

**THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY
1945—1955**

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PETER HORAM RUNGSUNG

**CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EAST
ASIAN AND SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA**

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Mehrauli Road : New Delhi-110067

Grams : JAYENU

Telephones : 652282


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CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN
AND SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled "THE
MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY 1945-1955" submitted by
Mr. Peter Horam Rungsung in partial fulfilment for the
award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been
previously submitted for any other degree of this or any
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PROF. URMILA PHADNIS
Chairperson

Prof. (Mrs.) Urmila Phadnis
Chairperson
Centre for South, Central and Southeast
Asian and South West Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Bhabram Dass Arora
DR. B.D. ARORA
Supervisor

21-7-87

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P R E F A C E

This study is devoted to examining the root-causes of the insurrection of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) from 1945-1955 of how and why it was launched and how it was faced.

In the post-World War II, history of Malaya the insurrection of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was a significant event as the Malayan Communist Party attempted to establish a Communist state in Malaya.

Surprisingly, by 1945, there were considerable number of young Chinese guerrillas in Malaya. In addition large numbers of weapons were also available from various sources in the country after the end of the World War II which encouraged guerrillas indirectly. Besides, it was true to some extent that the post-war military and colonial administrations were ill-equipped to withstand such insurrection.

Nevertheless, MCP had failed to achieve its goal due to many reasons. For instance, the MCP was never able to attract Malay and Indian support. The MCP was from the beginning overwhelmingly Chinese and with a Chinese character.

The Communist strategy was based almost on the pattern of Mao Tse-Tung revolution in China, which inspired

the MCP to a considerable extent. The MCP envisaged three phases, first of which was to cripple the national economy. Secondly, the MCP was to push the government from the rural areas, thereby liberating these for itself. Finally, the MCP was to expel the British from Malaya and to set up a Communist state in the country.

Immediately after the British returned and reoccupied Malaya in 1945, the MCP emerged from the jungle as a strong force. In response to the colonial government policies as well as under the pressures of the International Communist movement, in 1948 guerrilla fighting broke out. The war between the MCP and Malayan Government was the longest small war of its type, which lasted till 1960. The eventful period from 1945-1955 was thus the most remarkable period in the history of Malaya. It was during this period that the real Malayan political development took place. The Malays who were earlier not much interested in politics began to emerge as a significant factor in the political scene by forming United Malay National Organization (UMNO) so also did the Indians who formed a new party called the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC).

In 1955 in general elections the Alliance Party, composed of UMNO, MCA and MIC won 51 of 52 seats. The leader of the Alliance, Tunkee Abdul Rahman, was elected Chief Minister. There after, the talks between the MCP and the government were

held at Baling in 1955. These ended in smoke when the government insisted that the MCP surrender to the government, an idea which the MCP leader Chin Peng refused to accept. Chin Peng insisted that the MCP be recognised as a legal political party. The government flatly rejected this proposal by saying that loyalty to Malaya was the criterion and MCP should have accepted it.

Chin Pen and his colleagues resumed guerrilla activities and the government responded to these with imposing emergency which continued till 1960.

The dissertation consists of five chapters including conclusion. It is a chronological analytical study, examining the MCP responses to various policies adopted from time to time by the British colonial and later Federation of Malayan Government. The object of this study is to examine the nature of the MCP and composition and of its responses, its affiliations with international communist movement and its ultimate goal in Malaya, which was to establish a communist state.

First chapter is devoted to introducing the subject and examining the origin of the Malayan Communist Party and its ties with the Soviet and especially the Chinese Communist Parties.

It is interesting to study the policies and activities of predominantly Chinese MCP in a multi-racial society where Malays, the "bumiputras" (sons of the soil) always insisted on having a dominant position.

Following the end of the war, as the MCP was pursuing a sort of United Front strategy, the British Colonial Government came out with the Malayan Union proposals which were later replaced with the Federation of Malay Agreement. The second chapter deals with the MCP's response to these two constitutional frameworks.

It carries the analysis of how the Federation of Malaya Agreement pushed the MCP to the wall and forced it to adopt the path of armed struggle. As the MCP rose in revolt, the colonial government imposed emergency in the country. Third Chapter examining the various aspects of government vis-a-vis the MCP and the Chinese community. The government aim was to deny the MCP the mass support base provided by the Chinese. Fourth Chapter studies the MCP strategy for survival during the period of emergency. As it had been pushed to the Jungles and denied the mass support base, the MCP lost its momentum because it could no longer spearhead its revolutionary activities. The British Malayan government implemented extreme steps to eliminate it physically. It also sought to undermine the MCP's position by helping in the establishment of MCA as

competing focus of loyalty for the Chinese community. The concluding chapter deals with the findings of the dissertation.

I would like to express my most grateful thanks to my supervisor, Dr. B.D. Arora for taking considerable pains in guiding me in my research. I am, indeed, indebted to him for his unstinted help and cooperation without which it would have been impossible for me to complete it successfully. It was through his painstaking efforts that I could finish my dissertation blissfully. My work under him and the frequently useful exchange of views that I used to have with him will ever remain a source of inspiration to me.

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My thanks are also due to the staff of the J.N.U. Library, Sapru House, Teen Murti House and Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi who always assisted me in various ways.

I should end by saying that, I, and only I, bear full responsibility for the contents of this dissertation.

Peter H. Rungsung
(PETER HORAM RUNGSUNG)

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was not an indigenous movement. Communism was introduced in Malaya in the early 1920 by agents of the Communist Party of China (CCP). The MCP's major objective was to expel British Imperialism and establish a Communist state in Malaya.¹

Racially, it was almost entirely Chinese. Ideologically, it was under the influence of International Communism (Comintern), especially Chinese Communists. Institutionally the MCP had been facing constant danger of being wiped out by the British Colonial repressive police action.²

With Soviet Russia as an ally of Germany in Europe the MCP decided to carry out anti-British campaign in Malaya. However, when Germany suddenly attacked the Soviet Union in June 1942, the MCP immediately decided to extend its help to the British as the war advanced to the Far East Asian scene.³

It was the MCP which supported the British force when Japanese attacked Malaya on December 8, 1941, because Japan became the common enemy.⁴ The Japanese occupation forced the

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1. Harry Miller, *Jungle War in Malaya: The Campaign Against Communism 1948-60* (Bristol, London, 1972), p.27.
 2. J.H. Brimmell, *Communism in Southeast Asia* (London, 1959), p.77.
 3. Miller, n.1., p.29.
 4. Ibid.

MCP to go underground.⁵ The British reoccupied Malaya after the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, and the MCP was allowed to function as a political party. The MCP propaganda, nevertheless continued to be anti-imperialistic.⁶ The MCP also began to fight for social and economic equality between Malays and non-Malays. Its support to the British as a stay-behind party in a way prompted the British to set up Malayan union in 1946. Under the Malayan union proposals, non-Malays could easily acquire citizenship unlike before thus widening their means in political participation.⁷ But the privileged Malays were strongly opposed to these proposals and successfully sought the replacement of the Malayan union by a Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948.⁸

The MCP attempted to establish its political mastery through trade unions by resorting to strikes and demonstrations. Thus the year 1948 marked a new stage in the constitutional as well as political developments and eventually prompted the government to impose Emergency.⁹

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5. Cheah Boon Kheng, Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation of Malaya 1941-1946 (Singapore, 1983), p.56.
 6. Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-60 (London, 1975), p.39.
 7. Victor Purcell, "A Malayan Union, the Proposed New Constitution," Pacific Affairs, (New York), Vol.3, No.5, Mar. 1946. P.95.
 8. Gordon P.Means, "The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia," Comparative Politics, Vol.1, No.2, September 1969, p.269.
 9. Nam Tae Yul, Malaysia and Singapore: The Failure of the Political Experiment (Singapore, 1969), p.27.

The Emergency Regulations brought an end to the MCP activities in the open. The party survived underground. It changed its name from MCP to Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPAJA),¹⁰ and continued to operate anyhow under heavy odds. During Emergency period the MCP guerrillas lived at the mercy of the Chinese squatters who provided them food, medicines and articles. The MCP recruited young Chinese from among these squatters. However, the government extended its Emergency Regulations to the squatters' settlements. Thus, the MCP movement was gradually undermined and became weaker.¹¹

By 1955, the Alliance composed of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) came to power under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Thus, the MCP was not only pushed to the wall by the British government but also by the Alliance Party.¹²

During 1955 the Alliance leadership held talks with the MCP in order to end the emergency. But the talks ended in failure due to the MCP's insistence that it should be

10. Richard Clutterbuck, Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya 1945-1963 (London, 1973), p.172.

11. Anthony Short, n.6, p.204. See also, John Guellick, Malaysia Economic Expansion and National Unity (London, 1981), p.89.

12. John Guellick, n.11, p.97.

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recognised as legal political party, which the government flatly rejected. Tunkee Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister and his colleagues regarded the Communist activities as something entirely foreign to the Malayan way of life. They regarded the Communist Party as belonging to a power outside the country.¹³

The activities of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) did not become noticeable until 1924, five years after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was formed. It was stated that until then the Communist International did not give the directive to establish Communist groups in Malaya. In 1924 the task of recruiting Communist cadres in Malaya was left to Indonesian Communists like Tan Malaka and Alimin and a few CCP agents.¹⁴ This clearly meant that initially besides some well known Indonesian Communists, the Communist Party of China played a prominent role in the establishment of the MCP. Obviously, a large number of overseas Chinese community in Malaya provided fertile ground for recruiting the party cadres.¹⁵ The developments in China in the early nineteen twenties proved conducive to the growth of the MCP.

13. Anthony Short, n.6, p.464.

14. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.7.

15. Gene Z. Hanrahan, Communist Struggle in Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p.28.

In 1924, the Kuomintang - CCP United front was established. This led to the formation of the first Communist group in Malaya in 1925 within the Malayan branch of the Kuomintang.¹⁶

This branch actually became an overseas branch of the CCP. In 1927 the split in the United Front led to a split in the Malayan Kuomintang. After existing in various ways, the Communists finally formed the Malayan Communist Party in 1932.¹⁷

The Emergence of MCP

As expected, the membership of the MCP was predominantly Chinese. The Chinese Communist Party's close relationship with the MCP in Malaya turned it into a mainly Chinese organization instead of a multi-racial one. As a result, the MCP faced problems in extending its mass organizations to Malays and Indians.¹⁸ Besides, Malays were devout Muslims and had no interest in politics at that time. They did not show any resentment against the British rule, rather they enjoyed its benevolence and paternalism, because the British indirect rule favoured the Malays, the indigenous race, a proud people with a highly developed culture. As regards Indians, they were oriented towards India and its struggle for Independence.¹⁹

16. Miller, n.1, p.28.

17. Ibid.

18. Brimmel, n.2, p.56.

19. Miller, n.1., pp.27-28.

The efforts of the MCP labour leaders to organize Malay peasants and Indian workers into trade unions were consistently disrupted by vigorous police action.²⁰ Institutionally, it suffered a series of disruptions at the hands of the colonial government. In spite of difficulties, however, the MCP could make some headway among the Chinese.²¹

In 1936 when the rumour of Japanese invasion on Malaya reached, the MCP appealed to all groups of people especially Malays and Indians, to place more importance on external than on local conditions for determining their struggle against the British. It, however, secured only the support of local Chinese whose patriotic feelings were aroused by the Japanese occupation of northern China in 1937.²²

Internally, the MCP advocated the establishment of a Malayan Democratic Republic.²³ This tactical decision was to enable the MCP to maintain flexibility of action in case the British accepted its offer of mutual cooperation in local defence in the event of a Japanese invasion. This MCP offer was first made in July 1941. The MCP stated

20. Hanrahan, n. 15, p. 19.

21. Anthony Short, n. 6, p. 21.

22. Stephen Leong, "The Kuomintang - Communist United Front in Malaya During the National Salvation Period, 1937-1941", Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, (Singapore) Vol. 8, no. 1, March 1977, pp. 31-37.

23. Nan Tao Chih Chun, The Malayan Communist Party (Singapore 1946), p. 8.

that it would suspend its policy of anti-British Imperialism and rally its forces behind the defence of Malaya. It, however, did not mean abandoning its major objective. If Japan should invade Malaya, the Communists would continue to support an anti-Japanese front but only as a means of extending Communist influence.²⁴

The MCP Struggle Against the British

The international situation came to have a significant impact on MCP strategy. When the war broke out in Europe in 1939, the MCP brought itself into line with international communism. With Russia as an ally of Germany in Europe, the MCP decided to carry out violent anti-British campaigns in Malaya. At this stage, the MCP claimed a membership of thirtyseven thousand with just over half of it in Singapore.²⁵ But the volte-face came in June 1942, when Germany suddenly attacked Russia. The MCP immediately offered to the British colonial government its cooperation in the event of an extension of the war to the Far East. Six months later, when the Japanese attacked Malaya on December 8, 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbour, it offered its services again because Japan had them become

24. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.58.

25. Miller, n.1, pp.28-29.

a common enemy. Britain was perhaps in no position to refuse offers of help even from an erstwhile enemy.²⁶

The Japanese invasion on Malaya thus brought about a new, supportive relationship between the MCP and the British. Under war conditions, the British initiated a policy of belated rapprochement with the Chinese dominated Malayan Communist Party. The two sides reached agreement on December 18, 1941, on the training of Communist guerrillas to fight behind the enemy lines.²⁷ On December 23, 1941, President Chiang Kai Shek in Nanking, issued an appeal to all Chinese nationals in Malaya to help the British and rally behind the British force in resisting the Japanese.²⁸ Thus, both the MCP and the KMT extended help to the British. The Governor of Singapore, Sir Shenton Thomas, made a reciprocal gesture. He announced the lifting of the ban on the MCP.²⁹ On December 15, 1941, some leftist political prisoners had been released from detention. A secret meeting was held in Singapore between British officers and two MCP representatives, one of whom was Lai Tek, the Party's Secretary General.³⁰

26. Ibid., p.29.

27. Harry Miller, Prince and Premier (London, 1959), pp.57-59.

28. Richard Adloff, The Leftwing in Southeast Asia (New York, 1950), p.130.

29. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.58.

30. Ibid., p.59.

Agreement Between MCP and British

It was agreed that the MCP would raise and the British would train resistance groups to be left behind enemy lines in the event of the whole of Malaya being overrun by the Japanese. The MCP also conceded that the trained MCP recruits would be used as the British Military Command saw fit. The recruits were to undergo training in sabotage and guerrilla warfare at 101 special Training School (STS) in Singapore run by the Malayan Wing of the London based Special Operations Executive (SOE).³¹

The original British plan was that each MCP group thus trained would be led by a British officer to ensure that British instructions and policy were carried out. However, owing to the rapid advance of the Japanese, this scheme did not prove to be viable and the first Class MCP graduates of 101 STS were hurriedly sent out to Selangor in early January 1941. The second class went to Negri Sembilan and the third to north Johor.³²

Under the agreement between the MCP and British government, about two hundred communists received training in arms before Singapore fell to the Japanese on February 15, 1942.³³

31. Yap Hong Kuan, Perak Under the Japanese (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya, 1957), p.26.

32. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.59.

33. Miller, n.1, p.29.

The MPAJA Organization

Gradually, the party headquarters in Singapore regained contact over its members turned guerrillas. The MCP organised itself with state headquarters and districts and branch units. They formed a regiment in almost every state on the mainland and called the whole the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).³⁴ Japanese repressive policies prevented people of all races from helping the guerrillas, who became the major victims. One-third of the guerrilla force was said to have died during at this stage. The second phase from mid-1943 to mid-1944 until the end of the war, the MPAJA grew into a force of 37,000 men and became the nucleus of the MCP.³⁵

The MPAJA received supplies of arms medicines and money from the headquarters of the Allies' Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) under Admiral Mountbatten based in Colombo. The MPAJA comprised only the first four regiments and established four more regiments owing to an increase in the number of recruits.

34. The MPAJA Ex-Servicemen's Association, Ma-lai-ya jen min k' ang-jih chun chan - chi (The War Diary of the MPAJA), in Li Tich Min et.al., Ta-Chan Yu Nan Chiao (Ma-Laiya Chih Pu (The World War and the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia (The Malaya Section), (Singapore, 1947), pp.28-29, quoted in Chean Boon Kheng, n.5, p.60.

35. Hai Shing - 04, The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (Singapore, 1945), p.34.

36. F.S.V. Donnison, British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-46 (London, 1956), p.380.

After it was formed in July 1942, the Central Military Committee of the MCP acted as supreme command of the MPAJA. Liu Yau was Chairman of the Central Military Committee.³⁷ Initially each state had a military affair committee whose members were elected from various state area units of the MPAJA. Due to frequent betrayals by traitors in the MPAJA and in the MCP, communications were carried not by wireless transmission but by means of couriers who had to move slowly through the jungle from one area to another.³⁸

For the entire occupation period, the MPAJA claimed to have killed 5,500 Japanese troops and about 2,500 traitors. On the other hand, Japanese records indicated that they lost 600 troops and the local police 2000, while inflicting 2,900 casualties on the MPAJA.³⁹

MPAJA Relationship with the People

It was said that MPAJA received help especially from the Chinese. Initially, MPAJA attempted to live near the Chinese squatter areas, which had been established outside

37. Hanrahan, n. 15, p. 72.

38. F. Spencer Chapman, The Jungle is Neutral (London, 1951), p. 158.

39. Lucien W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya (Princeton, 1956), p. 66.

towns near the jungle fringes. However, the Japanese retaliated against the MPAJA by burning most of the Chinese villages. The MPAJA forces were forced to retreat to the slopes of the main mountain ranges. Many Chinese farmers followed them and cleared large fields where they planted vegetables, sweet potatoes etc. to feed themselves and the guerrillas. The MPAJA areas of operation were in Perak and Pahang.⁴⁰

Obviously, the guerrillas were careful in their contact with the local people. As the war continued and the Japanese reprisals became more cruel and tough, the MPAJA forces became more indiscriminate. They would attack not only Japanese but also any hostile, uncooperative local people. In this regard many Malay villagers became targets of such measure because they were hostile to the MPAJA.⁴¹ There was also certain reluctance to accept Malays as full partners or comrades-in-arms with Chinese in the anti-Japanese movement. Mutual distrust between Malays and Chinese began in the first year of the Japanese rule or even before. Frequently, Malay villagers betrayed the MPAJA camps to the Japanese. This made them suspect and unreliable in the eyes of MPAJA leaders. The Chinese, always used the

40. Yap Hong Kuan, n.31, p.26.

41. Mamoru Shinozake, Syonan: My Story (Singapore, 1975), pp.83-84.

term 'Choukou' meaning 'running dogs' while referring to Malays as "informers" and 'lackeys' of the Japanese.⁴²

The membership of the MPAJA was overwhelmingly Chinese constituting about 95 per cent. This organization boasted a few Malay and Indian members as well, but its Chinese character was never lost. Leaders were mostly Chinese, speaking and writing mainly Chinese. Very few of them could speak Malay. MCP and MPAJA statements were mainly in the Chinese language.⁴³ The MPAJA's main link with the local population was the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union (MPAJU). The MPAJU provided food, funds, collected clothes and information. It was also said that it gave guidance to MPAJA during patrol in unknown territory. After all, both MPAJA and MPAJU were under the control of MCP authority.⁴⁴ The MPAJA attempted multi-racial unity symbolized by the three yellow stars on its flag. Yet the plan did not turn outright. Only Chinese community responded to it.⁴⁵

Following the Japanese surrender on August 15, 1945, the focus of the MCP's efforts changed from a short-term

42. Li Tieh Min, The World War and Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia (Singapore, 1947), pp.169-70.

43. The War Diary of the MPAJA, pp.27-30, quoted by Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.67.

44. Chapman, n.38, p.158.

45. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.68.

anti-Japanese policy to long-range preparations for the overthrow of British colonialism from Malaya. The MCP/MPAJA were fully conscious of their role as the vanguard of the anti-Fascist struggle.⁴⁶ After the Japanese surrender, there was a brief period in which law and order collapsed. The surrender ceremony formally brought the Japanese regime to an end. Large areas of the outlying districts were still in guerrillas' hands. The MPAJA was reported to have occupied the state capital of Kuala Trengganu killing collaborators. In the north-west state of Perlis and Kedah too, there were several MPAJA guerrillas' take overs.⁴⁷

The island of Penang was reported to be quiet, however. In Kuala Lipis, capital of Pohang state, the MPAJA was reported to be anti-British and its leader was considered responsible for anti-British propaganda, banditry and of local population.⁴⁸ The troops which appeared in the streets of many towns and villages in Malaya in September 1945 almost immediately after the Japanese surrender belonged to MPAJA. They raised aloft their red hammer and sickle flag. They asserted that the people's Army had defeated the Japanese.⁴⁹

46. Stanley S. Bedlington, Malaysia and Singapore: The Building of New States (London, 1978), p.62.

47. F.S.V. Donneson, n.36, p.384.

48. ALFSEA WIR No.51 for week ending 21 September 1945 W O 172/1784, quoted in Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, pp.135-36.

49. Harry Miller, n.1, p.32.

It was reported that the areas taken over by the MPAJA and other guerrilla groups were quite extensive and that about 70 per cent of the small towns and villages throughout the peninsula had fallen into guerrilla hands.⁵⁰

By August 1945, the British forces were not yet in sight. The advance parties of force 136 officers and support staff, totalling not more than 350 men, were scattered in different parts of the country and posed no real challenge to the MPAJA guerrillas. By that time it was reported that the MPAJA had about 7,000 strong guerrillas.⁵¹

The MPAJA was thus in such a strong position that they could easily seize power in the interim period between the Japanese surrender and return of the British. Nevertheless it was against such an action due to certain reasons among which the most compelling seemed to be the military one. MPAJA forces were ill-equipped and small in comparison with the British forces. And also, 100,000 Japanese troops were bound by the orders of Admiral Mountbatten of Southeast Asia command. Obviously, he would not have hesitated to use them in the event of MPAJA's provocation.⁵²

50. Chin Kun Onn, Malaya Upside Down (Singapore, 1946), p.202.

51. Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.149.

52. R.O.Wenstedt, History of Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1982), p.250.

Reoccupation by the British

Above all, the Communist Parties in Britain and China had urged the MCP leaders to adopt a moderate policy. The MCP, therefore, postponed violent action and decided to conduct an open and legal struggle.⁵³ Thus, its policy statement of August 27, 1945, called on cadres and guerrillas to cooperate with the returning British and adopt a constitutional line of struggle. However, the arms which it had collected and seized during the war were hidden in the jungle for future struggle.⁵⁴

When the British returned and reoccupied Malaya in 1945, an important policy adopted by the British Military Administration (MBA) was that there was no restriction in forming any associations and organizations in the country. It was one of the eight demands in the MCP's manifesto of August 27, 1945. The British government permitted the Chinese to freely organize their labour unions as well.⁵⁵

Before the war the labour unions had been checked at every stage because of their anti-British activities. Even the Chinese Secret Societies could now come out into the open.⁵⁶

53. Ibid., p.250.

54. Ibid.

55. H.R.Hone, Report on the British Military Administration of Malaya, September 1945 to March 1946 (Kuala Lumpur, 1946), p.38.

56. Ibid.

However, the negotiations between British force 136 and representative of the MPAJA supreme headquarters had agreed on December 1, 1945, on the disbandment of the MPAJA. Each disbanded person was free to enter civilian employment to choose service with the police, volunteer forces or the Malayan regiment. On this day the MPAJA was formally dissolved.⁵⁷ Each guerrilla who handed in his arms received a gratuity of M \$350 (about £ 50). A total of 6,800 men were thus demobilized.⁵⁸

Though MPAJA was disbanded, the semi-underground influence of the MCP grew deeper and deeper because of its anti-British Imperialism from the very beginning. The MCP maintained this influence because it was distrustful of British intentions to grant independence. Meanwhile, the party accepted invitation from the MBA to appoint representatives to serve on the Governor's advisory councils being set up throughout the country. These councils were formed to consult and discuss problems.⁵⁹

There were many advantages for the Communist Party in having legal status and operating within the country's

57. Telegram giving the terms of agreement from Rear SACSEA to War Office, 6 November 1945, in WO 1790, quoted by Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.258.

58. Miller, n.1, p.38.

59. Victor Purcell, "Malaya's Political Climate IV" 10-30 November 1945, in WO 203/502 quoted in Cheak Boon Bheng, n.5, p.257.

constitutional system. Its more respectable image would help, it to attract a broadly based multi-racial support. Meanwhile, the party had a better platform for propaganda.⁶⁰

In 1945 the MCP was a legal party and the time seemed ripe for action in the cities. The MCP's reputation and prestige had grown from its resistance against the Japanese.⁶¹ It, therefore, sent most of its best men to Singapore and the other big towns to work for the seizure of power. This was an open front period. The MCP worked through a number of legal organizations, such as the New Democratic Youth League (NDYL), the Singapore Women's Association (SWA), the MPAJA Old Comrades Association (MPAJAOCA) and the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU).⁶² But its greatest success came in its establishment of the General Labour Union (GLU) in Singapore in October 1945 and later in all the states of Malaya.⁶³

The principal strength of the General Labour Union came from the Chinese. There were some Indians and Malays as well. The MCP's effort to enlarge its mass base seemed

60. Richard Clutterbuck, n. 10, p.48.

61. Ibid., p.46.

62. Richard Clutterbuck, n. 10, pp.46-47.

63. M.R. Stenson, Industrial Conflict in Malaya (London, 1970), p. 102.

to be succeeding. Initially, Indians were partially represented in the GLU, but later the Indian estate workers began to form, their own Indian Labour Union (ILU). The Malays employed, in various industries were reluctant to become part of the Chinese controlled union.⁶⁴

The General Strikes

According to Stenson, the original organizers of the various branches of the General Labour Union were invariably MCP appointed officials who were able to perpetuate their oligarchy.⁶⁵ In his view, the Pan-Malayan General Labour Union remained, an essentially vanguard organization, directed by the highly disciplined MCP members who founded it.⁶⁶

The first demonstration of their power was seen in the organization of a general strike on January 29-30, 1946 in Singapore. It demanded the release of a former General Secretary of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union in Selangor who had been convicted of extortion from a former Japanese collaborator a month after the war had ended.⁶⁷

64. Winstedt, n.52, p.251. See also, Charles, Gamba, The Origins of Trade Unionism in Malaya (Singapore, 1962), p.21.

65. M.R. Stenson, n.63, p.102.

66. Ibid., p.101.

67. F.S.V. Donnison, n.36, pp.389-91.

It was estimated that over 150,000 men took part in the strike in Singapore alone. In the Peninsula systematic strikes of a day's duration were staged and met with considerable success.⁶⁸ From January to May 1946 there had been an outbreak of strikes, demonstrations and 500,000 peasants, youths and workers took part in the strikes.⁶⁹

The strike in Singapore affected 150,000 workers and although violence itself was comparatively rare, the threat was freely used by some 3,500 organized intimidators provided by the General Labour Union propaganda section.⁷⁰ This was the first attempt by the MCP aimed at taking over the Labour organizations. By 1946, nearly three quarters of the 277 registered trade unions were controlled by the MCP.⁷¹ By August 1947 estate managers in Malacca were complaining that their estates were now controlled by the labourers and that unless government took strong action, labour would soon control the whole country.⁷²

68. Ibid., p.389.

69. Mountbatten of Burma, Post-Surrender Tasks: Section E of the Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 1943-45, 1969, p.304, quoted in Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.262.

70. M.R. Stenson, n.63, p.102.

71. Labour and Trade Union Organization in the Federation of Singapore (HMSO, Colonial, No.225, London, 1948), quoted in Weinstedt, pp.250-51.

72. D.J. Blake, Malayan Economic Review (Singapore, 1963) p.91.

Revieweing the situation, on February 13, 1946, Admiral Mountbatten issued an order to ban all processions or meetings and issued repeated warnings throughout the country that government would not tolerate saboteurs and that they were liable to be repatriated to their respective countries.⁷³ Consequently, twenty-four MCP members and officials were arrested in Singapore in connection with the general strike.⁷⁴

In spite of these arrests, on the morning of February 15, 1946, a public meeting took place in front of St Joseph's Institution, Singapore and a procession was formed. The party was well placed and well prepared to assume the leadership of the whole Chinese community. This was the situation in which the MCP found itself in the years 1945-1946.⁷⁵

This, however, made the MCP realize that the British government extended to take a strong line to maintain order. The lesson was learnt. The party was forced to devise a new strategy based on three major conditions: (1) the Party

73. Donnison, n.36, pp.304-305.

74. Ibid.

75. S.S.Awberry and F.W. Dally, Labour and Trade Union - Organization in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore (Kuala Lumpur, 1948), p.26 quoted in Richard Clutterbuck, n.10, p.52.

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was to take greater measure to ensure security by not exposing too many of its organizations and officials and to reduce its open activities.

(2) The United Front organizations were to be the only ones to step up their activities as a cover for the party underground activities.

(3) The party decided to prepare for the eventuality of armed struggle.⁷⁶

Thus, for most of March through August 1946, the party was involved in closing all open branches and ordering them underground. The party was to have only two open offices, one at Kuala Lumpur and the other at Singapore.⁷⁷

Victor Purcell, the Chinese Affairs Advisor in the BMA, had reached the end of his patience as far as the MCP was concerned. He openly declared that no compromise could be made with the MCP. And that no other course remained than to adopt a tough policy. This was the

76. Malayan Communist Party and Organization, WIR, Hqs. Malayan command, 2 April 1946 in WO 172/9773 quoted in Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, pp.264-65.

77. Victor Purcell, "The Issues Before Us", a report on Chinese Affairs, 18 February 1946 in SCA/FM/A/7/1, quoted in Chea Boon Kheng, n.5, p.265.



situation until government's declaration of an Emergency in June 1948 pre-empted the MCP into launching its uprising.⁷⁸

78. Victor Purcell, "Memorandum on Advisory Countries," 21 February 1946, in MU Secret 158/46 quoted in Cheah Boon Kheng, n.5, p.265.

Chapter IITHE MCP : MALAYAN UNION AND FEDERATION OF MALAYAN
AGREEMENTPost-War Situation

Immediately after Japan's surrender in September 1945 the MCP guerrillas appeared in the streets of many towns and villages in Malaya. The guerrilla instituted a sort of reign of terror when Allied force arrived on the scene. The British Military Administration accorded recognition as the MCP agreed to work openly in the Malayan political scene. But the MCP either ignored or delayed action on the party's approach to political and other matters. The MCP continued, however, their clandestine tactics of guerrilla warfare.¹

Behind the scenes, the MCP's Central Committee argued about its immediate policy for they considered Malaya ripe for some form of action. Because the people were undemourished after the rigours of the Japanese maladministration.² The MCP began to seek for regular work because too long they had been forced to their own wits.

After the war, both MCP and Malays got inspired politically and this produced a political rivalry between the

1. Harry Miller, Jungle War in Malaya: The Campaign Against Communism 1948-60 (London, 1972), p.32.

2. Ibid.

the two communities. Thus the situation was not helped by the British Government forcing a new constitutional set up on Malaya, in which Singapore was to remain a separate colony.³

Reaction of the MCP to Malayan Union

The new constitution was known as Malayan Union, a united Malaya working under a central government headed by a British Governor.⁴

The MCP was apathetic about the Malayan Union. The scheme was very much in favour of the MCP and other communities such as Indians and Eurasians. Under the proposals the Malay rulers were to lose their sovereignty to the British crown. The rulers would only retain their thrones and their personal residences and allowances. The chief function of each ruler would be merely to preside over an Advisory Council dealing mainly with the Malay customs and Islamic religion.⁵

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3. Victor Purcell, "A Malayan Union: The Proposed New Constitution," Pacific Affairs, (Columbia), Vol.1, No.6, March 1946, p.35
 4. Harry Miller, n.1., p.33.
 5. R.S. Milne and Deane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia (Singapore, 1980), p.27.

Regarding citizenship proposals the Chinese, Indians and others were to acquire citizenship without much difficulty. Thus, the MCP had no objection when the white paper revealed British intention to redefine the Malayan political community. No longer could its boundaries be considered congruent with the Malay community alone.⁶ "All those who had made the country their homeland" the document declared, "should have an opportunity of a due share in the country's political and cultural institutions". Thus, the response of the MCP to the Malayan Union Scheme left much to be desired.⁷

Although the Malayan Union scheme was quite favourable to the non-Malays, it evinced only lukewarm support from them. However, it stirred far-reaching opposition led by Dato Onn Kin Ja'afar, Malay leaders organised the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) in March 1946 to lead a massive movement against the scheme.⁸ Hence the Mac Michael treaties could not legitimize the new government. The UMNO called for fresh negotiations between the Malays and the British on July 25, 1946 to work out an alternative constitution. The report

6. Malayan Union and Singapore (cmd.672) (London: H.M.S.O. 1946) as quoted by Dayton D.Makin, Government and Politics in Malaysia (Boston, 1967), p.28.

7. H.B. Lim, "Malaya's Constitution," Labour Monthly, Vol.28 (1946), p.382 as quoted in Karl Von Vorys, Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia (London, 1978), p.65.

8. J.V. Allen, The Malayan Union (New Haven, 1967), p.17.

of the Committee jointly composed of the Rulers, U.M.N.O and British representatives eventually formed the basis of the Federation Agreement of 1948.⁹

When the negotiation was in progress between the UMNO and the British government the MCP did not pay enough attention to the Malayan Union. From March to May 1946 MCP and other organisations expressed more concern for the right to retain dual citizenship than for the Malayan Union.¹⁰ The MCP leaders remained apathetic while Malay agitation led the withdrawal of the Malayan Union scheme. According to Malcolm MacDonald, non-Malay leaders with whom he discussed the new constitutional question even urged him to accommodate Malay demand.¹¹

Only the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU), a left-wing party founded in Singapore by non-Malay intellectuals in 1945 evinced a sense of political realism.¹² The MCP could not do anything because they were not expected to mobilize Malay support for a constitutional scheme. On its part, the MCP only condemned Dato Onn's demands for restoration of sovereignty to the Sultans and for a policy of 'Malaya for

9. Yeo Kim Wah, Political Development in Singapore, 1945-1955 (Singapore, 1973), p.19.

10. Yeo Kim Wah, n.9, p.19.

11. Ibid.

12. Democrat (Kuala Lumpur), 9.3.46 as quoted in Yeo Kim Wah, ibid., p.20.

the Malays'. The existing evidence showed the absence of any clear-cut MCP policy towards the constitutional disparity.¹³ Right to the end of 1946 the MCP concentrated its efforts in organizing labour unions and strikes to gather workers' support for its anti-colonial struggle.¹⁴

On the other hand, the British government yielded to the UMNO persuasion. The British realized that they had moved too far and too fast in attempting to dismantle and refashion the old apparatus of government.¹⁵ Thus, the British at last changed their policy. After all, the traditional structure was basically a Malay structure and without Malay cooperation the British could not run their administration.¹⁶

The short-lived Malayan Union introduced in April 1946, remained effective for less than three months and was abrogated in 1948 after a short interval of agitated consultations between UMNO, the Sultans and the British.¹⁷

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ishak Kin Talin, "Dato Onn, 1946-1951", Journal of South East Asian History, (Singapore), Vol. 1, No. 1, 1968, p.30

16. J.de V.Allen (1967), For an Account of the Birth and Rapid Demise of the Malayan Union, quoted in R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, n.5, p.29.

17. John Gullick, Malaysia: Economic Expansion and National Unity (London, 1981), p.83.

UMNO-British Agreement and MCP Reaction

When the new constitution was announced in 1947, it was merely a set of proposals agreed between Britain and the Malay representatives.¹⁸ In the new Federation of Malaya Agreement, the Central Government consisted of a British High Commissioner, an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. The function of the High Commissioner was to safeguard both the special position of Malays and also the legitimate interests of other communities.¹⁹ Under the new Constitution, the Malay Rulers regained sovereignty in their states and remained the symbolic expression of Malaya as a Malay country.²⁰ On the question of qualifications for citizenship, it was more rigid for non-Malays. A Chinese or an Indian would qualify if he had been born in Malaya of parents both of whom had been born and resident in the country for fifteen years.²¹

The Federation, however, once again did not include Singapore. The non-inclusion of Singapore was partly due to

18. *Ibid.*, p.84.

19. Federation of Malaya Agreement (Kuala Lumpur, 1948), para 19 (d), quoted by R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, n.5, p.29.

20. T.H. Silcock, The Commonwealth Economy in South-East Asia (Durham, North Carolina, 1957), p.66.

21. Great Britain, Colonial Affairs, Federation of Malaya: A Summary of Reversed Constitutional Proposals (cmd.7171) (London, 1947), p.2, quoted by R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, n.5.

the British divide-and rule colonial policy and to keep their Singapore naval base.²²

The MCP apparently realized that the convening of the Anglo-Malay Working Committee was likely to lead to a British volte-face on the constitutional question. It might have decided, therefore, to exploit the non-Malay discontent that would have been provoked by a constitution more restrictive than the Malayan union scheme. Late in September 1946 the MCP organized a 20,000 strong rally at Farrer Ports in Singapore to demand a self governing Malaya in which all communities would enjoy equal rights.²³

Along with MCP, some of the parties such as Malayan (National) Democratic Union (MDU) and Malay National Party (MNP) started forming a united front movement to oppose the forth-coming Anglo-Malay proposals. In November 1946 Malcolm MacDonald flew to London to seek White Hall's approval for the working Committee Report before discussing it with the MCP, and others. Chinese newspapers and their organisations had already expressed their fear of flagrant discrimination against them under the Anglo-Malay proposals. Against this background, the MCP, the MDU and the MNP decided to form a

22. Victor Purcell, "A Malayan Union: The Proposed New Constitution," Pacific Affairs, 19 March 1946, p.35.

23. Yeo Kim Wah, n.9, p.23.

united front. The first meeting was held on November 19, 1946 to discuss the formation of a united front. Present at this meeting were Liew Yet Fun and Chai Pek Seang of the MCP, Ahmad Boestaman and Musa Ahmad of the MNP and Gerald de Cruz representing the Communist controlled newspaper, Democrat.²⁴ The MCP was the brain behind the formation of what later come to be called the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action (PMCJA) since it was agreed to form a united front, the MCP dispatched Gerald de Cruz to Malacca to invite Jan Ching Lock to lead it. On December 14, 1946, Jan Ching Lock and Eber jointly sponsored the Council of Joint Action (CJA) in Singapore. The CJA sought to open discussion with the British Government in order to frame a constitution based on the following three central principles: (i) Singapore to be included in a united Malaya; (ii) a self-governing Malaya to be based on a fully elected central Legislature; and (iii) a citizenship granting equal rights to all who made Malaya their permanent home and the aspect of their undivided loyalty.²⁵ On December 22, 1946, the Council of Joint Action (CJA) was extended to embrace other organizations in the mainland and was renamed Pan-Malayan

24. Ibid.

25. Minutes of meeting, 19.11.1946 (TCLP) in *ibid.*, p.23.

Council of Joint Action (PMCJA). The PMCJA added the following principles to its programme on January 5, 1947:

- (i) The Malay Rulers should become fully sovereign and constitutional rulers responsible to the people through democratic institutions;
- (ii) the Muslim religion and Malay custom should be solely under the control of the Malays, and
- (iii) special attention should be paid to the advancement of the Malay community.²⁶

In the policy-making of the PMCJA, the MCP gained complete control. The PMCJA's survival virtually depended on the MCP. For instance, the Working Committee of the PMCJA had along others, five MCP members.²⁷

The Anti-Federation Agitation

The government was urged to open direct negotiations with the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action (PMCJA) which claimed to be the sole body representing the domiciled Malays and non-Malays. But the truth of the matter was that the PMCJA did not even represent the majority of the domiciled non-Malays. And the government came to know the fact that it was virtually dominated by the MCP.²⁸

26. Ibid., p.29.

27. Ibid., p.30.

28. Interview with Lee Kong Chian, former President of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce, July 1965, quoted by Yeo Kim Wah, n.9, p.31.

The PMCJA was thus generally ignored by the UMNO as well as the British government. PMCJA was renamed again. It was called All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA). It was in order to overcome suspicious with its allies, such as Chinese Chambers of Commerce (CCC) and other member bodies. For instance the Chinese Chambers of Commerce (CCC) suspected that the term 'Pan-Malayan' denoted Communist domination.²⁹

With the people's constitution completed by then, the AMCJA-PUTERA launched the second phase of its campaign on September 21, 1947 the constitution was first presented to the people at a mass rally at Farrer Park (Singapore).³⁰

The campaign then rapidly moved from Singapore into the mainland. The leading English newspaper, The Straits Times declared that the People's Constitution was the most direct, the most extreme, the most uncompromising challenge to the British Administration that had yet been made in a constitutional manner.³¹

The agitation campaign now gathered momentum. By early October 1947 the MCP through AMCJA-PUTERA organization had become the most active organizer. Three hundred

29. W. Holland (ed.), Asian Nationalism and the West (New York, 1953), p.314.

30. Yeo Kin Wah, n.9, p.36.

31. W.Hollan (ed.), n.29, p.314.

propaganda groups toured the major towns and districts. The campaign had the support of virtually all the Chinese newspapers. On October 20, 1947, nearly all the towns in Malaya were paralysed. The October agitation was the greatest countrywide political strike in the history of Malaya.³²

The Federation Agreement and the People's constitution represented two different approaches to constitution making in Malaya. While the Federation Agreement assumed that Malaya was Malay State, the People's Constitution asserted that it was a multi-racial country. Both documents concurred that undivided loyalty to the country was essential to Malaya's successful evolution towards national independence. But while Federation Agreement contended that a Malayan nation should rest on the sovereignty of the states, the People's constitution stressed on a common citizenship which was a nationality and which conferred equal rights on all Malaysians. In contrast the Federation citizenship was neither a nationality nor did it confer equal rights on all citizens.³³

The Decline of the Anti-Federation Movement

After the October 1947 agitation the anti-Federation movement rapidly declined. Differences emerged in relations

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p.38.

relations between the MCP led AMCJA-PUTERA and the associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce (CCC). The AMCJA-PUTERA also suffered from financial difficulties. The most important reason was that the MCP had begun to realize that the colonial power would not bow to its constitutional agitation. The MCP thus abandoned the constitutional path and adopted armed struggle in 1948. In fact, the main reason the decline of the anti-Federation movement was due to the MCP's loss of faith in the constitutional struggle. By March 1948 the MCP had embarked on an armed **revolutionary war.**³⁴

In any case, in June 1948, the MCP strongly condemned the constitutional struggle as "rightist opportunism". The MCP accused the constitutional struggle by saying that under the influence of such an opportunity line it also committed certain mistakes.

Around late April 1948 the MCP removed the mass base of the AMCJA-PUTERA so that the coalition vertically collapsed before the MCP armed insurrection broke out in Malaya two months later.³⁵

34. The MCP Review, No.3, June 1948, p.7, quoted in Yeokim Wah, n.9, p.44.

35. Ibid., p.44.

Chapter IIIEMERGENCY AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

The year 1948 was a significant year in the post-Second World War history of Malaya. It was during this year that the guerrilla fighting occurred.¹ It took place almost immediately after the pronouncement of the Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948. It led to the imposition of Emergency which lasted till 1960.²

The Emergency has been described as the British Colonial authorities' response to the insurgency of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The Emergency imposed a difficult task for the government. Though the number of guerrillas was less than 10,000, their warfare activities were considerable and detrimental to the law and order of the country. The guerrillas themselves committed acts of sabotage during their raids and hid in the jungle. The government, however, underrated the strength and activities of the MCP.³

It was said that the British War Office itself made efforts towards taking out British contingents from Malaya

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1. R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government Malaysia (Singapore, 1980), p.31.
 2. The Federation of Malaya Official Year Book 1962, Chapter XXII, quoted in R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *ibid.*
 3. Gene Z. Hanrahan, Communist Struggle in Malaya (New York, 1954), p. 101.

for deployment in Korea. It was feared that if any troops had left Malaya, there would be the gravest danger of the people completely losing confidence in the ability of the government and would have been impossible to hold the enemy (MCP) from 1948-1955.⁴ The law and order in the country gradually deteriorated. Under the emergency, the British government, as expected, was bound to take military action against the MCP. According to Federation of Malaya constitution, the Emergency Bill empowered the government to ban the MCP as a pre-cautionary measure. Thus, the struggle for power between the ruling government and the MCP began from 1948 till 1960.⁵

Consultation

The first ever governmental consultation and decision immediately after the declaration of a state of Emergency was held on March 21, 1948. The meeting was initiated by the Chief Secretary, Commissioner of Police, the Commissioner for Labour, the Acting Attorney General, the Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Registrar of Trade Unions and the Trade Union Adviser. The first priority of the meeting was "to

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4. Harry Miller, Jungle War in Malaya - The Campaign Against Communism 1948-1960 (London, 1972), p.69.
 5. John Guellick, Malaysia: Economic Expansion and National Unity (London, 1981), p.90.

consider the numerous and recent manifestations in Malaya of what appeared to be a general increase of Communist propaganda in many parts of the world as well as in Malaya; and the steps which should be taken by government to strike at organizations indulging in anti-government activities and to restore public confidence in the government's ability to protect them from intimidation and lawlessness."⁶

In the meeting three lines of action were then drawn for discussion. First, it was whether to deal sternly with the Min Shung Pao, the Chinese paper, with the biggest circulation in the Federation and the voice of the MCP. Secondly, to ban the New Democratic Youth League (NDYL) controlled by the MCP as its agent for propaganda.⁷ Thirdly to take action against Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) for its anti-government activities.⁸ The issue on Min Shung Pao case was discussed rather inconclusively. In spite of its having misrepresented every action of government, such as its scurrilous articles, cancelling the paper's licence was thought to be too drastic a measure

6. Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960 (London, 1975), p.65.

7. Ibid., p.7.

8. Lecian W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya (London, 1956), p.66.

at least until the editor had been issued a preliminary warning, and it was thought better to get a conviction in court for criminal label."⁹

Discussion on New Democratic Youth League (NDYL) was a brief one. No one took it seriously. They simply came to the conclusion that the moment MCP was curbed it would remain silent. The question case of Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) was critical; the government reacted to it by amending trade union ordinance,¹⁰ such as disqualifying from office in the unions any persons who had not been employed for at least three years in the industries concerned or who had been convicted of serious crime such as extortion.

On June 13, 1948, the wave of violence in certain parts of the country was high; thirteen serious incidents including ten murders and three attacks on European estate managers took place. On the same day notice was served on the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions that their registration had been refused."¹¹

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9. Che Guevara, Guerrilla War (London, 1962), p.111.
 10. Harry Miller, Menace in Malaya (London, 1954) as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.67.
 11. S.S. Awberry and F.W. Dolly, Labour and Trade Union Organization in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore (Kuala Lumpur, 1948), p.26.

The government policy was to implement quick action against the law breakers. Apart from the condemnation of the MCP in the Legislative Council debate on May 31, 1948, and a suggestion that all its members should be banished, the Commissioner General's broadcast on June 6, 1948 referred to the outbreak of lawlessness and violence that was inspired by Communist agitators. On June 9, 1948 government could be said to have gone on to the political offensive against the MCP with the arrest of Liew Jit Fan, the editor of Min Sheng Pao which had formally been taken over by the MCP on June 1, 1948.¹²

The Chinese New Democratic Youth League was also declared illegal organization because of its indulgence in anti-government activities with the MCP.¹³ The strikes were being directed and dictated by the MCP in one form or the other. A cadre of the MCP captured in Perak in early July 1948 admitted that the Rubber Workers' Union was the chief cover for the MCP in Perak. Perak police raided the MCP offices.¹⁴ On May 25, 1948 the Commissioner of Police

12. Ian Morrison, "The Communist Uprising in Malaya"- Far Eastern Survey, (Hongkong), Vol. 17, ^{N. 12} December 1948, p.282.

13. Harry Miller, n.4, p.68.

14. The Labour Department Annual Report for 1948 as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.92.

reported two cases of murder on Negri Sembilan estates. On June 2, 1948, an armed clash took place in selangor between the police and the MCP guerrillas.¹⁵

Government Policy Objectives vis-a-vis Squatter Settlement

An important measure taken by the government in the first year of the Emergency campaign (1948-49) was the policy of insulating the Chinese squatter settlements; the rural Chinese in Malaya constituted a state without a state who were loosely described as squatters.¹⁶ The MCP drew the major chunk of its support and recruits from them. The squatters were almost entirely Chinese. They were the ones who assisted the guerrillas.¹⁷

In 1948 the Chinese squatter population was estimated at almost half a million, occupying land without any office title or by virtue of a temporary occupation licence. Most of the squatter territory was situated in no man's land (and of the jungle fringe. When the revolt had reached its peak, it was obvious that the Chinese Squatters extended help to the MCP.¹⁸

15. Anthony Short, n.6, p.92.

16. Milton E. Osborne, Strategic Hamlets in South Vietnam Cornell University, 1956 (Mimeo) as quoted by Anthony Short, n.6, p.174.

17. Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), October 20, 1978. as quoted in John Guellick in Malaysia (London, 1981), p.91.

18. Morrison, n.12, p.283.

However, police and military operations in the squatters' territory often caused a huge damage as peasant huts were set on fire. It was reported that crops were destroyed and in some cases innocent squatters became the chief victims during the operations.¹⁹

Before 1948, the squatters had no contact with the government because much of the land had been illegally occupied by them during the exigencies of the Japanese occupation. The government had fairly understood that the Chinese squatters were discontented with the government. If at all there was any contact, it was minimal and one of negative approaches and ill-treatment. It was reported that very few government services were made available to the squatters.²⁰

Chinese squatters had little opportunity to obtain alternative land with real title because of opposition from Malay community after the implementation of Federation of Malay Agreement (1948). By and large, thus majority of the squatters had no reason to have any interest in the Malayan government.²¹

19. Stanley S. Bedling Ton, Malaysia and Singapore - The Building of New States (London, 1978), p.79.

20. Victor Purcell, Malaya: Communist or Free? (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p.73.
Very few government services were provided to the squatters. Schools were built by themselves and operated by themselves. Communications were considerably poor, electricity was rarely, if ever, supplied, and health services were almost nil.

21. Ibid., p.75.

The government evolved military administrative, and political measures in squatter areas only when Emergency was imposed. During the emergency, government deployed some 40,000 regular soldiers with the support, on occasion, of artillery, aircraft and naval vessels. In addition, there was a police force of about 70,000 and a quarter of a million homeguards in the squatter villages.²²

This paramilitary operation was fully backed by the administrative and technical services of the government, a high priority area during the emergency. In 1948 the armed forces numbered 4,000 to 5,000 increasing to 8,000 in a year.

It was the game of hide and seek in which the numerically superior pursuers hunted down the guerrillas whose refuge was the squatter settlement. For several years the terrorists retained the local initiative in areas of their own choice and did great damage. In retaliation, government repatriated some 25,000 people to China or India if they were Indians. However, this method could not be absolutely viable to remove about 300,000 people. In any case the authorities of China and India would not accept them.²³

22. John Guellick, n.5, p.89.

23. Ibid., p.9.

Besides, this method of campaign was not free from some demerits and limitations, since the able-bodied men and the people who truly indulged in creating problem were often absent when the rounding-up took place and usually only women, children and old people were caught.²⁴

Resettlement was overall an emergency measure that grew into a major policy of the Malayan government.²⁵ This measure also was a factor to bring about division among the squatters, those who supported the Communists and the members of the KMT, who opposed them and the majority who sat on the fence awaiting the outcome. The most urgent and effective Emergency Regulations were those giving power to the government to arrest and detain without trial. The government was reported to have arrested nearly 1,000 known Communist Party members or sympathizers. By the end of 1948, 1,779 were held in detention.²⁶

Briggs's Plan

From 1950 onwards there was a new policy of resettlement of squatters often referred to as the 'Briggs Plan'. 1950 was said to be a critical year, as there was renewed

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24. Robert Thomson, Defeating Communist Insurgency (London, 1966), p.40.
25. Emergency Operation Council Directive No.6. Emergency Directive and Instruction, 1956 as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.173.
26. Charles Gamba, The Origins of Trade Unionism in Malaya (Singapore, 1962), p.335.

assault by the guerrillas every where.²⁷ The main purpose of the squatter resettlement was to bring the scattered squatter groups within the perimeter of compact settlement, 'New Villages', where the squatters could be "protected". Each village had protective ring of barbed wire and usually a police station. A total of 573,000 people of whom 300,000 were squatters were moved into the New Villages over the decade from 1950-1960 and about 650,000 labourers were regrouped.²⁸ Most of the movement to new habitations took place in the three years 1950-1953 and it was carried out in a hurry as a military operation.²⁹ It was stated that the sites of new villages were sometimes chosen with regard to their defensibility rather than to agricultural and economic considerations.³⁰ In addition to police protection the New Village had a school, a dispensary, and a community hall. The population of a New Village was between 100 and 1,000 persons in most cases, although some of the larger ones had populations of 5,000 to 10,000 or even more. The government had provided them employment. An incidental effect of resettlement during the Emergency campaign was to increase the urban element in the Malayan

27. Anthony Short, "Asian Communism", Pt.III, Asia Magazine, November 20, 1966, p.39.

28. John Guellick, n.5, p.91.

29. Ibid., p.92.

30. Sari Berita, May 31, 1962, 162, IMP paras 504-5 gives data on the state of New Villages in the mid-1970s, quoted in Guellick, n.5, p.92.

Chinese population as a whole to almost three quarters.³¹
By 1952, 423,000 Chinese squatters had been resettled in
410 New Villages at a cost of \$41 million.³²

As regards the MCP, despite a number of efforts by
the party, there were surprisingly little disturbances.
Very few of the Resettlement officers, either British or
Chinese, were killed. It was said that the officers were
not charged with unpopular duties such as collecting taxes
and registering young men for conscription. For the
villages they provided the only source of alleviation of
their hardships and the guerrillas understood that murders
would alienate the people from the MCP.³³

Another factor which was duly responsible for the
government success in this policy implementation was that
resettlement was carried out by soldiers not in frightening
orders but with a consideration which contrasted with the
ruthlessness of both the Japanese and the Communist
guerrillas.³⁴ For instance, the government issued Temporary
Occupation Licences (TOL) both for houses and agricultural

31. Kernal Singh Sandhu, "Emergency Resettlement in Malaya"
Journal of Tropical Geography (University of Malaya in
Singapore, August 1964), p. 117.

32. Richard Clutterbuck, Riot and Revolution in Singapore
and Malaya 1945-1963 (London, 1973), p. 175.

33. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p. 176.

34. Robert Thomson, n.24, p. 66.

small holdings which greatly increased their feeling of sincerity. They had previously no legal titles whatever to their land.³⁵

Protection of life and property of the people was stated to be the vital element in the government policy during resettlement. The squatters were not allowed to move into a New Village until a police post could be provided. Tenants registration was also introduced whereby the house-holder kept a list of all occupants, duplicated in the police post, and was obliged by law to notify any arrivals and departures within a day.³⁶

Kernials Sandhu gives an important and interesting data on resettlement as follows:

Resettlement and Regroupment

Size of Population	No. of villages	Size of New Villages		
		Total in these villages	% of villages of this size	% of people in these villages
Under 100	12	769	3	1
100 - 500	119	51874	35	9
500- 1,000	116	79886	24	14
1000-5000	119	340710	35	59
Over 10,000	2	26,273	1	4
unknown	2	-	-	-
TOTAL	370	499,512	98	87

35. Ooi Jin Bee, Land, People and Economy in Malaya (London, 1963), p.206.

36. Robert Thomson, n.24, p.66.

Percentage by Race in New Villages

Chinese	- 86 per cent (493,000)
Malay	- 9 per cent (52,000)
Indian	- 4 per cent (23,000)
Others	- 1 per cent (5,000)

Degree to Which New Villages Were New³⁷

On new and isolated sites	: 32 per cent
New Suburbs (separate but near towns)	: 16 per cent
Built around small villages	: 28 per cent
Unclassified	: 28 per cent

Labour Regroupment³⁸ (Mainly Rubber, Pineapple and Oil Palm) 1951-53

	Population	% Chinese	% Malay	% Indian	% Others
Estate	510,000	29.0	16.0	50.0	5.0
Mines	80,000	68.7	17.6	13.6	0.1
Others	60,000	71.8	14.0	14.0	0.2
TOTAL	650,000	246,000	104,000	274,000	26,000

37. Sandhu, n.31, p.164.

38. Ibid.

Food-Rationing Policy

The government instituted an administrative system of food-rationing and control of the movement of food-stuffs and other essential supplies.³⁹ It was nothing less than a policy of starving the guerrillas. The intention was to deprive the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) everywhere in the country of every necessity of life from food, to clothes and every article for their military aims including printing materials.⁴⁰ Peasants and estate labourers, for instance, were not allowed to take a mid-day meal with them into the fields. Identity cards were issued as a check on the movement of the MCP supporters. These sufficed to deprive the guerrillas of their previous freedom of movement. Security forces were thus able to pin them down to a great extent.⁴¹

It had been reported that the people had to keep detailed records of their customers and their purchases of food stuffs. They were not allowed to supply food of any kind without first producing their identity cards. The transport of food on turcks by night throughout the country was also strictly banned.

39. John Guellick, n.5, p.92.

40. Harry Miller, n.4, p.73.

41. "Report on the Emergency in Malaya," from 1950 to November 1951 (Kuala Lumpur, 1951), pp.3-5 as quoted in Guellick, n.5, p.92.

Predictably proposed food-denial measures in the Briggs Plan produced the most violent reactions from the Communists. In rage as well as panic they went on a rampage which ranged from damaging thousands of rubber trees by slashing them to murder. In June 1951 the number of Communist incidents soar to a record 606. The Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) sustained their ferocious aggression for the rest of the year.⁴² The casualties in 1951 were depressing for the country. Altogether 533 civilians and 504 soldiers and policemen had been reported killed. The guerrillas had suffered too with 1,079 killed and 322 captured.⁴³

Government quietly hoped that 1952 would bring a radical change in Malaya. There were some brighter signs ahead; military reinforcement were due early in 1952 from Fiji, East Africa and Rhodesia. The police force had been doubled in strength to 25,000 and was still growing. Special constabulary was 39,000 strong and also growing and a Home Guard formed in September 1950 was already more than 200,000 strong and was still expanding.⁴⁴

42. Harry Miller, n.4, p.74.

43. P.B.G. Waller, A Study of the Emergency Regulations in Malaya 1948-1960 (Bangkok, 1967), p.167.

44. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.168.

Special Branch of Police

Briggs had appointed a study group to investigate the Intelligence Services known as Special Branch of the Police (SBP) with responsibility for all tactical intelligence and counter subversion formed in 1950.⁴⁵ All the work of compiling the guerrillas orders of battle was done by Military Intelligence Officers (MIO) but they were all placed under the command of the Head of Special Branch Officer (HSB) in each state. Intelligence information from all sources was brought to special branch and all agents and informers were handled by them.⁴⁶ At district level was an Assistant Superintendent of Police with about two inspectors who were roughly equal in rank to Army Warrant Officer. In 1950-51 most of the district Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents of Police were British. Only after 1955, they were slowly replaced by the local people.⁴⁷

The Inspectors were almost entirely Chinese or Indian and handled most of the agents. At the village level, there were one or two detective Chinese in most New Villages. They lived in the security of the village police but worked in civilian clothes. Though they did not handle or deal critical

45. Robert Thomson, n.24, p.85.

46. Malcolen Browne, The New Face of War (London, 1966), p.265.

47. Richard Clutterbulk, n.32, p.179.

intelligence prospects, their presence gave confidence to the inclined villagers and made casual information for which rewards were paid.⁴⁸

Rewards

For casual information of value the police were authorised to pay reward approximately M \$50 to M \$100. It was just to encourage the people. In case the information led directly to the killing or capture of a guerrilla on the wanted list the informer was highly rewarded. In 1951, the scale of rewards was as follows:⁴⁹

Secretary General (Chin Peng)	M \$60,000
State or town committee Secretary	M \$30,000
State or town committee Member	M \$20,000
District Committee Secretary	M \$14,000
District Committee or MRLA Company Commander	M \$10,000
MRLA Platoon Commander	M \$6,000
District Committee Member or MRLA Section Commander	M \$5,000
Cell leader	M \$3,000
Others	M \$2,000

Later, these figures were said to be doubled and for some higher ranks quadrupled and a 30 per cent bonus added if the wanted person was taken alive.⁵⁰

48. Ibid.

49. Harry Miller, Menace in Malaya (London, 1954), p.101.

50. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.181.

In February 1952 the British Government dispatched General Sir Gerald Templer to be High Commissioner, Commander-in-Chief, as well as Director of Operations, with greater powers than those granted to Burney or Briggs. For the first time, the prosecution of the war and the functioning of the government was vested in him. Templer was vested with full powers and he used them. He was empowered to amend the Emergency Regulations if they were found inadequate.⁵¹

However, Gerald Templer agreed on the Briggs Plan as it stood and he made it effective with vigour and determination. During his two years of office (1952-54) it was said that two-thirds of the guerrillas were wiped out; the incident rate fell from 500 to less than 100 per month and the civilian and security force casualties dropped from 200 to less than 40.⁵²

Templer became popular for his dynamism and capability of leadership. His other achievements were such as self-government at every level from Kuala Lumpur down to the villages and progress in rural development both of these played a big part in winning the support of the people. When he left Malaya most villages had elected village councils

51. Richard Clutterbuck, The Long Long War (London, 1967), p.135.

52. Ibid., p.136.

The following table gives the figures of casualties on both sides⁵³-

	Years								
	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	
<u>Enemy Elimination</u>									
Killed	374	619	648	1079	1155	959	723	420	
Captured	263	337	147	121	121	73	51	54	
Surrendered	56	251	147	201	157	372	211	249	
TOTAL	693	1207	942	1481	1433	1404	985	723	
<u>Security Forces Eliminated</u>									
Police	89	164	314	386	207	58	53	47	
Soldiers	60	65	79	124	56	34	34	32	
TOTAL	149	229	393	510	263	92	87	79	
<u>Civilians Killed and Missing</u>									
Killed	315	334	646	533	343	85	97	62	
Missing	90	160	106	135	131	43	57	57	
TOTAL	405	494	752	668	474	128	154	119	

53. Ibid., n.32, p.187.

and the strong multi-racial Alliance Party under Tunkee Abdul Rahman had emerged as the leading political party with a firm guarantee of self-government to come.⁵⁴

The village councils collected licence fees, supplemented by government grants-in-aid for specific development projects such as dispensaries, schools and sanitation.⁵⁵

In September 1952, Templer granted citizenship rights to 1,200,000 Chinese and 1,80,000 Indians by Legislation to confer federal citizenship on anyone born in the Federation.⁵⁶ And the first village councils were elected in May 1952 and by March 1953 one-thirds of the Chinese New Villages had elected councils.⁵⁷ Thus, it was in 1952 the seeds of future democracy were sprinkled in the New Villages. By mid-1952 a total of about 435,000 men of the armed services including part-time Home Guards were opposing the Communist forces vehemently.⁵⁸

White Areas

In 1953 Templer attempted a number of bold experiments in Malaya. The districts where special branches were satisfied that the MRLA was ineffective and the MCP organisation had

54. K.J.Ratnam, Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p.154.

55. Sandhu, n.31, p.168.

56. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.191.

57. O Balance, Malaya - The Communist Insurgency 1948-60 (London, 1966), pp.77-79.

58. Harry Miller, n.4, pp.104-105.

been disrupted were declared 'White Areas'.⁵⁹ "White Areas" were defined as those in which certain Emergency Regulations such as food restrictions and curfew could be suspended, because the Emergency had so improved that their continuance was no longer considered necessary. The relaxation began in September 1953 when part of the central district of Malacca was declared white area.⁶⁰

However, the people were warned that the restrictions would be reinforced at once if there were a resumption of Communist activity or terror in the area. It happened to be true, no White area had to revert to black. Thus by 1954 competition for the hearts and minds of the people was well on the way to being won by the government.⁶¹

Templer's term came to an end in June 1954. He refused an invitation to continue as Supremo. By then many new villages had improved amenities, good crops and livestock. The government turned its attention to improving the economic position of the Malays.⁶²

59. Harry Miller, n.4, p.223.

60. Anthony Short, n.6, pp.378-79.

61. Richard Clutterbuck, n.51, p.313.

62. Frank Kitson, Gangs and Counter-Gangs (London, 1966), p.107.

The Cost of Emergency

Over the country as a whole, the cost of the Emergency had risen steadily. In 1948 it costed M \$4,000,000; in 1949 M \$50,000,000; in 1950 M \$60,000,000; in 1951 M \$155,000,000; in 1952 M \$210,000,000; and in 1953 the cost was variously estimated at between M \$250,000,000 and M \$270,000,000. These figures, however, revealed only part of the Emergency costs. They did not include expenditure on the police other than Special Constable and the Emergency establishment of police lieutenants.⁶³

The figures quoted are for Malayan dollars. They also did not include the expenditure on the Malay Regiment, nor did they cover the cost of maintaining British, Common Wealth and Imperial Forces in Malaya. When these costs were added, it was estimated that by 1953 at least the real cost of the Emergency was something like £100,000,000 per annum. In 1952 for instance, estimates of expenditure on Malayan fighting services, were of the order of £42,000,000.⁶⁴

In 1953 two-and-a-half million dollars were spent in acquiring 50,000 acres for the New Villages. In 1954 the High Commissioner gave the approximate cost to Britain of

63. Overseas Economic Survey, Malaya, March 1951, HMSO (London, 1952), pp.3-6 as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.347.

64. Anthony Short, n.6, p.348.

Army, Naval and Air Force units engaged in Malaya as £550,000,000 per annum.⁶⁵ And with a total in 1953 of £200,000,000 - 33 per cent of the estimated state and Federal revenue spent on social welfare - it was probably most of the Malayan budget in one way or another spent on Emergency projects.

Over the entire period of the Emergency the tin industry also was reported to have spent M \$30,000,000 in protective and security measures for the workers.⁶⁶

During the Emergency campaign the British government, thus, not only spent a huge amount of money on the war against the MCP but also attempted to establish a multi-racial political format in the country. The fact was that the political processes in Malaya had been largely dominated by the conflicts that arose among various communities. The communal divisions were not based on social differences alone but rather they were complicated with a plurality of cultural norms including inter-alia, religion, customs, habits and languages. Communalism had been the central theme of the British political processes in the country.⁶⁷

65. T.H.Silcock, The Commonwealth Economy in Southeast Asia (Durham, North Carolina, 1959), p.66.

66. Ibid.

67. Clifford Geertz, Old Societies and New States, the Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa (London, 1963), p.107.

From pre-colonial times, one of the distinctive manifestations of Malay communalism lay in the Malay claim that the Malays were and are the original inhabitants or the 'sons of the soil' ("Bumiputras" to use their own Malay language).⁶⁸

However, the Malayan Union was declared by the British government in which the citizenship proposals provided that citizenship could be acquired by having been born in Malaya or Singapore. The union proposals embodied a move towards direct rule by the British thus the proposals struck the privileged Malays socially as well as politically especially at the time when racial feelings had been high.⁶⁹

Likewise non-Malays too were active in struggling for their political and social right. The political activities of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) formed in February 1949 was encouraged by the British. The British political strategy was to attempt to bring the leaders of the main communities together in "Communities Liaison Committee" (CLC).⁷⁰

The MCA had different roles. Essentially, it rivalled the communists in providing another focus for Chinese loyalties. The MCA raised funds to help in the resettlement of the Chinese

68. Tae Yul Nam, Malaysia and Singapore: The Failure of a Political Experiment (Michigan, 1970), p.39.

69. R.S. Milne and Diana K. Mauzy, n.1, p.27.

70. Ibid., n.1, p.34.

squatters and thus worked hand-in-hand with the British. Thus it became a respectable body.⁷¹ Eventually, MCA became a major partner of UMNO covertly in pursuance of an idea promoted by the British. The first President of the MCA, Tan Cheng Lock, stressed this point in his inaugural address that it was a matter of supreme significance and indisputable necessity that a basic purpose of this organisation must be the attainment of inter-communal understanding and friendship particularly between the Malays and Chinese to make the land one country and one nation.⁷²

Nevertheless, appeals for unity among various ethnic groups in Malayan politics, the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians, continued to be defined along ethnic boundaries. In September 1951, Dato Onnbin Jao Bar, the former and first President of UMNO, who had failed to enlarge its membership to include non-Malays, resigned from the UMNO and established a multi-ethnic political party, the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP).⁷³

However, Dato Onn was replaced by Tunku Abdul Rahman.⁷⁴ Tunku Abdul Rahman called the IMP, destructive. There upon

71. Goh Cheng Teek, The Malay Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p.19.

72. Stanley S. Bedlington, n.19, p.85.

73. Ibid., p.86.

74. Ibid., p.87.

members of IMP were expelled from UMNO. Obviously, the special position of the Malays and their political dominance was of greater importance to the Malay community leadership than the formation of a Pan-Malayan identity.⁷⁵ The IMP's proposals to decrease the authority and position of the Sultans proved to be irksome to traditional and conservative Malays.⁷⁶

Several reasons prompted the UMNO and the MCA to join hands in fighting the 1952 Kuala Lumpur municipal elections. Some of the striking and binding factors were; first, British government had made it clear that independence would not be granted until various ethnic groups in Malaya had proved that they could work together in harmony. Secondly, the UMNO and MCA wished to assert positively that they could provide an alternative to the multi ethnic IMP, which was contesting the elections.⁷⁷ Thirdly, the UMNO had suffered a set back by its conflict with Dato Onn and the IMP so an alliance with the MCA would certainly enhance the UMNO's electoral prospects against the IMP.⁷⁸

75. Harry Miller, Prince and Premier (London, 1959), p.147.

76. Ibid.

77. Stanly Bedlington, n.19, p.86.

78. Ibid., p.87.

The first ever country-wide federal elections took place in July 1955. In these elections the alliance composed of UMNO, MCA and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) swept the polls winning 51 of the 52 seats. Tunku Abdul Rahman was elected and appointed Chief Minister and formed a cabinet.⁷⁹

The 1955 federal elections meant to demonstrate the strength of the Alliance throughout the peninsula.⁸⁰ The Alliance Party had proved to the British the potency of its prescription for ethnic cooperation for which the British too were looking. In January 1956 a delegation of Alliance leaders plus representatives from rulers journeyed to London to discuss plans for independence.⁸¹ From the outset of the London talks, it was obvious that the British had resigned itself to the inevitable, and desired to seize the opportunity in view of the winding down of the MCP insurrection in order to arrange for an orderly transition of power to a post-independent leadership.⁸²

79. R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, n.1, p.36.

80. R.K. Vosil, Politics in Plural Society (Kual Lumpur, 1971), p.50.

81. Ratnam, n.54, pp.154-55.

82. Great Britain (Colonial Office), Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Communism 1957 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1957) as quoted by Stanley Bedlington, n.19, p.89.

Talks Between MCP and Alliance Government

In 1955 after the Alliance won fifty one of the fifty two elected seats and polled over 80 per cent of the votes cast, Tunkee Abdul Rahman as Chief Minister made offer of negotiations with the MCP. By the end of September, 1955 the Chief Minister had agreed to meet Ching Peng, General-Secretary of the MCP, for negotiations.⁸³

The Communist leader Chin Peng accepted the invitation from Chief Minister Tunkee Abdul Rahman. Chin Peng received no VIP treatment for his journey to Baling. To the government he was a criminal coming to seek surrender terms.⁸⁴

The Tunku first offered the terms of surrender. Chin Peng advocated that the MCP should be legalised and allowed to enjoy equal status so that it could fight for independence by constitutional means. To this the Tunku retorted that the surrender terms declared that the Communists who gave up communism and showed that they genuinely intended to be loyal to the government would be helped to regain their normal position in society. He gave some terms and conditions. First, Communists would have to prove their loyalty to Malaya and being anti-British. It was because of the fact that all

83. John Guellick, n.5, p.118.

84. Harry Miller, n.4, p.167.

the Malayan people regarded the Communist Party as belonging to a power outside their country and considered that its members gave allegiance to that foreign country and not to Malaya.

Chin Peng asked for the actual meaning of loyalty to Malaya. The Tunku replied that the Malayan people would expect the Communists to give up activities against the government, such as subversion and to accept the democratic system of government.⁸⁵ Chin Peng was told that giving up Communist activities meant dissolution of the Malayan Communist Party.⁸⁶

The talks continued. When Tunku Abdul Rahman and his colleagues asked Chin Peng to dissolve his party, Chin Peng declared that as a member of the party he and his comrades would not succumb to this death-trap and would still believe in their ideology. He strongly proclaimed that they would never allow themselves to be forced by others to give up this ideology which the government requested them.

Chin Peng returned time and again to the question of recognition of his party. The Tunku closed the talks with the words: "If you want to have peace in the country one

85. Harry Miller, n.4, p.169.

86. Ibid., p.170.

side must give into us. I have to be frank with you. It is you who must surrender."⁸⁷

Chin Peng replied boldly again: "The amnesty means surrender, surrender means humiliation. We will not surrender at any time. If you demand our surrender we would prefer to fight to the last man." The talks broke down in the closing stages.⁸⁸

This was the kind of first peace offensive of the MCP. It was also described that the aim of the MCP was nothing but a peaceful democratic and independent Malaya. To attain peace and tranquility an abolition of the Emergency was necessary. However, the closer the MCP come to the negotiating table with the government, the more complex it was due to extreme position taken by the two sides.⁸⁹ Chin Peng said later that though the Baling talks had failed, the MCP would refrain from armed revolt if the government recognised the MCP as legal political party.⁹⁰

Though the government forces and police in Malaya were not able to meet the MCP challenge immediately, there were

87. MCP Directive of June 11, 1956 as quoted in White Paper, SCMSSU, 1956, p.1, quoted in Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.98.

88. Ibid., p.170

89. Anthony Short, n.6, p.460.

90. J.R.W. Smail, Bandung in the Early Revolution 1945-1946 (Ithaca, 1964), p.75.

quite a number of pressures under which the MCP were doomed to collapse. Malaya had no border with a Communist State through which reinforcements could be sent.⁹¹ Moreover, after a good deal of prompting from the British Embassy in Bangkok, a Thai-Malayan border agreement had been concluded in 1949 which was supposed to prevent guerrillas from being able to escape from the police of one country by crossing the frontier into the other.⁹² Besides, the MCP was overwhelmingly Chinese. The MCP claimed that the Malayan Revolution was under the vanguard of the proletariat. It was always claimed that the MCP was anti-Imperialist and anti-feudalistic national revolution.⁹³

Its demands were the right of self-determination. But the party never had been able to attract support from the Malays and Indians because of its Chineseness.⁹⁴ Above all the virtual end of the MCP insurrection in the mid-1950s could be attributed to a number of factors. By 1954 it had become clear that the armed revolt had no chance of immediate success due to preponderance of government forces.⁹⁵ By 1954, legal

91. Gene Z. Hanrahan, n.3, p.101.

92. Anthony Short, n.6, p.374.

93. R.S. Milne and Dean K. Mauzy, n.1, p.32.

94. Anthony Short, n.6, p.373. See Richard Clutterbuck, The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p.5.

95. Bedhington, n.19, p.88.

Malay and Chinese political parties - UMNO and MCA had been tightly woven into an ethnic alliance in the country for an independent Malaya. From 1951 onwards, the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) changed to emphasize united front tactics based on "Peaceful Co-existence" between Asian States, a policy that culminated in the enunciation of Five Principles of Peaceful co-existence at the Bandung conference in April 1955.⁹⁶

96. David Mozingo, The Maoist Imprint on China's Foreign Policy in China Briefing (Chicago: Centre for Policy Studies, University of Chicago, 1968), p.31.

Chapter IVMCP DURING 1948-1955

In 1948 after failing in its parliamentary struggle, the MCP was faced with the fundamental question: what should be the next stage of the revolution?

Led by Secretary General Chen Peng, the Party then condemned the constitutional struggle as "one of rightist opportunism" and proclaimed that "the primary task of the MCP was to organize and conduct workers' and peasants' struggles on the widest possible front".

On April 27, 1948, the MCP strategy aimed first of all to create a revolutionary situation by wrecking the economy of both Singapore and the Federation and aimed struggle followed soon.¹

After June 1948 MCP paid much less attention to Singapore because their future depended on the outcome of the armed struggle in the mainland. MCP attempted to make use of Singapore as a base to provide food and armed supplies to the communists fighting in Sautu Johore. The ultimate objective was victory and take over of power after eliminating British officials. The MCP anticipated that the managers

1. The MCP Review, no.3, June 1948, p.7, quoted in Yeo Kim Wah, Political Development in Singapore 1945-1955 (Singapore, 1973), p.221.

would desert and that the labour force would pass under Communist control.

The immediate concern of the MCP in 1948, however, was mobilization. This was in three phases:² In May and early June 1948 the hard core of the MCP assault force disappeared from public view. In short, they went underground. These were the professional revolutionaries. The MCP called them 'killer squads' which usually operated in groups of four or five and whose principal purpose was murder. The second phase was a preparation to make on the part of the open members of the MCP and their affiliates. The third phase would come with arms when the state of emergency was declared by the government. So as soon as emergency was declared they took up arms against the government. Thus the MCP had undergone a transition from a quasi-legal political organization whose strength lay principally in the labour unions,³ and Ex-Comrades Association to an entirely clandestine association in the jungle.

The MCP began to resort to a number of violent actions. Thus production of two major products of the British imperialists, rubber and tin, became stagnant. Work on most of the

2. "The Communist Threat in Singapore," Command Paper 33 of 1955, Singapore 1957, quoted in Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-60 (London, 1975), p.224.

3. Ibid., p.96.

rubber estates and tin mines, especially estates, stopped on a general scale as the workers ran to the farming villages. There was a shortage of labour, and this threatened the economic resources of British imperialism.

In fact, the MCP's principal hope of success in this early phase of the insurrection was to reduce the government control over the extractive economy in the country-side and to create self sustaining areas. Some potential headway at least was made in the reduction of government control in a small number of indefensible police posts which were closed down in Kedah.⁴

Managers left remote and extremely dangerous positions. At the tactical and ad-hoc level the MCP was often surprisingly effective. For instance, in the approach to open conflict with government the MCP's argument to encourage ex-Anti-Japanese Army recruitment was that if members of the MCP ex-members of the MPAJA allowed themselves to be arrested they would be banished to China and killed on arrival by the Kuomintang government. On the other hand, if they struggled and fought against the British, though they might lie on the battlefield, there was a chance of their gaining independence, eventually taking their place alongside Indonesia, Burma and Indo-China. It was, therefore, better to fight and live than to be arrested and killed.⁵

4. Ibid., p.106.

5. Ibid., p.107.

As the emergency was clamped and MCP and its affiliated bodies banned in the middle of 1948, the MCP found itself in a serious predicament. In a situation in which the colonial authorities were hell-bent on crushing the MCP immediate MCP extension seemed to be to obtain complete control of labour unions through trade unions and through this control disorganizes the economic life of the country. It was estimated that the MCP controlled between 65 and 75 per cent of the organized labour in Malaya, and that intimidatory methods could cause a partial stoppage of essential services and productive activities throughout the country.

The second purpose of the MCP was to create such a state of lawlessness and anarchy as to cause the people to lose confidence in the government. There were indications that the MCP was already attempting to do it through its control over ex-Pan-Malayan anti-Japanese Army.⁶

The MCP's dual aim in the early days of the emergency was for the guerrillas who were to become the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), to establish liberated areas and for the party to construct a widely-based united front including the petty and national bourgeoisie.⁷

6. Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960 (London, 1975), p.81.

7. MCP Strategy outlined in the document entitled, Gene Z. Hanrahan, "Strategic Problems of the Malayan Revolution" (New York, 1954), p.64.

Structure of MCP

For the achievement of these purposes, it would be useful to examine the party structure. The structure of the Malayan Community Party followed the customary Communist pattern. Senior party men, for instance, were members of committees at various levels and unit commanders too.

The supreme authority of the MCP lay in its Central Executive Committee. The main spring of the party was its constitution which had been drawn up in March 1934. Its first article read: "The Malayan Community Party is an affiliate of the Communist International".⁸ It also set out the party organization and principles in great detail. It stressed that obedience to Party discipline was the highest duty of a party member. The privilege of self-sacrifice was fundamental both in work and practice. This privilege was the highest glory a Communist member could attain.

Regarding discipline it said, each and every comrade in the Party should turn himself into a party disciplinarian and that there was absolutely no room for individual feeling in the matter. Discipline was, thus, the chain which bound

8. Harry Miller, Jungle War - The Campaign Against Communism 1948-60 (Briston, London 1972), p.53.

9. Lucien W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya (Princeton, 1956), p.78.

the comrade and the soldier to the machine.¹⁰

The armed forces were formed into eight regiments covering states of Johore and Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Perak and Kedah. The Perak regiment was the strongest of all consisting of seven hundred troops. Outside the jungle, in towns and villages the party built an enormous and complex organization to assist, feed and supply the guerrillas. This was known as the "Min yuen" or masses movement. They smuggled money, medicines and other articles. It was the organization working among the rural and town population.¹¹ So vital was the "Min Yuen" to the party that when the government launched what was literally "operation starvation" over a period of years to prevent food getting to the fighting guerrilla units, the "Min Yuen" formed the eyes, ears, hands and feet of the guerrilla army.¹²

1948 Calcutta Conference

In September 1947 Adru Ihdanov, a Soviet leader in a formal announcement had said that the world was divided into two camps. His speech explained that Communists had the

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10. Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party, "Record of Decisions," June 13, 1940, quoted in Hanrahan, n.7, p.106. The Communist Struggle in Malaya (New York, 1954),
11. Harry Miller, n.8, p.55.
12. Ibid., p.57

special historical task of leading the resistance to the American and British governments. The Communist parties all over the world, therefore, had to head the resistance to the plans of Imperialist expansion and aggression along every line.¹³

Zhdanov's inflammatory speech was printed in the first number of the Cominform paper, 'For a Lasting Peace, For a Peoples Democracy' in November 1947, and the theme dominated the Calcutta conference of February 1948. This conference was sponsored by two Communist controlled associations - The World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students.¹⁴

In a sense it was the conference of the youth and students of South-East Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence.¹⁵

In a most interesting paper on the Calcutta Conference that dealt with its origins and place in the development of Communist policies, Ruth T. McVey made the critical point that while the Conference did not make an open declaration for insurrection, its mood was one of extreme hostility towards colonial rule.¹⁶

13. Douglas. Hyde, In the Roots of Guerrilla Warfare (London, 1968), pp.23-24.

14. Charles B. McLane, Soviet Strategies in South-East Asia (Princeton, 1966), p.45.

15. Ibid.

16. Ruth T. McVey, The Calcutta Conference and the South-East Asian Uprising (Ithaca Cornell, 1958), p.15.

The most provoking report on the opening day of the Conference was given by a Vietnamese delegate Le Tam, and it set the tone for the entire Conference. He described the Anti-Imperialist struggle as having reached its highest form in the armed struggles of Indonesia and Vietnam. According to McVey, the fact that the Vietnamese delegation consisted of officers of Viet Minh, it might have had much to do with the military emphasises of Le Tam's Speech.¹⁷

Besides, there were many events and manifestations of resentment against the British Imperialism. For instance, there was a procession and speeches to mark the day of revolution of Indian Navy two years earlier. It only offered encouragement to militant action.

Soviet youth were at the same time watching with deep sympathy the armed struggle which the youth of different countries in South East Asia were waging for their independence. They conveyed that they would have their full support in the struggle.¹⁸

By and large, for the most part, the Conference was said to have adopted favourable attitude towards the armed struggle. None of the Calcutta meeting reports in any way discouraged armed actions against the Imperialists.¹⁹

17. Ibid., p.16.

18. A History of the Communist Party of India, Vol.2, 1947-51, Indian Intelligence Bureau, New Delhi, 1964, as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.46.

19. Ruth T.McVey, n.16, p.16.

The militant tone displayed at the Calcutta Conference added prestige to the more extreme elements among the South-East Asian Communists. Later, when the Communists of Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia came to realize that they had no prospect of gaining power by peaceful means, they could look back to the conference's declaration as an ideological justification for their decision to try the path of violence.²⁰

Lu Soon was the MCP's representative at the Calcutta Conference. On his way to Singapore he attended a Communist sponsored Congress of the All Burma Peasant's Union in which the All Burma Peasant's Union decided to dislodge British Imperialism from the country. Within a few months after the Calcutta Conference, armed rebellions had broken out in Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China, Malaya and the Philippines.²¹

Decision to Launch the Armed Struggle

Initially, the MCP directed its offensive against the two major industries of rubber and tin. The fact that the British rubber and tin centres were scattered through out of the way areas adjacent to jungles and rural districts, these areas were favourable to the actions of the Liberation Army.

20. "Regarding the Decision on Rectification of the Party, the political line of the party, the current situation in Malaya" by Yoong Sued Wah as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.49.

21. Anthony Short, n.6, pp.46-47.

At the same time these areas provided favourable conditions whereby the Liberation Army was enabled to eliminate the enemy, to Seize arms and ammunition and to expand itself.²²

Already the call for mobilization had been made in March 1948. Of the 10,000 ex-Malayan People's anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) numbers on the books only 3,000 took to the jungle calling themselves 'The Malayan Peoples' Anti-British Army' (MPABA). The British Military Administration (BMA) had reacted to them by imposing Emergency in 1948 itself.²³

While the MPABA went through the administrative processes of fighting in the jungle, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) planned a series of militant strikes. Its purpose was to convince the British that there was no stable future for their industries. Thus the MCP directed both the underground and the trade unions towards the armed struggle. The MCP's planned strategy was to declare a Communist Republic in Malaya by August 1948 itself, by which time it was hoped that the British would have decided to write off their losses and abandon the country.²⁴

22. Lennox A. Mills, Malaya - A Political and Economic Appraisal (Murnea Polis, 1958), p.19.

23. Charles Gamba, The Origins of Trade Unionism in Malaya (Singapore: Eastern University Press, 1962), p.335.

24. Ibid., p.334.

Gradually, the MCP assumed a new and more violent character in its policy. From May 17 to June 7, 1948 there was a wave of arson and destruction of machinery in the country. Managers and foremen (11 of them Asians and only 1 European) were murdered. During the same period the police killed seven and injured twenty-three more in fights.²⁵

As a result, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Union (PMFTU) was banned by the British government and eventually the Federation disintegrated. The leaders of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) who included a number of experienced ex-Malayan People's anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) commanders, took to the jungle.²⁶ Nevertheless, the Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPABA) appeared busy with its mobilization.²⁷

Guerrilla Strategy

The Malayan People's Anti-British Army (MPABA) which had the patriotic image of the Malayan People's anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) during the Japanese occupation got wide popular support from the rural Chinese, especially the squatters. They adopted Maoist strategy in revolution. They seized

25. Straits Times (Singapore), June 9, 1948 as quoted in Richard Clutterbuck, Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya 1945-1963 (London, 1973), p.167.

26. *Ibid.*, p.168.

27. John Davies, Interviewed with Richard Clutterbuck, 1966 as quoted in Richard Clutterbuck, *ibid.*

particular areas adjacent to the jungle, while estates and mines were captured by trade union strikers. They called these liberated areas.²⁸

In 1948-1949 the guerrillas lived in large camps of up to 300 guerrillas, with parade grounds and lecture huts concealed under the giant trees. About 3,000 guerrillas lived in the jungle and some 7,000 to 8,000 more lived in the open serving as part-time guerrillas in an organization known as the self-protection corps. During 1949 they also built up a political organization.²⁹

The MCP had great confidence that the Chinese rural people would rise spontaneously in support of its revolutionary armed struggle. Sure enough many Chinese, especially squatters, actively participated in their struggle.

Meanwhile, the MCP had been at work on a comprehensive direction. They came to realize that a quick action and decision was out of the question, and that they must first settle down to a safe place for which permanent jungle bases would be required. Two-thirds of the guerrillas were to withdraw into the deep uninhabited jungle with the exception

28. P.B.G. Waller, Notes on the Malayan Emergency Strategies and Organization of the Opposing Forces (Stanford Research Institute, California, U.S.A. 1967), p.21.

29. Ibid., p.17.

of a handful of aborigines, to train and reorganise. The remaining one-thirds were to remain as independent companies in camps on the jungle fringe. They continued to operate amongst the squatters and in the rubber estates and tin mines. It was at this stage that the Malayan People's Anti-Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) in 1949.³⁰

This was clearly an attempt to claim that the revolt was national in character and involved all races. Three stars replaced the single star on caps to signify that the three major races (Malays, Chinese and Indians) were participating in the rebellion. It was also a clear political move with the hope of gaining wider support from the masses.

The cultural Committee of the MCP wrote an open letter inviting all Malayan people belonging to all races to help the party to achieve its struggle, promising that "warmth and salvation" and "a brilliant and democratic future" could only come by dislodging the British and establishing in their place a "People's Democratic Republic".³¹ At the same time, there was a reorganization and integration of the political organization with that of the regiments. Instead of having separate command, each MCP Branch Committee was given control

30. Glene Z. Hanrahan, The Communist Struggle in Malaya (New York, 1954), pp.102-115.

31. Harry Miller, n.8, p.61.

of a platoon of the MRLA as its striking force.³²

Ideological Controversy in the MCP

In the meantime, however, the government had taken urgent measures by expanding police force from 9,000 to 43,000 and the number of army battalions was increased from 10 to 18. This undermined the movement of the MCP from which it never regained the initiative, nor did not ever again have the spontaneous support of a large part of the Chinese and Malay population.

Moreover, in June 1949, a serious ideological controversy arose in the higher ranks of the MCP, between Sie Lau the State-Secretary of Malacca, and members of the politbuero.³³ Si La was one of the best read and most intelligent members of the MCP. Formerly a school teacher, he was well versed not only in Marxism-Leninism but also in the "New Democracy" of Mao Tse-Tung. He did not hesitate to criticise his leaders when they were in error.³⁴

He bitterly criticised the Party by accusing that it did not fully understand the New Democracy of Comrade Mao

32. Richard Clutterbuck, Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya 1945-1963 (London, 1973), p.170.

33. Waller interviewed with Richard Clutterbuck as quoted by Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.172.

34. Anthony Short, n.6, p.311.

because in the MCP programme for the People's Democratic Republic issued by the Central Committee of the MCP in January 1949, a totally wrong interpretation had been given to a proper economy based upon the "New Democracy". New Democracy, Sir Lacey agreed, postulated equal distribution of land in the first instance in order to provide a strong attraction to the masses to support the Party against the capitalist-feudalists who owned most of the land. But the 1949 programme of the MCP stipulated that the large industries, which in Malaya meant rubber estates would be nationalised as soon as the MCP captured political power.³⁵

How, he asked, could the masses be induced to support a revolution which appropriated the rubber estates without the masses getting a share? He suggested that rubber estates and other lands should first be equally distributed among the masses. This was what Mao had proposed in China and it was through the appeal of land reform that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could manage to mobilize the Chinese masses.³⁶

However, in Malaya, by indulging in terrorist activities, the Party had caused the masses much trouble and had,

35. Anthony Short, n.6, p. 311.

36. Supplementary Views of the Central Politbureau of the Malayan Communist Party on 'Strategic Problems of the Malaya Revolutionary War' as quoted by Hanrahan, n.7, p.117.

therefore, alienated their sympathies by robbing them of their identity cards, burning buses, slashing rubber trees, indiscriminate shooting at trains and the like. Sie Lau concluded his proposition with the charge that the MCP was "horse Communists" riding the crest of the party to their doom.³⁷ He felt that it would be fatal to pursue this struggle until multi-racial support had been created. Malay support must be attracted, since without it success was an idle dream.

The Politburo replied with a furious directive, distributed throughout the Party, denouncing Sie Lau as a deviationist. He was accused of committing a fatal error in categorizing rubber workers as agricultural workers and thereby deducing that they were entitled to equal shares in the rubber estates. From the social and economic point of view, rubber and tin must be regarded as industries and the party must nationalize the big estates from the start in the interest of the people.

The controversy continued, and Sie Lau wrote more letters and pamphlets describing the party Executive as "Buffalo Communists".³⁸

37. Anthony Short, n.6, p.312.

38. Harry Miller, n.8, p.154.

In August 1949 he was demoted and in November 1949, expelled from the Party. In May 1950 he and his wife were executed by an MCP squad.³⁹

Some months later, on June 27, 1950, another leading Communist Lam Swee, came out of the jungle to surrender. He had been Secretary General of the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions before taking to the jungle on June 16, 1948.

These were the symptoms that showed that the MCP was in ideological trouble. Obviously, what was needed was to bury different views and opinions so that future errors would be avoided. In identification of past errors the Central Committee admitted that it had made mistakes.⁴⁰

MCP's New Policy in 1951

In October 1951 the MCP Central Committee issued a directive which radically changed the focus of its campaign. The MCP leaders realized what Sic Lacc had pointed out two years earlier that terror and economic disruption were alienating the people whose support was essential if they were to win the war. They, therefore, ordered members to stop destroying rubber trees, tin mines, factories, derailing

39. Harry Miller, n.8, pp.154-59.

40. Victor Purcell, Malaya: Communist or Free? (London, 1954), as quoted in Anthony Short, n.6, p.318.

civilian trains and burning 'new villages'. They, however, continued to strike at the British soldiers and officers. It was in 1951 itself that the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) achieved its greatest triumph when the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, fell to their bullet.⁴¹ It gave the impression of a peak of guerrilla aggressiveness just as the MCP had decided to abandon terror as its prime weapon.⁴²

The MCP During 1952-53

In the two years of Gerald Jumper's tenure as High Commissioner in 1952-54, the MCP suffered a lot due to operations carried out by the British Military Administration (MBA). In spite of it, the MCP branches were set up largely except in the "White areas" occupied by the government forces.

The MCP carried out its reorganization after the issuing of directive of October 1951, which was designed for survival and political manoeuvre, not for offensive action.⁴³

In 1953, Chin Peng moved his Central Committee from Pahang (Central Malaya) to northwards across the border to a

41. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.184.

42. Ibid.

43. Richard Clutterbuck, The Long Long War (London, 1967), pp.170-73.

secure base in Southern Thailand, where there was a strong Chinese minority of 30,000 and which had not been resettled into "New Villages" and unrestricted by Emergency regulations.⁴⁴

The Emergency Regulations interrupted the MCP communications with the southern states and regions of Malaya, which were more difficult for communications. The MCP committees could not receive specific orders or instructions either from their own headquarters or from outside the country. Nevertheless, they were able to operate effectively because they had fair knowledge of the geographical location of the country in which they were superior to the British forces.⁴⁵

With the new organizations, despite their heavy losses, the MCP succeeded in maintaining a viable hierarchy of a sort of secret government. Outside the jungle, the activities of the people were increasingly focussed around the dependable masses, who were generally the only ones who had direct contact with the guerrillas. The MCP continued recruiting those who they thought would not betray the party.⁴⁶

44. Waller notes, p. 19 as quoted by Clutterbuck, n. 21, p. 198.

45. Ibid.

46. Richard Clutterbuck, n. 32, p. 38.

From 1954 onwards, the MCP was intensified their activities. The guerrillas relied heavily on their mass Executives. Mass Executives were those who were assisting the guerrillas. They were the only ones who had direct contact with the guerrillas.⁴⁷

As the Emergency got under way, the MCP District Committee became the most important guerrilla grouping in 1954. With its own MRLA platoon, it became the lowest formation to possess independent striking power. Having several branches it could survive the loss of any one of them. One of the most militant hard core MCP Districts was Yong Peng. In 1952 this district contained about 200 of the 1,000 guerrillas.⁴⁸

In spite of the MCP commitment to fight against the British colonialism to the finish, the MCP guerrillas showed a rare understanding of the real function of the guerrilla revolutionary which was to indoctrinate the people and organize and mobilize their support.

Unlike the Communists in Vietnam, the MCP guerrillas had no "active sanctuary" on their borders - such as China provided for the Viet Minh and North Vietnam for the

47. Emergency Regulation No.4C as quoted in Clutterbuck, n.32, p.202.

48. Stanley S. Bedtugton, Malaysia and Singapore: The Building of New States (London, 1978), p.79.

Viet Cong. The Thai Border offered reasonable immunity for Chin Peng's command and training base, but it was not a practical channel for weapons and supplies. The MCP, therefore, had to rely on local sources: captured weapons from the army and police and supplies from the villagers.⁴⁹

The beginning of the end of the MCP occurred when the government uprooted more than half a million Chinese squatters who lived along the jungle edges and transferred them to "New Villages".⁵⁰

Also, the MCP undoubtedly expected help in men and materials from China, but Mao Tse-Tung's army had begun its final push against the Nationalist Government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was, therefore, in no position to divert anything to Malaya. As it turned out, the MCP was left alone to struggle for victory on its own which was fortunate for the British government. All the MCP were received from the Communist Chinese government was morale building propaganda sessions on Radio Peking.⁵¹

Did the MCP miss a chance of victory in 1948?
Perhaps they did. Because their violence was directed against

49. Richard Clutterbuck, n.39, p.74.

50. Harry Miller, n.8, p.18.

51. Ibid., p.20.

Chinese collaborators rather than against the British themselves: from June till October 1948 almost all the 223 civilians they killed were Chinese and only 17 were Europeans. Thus, the popular rising the MCP hoped for never came.⁵²

The MCP were certainly not badly placed in 1948. The government forces were weak and ill prepared, with little previous experience of fighting against guerrillas in the jungle. The Malays, though hostile to a Chinese takeover, were weakly organized and shamed by the Japanese occupation. The MCP had three years of war time experience and tremendous prestige. The Chinese were tough and brave people but they failed to rise in 1948 because the MCP had allowed their rural organization to lapse.

These MCP belatedly attempted to disrupt the rubber and tin industries, but they paid the price, which had been paid by so many revolutionaries before them of having an inadequate organization for popular support.⁵³

52. Richard Clutterbuck, n.32, p.272.

53. Ibid.

Chapter VCONCLUSIONSConcluding Observations

The MCP revolution was principally anti-imperialist since Malaya was a British colony and secondly anti-feudalistic because the feudal elements had no right to rule. The MCP had no any illusions about its prospects of immediate victory because the anti-imperialist camp was advancing in strength.

However, when the Japanese attacked Malaya on December 8, 1941, the MCP extended its help to the British government in fighting against the Japanese. The reason was that the Japanese were a traditional enemy for the Chinese. In course of war, the MCP in the framework of MPAJA, fought along with the British against the Japanese tooth and nail.

When the Japanese surrendered the MCP reluctantly welcomed the British military Administration. The MCP had no choice but to accept the British government. It was not in a position to resist the British force as the guerrillas were ill-equipped as compared to the returning British forces.

However, the MCP guerrillas had hidden their weapons in the jungles for future struggle. They knew that they would

have to confront with the British Colonial Government on many issues.

When the British returned and reoccupied Malaya, the MCP worked as a legal political party. The MCP was allowed to work like any other organization. But the MCP did not forget their unfinished struggle for independence. The MCP continued to operate their clandestine tactics of guerrilla warfare.

The MCP began to mobilize public opinion through trade unions which at least came absolutely under the control of the MCP. The MCP carried out demonstrations and strikes from time to time.

On the one hand the British began to feel a threat from the MCP. On the other hand, the Malays developed their mutual suspicion towards the MCP activities. This still further heightened the feelings between two communities, the Malays and the Chinese.

In exchange for the services rendered by the Chinese, and especially by the MCP, the British government set up a new type of government, the Malayan union in 1946. Under the new Malayan union proposals the Malay Rulers were to lose their sovereignty. The citizenship proposals provided easy way of acquiring citizenship. Of course, it excluded Singapore over

which there was not much controversy. The MCP remained silent on this issues because it was in favour of them.

However, the Malay Rulers had come to realize the adverse impact of these subjective proposals regarding the Malayan Union, which was completely unacceptable to the Malays. The Malays formed a united front called the United Malays National organization (UMNO). It was the turning point in as much as it aroused heightened feelings of Malay nationalism.

They condemned the Malayan Union in the sharpest term. In a short agitated consultations the British government yeilded to the Malay's pursuation. After all without Malays' cooperation the British had to face serious difficulties in the field of administration.

The negotiations between the Malay Rulers, the UMNO and the British led to the evolution of new constitution, i.e. Federation of Malayan Agreement. It was solely a compromise between the Malays and the British government.

The MCP realized that there was no prospect for the non-Malays in the Federation Agreement. Likewise, Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) and Malayan National Party (MNP) condemned the British for not consulting the non-Malays

In 1946 the MCP initiated to form an All Malayan Council of joint Action (AMCJA) to fight for equal rights

among all Malaysians irrespective of race. It was also controlled by the MCP. Almost immediately the Malay groups broke away from the AMCJA. The reason was that the MCP was behind the AMCJA. The Malay community preferred the UMNO because it opposed any form of common Malayan citizenship.

In spite of the opposition from the MCP and other non-Malay organizations the British government slammed the doors for discussion with them. And the Federation of Malaya was inaugurated on February 1, 1948.

The MCP had lost faith in constitutional struggle. They had left the AMCJA-PUTERA (People's Central Force). In fact they had abandoned the constitutional struggle.

As the MCP became a constant threat to the British authority in Malaya, the British government banned the MCP. The MCP was left with no choice but to go underground.

In early 1948 immediately after the announcement of the Federation of Malayan Agreement on February 1, 1948, the armed struggle broke out in Malaya. This led to the imposition of a set of Emergency Regulations to combat guerrilla militancy. The Emergency Regulations were promulgated into law in June 1948 and lasted till 1960.

Since then, the MCP lived at the mercy of the Chinese squatters till the emergency Regulations were extended to

these areas. If they created Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) the idea was to claim that the rebellion was national in character. One star replaced three stars on the caps of the MCP guerrillas. But the MCP could not attract the Malays. Most Malays saw the outbreak of guerrilla communism not simply as an attack upon British colonialism but also as an assault upon the homeland of Malays, an attempt to transform Malaya into a province of China.

It was due to this reason that the MCP could not succeed in their struggle against the British imperialism.

Besides, in 1949 there was a sharp controversy between Siew Lau, the State Secretary of Malacca (MCP) and the Party Politbureau. Siew Lau accepted that armed struggle was the only way to dislodge the British from Malaya. But he suggested that Malays' support should be attracted, for without it the struggle was an idel dream. Since 70 per cent of the population worked on the land support must be founded on the economic interests of the land workers whose outstanding demand was to own the piece of land on which they worked.

The Politburo accused Siew Lau of being a deviationist. He was thus expelled from the party and killed along with his wife by the MCP Squad in May 1950.

From 1951 onwards, the MCP policy changed. Instead of slashing rubber trees and derailing civilian trains, the MCP urged the guerrillas to concentrate on police and army only. The MCP leaders urged the guerrillas not to disrupt public life.

It was a hard lesson. Their anti Chinese and anti-workers' actions had led to the denial of the active support of those on whose support their very survival depended.

But by that time the colonial forces had taken a firm stand in fighting against the guerrillas. The Emergency Regulations were extended to all the squatter resettlements.

The squatters were brought to the New Villages under the protection of the police. The MCP was thus kept aloof from the squatters. Many guerrillas were arrested and detained under the Emergency Regulations.

The declaration of Emergency was thus followed by effective counter-measures against the MCP. The government equipped itself with wide powers, including the power to impose heavy penalties for assisting bandits and death penalty for carrying arms. The MCP severely opposed the measures. The guerrillas occasionally raided the villages and tore up the identity cards issued by the government. But all this was of no avail. The British also deported a large number of suspected Chinese terrorists to China.

The British government was aware that the success of the anti-Communist operations would depend upon the extent to which the Chinese Community was weared away from the MCP. The British encouraged all races especially Malays, Chinese and Indians to start political organization. With British encouragement the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was established in February 1949 under the Presidentship of Sir Tan Cheng Lock.

Among the objectives of the party were good inter-communal relations and support for the government in its efforts to maintain law and order. The MCA was accused as a British creation for the perpetuation of colonial rule in Malaya. Thus, MCP was left alone.

By late 1950, the MCP leaders realized that they had reached an impasse. The party failed to establish liberated areas also. The MCP admitted that serious errors had been committed in the past. The MCP realised that the masses were not behind its movement because of the militant objective of destroying public life and properties. The expansion of the mass base was to be brought about by setting up a united front of all communities and classes and by avoiding violent tactics. Which had antagonised peasants and workers.

But the fact was that the government had got upper hand over the guerrillas. The security situation began to

improve and in September 1953 the Emergency Regulations were lifted for the first time over large parts of South-west coastal settlements of Malacca, which was declared as a 'white area'. In the next two years nearly fifty per cent of the Federation population could lead normal lives without the rigours of Emergency regulations. Besides, the non-Communist Malayan nationalists under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman came to the forefront and the demand for self-government and independence began to gather momentum. The most important pre-requisite for independence was the development of a common national identity and unity among the various races. As early as 1952, the British government stated that Malaya was unfit to receive any major political concession and independence would not be forthcoming until unity among the various races had been attained.

The leaders of the three communities, Malays, Chinese, and Indians, therefore, realized that the general mass of the people should be encouraged to think as Malaysians and they should co-operate with one another in a national movement. Thus, the Alliance - an inter-communal organization - consisting of the UMNO, MCA and MIC came into existence in 1954. It was completely united in its demand for independence. The Alliance fought the election in 1955 on the issue of 'Merdeka' (independence). The party manifesto announced that the party would attempt to end emergency through negotiation with the MCP.

By 1955, the political atmosphere in the country was in favour of the Alliance. The country-wide elections took place and the Alliance Party composed of UMNO, MCA and MIC won 51 seats of 52 elective seats. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the President of UMNO was elected Chief Minister.

The new Federal government invited the MCP for negotiations. The meeting was held at Baling in 1955 between Chin Peng, the MCP leader and Tunku Abdul Rahman, the new Chief Minister.

The Baling talks broke down with no result. Chin Peng and his colleagues resumed their clandestine tactics of guerrilla warfare. So also did the government.

The MCP lost because it was alone. The MCP did not receive material support from either China or Russia because they had misjudged the mood of the majority of the people of the country from whom they had hoped for championship and aid. The MCP had failed its movement because of the offensive strategy of the government which rested on three meaningful words 'starve them out'. If the majority of the Chinese population had supported the MCP, no military counter-measures could have saved the country.

Guerrillas could only fight successfully if they themselves were provided with unlimited food, plentiful arms

and ammunition, constant recruits to make up losses, and intelligence - all these essentials to come from supporters in villages and towns. But the fact was that the MCP had failed to mobilize public opinion in the country. Guerrillas could not fight with vigour but must struggle to exist.

Three years after the beginning of the Emergency the government drew up a master plan for the defeat of the Communists. The strategy remained for the next nine years. It was geared to the simple concept of utterly disrupting the Communists lines of supplies, communications and intelligence. The guerrillas were starved into defeat. In spite of the pattern of Mads and Kochi Minh's protracted war, the MCP gradually lost its momentum because its leaders had not been able to attract non-Malay support. It was worth remembering the statement made by Mao Tse Tung that in revolution the army must become one with the people so that they saw it as their own army. Such an army would be invincible. Because in every revolution victory depended ultimately on winning popular support.

The MCP were not badly placed in 1948. The government forces were weak and ill-prepared with little previous experience of fighting against guerrillas in the jungle. The Malays though hostile to a Chinese takeover, were weakly organised and shamed by the Japanese occupation. The MCP had

three years of wartime experience, and prestige. The rural Chinese were generally ready to support them and many of them dedicated to doing so. Thus, it would be hard to find better opportunity for a popular rising, but they failed to rise in 1948 because the MCP had allowed their rural organization to collapse.

Though the MCP failed both in Singapore and in the Federation of Malaya, the conclusion was that their strong and vigorous struggle against the British imperialist brought them nearer to victory in early 1946.

The MCP guerrillas in many localities seemed to have wanted to exercise the prerogatives of new power. In most cases they did it in a very crude and counter productive fashion focussing on settling scores against informers and collaborators, brandishing weapons threatening people and generally creating a mood of fear, even a reign of terror. Local MPAJA guerrillas thus expended their energies on secondary objectives and wasted precious political capital. Their short administration left an indelible impression on the minds of most people of how frightening Communist rule might. For Malays especially distrust of Chinese and distrust of communism intertwined.

The international clashes seemed inevitable when large numbers of Malays became victims of Chinese MPAJA killings. Clearly, for the post-war period, the MCP lacked a comprehensive and far-sighted programme suited to Malaya's peculiar conditions. Since 1948, the Communist leaders were still in the jungle as hunted men trying to gain a foot-hold in the independence talks but rebuffed.

The need for the different races to think of themselves as one nation did not come easily also. Only in 1955 both UMNO and the MCA agreed to compromise which had been describe as the historic bargain a sepcial position for the Malays in return for qualified Chinese and other Communities. Thus MCA represented on behalf of the Chinese and left out the MCP by the British and Malays. The MCP was thus completely ignored when the Baling talks had failed.

Achieving independence was one thing. Building a truly pan-ethnic society and nation was another. Whether the MCP will continue to form the basis of Malaysian politics in the future is left to be seen.

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