

Cheah Boon Kheng

FROM PKI TO THE COMINTERN, 1924-1941:
THE APPRENTICESHIP OF THE
MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY

SELECTED DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSION
COMPILED AND EDITED WITH INTRODUCTIONS

SEAP

**Southeast Asia Program
120 Uris Hall
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
1992**

© 1992 Cornell Southeast Asia Program
ISBN 0-87727-125-9

About the Author

Cheah Boon Kheng, who received his BA and MA from the University of Malaya and his PhD in Southeast Asian History from Australian National University in 1979, is currently Professor of History in the School of Humanities, at Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang.

CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Bibliography	41
Part 1. Selected Documents [Introduction]	43
Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence	
1. MBPI, May 1922, "Bolshevism"	46
2. MBPI, August 1922, "Bolshevism"	46
3. MBPI, October 1922, (a) "Malaya in 1922" and (b) "Bolshevism"	47
4. MBPI, November 1922, "Communist Emissaries for the East"	47
5. MBPI, December 1922, "Communist Doctrines in Malaya—Chinese"	48
6. MBPI, December, 1925, "Strikes in Malaya"	48
7. MBPI, February 1926, "N.E.I. Communists in Singapore"	49
8. MBPI, April 1926, "Boedisoejitro in Singapore"	50
9. MBPI, October 1926, "Tan Malaka on Communism in Malaya, 1925"	50
10. MBPI, February 1927, "Arrest and Release of Alimin and Moeso"	51
Documents from Other Intelligence Sources	
11. "Subversive Activities of Tan Malaka." Extract from Despatch of U.S. Consul in Singapore to the State Department, dated September 1, 1927	53
12. "A Report showing the Connection between Chinese and Non-Chinese Concerned in Communist Activities in Malaya." (1 April 1930) by R. Onraet, Director C.I.D., Straits Settlements	53
13. "Communist Organizations in Southeast Asia." Despatch from U.S. Consul in Singapore to the State Department, 5 May 1930	56
14. "Close Liason Between Straits Settlements and Netherlands East Indies Against Communism." Extract from Sir Cecil Clementi, Governor, Straits Settlements Report of his visit to Batavia, 5 September 1930	58
15. Governor's Letter on Deporting Joseph Ducroux, 30 November, 1931	58
16. Note on Joseph Ducroux, alias SERGE LEFRANC, prepared by the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Straits Settlements, 30 November 1931	59

17.	Joseph Ducroux arrested by French Authorities. Extract from Malay Command Intelligence Note of 15th January, 1933	61
18.	"MCP and Labor Unrest." Statement of Director, C.I.B., Kuala Lumpur, undated [probably April 1937]	61
19.	Letter from an American Comintern Agent	64
20.	"Instructions from the China Communist Party to the MCP." Extract from a Malaya Combined Intelligence Summary, 1 to 31 October, 1940	65
21.	"MCP's New Policy to win over Overseas Chinese Capitalists." Extract from a Malaya Combined Intelligence Summary, 1 November to 30 November 1940	65
Part 2.	Selected Documents [Introduction]	67
1.	Straits Settlements Police, Special Branch Report for the Year 1934	68
2.	Straits Settlements Police, Special Branch Report for the Year 1935	75
3.	Straits Settlements Police, Special Branch Report for the Year 1936	81
Part 3.	Selected Documents [Introduction]	91
1.	"Prewar Organization and Foreign Influence of the MCP, 1920-1941" (Extract from Chapter II, OIR Report No. 3780: "The Role of the Communists in Malaya," U.S. State Department, March 16, 1947)	92
2.	Appendix A. "Twelve Revolutionary Bylaws Drafted by the Third Representative Council Meeting in 1932"	94
3.	Appendix B. "Bylaws Adopted at a Meeting Called by the Central Committee in April 1938"	95
4.	Appendix C. "Policy Decisions of the Fourth Executive Committee Meeting in July, 1938"	98
5.	Appendix D. "10-Point Directive Issued by the Sixth Central Expansion Council in April 1939"	99
6.	Appendix E. "The Nine Principles of February 1943"	99
Part 4.	Selected Document [Introduction]	101
1.	<i>Nan Daozhi chun</i> (Spring in the Southern Islands)—A Brief History of the Malayan Communist Party. Translation by Chen Jianhong	103
Part 5.	Selected Document [Introduction]	125
1.	<i>Malay and Indonesian Communists</i> (Supplement No. 5 of 1948 to Malayan Security Service, Political Intelligence Journal. Issued with PIJ. No. 11/48 dated June 15, 1948)	125

FOREWORD

This is a study of selected key documents, hitherto unpublished, pertaining to the history of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) from its origins up to 1945. These documents are found mainly in recently opened US and British government confidential and secret papers. This study also includes an analysis of an MCP pamphlet originally published in Chinese in 1946 under the title *Nan dao zhi chun* (Spring in the southern islands), which contains an account of the party's prewar history. Its contents have been translated and compared with those of the selected official documents. The aim has been to chart more comprehensively the course of the MCP's prewar history and its early links with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the Comintern. This study has paid special attention to the prewar activities of the Indonesian Communists in Malaya and their role in spreading communism among Malays to balance the unduly great emphasis given by scholars in the past to CCP agents and the influence of China in the 1920s and 1930s.

The documents presented here have been collected during several years of research. I have long felt that their publication would be useful to other scholars, and hope that with the end of the MCP's armed struggle, announced on November 30, 1989, and its intention to return to constitutional struggle, more party documents will become available to scholars.

I would like to thank the Cornell Southeast Asia Program for agreeing to publish this monograph and also the two anonymous readers for their valuable comments and suggestions to improve my manuscript. I also wish to thank Chen Jianhong, a tutor at the history department, Universiti Sains Malaysia, for translating *Nan dao zhi chun*. My colleague, Dr. Leong Yee Fong, made available to me some of the Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence (MBPI) documents in his possession while Dr. Yeo Kim Wah of the History Department, National University of Singapore provided information regarding the early origins of the Malayan Security Service. John Coe of Darwin, Australia very kindly sent me a copy of Wu Tien-wang's important 1947 unpublished manuscript, "The Communist Party of Malaya," which was recently recovered in London. Although it arrived in 1991 when my revised manuscript was already at Cornell, nonetheless it required me to undertake a further assessment of the MCP's internal split in 1936 and other aspects of its prewar history. Miss Loh Kim Foong did the excellent work of typing the original manuscript.

Cheah Boon Kheng
Universiti Sains Malaysia/Yale University
Penang/New Haven
October 1989/November 1991

This page intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

THE SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY (MCP)

Owing to the clandestine nature of the Malayan Communist movement during much of the colonial period, information about its activities have come largely from official sources. MCP documents have become scarce since 1948 when the MCP launched an armed revolt and became a proscribed organization again. Because MCP documents were considered illegal, very few people possessed them and even those who did were not likely to admit it. Fortunately, several MCP publications and documents have been found in overseas holding centers. One of these, *Nan dao zhi chun*, the MCP's history of its prewar policies, can be used to confirm much of the declassified secret and confidential official evidence on Communist activities in Malaya before 1941.

Apparently, some Malaysian government records on Communist activities that cannot easily be consulted by researchers are kept in the Special Branch archives in the Malaysian Police Headquarters. Over the years, only a handful of scholars have been allowed to use these papers, among them Charles McLane,¹ Anthony Short,² J. H. Brimmell,³ Rene Onraet,⁴ Yap Hong Kuan,⁵ and recently, Mahmud Embong.⁶ Not

¹Charles B. McLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1966). Professor McLane was able to see the papers through an arrangement with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Malaya, made by Anthony Short, a lecturer at the History Department, University of Malaya, who had been commissioned to write the official history of the Malayan Emergency from 1946 to 1960.

²Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Frederik Muller, 1975). The manuscript was submitted by Short to the Malaysian government but the government refused to publish it. Undaunted, Short had it published. The story of publication is told by Short himself. Cf. Preface, *ibid*.

³J. H. Brimmell, *A Short History of the Malayan Communist Party* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956); *idem*, *Communism in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959). Brimmell served in the British Embassy in Moscow from 1946 to 1948, with the Foreign Office in London from 1948 to 1951, and with the British commissioner general's office in Singapore from 1951 to 1953.

⁴Rene H. Onraet, *Singapore—A Police Background* (London: Dorothy Crisp, 1947). Onraet was a former inspector-general of police, Straits Settlements.

⁵Yap Hong Kuan, "Perak under the Japanese, 1942-1945" (B.A. Hons. thesis, University of Singapore, 1957). Yap's thesis is based on confidential and secret files of the Malayan Police, Special Branch, which he was allowed to consult as a former member of the police force. Because most of the information he used was still classified, the Special Branch requested the university to prohibit publication of the thesis. The prohibition was lifted recently.

⁶Mahmud Embong, "Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Gerakan Komunis di Malaya, 1920-1948" (M.A. thesis, History Department, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1985). He obtained

all these scholars, however, have been allowed to reproduce documents found within these papers. The exceptions were Yap Hong Kuan and Mahmud Embong, who were allowed to reproduce several charts on the organizational structures of the MCP, including those for 1925 and 1932. One of the important Special Branch papers frequently cited by these scholars is the "Basic Paper on the Malayan Communist Party," bound in several volumes, which is believed to include information given by police informers and Communist leaders during interrogations. Other writers, however, such as the journalist Harry Miller and the British Army officer Edgar O'Ballance whose works will be cited later, although they had not seen such papers had, nevertheless, been given police briefings on the historical background of Communist activities in Malaya. Their writing contains much useful information not found in scholarly works.

The earliest author to attempt a general history of the MCP was the mysterious "Gene Z. Hanrahan,"⁷ while other writers, such as Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff,⁸ pioneered brief preliminary studies of the Malayan Communist movement. Hanrahan's work, however, is still the best concise standard account and for some years of the MCP's prewar history remains the most important account. Hanrahan studied several MCP documents, including its 1934 party constitution, which was translated and included as one of the appendices in the book. He is also the first writer to use the wartime Japanese Kempeitai's account of the MCP found in Tsutsui's work entitled *Nampo gunsei-ron* (Military government in the southern regions), published in Tokyo in 1944. Although in some areas the information in Hanrahan's work is now out-of-date, it is still a useful reference. An intriguing question is how Hanrahan gained access to those MCP documents. He does not mention the holding centers where they are kept.

The police documents compiled within this monograph are (with one exception) found in holding centers *outside* Malaysia. This must be stated because under recent amendments to the Official Secrets Act (OSA) of Malaysia, following opposition disclosures in Parliament of naval arms purchases, the Malaysian government has tightened loopholes to prevent leakage of secret and confidential government documents to the public, and violators are liable to prosecution in a court of law. Therefore, the

permission to look at the Special Branch papers because his late father was an assistant minister in the federal government of Malaysia. While his thesis tends to be general and descriptive on the prewar period, it has, however, more recent information on the MCP's postwar history.

⁷Gene Z. Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1954); reissued, by arrangement with the Publication Centre, University of British Columbia, by the University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1971. It is believed that "Gene Z. Hanrahan" is the pseudonym of a research assistant or a research organization. According to his bibliographical card index at Yale University's Stirling library, "Gene Z. Hanrahan" is said to have authored the following works: *An Exploratory Critical Bibliography on the Chinese Red Army, 1927-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); *Ernest Hemingway 1896-1961: The Wild Years* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1962); *Documents on the Mexican Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1972); *Secret History of the Oil Companies in the Middle East* (Salisbury, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1979); and *Marighella, Carlos, Manual of the Urban Guerrilla*, introduction, new translation and a bibliography by Gene Hanrahan (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1985). When the University of Malaya Press decided to reprint *The Communist Struggle in Malaya* in 1971, they experienced great difficulties in contacting the "author," but finally signed a contract with a third party. Information was given to this writer by Beda Lim, retired chief librarian, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

⁸Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* (New York: William Sloane, 1950).

National Archives of Malaysia has closed all secret and confidential records going back into the colonial period, reversing its previous twenty-five-year ruling on opening government records and retarding the work of researchers. Appeals to the National Archives for a more liberal interpretation of the OSA have not yet been successful.

The importance of the official sources has, therefore, not diminished. In fact, over the years the official sources have influenced a vast number of writers in the field. Those who have been most impressed by these sources consider that they constitute a success story of the Special Branch in its fight against communism. It is a winner's story. The story of the losers, consequently, has not been heard or written. Such a history would have to be oral and based on the reflections and accounts of many of those who were involved at various levels of the Communist movement because written sources of such material are difficult to come by.

PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF POLICE SOURCES

Because access to the police archives is restricted, it has not been possible for this writer to obtain more information on how the police went about their tasks as historians of the Communist movement. "The most prolific and zealous historians of popular protest have been the police, spies and informers in the government's service, magistrates and army commanders," writes Richard Cobb, who has brilliantly reconstructed a history of popular protest during the French Revolution, 1789-1820, based on the records of the Paris prefecture of police.⁹ Cobb uses police sources to tell his story, and yet at every stage he comments on the sources he uses. In fact, his first chapter is an evaluation of the police sources with subheads as follows: "Police assumptions on the habits of violence and disorder," "Men to look for," "The informer and his trade," "The gendarme as witness," and "The police and credibility." It has not been possible to follow what Cobb has done. The French records are richer, more varied and plentiful, whereas most of those of the Malayan Special Branch are still closed. In most cases, it is impossible to know what were the views of the top Special Branch and police personnel, what they discussed at their meetings, or how they carried out their strategies. This information could sometimes only be inferred from their raids and arrests. Nor is it possible to know what transpired during police interrogations of those arrested, what instructions were issued to police agents and informers, or who were the people chosen as agents and informers. There is also no way to confirm whether those who were arrested or banished were really "Communists."

Special Branch "open" reports of this period (written for higher political authorities) tend to present Communist activists as "faceless" enemy targets or as statistical digits. Consequently, such documents reveal few personal details about Communist leaders and activists. However, this does not mean that no such details are available; there are personal dossiers of individuals who appear under police surveillance, and some scholars have been known to stumble upon such details in one or two rare "open" files, usually on banishment proceedings, or, like Anthony Short and McLane, they are given permission to look at such files. The problem is compounded by the MCP's highly secretive and conspiratorial nature, strictly enforced for security, which sometimes bordered on the paranoid and was counterproductive. Party state-

⁹Richard Cobb, *The Police and the People: French Popular Protest, 1789-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 4.

ments scarcely mentioned names of individuals. They deliberately concealed the names of their leaders and agents from the public view in the belief that this would prevent police from identifying these individuals. Before long, however, the Special Branch found out who they were. This Communist strategy, therefore, had its weaknesses because it meant the public was more likely not to know it existed and thus would forget the party because the public had no remembrance or image of its leadership and, in most cases, no knowledge of its policies or activities. It thereby presented the colonial government and police with opportunities to create the propaganda image of the Communists that they wanted the public to have—usually an image of intimidation, terror, and violence.

Given the shortage of MCP documents, students of Malayan communism have, therefore, relied heavily on the colonial government and police sources, which sometimes are the only ones available on the underground Communist movement. At this moment, it is impossible to write or reconstruct the history of the MCP without using such sources. Many gaps in the MCP's history still remain unfilled for lack of either or both MCP and police sources. Consequently, when certain MCP or unpublished police sources become available, they create excitement among interested scholars who expect these "new" sources to clear up problems for those studying the movement. Therefore, those who are fortunate to have had access to such sources are often regarded as having had an advantage over others. Perhaps now, with the end of the MCP's armed struggle, government restrictions may relax, and MCP documents may become more easily available, so that a complete history of the Communist movement can be written.

In the introductions to parts 1 and 2, I have attempted to provide some details about how the surveillance apparatus evolved in Malaya, who led the machine, and how intelligence was exchanged among the European colonial authorities in Southeast Asia. The most frequent sources of intelligence have, of course, been agents and spies, but the British police in Malaya had also relied on arrests of suspected Communists, on raids of their premises, and on postal censorship to obtain information. The seized documents have shed valuable light on the vast network of Communist operations throughout Malaya and provided details of persons, groups, and satellite organizations involved. While not denying their importance, a researcher, however, should be cautious and treat with some suspicion all such police reports. Police spies have been known to fabricate their information, and arrested suspects do not reveal the truth about all they know.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MCP, 1924-1945

THE EARLY INDONESIAN INFLUENCE

As demonstrated in the documents in part 1, Communist activities in Malaya became increasingly evident around 1922, when Bolshevik propaganda coming in from China was intercepted by the British police. It would, however, be incorrect to assume that prior to this time Communist activities were nonexistent in Malaya. In 1922 the British authorities in Malaya and London, viewing Bolshevism and nationalism as growing threats to British imperialistic interests in Southeast Asia and the Far East, agreed to set up the Malayan Security Service (MSS). This agency was given the primary task of maintaining constant surveillance of any political activities in Malaya that could threaten British interests and advising the authorities accordingly of appropriate measures to restrict or control such activities.

that could threaten British interests and advising the authorities accordingly of appropriate measures to restrict or control such activities.

"It is generally agreed⁷ wrote Jeanne S. Mintz in 1959, "that Marxism was formally first introduced into Indonesia in 1914, with the founding there of the Indies Social Democratic Association (ISDV)."¹⁰ This date—1914—is important because it establishes that the founding of the ISDV took firm root in Southeast Asia even before the establishment of the first Marxist body in China, (Li Ta-chao's Society for the Study of Marxist Theory in 1918).¹¹ The ISDV was founded by the Dutch Marxist, Henk or Hendricus Sneevliet.¹² The ISDV became the Perserikataan Komunis di India (PKI), or Indonesian Communist Party on May 23, 1920. On the other hand, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was not founded until May 1921 and the Indian Communist Party not until December 1925.¹³

These events were crucial in determining the early development of Communist operations in Malaya. One sees in the Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence (MBPI) reports in part 1 that between 1921 and 1922 Dutch and Indonesian Communist agents Sneevliet, Darsono, and others were frequent travelers to Malaya, ran a secret office in Singapore, and on several occasions were interviewed by British intelligence officials. These reports are confirmed by other sources used by Ruth McVey, who gives accounts of Darsono, Baars, and Sneevliet visiting Singapore in May 1921 en route to Shanghai. Samoan, another prominent Indonesian Communist, passed through Singapore on his way to Moscow via Shanghai. Sneevliet was again in Singapore in May 1922 on his way to Holland.¹⁴

The MBPI reports appear to be very informative about these Indonesian agents. The CCP agents had not yet started traveling to Malaya, the CCP having been formally established only in May 1921. No details of CCP agents for the early 1920s were released in these MBPI reports, which indicates that they were not yet active; otherwise, such information would have been in intelligence reports to the Chinese Affairs Department. The high point of the Indonesian Communist operations in Singapore may be said to have occurred in December 1926 when the British police arrested Alimin and Moeso. This episode formed the subject of a long banishment inquiry and led to discussion with both the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office in London on whether there should be a law to extradite "political offenders" from the Malayan territories (see Rene H. Onraet's "Report Showing the Connection Between Chinese and Non-Chinese Concerned in Communist Activities in Malaya," Document No. 12 in part 1).

¹⁰Jeanne S. Mintz, "Marxism in Indonesia" in *Marxism in Southeast Asia*, ed. Frank N. Trager, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 171-239.

¹¹See Maurice Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (New York: Atheneum, 1977).

¹²For an interesting biographical account of Sneevliet, see Michael Williams, "Sneevliet and the Birth of Asian Communism," *New Left Review* (123) (September-October 1980): 82-90. See also the brief background on Sneevliet, below p. 48, n. 12.

¹³See John Patrick Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy, 1920-1939* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 44-46.

¹⁴For details of these early activities in Singapore, see Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 129. See also Khoo Kay Kim, "The Beginnings of Political Extremism in Malaya, 1915-1935," (Ph.D. diss., University of Malaya, 1973), pp. 117-18.

PKI ACTIVITIES, 1924-1933

The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) did not emerge as a separate entity with its own Central Committee until 1930, but the first steps in setting up a Communist movement in Malaya were taken by Indonesian and Chinese Communists after a visit to Singapore in 1924 by the Indonesian Communist leader, Alimin.¹⁵ We have little evidence from MCP sources about its early origins, especially about the people involved. For such details, the official documents have been the major sources of information. In early 1925, another Indonesian, the Moscow-based Communist International (Comintern) representative for Southeast Asia, Tan Malaka,¹⁶ persuaded Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders in Canton to undertake the infiltration of leftwing groups in Singapore. A CCP representative, reportedly named Fu Ta-ching, was among the agents sent to Malaya to contact leftwing Chinese and Javanese. But, except among the Hailam (natives from the Chinese island of Hainan), the CCP members were less successful than their rivals in Sun Yat-sen's Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) in forming a Malayan branch.¹⁷ Soon, CCP members began arriving to join the Malayan Kuomintang (KMT) branch and to form the nucleus of a Communist group known as the Malayan Revolutionary Committee.¹⁸ They were

¹⁵This information, reportedly given by the Indonesian Communist Alimin, is quoted in Malaysian government records. See the Malaysian government White Paper, *Communism in Malaysia and Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1971), p. 5 (Malaya became Malaysia in 1963). Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 28, cites wartime Japanese military intelligence documents to the effect that Alimin, stopping in Singapore in early 1924 briefly while en route to the Pan-Pacific Labor Conference in Canton to be held in June of that year, carried out limited recruiting among the more radical elements there. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, p. 449, n. 142, however, has some interesting comments on Alimin's reported role: "If Alimin did take up contacts with Malayan radicals in 1924, it seems more likely that he did it on his earlier visit (where he reportedly met with Tan Malaka, who gave him the theses presented at the June 1924 PKI Congress) than on the way to Canton: what we know of his schedule indicates that he spent very little time in Singapore on the second journey. Since it also appears that Tan Malaka spent some time in Singapore before the Canton conference and that he found Canton inconvenient as a base, we may well wonder whether he and not Alimin initiated the idea for activity in Malaya. Neither Malaka nor Alimin mention playing such a role in their autobiographies, and I have found no corroborating evidence for it, although (given the patchy and unreliable nature of the available reports) this is not to say something of the sort might not have taken place." See also McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 132-33 and the Malayan Security Service document, "Malay and Indonesian Communists," in pt. 5.

¹⁶One of the most colorful of the PKI leaders, Tan Malaka stirred up consternation and even admiration and respect amongst the intelligence authorities of the European colonial powers in the international espionage of which he was the main character. His elusive role was cast very much like that of a Scarlet Pimpernel. Born in Suliki, West Sumatra, probably in 1897, his real name was Sutan Ibrahim gelar Datuk Tan Malaka. Trained as a schoolteacher, he left to further his education in Holland, where he became attracted to Marxism. On his return to Indonesia he joined the PKI and became its chairman in 1921. In March 1922 he was exiled from Indonesia and left for Holland. In the middle of 1923 he was appointed the Comintern representative in Southeast Asia. See Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 269-72; see also Noriaki Oshikawa, "Pajjar Merah Indonesia and Tan Malaka: A Popular Novel and a Revolutionary Legend," in *Reading Southeast Asia*, ed. Takashi Shiraishi (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Translation Series, 1990), pp. 9-40.

¹⁷White Paper, *Communism*. See also Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle* (reprint, Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p. 30.

¹⁸Chihiro Tsutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron* (Military administration in the southern regions), Tokyo, 1944, p. 335. Tsutsui's account is based on MCP documents captured by the *Kempeitai*

able to do so under the Soviet-Kuomintang agreement signed in 1923 by which CCP members could become KMT members. CCP members and their local Communist group continued to be found in the Malayan KMT until the KMT China broke with the CCP in 1927. The CCP members also paid attention to the organization of Malayan labor and in 1925 formed the South Seas General Labour Union (SSGLU) to cater to transport and dock workers.

In November, 1925, Tan Malaka, in a message intercepted by the British police, was reported to have painted a dismal picture of local Malay attitudes toward communism. He considered it more profitable to work among the resident Chinese and Indian populations (see MBPI document entitled "Tan Malaka on Communism," document no. 9 in pt. 1):

So far not the slightest advantage is to be seen from the work of our [propagandists] at Singapore or at Penang. You may say that they are quite incapable, but in criticising it must not be forgotten that the [Malay] inhabitants there, who form only a minority, are all conservative in their manner of living and thinking, and are petty bourgeois. . . . [In the] F.M.S. . . . impressions . . . obtained everywhere did not differ from those gained in Singapore and Penang. The section of the people which understands economy and politics are the Chinese. In brief, if one looks for a movement in the F.M.S., it is not to be sought on the side of the Malays. It will certainly come from the Chinese and Klings [Indians], whatever sort of movement it may be.¹⁹

Subsequently, Tan Malaka appears to have handed over the organization of the Malayan Communist movement to CCP members while he continued his efforts at recruitment among Indonesians, especially Sumatrans, in the hope that they could in turn influence the local Malays. In August 1926, he was reported to have attended meetings at Batu Pahat, Johor, and Singapore. The Singapore meeting was among Sumatrans aimed at establishing an "Indonesian Trading Association," which was to be based in Penang and was to have branches in Johor. Muar was another place where Alimin and Moeso and their followers had established places of refuge.²⁰ Muar, Batu Pahat, and other towns on the west coast of Johor had a high proportion of Indonesians among their populations. In 1926 and 1927, several Indonesian refugee Communists came to Singapore following the PKI's abortive uprisings to overthrow the Dutch regime in Java and Sumatra. Among early Indonesian arrivals were Alimin and Moeso and later Winanta, Soebakat, and Jamaluddin Tamin. Most of the Indonesians stayed for a short while in Malaya, carrying out anti-Dutch activities as well as recruiting local Indonesians and Malays, before moving to another

[Japanese military police] as well as on former British police records taken over by the *Kempeitai* during the Japanese occupation of Malaya, 1941-1945. See also Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 29.

¹⁹Quoted from Tan Malaka's letter to Boedisoejito in Jawa, November 6, 1925, intercepted by British police. Enclosure in Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence (hereafter cited as MBPI), October 1926, no. 44 in CO 273/535. "F.M.S." refers to the Federated Malay States of Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, and Pahang, formed in 1896. See also Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 110, and Anthony Short, "Communism and the Emergency," in *Malaysia*, ed. Wang Gungwu (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 150, for summarized versions of Tan Malaka's views.

²⁰McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 330-31, 482; and Khoo, "Beginnings of Political Extremism," n., p. 114.

destination. The available MBPI evidence shows that when the Indonesian Communists visited Malaya they were usually assisted by Indonesian residents in the country who were merchants and pilgrim brokers.²¹ By the end of 1926, however, most of these leading Indonesians had been arrested. The most well-known case was that of Alimin and Moeso (See MBPI document, February 1927, document no. 10, pt. 1). They were later ordered to leave Malayan territory for a destination of their own choosing. They all elected to go to China.²²

Undeterred by these actions, efforts were renewed by the Indonesian cadres to recruit Malays into the Communist movement between 1928 and 1930. At the time, these activities had alarmed the British police authorities. MBPI reports, in fact, show that in 1928 three Malay cadres had been recruited in Singapore, one of whom turned out later to be Alimin.²³ In the same year, the Malay section of the Anti-Imperialist League was formed by Alimin and Moeso, and Communist propaganda in romanized Malay and Jawi issued. A later (1948) Malayan Security Service document, "Malay and Indonesian Communists" (see pt. 5) reveals that in June 1928 they attempted to get in touch with the young intelligentsia of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) and Malaya studying at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, and apparently had some success. Two newspapers, *Pilihan Timor* and *Seruan Azhar*, issued by the students, were read in Malaya.²⁴ Alimin and two Malays and some CCP members attended the annual meeting of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat in Shanghai in June 1929. Toward the end of the year, a series of pamphlets in Malay, purporting to be issued by the Malay Seamen's Union, were printed and distributed with the help of the local Communist party. Throughout the first quarter of 1930, it was reported that non-Chinese branches of the Communist party were beginning to emerge in many places; in the Batu Pahat and Muar areas "most serious advances were made."²⁵ Police investigations in 1930 led to the arrest of six leading Communists of

²¹The pilgrim business for Indonesians in Singapore was run by a group of immigrant Indonesian merchants (dealing mainly in *songkok* [caps] and batik textiles) in Arab Street, and school teachers and religious teachers in Onan Road and North Bridge Road. The Indonesian Communists used them as contacts and even boarded with them, but the merchants were not necessarily Communists. See MBPI report No. 7, pt. 1.

²²Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 110. The Indonesians were not detained longer than police interrogations required because, as Onraet points out, "Existing agreements ruled that political prisoners could not be extradited." Onraet, who rose to become inspector-general of police, Straits Settlements, had conducted the arrests and interrogations as director of the Criminal Intelligence Department. (See also his "Report showing the Connection between Chinese and non-Chinese concerned in Communist Activities in Malaya," April 1, 1930, pt. 1). Onraet, who interrogated Alimin and Moeso, seems to have a warm recollection of Alimin:

One of them, after his release at Singapore and arrival in China, sent me the first copy of a magazine issued by the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. We did not know very much about this organisation at the time. It turned out to be connected with the Far Eastern Bureau. Mas Alimin, I believe, sent the pamphlet to put me one jump ahead of the Dutch C.I.D. He told me they were very rude! Personal hatred as well as ideological antagonism was the result. I never found bluster paid with such men—Alimin, a polished linguist and experienced traveller, reacted best to decent treatment.

²³MBPI, no. 48 for February-April 1927 in CO 273/535. Onraet later identified one of the Malay cadres as Alimin. See his "Report showing the Connection Between Chinese and non-Chinese Concerned in Communist Activities in Malaya," April 1, 1930 (document no. 12, pt. 1).

²⁴For more details on this student group, see W.R. Roff, "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s," *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970): 73-88.

²⁵Document no. 12, pt. 1.

Sumatran and Javanese origins. The arrests curbed but did not end the efforts to spread communism among Malays, especially because the Comintern's proposed re-organization of the Communist party in 1930 was intended to lead to a stepping up of such efforts.

The Malayan Security Service document, produced in 1948 (see pt. 5), however, is an important source containing much hitherto unknown information on Malay and Indonesian Communist activities in Malaya for the subsequent period, 1930-1936. It helps fill in many gaps in the history of the Malayan Communist movement. In this section, I will deal with the evidence up to 1933. Between October 1930 and February 1931 there was increased mention of Malay participation in Communist activities, a reported increase in the amount of propaganda in Malay, and confirmed cases of Malays being willing to go to Singapore (MCP headquarters) for training. The MCP's aim was to use these Malay comrades in agricultural districts, such as Rembau and Kuala Pilah, to form peasants' and workers' cells. Thereafter, Kuala Pilah and other areas in the state of Negri Sembilan reportedly began to feature prominently as Malay Communist centers of activity.

In September 1931, it was established that the five members of the Kuala Pilah provisional committee of the MCP were all Malays. The General Labor Union in Negri Sembilan claimed an increasing number of Malay members and announced the publication of a news-sheet in Malay and Javanese called *Soeara Boeroeh Malaya* (Voice of Malayan Labor). At the same time, a cyclo-styled manifesto in Malay was issued in Trengganu. Police raids carried out on Malay Communist centers in Kuala Pilah revealed that the Malay membership of the General Labor Union had reached between four and five hundred. In Lenggeng (also in Negri Sembilan) the Kaum Muda, the Islamic reformist movement, was said to have been influenced by Communists.²⁶ The Malayan Security Service document [Part V] comments:

Although the Kaum Muda had been labelled "Communist" it was, in fact, a movement in advance of orthodox Islam with many adherents in Sumatra, particularly among the Nationalist students whose activities frequently merged with Communism. The suspicion therefore existed that wherever the Kaum Muda was strong (Negri Sembilan and Malacca) there would be found a nucleus ready to listen to the clandestine propaganda of Indonesian Nationalist or Communist agents.

Between October 1931 and November 1932 three important discoveries were made by the Special Branch concerning Indonesian Communist activities among Malays:

1. An intercepted letter in October 1931 revealed that an attempt was being made to set up an organization called the Dutch East Indies Bureau (DEIB), among whose objectives were to reestablish the banned PKI, to find ways and means of establishing good connections with the Far Eastern Bureau and the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, and to assist in all possible ways similar work by the MCP in establishing communism among the Malays.

²⁶>For further details on the Kaum Muda in Malaya, see W.R.Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967).

2. In May 1932, a movement for the formation of an All-Malay Communist Party entirely independent of Chinese influence was reported. Information was received that the Javanese Communist Bassa was initiating this movement from Borneo and was in touch with Malays representing the states of Pahang, Selangor, Perak, Trengganu, and Singapore. However, the attempt subsequently petered out.

3. The arrest of Jamaluddin Tamin, an associate of Tan Malaka, on September 13, 1932 led to the disclosure that Tan Malaka's organization, PARI, was also attempting to recruit Malay members. Inquiries after his arrest led to the arrest of Tan Malaka in Hong Kong. Tan Malaka was banished from Hong Kong and Jamaluddin Tamin from Singapore.

These developments made the Special Branch conclude that "those political agitators of the Netherlands East Indies . . . , having fled their country after the 1926 rising, were still available to carry out the racial movement in the South Seas which was the declared policy of the Third International." Regarding the failure to form the "Malay" Communist party, the Malayan Security Service document gives the following reasons: "Sympathisers were generally without any directing influence, other than that of the Chinese heads of local divisional committees. Lack of funds, the difficulties of language, contempt for the Chinese and general apathy of local Malays for any movement led by foreigners, were factors responsible for the lack of progress."²⁷

In September 1933 an instructional letter from the Central Committee of the China Communist Party to Malaya "Central" was received [see the MSS document, pt. 5]. It advised: "Organizations to oppose Imperialism are to be widely started in the names of Anti-Imperialist League, the League of the Independence of the Malay Race, the League to support the Chinese Revolution, etc. At present other races can also be organized, but there must be a central organ to direct the entire activities. In this organ should be the representatives of various races, and the party must assume the role of leaders."

Throughout the year 1933 the Special Branch reported no activity by Malay and Indonesian Communists, but a revival was noticed in 1934. In February 1934 the Special Branch recorded that the efforts of Malayan "Central" to "graft upon the local Malay population an enthusiasm for the communism of Moscow had not been successful, but it was, nevertheless, borne in mind that a nucleus existed of renegade Javanese and Sumatran revolutionaries in Malaya," and that it was the primary object of these people to develop communism among the indigenous population. Leadership was in the "hands of capable Muslims whose influence was along the lines of religion and nationalism" (see the MSS document, pt. 5).

Of the two streams of Communist influence in Malaya, the Chinese and the Indonesian, the Chinese appears to have had a more lasting effect. Despite Tan Malaka's expectations of the Indians, there is little record of much Indian sympathy for communism in Malaya, even though there was Indian involvement in labor disputes in the 1930s.

²⁷After World War II another unsuccessful attempt to form a Malay Communist party was made in 1946 by one of the Indonesian Communist agents sighted by the Special Branch in the 1926-1936 period, Sutan Djenain. See Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1979), p. 68.

THE CCP INFLUENCE: 1925-1930

Before 1927, the KMT's activities in both China and Malaya had turned increasingly anti-imperialist and anti-British. This orientation had led to the Malayan KMT being declared illegal in 1925, which forced it underground. A leftwing committee probably existed within the Malayan KMT. The MCP's official history *Nan dao zhi chun* (see document, pt. 4), however, states that the MCP was born in 1925 as "an overseas branch of the CCP"²⁸ but does not state it was formed in the KMT. The branch was said to have been "a very small organization" that had established secret cells among Chinese shop assistants, workers in foreign concerns, and rubber tappers. In 1926, CCP members established "the South Seas Branch Committee to gradually expand its activities to all parts of the South Seas." It was clearly a provisional committee for the "South Seas [Nanyang] Communist Party (SSCP)." In 1926, CCP members formed the Communist Youth League in Singapore and organized the South Seas General Labor Union (SSGLU) to serve a wider area than Malaya alone. According to official sources, although its central headquarters was based in Singapore, the federation's jurisdiction covered various Communist-dominated labor organizations of Sumatra, Borneo, New Guinea, Celebes, Burma, Siam, and Indochina as well. It affiliated with the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, a Comintern agency that was established in Shanghai in 1927.²⁹ The SSGLU was allowed to operate freely in Malaya by the British authorities until 1928, when it was outlawed for organizing anti-British demonstrations and strikes. A serious incident had occurred in Singapore on March 12, 1927, the anniversary of the death of Sun Yat-sen, when members of the Communist Youth League had clashed with police. Communist demonstrators unsuccessfully attempted to storm a police station in

²⁸See also McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 132. Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p.30, called the KMT committee the "Malayan Revolutionary Committee," but cites no source for this. He states: "The Malayan Revolutionary Committee represented the more radical and pro-Communist factions in the Malayan Overseas Branch of the Chinese Nationalist Party." Hanrahan's influence has been considerable, as even some authorities have used the name he has given to this committee. See Brimmel, *Communism in South East Asia*, p.93. However, there is no official or MCP evidence to support it. Hanrahan's theory that this committee was formed in the KMT is a plausible and ingenious one and could only have come from a clever reading of Onraet's Book, *Singapore: A Police Background*, pp.108-109. After referring to the CCP and two factions in the China KMT ("Kuo Min Tang Right," and "Kuo Min Tang Left") and their rivalry among Chinese in Southeast Asia, Onraet states: "Still, as all of this was Kuo Min Tang work [in Southeast Asia], and it was via the Left Wing elements of the Kuo Min Tang that subversive organizations were first developed in Singapore...." Onraet (*ibid.*, p.III) further states: "From Left Wing Kuo Min Tang the movement filtered into a great many Chinese schools and into every craft and trade...." Thus, at no time did Onraet state that a committee was ever set up in the Malayan KMT. However, British intelligence did detect the existence of what was known as a "Main School" Communist organization which infiltrated the Left KMT in Malaya but whose work was eventually suspended in 1927 by the SSCP (see the US State Department paper found in Pt. 3 below). A MBPI report stated: "At the beginning of 1927 the seizure of documents at the Pheng Man School at Kuala Lumpur made it clear there was a definite group of agitators known as the 'Main School' (of which mention was made in last month's Bulletin) whose object was to work through the Night Schools, Labour Unions and sub-branches of the 'Left K.M.T/' to spread subversive propaganda through the Malayan Archipelago and to aim at a large increase in the number of fellow students." See document enclosed in CO 273/535 MBPI No 40, May 1927.

²⁹Onraet, *Singapore*, pp. 108-10; McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 133.

Kreta Ayer district. As a result, six of those in the attack were killed and several SSCP leaders were detained in a series of police raids.³⁰

In April 1927, the Nationalist Government in China carried out a ruthless campaign of suppression against the CCP and their labor unions in Shanghai, Hangchow, Nanking, Foochow, and Canton in which thousands of Communists and their sympathizers were executed. Following this event, the Malayan KMT purged its leftist elements, and the Malayan KMT and the Communists became rival groups. CCP refugees and agents arrived in Singapore to transform the CCP's "South Seas Branch Committee" into the "South Seas Communist Party" (SSCP). They convened its First Congress in 1927 to elect a pro tem committee of the SSCP.

According to the MCP's history, *Nan dao zhi chun*, the SSCP was given full jurisdiction "to gradually expand its activities to all parts of the South Seas."³¹ The authority for the extension of the SSCP's activities could only have come from Tan Malaka just before he ceased being the Comintern's area representative. For the MCP's official history records that after this event, due to the "inadequate experience" possessed by SSCP members and to "lack of leadership from the Comintern," little was accomplished.³² In 1929 the SSCP received instructions from the CCP to work out the revolutionary nature and basic tasks of the Malayan revolution. The CCP set forth the "basic lines of general struggle" for the SSCP.³³ It is believed that after the Sixth Comintern Congress held in Moscow in July 1928, Tan Malaka broke with the Comintern over the causes of failure of the PKI's 1926-1927 uprisings. He began to concentrate on his own political organization, Partai Repoeblik Indonesia,

³⁰Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 111. Onraet claims that through the SSGLU Communist influence had filtered into many Chinese schools, especially night schools, and into every trade and craft. The fracas was engineered by the night school left-wingers who, to use their own words, "got into close touch with junior right-wing Kuomintang supporters and led them to apostasy." However a report from the US consul in Singapore dated September 1, 1927, quoting a private source, claims that Tan Malaka was in Singapore at this time and played a role in arousing the feelings of the Chinese demonstrators (See document no. 11, pt. 1).

³¹*Nan dao zhi chun*, document, pt. 4; McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 132; Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 112. All these sources agree that it was the CCP, not the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern based in Shanghai, which was responsible for Communist activities in Malaya, including the SSCP's, up to 1930. Onraet, who is usually anxious to link up the "evil machinations" of international communism, categorically states: "Between 1926 and 1930 the South Seas Communist group, controlled from China by the Chinese Communist party, comprised the colonies of Great Britain, Holland and France, also Siam and Burma, the latter having contact with Burma." Tsutsui implies that the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern was involved when he states that several CCP agents arrived in Malaya "under Comintern orders" to form the SSCP. See Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, pp. 31-32. Brimmel in his book *Communism in South East Asia*, p. 93, gives what is probably the most acceptable explanation: "The South Seas Communist Party in Singapore was charged with the supervision of these activities, under the overall control of the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau, which continued in illegal existence in Shanghai, together with the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party." Commenting on the wide geographical control of the SSCP, Onraet observes: "Not a bad effort, it must be admitted and quite obviously something with a high level directorate," but reveals there was scepticism in high places on the strength and the coordination of the South Seas movement.

³²See *Nan dao zhi chun*; also McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 132.

³³See *Nan dao zhi chun* (pt. 4).

Pari, which he had organized in Bangkok even before the Sixth Congress.³⁴ Until 1930, when the Vietnamese Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) took over as Comintern representative from Tan Malaka, Communist affairs were disorganized after the debacle suffered in 1927.

COMINTERN CONTROL UNDER NGUYEN Ai Quoc³⁵

It was probably in 1929 or early 1930 that the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern in Shanghai began to assume full control of Malayan Communist affairs. According to a Japanese source, the Comintern continued to use CCP agents but made the CCP aware of its criticisms of earlier CCP-directed activities in Malaya. CCP cadres were accused of being "out of touch with the real mass elements," and of neglecting to institute a "broad-based workers and peasants movement." In addition, they had failed to recruit other races besides Chinese and had neglected to maintain "much closer cooperation and liaison with the Comintern."³⁶ Although the CCP was certainly responsible for what happened in Malaya, failure could equally be ascribed to the Comintern itself for its earlier lack of interest in Southeast Asian affairs. One writer has concluded that the Comintern's criticisms marked "the first serious conflict between the Comintern and the CCP over party policies in the area."³⁷ The conflict is, however, purely speculative because there is no evidence from Malayan, Soviet, or Chinese Communist sources to confirm it.³⁸ The CCP at that time was a fledgling party, not yet the ruling party in China, whereas the Comintern was responsible for the direction of regional and worldwide Communist operations. The CCP was subordinate to the Comintern. Besides serving Comintern interests, it was struggling to carry out its own revolution in China. Far from being locked in a dispute over hegemony with the Comintern, the CCP was groping along and attempting to apply its own mode of struggle to Malaya. Given differences of history, language, and race in Malaya, it is not difficult to imagine that CCP cadres encountered serious difficulties when trying to tackle problems there. This was why, to overcome race and language problems, they had sought the assistance of their Indonesian counterparts.

In 1933, however, the CCP agreed with Nguyen Ai Quoc's assessment of what had to be done in Malaya. In an instructional letter to the MCP's Central Committee (see the MSS document "Malay and Indonesian Communists," Pt. 5), it said: "In the

³⁴George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 85-86. See McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 97-101, for details of Tan Malaka's arguments in the Sixth Comintern Congress.

³⁵Nguyen Ai Quoc [Nguyen the Patriot], better known as Ho Chi Minh, was to adopt many other names, but his real name was Nguyen Tat Thanh. He was born on May 19, 1890 in the village of Kim-Lien in Nghe-An province of Central Vietnam. From the age of 13 he was on the run from the political authorities, and before the Second World War spent much of his time in prison. At the end of the First World War, he was in Paris and joined first the French Socialist Party and then the French Communist Party. In June 1924 he attended the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, and in 1925 went to Canton as a Comintern representative. Thereafter until his arrest in Hong Kong in 1931, he was engaged on Comintern missions and helped to form the Indo-China Party in 1930. See Jean Lacouture, *Ho Chi Minh* (London: Allen Lane, 1968), pp. 1-48 passim.

³⁶Tsutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron*, p. 335; also cited in Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 29.

³⁷Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, pp. 32, 38-39.

³⁸McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 136, rightly dismisses it as "no more than a plausible hypothesis."

progress of the anti-Imperialist campaign and the agrarian revolution, Malaya is a field for both. Due to geographical proximity, Malaya as a vanguard of the colonial and semi-colonial revolution, has very intimate connection with China's revolutionary movement. Our mission is, therefore, to lead the Malayan native peasants and labourers to join the revolutionary movement, which without them, will not be a success. The party has so far done very little in this branch of activities and we must try our level best to overcome the defects. We are of the opinion that your party must be responsible for the question of organising a strong and united Communist Party in Malaya in order to collect all different races and urge them on."

The Comintern Bureau recognized these problems between 1928 and 1930. Delegates of the SSGLU at the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference held in Shanghai in August 1929 reported difficulties encountered in attempting to organize the many nationalities living in Malaya and called on the permanent secretariat to arrange for competent union organizers from India and other countries to help in this matter.³⁹ This appeal was made after criticisms had been levelled at the SSGLU for its inattention to Indian and Malay labor.

A thorough review of the Malayan situation was undertaken and discussed either at the Second or Third Representatives' Meeting of the SSCP, which was secretly convened in Singapore in April 1930. The meeting was chaired by Comintern representative Nguyen Ai Quoc, who reportedly criticized the poor record of the CCP cadres in Malaya, especially their failure to make much headway in the recruitment of Malays and Indians. He ascribed the failure of the SSCP to its inability to resolve the racial question.⁴⁰ The Malayan Security Service document entitled "Malay and Indonesian Communists" (see document, pt. 5) described Nguyen Ai Quoc's important role at this conference as follows:

NGUEN [sic] AI QUOC, who at the Third Representative Conference of the M.C.P. had urged particularly the need for Chinese members to study the Malay language and enlist Malay recruits, was extremely active in the development of the Malay and Javanese party. It was revealed in the investigation of the LEFRANC [Comintern agent arrested in Singapore in June 1931] case that he [NGUYEN AI QUOC] had brought the attention of the Far Eastern Bureau to

³⁹Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 37.

⁴⁰Police intelligence sources give contradictory evidence on whether it was the second or third representatives' meeting of the SSCP or MCP. See the chronology in the US intelligence document, in pt. 3, which lists it as the second representatives' conference. McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 135-36. *Nan dao zhi chun* (pt. 4) also calls it the "Second Congress" which it states was held in 1930. Once again Brimmel, in his book *Communism in South East Asia*, p. 94, has an explanation to resolve this confusion: "No headway was made in transmitting revolutionary fervour to the Malays, or in developing a revolutionary movement in the other countries concerned. By the end of 1929 this general failure was discussed at the Party's [SSCP's] Second Representatives' Congress (the First was the one which set up the party in 1928), and apparently brought to the attention of the Comintern. The latter body decided on a reorganization of the South East Asian theatre, and summoned a Third Representatives' Conference of the South Seas Party in April 1930, together with a meeting of the South Seas General Labour Union." However, *Nan dao zhi chun* states that the First Congress was held in 1927. See also Harry Miller, *Menace in Malaya* (London: Harrap, 1954), p. 23. Miller was a local journalist who obtained much of his information on the early history of the MCP from interviews with senior British police officers in Malaya. Some scholars may tend to dismiss Miller's work as journalistic, but he reveals interesting information obtained from his police sources that is not available elsewhere.

BASSA [a member of the Indonesian Communist Party who took part in the 1926 rebellion], whom he hoped to enlist as a propaganda and liaison officer between the Eastern control and the South Seas.

The minutes of the Third Representatives' Conference revealed that there were "three Malay comrades in Johore and two Malay comrades in Malacca." An outcome of the meeting was that the SSCP was officially dissolved. In its place two new organizations were to be set up: the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP), both to come under the direct control of the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. The parties of Siam, the Dutch East Indies, and Burma were to be subdepartments of the MCP but this was reported to be only a temporary arrangement. Once these subdepartments were strong enough they would be given full party status. Onraet gives two possible reasons for the SSCP's break-up: its cumbersomeness and "the disordered state into which it had been thrown by arrests and deportations."⁴¹ The takeover of direct control of Malayan Communist affairs by the Comintern Bureau was obviously intended to be a shift away from the CCP. To facilitate closer liaison with these parties, the Bureau set up a "Southern Section" in Hong Kong, which was also charged with direct handling of the Communist movement in Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Yunnan, and Fukien provinces in South China.⁴²

Following similar Comintern orders, the SSGLU was reorganized into the Malayan Federation of Labor (MFL). A clear idea of Comintern designs behind the reorganization emerged at the MFL's congress when priority was placed on the organization of other races, especially Malays, over the Chinese. According to one representative, "The mass of Malay workers are yet to be organised into the trade unions and brought under the leadership of the MFL. . . . the main point to bear in mind is that the Malay worker must be reached and recruited."⁴³

However, before the Comintern's plans could be fully carried out, the Comintern bureau and its Southeast Asian network were shattered in 1931 by a series of police raids and arrests. A member of the French Communist party, Joseph Ducroix (alias Serge Lefranc) was arrested in Singapore in June 1931 as an agent of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat in Shanghai (See documents 15 and 16, pt. 1). He had been assigned to carry out the absorption of the SSCP into the MCP. His revelations under police interrogation led to the arrests of the secretariat's chief in Shanghai, Hilaire Noulens, and Nguyen Ai Quoc in Hong Kong.⁴⁴ Two leading CCP agents, one of whom was Fu Ta-ching, were arrested along with Ducroix.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 113.

⁴² Information contained in Japanese Military Administration (Malaya) documents suggest that the "Southern Section or Bureau" was that of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern in Shanghai. See Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, pp. 40-41. Miller, *Menace in Malaya*, p. 23, also attributes the Hong Kong bureau to the Comintern. However, McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 147, describes it as the "Southern Bureau" of the CCP. It appears to have been the Comintern's bureau because the arrest of Nguyen Ai Quoc, the Comintern representative, in 1931 was reported to have occurred in Hong Kong. Cf. Miller, *Menace in Malaya*, p. 28.

⁴³ Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 40; McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 135.

⁴⁴ For more details of the arrest of Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) and the Comintern-backed legal representations to free him, see the interesting article by Dennis J. Duncanson, "Ho-chi-minh [sic] in Hong Kong, 1931-32" *The China Quarterly* 57 (January-March 1974): 84-100.

⁴⁵ Tsutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron*, pp. 146-47. Tsutsui is the only source to mention Fu Ta Ching.

THE FORMAL MCP: 1932-1935

Despite these setbacks, the Great Depression of 1929-1932 threw many people in Malaya into dire poverty and unemployment and made them amenable to the appeals of communism. The MCP was, therefore, formally established in 1932. A twelve-point "revolutionary" program was adopted (see app. A, pt. 3 for the twelve points), which included the following main aims:

1. Military overthrow of British rule, the rajas, sultans, landlords, and compradores
2. Establishment of a Malayan Workers and Peasants Soviet Republic
3. Nationalization of all imperialist banking enterprises and reactionary property and lands
4. An eight-hour day, civil rights, and free education in the vernacular to be guaranteed
5. Redistribution of lands to farmers, plantation workers, and revolutionary soldiers.⁴⁶

But before the MCP could begin work on this program, it was plagued by an internal crisis. The MCP's history, *Nan dao zhi chun*, says that the party was betrayed by a group that advocated the "united front" strategy in opposition to the leadership's militant policy. The crisis was resolved by a purge of the opposition elements in late 1932 (See document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4).⁴⁷

Membership figures reportedly rose and the MCP stepped up its mass demonstrations and strikes against the British. For a brief period in 1934 the MCP maintained intermittent contacts with the Comintern agency in Shanghai after the agency's revival in that year. A regular Comintern subsidy had also been received. Between March and October 1934, "D. Ling," a Comintern agent with impressive credentials from Shanghai, was in Singapore to reestablish contact with the MCP. He became the driving force behind its reorganization. (See the Special Branch Annual Report for 1934 in pt. 2.) The Malayan Chinese Seamen's Union was believed to have supplied the couriers who traveled between the ports of Shanghai and Singapore to maintain contact between the MCP and the Comintern.⁴⁸ "D. Ling" is believed to have attended the MCP's Central Committee's Sixth Plenary Session on March 6, 1934. The meeting drew up a constitution in which the MCP described itself as an "affiliate" of the Comintern.⁴⁹ In June 1934, the MCP received a document said to have been written by an American Comintern agent in Shanghai (apparently Earl Browder), which among other things urged the MCP to "expand [its] recruiting ground by obtaining the sympathy of the working classes of all nationalities in Malaya"⁵⁰ (see the police intelligence document "MCP and Labor Unrest," document no. 18, pt. 1).

⁴⁶See also *Nan dao zhi chun*, (document, pt. 4); McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 200, cites identical details.

⁴⁷*Nan dao zhi chun* is the only source to mention the party crisis of 1932.

⁴⁸Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 114.

⁴⁹A full English translation of the MCP's 1934 constitution is in Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, app. 1, pp. 151-62.

⁵⁰See also Yeo Kim Wah, "Communist Involvement in Malayan Labour Strikes, September 1936-March 1937," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 49, (December

In December 1934, following complaints about its work, the Central Committee decided to establish closer contact with the masses. It divided the country into five centers and a Directing Committee was formed from members of the Central Committee who were to reside in each center for two months to recruit new members and stimulate local activities.

Throughout 1935, however, the party lost contact with the Comintern apparatus in Shanghai and consequently failed to receive any subsidy and instructions. In May 1935 the party sent a representative to Shanghai, but his arrival coincided with raids by the French Police there and the further disorganization of the Comintern apparatus. Nevertheless, he established contact with the Chinese Communist Party, but by the end of the year had not succeeded in obtaining the subsidy or instructions from the Comintern apparatus. In March 1935 a "Unification Committee" was formed in Singapore to recruit members of the various races into Communist labor unions. The committee's members comprised two Chinese, a Tamil, a Vietnamese, and a Javanese. At the Malayan Communist Party conference held in September 1935, a new Central Committee was elected. Representative conferences of the Malayan Communist Youth and Malayan General Labour Union were also held in Singapore in September and October 1935. (See Special Branch Report for 1935, pt. 2).

THE RESURGENCE OF THE **PKI** GROUP: 1934-1936

In 1934, the Special Branch (see their report for 1934, pt. 2) also detected further evidence of Indonesian Communists being used by the Comintern "to infect the indigenous population of Malaya [the Malays] with the virus of Communism, and for this purpose the services of some of the 'intelligentsia' amongst the N.E.I, renegade group resident in Singapore, have been requisitioned." The report goes on to give the following description of the group's activities:

This group which numbers about fifty "Indonesians" in Malaya of any importance, are the local representatives of that body of fugitives who fled from the Netherlands Indies after the rebellion there of 1926-27. Amongst them are supporters of all or nearly all the various political groups into which the aspirations of "Indonesians" are split up. There is also amongst them, a small section of pure Communists with an "international" outlook and it is from amongst this small section that helpers have been found by the M.C.P. to prepare the propaganda in Malay, found at Flower Road [Singapore] which is intended to further the progress of the "Racial Movement" in Malaya.

To this extent the "internationally minded" members of the N.E.I, renegade group in Malaya are a local danger. The majority of the group are, however, chiefly interested in their various schemes for the liberation of "Indonesia."

It is a question what line is best to be taken against the locally resident "international" Communist[s] from the N.E.I., whose arrest merely discloses information, without producing evidence sufficient for banishment. One of the more dangerous members of this group named Amir Hamzah Siregar left Singapore for Java on 3rd October 1934 and was arrested by the Dutch authorities on 29th December, 1934.

1976): pt. 2, pp. 36-79 for a fuller discussion of how the MCP carried out Browder's instructions.

No further evidence of the PKI group appears in the Special Branch Annual Reports for 1935 and 1936, but in the 1948 Malayan Security Service document (see pt. 5), the Special Branch had reported that their activities had, in fact, continued up to 1936, although on a decreasing level. It also noted that in 1934 the propaganda directed by the MCP underwent a significant change: "Whereas formerly similar propaganda had been Chinese inspired, began too far up the scale and ended in a meaningless jargon full of foreign terms which conveyed nothing to the average Malay there was now being issued in Malay documents of a comprehensive character. Elementary Communist principles were presented in understandable Malay of Indonesian origin with a minimum of Party jargon and international terms. One of these documents was a translation of the instruction letter [from the Chinese Communist Party to Malaya "Central"] referred to above."

Seven Indonesian and Malay Communists who were known to one another came under surveillance between 1934 and 1937. Among them were "Ma AH" (real name Sutan Jenain, who was believed to have arrived in Malaya originally in 1910), and Amir Hamzah Siregar, who had a string of aliases. Information revealed that between November 1933 and September 1934 regular payments were being made by the MCP to four of them, who included Sutan Djenain and Amir Hamzah Siregar.

Information was received from the Dutch authorities that Amir Hamzah Siregar, who was last reported to have been arrested by the Dutch authorities on December 29, 1934, had contacted a Javanese Communist named Sajoeti, a former president of the PKI, in Surabaya before his arrest. Amir Hamzah had received from Sajoeti instructions on behalf of the MCP. Sajoeti was arrested in Singapore on a banishment warrant on July 15, 1935.

Because Comintern policy was still pan-racial, a Unification Committee (see Special Branch Report for 1935, pt. 2) was set up by the MCP's Central Committee, composed of one Indian, one Malay, and one Chinese. The first evidence of the work of this committee was the establishment on a new footing in August 1935 of the Singapore Traction Company branch of the General Labour Union, Singapore. The cells of the branch were of mixed nationalities—Indian, Malay, and Chinese—and were formed on the five-man principle.

The 1948 Malayan Security Service document records that in December 1936 Djoeliman Siregar, a Christian Batak, who was converted to communism by Amir Hamzah Siregar, had also come to the notice of the Special Branch when he had just completed an inspection tour of Negri Sembilan and Malacca on behalf of the MCP. He had arrived in Malaya in May 1934. After this trip, Sutan Djenain came under strict surveillance. He was reported to have been a member of the MCP's Central Committee and also of the Malayan Racial Emancipation League. Another League member, Salim, was said to have sent a written report on activities in Selangor to the MCP Central Committee in March 1937.

However, the activities of the Malay and Indonesian Communists were reported to have stopped completely during the period 1937-1940. In the 1948 Malayan Security Service document, one finds the following observations:

It is undoubtedly true that the Communist Party had had little success in getting Malays to take an active interest in communism, and that in addition the Party had been dealt several crippling blows by the Police Forces of the F.M.S. and Singapore. (383 Communists were banished from Malaya between 1933-1937).

But it is difficult to believe that revolutionary Communists in hiding from Indonesia should have been quiescent for this length of time. The fact remains, however, that no information was received and we are brought now to the outbreak of the Pacific war.

Although from 1937-1941 the activities of the Indonesian Communists had not been sighted by the Special Branch, this did not mean that their influence was no longer felt by local Malays. The leaders of the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (Young Malay Union), which was founded in 1938—Ibrahim Yaacob, Ishak Haji Mohamed, Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, and others—were known to have had contacts with Alimin, Sutan Djenain, and other Indonesian Communists from 1926-1927 onwards. Their pro-Indonesian stance had a left-wing slant; this was noticeable even throughout the Japanese occupation to the postwar period, when many of the former KMM members emerged in the Malay Nationalist Party, whose formation was sponsored by the MCP.

In an account of the period, Ibrahim Yaacob has recalled that the 1926-1927 rebellion received some support among peninsular Malays. The political fugitives who fled to Malaya were sheltered by their relatives, and some of these fugitives were active in arousing national consciousness among the Malays. They included "Jamaluddin Tamin, Tan Malaka, Budiman, Sutan Djenain, Alimin, Mohd. Ariff, and others/"⁵¹

THE PARTY SPLIT: 1935-1936

In 1935, the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy and the new military power of Japan forced the Comintern to change strategy at its Seventh World Congress in Moscow. The previous militant line of all-out opposition to Western imperialism gave way to the Popular or United Front. Communist parties in the advanced countries of Europe and America had to seek alliances with all political groups to fight fascism, which the Comintern, under Soviet influence, now considered a more immediate threat than Western imperialism. Although the policy made it clear that opposition to imperialism in the colonial territories was not to be abandoned altogether, Stalin and the Soviet party were believed to have calculated that if the Communist parties in the metropolitan countries had alliances with their rival ruling groups, parties in the colonies were bound to follow suit.⁵² Because the MCP was still in a state of disarray and not in regular contact with the Comintern in 1935, it apparently failed to receive an invitation to attend the conference. As a result, the MCP did not learn of the Comintern's new policy until a year later, through contacts made with the CCP in Hong Kong.⁵³ Even so, it was not until 1937 that the MCP actually carried out the new Comintern policy.

One reason for this delay probably was that in 1935 and 1936 the MCP suffered a second internal schism. The crisis appeared to have been over party strategy: How far should the MCP pursue a militant line? The opposition group was said to have opposed the party's militant line. Hanrahan's account, which has so far been regarded as the most authoritative on the split, is now found to have given a wrong

⁵¹Ibrahim Yaacob, *Malaya Merdeka* (Jakarta: *Kesatuan Malaya Merdeka*, 1957), p. 20.

⁵²McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 207-14, summarizes the highlights of the Seventh Comintern Congress.

⁵³McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 237, 240.

interpretation of the event. Using an unpublished manuscript written in 1947 by a Singapore MCP leader, Wu Tien-wang, he had described the opposition group as "a group of extremists" who had "attempted to alter the party line in favour of a more militant, aggressive attack against the British." In fact, what is actually mentioned by Wu is the opposite. Wu's document, which has now been located and identified (Hanrahan had failed to detail where he obtained the manuscript),⁵⁴ in fact reveals that he had called the opponents "this spineless group," "leftist opportunists,"⁵⁵ and "sinister agents of reaction," who had "succumbed to the terroristic policy of imperialism." This last phrase meant that the opponents had been terrified and cowed by British coercive measures of police shootings, arrests, tortures, and banishments. Thus, far from being extremists or militants, they were being depicted as cowardly.

Hanrahan had apparently been led astray by terms which Wu had used to characterize the opponents' attitude towards the party. Wu also said they had described the party as "social democrats" and had attacked the "anti-imperialist united front policy." Wu's report was submitted to the British Empire Conference of Communist Parties in London in 1947, and it is certain he wanted to justify the party's position as being in accord with the correct ideological line. It is even possible there had been some *post ipso facto* rationalization over an event that had taken place nine years before. We need to remember that the opponents' crime was simply that they had dared to challenge the Central Committee's decisions. It seems clear from his report that what they had wanted was for the party to lie low, or go underground for a while, to avoid confrontations and stop making sacrifices of manpower in battles with the police, maybe to conserve party strength. These confrontations, as Wu had earlier admitted, had resulted in frequent detentions, banishments, and huge losses of lives of members and supporters. Such losses had given rise to suspicions of

⁵⁴I am grateful to John J. Coe of Darwin, Australia, for making available to me a copy of Wu Tien-wang's 25-page manuscript entitled "The Communist Party of Malaya, Wu Tien-Wang 1947." A typewritten duplicate was uncovered by his research assistant, Ms. Estelle Holt, at the Marx Memorial Library in London. Coe, who is the Curator of the Northern Territory Museum of Arts and Sciences in Darwin, is currently working on his PhD dissertation, "The Malayan Communist Party: A Study in History and Political Theory" at the University of New England, Australia. Wu's report, which devotes only four pages to the party's pre-1941 history, is concerned with giving a more detailed picture of the party's postwar struggles. The report was presented to the British Empire Conference of Communist Parties in London which Wu attended in February 1947 and during which the MCP's failure to include national independence in its postwar platform came in for severe criticism from foreign delegates. Hanrahan, in his *Communist Struggle*, p.237, cites the manuscript as follows: "Wu Tien-wang, The Communist Party of Malaya' (Unpublished manuscript, 1947?)," but fails to mention where it was located. However, as John Coe states in a communication to me, dated June 27, 1991, given that the passages quoted by Hanrahan correspond both in content and page numbers with the recovered document, they can be regarded as one and the same.

⁵⁵Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p.54, had latched on to this term to support his contention that the opponents were "extremists." According to him, "Left Opportunism, in Communist ideology, is a tendency to over-estimate the progress of the revolution and, therefore, to endanger its development. Left opportunists, for example, are often guilty of 'adventurism', i.e. of taking unnecessary risks; or of 'putschism', i.e. of initiating an armed uprising at a time when the circumstances are unfavourable to its success." However, Wu could merely have flown a canard by using what would have been regarded as an "offensive" term to his international Communist audience in order to make the group as discreditable as possible, but the charges he leveled against the opposition group are quite specific. The meaning is quite clear and is contrary to Hanrahan's reading of it, as will be shown below.

betrayals by "traitors" and agents in the party. Later on, this would be regarded as the period which saw the planting of Lai Tek, the British agent, in the party. It is ironical that Wu should be blaming the opponents as "sinister agents of reaction" when his own party boss in 1947, Lai Tek, whose virtues he had extolled in the same report, was a real agent; and he was oblivious to the fact. It seems incongruous, too, that the opponents could have called the Central Committee "social democrats" when that description seems more befitting the opponents themselves, unless it was simply a tactic to discredit the party leadership. Among Communists at that time "social democrats" were equated with "renegades" and "anti-Communists."

However, let us examine what Wu had said before he discussed the split, in order to clear up the confusion that had arisen in Hanrahan's mind. Wu had earlier traced the background of labor struggles waged by the party. According to him, 1936 was the year when the labor movement of Malaya had reached "new heights." Truly, as the Special Branch Report for 1936 admits, the country had witnessed an unprecedented series of general strikes by various categories of workers (to be discussed later); some of these strikes were spontaneous, in common with the rest of the world due to the world-wide economic recovery, and the Communist Party, seizing this great opportunity, had organized the rest. "Sensing that the party was at the head of the great strike movement," Wu said, "British imperialism had resolved to crush the party and the core of militant workers." Hundreds of labor leaders and members were "thus arrested, tortured and imprisoned." So far it is clear that the people who were leading a militant line were the party leaders, not the opposition group. Wu then goes on:⁶

But, unfortunately, on the one hand, a small section of our Party's rank and file succumbed to the terroristic policy of imperialism. This spineless group later formed themselves into the opposition faction within the Party. They audaciously and brazenly demanded termination of strikes and breaking-up of militant workers into small underground groups. They vehemently opposed the organisation of the labour masses on a semi-open basis. They advocated the policy of educating the militant workers secretly and striving for the establishment of Soviet power. They denounced the anti-imperialist united front policy of the Party, and labelled it the political line of the "Social democrats." Furthermore, these leftist opportunists openly opposed the Party, organised disruptive groups within the Party, and made no pretence of their antagonistic attitude towards the Central Committee. In short, by obstructing the role of leadership played by our Party in the anti-imperialist struggle, and by disrupting the political unity within the Party, they were in fact sinister agents of reaction within the Party. Thus, the Party was confronted with its most serious crisis.

One more problem that needs to be resolved is: did the party split occur in 1935 or in 1936? *Nan dao zhi chun* states that the "opposition faction made its appearance again in the party in 1935" (see *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4). However, the Special Branch report for 1936 says it occurred in 1936; its report for 1935 makes no mention of any split. According to Wu Tien-wang's 1947 account, the split occurred in 1936.⁷ The

⁶Wu Tien-wang, "The Communist Party of Malaya, 1947" (Report Presented to the British Empire Conference of Communist Parties, London, 1947). Marx Memorial Library, London.

⁷*Ibid.*, p.3.

truth may be that the split had started at the end of 1935. The Special Branch report for 1936 attributes the party crisis to a series of assassinations within the MCP during 1936, allegedly caused by suspicion of opposition betrayals that had led to the arrests in quick succession in December 1935 and March 1936 of two party chairmen. The arrests led to a belief in the party that certain members, who were known to be dissatisfied with the lukewarm manner in which Communist activities were being conducted, had set up an opposition that was betraying the Central Committee to the police.⁵⁸ In May, at a meeting held in Johore, it was decided to murder certain suspected traitors. Three of these suspected persons were lured to Johore and were murdered there. Two bodies were recovered by the police. The crisis then continued up to the party representatives' conference in September 1936. This conference adopted resolutions for launching large-scale strikes throughout the country. Criticisms of the strikes could finally have led to what Wu had described as the party's "most serious crisis."

A purge was accordingly launched in 1936, and the opposition faction was eliminated. Lai Tek, a Comintern agent, was reportedly sent to Malaya to settle the crisis. This was resolved at a conference of the Fifth Enlarged Central Executive held in Muar, September 1-8, 1936. The fourteen representatives from Singapore, Johor, Penang, and Selangor who attended the meeting adopted a policy on September 3 entitled "To struggle for the establishment, consolidation and expansion of the Anti-Imperialist United Front." In short, the meeting officially endorsed the "Vocational United Front" policy instructed by Earl Browder. In brief, this advice was to the effect that "the Communist Party should extend their field of activities, and expand their recruiting ground by obtaining the sympathy of the working classes of *all nationalities* in Malaya" (see police CIB document "MCP and Labor Unrest," document no. 18, pt. 1).

Participants in the meeting also decided to step up "proletarian" cultural activities among the Chinese intelligentsia, especially among schoolteachers and students. This was a legacy of the period of Communist influence over the Kuomintang government in southwest China from 1924 to 1927 and of the "proletarian literature movement" in the early 1930s when Communist books, pamphlets, and plays that had been produced in great quantities had left their mark on Chinese schools, the press, and literature generally. One of the cultural reforms advocated during this movement was the romanization of the Chinese script to promote mass literacy.⁵⁹ Finally, the meeting approved a policy on the propagation of communism among races other than Chinese. A Malayan Racial Emancipation League was started in October under the control of a committee of Chinese, Indian, and Malay comrades, but the Special Branch reported that their efforts met with little success (see Special Branch Report for 1936, pt. 2).

Most accounts of the MCP's history hardly mention this meeting, probably because the writers were unaware that it had taken place. Its omission may have been deliberately fostered by the MCP's official history, written under the leadership of Lai Tek, because the meeting coincided with the party purge and marked his entry into the party. This speculation is based on the fact that the MCP's official prewar his-

⁵⁸ See Special Branch Report for 1936, pt. 2. Some of these details are also found in the Special Branch document, "Basic Paper on the Malayan Communist Party" cited in McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 139.

⁵⁹ The romanized Chinese script is now used in the People's Republic of China.

tory, *Nan dao zhi chun*, is content to mention only in passing the "resolutions of the Enlarged Session of the Fifth Central Executive Committee Meeting of the Malayan Communist Party." It does not specify what the resolutions were or mention the date when the session was held or present any discussion of its deliberations, as is usually done in *Nan dao zhi chun* for all such enlarged party conferences. Consequently, it has influenced the chronology of key MCP resolutions as listed in the US State Department paper (found in pt. 3), the details of which had been obtained from the Malayan Special Branch. The US State Department paper also briefly states, "The Fifth Executive Expansion Committee Meeting made plans for organizing large-scale strikes." Its list follows quite closely the chronology as found in *Nan dao zhi chun*, and writers using Special Branch files have undoubtedly been influenced by it. On the other hand, the Special Branch papers (such as its Annual Report for 1936) do contain the decisions of this meeting, but, apparently owing to an oversight, the Special Branch had not recorded it in the chronology of key resolutions of the MCP that was passed on to US intelligence. *Nan dao zhi chun* refers indirectly to this meeting, which it is keen to show produced resolutions that led to "large-scale general strikes" and endorsed the supremacy of the Central Committee over the opposition faction, which it described as "anti-workers" as well:

The opposition faction made its appearance again in the party in 1935. Contravening the party's resolutions and betraying the interests of the working class, they appealed to a group of young Communist Party members and persuaded them to oppose the Malayan Communist Party. They attempted to assist the enemies to sabotage the Malayan Communist Party and indefinitely subordinate the workers and the laboring masses of Malaya to British imperialists and the bourgeoisie. This was the most critical challenge since the foundation of the Malayan Communist Party. But the Central Committee and party organizations of all levels and the entire membership did not abandon their noble mission of striving for the eventual liberation of all communities and peoples of Malaya. On the contrary, they actively and persistently upheld their Bolshevik fighting spirit and carried out the resolutions of the Enlarged Session of the Fifth Central Executive Committee Meeting of the Malayan Communist Party. They stood by the Malayan workers and toiling masses to protect their interests and organized and led the former in large-scale general strikes in reply to the hideous attacks of the British imperialist-bourgeoisie. This seriously curbed the anti-party activities of the opposition faction. As a result, the faction was eliminated. The party was saved and its organizational foundation remained intact.

THE EMERGENCE OF LAI TEK

This party crisis had, in fact, led the CCP in Yenan and the Comintern in Hong Kong to send trained cadres to Malaya to help the MCP leadership resolve the crisis. According to a Japanese military source,⁶⁰ a troubleshooter named Lai Tek, the Comintern liaison chief in Hong Kong, was ordered to visit Malaya to deal with the internal rift. Wu Tien-wang records that "Comrade Wright" (alias Lai Tek) directed the major portion of the purge, restoring "the ideological unity within the party" and

⁶⁰sutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron*, p. 152, see also McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 241.

LAI TEK

(Alias Comrade Wright, alias Chang Hung, alias
Wong Kim Geok and twenty other aliases.)

Lai Tek became Secretary-General of the Malayan Communist Party in 1938 and held this office until he was unmasked in 1947 as a British Special Branch agent. After hiding himself in Singapore for several months he then disappeared with most of the party's funds to Hong Kong and then to Thailand, where he is believed to have been tracked down by an MCP squad and killed. His death, however, was never officially confirmed. The recent release of his picture by the Singapore Special Branch to the mass media is significant because it means that the former Special Branch agent is in fact dead.

wiping out "the last remnants of incorrect inclinations." Lai Tek then "emerged the beloved leader of the party."⁶¹

However, according to a Special Branch source (see the Special Branch document, Report for the Year 1934, pt. 2), a Cantonese agent of the Third International had arrived in Singapore in 1934. He was subsequently identified on paper as one "D. Ling," who had been in touch with the Headquarters of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers in Amsterdam and, supposedly, with the Comintern apparatus in Shanghai. He was described as

an international Communist of evidently high attainments and was the driving force behind the movement in Malaya during the year 1934. He remained very much "underground" and his personal identity was known to not more than three of the members of Malayan "Central" of whom only one was in personal contact with him. He knows German, French and Chinese besides some English. His mission in Malaya appears to have been to give effect at least on paper, to the "Resolutions" of the XHth Plenum of the Executive Committee of Communist International (E.C.C.I.) held in Moscow in December 1932, and conveyed to Malayan "Central" in the Instructional letter (in Chinese) dated 23rd May 1933,⁶² a copy of which was obtained by the Special Branch in August, 1933 (Police Journal, Page 60 of 1933). The identity of D. Ling was established on paper on 5th October, 1934, but no opportunity presented itself to arrest him, a difficult and delicate matter. He left Singapore for Java about 15th October, 1934 by means and by a route at present unknown. He is expected to return to Malaya in 1935.

Who was this mysterious "D. Ling?" Was he Lai Tek? Police raids in June 1934 uncovered a typewritten document of the Federated Malay States (FMS) railway strike of April-May 1934 by "D. Ling" in German, evidently intended for Shanghai or Europe. No more was heard of him in the subsequent annual reports of the Special Branch for 1935 and 1936.

It is now known from Malayan government sources that Lai Tek was a police informant passed on to the British Special Branch from the French *Surete* in Saigon, either in 1934 or 1935. He worked his way into the upper levels of the party hierarchy during the crisis of 1935-1936.⁶³ Lai Tek appeared to have impressed everyone in the party with his alleged Comintern credentials and his great organizing ability. He was said to have resolved the party crisis during an intensive six-month "offensive against the opportunists".⁶⁴

⁶¹ Wu Tien-wang, "The Communist Party of Malaya," p. 3.

⁶² This was the letter from the China Communist Party that was discussed above under the heading "PKI and CCP Activities, 1924-1933".

⁶³ The Special Branch document, "Basic Paper on the Malayan Communist Party"⁷¹ cited in McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 241. McLane notes that sources differ on the date of the arrival. Lai Tek himself claims (in an interrogation with the Malayan Police, March 16, 1947) to have joined the MCP in 1934. An official MCP document entitled "Statement of the Incident of Wright (alias Lai Tek)," issued following Lai Tek's removal in 1947, dates his entry into the party in "late 1934 or 1935." It is most probable that the date of his arrival was sometime in 1934, soon after the first internal crisis. Surprisingly, *Nan dao zhi chun*, written at the time he was leader, does not refer to his date of arrival or to him at all.

⁷¹ Wu Tien-wang, "Communist Party of Malaya," p. 3.

In order to safeguard its correct line of national liberation, the Party unhesitatingly launched an offensive against the opportunists. Within six months, the true colour of the opportunists was exposed in its entirety. In the course of the anti-oppositionist struggle emerged the beloved leader of our Party, Comrade Wright. In the nick of time, Comrade Wright managed to restore ideological unity within the Party and successfully wiped out the last remnants of incorrect inclinations. In accordance with Comrade Wright's correct directions our Party unanimously reiterated its firm resolution on the advocacy of the anti-imperialist united front. At the sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee [this was held in 1938], Comrade Wright was unanimously proclaimed and acknowledged as the undisputed leader of our Party. The Central Committee of our Party rallied around Comrade Wright with unprecedented unanimity.

It is this writer's contention that Lai Tek acted as the shadow of Nguyen Ai Quoc, a role urged on him by the British police, to fill in the Comintern gap following Nguyen Ai Quoc's arrest in Hong Kong in 1932. A recent British account, clearly based on secret intelligence reports, has given rise to this contention, borne out by the fact that both Ho Chi Minh and Lai Tek were Vietnamese, and the British could have ingeniously used the latter to pose as the former's aide.⁶⁵

Although it was not known at the time, Chang Hung (who went under ten other names, including Lai Tek, and Mr. Wright) was hedging his bets by acting for the Japanese. A Chinese with Annamite blood, he came to Singapore in 1933 from French Indo-China where he had been acting as an informer, to work in the same capacity for the Malayan authorities. He joined the communist Seamen's Association and, helped by a claim of Ho Chi Minh's friendship and support, became Secretary General of the MCP. He was arrested by the Japanese soon after they arrived in Singapore and released on condition that he worked for them.

THE MCP AND LABOR UNREST: 1936-1937

Lai Tek's emergence into prominence was facilitated by the outbreak of Chinese labor unrest in rubber estates, mining, and other industries in the states of Selangor, Singapore, southern Johor, and Negri Sembilan between September 1936 and March 1937. The party had decided to implement its resolutions adopted at the conference

⁶⁵See Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (London:Oxford University Press, 1983), p.196. SOE, or Special Operations Executive, was a wartime clandestine intelligence agency whose US counterpart was the OSS, or Office of Strategic Services. Cruickshank had access to SOE records in London for information on its wartime operations in Southeast Asia, including Malaya. During the war SOE agents were sent by submarine for a rendezvous at a jungle hideout in Perak state. They held negotiations with Lai Tek, who used the alias Chang Hung, to arrange for the assistance of the MCP's guerrillas against the Japanese. Throughout the Japanese occupation of Malaya, the SOE agents did not know that they were dealing with their former agent, as he used various disguises. In addition, the SOE agents did not include his former Special Branch bosses who could have identified him. Although one of them, Spencer Chapman, claimed to have met him once before the war, Lai Tek had attended their meeting wearing dark glasses. But the truth came out not long after the British return to Malaya. For a more detailed account of this master spy's wartime activities, see Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, pp. 82-100.

of the Fifth Enlarged Central Executive Committee in September 1936. The party felt it necessary to exploit widespread labor grievances among Chinese workers engaged in the Chinese contract labor system, and also over low wages paid by European and Chinese estate and mine managements. Malaya had recovered from the depression and with tin and rubber prices rising, Chinese workers themselves were striking and making their own demands on employers.

In pursuing Browder's advice, the MCP had succeeded during the years 1935 and 1936 in establishing cells in all the Klang and Batu Laut factories (rubber and pineapple) and at Malayan Collieries in Batu Arang, all located in the state of Selangor. The time was ripe for the party to pursue the policy for which their work during the previous two years had been mere preparation. Special Branch agents discovered that to prepare for battle at the picket lines, the September conference had decided to change the organization of the party so that the Malayan General Labour Union, which was affiliated to the party, would have its headquarters at Kuala Lumpur instead of at Singapore and that the headquarters of a Northern Communist Party should also be at Kuala Lumpur and should be capable of action independent of Singapore.

It was decided that fifty strikes, which had been organized throughout Malaya, should proceed during the succeeding three months and that money should be raised for the party by robberies, smuggling, lotteries, and extortion. Some of these plans were put into operation, and in December 1936, the party reorganization, decided upon at the Representative Conference in September, was put into effect. Kuala Lumpur became the headquarters of the General Labour Union and the Northern Communist Party (see memorandum of the director, Criminal Intelligence Bureau, Kuala Lumpur, undated, probably April 1937, in pt. 1). The Special Branch Report for 1936 (pt.2) also observed: "A wave of strikes swept over Malaya in common with the rest of the world during the latter half of 1936, and the local Communist party did not lose the opportunity to exploit the situation." Elsewhere the report also added: "It is probable that, had there been no communism in Malaya, strikes for increased wages would still have taken place on the return of prosperity to the country."

Document no. 18 (pt. 1), "MCP and Labor Unrest," is an unclassified file on the 1936-1937 strikes in Selangor in the Selangor Secretariat records at the Malaysian National Archives, which is still open to researchers. It has several police reports that provide interesting details on Communists arrested during the strikes and banished to China.⁶⁶ Those identified were Central Committee members of the MCP: Lee, chairman of North Central command, who expounded Communist doctrines "whenever opportunities offered"; Chiu Tong, another Central Committee member, who, like Lee, appeared very knowledgeable; his right-hand man Chan Han, a twenty-eight-year-old, five-foot-two Hainanese with a white, round face, who was said to have had a secondary education; Pang Sow Lin, a skillful agitator, of whom a

⁶⁶Dr. Yeo Kim Wah of the History Department, National University of Singapore, was the first scholar to use this source. See his excellent article, "Communist Involvement in the Malayan Labour Strikes." The article attempts to disprove earlier studies that Communists played scarcely any role in these Malayan strikes. For earlier studies, see J. N. Parmer, "Chinese Estate Workers' Strike in Malaya in March 1937," in *The Economic Development of Southeast Asia*, ed. C. D. Cowan (London: Praeger, 1964), and J. N. Parmer, "Attempts at Labour Organization by Chinese Workers in Certain Industries in Singapore in the 1930's," in *Papers on Malayan History*, ed. K. G. Tregonning (Singapore: *Journal of South-East Asian History*, 1962); and also M. R. Stenson, *Industrial Conflict in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970).

factory owner complained, "If Pang Sow Lin is at the factory today, there is trouble tomorrow." After the police had cracked down on the estate strikers, Special Branch agents observed that Pang turned up in certain furniture factories in Kuala Lumpur where parting "his hair in a different way" and tipping some of his teeth with gold to disguise his identity, he continued to incite workers to put down their tools and fight capitalist exploitation. He was arrested in April 1937. Finally, there was Lee Sui, the self-possessed thirty-year-old Hakka of the Kajang strike committee who spoke "a bit of Malay" and was described as "beyond any doubt whatsoever a very clever leader, agitator and member of the Communist Party." On the whole, however, Dr. Yeo Kim Wah's assessment of these leaders was that they were "not theoreticians or thinkers" but, as the colonial authorities conceded, "skilful and audacious organizers and agitators both in their strategy and tactics alike."⁶⁷

The strike movement was, however, partially successful. Workers in many estates and industries obtained wage increases and better working conditions, but the Communist successes would have been greater had the British authorities not taken immediate countermeasures to break up the strikes and to isolate labor from Communist agitators, many of whom were arrested and banished. The most spectacular strike was that at the Batu Arang coal mines in Selangor from March 24-27, 1937, when a "Soviet" was established by the Communist-led workers. A British document said that during this period the Malayan Collieries mine was an *imperium in imperio*, as colonial governmental authority inside had completely collapsed and was only restored on March 26 when 200 policemen, with two companies of the Malay regiment on the standby, invaded the mine site at 3:30 A.M. on a dark night. At dawn, 116 persons were detained, and the essential Collieries services immediately resumed.

Based on his detailed study of these strikes, Dr. Yeo Kim Wah concluded that the concessions wrested by workers during the strikes enhanced Communist prestige and influence among Chinese labor and drove home to labor the power of the strike weapon. He also observed:

In fact the March [1937] strike marks the beginning of really deep Communist penetration among Chinese workers, a development sharply accelerated by Communist involvement in the [China] National Salvation Movement after July 1937. Through this movement, the MCP succeeded in organizing a growing number of trade unions among Chinese workers, ostensibly for the collection of financial and other contributions for China's resistance against Japan. By December 1941 Malayan Communists had, in fact, succeeded in blending the economic gains of labor with their doctrine of revolution.⁶⁸

Lai Tek was said to have played a prominent role in the formation of strike committees. His claim to leadership was subsequently to rest on his great organizing ability. At the MCP's Sixth Enlarged Plenum in April 1938 he was elected secretary-general.

MCP AND CHINESE NATIONALISM: THE CHINA SALVATION MOVEMENT: 1937-1941

In October 1936, CCP cadres had reportedly arrived in Malaya to urge the MCP to step up its anti-Japanese campaign. Anti-Japanese organizations under a central

⁶⁷Yeo Kim Wah, "Communist Involvement," p. 57.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 79.

organization known as the Anti-Enemy Backing-Up Society (AEBUS) had emerged in Malaya after the Japanese armed invasion of Manchuria in 1931, but their activities had been curtailed by strong police action as the Communists used them for anti-imperialist agitation against the British. Following the CCP directive, some efforts were made to revive these anti-Japanese organizations, but they did not make much headway until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1937. These efforts were facilitated by the KMT-CCP united front pact against Japan. In Malaya, this pact led to the formation of the Chinese National Salvation movement (see document "Review of Communist Activities in Malaya," 1936, pt. 2). The MCP aligned itself with the KMT and various Chinese associations to organize boycotts of Japanese goods and businesses and to raise donations and relief aid for China. This movement subsequently fell under MCP domination and caused the Malayan KMT to break away in July 1938. The KMT opposed the MCP's aim of turning the anti-Japanese movement into an anti-imperialist and anti-British movement as well.⁶⁹

Predominantly Chinese in membership, the MCP's stand on the National Salvation Movement betrayed a strong bias toward Chinese patriotism. It exploited these sentiments to the full to mobilize the "Overseas Chinese" (*Hua Ch'iao*) to support its anti-imperialist cause. The MCP, therefore, competed with the KMT for the support of the Overseas Chinese and in showing its patriotism toward China. An example of such a display of Chinese patriotic sentiment is found in a left-wing statement published in a leading Chinese newspaper in Singapore in 1938 aimed at explaining its struggle to the Chinese and the KMT:

The fact is that we have only one aim, and our attitude is the same as that aim: to consolidate and expand the *Malayan Chinese* national salvation united front and also utilise all kinds of methods, so that every bit of *Overseas Chinese* strength can be used for remitting funds back to China for anti-enemy backing-up work, so that *our nation* will be able to attain early independence and liberation, and so that we will not become slaves in a vanquished nation. Our goal is sacred, our attitude pure and bright.⁷⁰

The expression "our nation" clearly refers to China and contradicts the MCP's professed loyalty toward Malaya. Although the MCP seemed to be distinguishing between the "Malayan Chinese" (*Ma Hua*), apparently those born in Malaya and intending to reside permanently in Malaya, and the "Overseas Chinese" (*Hua Ch'iao*), those who were ardent nationals of China and who intended to return home after a brief sojourn in Malaya, it was, nevertheless, encouraging the Malayan Chinese to show some patriotic sentiment and duty to China. The MCP's inability to distinguish clearly between separate loyalties to China and to Malaya became increasingly evident throughout its involvement in the Chinese National Salvation Movement from 1937 to the Japanese invasion of Malaya in December 1941.

Probably because of its successful appeals to the Chinese, the MCP's strength increased during the anti-Japanese campaign. According to British records, its sup-

⁶⁹Stephen Leong, "The Kuomintang-Communist United Front in Malaya during the National Salvation Period, 1937-1941," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 8, (1) (March 1977): 31-47.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 40. Emphasis added. It should be pointed out that although the statement did not appear in the name of the MCP, the signatories were all known leftists or MCP members in the AEBUS.

porters more than quadrupled from 1934 to 1940 to an overall total, including Communist-affiliated organizations, of more than fifty thousand. Membership for the same period in the MCP proper, however, remained constantly around fifteen hundred to seventeen hundred owing to the party's own stringent restrictions.⁷¹ The MCP was still overwhelmingly Chinese. The ratio of Chinese to Malays in Communist-front organizations during 1930-1935 was said to have been approximately 15:1 and as high as 50:1 in the party itself,⁷² and although no figures are available for the remaining period of 1935-1941, the same picture probably existed. These figures indicate that the shift in the control of the MCP's affairs from CCP to Comintern leadership had no real effect in pan-racial terms. A large percentage of the Chinese members probably still retained an allegiance to the CCP. The scanty evidence available suggests that most of the MCP's Central Committee during this period were CCP members. Fu Ta Ching, who was arrested with Comintern agent Ducroix in 1931, was an official of both the Southern China Bureau of the CCP and the MCP.⁷³ In addition to the CCP agents of the Comintern Bureau there was a continuous flow of CCP members to Malaya. The bloody massacre that the Chinese Nationalists carried out against the CCP in Canton in 1927 forced large numbers of Cantonese Communists to flee to Malaya, bolstering the ranks of the MCP.⁷⁴ Later, CCP veterans of the Chinese Eighth Route Army in Yen-an⁷⁵ arrived in Malaya to assist the MCP in its anti-Japanese campaign. Some remained in Malaya throughout the Japanese occupation to train MCP recruits of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) in guerrilla warfare.

The gains in membership achieved by the Communists among the Chinese during the anti-Japanese campaign, therefore, appeared to have had an opposite effect among Malays and Indians. The MCP's call to Malays and Indians to join in the "anti-Japanese Fascist" struggle failed to get any response.⁷⁶ Disappointed, the MCP's CEC reviewed its strategy in July 1938 and decided to revert to its former strategy of stressing the Sino-Japanese conflict, using the Chinese as its main pillar of support.⁷⁷ It decided to establish an anti-Japanese united front among the Chinese by adopting the following measures (see the document, app. C, "Policy Decisions of the Fourth Executive Committee" in July 1938, pt. 3):

⁷¹McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 244, cites a Soviet source.

⁷²Ibid., p. 303.

⁷³Tsutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron*, pp. 146-47; also cited in Hanrahan, *Communist Struggle*, p. 41. Onraet, *Singapore*, p. 113, claims that of the two MCP officials arrested with Ducroix, one was "a China banishee and an old friend whom I had arrested just three years previously in the Communist Party bomb factory at Balestier Road, Singapore." He was Fu Ta Ching.

⁷⁴Tsutsui, *Nampo gunsei-ron*, p. 146.

⁷⁵U.S. Department of State, "The Role of the Communists in Malaya," OIR report no. 3789, March 16, 1947. It relies mainly on Malayan Police, Special Branch records.

⁷⁶This lack of response was most noticeable in the labor field. See Stephen Leong, "Sources, Agencies and Manifestations of Overseas Chinese Nationalism in Malaya, 1937-1941," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1976), pt. 2, pp. 482-86, 499-500.

⁷⁷Ibid.

For the purpose of extending and strengthening the common anti-Japanese front, problems pertaining to Labour-Capitalist relations should be placed below the priorities of the anti-Japanese struggle. Disputes should be settled placing the anti-Japanese object above everything. At the same time, to safeguard against the attack of British imperialists on the party, retaliatory measures such as strikes, etc. should be planned.⁷⁸

The party also adopted a resolution urging "British imperialism to go on the peaceful front, and at least refrain from assisting the Fascists."⁷⁹ The resolution was evidently aimed at helping the Soviet Union and not at setting any preconditions for cooperation between the MCP and the British authorities. The party, however, pledged that if the Japanese attacked Malaya, its stand would be to protect and assist. As a result of the July 1938 policy revision, the AEBUS activities escalated during late 1939 to the point where the AEBUS was reported to have gained thirty thousand members.⁸⁰

The MCP realized that the other races could not be expected to share the same enthusiasm as the Chinese in their support for China against Japan. An attempt was accordingly made at a meeting of the MCP's Central Committee in April 1939 to correct this situation by launching an "All-Races" united front against fascism and "to fight for a democratic system, safeguard peace and take action against the Japanese-Italian-German fascist bloc"⁸¹ (See document in pt. 3, "10-Point Directive Issued by the Sixth Central Expansion Council in April 1939.") In other words, the "anti-Fascist" united front was to be an extension of the MCP's anti-Japanese campaign to the other races. The meeting adopted a ten-point "democratic" program demanding an elected parliament and state councils, civil liberties, equality for women, free education, and the release of political detainees. It also called for the support and defense of China and the Soviet Union, for Indian independence as well as support for the Spanish people in "defeating the rebellious troops of Franco."⁸² The ten points in the program, to each of which was added five or eight more detailed demands, were aimed clearly at making them unacceptable to the British but were sufficiently wide to accommodate the interests "of all races of Malaya irrespective of party, class, creed or religion."⁸³

THE MCP DILEMMA

The MCP's "United Front" program throws light on the dilemma in which the party was beginning to find itself. The strategy of the anti-Japanese struggle had now been added to the MCP's anti-British imperialist struggle. The Comintern's new line in 1935 had not ruled out cooperation with British imperialism if the MCP thought it necessary. However, the MCP had decided to continue with its anti-British imperial-

⁷⁸U.S. Government, "The Role of the Communists in Malaya," app. C, "Policy Decisions of the Fourth Executive Committee Meeting of the MCP in July 1939," 119 (see document in pt. 3).

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Leong, "Sources, Agencies and Manifestations," p. 500.

⁸¹See *Nan dao zhi chun* (document in pt. 4). McLane, also refers to the date of the Sixth Plenum as "April 1939." Cf. McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, pp. 240-41. His date is based on the MCP document, "History of the Malayan Communist Party" found in the Malayan government record.

⁸²See *Nan dao zhi chun*. McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 241, cites almost identical details.

⁸³See *Nan dao zhi chun*.

1st strategy because it considered its party strength was inadequate and the "British imperialists" themselves were not ready for cooperation:

In Malaya at present, on account of intensified British exploitation, the national bourgeoisie are increasingly going into bankruptcy and the people's livelihood made difficult. On the one hand, there is an upsurge of anti-British struggle and on the other rising anti-Japanese Fascist feelings owing to the people's fear of a threat of Japanese invasion. But the British are hesitant and wavering in building up the defence of Malaya.

The United Front under the leadership of the Party is still not strong enough to talk of cooperating with the British because of the disparity of strength between the British and the Party. The British still rely on their own powers instead of the strength of the people. At this moment, we must concentrate ourselves on uniting all races under the principle of national unity. We must use democracy as a weapon in order to organise the disorganised masses.⁸⁴

The above arguments suggest that the MCP had not yet established sufficient support among Malays and Indians or created a sound basis for the national liberation movement in Malaya's plural society. Hence, the need for building up "national unity" first. The MCP further admitted that, during the 1930-1938 period, although its anti-imperialist struggles had continued to develop, and the number of strikes had increased, including civil servants pressing demands to raise living standards, "our mass organizations and politics have not reached the stage strong enough to overthrow British imperialism."⁸⁵

In adopting the "All Communities United Front Against Fascism" the MCP was hoping to benefit from the decision of the Comintern's Seventh Congress in 1935 that, according to the MCP, had declared that the most urgent task of Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonies was to establish an anti-imperialist front. For this purpose, they should absorb as many as possible of the masses into the national liberation movement. They should be mobilized not just against imperialist exploitation and oppression but in actual participation in nationalist and reformist-led movements.⁶ Thus, the anti-British imperialist struggle was permissible within a broad united front and could be conducted simultaneously with the anti-Japanese fascist struggle. But the MCP was aware that the anti-Japanese fascist struggle had a greater appeal to the Chinese in Malaya than to the other races, and, therefore, it hoped that it could establish the widest "united front" possible to include the other races on the basis of "fighting for democratic rights."

With the United Front program the MCP appears not to have altered its anti-British position by the time the Soviet-Nazi Pact was signed in August 1939. The pact allowed them, with full approval of the Comintern, to continue with their anti-British policies. Following the pact and the outbreak of the war in Europe, Communist-led work stoppages at the British naval base and in other areas escalated. This escalation was part of an anti-war movement "to smash the general offensive launched by

***Nan dao zhi chun*. For a brief resume, see also McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 242.

⁸⁵*Nan dao zhi chun*.

⁸⁶*Ibid*.

British imperialism."⁸⁷ Simultaneously, the AEBUS activities were stepped up in order to draw the British authorities into an appearance of hostility towards the National (Chungking) Government of China (see documents no. 18 and 19 in pt. 1).

Spurred by the successes of the strike movement and the AEBUS activities, between November 1939 and January 1940, the MCP's CEC at its Sixth Enlarged Plenum adopted a shorter ten-point "All-Races Democratic United Front" program that was almost identical to its April 1939 ten-point program except that it was shorn of all the subsections that were now considered "out of date."⁸⁸ The MCP, in fact, had decided to put its struggle back on a pan-racial basis. In the hope that Malays and Indians would support it, the party reiterated its demands for democratic rights. The party elaborated on its policies. Under the "All-Races United Front" (now called the "Anti-Imperialist Racial United Front"), Chinese in Malaya were told that they should still consider their main task "to assist the Motherland" (i.e., China); Malays should "carry on the Racial Independence Movement"; and Indians should struggle for the independence of India from British imperialism. In addition, each of these races should also consider participating in the anti-British imperialist and anti-Japanese struggles in Malaya, so that they could coordinate their struggles within the main struggle for "national independence" against the British imperialists.⁸⁹

THE "BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC" REVOLUTION

The February 1940 United Front program of the Sixth Enlarged Plenum was also significant for its description of the MCP's phase of struggle as the "bourgeois-democratic revolution."⁹⁰ The features of this struggle were anti-imperialism and agitation for democratic rights under a broad alliance of workers, peasants, "progressive intellectuals," and the "national bourgeoisie" including the "national capitalists,"⁹¹ the whole coalition coming under the control of the proletariat and the Communist party. The MCP's ten-point "democratic" program was aimed at creating better conditions for the MCP to operate in. The program implied that the MCP desired self-government for Malaya (by its demands for voting rights and elected legislatures). The aim of a "Workers and Peasants Soviet Republic" adopted in its 1932 program had been downgraded, as had other revolutionary aspects of that program—the removal of the Malay rajas and sultans, nationalization of foreign banking enterprises, and the confiscation and redistribution of the lands of rajas and capitalists to the farmers and workers. Apparently, the MCP considered the 1932 demands too advanced, or perhaps these demands had lost their exponents in the party's factional

⁸⁷Ibid.; McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 242.

⁸⁸Mm *dao zhi chun*. It is the only document to contain those resolutions.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid. It is the only known source to mention this.

⁹¹The CCP's strategy was to regard "national capitalists" in a colonial society as an "oppressed group" because it was thought they suffered from discriminatory policies practiced by the colonial administration, who favored the capitalists of their own nationality. Mao Tse-tung's "New Democracy," drafted in 1939 and adopted as CCP policy, spelled out the guidelines of the "bourgeois-democratic revolution" within the "New Democracy" phase of struggle. Mao makes space for the intelligentsia and the middle class in colonial society or semi-colonial society like those in China who "suffer and are oppressed by the colonial system" and possess together with the majority of the poor, the workers, and the peasants, that revolutionary dynamic, "at certain periods and to a certain degree" and could, therefore, act as allies of the working class and the petit bourgeoisie. See Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, (New York: International Publishers, 1954), 3: 72-101.

disputes of 1932 and 1935-1936. In any case, the MCP believed that the prerequisite "national unity" had to be established beforehand. It was hoped that the "All Communities United Front" against imperialism and fascism would bring this about.

Although "national independence" was now mentioned for the first time, it is apparent that the MCP had worked out a potentially hopeless formula, extremely confusing and ambiguous, involving a diversity of goals and a diffusion of energies. The MCP could not possibly link and coordinate these different strategies successfully. As far as priorities were concerned, it was not clear whether the anti-Japanese struggle was to supersede the anti-British imperialist struggle as both seemed to be running along parallel lines. Communists and workers involved in anti-Japanese strikes and demonstrations inevitably clashed with British police, which in turn escalated anti-British agitation.

THE MCP AND THE MA HUA (MALAYAN CHINESE)

Paying special attention to the Chinese, the MCP reiterated that it saw the Chinese in Malaya as consisting of two groups—the "Overseas Chinese" (*Hua ch'iao*) and the "Malayan Chinese" (*Ma Hua*).⁹² Because all classes of Overseas Chinese in Malaya had become increasingly involved in the anti-Japanese struggle and in the China National Salvation Movement, the party decided to give its full support to their struggles. On the other hand, the Malayan Chinese had not yet developed their anti-imperialist struggle against the British to a point where they and the other races could coordinate all their struggles to achieve the "high tide" of national liberation in Malaya. *Nan dao zhi chun* states: "If the Malayan Chinese [Ma Hua] could develop correctly, they would also be anti-imperialist in nature. As the Malayan Chinese were not directing their principal struggle against British imperialism they could not therefore be the leading force of the Malayan Anti-Imperialist United Front." Until each of the races in Malaya stepped up its anti-imperialist struggle, it thereby argued, the fight for national independence could not become the principal struggle. Meanwhile, the party considered it necessary to involve the Malayan Chinese bourgeoisie in the anti-Japanese movement of the Overseas Chinese. For the party to achieve such support, Malayan Chinese workers were required to cease their strikes against the Malayan Chinese bourgeoisie. Strikes were to be carried out only against "traitor capitalists" (i.e., those who traded with the Japanese) and against British capitalists.⁹³

MCP AND COOPERATION WITH THE BRITISH

Some time in September 1940, the MCP is said to have received instructions from the CCP to call off all strikes and other anti-British agitation. The reason for this was reportedly a new agreement concluded between the CCP and the Kuomintang government (Chungking) in July 1940, which was ratified at Yen-an about mid-August.⁹⁴ Apparently the CCP undertook to suspend its anti-British and anti-

⁹²*Nan dao zhi chun* is the only source for this.

⁹³Ibid. (see the British intelligence documents 18 and 19 in pt. 1).

⁹⁴See S. W. Jones, Officer Administering the Government (acting Governor), Straits Settlements, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 27, 1940, in CO 273/666/50336. The reason given for this latest change of policy of the CCP was that Britain and the United States were now irrevocably on the side of China in her struggle against Japan. McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 243, suggests that the Chungking government was hoping that the ending of anti-British agitation might gain British intervention in the opening of the Burma Road for military

imperialist policy, a decision which was communicated to the MCP.⁹⁵ Although the MCP agreed not to offer opposition to any campaign initiated by the Chinese community in Malaya to aid Britain's war effort, such as the purchase of Imperial War Bonds, nor to continue anti-British strike agitation,⁹⁶ this undertaking apparently applied only to Singapore and not on the Malayan mainland.⁹⁷

Long before Britain became China's ally in the war in December 1941 the Communists had been conducting anti-Japanese agitation in Malaya, not only against the local Japanese but also against Chinese shopkeepers and firms dealing with Japanese. Consequently, they had come into conflict with the British authorities, whose policy was to ensure that British relations with Japan were not compromised. British action made it difficult for the MCP to reduce or call off its anti-British agitation. Furthermore, when its united front with the Malayan KMT broke up in 1938, the MCP had also resumed its activities against KMT elements that, according to one source, "occasionally reached the extreme of assassination."⁹⁸ These activities against the Japanese, the British, the Chinese shopkeepers, and the Chinese Nationalists continued to be repressed by the police, who were able to arrest many Communist leaders and to deport them to Chiang Kai-shek's China, where most of them were executed.

As far as the MCP's "Anti-imperialist Racial United Front" was concerned, the policy was a complete failure. Between March and May 1941 a series of strikes by some five thousand Indian estate workers broke out in the Klang area of Selangor.⁹⁹ But there was no evidence that they had come under the influence of the MCP. In fact, the Central Indian Association of Malaya, (CIAM)¹⁰⁰ was responsible for organizing the strikes. The strikes led to some improvements in wages and working conditions. In fact, the British authorities were surprised that the Communists were not behind the strikes. It was established that there was no connection between the CIAM

and economic aid to reach Chungking. (See British intelligence documents 18 and 19 in pt. 1 concerning CCP directives to the MCP to this effect.)

⁹⁵Ibid. Stephen Leong, however, argues that the MCP independently reached its decision to reduce or stop anti-British agitation, and not as a result of CCP directives as claimed by British intelligence. His whole argument rests on a theory that the MCP had few or no connections with the CCP. Cf. Stephen Leong, "Sources, Agencies and Manifestations," pp. 549-73.

⁹⁶*Nan dao zhi chun* states: "In order to attain a more conducive situation for the All Malayan Chinese National Salvation Movement, all anti-British activities should now stop. . . . As for the campaign to support England, we could adopt a neutral stand."

⁹⁷According to Edgar O'Ballance, *Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-60* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 32, "Lai Tek did not completely accept these instructions [which O'Ballance claims came from the Hong Kong branch of the CCP] or obey them too literally; but he did order some relaxation." If one bears in mind that he was a British police agent, Lai Tek was apparently prolonging anti-British agitation for his own self-interest to ensure that the British still had need of his services. O'Ballance was a British Army major who had access to some secret British official sources on Communist activities in Malaya.

⁹⁸Ibid.

"See R. Bagot, inspector-general of police, FMS, "Report on Strikes in Selangor," Kuala Lumpur, June 13, 1941, pt. 1, in CO 717/145/51574/1, pt. 1.

¹⁰⁰Ibid. The inspector-general of police describes the political views of the CIAM as "essentially those of the Indian Congress Party" and controlled by "a group of Malayalees [Indians originally from Kerala], of whom Raghavan of Penang, Neelakandha Aiyer of Kuala Lumpur and M. R. Menon of Singapore are the most prominent and who maintain touch with Congress leaders in India whose advice is occasionally sought."

and the MCP.¹⁰¹ However, three Indian labor leaders were arrested and banished to India for their part in the strikes. Clearly, by concentrating its political activities among Chinese, and neglecting not only Malay but Indian labor as well, the MCP had failed to organize an effective pan-racial united front.

THE MCP's SECRET STRATEGY: JULY 1941

The MCP's CEC adopted a more moderate line at its Seventh Enlarged Plenum held in Singapore in July 1941, one month after Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Britain was now aiding both the Soviet Union and China. The MCP now made overtures to the British for mutual cooperation against the rising threat of Japan. The MCP's offer was conditional on the British acceptance of its minimum demand that they should grant "democratic rights" to the people. In return, the party would suspend its slogan of "anti-British imperialism" and rally its forces behind the defense of Malaya. The MCP's official history explained this decision as follows:¹⁰²

We are under no illusion that the British government would understand that the most urgent demand of the people is for national liberation. We want the British government to accept the demands of the party and the people for liberty and fundamental democratic rights. The procurement of fundamental rights was the party's bridge [would come halfway] to accomplishing its task of national liberation. From the anti-Fascist standpoint, the party would not want to put forth the slogan of crushing British imperialism. Nevertheless, it would not hesitate to suggest that democracy must be practised so as to defeat the Fascists and to protect peace and order in Malaya

In its anti-Fascist struggle, the party must maintain its political and organizational independence, and be free to criticize the British government. . . . It was thus obvious that the party's policy on the Anti-Fascist United Front was a policy to uphold the supremacy of national interests. It was absolutely not a policy of unconditional cooperation with the British government to protect the wealth and properties of the British capitalists, or a policy content with begging narrow and factional democratic rights from the British government.

Secretly, however, the party advocated the strategic slogan, "Establish the Malayan Democratic Republic," which reflected the character of the party's "bourgeois democratic revolution."¹⁰³ The decision was to enable the MCP to maintain flexibility of action in case the British accepted its offer. This rationalization was spelled out carefully as follows:¹⁰⁴

The party's slogan, "To strive for the establishment of a Malayan Democratic Republic" was a strategic slogan of the party in its phase of bourgeois democratic revolution. Anti-imperialism and land reforms were the contents of that phase's strategic aims. The dictatorship of an All-Communities Revolutionary Alliance would be centred on the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and working class, but

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²*Nan dao zhi chun.*

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

led by the proletarian party. It would assume the form of a democratic republic. The party's strategic aim of this phase would be changed when and whence it was deemed necessary. If the party failed to alter its revolutionary strategy according to the requirements of circumstances, or to replace the obsolete slogans with new ones, it would then be unable to achieve the objectives of revolution.

The decision meant that the MCP was ready to take advantage of the opportunity to expel the British from Malaya whenever practicable. If Japan should invade Malaya, the Communists would continue to support an anti-Japanese front but only as a means of extending Communist influence. Such a secret decision was reported to have been known only to certain party leaders.¹⁰⁵ Whether the British knew of it at that time is not known, but the MCP's offer was repeatedly rejected until after Japanese forces had landed in Kota Bharu (northeastern peninsula, Malaya), when it was reluctantly accepted.

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF MALAYA: 1941-1945

The Japanese occupation period saw the extensive destruction of the party's organization in Singapore and Malaya. Repeated raids and large-scale arrests, imprisonments, and killings of party cadres and officials by the Japanese Kempeitai (military police) had caused Communist activities to cease completely in the towns and cities by April 1943. These successful Kempeitai actions were due largely to one man—Lai Tek, who was arrested by the Kempeitai in March 1942 and who, for personal gain and survival, collaborated with them as a police agent. Lai Tek frequently betrayed party leaders by gathering them at one meeting place, where they were either rounded up or killed by the Kempeitai while attempting to escape. The personality cult around his person was so well built up that even when his secret leaked out, the party refused to believe it.¹⁰⁶

The only intact organizational unit of the party was the resistance army, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). This unit was partly a British creation. Trained and armed by the British for behind-the-enemy-lines operations in the last few weeks before their colonial territory of Malaya fell into Japanese hands, the MPAJA was allowed by Lai Tek to develop into a major resistance movement. As the fortunes of war changed, Lai Tek knew that the Japanese would be defeated and he kept the MPAJA intact to assist the returning British army.

Given Lai Tek's prewar collaboration with the British and his wartime role as a Kempeitai agent, he did not set much store by many of the party's policies adopted in 1939, 1940, and even in 1943, wherein the party had declared its ultimate goal was "the Malayan Democratic Republic" (see document *Nan dao zhi chun*). In fact, when the war ended, Lai Tek had the party issue a statement that it would collaborate with the British and that its ultimate goal would have to be shelved further. The goal of a "Malayan Democratic Republic" had lost most of its revolutionary advocates in the purges and raids which Lai Tek had masterminded with the assistance of the Kempeitai. When Malaya returned to British rule, he resumed his collaborationist role once more with the British authorities until he was unmasked in 1947. However, Lai Tek fled into hiding before the party could take any action against him. He is be-

¹⁰⁵McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 243.

¹⁰⁶For a fuller account of Lai Tek's role as a Kempeitai agent, see Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*.

lieved to have gone to Hong Kong, with most of the party's funds, and then to Thailand, where a MCP killer squad finally tracked him down and killed him.¹⁰⁷ His death, however, has never been officially confirmed. The new leader of the MCP was Chin Peng, who stood for a revolutionary line. In June 1948, the party launched an unsuccessful armed rebellion against the British. The party's leaders and guerrillas eventually retreated to the jungle fastnesses at the Thai-Malaysian border where they remained until the party called off its armed struggle on November 30, 1989.

CONCLUSION

This documentary history of the MCP from the 1920s to 1945 illustrates its mixed parentage—Indonesian, Chinese, Comintern, and Vietnamese. Consequently, the MCP tended to take on an "international" rather than a "national" character. In membership, the MCP, which was predominantly Chinese, was also not representative of Malaya's multiracial society. After several unsuccessful Indonesian and Comintern efforts to cultivate a more "national" character by involving Malays and Indians, the MCP adopted an "opportunistic" line by drifting with the tide of Overseas Chinese nationalism as the easiest way to obtain mass support. Its policies in the late 1930s and 1940s regarded the "Overseas Chinese" (and not the "Malayan Chinese") as the leading force of its strategies. The MCP had become a paradox—an Overseas Chinese party oriented toward China and the CCP but trying to lead a Communist revolution in the multiracial society of Malaya. This probably explains why the activities of the Indonesian Communist agents had petered out and were heard of no more during the period 1937-1941, after their attempts to form a Communist Party of the Malays had also failed. Not even the intervention of the Japanese occupation arrested the MCP's outward Chinese orientation. It was worsened by the fact that the MCP's organizational network had been virtually shattered by the collaborative role of its leader, Lai Tek, as a police agent, who was not unmasked until 1947. After the war, the party had to rebuild itself and did seriously make attempts to recruit Malays and Indians. But the "Malayanization" of the party did not become a priority until 1946, and the process was not even completed when it began its armed rebellion in 1948.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷This was confirmed by the MCP's Malay Central Committee members Rasyid Mahidin and Abdullah C. D. at a press conference after the party had announced an end to its armed struggle. *The New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), December 9, 1989.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.* *The New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), December 9, 1989. *Comrades*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, B.R.CXG., *Java in a Time of Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972.
- Brimmell, J. H. *A Short History of the Malayan Communist Party*. Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956.
8212. *Communism in Southeast Asia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Cheah Boon Kheng. *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya, 1945-1948*. Singapore: Times Books International, 1979.
8212. "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya." *Indonesia* 28 (October 1979): 85-120.
8212. *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1946*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983.
- Chihiro Tsutsui. *Nampo gunsei-ron*. (Military administration in the southern regions). Tokyo, 1944.
- Cobb, Richard. *The Police and the People: French Popular Protest, 1789-1820*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970.
- Cruickshank, Charles, *SOE in the Far East*. London: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Duncanson, Dennis J., "Ho-chi-minh in Hong Kong, 1931-32." *The China Quarterly*, 57 (January-March 1974): 84-100.
- Haithcox, John Patrick. *Communism and Nationalism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy, 1920-1939*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Hanrahan, Gene Z. *The Communist Struggle in Malaya*. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1954. Reprint, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1971
- Ibrahim Yaacob. *Malaya Merdeka*. Jakarta: Kesatuan Malaya Merdeka, 1957.
- Jarvis, Helen, ed. *From Jail to Jail by Tan Malaka*. 3 vols. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1991.
- Jones, Alun. "Internal Security in British Malaya, 1895-1942." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1970.
- Kahin, George McT. *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1952.
- Khoo Kay Kim. "The Beginnings of Political Extremism in Malaya, 1915-1935." Ph.D. diss., University of Malaya, 1973.
- Lacouture, Jean, Ho *Chi Minh*. London: Allen Lane, 1968.
- Leong, Stephen. "Sources, Agencies and Manifestations of Overseas Chinese Nationalism in Malaya, 1937-1941." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1976.
8212. "The Kuomintang-Communist United Front in Malaya during the National Salvation Period, 1937-1941." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. 8, (1) (March 1977): 31-47.
- Leong Yee Fong, "Chinese Politics and Political Parties in Colonial Malaya, 1920-1940." M.A. thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1977.
- Mahmud Embong. "Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan Gerakan Komunis di Malaya, 1920-1948." M.A. thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1985.

- Malaysian Government White Paper. Communism in Malaysia and Singapore. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1971.
- Mao Tse-tung. Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung. New York: International Publishers, 1954.
- McLane, Charles B. *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- McVey, Ruth T. *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1965.
- Meisner, Maurice. *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism*. New York: Atheneum, 1977.
- Miller, Harry. *Menace in Malaya*. London: Harrap, 1954.
- Mintz, Jeanne S. "Marxism in Indonesia." In *Marxism in Southeast Asia*, ed. Frank N. Trager. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959.
- North, Robert C., and Xenia J. Eudin, eds. *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist-Kuomintang Split of 1927*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.
- O'Ballance, Edgar. *Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-60*. London, Faber, 1966.
- Onraet, Rene H. *Singapore: A Police Background*. London: Dorothy Crisp, 1946.
- Parmer, N. "Attempts at Labour Organization by Chinese Workers in Certain Industries in Singapore in the 1930's." In *Papers on Malayan History*, ed. K. G. Tregonning. Singapore: Journal of South-East Asian History, 1962.
8212. "Chinese Estate Workers' Strikes in Malaya in March 1937." In *The Economic Development of Southeast Asia*, ed. C. D. Cowan, London: Praeger, 1964.
- Purcell, Victor. *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Roff, W.R., *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967.
8212. "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920s." *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970): 73-88.
- Short, Anthony, "Communism and the Emergency." In *Malaysia*, ed. Wang Gungwu. New York: Praeger, 1964.
8212. *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960*. London: Frederick Mueller, 1975.
- Stenson, M. R. *Industrial Conflict in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Thompson, Virginia and Richard Adloff. *The Leftwing in Southeast Asia*. New York: William Sloane, 1950.
- Van der Kroef, Justus M., *Communism in South-east Asia*. London: Macmillan, 1981.
- Williams, Michael. "Sneevliet and the Birth of Asian Communism." In *New Left Review*, 123 (September-October 1980): 82-90.
- Wu Tien-wang, "The Communist Party of Malaya, 1947." Report presented to the British Empire Conference of Communist Parties, London, 1947. Marx Memorial Library, London.
- Yap Hong Kuan. "Perak under the Japanese, 1942-1945." B.A. thesis, University of Singapore, 1957.
- Yeo Kim Wah. "The Communist Involvement in the Malayan Labour Strikes, September 1936-March 1937." In *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 49 (December 1976): pt. 2, 34-79.

PART!

SELECTED DOCUMENTS FROM VARIOUS ISSUES OF THE MALAYAN BULLETIN OF POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE (MBPI) AND ITS SUCCESSOR MALAYA POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL, MALAYAN POLICE ADMINISTRATION, 1922-1931, FOUND IN THE BRITISH COLONIAL OFFICE RECORDS, LONDON, AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE SOURCES, INCLUDING US DIPLOMATIC DESPATCHES

INTRODUCTION

The idea of setting up a Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence to keep the government informed of political agitation was first raised in October 1921 during the administration of British High Commissioner to the Malay States and Governor of the Straits Settlements, Laurence Guillemard. One year later, A. S. Jelf, of the Malayan Civil Service, was appointed its first director. He toured the country and requested information from government officials, including district officers. He established liaison with the military and the Police Criminal Department and direct communications with security departments in London, India, and Hong Kong, as well as with British consulates in Bangkok and Batavia.

Owing to limited funds, the MBPI could not afford its own special staff of paid informers on the scale of similar departments in the police and the Chinese Protectorate; detailed information on local political affairs was, therefore, submitted to the MBPI by the other two agencies. Despite its limited size throughout the eight years of its existence, according to one study, the MBPI "gained the esteem of those concerned with intelligence affairs on the imperial as well as the local level"¹

However, in 1930, Guillemard's successor, Hugh Clifford, abolished the Bureau which was regarded as "of little value" and in its place set up a Political Advisory Committee for Malaya, comprising representatives of Police, the military, and Chinese Affairs officials. In 1932 the committee concentrated almost entirely on Communist activity and left other political matters to other agencies. Before long, this body was regarded as cumbersome, and political intelligence was passed on to a unit within the Police Department under the Director of Criminal Investigation, known as the Special Branch. This officer was Rene Onraet, who later rose to become Inspector General of Police, Straits Settlements. In the Special Branch, Onraet was assisted by Chief Inspector Metha Prithvi Chand, an Indian, who was seconded from the Indian

¹Alun Jones, "Internal Security in British Malaya, 1895-1942" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1970), p. 140.

Government. One of his duties originally was to keep in touch with subversive Indian agitators among Indians in Malaya.²

A Criminal Intelligence Department (CID) was established in 1918 in Singapore for the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca, and Penang), which paid attention mainly to political affairs. A Criminal Intelligence Branch (CIB) was established in the Federated Malay States (comprising Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Pahang, and Perak) in April 1920; each police department in these states and in the Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu) had its own detective branch that handled both criminal and political investigations. Close cooperation between all police forces was maintained. The director of the CIB prepared a monthly political report for the government.

Owing to the specialized work of the CID in Singapore, its name was changed to Special Branch in 1933. Special Branch also established and sustained contacts with the Dutch authorities in the Netherlands East Indies, American intelligence in the Philippines, and the French authorities in Indochina and exchanged information with them from time to time. It also had contacts with British intelligence bureaus in the Far East, especially those in Hong Kong, Burma, and India. In the early 1930s, the Special Branch was organized into five separate coordinated sections, each specializing in a particular sphere of activity: the Anti-Communist, Japanese, Security, Political, and Aliens sections. The largest and possibly the most important was the Anti-Communist section, which assumed a prominent role in response to increasing Communist activity in British Malaya. In 1940-1941, with the outbreak of war imminent, the Malayan Security Service was created, probably to coordinate all intelligence activities. It resumed its work after the Japanese occupation and continued until it was abolished shortly after the Emergency was declared in 1948.³

The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence (MBPI), which was published by the Malayan Bureau of Political Intelligence, ceased publication in 1930 when the Bureau was abolished. Not all copies of the MBPI are found in the Colonial Office files at the Public Record Office in London. MBPI issues for 1923, 1924, and for eleven issues of 1925 (January-November) are not available. No explanation has been found for this omission. The MBPI was brought out each month. From 1922 to 1924 the MBPI and the Singapore Special Branch Political Intelligence Journal (PIJ) were printed by the regimental printer of the British Army's Middlesex Regiment, then based in Singapore, but from 1924 the printing was taken over by the Confidential Printer to the Government until the Government Printing Office was created in 1931. Printing was left in the hands of Europeans apparently because the authorities felt that "no Asian subordinates could be trusted to print confidential papers of this kind."⁴ Researchers have seen frequent references made to the PIJ in official correspondence on the MCP, but only extracts of this publication have been found in the Colonial Office files. Its distribution was kept very restricted.

²For further details, see Governor's Despatches (hereafter cited as G.D.) Secret 224/1921, 261/1922, 64/23 and 312/1929, National Archives, Singapore. I am grateful to Dr Yeo Kim Wah of the History Department, National University of Singapore for providing the above information.

³The details about the evolution of the political intelligence organizations were obtained from Jones, "Internal Security," pp. 114-19, 138-41.

⁴*Ibid.*, p.143.

The distribution list of MBPI shows that half the recipients were resident in Malaya, while the other half were outside Malaya. The Malayan recipients were top British government officials and political authorities like the British State Residents. This list is useful in identifying possible holding centers of MBPI outside Malaya. MBPI's contents have an almost predictable format under the following sub-heads: (1) Affairs in China; (2) Affairs in the NEI; (3) Affairs in the Hejaz; (4) Affairs in Malaya; (5) Kuo Min Tang in Malaya; (6) Affairs in Indochina; (7) The Communist Centre [NEI] in Singapore; (8) Soviet political activity in the Far East, or Bolshevism; (9) Affairs in India; (10) Pan Pacific Labour Congress (China); and (11) Communist emissaries for the East.

The CO files at the PRO, however, do contain another valuable intelligence source for the study of Communist and Chinese activities in the 1920s and 1930s. This is the Malayan Review of Chinese Affairs (MRCA), a publication of the Chinese Secretariat. According to Dr. Leong Yee Fong, who has used this source, it has a useful collection of materials on the Kuomintang in Malaya and the MCP, including party documents recovered by the police, translations of censored mail, as well as extracts of editorials from Chinese newspapers and other miscellaneous matters concerning local Chinese affairs.⁵ Items on the MCP sometimes duplicate those in the MBPI, but there are instances where the MRCA source is richer than the other. On the other hand, the MBPI gives a better overall picture of the political situation in Malaya and the Southeast Asian region.

The political intelligence reports are usually based on information collected by informers and spies or obtained during police interrogations of Communists and other political activists, as well as documents picked up during police raids; information obtained from foreign intelligence agencies, such as those in the Netherlands Indies, was also coordinated. Compilation and analysis was usually done by "political analysts" who often are nameless, although in one document, the Special Branch Report for 1934 (in Pt. 2), the name of an analyst, a "Mr Barry," is given; another report (in Pt. 1) carries the name of R. Onraet, director, CID, Straits Settlements. Not much is known about the workings of the "political analysts" section; but it is clear that their work was tremendously important in assisting the political authorities to make decisions.

Only certain reports for the period 1921-1941 pertaining to the MCP that are considered relevant to the present study have been included in this section. Besides MBPI reports, extracts from official correspondence and US diplomatic despatches relating to Communist activities in Southeast Asia have also been included. All the footnotes in Pt.1 are mine. [Ed.]

⁵See Leong Yee Fong, "Chinese Politics and Political Parties in Colonial Malaya, 1920-1940," (MA thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1977), pp. ix-x.

MALAYAN BULLETIN OF POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE (MBPI)

I.MBPI, MAY 1922 6

Bolshevism

There is no trace of any activity in Malaya other than Chinese literature, censored and dealt with by the Protectorates in the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements. The influence of the agitation in the Netherlands East Indies does not seem to have spread to the F.M.S.; representatives visiting Malaya appear to get no further than Singapore and are not reported as being very successful in that seaport.

2. MBPI, AUGUST 1922 7

Bolshevism

(a) Chinese Bolshevik literature has recently been sent from Canton to the Headmaster of the Chinese High School in Singapore, and to the head "bar-boy" (a Hylam) of the Grosvenor Hotel, Singapore.

(b) N. Mohammad Dulfakir, bookseller of 14-1 High Street, Singapore, has been discovered to be exposing for sale a book by Lenin ("Will the Bolsheviks maintain power?"), and to have an order (from London and San Francisco) for a number of politically and otherwise objectionable books and periodicals. These he states find a ready sale amongst English-speaking Chinese.

(c) The well-known Indian agitator, M. N. Roy,⁸ who is in Berlin, is known to have despatched a number of Communist Agents to India, and as it is possible that some of Roy's numerous activities may extend to Malaya, the following note may be of interest.

So far as can be ascertained, some 30 young Indians have undergone a course of training in Communism at Moscow University. It is difficult to arrive at the exact number of those who have left Moscow and have succeeded in entering India. Roy himself appears to be in some doubt about the matter, and the probability is that after their departure from Moscow he has more or less lost touch with them. He is believed to have estimated that he had about a dozen adherents working for him in India, with 16 more to follow.

⁶ Source: CO 273/516. Public Record Office, London.

⁷ Source: CO 273/517. Public Record Office, London.

⁸Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, later to be known as Manabendra Nath Roy, was born of Brahmin parentage in the Bengali village of Arbali, some twenty miles from Calcutta. The exact date of his birth is unknown. Estimates range from 1886 to 1893. Roy first emerged in prominence in Mexico and attended the 1920 Second World Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in July 1920 as an official representative of the Communist Party of Mexico. Throughout the 1920s, Roy made strenuous efforts to organize a Communist movement in India. In April 1922, his center of activities was transferred from Moscow to Berlin. He is generally regarded as the founder of the Communist Party of India. See Haithcox *Communism and Nationalism in India*, pp. 4, 11, 20, and 24. See also Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin, eds., *M. N. Roy's Mission to China: The Communist-Kuomintang Split of 1927* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 4.

3. MBPI, OCTOBER 1922⁹

(a) Malaya in 1922

The following is an attempt to appreciate the Political situation in British Malaya as it is thought to be today. It is based on impressions formed during a service of extended tours throughout the country, in the course of which all the Settlements of the colony, and all the Malay States, whether Federated or Unfederated, have been visited, and opinions sought from District Officers, Police Officers, Chinese Protectorates and officials of every kind, as well as from unofficials of all nationalities.

Generally speaking, it would probably be true to say there is little or no active sedition in Malaya of the sort that is so prevalent in India or the Dutch East Indies. The firmer measures which have recently been taken in India have had their reflection among Indians here, and the action by the local C.I.D. in seizing seditious literature, and in two instances, a personal interview between delinquents and responsible authorities, are believed to have had a good effect on the Indian community. The Chinese are deeply interested in the progress of events in their own country, and are "waiting to see which way the cat is going to jump" in China before making any move towards the development, in Malaya, of their growing Nationalist ideas, and the Malays are, on the whole, rather indifferent to happenings in the Muhammadan world. But, more than anything else, the prolonged financial depression, which has perhaps hit Malaya harder than most countries, is keeping all classes so fully occupied in seeking and keeping a precarious living that they have not the time nor the inclination to indulge in political agitations. This same depression, of course, makes it difficult for agitators to find funds for their own emoluments, or for propaganda.

(b) Bolshevism

With reference to [the] note in the Bulletin for August, 1922, it is stated that M. N. Roy is feeling the want of reliable agents in India, and he has asked the communist organisation in Great Britain whether they can supply him with two suitable men, one for Bombay and one for Calcutta. He offers passage money and pay at \$10 or \$15 per month for two months, after which they will have to be prepared to maintain themselves, as his finances will not permit of further assistance.

The work of these men will be to arrange for the reception and distribution of "merchandise," which presumably means Bolshevik literature. It is, of course, not improbable that the Calcutta agent may turn his attention to Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

4. MBPI, NOVEMBER 1922¹⁰

Communist Emissaries for the East

The well-known Javanese Communist, RADEN DARSONO,¹¹ who was imprisoned in Java for taking part in an attempted rising there in 1918, and eventually left

⁹ Source: CO 273/518. Public Record Office, London.

¹⁰ Source: CO 273/518. Public Record Office, London.

¹¹ Of Javanese aristocratic background, Darsono had dropped in on Sneevliet's trial in 1917 and been converted on the spot to revolutionary socialism. He was one of Sneevliet's closest co-workers during that leader's last year in the Indies. Darsono was one of the few Indonesian Communist leaders to study Marxism seriously. It was said he frequently had trouble adjusting his Western Communist ideas to Eastern conditions. He was a great admirer of the Bolshevik Revolution, which he enthusiastically urged his fellow Indonesians to emulate; this

for the north of China in June, 1921, is now reported to be in Berlin with the Dutch Revolutionary and Communist, H.I.J.M. SNEEVLIET,¹² who passed through Singapore for Holland in May, 1922 (a long conversation between the Director of the Bureau and Sneevliet was reported to the Government). Sneevliet wishes to take Darsono to Moscow, and it is very possible that the rabid native Communist and Sarikat Islam leader, Malaka, for whom Sneevliet has the greatest admiration, may join them. All three will then proceed to Moscow, and then via North China to Canton. Sneevliet, it is believed, will stay in Canton (at which city he was during the great Hongkong strike of March, 1922) while the other two will attempt to re-enter Java. There is strong reason to believe that this report, which comes from a Dutch source, is correct.

5. MBPI, DECEMBER 1922¹³

Communist Doctrines in Malaya—Chinese

The manifesto of the "Congress of the labouring masses of the Far East," abusing "European, American, and Japanese buccaneers," ended with the Manifesto of the Communist International, Korean, and Dutch East Indian Delegations.

There has now been discovered at Singapore, in the post, a bundle of ten copies of the "Pioneer" sent apparently from "Phang Chap Mui, society of Pioneer/ c/o Min Kuo Jit Pau, Shanghai." The sender asked the Singapore addressee to distribute these copies to "other school colleagues." The publication comprises a "Manifesto issued by the First Convention of the Communist and Racial Revolutionary Organisations of the various countries of the Far East."

6. MBPI, DECEMBER 1925¹⁴

Strikes in Malaya

The phenomenal rise in the price of rubber and the strength of the tin market have resulted in a demand for labour which cannot be met in full.

As a result, the wages of workers in these two industries have increased, and the workers in other trades, have demanded a sympathetic increase owing to the general prosperity of the country, as well as to an all-round increase of 15 per cent in the cost of living.

Increase in wages, varying between 30 percent and 50 percent, have been received by the tailors in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Singapore.

The shoemakers in Kuala Lumpur received an increase in wages averaging 50 percent and the goldsmiths an increase of 20 percent in addition to free food.

led, in December 1918, to his arrest and one year's imprisonment. He was the first vice-chairman of the PKI. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 36,51.

^Hendricus Josephus Franciscus Marie Sneevliet, who first gained prominence in Indonesia as a young Dutch labor leader. A gifted and ardent propagandist, he was one of the founders of the Marxist-oriented Indies Social Democratic Association (ISDV), the precursor of the PKI, in 1914. He was expelled from Indonesia by the Dutch authorities in 1919 for antigovernment activities, and in 1920 emerged as an official of the Communist International. He became known by his Comintern alias, Maring. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³ Source: CO 273/518. Public Record Office, London.

¹⁴ Source: CO 273/534. Public Record Office, London. It should be noted that MBPI reports for 1923, 1924, and for January-November 1925 have not been sighted in the CO files at the PRO. No official explanation has yet been available to explain this omission.

Fitters in various engineering concerns, both European and Chinese, have received increases of between 10 percent and 20 percent. In every case, except that of the fitters, employers have been forced to grant the increases demanded owing to an actual strike of employees, whilst in the case of the fitters the threat of a strike was sufficient.

Although there has been no trace of direct Communist instigation of the strikes hitherto, there is no doubt that labour in Malaya is beginning to realise the value of unity and the power of direct action, and the advice of persons with Communist leanings is being listened to in many instances.

7. MBPI, FEBRUARY 1926 15

N.E.I. Communists in Singapore

It is now known that the Javanese Communists Moeso [sic],¹⁶ Winanta [sic],¹⁷ Boedisoejito [sic],¹⁸ and Soebakat [sic]¹⁹ are in Singapore

Tan Malaka himself was undoubtedly in Penang during the early part of January, until the 14th of that month, and is said to have been seen there in the company of Hasonoesi.²⁰ An intercepted letter however, points to Tan Malaka having returned to Cheng Mai by the 20th January.

The local Communists have become suspicious of Abdul Ghaffar and the safety of 84 Onan Road as a postal address and would appear to have changed the latter to 709 North Bridge road, a house rented by Sheih Abdullah Dahlan, a local Arab suspect, the ex-Sheikh-ul-Islam of Kedah.

Letters for Communists are to be addressed to Tuan Moechtar and the missives enclosed in an outer envelope addressed to Haji Safie bin Haji Salleh at 709 North Bridge Road.

Haji Safie is a pilgrim broker by trade, in conjunction with his father, and rents a portion of the above premises.

¹⁵ Source: CO 273/534. Public Record Office, London.

¹⁶ Also spelled "Musso." Born in 1897, he attended high school and teacher-training school in Batavia. There he was a friend of Alimin. He was cultivated by Dutch educator D. van Hinloopen Laberton. Like Alimin, he lived for a time at the Tjokroaminoto boarding house in Surabaya and divided his loyalties between several political organizations—in his case, Insulinde, Sarekat Islam, and the ISDV—before making a firm commitment to the PKI. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 169-70.

¹⁷ A. Winanta, a former minor official of the Netherlands East Indies railway line and a leader of the Communist movement in Bandung, who was elected chairman of the PKI at its convention of June 7-10, 1924. He belonged to a group of PKI leaders who advocated revolt in 1926. *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 315-16.

¹⁸ He and other PKI leaders were arrested by the Dutch authorities in October 1924 but were released a few months later. He, Alimin, and Tan Malaka attended the Pan-Pacific Transport Workers' Conference held under Comintern auspices at Canton in June 1924 as the PKI's representatives. See George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 77 and McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 216, 431.

¹⁹ Described as one of the PKI's chief theoreticians, Soebakat was a member of the party's executive committee in 1923. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 155, 191.

²⁰ A Javanese Communist believed to be identical with R. S. Hassan Sanoesi, a committee member of the Union of Sailors and Dockers of Java and a close associate of Tan Malaka. See document "Malay and Indonesian Communists" in pt. 5.

Haji Salleh Surati, the father of Haji Safie, hails from Semarang and is suspected of having sheltered Raden Samoem [*sic*]²¹ at his house early in 1922.

8. MBPI, APRIL 1926²²

Boedisoejitro in Singapore

Both Boedisoejitro and Sutan Perpateh²³ were observed in Penang during the middle of May and were met with again in Singapore towards the end of the same month. Perpateh whilst in Singapore was known to have resided at 131 Arab Street, a pilgrim brokers' establishment and to have frequented 144 Arab Street, a Malay cap shop managed by Haji Ali and Haji Samoem. Soebakat was also observed in Singapore on the 9th May.

It is reported on good authority that a Malay newspaper is to be started in the Colony which will be financed by N.E.I. communists.

Perpateh in converse with a friend stated that he had recently opened a club in Province Wellesley the members of which were mainly Javanese from Sumatra.

Enquiries were made in April, on behalf of Boedisoejitro, for suitable premises in the Kallang district of Singapore adjacent to the sea to be used as a club.

Omar bin Haji Samad of Sumbawa Road, who is concerned in a Javanese Labour Depot situated at Kallang was one of the individuals approached.

On the 29th May, Haji Jaafar, a great friend of Haji Ghafar's, at a private meeting held at 82 Onan Road, the house of Saiyid Mahdar broached the subject of the formation of a club consisting of some 500 members for the purpose of mutual assistance; the subscriptions to be nominal as he knows of persons who would finance the undertaking.

9. MBPI, OCTOBER 1926²⁴

Tan Malaka on Communism in Malaya, 1925

From papers found on Communists arrested in Sumatra it appears that Tan Malaka has composed, while residing abroad, and sent out, apparently from Saigon, three books embodying advice and guidance from Moscow to those engaged in the "struggle for the people."

The booklets are entitled:

1. Wasiat Kaoem Militair, (Military Guidance)
2. Naar de Republiek Indonesia, (Towards the Indonesia Republic)
3. Semangat Moeda, (The Modern Spirit)

²Spelled "Semaun" by Ruth McVey. He was one of the most prominent figures among the early group of Indonesian Marxists. Born in 1899 near Surabaya, the son of a minor railroad official and himself a railroad employee, he gained notoriety as one of Indonesia's first labor agitators. It also brought him into contact with Sneevliet, whom he admired greatly, and in 1915 he joined the ISDV. Semaun was very young when he rose to prominence in the revolutionary movement. In 1916 he was seventeen years old. He attended the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East in Russia as the PKFs representative in 1922. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 22,51, and 213.

²² Source: CO 273/534. Public Record Office, London.

[^]Identity of this person is not known.

²⁴ Source: CO 273/535. Public Record Office, London.

and have not been published generally but sent by Tan Malaka to Communist leaders in person.

An old letter written by Tan Malaka from Singapore dated the 6th November, 1925, and addressed apparently to Boedisoejitrohas just been discovered in Java.

A portion of the letter is interesting as a comment on the unpromising nature of British Malaya as a field for communist propaganda.

So far not the slightest advantage is to be seen from the work of our dealers (propagandists?) at (Singapore) or at (Penang). You may say that they are quite incapable, but in criticising it must not be forgotten that the proper (indigenous?) inhabitants there, who form only a minority, are all conservative in their manner of living and thinking, and are petty bourgeois. On the departure of Hadji Moek²⁵ from (Singapore) his kindness was invoked to make a visit to the F.M.S. The impressions which he obtained everywhere did not differ from those gained from (Singapore) and (Penang). The Section of the people which understands (economy) and (politics) are the (Chinese). In the harbours, in buildings in the trains, and above all in commerce, the (Chinese) are the most prominent. None the less their Federation is very weak. You will understand that in these circumstances it is impossible for us to effect a union. The railway personnel and those in establishments connected with the railway are all Klings. In their circles no beginning has been made to set up any association. There is not a single daily paper in the Straits or F.M.S. that is read by Malays²⁶. In brief, if one looks for a movement in the F.M.S., it is not to be sought from the side of the Malays. It will certainly come from the Chinese and Klings, whatever sort of movement it may be. I give you this explanation to enable you to form an opinion of us.²⁷

Note: Words in brackets have been decoded from the cypher used in the original letter.

10. MBPI, FEBRUARY—APRIL 1927²⁸

Arrest and Release of Alimin²⁹ and Moeso

Alimin and Moeso who have several times been mentioned in the Bulletin as leaders of the Communist party in the N.E.I, were arrested in Singapore in December

^Identity of this person is not known.

²⁶This statement is not entirely accurate. Malay newspapers like *Utusan Melayu*, 1907-1921, and *Lembaga Melayu*, 1914-1931, were published in Singapore. See P. Lim Pui Huen, *Newspapers Published in the Malaysian Area* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1970.)

²⁷An identical copy of this letter is also reproduced in the 1948 Malayan Security Service document, "Malay and Indonesian Communists" (see pt. 5).

²⁸Source: CO 273/535/28030. Public Record Office, London.

²⁹Mas Alimin Prawirodirjo was born in 1889 in Surakarta. He was the foster son of G.A.J. Hazeu (later Adviser for Native Affairs) and so was able to obtain a good education. He attended European schools in Batavia and became fluent in French, English, and Dutch. He began the newspaper, *Djawa Moeda* (Young Java) and entered the Budi Utomo. Later he joined Insulinde, became interested in labor affairs, and was active in organizing printers, seamen, and dockworkers of Batavia. He then joined ISDV, the Sarekat Islam, and finally the PKI. He was among the PKI leaders who supported the 1926-1927 uprisings. McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp.168-69.

last, and after a searching banishment enquiry were released and almost immediately left for Canton.

The enquiry revealed the fact that though these two men, and through them the revolutionary party in the N.E.I., are directly connected with Moscow, no real suspicion showing activities against Malaya were substantiated, in consequence they were released.

Dutch opinion, while appreciating the Straits Settlements Government action in this matter, consider that the presence of men of this type in Malaya, though ostensibly working against the Dutch, constitutes a grave danger to the masses of the country in which they take refuge.

DOCUMENTS FROM OTHER INTELLIGENCE SOURCES

11. EXTRACT FROM DESPATCH OF U.S. CONSUL IN SINGAPORE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, DATED SEPTEMBER 1, 1927.³⁰**Subversive Activities of Tan Malaka**

There have been no subversive activities in Malaya of special application to the British Government of this particular area, but the local authorities either actually know or suspect various attempts to arouse interest here. Confidential despatches Nos. 94 and 144 of January 31st, and March 30th, 1927, respectively, from this office, suggested the relation of Singapore to activities by Javanese communists which involved the possible use of Manila, Philippine Islands, as a base for the direction of subversive activities in the Dutch East Indies. The alleged ringleader is an ubiquitous Javanese known as Tan Malaka. This individual was recently reported (in Manila newspapers) as having been taken into custody by Philippine authorities and as having been deported during the latter part of August, 1927 on a ship bound for Amoy. Tan Malaka is believed by secret agents of the Straits Settlements Government to have spent most of the last two years in the Philippines, but I have learned from a reliable private source that he came to Singapore in April, 1927, and spent some twenty-five days here endeavoring to arouse the Chinese of Singapore in connection with the feeling arising out of the rioting and attack on the local Kreta Ayer police station on March 12th, 1927. The police tried unsuccessfully to catch him. This Kreta Ayer affair has been the subject of various despatches from this office of which the last one was No. 162 of April 13th, 1927, entitled "Chinese Rioters Killed by Singapore Police on March 12th, 1927—Coroner's Verdict."

12. A REPORT SHOWING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHINESE AND NON-CHINESE CONCERNED IN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN MALAYA (1 APRIL 1930)³¹

Lord Pasfield
Colonial Office.

Government House,
Singapore.
8 April, 1930.

My Lord,

I have the honour to forward for your information a copy of a letter and report from the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Straits Settlements, on the subject of local Chinese communist efforts to convert non-Chinese natives of Malaya to their beliefs.

2. Copies of the report are being sent to the Governor of Hong Kong and to His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Peking.

C. Clementi
Governor.

Enclosure 1. Secret—8th April 1930

³⁰ Source: [846d.OOPR/13]. U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³¹ Source: C.O. 273/561/72074 (1930), Public Record Office, London.

Mr H. Fairburn,
Inspector-General of Police,
Straits Settlements, Singapore.

Office of Director of
Criminal Intelligence
Singapore.
1 April, 1930.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit for the information of the government a report on that phase of local Chinese communist activities which concerns their efforts to convert the non-Chinese natives in Malaya to their beliefs.

The efforts are now proved to be backed by the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, an anti-Imperialist body directed by the Third International, and one with which the Nanyang General Labour Union is in communication through "Central" in China.

The report is a coordinated record of information received at various times and through many sources by the Special Branch, and can be substantiated by documents and statements. Detailed corroborative information received in March this year enables me to write up this report.

It is my opinion that the chief persons linking the Chinese and the non-Chinese subversive activities in Singapore have been arrested.

I have not been able to discover how the Chinese and non-Chinese elements were first introduced to each other.

R. ONRAET
Director,
Criminal Intelligence Department
Straits Settlements.

C.S.O. Correspondence No. Secret 12/1926 gives in detail the banishment enquiry in the case of Alimin & Moeso, the two Javanese revolutionaries arrested in Singapore at the end of 1926. At the present moment Moeso is reported to be in Moscow and Alimin, till quite recently, was working as a sailor in the S.S. "Valaya" which sails between Bangkok and Singapore. His present whereabouts are unknown.

2. At the time this banishment enquiry was held no proof was obtained that the Javanese revolutionaries had made any effort to form or connect themselves with subversive organizations in Malaya for the purpose of embarrassing the Government of Malaya.

3. The connection between Alimin and Moeso on the one hand and Canton, in 1926, on the other gave us every reason to suspect that their stay in Malaya was not exclusively connected with revolutionary activities against the Dutch in the Netherlands East Indies. In support of this supposition was the fact that Tan Malaka had put on record his opinion that Malaya was on account of the language difficulty, a difficult country wherein to organise proletarian movements, and Alimin told me in 1927 that it was impossible to lead the masses in Malaya on account of the different nationalities it contained.

4. This difference in speech and the variety of customs of the various races in Malaya is still a serious barrier against the spread of Communism, and is responsible for the recent reorganisation of the local Communist Party whereby racial groups are to be formed. It is through the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat comprising within

its membership all Far Eastern revolutionary groups that teachers are to be supplied to these racial groups in Malaya.

5. It is here necessary to mention that there existed at this time (1926), and still exists in Malaya, a Chinese Communist Party directed by "Central"⁷ the China Communist Party headquarters itself directed by the Third International. Among the known leaders of the local Communist Party are the following whose names occur in this note:

SOH PEKNGI, Cantonese Sentenced to three years R.I., November, 1928.

MAH YAPPENG, Hailam, not arrested.

WONG JUAT PHO, Hailam, not arrested.

HO HONG SENG, Hokchiu, banished in 1928.

6. In 1926 Mah Yap Peng and Moeso were in communication with each other. Moeso was known as the fat Javanese who had come from Canton and his photograph has recently been identified by an important member of the party. In 1926 the revolutionary Javanese groups detailed for work in Malaya, included Alimin, Moeso, Soebakat (arrested in 1930 in Bangkok), Ali, Winanta and Abdul Karim.

7. The four Chinese mentioned above, together with Chinese not yet identified, used to meet in 1928 and 1929 with three Malays named (1) Ali, (2) Ahmed and (3) Abdul Rahman. Ali was the leader of the three and is the organizer of the Malay side of the League Against Imperialism. Ho Hong Seng in 1928 identified Alimin's photo as Ali, the reason for this was at once apparent after Ali's arrest: he is extraordinarily like Alimin.

8. The League Against Imperialism has at various times and especially on occasions when the local Chinese Communist Party has issued propaganda put out propaganda in Romanized Malay and Jawi, the first occasion being on August the 3rd, 1928 and the last in March 1930. Ali was closely associated with Wong Juat Pho, Mah Yap Peng and Soh Pek Ngi, and frequented the Hailam night schools at Kampong Bahru—the Lok Man School, and at Coleman Street, the Lok Teng School.

9. During 1928-29 efforts by The Communist Party—still a purely Chinese association predominantly Hailam—to connect up and recruit non-Chinese Malayan races, continued. These efforts are summarized in Police Journal Paragraph 1 (a) of 1930 (attached).

10. In May/June 1929 Ali journeyed to Shanghai in company with Wong Juat Pho, Mah Yap Peng, Salleh—a Malay from Malacca, and Haji Mohamed—a Padang Malay religious teacher in Malacca—to attend the annual meeting of the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat (for particulars of P.P.T.U.S. c.f. M.B. November issue).

11. This Conference was originally to be held at Vladivostok but on account of passport difficulties, was divided into two sections—the Asiatic section meeting in Shanghai and the European section, including Moeso who was at the time in Russia, in Vladivostok. The Asiatic Section, which included the delegates from Malaya, was interviewed several times by a Canadian, Harrison George, and a Frenchman whose name cannot be vouched for, probably Elkre. The minutes of this conference have been published in the "Pan-Pacific Monthly," the magazine issued by the P.P.T.U.S. The aims of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat are quite openly anti-capitalist and subversive to all forms of colonial administration.

12. The Conference took place in July/August 1929 and a great deal of space was devoted to Malaya in the subsequent reports. The Malayan delegates returned via Hongkong and Bangkok to Malaya in September 1929. At Bangkok Wong Juat Pho

left the party and the others took the train to Penang and a boat from Penang to Singapore.

13. It was towards the latter end of 1929 that a series of pamphlets in Malay, purporting to be issued by the Malay Seamen's Union, were printed and issued with the help of the local Communist Party; a very large quantity ready for despatch was seized at Tiverton Lane—a propaganda distributing office of the local Communist Party on the 13th of March, 1930.

14. In March 1930 a draft notification in Tamil of the usual Red Labour type was discovered and Ali is proved to be directly responsible.

15. In January, February and March, 1930, Chinese Communist organizations in Johore, Malacca, Seremban and Penang asked for propaganda printed in the Malay language for distribution in their areas; but it was in the Batu Pahat and Muar areas that the most serious advances were made. A number of names of persons connected with the organisation of non-Chinese branches have been obtained and are at present under investigation.

16. Information which connected previous information and which identified certain people who were but names, has led to the arrest of:

AHMED BAIKI BIN SUILE—a Padang Malay, in Singapore.

ALI alias ALIMAJID—a Bugis in the s.s. "Van de Pura" in the harbour of Singapore.

SALLEH BIN SAPI—a Malay, at Pengkalang Batak, Malacca.

JAMAL UD DIN—a Padang Malay, in Singapore.

EMAT alias ABDUL HAMID—a Javanese in Singapore.

HAJIMOHAMED BIN HASHIM—a Padang Malay, in Tampin, Malacca.

All except the last named admit their guilt. One more important person, Abdul Rahman, whom it is suspected is Abdul Karim an associate of the Tan Malaka-Alimin gang, is still at large and was last heard of in Penang.

17. Since the arrest of the above-named Javanese and Malays, documents have been seen in which the arrest of Ali is noted with regret. These documents are departmental notifications in Johore and the Provisional Committee, Singapore.

(Sgd.) R. ONRAET Director,
Criminal Intelligence Department
Straits Settlements.

1st. April, 1930.

13. "COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA/' DESPATCH FROM U.S. CONSUL IN SINGAPORE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, MAY 5, 1930³²

Communist Organization:

In the previous bi-monthly political report, reference was made to a subversive organization of communistic creation in British Malaya. It was pointed out that the Malayan organization acts as a base for the dissemination of communistic propaganda in Middle Asia, and that the situation has reached such proportions that a

³²Source: [846d/00 PR/16. "Communist organizations, etc/"] US National Archives, Washington, DC.

close degree of cooperation is maintained with the authorities of the Dutch East Indies, Siam, and French Indo-China.

Reports of communist disturbances emanating from the Philippine Islands have been of such a character as to indicate that it might prove advantageous to the Governor General's office in Manila if a degree of cooperation could be established with the appropriate Malayan authorities. With a view to obtaining information which might be useful in the Philippine Islands, the Inspector General of Police at Singapore was approached. Mr. Fairbura was good enough to give me a survey of the present situation in Malaya as well as to supply certain documents, notably the report of the Nanyang Labour Union, the pertinent part of which is transmitted as enclosure No. 4. He also furnished the name and address of the Filipino who attended the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretarial Meeting which was held in Shanghai in July and August, 1929. This Consulate General has transmitted the relevant information to the Governor General's Office with the request that the source of this information be treated in the strictest confidence.

Since the acute disturbances which occurred in March, 1927, the local police have exercised extreme vigilance with regard to all subversive and communistic activities in this country. The task has been in some measure facilitated by the divergency of races resident in this country and by the fact that there is an adequate censorship law in force which allows the outgoing and incoming mail to be inspected by the proper authorities. However, it is only during the past eight months that the police have definitely established a reliable source of information by which frequent reports can be obtained from the Central Communistic Bureau at Shanghai, which controls the Malayan organization.

Communistic activities in this country are ruled by a Provisional Committee, usually located in Singapore. This committee has organized a number of sub-committees in various important places in Malaya who, in turn, have established "cells" throughout the thickly populated areas. Information from Shanghai is conveyed in two ways: first, by secret written communications, and secondly, through visiting agents who are usually members of a Shanghai or Canton seamen's union.

The Malayan Provisional Committee controls and is responsible for the activities of a communistic nature in Java, the Dutch East Indies, as well as Siam, and Annam in French Indo-China. The Philippines are not directly responsible to the Malayan organization. The local police believe that, in all probability, they get their information directly from Shanghai.

The Malays, although there are a number of communists among them, are not a politically minded people, and are not interested in communistic propaganda unless at the moment they felt a just or unjust grievance of some nature. The Indians are by and large more interested in the political affairs of their own country, and, because of the prosperity and better living conditions which exist in Malaya, are not a very fertile field in which to disseminate propaganda of this character. It is among the Chinese that special strides are made, and of all the southern Chinese resident in this country, those from the Island of Hainan take most kindly to communistic ideals. In this connection it is of interest to note the latest official estimate of the population of this country, which is as follows:

Chinese	1,775,000
Malays	1,775,000
Indians	650,000
Europeans	24,000

The Inspector General of Police informs me that in manner and method, the communist organization is a very clever one and is being managed especially well at Shanghai. All efforts of the British Secret Service to locate the Shanghai Central Committee have met with failure. However, the movements in this country are very closely watched because of the adequate information now available; and although the situation is in no way serious, since it is doubtful whether there are more than 4,000 bona fide communists resident in British Malaya, nevertheless, because of the efficiency of the organization, it is potentially a menace. Communist methods practised in Malaya consist not in creating disturbances directly, but in waiting with great patience until some favourable situation arises which lends itself to exploitation.

14. EXTRACT FROM SIR CECIL CLEMENTI, GOVERNOR OF STRAITS SETTLEMENTS¹ REPORT OF HIS VISIT TO BATAVIA TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON. FROM DESPATCH DATED SEPTEMBER 5, 1930.³³

With respect to Communism, Jonkheen de Graeff [Governor-General in Netherlands East Indies] readily agreed that the closest possible *liaison* [emphasis in original] should be maintained between the authorities in Malaya and Java. We agreed that the directly responsible authorities in the Police Departments and the Chinese Protectorates of Malaya should deal directly in this matter with the Attorney-General of the Netherlands East Indies, who is responsible to the Governor-General for this branch of administration, and moreover, that the British and Dutch authorities concerned should meet at periodic intervals, in order to exchange views and information.

15. GOVERNOR'S LETTER ON DEPORTING JOSEPH DUCROUX, NOVEMBER 30, 1931³⁴

SECRET

The Right Honourable
Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister,
P.C., G.B.E., etc.,
COLONIAL OFFICE

Government House
Singapore.
30 November 1931

Sir,

I have the honour to address you regarding a French subject, one Joseph Ducroux, *alias* Serge Lefranc, whose banishment from the Colony has been approved by the Executive Council under Section 4, Ordinance No. 153 (Banishment).

2. On information received from the Criminal Intelligence Department, an Order of Banishment subject to further enquiry was on the 20th May, 1931, issued against Ducroux as a Communist and undesirable character. Ducroux was arrested on the 1st June, 1931, and on the 22nd June was convicted under Section 11 of Ordinance No. 116 (Societies) of assisting in the management of an unlawful society, to wit, the Malayan Communist Party, and was sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment. An appeal was lodged against the conviction but was subsequently withdrawn, and

³³ Source: C.O. 273/561/72074 File entitled "Communist Activities," Public Record Office, London.

³⁴ Source: C.O. 273/580/92041. Public Record Office, London.

the Order of Banishment was confirmed without further enquiry by the Executive Council on the 6th August, 1931.

End. No. 1 I enclose a note on Ducroux prepared by the Director of Criminal Intelligence.

3. It will be seen from the enclosed copy of the usual form of Order of Banishment that the destination of the vessel in which the banishee is to be removed from the Colony is specified in the Order, and in the case of Ducroux the destination will be Saigon, as being the nearest port in French territory. So far as is known here, he has committed no extraditable offence in his own country and no warrant for his arrest has been issued by the French authorities, though there is reason to believe that there are charges outstanding against him for the following offences committed in French territory:

- (a) Aiding in the management of an unlawful society;
- (b) Sedition;
- (c) Offence under the Passport Regulations.

It is of course possible, if not probable, that Ducroux on being landed at Saigon may be arrested and charged by the French authorities with offences in respect of which his extradition from the Straits Settlements could not have been obtained. I therefore consider it my duty to refer to you before the banishment is carried into effect, in accordance with the instructions contained in the concluding paragraph of *Mr. Ormsby Gore's Secret despatch of the 1st September, 1927*.¹ I would however point out that there can be no suggestion in this instance that this Government is deporting Ducroux merely to oblige the French Government: he is a dangerous character whose removal from the Colony is in the highest degree conducive to the public good, and I sincerely trust that no objection will be raised to the Order of Banishment being carried into effect as proposed.

I have the honour to be,
 Sir,
 Your most obedient, humble servant,
 Governor

16. NOTE ON JOSEPH DUCROUX, ALIAS SERGE LEFRANC, PREPARED BY THE DIRECTOR OF CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, 30 NOVEMBER 1931³⁵

DUCROUX Joseph

He was born 24 April 1904 at Belleville-sur-Saone, Department of the Rhone, France. His father was Joseph Ducroux and his mother Claudine Sautier. He has a brother Jean Baptiste Ducroux, 67 Rue de la Republique, Belleville-sur-Saone, Rhone. His father is dead. His mother's address is: Mme. Veuve Joseph Ducroux, Au Bourg de Salles, Rhone, France. He has one other brother. He was at school for two years in England (Bristol) and later for two months in London. He has been known in France since 1923 as a fighting communist and associate member of the "Federation de la Seine des Jeunesse Communistes" and as such took part in the reorganisation of the French Communist Party on the "industrial cell" system. In 1924 he went to England. In February 1925 he was employed in Thomas Cook's Agency at Marseilles as an interpreter and he founded a Leninist school there in which he taught under the name of DUPONT. He wrote under the name of Dupont for the organs of the Young

³⁵Source: C.O. 273/580/92041. Public Record Office, London.

Communist International. At this period he was in close touch with those directing the revolutionary movement in Egypt (murder of Sir Lee Stack) and was also at this time acting as an agent for M. N. ROY for the transmission of communist literature into India. In August 1926 he returned to Paris and lived for some months at No. 27 Rue de Meaux with a young woman employee of the French Communist Party named JEANNE CELINE TOSCAN.

From 1926 to 1929 he was in Shanghai in the employ of the firm of Chapeau Freres during which time he is believed to have acted as Secretary to J. H. DOLSEN of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.

At the beginning of 1930 he returned to France and on 26 June 1930 he obtained passport, No. 66 issued in his own name at Ville-franche, Department of the Rhone. He was unable to obtain a British visa for Colombo for which he had applied and he then fraudulently obtained a passport in the name of Serge Lefranc under which name he travelled to the Far East by trans-Siberian railway towards the end of 1930, as the representative of the Third International in connection with the reorganisation of Comintern and Profintern activity in Far Eastern Colonies.

He was in Shanghai during February 1931 where he stayed at the Palace Hotel and was well supplied with funds, while he used P.O. Box 1518 for correspondence. He was in close touch with HILAIRE NOULENS³⁶ (whose telegraphic address is HILANOULI Shanghai) and also with JACK A. HOEG³⁷ and other communist suspects in Shanghai.

He arrived in Hongkong on 3 March 1931 and left there about 17 March 1931 on s.s. "Athos II" for Saigon, where he stayed at the Palace Hotel from 20th to 27th March. While in Saigon he was visited by members of the Indo-China "Central" in his hotel and informed them that he was a delegate of the Third International.

When in Hongkong Ducroux was in close touch with NGUYEN AI QUOC,³⁸ the notorious Annamite Communist who has since been arrested there.

He was in Hanoi on 1 April 1931. He arrived in Haiphong ostensibly from Saigon on 7 April 1931 and returned to Hongkong 9 April 1931 and left for Singapore by the s.s. "President Adams" (a "red" ship) on 19 April 1931, having booked by this ship at Hanoi on 1 April 1931. He is believed to have visited the mines in Tongkin for propaganda purposes between the dates of 27 March 1931 and 7 April 1931. He possibly reached the mines in Tongkin via the uninspected port of Campha.

From French sources it is learned that the pending arrival of Lefranc was announced to "Central" Indo-China by Nguyen Ai Quoc about the middle of March 1931. He was known to his communist associates in Indo-China during this visit as Dupont and Ducrot.

He arrived in Singapore on 27 April 1931 in the name of S. N. Lefranc ostensibly as a commercial traveller for a Paris firm of alleged hardware manufacturers name "Etablissements Cidlo" which firm the Paris Police report does not exist.

³⁶Noulens was secretary of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, a Comintern agency in Shanghai.

³⁷Identity of this person is not known.

³⁸I.e., Ho Chi Minh, see above, Introduction, pp. 15-17. For more details on Ho's arrest in Hong Kong and the Comintern-inspired legal battles which finally set him free, see Dennis J. Duncanson, "Ho-chi-minh in Hong Kong, 1931-32," *The China Quarterly* 59 (January-March 1974): 84-100.

He stayed at a good class European boarding house and rented an office in the business centre of Singapore from the 1st of May 1931.

He came under close Police supervision from 16 May 1931 and his subsequent secret association with the members of the Malayan Communist party "Central" to whom he revealed himself as a delegate of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, led to his arrest in Singapore on 1 Jun 1931 and subsequent conviction on 23 Jun 1931 when he was sentenced to eighteen months R.I. for engaging in subversive activities.

With reference to his connection with M. N. Roy in 1925 mentioned above, it is interesting to note that a connection has been discovered in Singapore between Berlin and Fu Tai Kheng³⁹ in Singapore and thence to Ducroux. This connection which, although Chinese is also interesting itself in the Malay side of the movement, is now the subject of separate enquiry.

Date: 30 November 1931

17. JOSEPH DUCROUX ARRESTED BY FRENCH AUTHORITIES IN INDOCHINA. EXTRACT FROM MALAYA COMMAND INTELLIGENCE NOTE, NO. 75 OF 15TH JANUARY, 1933.⁴⁰

The Police have arrested at Cap St. Jacques, Joseph Ducroux, alias Le Franc, delegate of the Third International. After completion of his sentence in Singapore Ducroux was repatriated to Indochina and was arrested on a ship coming from Singapore, on a charge of fabricating and using a false passport under the name of Le Franc.

18. "MCP AND LABOR UNREST/' INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE DIRECTOR, CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, KUALA LUMPUR, (N.D.), PROBABLY APRIL 1937⁴¹

MEMORANDUM

I. Introductory Statement of the Director, C.I.B., Kuala Lumpur

Supplement No. 2,
Police Journal 1935.

Para. 10, Police Journal, April 1937.

In 1934, a document dated 1st June, written by an American member of the Comintern in Shanghai, to the Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party, was seized in Singapore. This document contained advice as to the policy to be adopted in the future by the Malayan Communist Party. In brief, this advice was to the effect that the Communist Party should extend their field of activities, and

³⁹Also known as Fu Ta Ching, a member of the China Communist Party, who was sent to Malaya as organizer of the Nanyang (South Seas) Communist Party in the twenties. A fluent English speaker, Fu was a CCP official of international repute. He was said to have been an associate of Ho Chi Minh in the formation of the Siamese Communist Party in 1925. He was also known to Tan Malaka and was said to have been connected with the Indonesian Communist "during the Comintern-inspired putsch of 1925-27." See Duncanson, "Ho-chi-minh," p.85; see also Brimmel, *Communism in South East Asia*, p.92.

⁴⁰Source: C.O.273/580/92036. Public Record Office, London.

⁴¹Source: File Selangor Secretariat Gen. 622/1937 entitled "Notes on Enquiry into Banishment of Chien Chin Ying," found in Arkib Negara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

expand their recruiting ground by obtaining the sympathy of the working classes of all nationalities in Malaya. This policy eventually became known as the "United Front Movement."

Statement 3 of Agent No. 2.

In pursuance of this advice, the Malayan Communist Party during the years 1935 and 1936, succeeded in establishing cells in all the Klang and Batu Laut factories (rubber and pineapple) and at Malayan Collieries, Batu Arang.

During the year 1936 a wave of returning prosperity swept the country, but in most cases this was unaccompanied by any corresponding rise in wages. This inevitably led to dissatisfaction among the working classes, and the time was now ripe for the Malayan Communist Party to pursue the policy, for which their work during the previous two years had been a mere preparation.

Between the 1st and 8th September 1936 a Representative Conference of the Malayan Communist Party was held in the neighbourhood of Muar, Johore. Fourteen representatives attended, from Singapore, Johore, Penang and Selangor.

Para. 52, Police Journal, September 1936.

At this meeting it was decided to change the organisation of the Party, so that the Malayan General Labour Union, which is affiliated to the Malayan Communist Party should have its headquarters at Kuala Lumpur, instead of at Singapore, and that the headquarters of a Northern Communist Party should also be at Kuala Lumpur and should be capable of action independent of Singapore. It was decided that fifty strikes, which had been organised throughout Malaya, should be proceeded with during the succeeding three months and that money should be raised for the Party by robberies, smuggling, lotteries and extortion.

Para. 52, Police Journal, September 1936.

In accordance with these resolutions the pineapple workers of Singapore and Johore were called out on strike on 9th September, this being followed by a series of strikes among building workers in Singapore and Johore which started on the 11th September. Other strikes also took place in Singapore in October. Further, on the 16th September 1936, a gang of Communists held up and robbed a European in Johore of \$8,700. Unfortunately for the Communist Party funds those responsible for the robbery were arrested, and the bulk of the money recovered.

Para. 58 Police Journal, October, also Information from Agent No. 2 (No. 1 in 20/C/37)

In October 1936 two trusted members of [the] Malayan Central Communist Party came to Kuala Lumpur from Singapore in order to re-organise the local Communist party and General Labour Union, and also to prepare the way for the formation of the independent Northern Party as forecast at the Representative Conference in September.

Evidence of Mr. Huang.
I.L.471/36

In November 1936 a strike occurred at Malayan Collieries, Batu Arang, and lasted for five days. One of the two members of the Malayan Central Committee, who had been in Batu Arang when the strike started, remained there during the

progress, and the conclusions he drew are embodied in a report which the Selangor Local Committee of the Communist Party sent to the Malayan Central Communist Party.

Para. 65 (B1 D) and 65 (C A) Police Journal, November 1936.

A Hylam who was arrested at Batu Arang for his activities during the strike, in pleading guilty to being a member of the General Labour Union, stated that he had been engaged in furthering the policy of the Workers United Front Movement, as adopted by the Selangor Local Committee on 11th November 1936.

Statements of Agent No. 2.

Further strikes occurred during the months of November and December in Sungei Besi, Batu Laut, Bukit Changgang and Klang. Those strikes were sponsored by the Selangor Communist Party, working through the cells which had already been established among the various labour forces.

Statement 3 of Agent No. 2.

In December, 1936 the Party reorganisation decided upon at the Representative Conference in September, was put into effect, and Kuala Lumpur became the headquarters of the General Labour Union, and the Northern Communist Party.

- a. Evidence of Mr. Huang
- b. Statements of Agent No. 2.
- c. 14/C/37.
- d. 3 in 18/C/37.

During the first two months of 1937 the General Labour Union concentrated their efforts in expediting the formation of vocational labour unions in Northern Malaya. The unions in which most progress was made were the Coal Workers Union at Batu Arang, the Pineapple Cutters Union at Klang and the Rubber Workers Union at Kajang.

Statements of Agent No. 2.

The stage was now set for a show of force, and at the beginning of March, 1937, the General Labour Union called for strikes among Chinese labour forces. These commenced in Kajang on 7th March 1937 and rapidly spread all over Selangor, into Negeri Sembilan and into Pahang. The object of these strikes, as far as the General Labour Union was concerned, was to force the Government to recognise the Rubber Workers Union. If they had succeeded in this, recognition of the other vocational unions must have followed. All these unions would have been subject to the direction of the General Labour Union, through which the Communist Party would have been able to dictate to Government their labour policy.

19. LETTER FROM AN AMERICAN COMINTERN AGENT, BELIEVED TO BE EARL BROWDER, TO MCP "CENTRAL." EXTRACT FROM S.S. POLICE JOURNAL, APRIL 1937, PARA 10.⁴²

Therefore the Party—from the Central Committee to the lower Party committees and units—should concentrate its entire forces and center its main activities upon and in the decisive railway shops and centers, such as Sentul and Singapore, the most important tin mines and smelters, rubber factories and plantations, such as the region of Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Seremban, the shipping lines and wharves in Singapore, Penang and Malacca, and in the Singapore Naval Base, for developing mass work and building up and strengthening the Party, as well as the Red trade unions and the mass organizations, on this basis: for creating broad and intimate ties and permanent working contact between the Party and the masses in the key points of production: for mobilizing and gaining the fighting co-operation of the widest sections of the workers, unemployed, poor peasants, city poor, anti-imperialist students and intellectuals for definite united front mass struggles in defence of their everyday economic and political demands and basic interests.

Precisely at the present juncture, in order to strengthen the fighting capacity of the proletariat and its leading role in the anti-imperialist agrarian revolution, the Communist Party of Malaya must devote the greatest attention to building up and consolidating the Red trade unions on a factory, mine, plantation and wharf basis, and at all costs initiate, expand and win the leadership of the strike and unemployed movements. The advancing revolutionary strike struggles of the workers in the main industries clearly shows the great inexhaustible strength of the workers and confirms the fact that the working class is the leading force in the Malayan revolution: at the same time it places most sharply before the Communist Party of Malaya as one of its central vital tasks the problem of transforming the red unions into powerful mass organizations of the proletariat and of organising and leading the strike struggles.

Concentrating upon the decisive railway shops, tin mines, rubber plantations, wharves and ships, the Party thru the Red trade unions, particularly the lower organizations of the unions and thru the establishment of various united front grievance Committees, committees of action for strike preparation, broad elected strike committees, the holding of enterprise, etc. delegate conferences—should work out together with the workers a series of the most urgent and immediate demands for given factories, etc., and specific program of action for the transport, tin and rubber industry around which the Chinese, Indian and Malayan workers, irrespective of their political affiliations can be drawn into definite struggles for improving their working conditions and defending their daily and vital interests.

-Certified as true extract from the S.S. Police Journal, No. 4 dated 30.4.1937.—
Director, C.I.B., Federated Malay States. 24 July 1937.

⁴²Source: File Selangor Secretariat Gen.622/1937 entitled "Notes on Enquiry into Banishment of Chien Chin Ying," found in Arkib Negara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

20. "INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE CHINA COMMUNIST PARTY TO THE MCP." EXTRACT FROM A MALAYA COMBINED INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY, 1 TO 31 OCTOBER, 1940⁴³

*Extract from a Malaya Combined Intelligence Summary,
No. 8.*

*Period 1st to 31st, October 1940
(MCIS No. 8/1940)*

174. MALAYA—COMMUNISM

Policy of the Malayan Communist Party. Previous reference: MCIS No. 7/1940, page 133.

Instructions were received in the middle of September by the Malayan Communist Party from the China Communist Party apparatus in Hong Kong to adopt forthwith the following programme:

1. All anti-British movements and strike agitation in Malaya to cease forthwith.
2. Henceforth the Malayan Communist Party will concentrate upon the consolidation of the anti-Japanese front and support of the National Salvation Movement in Malaya.

3. No opposition to be offered by the Malayan Communist Party to any campaign initiated by the Chinese community in Malaya to aid Britain's war effort.

These orders have been accepted by the Malayan Communist Party, whose representatives toured the country during October to convey them to local committees.

21. "MCP'S NEW POLICY TO WIN OVER OVERSEAS CHINESE CAPITALISTS/' EXTRACT FROM A MALAYA COMBINED INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY, 1 NOVEMBER TO 30 NOVEMBER 1940⁴⁴

SECRET

*Extract from the Malaya Combined Intelligence Summary
No. 9*

*Period 1st November to 30th November, 1940.
(MCIS No. 9/1940.)*

199. MALAYA—COMMUNISM

Policy of the Malayan Communist Party. Previous Reference: MCIS No. 8/1940, page 155.

Letters by courier confirming the instructions received by the Malayan Communist Party from the China Communist party through Hong Kong clearly show that the new policy is one solely of temporary expediency. The substance of the new policy is as stated in M.C.I.S.No. 8/1940, but it is also laid down that "a victorious war for China will be the overture for an emancipation movement in the Colonies," and that "the sin of any struggles conducted by the toiling masses should be specifically directed against the British Imperialists, and not against the overseas Chinese capitalists. This distinction must be made, or there will be the danger of driving the large middle and upper strata of the overseas Chinese into the bosom of the Kuomintang. We must increase our activities so that we may win them over by

⁴³Source: C.O.273/666/50336, Public Record Office, London.

⁴⁴Source: C.O. 273/666/50336, Public Record Office, London.

establishing an united front based on armed resistance, unity and progress, which will appeal to them irrespective of their faith, doctrine or inclinations."

(Director, Special Branch, S.S. Police)

PART 2

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POLICE, SPECIAL BRANCH ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 1934,1935, AND 1936

INTRODUCTION

This section containing Special Branch papers owes largely to series no. 273 of the Colonial Office records in London. The papers were compiled as "supplements" by the Special Branch, the agency responsible for internal security in the Straits Settlements, and published in their *Political Intelligence Journal* (comprising Singapore, Melaka, and Penang). Copies of this journal were sent to the Colonial Office in London by the British high commissioner in Singapore. Unfortunately, the complete set of the annual reports of the Special Branch is not available in the C.O. 273 series. Although there are references to other issues of the *Police Journal*, only its annual reports for 1934,1935, and 1936 have been located.

The Special Branch reports deal not only with Communist activities in Malaya but also with the international Communist movement, and give special attention to activities in Indochina, Siam, the Dutch East Indies, Burma, and India. The Special Branch appears to have detected contacts between the MCP and the Comintern network in Shanghai and Hongkong as well as with Communist groups in NEI and Burma. The reports also reveal that the communications between the Special Branch in Malaya and its counterparts in these countries had been "close and cordial" (see its report for 1934).

One of the main highlights of these Special Branch reports is the disclosure of successful British methods of control of Communist activities during the period 1934-1936, especially arrests of suspected Communists and postal censorship. The British used a number of restrictive ordinances—the Banishment Ordinance, the Registration of Societies Ordinance, and Labor Control Bills—to exert a measure of control over the expansion of Communist influence and activities. The police force was also successful in dealing with overt acts of violence that were allegedly carried out by Communists or the organizations they controlled. The footnotes in this section are mine. [Ed.]

SECRET¹

**STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POLICE
SPECIAL BRANCH
REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1934**

PART I—ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTION**1. RAIDS**

The following table shows the number of raids carried out in the year under review and in the four preceding years:

Settlements	1934		1933		1932		1931		1930	
	Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids	
	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results
Singapore	33	13	95	78	118	84	174	44	60	26
Penang	33	4	34	8	70	12	44	11	---	---
Malacca	5	2	8	2	60	---	---	---	---	---
Total	71	19	137	88	248	96	218	55	60	26

2. ARRESTS

The following table shows the number of suspected communists detained and subsequently either released or proceeded against and affords some comparison with previous years, as far as figures are available:

Settlement and Year	Total Detained	Released after Inquiry	Charged in Court	Converted in Court	Number of Court Cases
Singapore					
1934	164	118	31	26	13 ^a
1933	631	411	48	48	22
1932	462	216	213	189	72
Penang					
1934	17	7	7	5	6 ^b
1933	36	13	21	2	2
1932	54	20	34	24	18
Malacca					
1934	17	5	2	2	1
1933	132	62	55	51	14
1932	101	61	28	14	14

^a One case pending.

^b Three cases pending

3. BANISHMENTS

The following table shows the number of applications for banishment made against communists and the results of banishment action taken and affords some comparison with previous years, as far as figures are available:

Settlement and Year	No. of B.W.s Applied for	No. Issued	Including Those Outstanding from Previous Years	No. of Deportees The Aliens Ordinance (1933)
Singapore				
1934	40	36	32	6
1933	235		204	66 ^a
1932	286		224	
1931	214	175	179	
1930	110	97	100	
Penang				
1934	7	3	4	3
1933	24		18	
1932	25		25	
Malacca				
1934	—		—	9
1933	53		52	
1932	37		37	

¹ Of the 66,13 were arrested on B.W.

4. POSTALCENSORSHIP

The following table shows the number of useful communist letters in Chinese intercepted in Singapore and affords a comparison with previous years:

Year	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928
No. of letters in Chinese	459	522	1,280	1,485	898	345	-2 ^a

^a Censorship began. No record kept.

During 1934 as in previous years, a number of other subversive communications were intercepted by postal censorship, which are not included in the above figures. Amongst these were letters in English, German, Malay and Japanese. In addition a large quantity of printed Communist propaganda not included in the above, in English, French, Dutch, Chinese, Malay and Gurmukhi, was intercepted, some of which was of local and some of external origin.

The downward trend in the volume of local Chinese communist correspondence is maintained, despite an increase in the staff of Censors. This demonstrates what is already known, namely the increased use of couriers by the Party both in the conduct of their local correspondence and in the maintenance of their contact with neighbouring countries. Other noticeable features during 1934 in the development of Party correspondence during 1934 were:

- (a) A considerable decrease in the percentage of letters written in invisible ink.
- (b) The use of a numerical code based on the Chinese Telegraphic code.
- (c) The introduction of a "cryptic style" in open letters.

The two latter methods are very laborious to decypher not only to the Special Branch, but also to the recipients themselves.

5. IMPORTANT ANTI-COMMUNIST RAIDS MADE IN SINGAPORE IN 1934

(1) On 4th January, 1934, an important "Post Office" or Propaganda Distribution centre of the M.C.P., Malayan Communist Youth (M.C.Y.) and Malayan General Labour Union (M.G.L.U.) at 409, New Bridge Road was raided. A large quantity of seditious literature were found ready for despatch. Six arrests were made including the Chairman of the Young Workers Department, the Chairman of the Young Men's Association and an important executive of M.C.Y./"Central." All were convicted and banished.

(2) On 20th February, 1934 a Communist rendezvous at 5, Sago Street was raided. Seditious literature were found. Seven arrests were made including an important executive of M.C.Y. "Central" who was found to have a long record as an executive of the M.C.Y. in Penang.

(3) On 22nd June, 1934, the joint printing section of the M.C.P. and M.C.Y. was raided. A printing press, a typewriter, and a large quantity of printing material and cyclostyled documents were seized. Seven arrests were made—2 female and 5 male—including the secretary of the M.C.P. "Central."

(4) On 24th July, 1934, a raid was made at 218, Serangoon Road where C.P. documents and an automatic pistol with 5 rounds of ammunition were found.

(Note: In Para. 5 of the report of this Branch for 1933 reference is made to the connection between the Kei Shuk Sheh Seamen's Organisation and the Malayan Seamen's General Labour Union.) In September, 1934, the Kei Shuk Sheh was suppressed by Government and 4 of the leaders of the M.S.G.L.U. who were also important members of the K.S.S. were banished.

6. A GENERAL REVIEW OF COMMUNISM IN MALAYA DURING 1934

Comment under this section is to be found in the printed supplement attached at the end of this report.

SECRET

REVIEW OF COMMUNISM IN MALAYA DURING 1934

1. EXTERNAL DIRECTION

THE COMINTERN APPARATUS IN SHANGHAI.

The nerve-centre of Comintern international intrigue in the Far East, formerly known as the Far Eastern Bureau, and still situated in Shanghai, underwent a change during the year. It is probably now more efficiently organised for underground subversive activity than ever before.

Resident External Directive Agent In Singapore

A Cantonese agent of the Third International arrived in Singapore in March. He was subsequently identified on paper as one "D. Ling." He was in touch with the Headquarters of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers in Amsterdam and believed also with the Comintern apparatus in Shanghai. He is an international communist of evidently high attainments and was the driving force behind the movement in Malaya during the year 1934. He remained very much "underground"

and his personal identity was known to not more than three of the members of Malayan "Central" of whom only one was in personal contact with him. He knows German, French and Chinese besides some English.

His mission in Malaya appears to have been to give effect, at least on paper, to the "Resolutions" of the XHIth Plenum of the Executive Committee of Communist International (E.C.C.I.) held in Moscow in December, 1932, and conveyed to Malayan "Central" in the Instructional Letter (in Chinese) dated 23rd May 1933, a copy of which was obtained by the Special Branch in August, 1933 (Police Journal, Page 60 of 1933). The identity of D. Ling was established on paper on 5th October, 1934, but no opportunity presented itself to arrest him, a difficult and delicate matter. He left Singapore for Java about 15th October, 1934 by means and by a route at present unknown. He is expected to return to Malaya in 1935.

Letter From The Comintern Apparatus In Shanghai To The Central Committee Of The M.C.P., Dated 1-6-34

An "Instructional Letter" in English dated 1st June, 1934, from the Comintern Apparatus in Shanghai to Malayan Communist Party was obtained and photographed in October. It had meanwhile been translated into Chinese by D. Ling. It proves that the interest of the re-organised apparatus in Shanghai in Malayan Communist Party was at that time undiminished.

Subsidy From The Comintern Apparatus In Shanghai To The Malayan Communist Party

Arrangements for the payment by Shanghai of a subsidy of \$300 per month to the M.C.P. (to be drawn by courier quarterly) were made towards the end of 1933. As far as is known this has been paid regularly up to the present time. The last known remittance to the Malayan Communist Party was about \$2,300 received in Singapore in August 1934. Arrangements for sending a further remittance were in hand at the close of the year.

2. THE CONDITION OF THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY

(1) The Party's Own Records For 1933 and 1934

Successful raids in 1933 and the early part of 1934 put the Special Branch in possession of the original records of the "Annual Conference" of the M.C.P. for the year 1932 and 1933.

These records were analysed by Mr. Barry of the Special Branch and were issued as Supplement No.11 to the Police Journal under date 30th June 1934. This analysis gives a fair picture of the condition of the Party in those two years. Since the date of the 1933 Conference (26th August, 1933), however, the reorganisation of the Comintern Apparatus in Shanghai has taken place and a regular subsidy has been received which added to the presence in Singapore during 1934 of D. Ling has considerably altered the rather gloomy picture of the fortunes of the M.C.P. presented by the earlier Conference reports.

This improvement in the condition of the M.C.P. was clearly shown by the results of a raid in Singapore on 22nd June, 1934.

(2) The Flower Road Raid, Singapore

On 22nd June, 1934, a successful raid was made on a small compound house in Flower Road (Paya Lebar District) which proved to be the Printing Section of the M.C.P. "Central." Four men and two women were arrested in the house which was

well-stocked with all requirements including a typewriter, printing press (cyclo-style) and a large quantity of propaganda in Chinese, English, Malay and Tamil completed and in preparation.

The Secretary of Malayan "Central" (a non-resident) was also arrested later the same day when visiting the house. This raid proved clearly the reviving fortunes and activities of the M.C.P. as a result of the Shanghai subsidy and indicated a very different condition of the Party from that shown to exist in 1932 and 1933.

In this raid a type-written report of the F.M.S. Railway Strike of April-May, 1934, by D. Ling in German was found, evidently intended for Shanghai or Europe. A quantity of propaganda in Malay and Tamil both completed and in preparation and indicating the handiwork of some members of the N.E.I, renegade group, resident in Singapore, was also found.

(3) The "Racial Movement" In Malaya

This propaganda in Malay and Tamil has been examined and analysed and the results with comments have been issued as Supplement No. 12 to the Police Journal under date 30th October, 1934.

While the practical results so far obtained by the M.C.P. in this direction are not disquietening, the fact is again proved of the desire and intention of the Comintern to infect the indigenous population of Malaya with the virus of Communism, and for this purpose the services of some of the "intelligentsia" amongst the N.E.I, renegade group resident in Singapore, have been requisitioned.

(4) The Activities Of The Renegade N.E.I. Group In Malaya.

This group which numbers about fifty "Indonesians" in Malaya of any importance, are the local representatives of that body of fugitives who fled from the Netherlands Indies after the rebellion there of 1926-1927. Amongst them are supporters of all or nearly all the various political groups into which the aspirations of "Indonesians" are split up. There is also amongst them, a small section of pure communists with an "international" outlook and it is from amongst this small section that helpers have been found by the M.C.P. to prepare the propaganda in Malay, found at Flower Road which is intended to further the progress of the "Racial Movement" in Malaya.

To this extent the "internationally minded" members of the N.E.I, renegade group in Malaya are a local danger. The majority of the group are however, chiefly interested in their various schemes for the liberation of "Indonesia."

It is a question what line is best to be taken against the locally resident "international" communist from the N.E.I., whose arrest merely discloses information, without producing evidence sufficient for banishment. One of the more dangerous members of this group named Amir Hamzah Siregar² left Singapore for Java on 3rd October, 1934, and was arrested by the Dutch authorities on 29th December, 1934.

3. COMMUNIST DEVELOPMENTS IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IN 1934

(1) French Indo-China

There have been signs of a recrudescence of communist activity in French Indo-China during the latter half of the year.

²Amir Hamzah Siregar, alias Jimmy Taylor, alias Elias bin Hassan, alias Amat, alias Monica, a native of Tapanuli, Sumatra, was born about 1906 and was said to have been an active Communist in Malaya. See the Malayan Security Service document, "Malay and Indonesian Communists," in pt. 5.

The profound economic depression which continues in that country, helps the appeal of the "Communist way out."

(2) Siam

Luang Pradit,³ the dark horse of Siamese politics who has frequently been suspected to be a Communist at heart, has [at] last been given a definite political label. He is a left-wing Socialist, without at present any taint of Moscow.

What he may become if Moscow gets at him, in the unstable political conditions in Siam is another matter. It seems too good an opportunity to be missed by Moscow for "helping him over the border." Communism spreading in from French Indo-China has made its appearance amongst the Siamese of the north east of the Kingdom and the Chinese cell in Bangkok is also alive and in touch with M.C.P. Singapore.

(3) Netherlands East Indies

There are signs of liaison between the Communist members of the N.E.I renegade group in Singapore and their friends in Java, particularly Solo.

The M.C.P. reported during the year to Shanghai "renewed connection with Java," but the nature and extent of these connections is not known.

A new European Bureau of the Third International which opened in Brussels in July with Rustom Effendi⁴ at its head, appears to be in direct contact with Java.

(4) Burma

The extent of pure Communism amongst Burmese (if any) is unknown. The nationalist movement appears to be the chief political interest in that country.

There is a Chinese cell in Rangoon which was in touch with M.C.P. "Central" Singapore in 1933, but its activities appear at present negligible, although M.C.P. has reported to Shanghai as recently as September 1934, its current interest in Burma.

(5) India

Since the discharge from gaol in 1933 of those convicted in the Meerut conspiracy case, the organisation of "international" Communism in India (as opposed to sectarian squabbling on the basis of Communism) has made rapid and decisive strides.

There has appeared the distinct danger that the Communist creed expertly used might prove the one co-ordinating factor amongst India's millions which might lead them to sink racial and religious differences and present "an United Front to British Imperialism."

(6) Proscription By The Government Of India Of The Indian Communist Party

By a proclamation of 1st July, 1934, the Government of India declared the Communist Party of India and its subsidiaries to be an illegal association. This action is one of great importance to those engaged upon the work of combatting the inroads of communism in the East.

³Luang Pradit Manutham, also known as Pridi Phanomyang, the radical Thai leader who played a prominent role in the military coup of 1932 that ended absolute monarchy in Thailand. See Benjamin A. Batson, *The End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1984).

⁴Rustam Effendi, a Minangkabau Communist, was a member of the Communist Party of Holland and a representative of the party in the Dutch Parliament. He had headed the Indonesian Students' association Perhimpunan Indonesia in 1931. He was not to return to Indonesia until the end of 1946 when he broke with the PKI.

4. LIAISON BY THE SPECIAL BRANCH WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Liaison in communist matters between the Special Branch and India, Rangoon, Batavia, Bangkok, Saigon, Hanoi, Hongkong and Shanghai, as well as with Europe, has been close and cordial throughout the year.

5. JAPANESE INTEREST IN "RACIAL MOVEMENTS"

Signs are not lacking that the Japanese in their self-appointed role of "leaders in the liberation of Asia"⁷ are interested in the various "racial movements" in the "Colonial countries" of the Far East. How far, if at all, under-surface co-operation is possible between the leaders of Japanese pan-Asianism, oriental nationalism and Moscow communism, remains yet to be determined .

The attitude of Japan after she finally leaves the League of Nations in March, 1935, may offer some means of gauging this aspect of future possibilities.

Singapore, Special Branch
31st December 1934

SECRET⁵

**STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POLICE
SPECIAL BRANCH
REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1935**

PART i—ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTION**i. RAIDS**

The following table shows the number of raids carried out in the year under review and in the four preceding years:

Settlements	1935		1934		1933		1932		1931	
	Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids	
	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results
Singapore	12	7	33	13	95	78	118	84	174	44
Penang	26	2	33	4	34	8	70	12	44	11
Malacca	4	1	1	2	8	2	60	12	12	12
Total	42	10	71	19	137	88	248	96	218	55

2. ARRESTS

The following table shows the number of suspected communists detained and subsequently either released or proceeded against and affords some comparison with previous years, as far as figures are available:

Settlement and Year	Total Detained	Released after Inquiry	Charged in Court	Converted in Court	Number of Court Cases
Singapore					
1935	35	17	17	13	10
1934	164	118	31	26	13
1933	661	411	48	48	22
1932	462	216	213	189	72
Penang					
1935	13	—	13	4	6
1934	17	7	7	5	6
1933	36	13	21	2	2
1932	54	20	34	24	18
Malacca					
1935	12	4	7	6	3
1934	17	5	2	2	1
1933	132	62	55	51	14
1932	101	61	28	14	14

⁵Source: CO 273/616/50147, Public Record Office, London.

3. BANISHMENTS

The following table shows the number of applications for banishment made against communists and the results of banishment action taken and affords some comparison with previous years, as far as figures are available:

Settlement and Year	No. of B.W.s Applied for	No. Issued	Including Those Outstanding from Previous Years	No. of Deportees The Aliens Ordinance (1933)
Singapore				
1935	19	18	16	22
1934	40	36	32	6
1933	235	—	204	66 ^a
1932	286	—	224	—
1931	214	175	179	—
1930	110	97	100	—
Penang				
1935	4	4	4	—
1934	7	3	4	3
1933	24	—	18	—
1932	25	—	25	—
Malacca				
1935	8	8	7	1
1934	—	—	—	9
1933	53	—	52	—
1932	37	—	37	—

^a Of the 66, 13 were arrested on B.W.

4. POSTAL CENSORSHIP

The following table shows the number of useful communist letters in Chinese intercepted in Singapore and affords a comparison with previous years:

Year	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928
No. of letters in Chinese	350	459	522	1,280	1,485	898	345	— ^a

^a Censorship began. No record kept.

As in previous years, a number of other subversive communicating [sic] was intercepted by postal censorship which is not included in the above figures. In addition, a large quantity of printed communist propaganda in various languages was intercepted, some of which was of local and some of external origin.

The downward trend in the volume of local Chinese communist correspondence is maintained. This is accounted for by-

- te) the weak organisation of the Communist Party in Malaya during the year, and
- (b) the continued use by the Party, whenever possible of couriers.

Other features of the year were:

- (1) the decrease of the use of sympathetic inks in correspondence, and

(2) the standardisation of the cryptic style introduced to communist correspondence in 1934.

5. IMPORTANT ANTI-COMMUNIST RAIDS MADE IN SINGAPORE IN 1935

(1) On 17th June, 1935, a successful raid was made on the printing press of the Malayan Communist Party at 600-A, Serangoon Road. Four Hakka Chinese, including two women, were arrested, and a quantity of seditious literature and printing material seized.

(2) On 12th December, 1935, two Malayan Communist Party executives were arrested during a raid made on Nos. 131-A and 161-U, Paya Lebar Road. One of the arrested men was the Chairman and Secretary of the Malayan Communist Party Central Committee.

6. A GENERAL REVIEW OF COMMUNISM IN MALAYA DURING 1935

Comment under this Section is to be found in the printed supplement attached at the end of this Report.

SECRET

REVIEW OF COMMUNISM IN MALAYA, 1935

(A) EXTERNAL DIRECTION

The year was marked by the complete loss of contact by the Communist Party with the Comintern Apparatus in Shanghai on which the Malayan Communist Party relies for a subsidy and instructions. There was no evidence during the year that the Party in Malaya was receiving instructions or assistance from any other source.

In May, 1935, the Malayan Communist Party sent a representative to Shanghai to regain contact and to procure the subsidy. The arrival of this representative coincided with raids by the French Police in Shanghai and the disorganisation of the Comintern Apparatus. As a result he made contact only with the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai but had not succeeded in obtaining the subsidy or instructions from the Comintern Apparatus by the end of the year.

An incorrect report which reached the Malayan Communist Party that this representative had been arrested in Shanghai led the Malayan Communist Party in November, 1935, to send a man to Bangkok to establish liaison with the Siamese and Annamite Communist Party with a view to regaining contact with the Comintern Apparatus in Shanghai through them, via the External Directing Committee of the Annamite Communist Party which was operating from Macao in South China.

(B) INTERNAL DIRECTION

The year opened with one Central Committee in control of the active communist organisations in Malaya, namely, the Malayan Communist Party, Malayan Communist Youth and the Malayan General Labour Union.

This Central Committee consisted of eleven members from which an Executive Committee of five members and a standing Committee of three members were selected. In addition there were local committees in immediate charge of communist activities in various centres of the country. Of these the Penang Local Committee was the most active.

In December, 1934, certain members of the Party who were dissatisfied with the work of the Central Committee had suggested that the Central Committee should

send activists to various places in Malaya to recruit new members and to stimulate local activities. The Central Committee accepted this suggestion and a Directing Committee was formed from members of the Central Committee which divided the country into five centres. A member of this Directing Committee was sent to reside in each centre for two months. Thus was born the first of a series of "Periods of Activity." The first period, which was known as the "Campaign Period" lasted from December, 1934, until April, 1935. Then followed the "Rushing Period" from April, 1935 to August 1935. A third period of activity, known as the "Struggling Period" was in operation at the close of the year and was due to last from October, 1935 to February, 1936.

Representative conferences of the Malayan Communist Party, Malayan Communist Youth and Malayan General Labour Union were held in Singapore in September and October, 1935. At the Malayan Communist Party Conference held in September, 1935, a new Central Committee was elected to supervise the activities of all three organisations. The Executive and Standing Committee were abolished owing to lack of trained personnel. The new Central Committee consisted of a Chairman (who was also Secretary), a Propagandist, an Organiser and six other members with two extra members as reserves. In addition a Communist Youth Committee of three members and a Malayan General Labour Union Committee of two members were elected. A whole-time travelling Inspector for Malaya was also appointed.

In June, 1935, there was an unsuccessful attempt by the Party to obtain registration of a disguised Communist Labour Union under the name of the "Singapore Building Workers General Labour Union." There was also an attempt to register a Hawkers' Union in Singapore which there is reason to believe was instigated by members of the Communist Party. Further attempts along these lines may be expected.

In March, 1935, a new attempt was made by the Party to unite in common action members of the several races in Malaya. An "Unification Committee" was formed in Singapore for this purpose. This Committee, which consisted of two Chinese, a Tamil, an Annamite and a Javanese, is experimenting in organising labour unions on a pan-racial basis. It has reorganised the Red Labour Union in the Singapore Traction Company and has established a "grey" union of mechanics. The mechanics in Singapore already have a registered society and it has evidently been found impossible to influence the directing elements of this society in favour of communism. An attempt has, therefore, been made to recruit members, of the mechanics' community in Singapore, who are not members of the registered Mechanics' Society, to form an unregistered and, therefore, unlawful society of their own. This has met with at least partial success and the membership of this "grey" union is estimated at about 100 persons. The Singapore Traction Company Red Labour Union is organised in five groups of five cells each. It remains to be seen how far the various races will combine. The Party itself is apparently uncertain on this point for the members of this union have only been permitted to watch and not to participate in three of the minor demonstrations that occurred during the year. As these demonstrations were carried out on a "tip and run" principle, it is doubtful whether the members of the Singapore Traction Company Red Labour Union were greatly impressed.

(C) ACTIVITIES

The Malayan Communist Party is the directing organisation of the Malayan Communist Youth and the various Communist Labour Unions. It has issued a certain amount of propaganda in its own name.

Malayan Communist Youth activities have been almost entirely confined to the issue of propaganda.

Four small demonstrations were staged during the year.

In May some younger members of the Malayan General Labour Union attempted incendiarism against the Jubilee decorations in Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Some home-made bombs were discharged in Singapore during the Jubilee festivities but without effect other than to injure slightly a Chinese onlooker.

On 20th August, a party of about thirty Chinese (chiefly Hailams) armed with bottles and iron bars, threw the bottles into the Japanese Club in Selegie Road and ran off in a body. A detective who happened to be passing called three policemen to his assistance and three arrests were effected.

On 20th November, a party of about seventy members of the Malayan General Labour Union (Hokkiens and Hailams) threw stones and several pieces of iron bars into a Japanese hospital in Singapore. They scattered anti-war and anti-Japanese pamphlets and disappeared. The whole incident lasted less than a minute.

Towards the end of the year anti-war and (in Singapore) anti-bicycle tax propaganda appeared in the form of pamphlets, news sheets and slogans written on blank walls.

On 26th December, a demonstration was planned in Singapore town but the demonstrators had only time to scatter a few pamphlets and to disappear in the crowd before the Police arrived on the scene.

(D) LIAISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

There are no indications that any of the Malayan Communist organisations was in liaison with any other country except Siam where contact had just been made by letter at the end of the year. There was, however, one Chinese cell in Bagan Si Api Api, Sumatra which remitted \$15 monthly to the Malayan Communist Party funds.

(E) GENERAL

As will be gathered from the foregoing, the Communist Party in Malaya is at the moment in low water owing to loss of contact with the directing organisation in Shanghai and the consequent loss of the Comintern subsidy.

Sooner or later contact with the directing apparatus of the Comintern will be regained and the Party in Malaya will be infused with new life.

It is remarkable with what tenacity the Party continues its activities in spite of the handicaps mentioned above. It is true that at the moment these activities are confined to the publication of propaganda and the staging of very minor disturbances but the point is that it is the Labour Unions which display this activity and it is on the Labour Unions that the Central Committee is mainly concentrating its efforts and especially on those Labour Unions whose members are of more than one race. It is almost certain that the attempt to induce different races to combine in a common cause will fail. The only hope of success lies in the increase in the number of locally-born members who have from an early age been accustomed to mix with other races in this country. In Malaya, as elsewhere, the labour dispute is the communist opportunity. The for-

mation and control of Labour Unions is, therefore, essential to the communist scheme.

There are signs that efforts may be made once again to stimulate recruitment among school boys and students and to utilise recreation clubs for the purpose of spreading communism among the younger generation in Malaya.

Singapore, Special Branch.
1st January, 1936.

SECRET⁶

**STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POLICE
SPECIAL BRANCH
REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1936**

PART I -ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTION**1. RAIDS:**

(a) The following table shows the number of raids carried out in the year 1936 and the four preceding years:

Settlements	1936		1935		1934		1933		1932	
	Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids		Raids	
	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results	Total Raids	Yielding Results
Singapore	8	4	12	7	33	13	95	78	118	84
Penang	13	6	26	2	33	4	34	8	70	12
Malacca	2	2	4	1	5	2	8	2	60	—
Total	23	12	42	10	71	19	137	88	248	96

(b) It will be noticed that the number of raids has decreased year by year. Steady police pressure is gradually restricting the activities of the Malayan Communist Party. In the last two years this restriction has been accentuated by the isolation of the Malayan Party from Comintern guidance and subsidies. Continual vigilance is, however necessary. The potentialities of the Party remain and they will take every opportunity to develop those potentialities. Any relaxation in the police pressure would result in a recrudescence of communist activities, especially if contact is again made with the Comintern and European direction.

2. ARRESTS:

(a) The following table shows the number of suspected communists detained and subsequent action taken and affords some comparison with previous years:

Settlement and Year	Total Detained	Released after Inquiry	Charged in Court	Convicted in Court	Acquired	Withdrawn in Favour of Banishment	Sub-judice at the Close of the Year	Number of Court Cases
Singapore								
1936	16	4	12	7	2	3	—	10
1935	35	17	17	13				10
1934	164	118	31	26	—			13
1933	661	411	48	48				22
1932	462	216	213	189				72

⁶Source: CO 273/630/50147, Public Record Office, London.

Settlement and Year	Total Detained	Released	Charged	Convicted	Withdrawn in Favour of Banishment	Sub-judice at the Close of the Year	Number of Court Cases
		after Inquiry	in Court	in Court			
Penang							
1936	13	5	8	5	3	—	—
1935	13	—	13	4	—	—	6
1934	17	7	7	5	—	—	6
1933	36	13	21	2	—	—	2
1932	54	20	34	24	—	—	18
Malacca							
1936	11	3	8	3	5	—	2
1935	12	4	7	6	—	—	3
1934	17	5	2	2	—	—	1
1933	132	62	55	51	—	—	14
1932	101	61	28	14	—	—	14

(b) With the decrease in raids mentioned in paragraph 1, there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of arrests made. Arrests by Special Branch are now usually confined to office-holders directing the activities of the Communist Party.

3. BANISHMENTS

(a) The following table shows the number of applications for banishment made against communists and the results of banishment action taken and affords some comparison with previous years, as far as figures are available:

Settlement and Year	No. of B.W.s Applied for	No. Issued	No. Executed Including Those Outstanding from Previous Years	No. Banished	No. Awaiting Banishment at the End of the Year	No. of Deportees under The Aliens Ordinance (1933)
Singapore						
1936	15	15	10	5	5	2
1935	19	18	16	—	—	—
1934	40	36	32	—	—	6
1933	221	221	204	—	—	66
1932	286	266	224	—	—	—
1931	214	175	179	—	—	—
Penang						
1936	—	—	—	—	—	3
1935	4	4	4	—	—	—
1934	7	3	4	—	—	3
1933	24	—	18	—	—	—
Malacca						
1936	4	4	4	4	—	—
1935	8	8	7	—	—	1
1934	—	—	—	—	—	9
1933	53	—	52	—	—	—

(b) A case occurred this year of an arrested communist—the Chairman of the Malayan Communist Party Central Committee—who could neither be charged in open Court since the evidence against him was from secret sources nor could a banishment enquiry be held, since he was able to produce proof of local birth. He, there-

fore, had to be released. This difficulty will become accentuated as the number of locally born persons increases.

4. POSTAL CENSORSHIP -

(a) Censorship of mails was carried out in Singapore and Penang.

(b) Few useful interceptions of communist letters were made in Penang since it was found preferable to make such interceptions normally in Singapore. Numerous proscribed and objectionable publications were however, intercepted in Penang.

(c) The following table shows the number of useful communist letters in Chinese intercepted in Singapore and affords a comparison with previous years:

Year	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929
No. of letters in Chinese	533	350	459	522	1,280	1,465	896	345

(d) As in previous years, a number of other subversive communications was intercepted by postal censorship, which is not included in the above figures. In addition, a large quantity of printed communist propaganda in various languages was intercepted, some of which was of internal and some of external origin.

(e) The amount of local Chinese communist correspondence has increased as compared with the figures of the preceding three years and the number of letters written in sympathetic ink has likewise increased.

(f) An outstanding feature in this year's intercepted letters was the introduction of the use of Romanised Chinese in Party correspondence.⁷

5. GENERAL

(a) During the year the Malayan Communist Party has been cut off from external funds and direction and has been thrown on its own resources. The Party has a few intelligent leaders but the material with which they have to work is very poor. Throughout the year unceasing efforts have been made in vain to regain contact with the Comintern in order to recover the subsidy and skilled direction of which the Party is so sorely in need.

(b) A split in the higher ranks of the Party led to the formation of a gang with the object of murdering certain comrades who were in opposition to the policy of the Malayan Communist Party Central Committee. These murders were duly carried out in Johore. A robbery by members of the same gang to raise funds for the Party resulted in the arrest of the persons taking part and the recovery of the money and two pistols.

(c) A wave of strikes swept over Malaya in common with the rest of the world during the latter half of 1936, and the local Communist Party did not lose the opportunity to exploit the situation.

(d) The Party took advantage of the Chinese National Salvation movement against Japanese aggression to distribute anti-Japanese National Salvation propaganda emanating from communist sources, among the literate classes particularly school teachers and students. This communist propaganda advocated an alliance between the Communist Party of China and the Chinese National Government

⁷Romanization of the Chinese script was one of the reforms advocated by the China Communist Party to promote mass literacy. It has been introduced in the People's Republic of China.

against the Japanese. To facilitate the spread of this propaganda the former Malayan Proletarian Art League was revived under the new name of the Malayan Proletarian Writers' Association. Branches and subsidiary groups of this association were opened in several places.

(e) A more detailed Review of Communist Activities in Malaya during 1936 is appended to this Report. A study of that review makes it clear that the Communist Party in Malaya is dependent on discontent of one kind or another to retain its hold on the people of this country. The surest safeguard, therefore, against the success of subversive communist propaganda is to remove, as far as is possible causes of discontent, especially among the Chinese who form the bulk of the population and from whose ranks the Malayan Communist Party is almost entirely recruited.

REVIEW OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN MALAYA, 1936

I. EXTERNAL DIRECTION

(a) The Malayan Communist Party remained throughout the year isolated from contact with the Comintern. Previously the Malayan Communist Party had been both directed and financed by a Comintern organisation in Shanghai. This organisation was, however, broken up in March, 1935, since when all liaison with the Comintern has been severed.

(b) Many attempts were made during the year by the Malayan Communist Party to regain contact with the Comintern via China, Siam, French Indo-China and France. In December contact was made with the Southern Bureau of the China Communist Party in Hongkong.

2. INTERNAL ORGANISATION

(a) Owing to lack of trained personnel the Party found it impossible to place the Communist Party (C.P.), Communist Youth (C.Y.), and the General Labour Union (G.L.U.) organisations under separate committees. A combined Malayan Communist Central Committee directed C.P., C.Y. and G.L.U. activities throughout the country, issuing propaganda and instructions in the name of the appropriate organisation. These three organisations were similarly represented on the Local and Town Committees.

(b) The Central Committee itself consisted partly of members resident in Singapore and partly of members resident elsewhere in Malaya. The work of the Committee was carried on by those members resident in Singapore. The Central Committee members up-country acted as channels through which the directions of the Singapore members reached the Local and Town Committees. These up-country Central Committee members were also responsible for conducting activities in their areas and for reporting progress to Headquarters in Singapore.

(c) To assist the above Committees to maintain discipline among members "picket corps" were formed in Singapore and Johore to murder traitors to the Party, to attack any police who attempted to arrest members of the Party and to carry out robberies to supply the Party with funds.

3. LACK OF FUNDS AND STEPS TAKEN BY THE PARTY TO REMEDY THE SITUATION

(a) The Party were considerably handicapped by lack of funds throughout the year. Various devices to raise funds were proposed, including armed robbery, organ-

isation of a lottery, making collection from Chinese patriots for the defence of China against Japanese aggression and importing and selling anti-Japanese literature. Of these methods the only temporarily successful one was an armed robbery carried out in Johore in September when approximately \$8,700 were stolen from an European employee of a building contractor who was conveying the money without a police escort to pay the labour force. However, the man participating in the robbery was arrested and the money was recovered as well as two pistols and a knife.

(b) In November the Negeri Sembilan Local Committee reported that an attempted robbery to raise funds had failed owing to unsatisfactory arrangements. Reading between the lines of that report, it appeared that the Negeri Sembilan Local Committee had not seriously contemplated a robbery.

(c) A small sum of money (\$40) was collected from students in Johore by asking for subscriptions to a Chinese communist paper, the Giu Guo Sh Bao, published in Paris, but subscriptions were never sent to Paris but were retained by the Central Committee who arranged with the Editor of the paper that an acknowledgement should appear in the paper to satisfy the subscribers, to which the Editor consented.

(d) Actually the current expenses of the Party was not heavy. Money was necessary to pay fares and passages of members of the Committee on transfer and to pay the cost of stencils and paper for propaganda issued by the press. These expenses were paid for by small subscriptions collected from members.

4. POLICY OF THE PARTY

A representative conference of the Party was held in September in Johore as a result of which three lines of activity were decided on. These three lines may be briefly designated as:-

- (a) Activities among the Intelligentsia
- (b) Labour activities
- (c) Propagation of communism among races other than Chinese.

(a) Activities among the Intelligentsia

This work was undertaken by the Communist Party and Communist Youth organisations, chiefly among school teachers and students. It had been the policy of the Comintern, since the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow in July, 1935, to form an United National Front of Communists and Kuo Min Tang against Japanese imperialist aggression in China. The period of communist influence over the Kuo Min Tang government in Southwest China from 1924 to 1927, when communist books, pamphlets and plays were produced in great quantities, had left its mark on Chinese schools, the press and literature generally. The proletarian literature movement which succeeded the communist regime reached its zenith in 1931 and was particularly popular among editors, school teachers and students upon whom it had made a deep impression.

During the year the Malayan Communist Party, exploiting the prevailing anti-Japanese tendency, started a local National Salvation (Anti-Japanese) Movement among the school teachers and students similar to the National Salvation Movement in China, and in order to facilitate the dissemination of communist propaganda in this guise among the Chinese-educated youth in Malaya, revived the Malayan Proletarian Art League under the new name of Malayan Proletarian Writers Association. Local Young Men's Literary Research Societies, Romanised Chinese

Research Societies and Reading Clubs were organised in conjunction with the Malayan Proletarian Writers' Association and the Student's Federation.

(b) Labour Activities

The Malayan General Labour Union aimed during the year at increasing the membership power and prestige of the vocational Labour Unions. It was realised by the Central Committee that the best way to achieve this aim was to instigate strikes by labour forces. This was not difficult since Chinese labour forces already had grievances by reason of their low wages, long hours and abuses by Chinese contractors and sub-contractors who often cheated them of their rightful wages. The Communist Labour Unions were already in contact with certain labour forces and these in many cases required but little persuasion to declare strikes. Such strikes were almost invariably successful in securing some improvement in labour conditions and the example soon spread to other forces. The General Labour Unions took the opportunity to enrol the strikers as members of the appropriate vocational union. This increased membership and the success of the strikes in turn increased the prestige of the Communist Labour Unions. The increased membership, however, was chiefly a paper one. The ordinary Chinese labourer was not particularly interested in communism as such but was prepared to join any union if told it was going to assist him to get more pay.

(c) Propagation Of Communism Among Races Other Than Chinese

A Malayan Racial Emancipation League was started in October under the control of a Committee of Chinese, Indian and Malay comrades. So far as is known, there were not more than two Tamils and two Malays who took an active part in this work. Their efforts appeared to have met with little success.

5. SPLIT IN THE PARTY AND MURDERS OF SUSPECTED TRAITORS

(a) The arrest of two successive chairmen of the Central Committee in December, 1935 and March, 1936, respectively led to a belief in the Party that certain members, who were known to be dissatisfied with the lukewarm manner in which communist activities were being conducted, had set up an opposition faction which was betraying the Central Committee to the Police. In May, at a meeting held in Johore, it was decided to murder certain suspected traitors. Three of these suspected persons were lured to Johore and were murdered there. Two bodies were recovered by the Police. One man had been strangled and buried in a Chinese vegetable garden; and [the] other had been shot. There was no evidence, other than his own statement, that the owner of the vegetable garden had been present at the murder of the strangled man and had buried the body. He could not, therefore, be charged in court but was banished. The murderers in these two cases were not arrested.

(b) A further murder took place in November in Johore. The Johore Local Committee suspected two Hailam brothers of having given information to the Police regarding communist activities. It was also ascertained that there was a sum of \$2,000 in the house where the brothers lived. One of the brothers was seized by three Chinese members of the Johore "picket corp," tied up in the jungle and questioned until he disclosed where the money was kept. Leaving him there, the three men, armed with a pistol and knives, proceeded to his house where they held up the inmates. One man, however, escaped. Fearing that he would raise an alarm the robbers fled. They returned to the jungle where they killed the brother whom they had tied up. No arrest was made in this case.

(c) On the 16th August, a Hailam member of the party who was erroneously suspected of having given information which led to a raid by the police was murdered at Maschap by two Hailam fellow members. His two assailants were arrested but the evidence was insufficient to substantiate a charge of murder.

(d) These murders culminated in the murder of a police detective when making the arrest of a slogan writer in Singapore in December.

(e) In order to appreciate the difficulties of the police in bringing these communist murderers to book, it should be realised that, as soon as a murder has been committed, the murderer is taken by a member of the Central Committee to a hiding place which is known to, at most, only two absolutely trustworthy persons. Furthermore, it is almost invariably impossible to find witnesses to give evidence to charge him with the crime.

6. INCIDENTS

(a) Demonstrations

The following public demonstrations took place during the year:

(1) In January, an anti-bicycle registration demonstration took place in Singapore. On this occasion a party of Chinese riding bicycles broke a window in the Registrar of Vehicles Office and made off scattering some pamphlets on the road way.

(2) In February, an anti-Japanese demonstration was carried out in Singapore. A party of Chinese carrying a banner was stopped by two policemen who seized the banner and arrested one of the banner bearers. A detective and a constable shortly afterwards made a second arrest, whereupon the demonstration fled.

(3) In June, on the occasion of the taking of the municipal census in Singapore, a party of Chinese distributed anti-Japanese and anti-census pamphlets but fled at sight of a police corporal in uniform on routine divisional duty. A Chinese youth on a bicycle pulled a street fire alarm and escaped on his bicycle. A home-made bomb was thrown through a window of the Chinese Protectorate but failed to explode. The gun powder was found to be so faultily mixed as to be non-explosive. There was no interference with the actual taking of the census.

(4) In August, a party of Chinese demonstrated in front of a Chinese theatre in Singapore. A police lance-corporal who went to investigate was attacked. He blew his whistle and the demonstrators ran away scattering pamphlets. One arrest was made.

(5) At the end of July, a serious and well-organised demonstration was planned. This was to have taken the form of an attack on Japanese shops by communists using incendiary bombs, pieces of iron, stones and sticks. At the same time anti-Japanese leaflets were to be distributed. This demonstration was frustrated by the arrival of the police who found the bombs, pamphlets, etc., abandoned on waste land near the rendezvous.

(6) Slogan writing on walls and scattering of pamphlets took place on the occasions of communist commemoration days in those places in Malaya where communists were active.

(b) Attacks On Police

In Singapore slogan writers were protected from police interference by members of the "picket corps" armed with knives and iron bars. The following four cases occurred in Singapore of the "picket corps" attacking policemen who attempted to arrest slogan writers. In July, a police constable and a civilian who went to his assis-

tance were attacked with iron bars. In September, a Sikh constable was attacked with iron bars. In October, a police constable was stabbed in the arm and in December, a detective was stabbed to death. In the last case two gangs of slogan writers joined together, each gang led by a "picket corps" leader. The leader of one of the gangs was arrested. The murderer, whose identity was known, was not arrested by the end of the year. The attack took place at night and evidence from eyewitnesses was not forthcoming. Banishment proceedings were taken in respect of the arrested gang leader.

(c) Strikes Organised Or Influenced By Communist Agitators

(1) In September the Singapore General Labour Union organised strikes in the pineapple canning and building trades in Johore and Singapore. Large bodies of strikers visited the Chinese Protectorate and remained there all day and slept outside the Protectorate building that night. Early next morning, the crowd having refused to disperse, the police arrested 22 persons and dispersed the strikers with a fire hose. The Singapore General Labour Union urged the strikers to remain out but they gradually drifted back to work. Steps were taken by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs to remedy the genuine grievances of the strikers.

A sequel to the pineapple cutters' strike was a night raid made in October by five pineapple cutters assisted by communist members of other trades on the Whatt Hin Pineapple Factory in Singapore. Sand was thrown into some of the machinery, a corrosive liquid was thrown over a dynamo and the account books were burned. The raid was actuated by motives of revenge on one of the foremen of the factory who was unpopular with the coolies on account of his harsh treatment and with the communities because he would brook no communist interference. The foreman was shot in the back in November and subsequently died of his wounds. The shots were fired by the Chairman of the Communist Domestic Servants Union who went into hiding. No witnesses of his murder can be found.

(2) *Singapore Traction Company*

In September, a number of drivers and conductors employed by the Singapore Traction Company struck work. This strike was not organised by the Communist Party. It was a half-hearted affair and after having been addressed by the Extra Assistant Controller of Labour the men resumed duty.

In October, they again came out on strike demanding higher wages and better conditions generally. The strike lasted two and a half days. Eventually the Company made a number of concessions and the employees returned to work. As soon as this second strike had been declared the Malayan Communist Party Central Committee offered the assistance of pickets which was accepted. Apart from this the Communist Party played no part in the strike.

(3) *Malayan Collieries, Batu Arang, Selangor*

In November, a strike occurred on the coal mine at Batu Arang. The strike was precipitated by an European employee on the mine attempting to break up a meeting of the Chinese employees who were preparing representations for submission to the company. The strikers disconnected the electric current at the power station and became so menacing that on two occasions the small police post at the mine were obliged to fire. Police reinforcements soon had the situation under control and negotiations between the employers and the strikers were able to proceed as a result of which certain concessions were granted to the labour force. A communist agitator

who had been sent to the mine by the Selangor Local Committee a few days before the strike took place remained on the mine throughout the strike.

(4) *Sungei Besi Tin Mine, Selangor*

In November, a strike took place on the Sungei Besi tin mine and, after negotiations the demands of the miners were granted. Certain communist agitators, who were at work to prolong the strike, were arrested. About 500 truck coolies endeavoured to march from the mine to Kuala Lumpur to demand the release of the arrested men but were met on the way by a party of police and turned back to the mine. Normal conditions prevailed on the mine by the end of the month.

(5) *Tong Sang Tin Min, Selangor*

A strike occurred on the mine in December. Among the demands of the strikers was one demanding the release of a communist agitator who had been arrested on a neighbouring mine in possession of documents containing terms suggested by the Selangor General Labour Union. This strike was quickly settled.

(6) *Pineapple Factories In Morib And Klang, Selangor*

Small strikes occurred in pineapple factories in Morib and Klang. These were believed to be the result of agitation by communist emissaries. They were quickly settled.

(7) *United Engineers And Singapore Harbour Board Fitters Strikes, Singapore*

In December the fitters struck for better terms. Negotiations proceeded amicably but a settlement had not been reached by the end of the year. In both these cases the Singapore General Labour Union sent agitators who urged the fitters to strike.

7. LIAISON BY THE PARTY WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Correspondence was maintained between the Central Committee in Singapore and individuals known to them in Burma, Siam, French Indo-China, Shanghai, Hongkong, Amoy, Swatow and Bagan Si Api Api in Sumatra. The object of this correspondence was, except in the case of the last named, mainly to find a way to regain touch with the Comintern. In Burma a member of the Malayan Communist Party took up his residence in Rangoon in July but soon had to go into hiding. Correspondence with him produced nothing of value to the Party. The correspondence with Siam was equally abortive. The French Indo-China Party showed little desire to co-operate. The correspondence with Hongkong and China consisted chiefly of instructions to former members of the Party, who had fled or been banished from Malaya, to endeavour to make contact with the China Communist Party or with the Comintern organisation in Shanghai. As regards the Netherlands Indies the correspondence only concerned a very small monthly subscription from sympathisers in Bagan Si Api Api.

8. PROPAGANDA

(a) The whereabouts of the Central Committee press in Singapore was kept a most closely guarded secret during the year; it was known to only the Chairman and the Secretary of the Central Committee. Most of the local propaganda, which was issued in considerable quantities by means of cyclo-styled books and pamphlets was in the handwriting of the Chairman. The police did not succeed in locating the main press, although a subsidiary press in Singapore was successfully raided in August.

(b) In Penang police efforts to locate the local Party press were similarly unsuccessful.

(c) Communist literature continued to be received from abroad. The "Giu Guo Sh Bao" (au secours de la patrie), an anti-Japanese paper published in Paris, was very popular and arrangements were made by the Central Committee to increase its sales locally. The "Chinese Vanguard" also published in Chinese, was received from New York. Mendacious accounts of local communist activities were sent to both papers by the Central Committee. Various other communist papers in Chinese and French and English were received from Paris, Berlin and London.

A new feature during the year was the introduction of romanised Chinese in reports and letters between communist organisations in Malaya. Text books were distributed and members were encouraged to use their form of script.

9. GENERAL

It is no easy matter to obtain a clear view of present day communist organisations and activities in Malaya since the break down of the orthodox communist organisation which was previously operating in this country. The functions of Committees are now indefinite and vary according to the ideas of the leading members and circumstances. The Central Committee has little hold over the local and town committees. The main function of the Central Committee, appears to be to issue propaganda and instructions and to arrange transfers of personnel. Subsidiary committees, having received a general idea of what is required, whether it is to stage demonstrations, to develop anti-Japanese activities or to organise strikes, act independently. Inspectors are sent around from time to time by the Central Committee to see how matters are progressing. In Singapore and Johore, chiefly due to the activities of the present Secretary of the Central Committee who has so far evaded arrest, "picket corps" have been formed, composed of men of the secret society gangster type, who are prepared to commit murder without any qualms. These men are exceptional and few in number. The majority of active members are far from bold, as is obvious from the timidity displayed when demonstrations have taken place without the presence of picket corps members. The Chinese National Salvation Movement and prevailing labour unrest provided the Party with opportunities of which they were not slow to avail themselves. It is probable that, had there been no communism in Malaya, strikes for increased wages would still have taken place on the return of prosperity to the country. Although more spectacular at the moment, the exploitation of labour discontent among uneducated Chinese coolies is probably not as likely to have as lasting an effect as the dissemination of communism via the National Salvation Movement among Chinese schools in Malaya may have, if it progresses further. This movement has been recently noticeable particularly in the Chinese schools in Penang. Increased activity in this direction coincided with the arrival in October of three Hokkien communist members of the Amoy Provisional Committee. Very little is known as yet about these three men. It is believed that the Malayan Party succeeded in making contact with the Party in Hongkong through the good offices of these new comers.

Singapore, Special Branch
1st January, 1937

PARTS

DOCUMENTS FROM REPORT No. 3780, 'THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNISTS IN MALAYA/' THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH FOR FAR EAST, OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH (OIR), DEPARTMENT OF STATE, MARCH 16, 1947.
(US NATIONAL ARCHIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.)

INTRODUCTION

The US papers in this volume are found in a 135-page report compiled by the Office of Intelligence Research (OIR) for the Far East under the State Department and kept in the US National Archives in Washington, DC. The report was previously labeled "Secret" but has since been declassified. Entitled "The Role of the Communists in Malaya" and dated March 16, 1947, it provides a good survey and analysis of the MCP's policies and activities from its origins until 1946. The OIR researchers were given access to several secret and confidential papers of the British Special Branch in Malaya. The OIR report has ten chapters. A section of Chapter 2 about the MCP's pre-war history entitled "Prewar Organization and Foreign Influences," together with five appendixes, has been included in this volume. Its history of the MCP bears comparison with that given in *Nan dao zhi chun*.

The OIR report is also important because it is the only "open" source to contain several resolutions of the MCP between 1932 and 1943. These have also been reproduced in this volume. [See below Appendices A-E.] The resolutions were apparently obtained by the British Special Branch through successive raids on the various offices and printing presses of the MCP or seized from detained leaders and members.

The preamble of the OIR report makes clear that although it has used police and government records, it is aware that these records contain some element of bias. It is a useful reminder to any researcher using police reports:

The Malayan Communist Party was an illegal party before the war. Hence, its activities were necessarily subversive, and information concerning these activities is inadequate and often contradictory. The problem of analysis is further complicated by the difficulty of making proper allowance for suspected bias. The bulk of the available information has been found in police records, British-controlled newspapers, and general textbooks.

The following is an extract from chapter 2, pp. 5-9 OIR Report no. 3780, "The Role of the Communists in Malaya," March 16, 1947. Unless otherwise indicated, the footnotes in Pt. 3 appear in the original document. [Ed.]

PREWAR ORGANIZATION AND FOREIGN
INFLUENCES OF THE MCP, 1920-1941

It is difficult to trace in a detailed yet intelligible manner the prewar organization of the Malayan Communist Party and the foreign influences that affected it. The most significant developments on which information is available may be summarized chronologically as follows:

- 1920-25 Communist influence was manifested chiefly by means of left-wing Kuomintang Chinese and the South Seas General Labor Union.
- 1925 Nucleus of a Malayan Communist Party was established as an overseas branch of the Communist Party in China, which received directives from the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai. The Kuomintang Party in Malaya was declared illegal and forced underground.
- 1926 A South Seas Committee, presumably of the Communist Party in China, was formed. Singapore became a center for refugee Communists from Indonesia.
- 1927 A "Main School" organization, which had branches in Malaya, Siam, and the Netherlands East Indies, was discovered. The "Main School" was suspended by the South Seas Communist Party, which held its First Representatives Council Meeting. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party controlled the South Seas Communist Party. The South Seas General Labor Union was reorganized and a Communist youth organization formed.
- Following similar events in China, the Malayan Kuomintang purged its leftist elements, and the Kuomintang and Communist elements in Malaya became rival political groups.
- 1929 Evidence showed that the South Seas Communist Party continued to be directed by the Chinese Communist Party.
- 1930-31 The Second Representative Council Meeting of the South Seas Communist Party was held at Singapore. The party was dissolved and superseded by the Malayan Communist Party (to which were attached the Communist Parties of Siam and the Netherlands East Indies) and the Indochina Communist Party, both of which were placed under the control of the Far Eastern Bureau.
- Implementation of this reorganization was hampered by the arrest of Serge Lefranc (alias Joseph Ducroux), an agent of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, a Comintern agency with headquarters in Shanghai.
- 1932-34 At the Third Representative Council Meeting (1932) twelve bylaws for the Malayan Communist Party (Appendix A) were drafted. Intermittent contacts were maintained with the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai.
- For a brief period in 1934 the Malayan Communist Party received subsidies from the Comintern agency in Shanghai. In general, however, the local Communists suffered from lack of external funds and guidance. The Malayan Seamen's Union is believed to have affiliated with the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers, a Communist organization which was in direct touch with the Comintern.
- 1935 During 1935, funds were low and foreign contacts were lacking. Efforts were made to expand membership of labor unions on pan-racial basis. The

- Fifth Executive Expansion Committee Meeting made plans for organizing large-scale strikes.
- 1936 Contacts were made with the Communist Parties of Siam and the Netherlands East Indies, and an attempt was made to contact Comintern by correspondence with Paris.
- Contact was made with the Southern Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party in Hongkong. This contact brought to Malaya the effects of policy decisions reached at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in July-August 1935.
- 1937 The Malayan Communist Party concentrated locally on penetrating schools, funding patriotic anti-Japanese organizations and disseminating anti-Japanese propaganda (in accordance with policy directives from the Chinese Communist Party), and organizing strikes and anti-Japanese boycotts. Headquarters of the Malayan Students Anti-Enemy Backing-Up Society were established in Singapore. The Communists maintained intermittent correspondence with the Siam and Indochina Communist Parties, the Amoy Communist Party, the Southern Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party, and Paris.
- Authorities raided the Central Committee's press, arrested and banished a number of Communist leaders and agitators, and proscribed a number of imported Communist publications.
- 1938 At a meeting in April, the Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party decided on a united front to oppose fascism (Appendix B).
- The Fourth Executive Committee Meeting in July decided upon an anti-Japanese program (Appendix C). Organization of labour unions and of patriotic societies was pressed.
- 1939 At the Sixth Central Expansion Council, an extremely anti-British ten-point directive (Appendix D) was issued. Strikes increased in number.
- It is believed that top-level direction came through the Chinese 8th Route Army and the Southern Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party in Hongkong.
- 1940 The Malayan Communist Party pursued a more extreme anti-British program and was vigorously suppressed by British authorities.
- 1941 Malayan Communist policy of semi-cooperation with the British began in June, when Germany attacked the USSR. Full cooperation was offered in December, and many communists were then released from jail.
- The Singapore People's Anti-Japanese Committee became the highest Malayan Communist Party organ.

The foregoing chronology shows that the Malayan Communist Party began as an overseas branch of the Chinese Communist Party. During the 1920s Malayan Communist activities were controlled directly by the Chinese Communist Party and more remotely by the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai, which issued directives to the Chinese Communist Party and was the over-all guiding force. The Malayan Communists were almost exclusively Chinese. The development of both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party in Malaya paralleled the development of their parent bodies in China.

The Malayan Communist Party seems to have emerged as an entity in itself, with its own Central Committee, in 1930. The reorganization at that time, which provided

for direct control of the Malayan party by the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau in place of earlier indirect control by the Comintern via the Chinese Communist Party, was possibly planned in order to direct Communist activities in Malaya away from an exclusively Chinese movement and to make Communist ideas more appealing on a pan-racial basis.

Apparently the reorganization was never adequately implemented, primarily because of the arrest of a key agent, Serge Lefranc. Between 1931 and 1936, there were intermittent contacts with both the Chinese Communist Party and a Comintern agency in Shanghai. Major efforts were concentrated in making direct contacts with any external directive organ of the Comintern. These efforts were not very successful, however, and the Malayan Communists had to operate largely on their own resources. In 1936 contact was made with the Southern Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party in Hongkong, and it is probable that this bureau provided most of the external direction for the Malayan Communist Party up to the time of the outbreak of the war in the Pacific.

Several tentative conclusions may be drawn from a review of developments during the prewar period. Organized Communism in Malaya was introduced by the Chinese with Comintern guidance. External direction was irregular; therefore, local Communists were often thrown on their own resources. The fact that Communism gradually increased its influence despite the small number of party members,¹ inadequate funds, increasingly close police observation, and lack of continuous external direction and assistance indicates that within Malaya the Communists had developed fairly effective leadership and a well-knit organization.

SECRET
APPENDIX A
TWELVE REVOLUTIONARY BYLAWS DRAFTED BY THE THIRD
REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEETING IN 1932²

During its Third Representative Council Meeting in 1932 the Malayan Communist Party reelected its Central Committee members, defined its fundamental working policy, and advocated the establishment of a Malayan republic to be run according to the Communist principles set forth in the following bylaws.³

- (a) Expulsion of British Imperialism from Straits Settlements and the Malay States; overthrow of the puppets of British Imperialism—the rajahs, sultans, landowners, and capitalistic brokers, and their rule.
- (b) Confirmation of all imperialistic banking enterprises, and confiscations of all anti-revolution properties.
- (c) Taking over and confiscation of all land of imperialism, rajahs, sultans, landowners, officials and religious bodies. Such landed interests will be distributed to the peasants, workers, and soldiers who joined in the revolution.
- (d) Fight for the attainment of social liberation of Malayan races, establishment of a Malayan Workers-Peasants Soviet Republic.

¹In 1931 reported to include 1,300 of a total Malayan population of about 4,385,000.

²Compare with those in the Document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4, below, p. 103. [Ed.]

³Text is quoted from D-194, Singapore, October 21, 1946. Enclosure #1, p. 4, CONFIDENTIAL.

- (e) Abolition of capitalist systems, expansion of Malayan races', economics, on the path of Socialism.
- (f) Adoption of the 8-hour working system—8 hours for youth workers, 6 hours for women workers. Increase of wages, proclamation of legal labour ordinance in protection of workers. Freedom of organization of trade unions for workers. Application of unemployment insurance. Improvement of the standard of living of the masses. Abolition of labour contract and the apprentice systems.
- (g) Realisation of absolute freedom of assembly, organization, comment, publication, strike, demonstration, belief and education.
- (h) Opposition against all reactionary religions.
- (i) Fight for the realisation of free education in all individual national languages.
- (j) Abolition of all feudal exploitation of imperialism, rajahs, sultans and other royal household. Abolition of all excessive tax and miscellaneous duties. Imposition of income tax.
- (k) Opposition against preparation of war and militarism of British Imperialism in Malaya. Opposition against imperialistic war.
- (l) Protection of Soviet Russia, support of Chinese and Indian revolutions, and combination of the proletariat class and the suppressed little peoples of the world.

SECRET
APPENDIX B
BYLAWS ADOPTED AT A MEETING CALLED BY THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN APRIL 1938⁴

In April 1938 the Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party called a meeting to survey the party's policy in view of the spread of Fascist powers in Europe and Asia. At the meeting, it adopted the following bylaws, which stress the importance of a united front to fight for a democratic system in Malaya:⁵

1. Union of people of all races of Malaya irrespective of race, party, class, belief, or religion; establishment of a united front of Malayan people fighting for democratic system, protection of peace, combined suppression of the Japanese, German, Italian Fascist aggression group.
2. Reformation of political constitution, and adoption of democratic political system.
 - A. *Political*
 1. Establishment of a true representative Malayan People All Races Congress, giving the people power to decide defence, economic, political and social problems.
 2. This congress is to be formed by ballot election of all races of the Malayan people irrespective of races or property. Those who have attained 21 years of age have the right to elect, and those 25 years of age have the right to be elected.
 3. District congress committee throughout the states of Malaya. People of all states will have the right to decide on the political, economic and social problems of the place. The election method is same as No. 1 above.

⁴Compare with details in the Document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4, below, pp. 105-8. [Ed.]

⁵Text is quoted from D-194, Singapore, October 21, 1946. Enclosure #1, pp. 8-12, CONFIDENTIAL.

- B. *Executive*
 - 1. Eradication of all reactionary influence in government departments and amongst the forces, absorption of all eligible candidates amongst the races to join political organizations.
 - 2. Elevation of living conditions of government personnel.
 - (a) Regular increment, salary to be sufficient for living.
 - (b) Officials of all races of Malaya must receive same treatment as British officials.
 - 3. The penghulus (village chiefs) of kampongs should be elected by the people of the kampongs. Ample salary must be granted by government to prevent extortion by the penghulus from the kampong (village) people.
- C. *Judicial*
 - 1. Abolition of all oppressive bylaws and colonial ordinances in suppression of people and the realization of British democratic principles in Malaya.
 - 2. The employment of local advisors for the organization of courts.
 - 3. Realization of commercial regulations and settlement of disputes by landlords and farmers by arbitration regulations.
 - 4. Severe punishment of those who arrest people without warrant.
 - 5. Public trials of all political offenders, and provision of the right to retain counsel for defence.
 - 6. Abolition of Aliens Ordinance and tax on immigrants and emigrants.
 - 7. Release of all political prisoners and improvement of the prison system.
- D. *Financial*
 - 1. Abolition of excessive tax and miscellaneous duties, reduction of market dues and licence fees. Adoption of democratic tax by percentage on income.
 - 2. Prohibition of auction of property to return loans, taxes or rents.
 - 3. Severe punishment for high interests on loans, and the legalization of fixed interest rates.
 - 4. General establishment of District Agricultural Banks, extension of the period of loan to assist the middle and poor classes of farmers, small merchants and those in handicraft trades.
 - 5. Adoption of self-decided tariff, amendment of tariff policy, and the expansion of enterprises of Malayan races.
 - 6. Abolition of government subsidy for production costs of big concerns, and the utilisation of such funds for the relief of unemployed and displaced persons.
 - 7. Reduction on expenses of detective organizations, and the utilisation of such funds for the establishment of hospitals and other beneficial organs for the people.
 - 8. Expansion of agricultural enterprises and irrigation system to prevent drought, abolition of rubber control, and severe punishment for brokers and opportunists exploiting on control and banking rights.
- 3. Improvement Of People's Living
 - A. *For Workers*
 - 1. Adoption of 8-hour day system; 15 days of leave per year.
 - 2. Abolition of contract and apprentice system.

3. Same wage for male and female workers of same work.
 4. Adoption of social insurance, and relief for the unemployed.
 5. Total of 2 months maternity leave with full pay for female workers prior and after birth.
 6. Increase of wages and regular increment, holidays on Sundays with pay, and improvement on the material returns of workers.
 7. Freedom of labour union organization for workers.
- B. *For Proletariat* (especially farmers)
1. Reduction of quit rent on farmers and the abolition of excessive taxes and miscellaneous duties.
 2. Assistance for poor farmers in goods and farming implements.
 3. Low quit rent for farmers with insufficient, inadequate or unsuitable farm-land, free of quit rent in case of famine, and the extension of period of loans.
 4. Rights for farmers to fell trees in forests.
 5. Establishment of Farmers Relief Fund.
- C *For Women*
- I. Adoption of equality for male and female, and prohibition of polygamy and commercial marriages.
 2. Abolition of slave girl (*mui tzai*) system.⁶
 3. Prohibition of arrest in state of pregnancy, and detention in *Po Leung Kok* Reformatory (Home for Girls).
- D. *For Social Relief*
- I. Extension in the establishment of relief centres and hospitals of all kinds.
 2. Establishment of orphanage.
4. Reformation of Military Administration
1. Adoption of same treatment and privileges as British officials for all officials of all races of Malaya.
 2. Adoption of voluntary conscription, period of conscription shortened to 18 months.
 3. To promote the anti-Fascism education of all soldiers.
 4. Increase of ration and pay, and adoption of same and equal privileges for both British and Malayan soldiers, ample family allowance for soldiers' dependents, and guarantee of occupation after conscription.
 5. Abolition of all suppressive and abortive regulation on soldiers freedom of reading any paper for soldiers.
5. Adoption of General Education
1. Freedom to establish schools and freedom of education for the people, using national characters and languages.
 2. Establishment of Malayan University and specialised colleges in the various sciences.
 3. Abolition of entrance regulations, and examination system.
 4. Free education for the poor students and freedom to go abroad for studies for all peoples.

⁶This was a social practice whereby Chinese settled their debts by selling off their daughters to their creditors. The colonial government subsequently introduced legislation to curb it. [Ed.]

5. Establishment of military schools for peoples of the various races, technical schools for handicraft education, and the extensive establishment of libraries of all races.
6. The British Government should immediately adopt the International Anti-Aggression Pact and participate in centralised security.
Suppress immediately freedom of sea transport of ammunition, raw materials for arms and food of Japanese Fascist aggressors.
Prohibition of mining and buying of raw materials by Japanese in Malaya.
Refuse loans or security.
7. To assist China in her war of self-preservation, refuse to do all work for Japanese Fascist aggressors in transportation, mining and rubber tapping, carry out boycott of Japanese goods movement, collect funds and organise comfort party and international volunteer corps, assisting China in driving the Japanese Fascists out of China, support the Spanish people in beating rebellious troops of France.
8. To punish severely all spies and collaborators of Fascist aggressor and the followers of Trotsky; and to confiscate all their property for anti-aggression funds.
9. To grant absolute freedom of comment, publication, organization, belief, and strike of the people.
10. To protect Soviet Russia, the mainstay of real peace and up-holder of rights; to combine with workers and peace-loving people of the whole world in support of international peace and suppression of the tyranny of Fascist aggressors, and eradicate Fascism.

SECRET
APPENDIX C
POLICY DECISIONS OF THE FOURTH EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEETING IN JULY ms⁷

The Fourth Executive Committee Meeting of the Malayan Communist Party in July 1938, reemphasising the threat of Fascism, particularly that of Japanese Fascism, decided on the following policies.⁸

1. To urge British Imperialism on the peaceful front, and at least refrain from assisting the Fascists.
2. The attitude to be adopted by the Party in the case of Japanese attack on Malaya was one of protection and resistance.
3. For the sake of safe-guarding the people's peace and democratic benefits, the party was prepared to cooperate with all anti-Fascist parties under certain conditions.
4. For the purpose of extending and strengthening the common anti-Japanese front, problems pertaining to Labour-Capitalist relations were placed below anti-Japanese fundamentals. Disputes were settled placing Anti-Japanese objective above everything.
5. At the same time, to safe-guard against the attack of British Imperialists on the party, retaliatory measures such as strike, etc. were planned.

⁷Compare with details in Document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4, below, p. 108. [Ed.]

⁸Text is quoted from D-194, Singapore, October 21, 1946. Enclosure #1, p. 12, CONFIDENTIAL.

SECRET
APPENDIX D
IO-POINT DIRECTIVE ISSUED BY THE SIXTH CENTRAL EXPANSION
COUNCIL IN APRIL 1939⁹

The Sixth Central Expansion Council of the Malayan Communist Party, held in April 1939, marked the beginning of a more extreme anti-British policy. The Communists stated their opposition to war preparations and blamed British imperialist exploitation for the low living standards and lack of a democratic political system in Malaya. The following directive was issued.¹⁰

1. All races of Malaya irrespective of class, party, or belief, to establish a common front to fight for democratic system, and safeguard Malayan peace and security.
2. To establish an All-Malaya Congress with state councils elected by the people with powers to decide economic, political and defence problems.
3. To grant people absolute freedom of comment, publication, assembly, organization, beliefs and travel abroad.
4. To oppose all reactionary policy and severely punish Fascist elements and traitors of the country.
5. To increase wages and bonus, provide relief for distressed and application of labour ordinance and 8-hour day system.
6. To decrease all rentals and high interest rates, encourage labour and commercial enterprises, and independent tariff.
7. To adopt equality for males and females, and abolish slave-girl and *Po Leung Kok* System.
8. To generalise education with own racial languages and free education for the poor.
9. To urge the British government to participate in the Security Assembly to suppress Fascist aggression; and to assist China in her war of self-preservation.
10. To combine with peace-loving nations and peoples of the world in support of international peace movements.

SECRET
APPENDIX E
THE NINE PRINCIPLES OF FEBRUARY 1943¹¹

In February 1943 the Malayan Communist Party submitted the following principles to the people of Malaya as a directive for anti-Japanese resistance and for the reconstruction of an independent and democratic Malaya.¹²

⁹Compare with details in Document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4, below, pp. 108-9. [Ed.]

¹⁰Text is quoted from D-194, Singapore, October 21, 1946. Enclosure #1 p. 14, CONFIDENTIAL.

¹¹Compare with details in Document *Nan dao zhi chun*, pt. 4, below, pp. 122-24 Note, however, that it does not mention the date when the program was approved. [Ed.]

¹²Text is quoted from REF-XL 42875, February 11, 1946; REF-XL 30338, November 9, 1945.

1. Drive out the Japanese Fascists from Malaya and establish a Malayan Republic.
2. Establish a state organ through the common franchise of all races for realizing democratic rights and developing commerce, industry, and agriculture to form a free and happy Malaya.
3. Release anti-Japanese prisoners, cancel obsolete enactments that are enslaving people, and give them instead complete freedom of speech, publication, association, and belief.
4. Cancel exorbitant taxes and give general wage increase and relief to refugees and the unemployed.
5. Reorganize the Anti-Japanese Army into a regular army for national defence; give relief to the crippled and wounded and also compensate the families of the fallen heroes.
6. Give universal free education in the languages of the different races so as to develop national culture.
7. Confiscate the property of the Axis Powers and their underlings and return to the people and the friendly powers the property confiscated by the enemy.
8. Practice tariff autonomy, establish friendly treaties and commercial relations with friendly nations, and recognize their free trade.
9. Unite with USSR and China to uphold the independence of the Far Eastern oppressed races and help the Japanese people in their anti-Fascist struggles.

PART 4

NANDAO ZHI CHUN (SPRING IN THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS)
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY
TRANS. BY CHEN JIANHONG¹

INTRODUCTION

A copy of this MCP document is found in the Menzies Research Library of the Australian National University in Canberra.

Nan dao zhi chun is the MCP's official history up to 1942 and is, therefore, significant to students of Malayan communism. Most of the existing studies of the MCP's pre-1941 history have not examined *Nan dao zhi chun* in detail because it is not easily available, either in its original text or in translation. The only scholars who have referred briefly to it in translation are Professor McLane and Mahmud Embong, a Malaysian, both of whom were granted permission to use Special Branch records kept at the Malaysian Police headquarters.

On the early origins of the Communist movement in Malaya, *Nan dao zhi chun* is not sufficiently informative. One must depend on the official sources to get a clearer picture of the groups and individuals involved. *Nan dao zhi chun* begins to shed more light on Communist activities from 1925 onward, albeit somewhat briefly until 1938, when it unloads a large amount of information on the party's programs and policies. The MCP existed as an illegal organization from its founding until late December 1941 when recognition was accorded by the British High Commissioner, Sir Shenton Thomas, in appreciation for the party's services in mobilizing labor and local defense volunteers for the British war effort against Japan.

Nan dao zhi chun claims that the MCP was formed in 1930 and that its nucleus was first established as an overseas branch of the Chinese Communist Party in 1925. However, it provides no names of the party's pioneers. For these and other details of its beginnings, one must turn to the official sources. One means of collecting such information has been police agents and informers, and anyone using these official sources must allow for suspected bias.

Nan dao zhi chun was intended to be an introduction for new party recruits. The first part of this document, which gives lengthy explanations of Communist doctrines and the early origins of the international Communist movement, has been left out of

¹A tutor in the History Department, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Although his current research interests are Chinese traditional historiography and nineteenth-century Chinese clan and business organizations in Penang, Chen undertook to do the translation merely as a favor to me, for which I am most grateful. [Ed.]

found in the Malaysian government records. Professor McLane was the first scholar to have drawn heavily on a document entitled "History of the Malayan Communist Party" in these records. The details, which he cites from this history in his *Soviet Strategies in the Far East*,² are in most respects identical to the MCP's history given in *Nan dao zhi chun* although there are some discrepancies in dates. McLane refers to the date of the document as "1945,"³ whereas *Nan dao zhi chun* is dated 1946. Elsewhere in his book (especially on p. 241) McLane calls it the "1940 party history." *Nan dao zhi chun*, in fact, ends its historical account in 1942. Footnotes in Pt. 4 are mine. [Ed.]

²Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 132-33.

³Cf. McLane, *Soviet Strategies*, p. 132.

NAN DAO ZHI CHUN

TRANS. BY CHEN JIANHONG

OVERSEAS BRANCH OF CCP, 1925

The Malayan Communist Party is a branch of the Comintern. It was born in 1925 when the capitalist imperialist powers accelerated their oppression and exploitation in the colonies after World War I. The victory of the October Revolution in Russia had forcefully undulated the high tides of world revolution. It not only spurred on the continuous and valiant struggles of the proletariat in the West but also aroused the consciousness of the oppressed peoples in the Eastern colonies and semi-colonies. In such circumstances the progressive and far-sighted Chinese comrades in Malaya established the party. It was then essentially an overseas branch of the Chinese Communist Party. With a very small organization, the party's organizational work and activities were confined to Chinese shop assistants and workers in foreign concerns, and rubber tappers.

SOUTH SEAS COMMUNIST PARTY, 1927

In 1926, the party established the South Seas Branch Committee to gradually expand its activities to all parts of the South Seas. The First Congress of the South Seas Communist Party was held in 1927 to elect a Protem Committee of the South Seas Communist Party. Due to the inadequate experience of the young members of the South Seas Communist Party and the lack of Comintern leadership, the party was unable to stride forward for its necessary development.

In 1929, the South Seas Communist Party received instructions from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It then identified the nature of revolution in Malaya and drafted the basic lines of general struggle. Our comrades were able to uplift their Bolshevik fighting spirit thereby enabling the party to transform itself slowly from a weak party to that of a strong fighting organization.

FORMATION OF MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY, 1930

The Second Congress of the South Seas Communist Party was held in 1930. It set up officially the Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party and called on party organizations of all levels and all comrades to struggle gallantly to protect the immediate interests of the working class and the poverty-stricken masses. This further awakened the class consciousness of Malayan workers and toiling masses, heightened their fighting sentiments against capitalism and imperialism and raised the tides of revolution in Malaya.

INTERNAL CRISIS, 1932

In the first half of 1932, with the emergence of an internal opposition faction, the party underwent some critical changes. The opposition faction organized the Grand Alliance of the Malayan Communist Party to surrender openly to the enemies by betraying the revolution and carrying out anti-party activities. With our comrades determined to struggle for the party, make heroic sacrifice for revolution, and follow a correct political direction in such a complicated situation, the opposition faction was finally liquidated. Consequently, the Malayan Communist Party was able to stride forward to the true Bolshevik path.

THIRD CONGRESS, MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY, 1932

The Malayan Communist Party held its Third Congress in the same year to elect its Central Committee and to decide on its future policies. It also put forward its twelve-point revolutionary program for Malaya:

1. To expel the British Imperialists from the Straits Settlements and the Malay States and to overthrow their puppets, the rajas, sultans, landlords and compradore capitalists.
2. To confiscate all imperialist banking corporations and all anti-revolutionary properties.
3. To wrest control of land and farms belonging to the imperialists, rajas, sultans, landlords, bureaucrats and temples, mosques and churches and subsequently, to distribute them to the peasants, estate workers and soldiers who have joined the revolution.
4. To struggle for national and social liberation in Malaya and to establish a Malayan Soviet Republic of Workers and Peasants.
5. To abolish the capitalist system and to develop Malaya's national economy along the socialist path.
6. To practice an 8-hour work system; young workers will work for eight hours and women workers six hours; to increase wages; to promulgate labor laws to protect the workers, including the freedom to organize trade unions; to implement unemployment insurance; to improve living conditions of the toiling masses; and to abolish contract labor and apprenticeship.
7. To practice absolute freedom in assembly, organization, speech, strike, demonstration, belief and education.
8. To oppose all reactionary religions.
9. To strive for the realization of free education in people's own languages.
10. To eradicate all kinds of exploitation by the imperialists, rajas, sultans, and feudal chiefs; to abolish all heavy and petty taxes; and to implement income tax.
11. To oppose the war preparation efforts of the British imperialists in Malaya; to oppose militarism and imperialist war.
12. To protect the Soviet Union; to support the revolutions in China and India; and to unite the proletariat and the oppressed weak minorities of the world.

SECOND INTERNAL CRISIS, 1935

The opposition faction made its appearance again in the party in 1935. Contravening the party's resolutions and betraying the interests of the working class, they appealed to a group of young Communist Party members and persuaded them to oppose the Malayan Communist Party. They attempted to assist the enemies to sabotage the Malayan Communist Party and indefinitely subordinate the workers and the laboring masses of Malaya to British imperialists and the bourgeoisie. This was the most critical challenge since the foundation of the Malayan Communist Party. But the Central Committee and party organizations of all levels and the entire membership did not abandon their noble mission of striving for the eventual liberation of all communities and peoples of Malaya. On the contrary, they actively and persistently upheld their Bolshevik fighting spirit and carried out the resolutions of the Enlarged Session of the Fifth Central Executive Committee Meeting of the Malayan Communist Party. They stood by the Malayan workers and toiling masses to protect their interests and organized and led the former in large-scale general strikes in reply

to the hideous attacks of the British imperialist-bourgeoisie. This seriously curbed the anti-party activities of the opposition faction. As a result, the faction was eliminated. The party was saved and its organizational foundation remained intact.

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING, APRIL 1938

In April 1938, the Central Standing Committee made a new assessment of the prevailing situation in Malaya and carried out a review of party policies. It was of the opinion that the intensification of struggle between the Fascist Invasion Front and the Peace Front characterized the current international situation. The greedy German Fascist forces were making frantic preparations for war in Europe while the Japanese Fascists were continuing their aggression toward China and announcing their Continental Policy to engulf the whole of East Asia. Peace and security in Malaya were seriously threatened by the Japanese Fascists. In another respect, the courageous resistance of the Chinese people had further strengthened the determination of the Malayan people to fight Fascist aggression. This was especially so among the Chinese who accounted for almost one-half of the local population. In view of their communal ties and fervent sentiments for their homeland, their antagonistic attitude towards the Japanese Fascist invasion of their motherland became more intense. In addition, the implementation of the so-called Continental Policy and Southward Expansion of the Japanese Fascists had also worried the British imperialists with regard to their role in Malaya. They were unhappy with the Japanese Fascists and were inclined to the temporary maintenance of the status quo to sustain their rights in China and Malaya. Circumstances had apparently compelled our party to respond to the people's sentiments and urgent demands in uniting all communities to deal blows to the Fascist invasion. It would simultaneously swell our party's subjective power and spread our influence, so that it would become a true party of the masses. Our party had therefore made the Malayan people's struggle for a better life and their opposition to Fascist invasion top priorities in its present phase of bourgeois democratic revolution. The party had firmly decided on the establishment of an All Communities United Front of Malaya. Its most urgent tasks were to safeguard peace, to oppose Fascist invasion, and to struggle for sovereignty.

The program of struggle decided by the party was as follows:

- I. To unite Malaysians of all nationalities, irrespective of race, party, class, creed, and religion for the establishment of a Malayan People's United Front; to fight for democracy; to safeguard peace; and to jointly apply sanctions against the Aggressive Fascist Bloc of Japan, Germany, and Italy.
- II. To reform the political structure and to implement a democratic political system,
 - a. Political
 - (1) To set up a Representative Council to truly represent Malaysians of all nationalities and to resolve defense, economic, political, and social problems. The council should be elected by all Malaysians, irrespective of race and wealth, in a general election. Franchise will be given to people aged 21. They would be eligible to vote into office those aged 25 and above.
 - (2) To set up State Assemblies in all Malayan States to empower the state nationals to resolve their local political, economic, and social problems. They are to be elected by popular ballot in a general election. Franchise will be given to people aged 21. Those eligible to be voted into office should be aged 25 and above.

b. Administrative

- (1) To weed out reactionary forces in the government departments and army; to absorb elites of all nationalities into the political system; to improve the living conditions of government servants; first, to increase salaries with sufficient allowances and increments from time to time and, second, to enforce parity between Malayan civil servants and English officials.
- (2) To allow the election of village headmen by the villagers; to pay them adequate salaries; and to prevent them from exploiting the villagers.

c. Legislative

- (1) To withdraw all oppressive laws, enactments and colonial directives; to introduce in Malaya British democratic legislation.
- (2) To probe into the possibilities of appointing local assessors in courts.
- (3) To implement agrarian laws; to enact laws to resolve disputes between the landlords and peasants.
- (4) To take action against culprits who have arrested people at their own will and without any warrants.
- (5) To allow public trials to political detainees and also to respect their right to engage advocates for defense.
- (6) To withdraw the Aliens Ordinance and Immigration restrictions.
- (7) To free all political detainees and to improve the prisons.

d. Financial

- (1) To abolish oppressive and petty taxes; to reduce rentals for markets and house assessments; to impose democratic taxation.
- (2) To prohibit any deferred payment of taxes, rental, and money, and if any of such incurs it will be recovered through sales of the debtor's properties.
- (3) To prohibit high money lending rate and to decide on fixed interests for loans.
- (4) To set up agricultural banks and to extend the period of loans; to assist the middle farmers, poor peasants, petty traders, and craftsmen.
- (5) To effect tariff autonomy; to revise tariff policies; and to develop national industries in Malaya.
- (6) To withdraw government subsidies for production in large enterprises.
- (7) To cut down expenditure for the investigation departments and to utilize the money to build hospitals and other projects to benefit the people.
- (8) To develop agriculture and to expand the irrigation system to relieve victims affected by drought, etc.

III. To improve the people's livelihood

a. Workers

- (1) To enforce the eight-hour work system with fifteen holidays per annum.
- (2) To abolish contract labor and apprenticeship.
- (3) To observe parity for men and women workers.
- (4) To implement social security and to assist the unemployed.
- (5) To grant women workers a two-week paid maternity leave.
- (6) To increase wages and salaries; to stipulate increment from time to time; to observe Sundays as fully-paid rest days.

b. Peasants

- (1) To reduce quit rents and to abolish all oppressive and petty taxes.

- (2) To assist the poor peasants in their purchase of seeds and implements.
 - (3) To lower land rents for the landless peasants and for those with insufficient land who rent lands, and to exempt them from paying such rent in cases of drought and other natural calamities, as well as to extend period of loan repayment.
 - (4) To grant peasants logging rights in the forests.
 - (5) To set up a Peasant Relief Fund,
- c. In regards to social relief:
- (1) To set up more hospitals and extend medical facilities.
 - (2) To establish orphanages.
- IV. To reform the military administration⁴
- (1) To enforce parity of salaries and basic rights between Malayan officers and their British counterparts.
 - (2) To implement voluntary services and to reduce the period in the services to eighteen months.
 - (3) To promote political education in the armed forces to a higher level.
 - (4) To increase salaries; to enforce parity between British privates and their Malayan counterparts; to give special consideration for the families of privates with inadequate subsidies; to guarantee the career of privates after their service.
 - (5) To revoke all oppressive rules and regulations applicable to the privates and to grant them freedom to read books and newspapers.
- V. To implement universal education
- (1) To grant the people access to education and freedom to establish schools using their own textbooks and languages.
 - (2) To establish institutions of higher learning in Malaya and to offer courses in science and other disciplines.
 - (3) To abolish rules and regulations for school admissions; to abolish unified government examinations.
 - (4) To assist poor students with free education; to grant the local people the freedom to study overseas.
 - (5) To establish military colleges for all races; to set up vocational schools to teach handicrafts; and to build public libraries for all communities.
- VI. The British Government should immediately implement resolutions of the League of Nations in imposing sanctions against aggressive member countries and compel them to participate in a collective security system; to revoke Japanese Fascists' rights of freely transporting military resources and food supplies by sea; and to immediately terminate their mining and trading rights in Malaya as well as their overdrafts and loans.
- VII. To assist China in her War of Self-Defense by means of strikes in loading and unloading, mining, rubber tapping and all other activities in businesses owned by Japanese Fascists, and waging boycotts against Japanese goods; to collect donations and to organize goodwill missions and international contingents of volunteers to actively assist the Chinese people in expelling the Japanese Fascists from China; and to support the Spanish People's Government to defeat Franco rebels and throw out the German and Italian Fascists.

⁴This designation refers to the British Armed Services, which employed a large number of local employees in civilian and uniformed positions at their bases.

- VIII. To inflict punishment on secret agents and spies of Fascist aggressors and Trotskyite bandits and to confiscate their properties for an anti-invasion fund.
- DC To grant the People absolute freedom in speech, publication, assembly, beliefs, strikes, and organization.
- X. To honour the Soviet Union as the bulwark of peace; to unite workers and peace-loving peoples of the world; to support world peace by taking sanctions against the Fascist aggressions.

In addition to the program, the party had also decided on several concrete guidelines for its activities, such as the establishment of a united front of the working class and the peasant, Army and Youth movements. Both were given sufficient supplementary comments on their methods of operation. During this period, the party's policies had evoked much enthusiastic response from the masses who now had a better understanding of what they were supporting.

FOURTH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, JULY 1938

In July of the same year, the Fourth Executive Committee Meeting of the party explicitly made several other concrete decisions. It proposed that the British imperialists be advised to join the Peace Front, or at least not to assist the Fascists. Secondly, in relation to our party's stand in the event of Malaya's invasion by the Japanese Fascists, it would offer conditional co-operation with any anti-Fascist forces to safeguard peace and order in Malaya and to protect the lives and democratic rights of the people. Thirdly, in order to consolidate and expand the Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese United Front, problems of labor relations involving the Overseas Chinese must be solved with the overruling principle of fighting the Japanese. The party had also taken firm decisions on alerting the organization against any possible attack by the British imperialists, and on the question of expanding its subjective strength.

These resolutions had further spread and deepened the party's influence on the masses, who sympathized fervently with its proposals. These had also fully exposed and severely attacked the indecision and insincerity of the British imperialists in their war against the Fascists.

ENLARGED SESSION OF SIXTH CENTRAL COMMITTEE, APRIL 1939

The Enlarged Session of the Sixth Central Committee Meeting was a turning point in the history of the party evolving from a narrow-based and underground position to one that was broader-based with widespread influence. The session had in the first place made an evaluation of the current objective international and Malayan situation. Its assessment of differences between contemporary subjective and objective forces and the future of the United Front of all races was more comprehensive and clear-cut. It also at the same time undertook a thorough review of past activities.

The Enlarged Session of the Sixth Central Committee was held in early April 1939. It considered the following characteristics of the prevailing objective situation.

Internationally, there was a new worsening of the general economic crises of capitalism. The new imperialist war of re-demarcating the world was in progress. Under such circumstances, there arose, on the one hand, the rising waves of sentiment against Fascist invasion and, on the other hand, the greater victories achieved by the Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union. In Malaya at present, on account of intensified British exploitation, the national bourgeoisie are increasingly going into bankruptcy and the people's livelihoods made difficult. On the one hand, there is an upsurge of

anti-British struggle and, on the other, rising anti-Japanese Fascist feelings owing to the people's fear of a threat of Japanese invasion. But the British are hesitant and wavering in building up the defense of Malaya.

The United Front under the leadership of the Party is still not strong enough to talk of cooperating with the British because of the disparity of strength between the British and the Party. The British still rely on their own powers instead of the strength of the people. At this moment, we must concentrate ourselves on uniting all races under the principle of national unity. We must use democracy as a weapon in order to organize the disorganized and backward masses. Under this broad objective and principle, the urgent task of the party is to establish a united front of all communities to strive for democracy and to safeguard peace. It lays down the following ten points as the objectives of struggle for the brethren of all communities:

1. To establish an All Communities United Front irrespective of class, party, creed, and religion to fight for democracy and to defend peace and security in Malaya;
2. To set up a Pan Malayan Parliament and State Legislative Councils which are both elected by all communities and empowered to resolve economic, political, defense, and other problems;
3. To grant the people freedom in speech, publication, assembly, organization, belief, and immigration;
4. To oppose reactionary policies and to inflict punishment on Fascist elements and traitors;
5. To increase wages and salaries; to provide aid to victims of disasters and unemployment; and to enforce labor laws and the eight-hour work system;
6. To reduce all rents and interests; to develop industry and trade; and to exercise autonomy in tariff policies;
7. To recognize parity between men and women and to abolish the *mui-tzai* system and the institution of *Poh Leung Kuk*;
8. To implement universal education in people's own languages and to provide free education to poor students;
9. To pressure the British Government to take part in collective security, impose direct sanctions against fascist aggressors, and assist the Chinese people in their war of self-defense;
10. To unite all the peace-loving countries and people of the world in support of an international peace and unification movement.

PROPOSALS AND STRATEGIES OF THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY, 1939-1941

I. THE NEW PARTY POLICIES OF THE ENLARGED SESSION OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Current Objective Situations

Internationally, the new depression had erupted as part of the general economic crisis of capitalism and the new imperialist war of redemarcating the world. Under such circumstances, there arose, on one hand, the rising wave of sentiment against Fascist aggression, and on the other, the bigger victories achieved by the Socialist Soviet Union. In Malaya, as British imperialism accelerated its economic and political onslaught the national bourgeoisie became bankrupt day by day, and the life of the laboring masses became more and more miserable. While the anti-Fascist sentiments among the people might have heightened, the British

imperialists were, in fact, hesitating and wavering as regards their defense of Malaya.

New Party Policies:

A. The new policies of the party were:

To establish an All-Communities United Front; to unite all communities, classes, parties, and the oppressed and exploited masses and to muster all possible forces of the people to oppose colonial reactionary policies for the realization of a fundamental democratic system; to struggle for the formation of a broadly based democratic united front, always linking it to the international anti-Fascist movement and the national liberation movements of the oppressed people, particularly those of the British people and the colonists under British imperial rule.

B. The policies of the party were based on the following:

(i) The various communities in Malaya were under the exploitation and oppression of British imperialists who had been trying by all possible means to cause disunity among the various communities and classes. Ever since the Great Depression the British imperialists had become more exploitative towards the various communities in order to subsidize the economic losses incurred by the big British bourgeoisie. This had further caused the various communities and people in Malaya to harbor hatred against the British imperialists. It also further deepened the contradiction between the Malayan national bourgeoisie and the British capitalists. As a result, all communities, classes, parties, and organizations had become more aware of the necessity of having a united front to protect themselves. Viewed from the perspective of the oppressed people and the exploited masses, British imperialism was the main enemy of the various communities in Malaya.

(ii) The Seventh World Congress of the Comintern resolved that the most important task of Communist Party members in the colonial and semi-colonial countries was to set up a People's War Front against Imperialism. As such, the largest possible number of people must be absorbed to take part in the national liberation movement to oppose the more and more distressing exploitation of imperialism and its cruel oppression. To expel the imperialists and struggle for national independence, party members should participate in the anti-imperialist mass movement led by the national reformist group. On the basis of a comprehensive program, they should also work hard with the national revolutionary organizations and the national reformist group. To achieve their common objective, the most fundamental task of the various communities in Malaya was the anti-imperialist struggle.

(iii) In terms of the intensity of struggle in Malaya in the eight-year period between 1930 and 1938, there were the continuous anti-imperialist struggles by all communities and the swelling waves of strikes and demands by government servants to improve their living conditions. The struggles became more intense especially after 1936. As our mass organizations and politics have not reached the stage strong enough to overthrow British imperialism, establish political power of the workers and peasants, and attend to questions of land reforms, the most demanding

central task was therefore to create a most widely-based All-Communities Anti-Imperialist United Front to struggle for fundamental democratic rights.

- (iv) At the moment, Fascism in the capitalist countries was the most dangerous enemy of the working class and mankind. We still hoped that the British capitalists would cooperate and head for the correct path of defending world peace as directed by the Comintern, joining hands with all progressive and democratic forces and collectively taking direct punitive actions against the Fascist invaders. This would not only depend on the action of the British People's United Front but also the joint action of the broadly-based All-Communities United Front in Malaya to effectively drive the British imperialists forward. But under British imperial rule the various communities had no fundamental democratic rights as tools to organize the people in opposing the Fascist aggression and in safeguarding peace and national survival. Consequently, to strive for democracy and to defend peace became the most urgent and important task of the party.
 - (v) The war crisis in the Far East had directly endangered peace and security in Malaya, the safety of her people, and the British imperial interests in the Far East. To safeguard Malaya's peace and security, we needed to conclude a treaty regarding Malaya's defense with the British imperialists to repulse the aggressors. But to attain this objective, we also needed to have democratic rights without which it would be impossible to defend peace and defeat Japanese imperialism. Our party thereby stated, "Gauging from the intensity of the prevailing mass struggle, democracy requires certain conditions. It would be possible to defend peace if we could appeal to the general masses of all nationalities to jointly oppose the reactionary colonial system irrespective of classes and parties."
- C. The party advocated cooperation with the bourgeoisie on the basis of an Anti-Imperialist United Front. This was, however, not a proposal of inter-class cooperation as the situation was different from the past. In Malaya, where capitalist development was in a backward and nascent stage, the reformist proposals of the nationalist group were representative of the national bourgeoisie. In the past, they had stood by the British imperialists. On seeing the rapidly rising struggle of the Malayan working class and the heightening of world revolution, they collaborated with the feudal forces to carry out anti-revolution activities and surrendered openly to imperialism to acquire some small gains. But we would say that they have failed with such incorrect and unscrupulous means. If they had realized how the anti-imperialist forces of the masses had been growing in strength, they should have grasped the opportunity and become active. If they had only worked side by side with the anti-imperialist forces of the people, they would have reaped much greater profits and gains. In recent years, the national bourgeoisie sensed that the British imperialists were accelerating their economic and political monopoly. They were disillusioned with their dream of clinging to British imperialism. As a result, they had no alternative but to change their attitude and become active to enhance their own strength and consolidate and expand their interests with rigor. They felt for themselves the close rela-

tionship between their interests and the anti-imperialist forces of the people. They had in some cases showed their dissatisfaction with British imperialism and become more inclined to the leftist path. Their anti-British imperialist spirit was demonstrated in their opposition to the tariffs and business registration and in their protest and action against the various monopoly policies. They would at times publicly attack the ruling policies of the British imperialists in bourgeois newspapers. Their current pressing demand was in relation to economic and political reforms which were supported by the reputed sultans. In the new environment where British imperialism continued to wage its attacks and carry out exploitation, where the people were yet to be granted democracy and freedom to enable them to struggle, and where the mass struggle had not reached its highest level, certain demands of the mass struggle could be brought in line with those of the national bourgeoisie. We could also work with the national bourgeoisie, using the situation to call on all classes and parties under imperialist oppression to involve themselves in a struggle against imperialism and demand their fundamental rights. If the slogans and demands of the national bourgeoisie coincided with ours we could together formulate a program of co-ordinated actions and work with them.

- D. The proposal put forth by the party to support Great Britain and safeguard peace did not amount to co-operation with British imperialism nor, least of all, did it support the Chamberlain Government which compromised with the Fascists. On the contrary, the party was calling upon the people's forces to continue with their criticism of and protest against the Chamberlain Government. They would oppose its reactionary policies and demand that the British imperialists move forward to the path of peace and collective sanction against Fascism. The party was against British imperialism and not the British people. Quite the contrary, in the struggle for democratic rights, we not only advocated co-operation with the British proletariat and their vanguard, the British Communist Party, but also with all the British people to jointly fulfil the demands of all the communities in Malaya, and to oppose the reactionary policies and Fascist elements of the British imperialist government in the Malayan Colony.
- E. The task of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Malaya was to topple the rule of imperialism of any kind in Malaya, to abolish the feudal forces, and to strive for complete independence in Malaya. No change would be made to this policy but, nevertheless, it was not the immediate task of the All Communities Anti-Imperialist United Front. It was only its ultimate objective. Based on the level of development of Malaya's struggle, the United Front was to unite all communities and all classes to strive for their rights with various modes of struggle. It was also to oppose the inhuman colonial policies to prepare grounds for national liberation.

THE PARTY LINE ON MASS ORGANIZATIONS

Circumstances in Malaya did not permit the existence of any revolutionary organizations, including trade unions. A large number of the people were disorganized and backward with only simple and rudimentary organizations. Therefore the party advocated strongly, through the best possible means, that the masses should be organized into various forms of open and semi-open bodies. To meet with the cur-

rent situation, no narrowly based, closed-door and isolated organizations would be brought into being. With these organizations, we would then be able to understand fully the needs of the masses. We would lead them in their struggle, and with incessant training, we would help them to have better knowledge of their organizations, which in turn would help them to expand, consolidate, and become revolutionary in the course of struggle. This would, in fact, be the most reliable method for the All-Communities United Front to form organizations.

The formation of these open and semi-open organizations was an essential transitional phase for us to win massive support from the people. If we worked hard, we would shorten the transitional period. If we could only put forth to the backward masses attractive leftist slogans, we would detach ourselves from those causing the party to exist in isolation.

The party was not arguing for the permanent abolition of a unified mass formation. Instead it advocated a transitional process to win the support of the masses by training and enlightening them to head for unity and revolution. This would mean first to assimilate the masses into the organizations and subsequently to organize and lead these organizations for disciplined and orderly struggles to attain the objective of a unified national movement.

II. THE PARTY'S TASKS AND STRATEGIES OF STRUGGLE IN THE IMPERIALIST WAR, 1940

1. The basic characteristics of the international situation after the outbreak of the Imperialist War.

There was the development and confrontation of two fronts represented by Great Britain, the U.S.A., Germany, and Italy, on one side, and the Soviet Union, on the other, but it was outstripped by the rivalry between the Great Britain-U.S.A. camp and that of Germany-Italy. The German Fascists had won their early victories in the war and were thereby put in an advantageous position against the Soviet Union. They had furthered their looting and fascism in the European continent and thus invoked the unhappiness of the American capitalists who eventually lent their strong support to their British counterparts. This solidified the determination of the British imperialists to fight Germany to the end thus further extending the dimension and duration of the war. On the other hand, the neutrality of the Soviet Union had won her greater victory for her policy of peace. She now enjoyed higher prestige and possessed reinforced power to further guarantee the safety of her Socialist Motherland's borders. The Soviet Union had crushed an Anglo-French conspiracy to turn the Imperialist War into an anti-Soviet one.

In the Far East, the contradictions between the Anglo-American imperialists and the Japanese Fascists deepened day by day, compelling the former to adopt a more active policy against the latter. This fermented situation was favourable for China's War of Resistance against Japan. The urgent need that forced the Japanese bandits to move southward and the implementation of the Monroe Doctrine by the American imperialists had brought about temporary suspension of a Far Eastern Munich Conspiracy. Great Britain and the U.S.A. would, on the one hand, strengthen their war preparations in the Far East to deal the Japanese bandits severe blows, and, on the other hand, China would persist in her Resistance War.

The spread of the Imperialist War had magnified the general crisis of capitalism. It had also created conditions favourable to the high tide of world proletarian revolution and revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies. In the process of intensifying

the war, the imperialists would be accelerating their inhuman oppression and expropriation of the English people, and all those living in the colonies. They would also use every Fascist means to suppress revolutions. It was thus expected that the implementation of the British imperialists' war-time policies in Malaya would lead to political darkness and reactionism and increasing suffering of the people by the hundred fold.

2. The Anti-War Resolutions of the Party

The international situation was immediately altered with the outbreak of the Imperialist War in September 1939. The Malayan people suffered greater ordeal in their life, but their spirit of struggle was raised to a higher level. As past strategies to safeguard Malaya's peace and security were no longer suited to the new situation, the party had therefore to determine afresh its tasks in the struggle. The Central Committee made known its resolutions to expand the anti-war campaign by calling upon the brethren in Malaya to wage the anti-war struggle, to crush the full attacks of the British imperialists under the pretext of war, and to protect the important interests of the brethren. The correctness of the party's call elicited an enthusiastic response from all communities, especially the laboring masses who had suffered the most, and they started to hold a series of persistent strikes. The announcement of the party's resolutions demonstrated that it was a true Bolshevik party, fully armed with the spirit of internationalism. It stood steadfast by the policy of national liberation and it represented the national interests.

3. The Policy of an Anti-Imperialist National United Front as Exemplified by the Central Executive Committee

The Sixth Central Executive Committee had its Enlarged Session in February 1940. It decided to make the policy of an anti-imperialist national united front more concrete in nature. It resolved that we should look into the special situation confronting the various communities and use them concretely. As for the Overseas Chinese, the party had decided that the focal point was again to be directed towards assisting the resistance war in the motherland as the prevailing international situation was then in China's favour. As China persisted in her resistance effort, Malayan Chinese of the upper, middle, and lower classes were gradually awakened to support the struggle whose objective was to save the nation. Thus the basic objective of contemporary struggle was anti-Japanese and anti-renegades. If the Malayan Chinese (*Ma Hua*) Anti-Japanese United Front could develop correctly, it would also be anti-imperialist in nature. As the Malayan Chinese (*Ma Hua*) were not directing their principal struggle against British imperialism, they could not therefore be the leading force of the Malayan Anti-Imperialist United Front. But in the course of future developments, they could co-ordinate the high tide of liberation of all communities and exalt themselves into the leading position. Meanwhile they would appeal to the Malays to concentrate on their national independence movement, directing their struggle against their most immediate oppressors and exploiters, the British imperialists. They would also appeal to the Indians to struggle against British imperialism and respond simultaneously to the requirements of the national liberation struggle in their Indian Motherland, warmly assisting the Indian national liberation movement. Such a resolution of the party had rectified the past weakness of summarily entertaining the special needs of the different communities without discretion. It had also at the same time further enhanced the direction and contents of struggle of the com-

munities. Besides, it had concretely reaffirmed the targets and qualifications of the principal forces of the Anti-Imperialist United Front to enable the ordinary comrades to have a clear sight of direction in carrying out the policies of the united front. This was the new policy of struggle as decided by the party in accordance with the supreme principle of the Anti-Imperialist National United Front and the prevailing subjective forces of the time.

4. The New Program of Struggle as Redefined by the Party

The party was of the opinion that some aspects of the Ten-Point Programs of Struggle approved by the Enlarged Session of the Sixth Central Committee were totally dated, and thus must be withdrawn. The Central Executive Committee had re-identified another ten main points according to the needs of the new situation. They would serve as the objectives of the party's struggle against Imperialist War. The new program would first make more concrete the party's revolutionary task in the present phase of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Malaya as determined by the Enlarged Session of the Sixth Central Committee. Secondly, they were aimed at meeting with the rising tide of the anti-war and anti-imperialist struggles as confronted by the Central Executive Committee in order to push the people's struggles to a higher stage.

5. The Significance of the Party's Two Important Decisions

A. Concerning the expansion and consolidation of the party to ensure Bolshevization

As a result of heightened revolutionary circumstances, the party was required to attend to more tasks. The masses longed for the leadership of the party, and the national liberation struggle had also, day by day, developed into a higher stage. The responsibility of the party thus became more and more important. If the party failed to expand and consolidate itself in the struggles to achieve true Bolshevization, it would definitely be impossible for it to lead the masses. Worse still, it might lag behind the masses, unable to meet with the developments of a revolutionary situation and become more and more secretive and narrow-based. Therefore, to ensure the party would day by day become the party of the masses, as well as the vanguard of national liberation to truly lead them in protesting against the Imperialist War, imperialist oppression, and exploitation of the colonies to achieve national liberation, it had to ensure that it would steadily consolidate and expand itself to become more Bolshevik. The significance of the party's decision was, first, the need to strengthen trade unionism to consolidate the lower base of the united front so as to ensure the expansion and consolidation of the Anti-Imperialist National United Front. Secondly, under the exploitation of the British Imperialist War-time policies, it was the working class which suffered the most. We need to give top priority to their unity and struggle. Finally, the party's decision would make us secure the support of the working class and posit them in the main stream of the struggle.

B. The Central Committee's Resolution on the Strategy of an Overseas Chinese National Salvation Movement before the Formation of the German-Italian-Japanese Anti-Communist Alliance

a. On the Organization of an Overseas Chinese National United Front.

Under the present circumstances, the party felt that the organization lines of the Overseas Chinese were to utilize every legal means to promote unity and organization of the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Movement to involve all classes of people. This was meant to create favourable conditions to strive for the lawful existence of the All-Malayan Chinese National Salvation Movement. They should, in another respect, eradicate frictions and muster all forces to defeat Japanese Imperialists and traitors of the Wang Jingwei Clique, and to struggle for the final victory of the Resistance War in the Motherland.

- b. **On the Class Struggle within the Anti-Japanese National United Front**
The party had altered the contents of the Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese National United Front, according to which, all strikes of the Overseas Chinese workers should cease. We should, as far as possible, refrain from initiating and leading any strikes. We should henceforth gather our strength to stage our strikes and struggles at the "throats" of the imperialists and industries belonging to the traitors of the Wang Jingwei Clique.
- c. **Withdrawal of the Anti-Enemy Back-up Society**
As the Society had hindered the effort of striving for the legal existence of the All-Malayan Chinese National Salvation Movement, we should now establish various forms of anti-Japanese organizations appropriate to the consciousness of the masses.
- d. **The Overseas Chinese Attitude towards British Imperialism**
In order to attain a more conducive situation for the All-Malayan Chinese National Salvation Movement, all anti-British activities should now stop. As regards the collection of War Bonds, the party could render its correct leadership if the masses had voluntarily asked for its reduction to enable such action to be carried out legally and peacefully. As for the campaign to assist England we could adopt a neutral stand. All progressive Overseas Chinese bourgeoisie would be encouraged to express their views to comply with the interests of the War of Resistance while the conservatives would be severely criticized and secluded, and their negative influence insulated to facilitate the growth of the National Salvation Movement.

III. THE OBJECTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ENLARGED SESSION OF THE SEVENTH CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND THE URGENT TASKS OF THE PARTY.

1. Objective Circumstances

- A. **Internationally:** The war of aggression staged by the German Fascists against Soviet Russia had transformed the nature of the Imperialist War in Europe and altered the international situation as a whole. The fundamental feature of the international situation is the rivalry between the Fascist Front and the Anti-Fascist Front, a life-and-death battle, the outcome of which would determine the future of the world. Soviet Russia is the leading force of the Anti-Fascist Front in the unity of the proletariat, weak minorities, and all the democratic and progressive capitalist countries. Thus the victory of the Soviet Union would decide the victory of the Anti-Fascist Front and the

future of the world. Germany, Italy, and Japan were members of the Fascist Front.

- B. In the Far East: In the present situation, the plundering policies of Japanese Imperialism have become more frantic with her internal policies becoming more and more Fascistic. Japan accelerated her military and political aggression against China. She was determined to solve the China issue, and her military adventurism of opening up new war fronts was thus inevitable. She was, on one hand, preparing a northern expedition against the Soviet Union to lend her support to the German bandits and, on the other hand, busily gearing for a southward movement to overcome her military isolation and critical domestic economic crisis. The danger of a Far Eastern War had soared to unprecedented heights.
- C In Malaya: Under British imperialist rule, the various communities in Malaya lived an oppressed life while being daily threatened by the outbreak of war. Meanwhile, the Socialist Motherland of the Soviet Union and China were engaged in an arduous struggle (and a just war) against Fascist aggression. It aroused the fighting sentiments of the Malayan people to support Soviet Union's just war and to safeguard world peace.

2. The Three Urgent Tasks of the Party

- A. To establish an All Communities Anti-Fascist United Front of Malaya to protect the Soviet Union and China, to safeguard peace in Malaya, and to support the International Anti-Fascist United Front. The party identified such a task based firstly on the fact that the international Fascists were the most dangerous enemies of mankind, and the international anti-fascist war was a just war. Secondly, the victory of the Soviet Union in her War of Resistance was a victory for the various communities in Malaya in their struggle. If the German Fascists were to achieve another victory, it would accordingly further deepen the unprecedented danger confronted by the Malayan people. This would cause the Malayan people to lose a forceful supporter in their struggle for liberation. Finally, the victory of China would similarly determine the future of peace in the Far East, and the Soviet Union's victory is the prerequisite of a victory in China.
- B. To consolidate and expand party organizations and to mobilize resources to penetrate into all classes expanding organized mass movements and strengthening and enlarging the Workers United Front to enhance our subjective strength. This was the task to ensure the party's leading position in securing the unerring development and accomplishment of the first task.
- C To mobilize all propaganda weaponry to increase anti-Fascist resistance, to support the Soviet Union and China in destroying the Fascist lackeys, and to expose all reactionary anti-Soviet and anti-communist activities.

3. Policy on an Anti-Fascist United Front

The policy of the party was to establish a Malayan Anti-Fascist United Front to safeguard China and the Soviet Union and to struggle for peace and security in Malaya. This was the party's strategy in the phase to strive for national liberation to reflect a new objective situation.

- A. The party's slogan, "To strive for the establishment of a Malayan Democratic Republic," was a strategic slogan of the party in its phase of bourgeois democratic revolution. Anti-imperialism and land reforms were the contents of that phase's strategic aims. The dictatorship of an All Communities

Revolutionary Alliance would be centered on the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants, and the working class, but led by the proletarian party. It would assume the form of a democratic republic. The party's strategic aim of this phase would not change, but its dynamic strategy would be changed when and whence it was deemed necessary. If the party failed to alter its revolutionary strategy according to the requirements of circumstances, or to replace the obsolete slogans with new ones, it would then be unable to achieve the objectives of revolution.

- B. Such a definitive revolutionary policy of the party's Central Committee was in line with the principles of Leninism. In 1917, Lenin pointed out that "History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can readily be understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master all forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power—sometimes at great risk and with very great danger—what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another." (Lenin: "Left-wing" Communism An Infantile Disorder).⁵
- C We are under no illusion that the British Government would understand that the most urgent demand of the people is for national liberation. We want the British Government to accept the demands of the party and the people for liberty and fundamental democratic rights. The procurement of fundamental democratic rights was the party's bridge [would come halfway] to accomplishing its task of national liberation. From the anti-Fascist standpoint, the party would not want to put forth the slogan of crushing British Imperialism. Nevertheless, it would not hesitate to suggest that democracy must be practiced so as to defeat the Fascists and to protect peace and order in Malaya. The party has no reason to reject the people's demands in struggling for their most concerned interests. It has also no reason to stop the people from harboring hatred against the imperialists. It only proposed that the sentiments and the striking actions of the people's struggle be channelled towards the general direction of defeating the Fascists and their accomplices.
- D. In its anti-Fascist struggles, the party must maintain its political and organizational independence, and be free to criticize the British government. It was only through such means that it was able to promote the development of the anti-Fascist movement as a whole, and to continuously consolidate and expand the vanguard models and central elements of the Anti-Fascist United Front.

⁵This is a pamphlet which Lenin wrote and was first published in Petrograd in June 1920. See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971).

E. It was thus obvious that the party's policy on the Anti-Fascist United Front was a policy to uphold the supremacy of national interests. It was absolutely not a policy of unconditional co-operation with the British Government to protect the wealth and properties of the British capitalists, nor a policy content with begging narrow and fractional democratic rights from the British Government. As a new development of the national liberation policy, the party was preoccupied with national interests. But since the British Government continued to cling to its past policies, the party and all the communities need to work persistently. They must mobilize all resources of the masses for the realization of democracy in order to realistically strengthen our national defense.

IV. THE PARTY'S URGENT TASKS, SLOGANS AND POLICIES FACED BY THE SECOND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AFTER THE ENLARGED SESSION OF THE SEVENTH CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

1. The prevailing objective circumstances.

With the outbreak of the Pacific War and large-scale Fascist attacks, conflict had spread to every nook and corner of the world. The Japanese Fascists had resorted to military aggression of the Nanyang, looting its wealth and butchering its peoples to solve its own crisis. They had begun their banditry and cruel plundering. This would soon be met with a period of bloody struggle. Malaya occupied a strategically important position for safeguarding the British interests in the Far East. She was also to protect the interests and national survival of the various anti-Fascist countries in the Pacific region.

2. The Party's Two Main Tasks and Three Principal Slogans.

A. Two Main Tasks

- a. To unite and mobilize all the people as the back-up forces of the British Government in resisting and defeating the Japanese Fascists.
- b. To set up an All-Communities Anti-Fascist United Front to safeguard Malaya, the Soviet Union, and China and to struggle for the ultimate victory of the international anti-Fascist campaign.

B. Three Principal Slogans

- a. Support the government and persist in the anti-Japanese struggle.
- b. All People Unite! Protect Malaya and strive for the victory of the war of Resistance.
- c. Assist the Soviet Union and China in their Resistance war and defeat the German, Italian, and Japanese Fascists.

3. The Party's Policy on the Defense of Malaya

A. British Far Eastern Policy at the time was to use war to safeguard herself. She also went to war to protect the interests of some Far Eastern countries and to fight for the victory of the international anti-Fascist struggle. This was a war to protect democracy and freedom and to defeat the aggressors. It was also a war for national survival. Viewed from this perspective, the war adventurism launched by International Fascism was a serious threat to human survival. Since the victory of the Malayan Anti-Japanese War would guarantee our national survival, the victory of the present war was the prerequisite of Malaya's national freedom and independence.

This demonstrated that the defensive war in Malaya and the Anti-Japanese Resistance War of the Chinese people were of the same character.

- The simultaneous liquidation of Japanese fascism in the Far East also fulfilled the needs of the anti-Fascist Campaign in Europe. The anti-Fascist war, as represented by the Soviet Union in the East, the Western countries and the U.S.A., would determine the future of the world. The most important mission of mankind at present was to ensure the victory of this war, and the most important mission of the Malayan Communist Party was to fight for the victory of Soviet Socialism and for the interests of national liberation. We had come to the stage of direct struggle. To secure the victory of this struggle and the victory of the international anti-Fascist war was the necessary step to ensure the victory of communism. It was the most urgent task to be shouldered by the Communists in every country. Therefore, the two main tasks and the three principal slogans of the party were the guidelines of anti-Fascist struggle and the most pressing revolutionary strategy of the day. They were in line with the requirements for a communist victory in Malaya.
- B. We supported the war for national survival and not for the protection of British imperialist interests. The victory of Malaya's national liberation would be determined by the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, the development of national liberation conditions, and the victory of the Soviet Union and China in their War of Resistance.
- C. Hence, the party should ceaselessly attempt to consolidate and expand itself and to unite our brethren at large and win them over. It was a task that required us not to slacken for even a minute. Our behavior and actions were factors that could decide the victory of the war. With a strong national force, we could reliably surge ahead in order to defeat the enemies. This was the basic requirement of a Communist revolution. Through the Anti-Fascist United Front, we could make it materialize.
- D. The anti-Japanese War might be progressive in nature, but the internal contradictions in Malaya had yet to be resolved. We should reduce such contradictions at the beginning of the War of Resistance to strive for its victory. The progressive nature of the war would not be able to alter the nature of Imperialism. We should never forget the existence of contradiction between Imperialism and all the communities. Of course, we should also not lay aside our weapons of national liberation struggle. Therefore, the political and organizational independence of the party should absolutely be maintained. In other words, from the standpoint of national liberation struggle, the party must strive to secure victory through its opposition to Fascist invasion. We must unite all forces, including the government and people to defeat Fascism. We were faithful to this stand and would fight to the end with persistence. The party had pointed out, "Fighting for the victory of the anti-Japanese War and for the national interests ought to become the norm and discipline of present-day political life."
- E. The party felt that the Overseas Chinese were the overriding force of the Anti-Japanese War. They would certainly exercise their leading function in the War of Resistance. Firstly, because the Overseas Chinese, with a ten-year enmity against the Japanese, had organized various forms of anti-Japanese organizations. Secondly, they had made Malaya their second homeland with close economic ties with the British Government. This was why the general policies and strategies of the party had to be planned and implemented with the Overseas Chinese as the leading force.

V. THE PARTY'S PROPOSALS AND STRATEGIES OF STRUGGLE AFTER THE FALL OF MALAYA

1. In the article "An Analysis of the Present Situation/" dated May 30, 1942, the Central Committee outlined the following:

- A. The basic features of the international situation
 - a. With the development of capitalism into the last stage of fascism, there occurred the split between the German-Italian-Japanese axis and the British-American Clique which weakened their relative power against each other. This would pave the way for the general collapse of capitalism.
 - b. With the materialization of communism in the Soviet Union, the struggle for freedom and liberation staged by the oppressed nationalities and peoples of the world reached its climax and gradually inclined towards the Soviet Union. Concurrent with the struggle of two battle lines, world revolution was at its peak.

B. The simple task and direction of struggle

It was under Fascist rule that the Malayan National United Front grew and developed. The Malayan Anti-Fascist United Front was in a period of direct struggle. This bestowed on the various communities a simple task and direction of struggle, namely, all struggle must be aimed at one's liberation from the rule of the Japanese bandits. These communities still had time to muster all resources to decide on Malaya's full liberation from her anti-Fascist war ahead.

C. The overriding principle of the Anti-Japanese National United Front

The subjective forces of Malaya's revolution were still weak. The enemies might have been weakened day by day but certainly not to the extent of being totally powerless. By comparison, it was crystal clear that the enemies were stronger than us. Hence, the overriding principle of the National United Front was to increase our own strength and to prepare the conditions to welcome the high tide of a new revolution.

D. The importance of People's Organizations (*Min Yun*)

To spread the party's influence by way of expanding the United Front; to increase the party's control over the masses; to ensure a bond between the party and the masses; to unite cohesively the masses around the focus of the party as the party's reserve units and as the back-up forces of the guerrillas. These were the most important issues. This was why *minyun* was of utmost importance.

E. The relative importance of economic struggle

The Japanese bandits required a massive supply of resources and they would most likely try to utilize a large labor force. As labor was essential to enhance the enemy's economic conditions, its absence would be a serious loss. The communities today must penetrate into all production sectors to set up party and mass organizations. We need to resort to strike and work-to-rule to sabotage the enemy's production. Hence, we had to pay attention to economic struggle organizing and leading the people to lend assistance to our impending military struggle.

The party and the people's strength would determine everything. The Japanese Fascists have to be expelled before Malaya's national liberation can

become a reality. Malaya's revolution today cannot be determined solely by domestic conditions. Its success would also depend on a supplementary favourable international situation, in particular, the triumph of the Soviet Union's war of Resistance. But Malaya's national liberation would not rely on British and American counterattacks. It has to hinge on the forces of the various communities in Malaya and be supplemented by the counterattacks of the Soviet Union, China, Britain, and the U.S.A., as well as the eruption of revolution amongst the weak peoples in the Pacific and the Japanese people themselves. We would never welcome the British and the Americans to rule us. The future position of Malaya must be decided by the people and the strength of the party.

VI. THE TASKS AND PROGRAMS OF THE THIRD CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- A. The Characteristics of the Contemporary Political Situation
 - a. The rivalry in the capitalist front between Fascist monopoly capitalism and the bankrupt bourgeoisie. The latter had been struggling for the survival of their nations and peoples and to protect the residue of capitalism. On turning into national patriots, they would eventually join the Anti-Fascist United Front. As a result, the contradiction between Fascist and anti-Fascist lives could never be compromised and resolved.
 - b. The proletariat and the oppressed peoples were united in one single front for their common struggle, with the Soviet Union emerging as the leading force in the Anti-Fascist Front. She had become the vanguard of the Anti-Fascist War and also the principal element in determining its victory. The development of this revolutionary dynamic was the most convincing assurance for world revolution to oppose capitalist enslavement and eliminate bourgeois reactionary forces and to cultivate a socialist foundation. The defeat of the German-Italian Fascists' Spring Invasion, coupled with the campaign of the Japanese bandits in India and the failure of their conspiracy to sever the communications lines between the Soviet Union and Britain and America, had resulted in the annihilation of their own best armies. This had in turn led to Japan facing a critical military and economic crisis. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had not only recovered a large area of lost land, but had also crippled the enemies' forces in the fierce struggle for final victory.
- B. Contemporary Fundamental Tasks of the Party
 - a. To establish an All-Communities Anti-Japanese United Front of Malaya to struggle to the end for the realization of a Malayan Democratic Republic and the victory of the Soviet Union and China;
 - b. To unite all the oppressed peoples in the Far East to jointly defeat Japanese Fascism and to struggle for their independence and liberation;
 - c. To support the International Anti-Fascist United Front.
- C. The Nine-Point Anti-Japanese Program of the Party

A nine-point anti-Japanese program was approved by the Third Executive Committee. The contents were as follows:

 - "1. To expel the Japanese Fascists from Malaya and set up a Malayan Democratic Republic.

2. To establish national organizations through universal suffrage to safeguard the motherland and implement democratic rights; to improve the people's livelihood by way of industries, agriculture, and trade; to construct a new and happy Malaya on the basis of racial harmony and freedom.
 3. To establish freedom of speech, publication, organization, and belief; to abolish all oppressive laws of the old regime; to free all prisoners and anti-Japanese detainees.
 4. To improve people's livelihood; to provide relief to unemployed refugees; to implement a general pay rise; and to withdraw oppressive taxes and high interest loans.
 5. To rehabilitate and regroup the People's Anti-Japanese Army into regular defense units; to give special treatment to all anti-Japanese troops; to compensate relatives and families of soldiers killed in the battles; and to provide injured and crippled soldiers with relief and aid.
 6. To provide universal free education in the peoples' own languages; to develop national culture.
 7. To confiscate and nationalize properties of the German, Italian, and Japanese Fascists and their running dogs; to return all Japanese confiscated properties to the people and citizens of the various allied nations.
 8. To implement tariff autonomy; to conclude friendly treaties; and to establish true relations with all allied countries in recognition of their freedom of trade.
 9. To co-operate with the Soviet Union and China in supporting the independence movements of all the oppressed peoples in the Far East, and the Japanese people in their anti-Fascist struggle."
- D. The Meaning of the Party's Nine-Point Anti-Japanese Program
- a. The Program was but a brief description of tasks. The proposition of the Nine-Point Anti-Japanese Program would enable all communities to have a better knowledge of our aims in resisting the Japanese and a clearer understanding of the objective of contemporary revolution, and the type of government that we would build. This would certainly enhance our people's passion for the struggle and their determination to fight the Japanese and at the same time give them the encouragement to strive harder.
 - b. As the Nine-Point Anti-Japanese Program represented the demands and interests of all communities, the proposition would undoubtedly increase their understanding of and support for the party. They would come to believe that the party was genuinely upholding national liberation. They would then facilitate the party to unite all communities around its organization and let it lead them to struggle for the realization of their demands. Besides explaining the revolutionary tasks of establishing a Democratic Republic in the present stage of bourgeois democratic revolution, the Nine-Point anti-Japanese Program also outlined the necessity of developing industry, agriculture, and commerce, concluding friendly treaties, and establishing trade relations with allied countries. It was meant to attract allies' trade and investment to reconstruct Malaya's industries and reinforce the economic foundation of the Democratic Republic. This was aimed at accelerating and shortening the transition

period for the continuous victory of Socialism. Thus, the Anti-Japanese Program not only represented the interests of all communities, but also the interests of the workers and peasantry. This proves that the party is a Marxist-Leninist party ever upholding the position and the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

PARTS

MALAY AND INDONESIAN COMMUNISTS
SUPPLEMENT No. 5 OF 1948 TO MALAYAN SECURITY SERVICE,
POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL, ISSUED WITH
PIJ NO. 11/48 DATED 15/6/48¹

INTRODUCTION

This important file has been used by several students researching communism at the archives of the Special Branch, Malaysian Police Force, at Bukit Aman, Kuala Lumpur. Among them is Mahmud Embong, who did his M.A. thesis at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He cites this source as "Supplement to the Basic Paper on the Malayan Communist Party, 'Malay and Indonesian Communists' Special Branch, March 1950." Another researcher who has used the document is Yap Hong Kuan in his B.A. thesis in History "Perak Under the Japanese, 1942-1945," submitted to the University of Singapore in 1957. It is believed that the document reproduced here is in all respects identical to the one they have consulted.

This document gives the most comprehensive survey of Indonesian and Malay Communists in Malaya during the colonial period and helps to fill in many gaps in the MCP's history, especially with regard to its efforts to convert Malays to communism. The footnotes are mine. [Ed.]

SECRET

MALAY AND INDONESIAN COMMUNISTS
SUPPLEMENT NO. 5 OF 1948 TO MALAYAN SECURITY SERVICE
POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL
(ISSUED WITH PIJ. NO. 11/48 DATED 15/6/48)

An attempt will be made in this Supplement to trace the growth of Communism among Malays and Indonesians in Malaya.

It is a popular belief that there was no political consciousness among Malays prior to the Japanese war and to a great extent that is true. There have been, however, many attempts to inculcate Communism (and toward that end a spurious "Nationalism") into the indigenous people of Malaya. Although, on the face of it

¹A copy of this document is found in the file C.O. 537/3752 in the Public Record Office, London.

these attempts had failed up to 1936, undoubtedly seeds were sown which later bore fruit.

In February 1924 MAS ALIMIN, leader of the then new SHARIKAT RAKYAT (People's Partnership or Party) in Java, visited Singapore under the name of EUSOFF bin Haji MOHAMED. He contacted many prominent Malay and Indian personalities in Singapore and on his return to Java boasted of his success in establishing communist agents in this country. Also in 1924 details were obtained of the SHARIKAT PEGAWAI LAOET INDONESIA (Union of Indonesian Seamen). This union at that time had a membership of 12,000 and all were working in ships of the Rotterdam Lloyd Co. and the Netherlands Steamship Co. The Central Committee situated in Amsterdam had as its President the well known Javanese communist SEMAOEN. All the vessels of the Dutch companies mentioned called regularly at Singapore.

Evidence became available in February 1925 that the Union of Indonesian Seamen and the People's Party were closely connected. The latter convened meetings throughout Java, established schools at various centres and spread communist propaganda by informal meetings in country villages (compare this with the actions of present day left wing parties in establishing Sekolah Ra'ayat and holding political classes). It also planned to create a combination of all the native trade unions in the N.E.I, and in this made considerable progress. There was evidence to show that the money for all these schemes came from the Soviet authorities both at Moscow and Canton, through TAN MALAKA. This state of affairs prevalent in a country so adjacent to Malaya, and the fact that there was then, as now, a daily ebb and flow of travellers between the two territories made it almost impossible for Malaya to avoid the propaganda and the activities of Soviet fed and trained Communism.

By May of 1925 signs that the apostles of Communism were turning their attention to Malaya were not lacking. It was learnt that a Javanese communist named HASANOESI, believed to be identical with R. S. HASSAN SANOESI, a Committee member of the Union of Sailors and Dockers of Java,² had been sent to Malaya by TAN MALAKA. It was also known that an ARAB named S. HASSAN promised \$500 to aid a trade union in Java from "our party in Kuala Lumpur". The communist KOESNO³ about this time wrote a letter to the communist paper "API" published at Semarang, describing a visit "for the cause" to Singapore and Johore.

There was also received at this time information that definite instructions from Moscow had been sent to the Far East calling for immediate activity. "ISVESTIA", the official Soviet paper stated just prior to this, "It [propaganda] will awaken a race which has hitherto slept a sound sleep while playing a significant part in the world's economy. However hard the task we must not let ourselves be discouraged. *As an example let us point to the vast Communist organisation which we have succeeded in developing among the Malayan proletariat*". The "definite instructions" referred to above included a proposal by the Third International for the establishment of a direct centre of work under the direction of a Committee of six representatives of the Central Committees of the Chinese, Japanese Australian, Indo-Chinese and Javanese Communist parties. SEMAOEN was among the "comrades" destined for this Committee.

² See note on him, p. 49 above.

³ Probably the same person as "Kusnogunoko" who was in the executive committee of the PKI in 1924. He was said to have been from Bandung. See McVey, *Rise of Indonesian Communism*, pp. 460n, 471n, 483n.

In addition there was seen a copy of a report drawn up by TAN MALAKA and SEMAOEN. This report urged the establishment of a proper organisation for communication with the COMINTERN; the despatch of comrades familiar with local dialects; and the institution of a special school for the Malayan population.

TAN MALAKA was in Singapore in November 1925 and the following extract from a letter written by him is of interest as showing that at that time little, if any, success had been achieved in Malaya:

"So far not the slightest advantage is to be seen from the work of our dealers (?propagandists) at (Singapore) or at (Penang). You may say that they are quite incapable, but in criticising it must not be forgotten that the proper (?indigenous) inhabitants there, who form only a minority, are all conservative in their manner of living and thinking and petty bourgeois. On the departure of Hadji MOEK from (Singapore) his kindness was invoked to make a visit to the F.M.S. The impressions which he obtained everywhere did not differ from those gained from (Singapore) and (Penang). The section of the people which understands (economy) and (politics) are the (Chinese). In the harbours, in buildings, in the trains, and above all in commerce, the (Chinese) are the most prominent. None the less their Federation is very weak.

You will understand that in these circumstances it is impossible for us to effect a union. The railway personnel and those in establishments connected with the railway are all Klings. In their circles no beginning has been made to set up any association. There is not a single daily paper in the Straits or F.M.S. that is read by Malays. In brief, if one looks for a movement in the F.M.S., it is not to be sought from the side of the Malays. It will certainly come from the Chinese and Klings, whatever sort of movement it may be!"⁴

In December 1925 TAN MALAKA was in Chiangmai, Northern Siam. Documentary evidence proved that there was a Communist centre in Singapore and that attempts had been made to discover which section of the population of Malaya would be receptive to Communist propaganda. In January 1926 there was evidence from A.I sources that TAN MALAKA had recently been in Penang and 84 Onan Road, Singapore, occupied by ABDUL GHAFAR bin ABDUL RAHMAN, a Javanese pilgrim broker was known to be an address through which Communistic correspondence was passing.

In March 1926 four known Javanese communists, MOESO, WINANTA, BOEDISOEJITRO and SOEBAKAT were located in Singapore. TAN MALAKA had returned to Chiangmai from Penang and 84 Onan Road had been replaced by 709 North Bridge Road (Singapore) as an accommodation address. Letters to communists were addressed to Tuan MOECHTAR.

It was recorded in July 1926 that SUTAN PERPATEH who was arrested by the Dutch in May at Medan, had travelled in Kedah and North Perak trying to collect subscriptions and interest local Malays and Javanese in Communism.

On the 12th November 1926 a communist rising occurred in West Java. This is nowadays referred to as the 1926 revolution. The following brief account, written at

⁴See above pt. 1, document no. 9 (MBPI, October 1926), pp. 50-51. According to that document, "Words in brackets have been decoded from the cypher used in the original letter."

this time, is given to indicate the form that the revolt took and is of considerable interest in the light of present-day tendencies in Malaya:

"On the night of Friday, 12th November, a communist rising occurred in West Java, simultaneous disturbances took place in Batavia, in several villages in the Preanger and in many districts of Bantam. In Batavia itself small bodies of armed natives attacked two of the gaols with the object of liberating the prisoners, but were easily driven off.

A party of communists also seized the telephone exchange in Lower Batavia, but were dispersed the following morning before any real damage had been done to the installation. In Batavia itself the situation by Saturday morning was completely in hand.

The main disturbances occurred in the various small towns in Bantam where the native population turned out in large numbers, attacked Police stations and destroyed telegraph wires and bridges. In this district three or four native officials were killed and a Dutch Eurasian railway employee murdered, whilst an appeal had evidently been made to the religious feelings of the mob, as in some cases gangs were dressed in white, symbolical of preparedness for martyrdom. Owing to the more general nature of the rising in Bantam, troops had to be employed for the suppression of the movement, and it is reported that some 300 rebels were killed during the course of operations.

Elsewhere occasional attacks were made on Police patrols, as a result of which several policemen were killed, telephone and telegraph wires were cut, and cases of incendiarism occurred.

These disorders, as well as the more minor ones which took place in Mid and East Java were, however, easily suppressed.

The rebels, for the most part, were armed with parangs (cutting knives) whilst many of the leaders carried firearms, especially automatics of a variety that can be purchased easily at any seaport in the East from the crews of steamers trading to Europe.

Except in Bantam, where the rising was of a more popular character, the small gangs of communists appeared to be completely in the hands of their local leaders, and came out merely because they were ordered to do so, whilst as often as not they laid down their arms with alacrity at the command of numerically insignificant bodies of government officials or Police.

It would appear as if the majority of the unthinking coolies, miscalled communists, who took part in the rising, had been hypnotised into the belief that they merely had to come out in open resistance to the government to succeed in overthrowing it and no further action would be necessary except to enjoy the fruits of their daring.

As soon as the authorities realised the seriousness of the outbreak and the cause of it, they immediately took steps to arrest every known leader of the Communist Party (P.K.I.) in the whole country, whether concerned with the outbreak or not; a proceeding which had a most salutary effect. Owing to the well known wish of the Governor-General, little harshness was employed in making arrests, and in fact, even in the suppression of rebels in arms, firing was only resorted to in the last extremity when capture by any other method was out of the question.

The total number of communists arrested by the end of November had reached several hundreds who were to be dealt with by special tribunals, and if found guilty, banished to a new Penal Settlement in New Guinea. Those who had taken part in the actual rising, however, were to be punished in the first instance by the local Courts before banishment took place.

There can be no doubt that the outbreak was actually organised by the P.K.I. (or Communist Party in Java) as evidenced by the concerted character of the rising, the secrecy with which the plans were laid, and the choice of the birthday of SUN YATSEN as the day on which the rising was to occur.

It is a remarkable fact however that although the communist organisation covered the whole of Java and was particularly strong in other parts of the N.E.I., especially in Padang, the revolt was practically confined to a section of West Java.

It may have been that the lightening by the new Governor-General of the very severe repressive measures enacted against the communists by his predecessor, Mr. Fock, resulted in a sense of freedom which allowed them to combine and act quickly whilst still feeling resentment against their recent treatment, but even this does not account for the paucity of general support, or the fact that in some cases lists of Dutch officials to be murdered were found on certain communists but no attempt had been made to execute the order. In fact, during the whole rising no European has been killed or even seriously injured.

The only conclusion to be drawn is that the revolt was premature, and due to the conflicting views of the leaders as to the psychological [*sic*] moment both from the point of view of preparedness and opportunity.

From the correspondence of certain of the communist leaders, written in 1925, it was apparent that TAN MALAKA (by far the shrewdest of them), was opposed to a revolt in 1926 whilst the others were in favour, and in the sequel apparently had their way.

It must be realised at the outset that although great stress has been laid by the Dutch authorities on the Communist nature of the revolt, the real force behind the movement is Nationalism and a dislike of European domination. With the exception of a mere handful of native leaders who have been in contact with European and Russian communists and may be supposed to have assimilated some of the doctrines, the ordinary member of the P.K.I. is entirely ignorant of the articles of the communist faith.

No attempt was made by the leaders of the party to explain, for obvious reasons, the real tenets of communism but the people were informed that membership of the party would enable them to overthrow, when the time was ripe, the existing state of affairs whereby they were overtaxed and maltreated by the Police, and would also enable them to possess for themselves land at present in the hands of European planters.

Although the outbreak has been completely quelled and the communist party has received a severe setback, unless something is done to remove the underlying causes of the revolt it can only be a question of time before a new and stronger Nationalist Party arises, wise in the knowledge of past defeats and conscious of the immense power which can be exerted by an organised proletariat even if it does not resort to arms for victory".

The following additional note on the revolt in Java which mentions the ADAT PERPATEH is of particular interest at the present time, since a movement has

recently appeared in Negeri Sembilan upholding the ADAT (see PIJ, page 140, of issue No. 5/1948).

"The ADAT PEKPATEH

As many districts in Negeri Sembilan and Malacca are populated by Minangkabau Malays, the following note on the recent revolt in the N.E.I, will be of interest, as it mentions the ADAT PERPATEH of the Minangkabau Malays:

"Even after the putting down of the actual disturbances there have been repeated rumours of fresh plots against the administration, although in no instance have any of these reports materialised. It is becoming clear that Communist agitation, though it was certainly the immediate, was not the only, or the ultimate cause of the rising in this district, where antagonism towards the Government has always been latent. This antagonism arises in large measure out of the opposition, dating since many years past, of the more progressive section of the local population (the Minangkabau Malays) to the curious system of matriarchal succession and of the common possession of family property which still continues to be observed in their midst. Years ago, the Dutch Government, in order to strengthen its hold upon the country, chose to take the side of the upholders of tradition in this matter. The result has been that in a sense, the administration has become involved in the fierce disputes around the question at issue, and that it has incurred the hostility of those (including orthodox Moslem supporters of the Islamic law of succession) who demand the abolition or at least the mitigation, of an archaic survival of tribal rule which is felt to be in accord neither with the social conditions of today, nor with the precepts of the Koran. True to their customary policy, the communists seized upon these elements of discontent and utilised them for the purpose of fomenting an insurrection."

On 18th December 1926 MOESO and MAS ALIMIN, two of the organisers of the revolt in Java were arrested in Singapore. A searching banishment enquiry revealed that though these two men, and through them the revolutionary party in the N.E.I, were directly connected with Moscow, strong suspicions of activities in Malaya were not substantiated. They were in consequence released and left almost immediately for Canton.

ALIMIN is next heard of representing Java at the Pan Pacific Labour Conference at Hangkow in May 1927. Other persons present were Tom MANN, representing Great Britain, Earle BROWDER, the United States of America, and several Russians, and it was here that it was resolved to form the WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS—moved by a Russian named ISMAILOV.

An echo of the November 1926 revolution was heard in Java in July 1927. The P.K.I, suppressed as an organisation, split up into small revolutionary parties, study clubs and religious parties and planned a second revolt for the 17th of July. The authorities were, however, forewarned and scotched the revolt in Batavia. Disturbances at Bandoeng were successfully suppressed. Moscow was credited with this latest attempt and the presence of MOHAMED HATTA (now Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia) on the Executive Council of the League against Imperialism was looked upon by some as proof of the Soviet connection.

The League against Imperialism, or to give it its full title, "The League Against Imperialism and Colonisation and for National Liberties" deserves a brief mention here.

The First Congress was held in Brussels in February 1927. It was inspired by the Soviet Union and one of the resolutions passed was:

"A general amnesty to be granted for the recent insurrection in the N.E.L"

In September 1927 it was known that the PERHIMPOENAN INDONESIA, an association of Indonesian students in Holland (the organisation which sent SURIPNO (see PIJ. 11/48) to Batavia in 1947) was the channel of communication between Moscow and Communist organisations in Java, while the active spirit in Russia was SEMAOEN.

In February, news was received that ALIMIN was in Shanghai, using the name of HO MING LIE. In June 1928 it was noted that strong Communist influences were at work among Muslim students in Cairo. The League against Imperialism which had enlisted the aid of ALIMIN and MOESO, attempted to get in touch with the young intelligentsia of the N.E.I, and Malays studying at the Al Azhar University, and apparently had some measure of success.⁵ Two newspapers, PILEHAN TIMOR and SERUAN AZHAR issued by the students, were read in Malaya. The following extract from PILEHAN TIMOR indicates the tone of these publications:

"Oh, ye Malays of the Peninsula, do you willingly allow your country to be governed by a nation which is for ever greedy? Have you never thought of gaining your freedom? Look at Egypt and China; what race governs these countries? Let us follow the example of our brethren in Java and Sumatra The Japanese are also an Asiatic race, coloured much like ourselves. How is it that they are able to stand on their own and not be dominated by another race? . . . Let us find ways and means to work out the freedom of our country from the domination of greedy races."

About the middle of 1928 a branch of the League against Imperialism was opened in Singapore and there was good reason to suspect that ALIMIN and a group of agitators consisting of another Javanese, a Malay, an Indian and several Chinese had joined forces with the local Communist Party. Despite however, the desire of communist agitators to foster the growth of their ideology among Malays and Indonesians in this country, it can be stated with confidence that up to the end of 1928 little progress had been made. Such headway as had been made was among immigrant Chinese and of these, mostly among Hainanese.

The year 1929 was one of little known activity among non-Chinese in Malaya, but in April 1930 Communist propaganda in Malay was noticed, and it was learnt that cells comprised of men of other than Chinese nationality had been successfully formed. The Malay propaganda was issued either by an organisation called the KAUM BAHRU LAUT (The New Sea Party) or the League against Imperialism. It was published by a Bugis named ALI, a sailor on the s/s "Van der Parra". Information leading to the arrest of ALI definitely connected certain members of the Provisional Committee of the South Seas Communist Party with the following:

⁵ See W.R. Roff, "Indonesian and Malay Students in Cairo in the 1920's," *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970): 73-88.

AHMAD BAIKI bin SUIB	See PIJ. 4/48, page 101.
SALLEH bin SAPI	A Malay of Malacca.
JAMALUDDIN	A Padang Malay in Singapore.
EMAT @ ABDUL HAMID	A Javanese of Singapore.
Haji MAHMUD b. HASHIM	A Padang Malay in Malacca.

All of these were arrested and it was subsequently established that ALI, SALLEH and Haji MAHMUD, together with two Chinese communists, attended the annual meeting of the PAN PACIFIC TRADE UNION SECRETARIAT in Shanghai in 1929. ALI and Haji MAHMUD were identified as revolutionaries concerned in the outbreak of 1926 in Java.

It was revealed in the Minutes of the Third Representative Conference of the South Seas Communist Party which was held in April 1930 that there were:

"3 Malay comrades in Johore; 2 Malay comrades in Malacca".

It was noted in February 1931 that since October 1930 there was increased mention of Malays in Communist activities, and an increase in the issue of Malay propaganda. During these four months definite cases of Malays willing to go to Singapore for training were noted. The Malayan Communist Party suggested that these Malay comrades should be used in agricultural districts such as Rembau and Kuala Pilah for the purpose of forming peasants' and workers' cells.

The following was placed on record at the end of 1930:

"The Movement in Malaya, though it still remains largely a 'paper war'⁷, and in many individual cases moves to laughter rather than anxiety, must not be underestimated. Such examples as the Batu Pahat strike involving over four hundred Chinese, Javanese and Indian coolies; the two Communist demonstrations of a disturbing nature at Tangkak; the assault on the Police at Sungei Rembau, and the attempt at Masjid Tanah, Malacca; the innumerable and impudently open demonstrations, flag-wagging, distribution of pamphlets, fixing of banners and placards in public places, raiding of houses and assaults on the Police in Singapore town, are no small achievements when the hitherto peaceful and un-presuming character of all classes of Chinese in Malaya is considered. That there are only a few resident natives of the N.E.I, in Johore, a few Indians and Malays in the peninsula and a sprinkling of non-Hailam Chinese in this organisation manned by Hailams must not be taken as single events of little importance. To appreciate their true character correctly, these incidents must be taken collectively as the work of a small but extremely good staff who have at one time been subsidised by 'Central' China and who are now to be subsidised by the Eastern Bureau or Third International and against whom Government forces, linguistic difficulties, prosperity and even slump conditions, have worked.

Taken at its lowest or poorest value, there is in Malaya today a connected network of local and divisional offshoots of the Malayan Communist Party and propaganda bids fair to increase the cell formation in all classes of labour with a considerable potentiality for creating mischief, disorder and general antagonism to British rule".

Following the arrest in Singapore (June 1931) of Joseph DUCROUX alias SERGE le FRANC, an important Communist Agent of the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat [P.P.T.U.S.], the headquarters of the P.P.T.U.S. were raided by the Shanghai Police. This raid resulted in the arrest of Hilaire NOULENS the Secretary, the capture of documents of world-wide importance, and the arrest in Hong Kong of NGUEN [sic] AI QUOC, the notorious Moscow-trained Annamite revolutionary responsible for rebellions in Indo-China and well acquainted with Malaya.

From the documents seized the following information was obtained relative to the projected movements and activities of Javanese communists:

TAN MALAKA	was to go from Amoy to Rangoon for work in Burma.
ALIMIN @ DIRDJA	was to follow TAN MALAKA
MOESO	was to act as liason officer between the above two and the Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai.
BASSA	who had not been noted previously was described as a Javanese intellectual aged 27, a member of the Communist Party who took a leading part in the 1926 rebellion in Java, and went to China in 1927. He was believed to have been in Malaya about the time engaged in the selection and despatch of Malay students to Haborvosk.

In September 1931 it was established that the members of the Kuala Pilah Divisional Committee (of the C.P.)—5 in number—were all Malays. The General Labour Union claimed an increasing number of Malay adherents and announced the publication of a periodical in Malay and Javanese called SOEARA BOEROEH MALAYA (Voice of Malayan Labour). At the same time a cyclostyled manifesto in Malay was issued in Trengganu.

In October 1931 an important document was received. The following is a translation:

"PLAN OF THE WORK OF THE D.E.J.B.
(Dutch East Indies Bureau)"

A. *Organisation*

- i. *Title.* This Bureau is called the D.E.I.B.
- ii. *Staff.* To begin with, the staff will be three in number with responsibilities as follows:
One President, one Organiser, one Propagandist. The three members of the staff will to start with, share the responsibilities of their offices equally. It is unnecessary at this stage to particularise further. Later on when the routine is in working order and the work is felt to be heavy, there can be added two to four additional assistants as may be found necessary to help in the work of the Bureau,
- iii. *Objects.* The objects of this Bureau are primarily as follows:-
 1. Firstly and foremostly to re-establish the P.K.I. (East Indian Communist Party), however difficult and demanding much ability and energy.
 2. Secondly to find ways and means as soon as possible to establish good connections with the Far Eastern Bureau and Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.

3. Thirdly, to assist in all possible ways similar work done by the C.P.M. (Communist Party of Malaya) in establishing our movement amongst the Malay races,
- iv. *Finance.* For the time being the following arrangements will have effect:
 1. Money may be drawn from the P.K.I, funds held by "Comrade L" but such money must be spent with the greatest care so that all necessary expenditure may be met out of the lowest possible outlay.
 2. As soon as connections have been established with the F.E.B. [Far Eastern Bureau] and P.P.T.U.S. we must ask them for monetary assistance.
 3. As soon as our membership has been increased, we will certainly maintain ourselves by regular subscriptions from members. In the first place all money received will be used for the resuscitation and maintenance of the P.K.I. The money question however, we need not worry about. We will find ways and means of carrying on until we have the necessary money in hand.
- B. In order to carry out activities and propaganda with all possible speed it will be necessary to act as follows:
 - i. To find ways and means of effecting contact with our comrades who are at present still in Indonesia, whether in Java or elsewhere, and as soon as contact with them has been effected, we may then as soon as possible establish a branch of the P.K.I, (in such places as our comrades may be found) so that they may be linked with the work and may carry out our activities in those places.
 - ii. With luck we shall find means for collecting up the exiles of the P.K.I, who are now in hiding in Malaya, and having collected them as soon as possible, we propose to establish a branch of the P.K.I, here in Malaya.
 - iii. We propose as early as possible to find means of sending one of our comrades here as an emissary to enter Indonesia and discover and link up our connections there. Furthermore we propose to send a man at once to establish connections with the F.E.B. and P.P.T.U.S. in order that we may have as early as possible, strong and regular direction.
 - iv. Through or with the aid of the C.P.M. (Communist Party of Malaya) we will seek connections in Indonesia or collect together our Indonesian comrades who are now living in Malaya or else we will establish in Malaya an Indonesian Red VAKBON (labour union) either of labourers or of peasants, so that our organisation may be thereby strengthened.
 - v. As regards propaganda whilst carrying on verbal propaganda we will always prepare or distribute circulars, which will be used for conveying information to Indonesian comrades living in Malaya. As regards the issue of a newspaper we must wait until our work has been properly established and until we are in funds, then we must certainly issue our own newspaper so as to widely increase our propaganda.

This plan will be carried out until we establish a connection with F.E.B. and other essential links. Later on, according to circumstances or the condition of our work, we can draw up a fuller plan. Meanwhile, this is all we can hope to do at present with our present resources.

S.T.L.
Oct. 4th, 1931."

The writer of this document was believed to be TEO YUEN FOO a Hokkien born in Indonesia who passed as a Javanese under the name of SOEMITO. It was thought that he was identical with BASSA mentioned above.

Communism continued to spread among Malays in Kuala Pilah, Trengganu and Malacca.

The material for the Malay publication "Voice of Malayan Labour" was traced to a Red Labour document in Malay published in Shanghai and the author was said to be ALIMIN. He, with MOESO and DARSONO, were said at the time, to be in Moscow engaged in the preparation of red propaganda to serve the needs of Malaya and Indonesia. Raids carried out on Malay communist centres in Kuala Pilah in March 1931 disclosed that the movement was very much advanced in that district. The Malay membership of the Labour Union had reached between 400 and 500.

An important development was noted in May 1932. This was the discovery of a movement for the formation of an All-Malay Party entirely independent of Chinese influence. Information was received that BASSA mentioned above and for whom another name (ABDUL RAHMAN WADOED) had been discovered, was initiating this movement from Borneo and was in touch with the following persons representing the States of Pahang, Selangor, Perak, Trengganu and Singapore:

1. EMED @ ABDUL HAMID, a member of the Partai Kommunis Indonesia and friend of JAMALUDDIN TAMIN, fifth representative of the P.K.I.⁶
2. ABDUL RAHMAN @ BAHRUDIN
3. MOHAMED SA'AD @ MANSOOR, a friend of JAMALUDDIN TAMIN
4. SARDJONO, then first Secretary of the P.K.I.⁷
5. SENAWI
6. ZUBIR

On the 13th September 1932 JAMALUDDIN TAMIN was arrested in Singapore, and his arrest disclosed a movement of extreme importance.

JAMALUDDIN is a contemporary of such well known revolutionaries as ALIMIN, MOESO, SOEBAKAT and TAN MALAKA, and with them was prominent in the PARTAI KOMMUNIS INDONESIA. He escaped after the rising in 1926 and from then onwards devoted his energies towards the formation of the PARTAI REPUBLIQUE INDONESIA, the membership of which was recruited from the overseas remnants of the P.K.I, and which in all probability was a development of the D.E.I.B. At the time of his arrest he had made Singapore the headquarters of this organisation. Documents of a violently revolutionary type embracing the whole of the South Seas were found in his possession and he was identified as "KAUKITA" the author of anti-British articles in the "BINTANG TIMOR" (East Star). Enquiries after his

⁶ Best known as Tan Malaka's closest compatriot, Jamaluddin was born in 1900 in Kota Gedang near Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra, and joined the PKI in 1922. Jamaluddin opposed the PKI's uprising in 1926, and his views were confirmed when he met Tan Malaka. Later, he worked for Tan Malaka's party PARI, of which he was a member of the central executive committee, until his arrest in 1932, when he was exiled to Boven Digul. See Helen Jarvis, ed., *From Jail to Jail by Tan Malaka*, 3 vols. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1991), 3:355-56.

⁷ Chairman of the PKI from 1924 to 1926, Sardjono was exiled to Boven Digul in the wake of the 1926-1927 uprisings. He remained there until he was sent to Australia as the Japanese occupied Indonesia. See *ibid.*, p. 336.

arrest culminated in the arrest of TAN MALAKA in Hong Kong. He was on his way from Shanghai to Bangkok with "money and instructions".

The position with regard to non-Chinese at the end of 1932 may, therefore, be summed up as follows:—

A. There were perhaps some thirty Malay and Indian members of the Malay Communist Party proper, 40 Malay and Indian members of the Communist youth proper, 1,000 Malay and Indian members of the Malayan General Labour Union, and one hundred Malay and Indian members of the Peasants' Union.

B. The development of nationalism and an awakening to political consciousness among Malays was apparent. It was realised that such a movement would certainly receive the sympathetic attention not only of the local Communist Party but also of those political agitators of the Netherlands East Indies who, having fled their country after the 1926 rising, were still available to carry out the "racial" movement in the South Seas which was the declared policy of the THIRD INTERNATIONAL.

C. NGUEN [*sic*] AI QUOC, who at the Third Representative Conference of the M.C.P. had urged particularly the need for Chinese members to study the Malay language and enlist Malay recruits, was extremely active in the development of the Malay and Javanese Party. It was revealed in the investigation of the le FRANC case that he had brought the attention of the Far Eastern Bureau to BASSA, whom he hoped to enlist as a propaganda and liaison officer between the Eastern Control and the South Seas.

D. The "Malay" Communist party had not been formed. Sympathisers were generally without any directing influence, other than that of the Chinese heads of local divisional Committee. Lack of funds, the difficulties of language, contempt for the Chinese and general apathy of local Malays for any movement led by foreigners, were factors responsible for the lack of progress.

E. There was, nevertheless, the ever present potential danger of a movement sympathetic with the N.E.I, revolutionaries and there were distinct indications of growing political consciousness among Malays:

1. In the Kuala Pilah district of Negeri Sembilan a communist organisation headed by leading Malays, was broken up by the Police in 1932.
2. In Lenggeng (also in Negeri Sembilan) the KAUM MUDA (Youth Movement)⁸ had become prominent. Although the KAUM MUDA had been labelled "communist" it was, in fact, a movement in advance of orthodox ISLAM with many adherents in Sumatra, particularly among the Nationalist students whose activities frequently merged with Communism.

The suspicion therefore existed that wherever the KAUM MUDA was strong (Negeri Sembilan and Malacca) there would be found a nucleus ready to listen to the clandestine propaganda of Indonesian Nationalist or Communist agents.

3. But by far the greatest potential danger lay in the activities of the D.E.I.B. and the Partai Republik Indonesia, proved to be under the direction of TAN MALAKA, working through JAMALUDDIN TAMIN in Singapore.

⁸ W. R. Roff has an excellent chapter on the Kaum Muda in Malaya. See his *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967).

The following item quoted from official records in November 1932 is of particular interest:

"Further delicate investigations led to the arrest of TAN MALAKA on October 10th in Hongkong. He was then on his way from Shanghai to Bangkok; there, on his own admission, to meet the leaders of the *Partie Republik Indonesia* (P.A.R.I.), and decide whether or not the time had yet come for direct action in the Netherlands East Indies. Subjected to searching cross-examination, TAN MALAKA insisted that he was interested solely in the development of P.A.R.I., a purely Nationalist body aiming at the organisation of the Javanese and Sumatran proletariat with the ultimate object of driving the Dutch from the N.E.I. He denied absolutely his connection with any subversive movements directed against the British. He denied absolutely the incriminating evidence found in the Noulens's papers in which he is clearly proved to have been in the pay of Moscow, and to have been offered in 1931 and to have accepted the duty of proceeding to Burma with ALIMIN (Dirdja of the Noulens's papers); from there to foment colonial revolution in the South Seas.

In face of this, his admission in regard to P.A.R.I. must be incomplete. It is impossible that the successful launching of the programme of P.A.R.I. under the direction of an Internationalist of the calibre of TAN MALAKA could leave Malaya, Siam, Indo-China, the Philippines and possibly Burma unaffected. No direct proof has yet been obtained in the recent investigation of his present activities that TAN MALAKA was being assisted by Moscow; but the overwhelming evidence of his history, past and present, extending over a period of ten years, leaves little doubt that his visit south must have been connected with plans of wider import than the alleged localised aims of P.A.R.I., the leaders of which, it should be remembered, were recruited from the surviving leaders of the old *PARTIE KOMMUNIS INDONESIA* which engineered the 1926 rebellion in Java.

At the moment of writing, the political situation in Siam appears to be uncertain. In spite of his denials there are indications that TAN MALAKA's visit to Bangkok may have been concerned with further subversive movements in that country.

If we accept, as indeed we must, the existence of Moscow's policy of colonial revolution in this part of the world, the arrest of TAN MALAKA constitutes a heavy blow struck against that policy and in defence of the Imperialist Powers in the South Seas."

The year 1932 ended on a note favourable to the forces of law and order.

TAN MALAKA was banished from Hong Kong. TOLEDO @ DAUD his associate in Hong Kong, was also banished.

JAMALUDDIN TAMIN was banished from Singapore.

Early in 1933 ALIMIN and SARDJONO were returned as members of the Second Chamber at the Hague, but they forfeited their seats as they failed to submit their credentials within the stipulated time.

Information was received in July 1933 that the Communist Party of Holland passed a resolution in December 1932 to reestablish the *PARTAI KOMMUNIS INDONESIA*.

In September 1933 an important document in the form of an instructional letter from the Central Committee of China Communist Party to Malay "Central" was received. The following is an extract:

"We must realise that it is the proletariat and their allies—the peasants—who can carry out from beginning to end the anti-Imperialist movement and the agrarian revolution which, under the leadership of the proletariat and the Bolshevik Party, will in the end lead to the socialist revolution. In the progress of the anti-Imperialist campaign and the agrarian revolution, Malaya is a field for both. Due to geographical proximity, Malaya as the vanguard of the colonial and semi-colonial revolution, has very intimate connection with China's revolutionary movement. Our mission is, therefore, to lead the Malayan native peasants and labourers to join the revolutionary movement, which without them, will not be a success. The party has so far done very little in this branch of activities and we must try our level best to overcome the defects.

We are of opinion that your party must be responsible for the question of organising a strong and united Communist Party in Malaya in order to collect all different races and urge them on.

Undoubtedly, our party knows that the British Imperialists are very strong and that we are very weak. If we want to achieve immediately the success of our uprisings, it is more than impossible. The establishment of a Soviet Republic in Malaya will have very close connection with the revolutionary movement in China and India, but this is not to say that the consummation of the revolution in China and India must always be the antecedent of the Malayan revolution, and you should not think that before the consummation of the revolution in China and India, the party activities in Malaya should be confined to exciting labourers and peasants to minor struggles. During this period we should make use of the chance to spread the influence of the Party, and whether we can do it successfully or not depends solely upon our decision as regards our future working schemes towards the path of revolution. It is by means of the daily struggles that we can unite the labour and peasant struggles against Imperialism and for the racial independence movement. For this reason we must draw special attention to these struggles which will put us in a better position and earn us the confidence of the labour masses, as well as to the further development of the Communist Party, labour unions and other mass organisations.

We must also know that the young labourers, peasants and some portion of the students will enhance the influence of the party in the midst of the revolutionary struggles. Consequently, the development of the Communist Youth is also one of our important duties.

Activities of the Red Labour Union are also very important ones. The work should not be done by a few comrades only sent by us; you must train all your members to take part in it as a powerful organisation. We must act in such a manner that we will make the Labour Union become an all-powerful organisation in the making of struggles. Within the Labour Union, the Communist Party have to set up Communist Party and Communist Youth branches which must always be very active. To lead the work of the Labour Union, the Party have to pay special attention to absorbing into the Union female workers in factories and the rubber estates.

Organisations to oppose Imperialism are to be widely started in the names of Anti-Imperialist League, the League of the Independence of Malay Race, the League to support the Chinese Revolution, etc. At present other races can also be organised, but there must be a central organ to direct the entire activities. In this organ should be the representatives of various races, and the party must assume the role of leaders".

The year 1933 was on the whole practically free from activity by Malay and Indonesian communists. It was recorded in February 1934 that the efforts of Malayan "Central" to graft upon the local Malay population an enthusiasm for the communism of Moscow had not been successful, but it was, nevertheless, borne in mind that a nucleus existed of renegade Javanese and Sumatran revolutionaries in Malaya, and that it was the primary object of these people to develop Communism among the indigenous population. Leadership was in the hands of capable Muslims whose influence was along the lines of religion and nationalism.

In the middle of 1934 a revival of activity among this group was noticed and in October an important member named AMIR HAMZAH SIREGAR @ JIMMY TAYLOR @ ELIAS bin HASSAN @ AMAT @ MONICA left Singapore for Solo, Java. This man is a native of Tapanoeli, Sumatra, born about 1906 and had been an active communist in Malaya.

Also at this time propaganda directed by M.C.P. to Malays and Indians underwent a significant change. Whereas formerly similar propaganda had been Chinese inspired, began too far up the scale and ended in a meaningless jargon full of foreign terms which conveyed nothing to the average Malay there was now being issued in Malay documents of a comprehensive character. Elementary communist principles were presented in understandable Malay of Indonesian origin with a minimum of Party jargon and international terms. One of these documents was a translation of the instructional letter referred to above.

In December 1934 temporary possession of the original accounts of the M.C.P. covering payments between November 1933 and September 1934 disclosed that regular payments were being made to the following Malays and Indonesians:—

"MA ALI"	real name SUTAN JENAIN.
"NI"	Possibly AMIR HAMZAH SIREGAR @ MONICA arrested in Java in December 1934.
"ho"	probably a Malay comrade from the N.E.I.
"SELLAH"	Probably SALLEH a known Malay Communist in Malacca.

Information was received in January 1935 from the Dutch authorities that AMIR HAMZAH SIREGAR left Singapore for Java via Palembang on 3rd October 1934. He stayed at Djokjakarta till 2nd November when he went to Sourabaya. There he received instructions on behalf of the M.C.P. from a Javanese "who lives in British Malaya". This latter was identified as SAJOETI, a former president of the P.K.I. Sajoeti, having been released from internment in Upper Digoel in April 1933 arrived in Singapore in September 1934. It was thought possible that Sajoeti was identical with BUDIMAN @ AMAT who took the place in Singapore of Amir Hamzah.

In June 1935 a "Unification Committee" was formed by Malayan "Central" composed of 1 Chinese, 1 Malay and 1 Indian, all members of the Communist Party, for the purpose of unifying Communist efforts in all three sections of the party. The first

evidence of the work of this committee was the establishment on a new footing in August 1935 of the Singapore Traction Company branch of the General Labour Union, Singapore. The cells of the branch were of mixed nationalities—Indian, Malay and Chinese—and were formed on the 5 man principle.

On 15th July SAJOETI @ BUDIMAN was arrested on a Banishment Warrant.

DJOELIMAN SIREGAR, a Christian Batak, arrived in May 1934 and stayed with AMIR HAMZAH SIREGAR. He appears to have been converted to Communism by Amir Hamzah and had, when he first came to notice in December 1936, just completed an inspection tour of Negeri Sembilan and Malacca on behalf of the Communist Party. He was credited with a knowledge of English, German, Dutch, Chinese, and was a proficient stenographer.

In December 1936 the M.C.P. Central Committee instructed the Selangor Local Committee to contact AMAT a Malay comrade in Selangor. Amat was known to be SUTAN JENAIN @ MA ALI, believed to have come originally to Malaya in 1910. After a short stay in the F.M.S. he returned to Java, where he was believed to have been head of the Postal and Railways Union in Bandoeng till 1924, when this union was declared illegal. During the period 1926-1928 he came to Malaya a second time as a refugee from the P.K.I. He is known to have been a member of the M.C.P. Central Committee and to have Chinese friends. A Banishment Warrant against him was extant in 1936. He is at present living in Singapore.

SUTAN JENAIN was a member also of the MALAYAN RACIALEMANCIPATION LEAGUE, an organisation set up by the M.C.P. to bring Malays and Indians into the Communist fold and to organise Peasants' Unions.

Another member of the Malayan Racial Emancipation League named SALIM wrote in March 1937 to the M.C.P. Central Committee reporting on activities in Selangor.

It will have been noticed in this Review that the flow of information regarding the activities of Malay and Indonesian communists steadily decreased. During the period 1936-1940 it stopped completely. It is undoubtedly true that the Communist Party had had little success in getting Malays to take an active interest in communism, and that in addition the party had been dealt several crippling blows by the Police Forces of the F.M.S. and Singapore. (383 communists were banished from Malaya between 1933-1937). But it is difficult to believe that revolutionary communists in hiding from Indonesia should have been quiescent for this length of time. The fact remains however, that no information was received and we are brought now to the outbreak of the Pacific war; but before bridging the gap of the war years an event of the utmost importance must be recorded. A most serious decision was taken in December 1941—a decision that was to have a marked effect on the political outlook of the Malay in post-war Malaya.

The following is quoted from official records of December 1941:

"The Chinese Section of the Special Branch put out feelers on 16th December 1941 for the formation of an united organisation to mobilise Chinese activities to resist the effects of bombing, and profit from the lesson of Penang. A surprisingly unanimous result followed. The Kuomintang, the China Relief Fund group, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Communists, all came to the Special Branch with what almost amounted to demands that a Mobilisation Organisation should be set up, and that all party and clique differences should be sunk in a common purpose. All parties however—and this point is most significant—

insisted that TAN KAH KEE was the only person who could successfully command the support of the broad masses of the Chinese population in the fulfilment of the project.

Mr. Tan Kah Kee, who had already made arrangements to leave the country, was most reluctant to accept leadership, and it looked for a time as if the whole idea might fail, but after strenuous efforts between 18th and 24th December, by the Chinese Section of the Special Branch, supplemented by the Chinese Consul-General, Mr. KAO LING PAI, Mr. George K. C. YEH, representative of the China International Publicity Bureau, and Mr. HEAH WING CHOO, the President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Tan Kah Kee was persuaded to accept the leadership of a "Mobilisation Council" for Singapore, upon which all shades of Chinese opinion agreed to serve.

The Council comprises 95 members as follows:

Chinese Chamber of Commerce, representing all dialects and guilds	31 seats
Kuomintang	10 seats
Malayan Communist Party	10 seats
Straits-born Chinese	10 seats
Chinese women	4 seats
Culturists, newspapers, etc.	10 seats
Labour organisations	10 seats
Unallotted	10 seats

and under the heading THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY we read:

"Since the attack by Germany upon Russia (22nd June 1941) the Malayan Communist Party has become less and less aggressively hostile to the local Government, and indeed, could be said to be co-operating in the war effort by not agitating labour, and its propaganda has become almost friendly.

Since the invasion of Malaya on 8th December 1941, the Party has been loud in its demands for an united front among the Chinese in Malaya against the Japanese invaders.

The tone of its propaganda has ceased to be anti-British and anti-Imperialist. This has enabled a momentous decision to be taken to recognise the Party on the Mobilisation Council. It was clear that without the M.C.P. the Council could not fulfil its obligations, because labour, which the Council undertook to supply, would always be liable to pressure from the M.C.P.

It remains to be seen how far the M.C.P. will carry out its good intentions, which include the supply of guerillas to operate behind the Japanese lines in North Malaya. Already it shows signs of a bargaining spirit which might wreck the Mobilisation Council. Nevertheless, the first party of communist guerillas were trained in Singapore by arrangement with Special Branch during December 1941, and left for the scene of their new activities on 4th January 1942. They earned the highest praise as "trainees" from their European instructors in guerilla warfare."

In September 1945 after the surrender of the Japanese, the returning British forces found the country virtually in the hands of the MALAYAN PEOPLE'S ANTI-JAPANESE ARMY, which had grown out of the guerilla forces formed at the end of

1941. It was, of course, a communist organisation and a considerable number of Malays were part of it.

Indonesia was again the scene of a revolution in which ALIMIN, TAN MALAKA and other remnants of the 1926 revolt were prominent.

It is necessary to mention briefly here the KESATUAN MELAYU MUDA from which the MALAY NATIONALIST PARTY sprang.

The K.M.M. or Malay Youths' Union was established and registered in 1938, and its president was IBRAHIM bin Haji JA'ACOB.⁹ It did not then qualify for mention among Communist organisations and its 1941 activities indicated quite clearly that it was on the opposite side. This organisation lent itself to Japanese Fifth Column work; its leader was a self-confessed spy in the pay of the Japanese Intelligence Service, and it co-operated with the Japanese during the occupation till suppressed by them.

The most recent comment on the K.M.M. comes from ISHAK bin Haji MOHAMED,¹⁰ former second in command, and now President of the M.N.P. In a speech at Johore on the 29th April 1948 he said:

"The M.N.P. is not a new party. Its seeds were planted long before the war came to Malaya. It was then known as the K.M.M. Malaya, which was established in 1938 with the object of working for the independence of Malaya. At that time I was working with the "Warta Malaya", through which the objects of the K.M.M. were transmitted to the ra'ayat.

When the Japanese invaded Malaya the K.M.M. knew that to save the Malays from being treated like Chinese in China it must pretend to co-operate with them. The leaders of the K.M.M. quickly gained the confidence of the Japanese and thus saved the Malay masses from being ill-treated by them. But when the Japanese adopted Fascist rule they disbanded us. Many of our comrades banded together and formed the "Wataniah" in Pahang and Perak, and worked as guerillas in co-operation with the THREE STARS organisation against the Japanese fascists."

Little is recorded on the subject of Malay and Indonesian communists during the year 1946, but readers of PIJ. from 1947 onwards will be familiar with the organisations shown in the diagram. Old acquaintances such as ALIMIN, TAN MALAKA, SUTAN JENAIN, JAMALUDDIN TAMIN are met with again, but it is at this period that ABDUL RASHID bin MAIDIN, the first Malay communist to come to the front openly, is heard of. That he is a product of the MPAJA there can be no doubt. In company with a Chinese and an Indian he represented the Malayan Communist Party at the Conference of Empire Communist Parties in London in February 1947.

⁹ Born in 1911 at Temerloh in central Pahang state, Ibrahim was of Bugis descent. He graduated from the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) in Tanjong Malim in 1931, and got a job as a language teacher at the Kuala Lumpur Police Depot. He later left to join the Malay newspaper *Majlis*. In 1938 he formed the KMM with other SITC graduates. See Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-45: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya," *Indonesia* 28 (October 1979): 85-120.

¹⁰ Ishak was born in September 1909. Of Acehnese descent, he never forgot his peasant background even though he went to the school for aristocratic children, the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar. Although destined for a top government career, he resigned from government service and became a freelance writer and novelist. He formed the KMM with Ibrahim Yaacob in 1938. See *ibid.*, p.97.

Up till the present time (June 1948) ABDUL RASHID and his two companions, DAT bin ABDULLAH @ ABDULLAH C. D. and KAMARULZAMAN bin TEH, who were also members of the MPAJA, can be regarded as leaders of the Malay section of the Communist Party. As will be seen from more recent issues of P.I.J. their following has considerably increased, and while it may be said that pre-war efforts to convert the Malay to Communism failed, appeals through religion (in the name of independence), exploitation of the economic situation, the uncontrollable entry into the country of political agitators, and active uncountered propaganda, are undoubtedly producing results.

ABDUL RASHID and his friends have made public denials that they, as representing the Malayan Communist Party, have any connection with SUTAN JENAESf (and therefore the PARTAI KOMMUNIS INDONESIA) but this, in effect, means little. It is known from authentic sources that there is a definite relationship between them.

It is the considered opinion of those who have made a study of this movement in Malaya over a period of years that without the support of the Chinese-controlled M.C.P. and the Indonesian extremist controlled P.K.I, (which includes Indonesian "nationalist" organisations) the activities of Malay and Indonesian communists living in Malaya need not constitute a serious menace—that is to say—they could be brought under control and ultimately eliminated by the forces at the command of Government. As matters stand at present, however, they cannot be regarded otherwise than as a grave threat to Security, and as time elapses the threat will increase and become harder to deal with.

MALAYAN SECURITY SERVICE HQRS.,
Singapore.
15th June, 1948.