

PRESS RELEASE

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THE COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY

The Communist Party of Malaya, foiled in its attempt to win power by armed revolution, which caused thousands of deaths, has for some years been conspiring to attain its aim of establishing a “dictatorship of the proletariat” throughout the Malayan Peninsula through the familiar Communist methods of the “United Front” and the “peaceful constitutional struggle”. Significantly, however, the Party has not disbanded the defeated remnant of its terrorist force, but has kept it in being both as a symbol of resistance and as a potential nucleus for a revival of the “armed struggle” at any time when conditions appear favourable.

2. Deriving its inspiration from the revolutionary experience of the Chinese Communist Party, the Communist Party of Malaya is at present in the stage of development described by the CCP as the “minimum programme”. “Anti-imperialism” is the keynote of this stage. The United Front, described by the Malayan Communists themselves as “not an organisation but a sort of struggle strategy”, is the principal instrument of the minimum programme. Their aim at this stage is to establish a “new democratic” government under which the Communists concede that limited forms of capitalism will continue to be permitted. The ultimate goal, however, of the “maximum programme” remains unaltered: namely the Communist “dictatorship of the proletariat”.

3. The Communists in Singapore, taking their directions from the CPM Central Committee, have adopted the United Front strategy since 1955. Their leaders, trained as underground CPM cadres in numerous cells within the

Chinese schools, are well versed in the United Front tactics of adopting the guise of a “democratic and socialist” anti-colonialist opposition. At first they attempted to gain power through winning key positions in the socialist and non-Communist People’s Action Party. During the years 1955 to 1959, making use of the organisation, skill and experience they had accumulated over a period of more than 30 years, the Communists heavily infiltrated the PAP but never

succeeded in exploiting it as a subservient and effective instrument of the United Front.

4. In 1955/56 the Communists, at the same time as attempting to achieve a dominant influence in the PAP, made considerable progress in gaining control of the bulk of the trade union movement. The militant policy of the Communist-led unions provoked a series of strikes and industrial disputes designed to inflame the workers against the “foreign capitalists”. The CPM drew upon the extensive student organisations which it had recruited during the previous five years to provide militant support for the strikers, the resultant unrest culminating in the widespread rioting and mass arrests of 1956 and 1957.

5. The Communists acknowledged the tactical mistakes of 1956/57 which caused the loss of many valuable party cadres and the disruption of the United Front work. The CPM circulated a pamphlet of self-criticism entitled “Summary of Experiences of the Anti-Persecution Struggle” for the training of Communist cadres in United Front work in future. Attributing the set-backs of 1956/57 to incorrect tactical guidance arising from the “left-wing adventurist policy” of the open leaders of the United Front, the document called for a fundamental policy in future to “conceal the best cadres and conserve our strength”. To implement this policy the CPM in Singapore tightened its security

measures, withdrawing valuable cadres to safe areas and disbanding its subsidiary organisation, the Anti-British League. There followed a period of Communist consolidation leading to a further offensive to dominate the PAP after it had obtained power in the 1959 elections. LIM CHIN SIONG, FONG SWEE SUAN and other experienced Communist cadres released from detention were given junior appointments in the administration and at the same time established themselves and their followers in key posts in the trade union movement. They quickly dominated the influential Singapore General Employees' Union and used it as a base from which to extend their penetration to other unions. By drawing individual unions together into federations under their control and establishing a similar grip on organisations of rural dwellers, they hoped to secure their "mass base", in accordance with Communist doctrine, in the "workers-peasants alliance."

6. A last desperate attempt was made by the Communists to capture the Government and the PAP following the announcement of joint support for the Malaysia plan by the Prime Ministers of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore. The Communists should have welcomed Malaysia as fulfilling their own proclaimed aims of national unity and independence, but their calculations had in truth been based on the premise of an isolated Singapore where they could make a bid for political control at the next elections and secure self-government and the

abolition of the Internal Security Council. Thereafter, their strategy was to develop a safe base in Singapore from which they could be assured of immunity from security action. They then hoped that with the resources of the State at their disposal, they would be able to use Singapore as a beach-head from which to mount a continuous political offensive against the Federation. Eventually when the Federation was sufficiently softened up, they hoped to move to the second stage of the revolution. Some of the Barisan leaders have openly stated that Singapore was to be the Cuba of Malaysia, that is the spring board of the Communist revolution. To achieve this they had to frustrate merger and Malaysia.

7. For with merger and Malaysia internal security would be in the hands of a central government which could not be captured from Singapore alone. Moreover, a strong central government could deal more firmly with Communist subversion without the Communists being able to raise a successful counter-attack against colonialist oppression. Although paying lip service to the principle of merger, the Communists were obliged to oppose its establishment by every possible means and thereby to expose the fact that the only Malaysia they wanted was one under Communist domination. This attempt failed in July 1961 and the Communists established their own front party, the Barisan Sosialis, which became the principal vehicle of their United Front strategy.

8. Entrenched in the key positions of Secretary-General, Organizing Secretary and other posts in the Central Executive Committee, the Communists have absolute control of the organisational structure of the Barisan Sosialis Party. The United Front has now become clearly identified by the dominant influence which these same Communists in the Barisan Sosialis have established over their own mass organisations in the trade union, rural organisation and educational fields. Communist leaders of the Barisan Sosialis are at the same time advisers to important trade unions, members of the Executive Council of the "Singapore Association of Trade Unions" and organisers behind the scenes of anti-Government activity by their puppet rural organisations and student action committees. Students are incited to oppose the Government on the pretext of defending Chinese education. Rural dwellers are incited to oppose Government development schemes although these were designed to improve their living conditions. Workers are told that merger with the Federation of Malay will lead to their suppression and the de-registration of their unions. In each case the object is the same: the exploitation of any issue to foment bitterness, frustration and hatred amongst the people so that the Barisan Sosialis can increase its following and the Communists thereby increase their influence.

9. The past year-and-a-half since the formation of the Barisan Sosialis have provided a series of examples of the Communists' mobilization and engagement of the United Front to exploit issues which they consider might be advantageous to their cause. In each case the technique is the same. Local "working committees" are formed in each district and constituency.

Representatives are appointed to these committees from each of the United Front mass organisations which has a significant following in the locality concerned.

Thus in a rural constituency the leading part in the working committee will be played by the local officials of the Communist-dominated Singapore Rural

Residents and Country People's Associations, assisted by the local branch

officials of the Barisan Sosialis and members of the Communist-inspired Old

Boys' Associations. In the urban districts the strongest SATU controlled trade unions in the constituency concerned will be represented on the working

committee, again together with the local Barisan branch officials and members of

Teachers' or Old Boys' Associations. In districts where the Malay population is predominant the Communist elements in the Partai Rakyat Singapore are

expected to provide the local leadership, although in practice the Communists

have been able to make little or no headway amongst the Malays (a point

admitted in recent CPM publications) and the Partai Rakyat has remained largely

ineffectual. The working committees established in this way are responsible, in

accordance with central direction from the Communist caucus with the Barisan

Sosialis leadership, for the organisation of house-to-house canvassing campaigns, public meetings and “political education” of the rank and file members of the mass organizations in the districts through cadre training classes, entertainment parties, picnics and other ostensibly social functions.

10. The outstanding example of this mobilization of the various components of the United Front occurred in the National Referendum campaign. A “Referendum Working Committee” was set up under the chairmanship of FONG SWEE SUAN and under its direction B.S. branches appointed their own working committees to conduct the anti-Referendum campaign in the various constituencies. All the main components of the United Front participated in a massive propaganda campaign for blank votes in the Referendum involving local mass rallies, house-to-house canvasses, gallup polls and other would-be demonstrations of “the peoples’ hostility to the phony merger”.

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11. In the left-wing trade union field the United Front tactics were most clearly demonstrated by the setting up in June 1962 of a “Singapore Trades Union Working Committee” to act as a permanent liaison body to co-ordinate the anti-government activity of trades unions, rural and student associations and political parties. Under the leadership of HUSSEIN JAHIDIN as Chairman, TAN TECK WAH (President of the Singapore General Employees’ Union) and

DOMINIC PUTHUCHEARY, (Vice-President of the S.G.E.U. and member of the Barisan Sosialis Executive Committee) this Committee invited representatives from over 100 civic organisations to two meetings at the Singapore Motor Workshop Employees' Union premises to oppose the Referendum Bill. Both meetings were banned by the Government. The same Hussein Jahidin was a leading figure in the 1956 so-called "Trades Unions Working Committee". As in the case of the 1956 Committee the activities of the 1962 Singapore Trade Union Working Committee were in no way connected with legitimate industrial grievances. In fact no industrial grievances were ever taken up for these committees were designed only to mobilize mass support for Communist-inspired political issues.

12. The Communists have used their domination of the Singapore Rural Residents and Country People's Associations and the Hawkers' Union to incite the rural population to oppose Government development projects designed to improve their living conditions. Many of the leading officials of these organisations, headed by FONG BENG BOO and LIM WOON CHYE, paid secretaries of the SRRA, have had considerable experience of United Front activity in former banned Communist-controlled organisations such as the Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union and the Singapore Farmers' Association. Under their leadership the SRRA, SCPA and Hawkers' Union

participated in the B.S. Referendum and anti-merger campaigns. They also instigated local dwellers to obstruct Government development work such as the canal construction in the Kampong Ang Teng area in October 1962. When these tactics were publicised by the Government, the SRRA leaders, taking their direction from LIM CHIN SIONG, called off their obstruction campaign. Now their new tactics are to attempt to claim credit amongst the people for forcing Government to carry out improvements on their behalf.

13. The same Communist United Front support has been mobilized for the campaign to work up an issue over Chinese education. A Chinese Middle School Students' Action Committee was set up to boycott the Government Secondary IV examinations in November 1961 and its agitation amongst the students was given extensive publicity in the Communist United Front publications. The agitation was resumed in November 1962 but failed to win sufficient support for the organisers, guided by the United Front leadership, to risk conducting a further boycott campaign. The Communists and their sympathisers in influential positions in the Nanyang Guild of Graduates, the 33 Chinese School Old Boys' Associations and the Nanyang University Students' Union have given full support and encouragement to the politically-inspired campaign to work up an issue over Chinese education. They are currently

engaged in attempting to organise a “torch campaign” for this purpose, and this also is receiving Communist United Front and Barisan Sosialis support.

14. By participation in a “Council of Joint Action” to defeat the merger proposals in the National Referendum, the Communists hoped to extend their United Front to include non-Communist and even anti-Communist elements of the “national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie”. However, the falsity of Barisan Sosialis propaganda concerning “second-class citizenship” was recognised and the Electorate firmly endorsed the merger proposals in the Referendum. LIM CHIN SIONG’s admission of the Referendum result as a “minor and temporary setback” indicated Communist recognition of the defeat of their campaign against merger. A new phase of the struggle opened, its basis to be broadened to include all racial communities of the future Malaysia. For this purpose the Communists had already established an instrument under their own control in the form of a “Liaison Secretariat” of the “Malaysian Socialist Conference” at Barisan Sosialis headquarters in Singapore with DR. POH SOO KAI, the Assistant Secretary-General of the B.S., as its Executive Secretary LIM CHIN SIONG told his followers that they must take heed of any favourable conditions offered to the Malayan socialist forces in future, extend their activities outside Singapore and make the best use of all methods available, seeking co-operation from the left-wing and anti-colonial forces in Malaya and the Borneo territories.

15. The Communists have evidently been in some doubt as to the best methods for implementing this policy. The “peaceful constitutional struggle” was shown by the Referendum results not to be paying all the dividends they hoped. The experience of Communist parties elsewhere showed that the armed struggle was also necessary to achieve the complete revolution. The Communists were reminded by LIM CHIN SIONG in his veiled 1963 New Year message to appreciate the teaching of LENIN, as quoted in the Statement of 81 Parties adopted at the Moscow Conference in 1960, that “the ruling classes never relinquished power voluntarily”. For this reason the founders of Communism laid down that the armed struggle would always have to be co-ordinated with the constitutional method and that the success of the revolution would depend on how well prepared the Communist parties were for any swift and sudden replacement of one form of struggle by another.

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16. These problems and the implementation in Singapore of Communist theory were discussed at a series of cadre training meetings held by the Barisan Sosialis SGEU and other components of the United Front in the months after the Referendum. In all cases the policy and tactics advocated by LIM CHIN SIONG on September 12, 1962, in his re-appraisal of the situation after the Referendum setback, were accepted as the fixed partyline for the future. His speech on that

occasion, his Annual Report as Secretary-General of the Barisan Sosialis and FONG SWEE SUAN's Annual Report of SATU were circulated for study and purposes of "political education" to the various component organizations of the United Front.

17. In the meantime, in accordance with LIM CHIN SIONG's directions for the new phase of the struggle, the Communists are endeavouring to exploit any situation which may arise from their co-operation with friendly elements elsewhere to impede and sabotage the establishment of Malaysia. The outbreak of the revolt in Brunei provided just such a situation. A.M. AZAHARI, its fugitive leader, had been associated with the Communists in Singapore for a long time. He and his lieutenants in the Partai Rakyat Brunei were guests of honour at the inauguration ceremony of the Barisan Sosialis in Singapore in September 1961. On that occasion, in spite of the divergence between their ultimate objectives, AZAHARI and the Barisan Sosialis leaders preached opposition to Malaysia from the same platform and declared their common aim as "Socialism". Subsequently AZAHARI and LIM CHIN SIONG, sometimes accompanied by other Barisan leaders, met on several occasions when AZAHARI visited Singapore during 1962. In spite of their mutual distrust they are known to have discussed plans for the defeat of Malaysia by action in the five territories of the future Federation. These meetings were held in clandestine

circumstances. They were arranged by SAID ZAHARI, one of LIM's closest Malay associates and AZAHARI's closest companion during his final visit to Singapore in December 1962, before the Brunei revolt. SAID ZAHARI also accompanied AZAHARI to Brunei in October 1962. LIM, SAID ZAHARI and AZAHARI had a meeting in Singapore four days before the outbreak of the Brunei rebellion.

18. The whole Communist United Front quickly demonstrated their approval of armed struggle in Brunei. In spite of the disruption of normal communications and the obscurity of the situation, within 24 hours of the outbreak the Barisan Sosialis and their friends in the Partai Rakyat Singapore simultaneously declared their support for "a popular nationalist movement for independence and liberation from British colonialism". The same elements have subsequently done their utmost to incite public opinion against the "colonialists and their stooges" who have successfully restored order in the Borneo territories. Rallies of the Barisan Sosialis on December 23 and of the Partai Rakyat on January 25 were held with the specific object of mobilizing support for the self-styled "Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara" (North Borneo National Army). Significantly, as in the case of all other issues on which the Barisan Sosialis leaders have taken a public stand, there has been no disharmony between their

propaganda and that of the chorus of foreign Communists in Moscow, Djakarta and elsewhere.

2nd February, 1963.

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