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THE PATTERN OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SUMMARY

Development of the Communist movement in Southeast Asia has to a great extent followed lines set by the Comintern some of which were formulated more than 30 years ago. Policies of most Communist parties in the area have been guided directly or indirectly by Moscow and more recently, also, by Peiping. Associated in various ways with nationalist movements and often operating under the guise of nationalism, these parties have followed a general pattern which involved attempts to bring all the colonial areas of South East Asia into the fold of international Communism. Only in Thailand, which has long been an independent nation, has the pattern varied to a great extent.

Most countries of the area have more than one Communist party, sometimes because of individual differences, sometimes representing different ethnic groups within a country. Most of the parties are built of a hard core of theoreticians and leaders surrounded by assorted hangers-on who are malcontents or seekers of personal gain. Member support comes from those elements among the overseas Chinese population which still have strong ties with Communist China regardless of the ideological forces directing her destiny.

The hands of the Russian and Chinese Communists were clearly visible in the 1920's and the 1930's, when most of the Southeast Asian Communists worked under the direction of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern.

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Their influence continued to be evident in 1948 when, after representatives from Peiping, Moscow and Southeast Asia met with the Indian Communists in February, Communist insurrections broke out in Malaya, Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines.

Current evidence of Peiping's influence is the logistic support given the Viet Minh in Indochina, the activities of Chinese Communist agents in Southeast Asia, particularly among the overseas Chinese and other ethnic minority groups, and in Burma the financing by the Red Chinese-owned banks of low interest loans to those who do not oppose Communism. Through the Soviet-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions, Peiping supervises the activities of leftist labor organizations in many countries of the area. Through cultural missions, traveling businessmen, returning students and sightseeing trips, Peiping passes on instructions where official channels such as embassies are lacking.

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I. International Aspects of Movements in Southeast Asian Communism

The Third Communist International (Comintern) and Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), have clearly stated Soviet policy and tactics for developing Communist movements in colonial and semi-colonial areas. The policy plays down the class struggle emphasized elsewhere and intensifies the theme of nationalism and anti-colonialism.

Communism in Southeast Asia, appearing there in the early 1920's, has been developed in line with this policy and under the direction of the Comintern, Cominform and Peiping.

With ^{its} these racial complexes and its pre-war colonial status, Southeast Asia seemed an easy target for Communism. Playing national group against European power and cultivating these groups' and minorities' desires for independence, the Communists sought to divide and conquer.

Among the Communist minority groups in most countries of Southeast Asia are Communist front organizations made up of members of the Overseas Chinese community. The Communist groups represent a relatively small percentage of the total Chinese population of the area but are often well-organized and supported by Peiping.

Communist parties in Southeast Asia are composed of a small hard core of doctrinaire Communists surrounded by a larger group of dissidents, malcontents, social misfits and profiteers. They are drawn from all segments of the population--peasants, proletarians and intellectuals.

In addition to these, many of the overseas Chinese—who normally care little about politics and are more concerned with earning a living—follow the movement because of their strong family and cultural ties to China, regardless of her politics. Because the Communists now control the mainland, many overseas Chinese feel that the future lies with the Communists. This feeling is often conditioned by their ability to trade with the mainland.

Throughout Southeast Asia Communism encountered similar conditions, with one major exception, Thailand. While Burma, Malaya, Indochina, Indonesia and the Philippines were all colonies of metropolitan powers, Thailand has been a sovereign nation for centuries. Even under the Japanese occupation, Thailand maintained a larger degree of self-government than have most occupied nations. Thailand has been also relatively self-sufficient, with an adequate food supply and an export surplus in rice, the most vital commodity of the area. But perhaps the farmers' ownership of their land is the main reason for the different approach to Thailand. Communism, which, among other things, feeds on exploitation of the peasant class by wealthy landowners, on poverty and on food shortage, has had difficulty making much headway with the Thais, who are well-fed and clothed by standards of the area and whose lower classes to a large extent already own their land. Only through an alien minority, the overseas Chinese, have the Communists been able to make anything but a minor dent in Thailand, and the Chinese Communists in Thailand have become the largest alien Communist party in Southeast Asia with the possible exception of Malaya.

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia Communist growth has followed a single pattern, with but minor variations. Except in Burma and Thailand, Communism appeared in the early 1920's under the guise of nationalism, anti-colonialism or with a pro-labor disguise. It started among the Thailand Chinese in the 1920's but the appeal was different. In Burma Communism began as a nationalist movement about 1930. The trend until nearly the end of the decade favored formation of small groups, some organized into parties and some into less formal groups of Marxist extremists. In 1925 when the Comintern sent Borodin to China as its chief agent, he took Ho chi-minh with him as an interpreter. Ho was by then the leader of Indochinese Communism and a member of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern. In the course of his travels through China and Thailand to organize emigre Vietnamese into Communist cells, he brought with him the teachings and orders of the Comintern. Ho helped found the Communist Party of the South Seas, which had representatives from several countries. In 1930 this party split into national organizations, such as the Malayan Communist Party and the Indochinese Communist Party.

About this time Communism began to appear in Burma, largely as an indigenous movement but with some impetus from Indian Communists. This move, too, started as nationalism with leftist leanings.

From 1930 until the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific the nationalistic trend was maintained, with the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern, among others, guiding the Communists of Indonesia, Indochina, Malaya and the Philippines.

During World War II many Communist groups formed a "united front" with non-Communist groups against the common foe. This was particularly true in Burma, Indochina, Malaya and the Philippines. There was no fighting in Thailand, but the Free Thai Movement in which Communist-inspired elements participated, did work with the Allies in obtaining information and carrying out sabotage missions. The underground activities strengthened the Communist's hands by emphasizing the concept of nationalist and patriotism as the major motive of these groups. In Indochina and Burma the resistance groups participated in the post-war governments of their countries. In Indochina, however, Ho and the French disagreed over the colonial status of Indochina, and the Communists organized coalition of parties known as the Viet Minh, resorted to open warfare to gain complete control. In Burma the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League became ardent advocates of full independence from Britain and, upon attainment of full independence in 1948, into control of the government. But, Communist leaders were purged from the league prior to independence and it is now dominated by the Socialist Party.

In Indonesia the Communists were not very active during the Japanese occupation, but after the war they did join with other nationalist groups in the fight against the Dutch which eventually led to Indonesia's independence. Veterans of this campaign who are not in the Indonesian armed forces and who belong to the veterans organization PERBEPSI are dominated by the Indonesian Communist Party. The Indonesian Communist Party is an example of Communist parties in foreign colonies

which are offshoots of the Communist parties in the parent countries.

The first wide-scale Communist action to eventually dominate South-east Asia began in 1948. In February 1948, representatives from Moscow, the Chinese Communists and Communist groups in Southeast Asia attended a meeting of the Calcutta Youth Conference. Within a year, the Communists launched rebellious offensives in four countries--Burma, Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippines. Indochina already was rent by open warfare. The Indonesian uprising was put down almost immediately and the other three 1948 rebellions now have been quelled or sharply reduced in intensity. The timing of these uprisings is regarded as too similar to be coincidental.

The series of defeats forced the Communists to adjust their tactics. Wherever possible the Communists are now playing the game of "if you can't lick them, join them." In Burma, although the rebellion has not been fully put down, the Communists have joined the government in denouncing their common opponents, the Chinese Nationalist troops in Burma and have advocated the formation of a coalition government. In Indonesia the Communists are playing the role of full supporters of the Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo government, in a "united front". Insurrection still continues in the Philippines and Malaya, although the Philippine rebels have been virtually defeated.

The Chinese People's Republic has diplomatic representatives in Burma and Indonesia and with the Communist Viet Minh regime in North Viet Nam. Russia has representation in Thailand, Burma, Indonesia and North Viet Nam. Communist Chinese diplomatic missions provide channels of communications between Peiping and Communist elements in these

countries. An additional channel is the Asian-Australasian Bureau of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Peiping, representing Communist-controlled labor movements in several of the countries.

Another Peiping channel is the China Democratic League, which has active branches in Burma and Indonesia. Overseas Chinese students who return to mainland China for advanced study and the Communist-sponsored, mainland cultural and sightseeing trips for leading pro-Communist overseas Chinese provide another channel of indoctrination and infiltration.

There is no doubt that Peiping sanctions most of the Communist activities of the area; the only question is the degree of control, by Moscow or Peiping. Peiping is supplying arms to Communist groups in Indochina, and probably some arms in Burma. The Chinese Communists in Thailand are known to be receiving direction from Peiping, and Peiping agents operate throughout the area. Recent newspaper reports from Burma mention the activities of Peiping agents among the Kachins of northern Burma.

The pattern as it now appears is one of Peiping support - under Moscow's general direction - of Communist movements in the area so that they may act as a fifth column. Toning down militant activities and feigning cooperation with existing authority wherever possible, the local Communists act as Peiping tools boring from within. Peiping is heavily emphasizing the wooing of overseas Chinese, that they too may act as a fifth column and, even more important in some countries, may use their important position in the national economy to disrupt and weaken their host countries.

II. Communism in the Southeast Asian Countries

A. Burma

Communism in Burma is reflected in a complex of parties, large and small, strong and weak, legal and illegal. These include both "peaceful" and insurgent groups and represent parties with basically "national" and "international" outlooks. Adding to the confusion are the activities of Burma Chinese Communists. Several Communist leaders were at one time members of the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL), the coalition heading the Burmese Government since its independence. The AFPFL has progressively purged these Communist elements from its fold.

The complexity of Burmese Communism disguises its true strength and it is this very complexity that has prevented the Communists from realizing their fullest potential. At present only the Burma Workers and Peasants Party (BWPP) appears to serve the Communist cause in any greater measure than a nuisance value. Communist insurrection begun in 1948 has been greatly reduced. The Communists have obtained much propaganda value from the irritation caused by the presence of irregular Chinese Nationalist troops in Burma, and this irritation has helped the cause of local Chinese Communists. Agents from Red China are operating in North Burma, in the Kachin State and the Shan States, attempting to lure minority racial groups into cooperation with Red China.

Burma Communist Party (BCP)

One of the earliest Communist groups was the Burmese Communist Party, or White Flag Communists. The party grew from the left-wing nationalist movement called the Nagani Book Club, founded in 1937 by Thakins NU, SOE and THAN TUN. These men later became the leaders of the AFPFL, the Communist Party of Burma, or CP(B), and the BCP, respectively. They originally were associated with the Dobama Asiayons (DAA), or Thakins' Party, which was founded in 1930. The moderate left program of the DAA failed to satisfy many of the Thakins, and they formed the BCP, which in the pre-war period urged revolution as the means to freedom. During the war the BCP, under the guise of collaborating with the Japanese, worked with British authorities to create a resistance movement. The BCP became the leading member of the league, and the Party's leader Thakin THAN TUN (who still heads the BCP today) became secretary-general.

In July 1946 the AFPFL began to rid its organization of Communist elements and THAN TUN was forced to resign the secretary-generalship. In October of that year the BCP was expelled from the league. After attempts to heal the breach between the BCP and the AFPFL failed, the BCP went underground and in 1948 started a campaign of armed rebellion which, while at present relatively quiet, has not been fully stopped. In the fall of 1953 the BCP was declared illegal by the Burmese Government.

Communist Party of Burma (CP(B))

In February 1946 rivalry for power within the BCP between Thakin THAN TUN and Thakin SOE, as well as SOE's insistence upon immediate revolution, split that party. SOE formed the CP(B) or Red Flag Communists. In July 1946 the CP(B) was declared illegal and SOE was imprisoned. Shortly afterwards both the ban and the imprisonment were lifted, but the ban was reimposed in January 1947 and has remained in force since then. Efforts to reunite the BCP and CP(B) have been unsuccessful thus far, largely because of personal differences between TUN and SOE.

Burma Workers and Peasant Party (BWPP)

The Burma Workers and Peasants Party is the overt Communist Party in Burma. It was formed in December 1950 when a group, headed by Thakin LWIN, withdrew from the Burma Socialist Party. The BWPP is considered the most orthodox of the legal Communist groups, the best disciplined and the strongest threat to the stability of the present government. It has nine representatives in the Chamber of Deputies.

The party has a number of front organizations, the most important of which are the Burmese branch of the World Peace Congress and the Burma Trades Union Congress. This DTUC affiliation provides a link between the BWPP, Moscow and Peiping. Other links with Peiping and Moscow may exist. But such a connection is rather new in Burmese Communism, which, if associated with Communism in any other country originally was closest to Indian Communist circles.

Overseas Chinese Communists

Local pro-Communist Chinese work mostly through the Burma Branch of the Chinese Democratic League (CDL), an international Chinese Communist organization. The CDL operates in Burma with the blessing and financial support of the Peiping Embassy. Although the overseas Chinese in Burma are not as numerous as in other countries of Southeast Asia, they nevertheless control important segments of the national economy and could pose a threat to the Burmese Government. Fortunately for the Burmese, the number of hard core Communist Chinese is only a small fraction of the approximately 300,000 Chinese in the country.

An important Peiping effort to woo the Burma Chinese was its low-interest loan program financed through Burma branches of the Bank of China and Bank of Communications. Under this arrangement, Chinese were allowed to borrow money at about half the going rate if they agreed not to oppose the Communists and Communist causes and renounced any connections with anti-Communist groups. Loans to schools, social organizations and other Chinese groups have had an effect on the growth of Communist influence in the Chinese community.

B. Indochina

In Indochina's three states are several Communist parties. In Vietnam there is the Dang Lao Dong (Workers Party), often still called by the name of Viet Minh. In Cambodia there is a Communist faction of the Khmer Issarak. In Laos there is a Communist faction of the Lao Issarak. (Phatet Laos). The pro-Communist factions of the Khmer

and Lao Issarak groups (issarak means free) are directly controlled by the Lao Dong. There are Communist Chinese which may or may not be organized into parties.

The Communist rebels led by Ho chi Minh have created a state called the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), which is completely dominated by the Lao Dong Party. The Lao Dong, established in March 1951, is the successor to the Indochinese Communist Party. DRV and Lao Dong officials have openly stated that no change in orientation or motivation accompanied the change in name to the Lao Dong Party. Quoc Viet, an official of the Lien Viet united front of "democratic parties" forming the DRV government, stated upon the death of Stalin:

Mourning for and grateful to Comrade Stalin the entire Vietnamese people and cadres are all the more determined to carry out President HO chi Minh's behest to learn the doctrine of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, apply it to concrete conditions in Vietnam, push the resistance, wipe out the French colonialists, American interventionists, and Vietnamese traitors, and build Vietnam into a new democratic country advancing to socialism.

The Lao Dong Party is the leading and controlling element of the Lien Viet Front. HO is president of the Lao Dong and Kuan Khu (aka Chinh) is secretary-general.

The history of Indochinese Communism is closely tied to the history of HO chi Minh. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, HO, then in France working with the French leftist leaders, presented demands for Vietnamese independence to President Woodrow Wilson. These demands were not accepted. HO then became associated with the Third International and, between 1919 and 1925 traveled between France and the USSR

including an appearance as a delegate to the 1923 Krestintern Conference.

In 1925 he went to China with Borodin, the chief Comintern agent in China. While in China he organized Vietnamese emigres into Communist cells and formed the Viet Nam Cach Menh Thanh Nien Hoi (Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League). He also organized similar groups in Thailand. As a member of the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern he helped form the Communist Party of the South Seas, which later split into individual national Communist parties, including the Indochinese Communist Party (PCI) in 1930. The next year the party was recognized by the Third International and admitted to the Comintern.

When the Popular Front Government came to power in France in 1936, the PCI emerged as a legal party in Cochinchina. In 1939, when the Popular Front Government fell, most of PCI leaders withdrew to China. During World War II the party was the leading component of the Viet Minh and was hardly distinguishable from it. On 11 November 1945 the PCI was dissolved and replaced by the Cultural Association for the Study of Marxism, headed by Xuan Khu, now secretary-general of the Lao Dong. The Marxist study groups continued until 1951, when the Lao Dong was formed.

The Lao Dong Party is the Communist Party of Indochina, openly admitting allegiance to Moscow and Peiping. The Lao Dong is the backbone of the DRV regime.

C. Indonesia

Two Communist groups exist in Indonesia: the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), or Communist Party of Indonesia, and the Partai Murba, or Proletarian Party. There is no Chinese Communist Party in Indonesia comparable to those in other countries of the area. The Chinese are organized in pro-Communist front organizations and operate through the Chinese Communist Embassy in Indonesia.

Thus far cooperation between the Chinese pro-Communist fronts and the PKI has been scant; but if they should ever combine, the resulting strong, legal Communist Party could threaten the Indonesian Government.

Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Communist Party of Indonesia)

The leading and oldest Communist Party in Indonesia, the Partai Komunis Indonesia, was organized in May 1920. Of the early leaders of the organization, the only one still prominent is Semaun, who is now and has been for several years, in the USSR and actually may be controlling the party from there. From its earliest days, when the party associated itself with the Comintern, it has been definitely Moscow-oriented. The leaders in Indonesia, Aidit and Alimin, have both spent some time in Moscow and probably received their training there. In a recent clash between these two, Aidit emerged the victor and Alimin is now out of power. Like other Communist parties of the area organized shortly after World War I, the PKI was established with the overt semblance of being a nationalist movement to gain independence for colonial Netherlands East Indies.

On the local scene, the tactics of the PKI have changed in the past few years. In 1948 PKI policy called for an all-out revolution to seize control of the government, and factions of the party launched an abortive rebellion in Madiun in September of that year. With the advent to power of the Wilopo government, the PKI switched to the tactic of presenting a national front, through which they hoped eventually to gain control. They have continued their support of the new Sastroamidjojo cabinet as well, although they still have no cabinet representation. Currently the PKI has 17 members in the appointed Indonesian Parliament, the third largest delegation, after Masjumi and the Partai Nasional Indonesia. The delegation is headed by Aidit. The party also has six other seats through two of its affiliates, SOBSI and the Barisan Tani Indonesia, which have three each.

The present estimated strength of the party is about 100,000, although it probably controls a much larger number through its many front affiliates. The largest such group is the Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI), the largest labor federation in the country, with an estimated strength of one million members. Its largest member unions are in the fields of transportation and petroleum and among the sugar estate workers. SOBSI is affiliated with the WFTU, and possibly acts as a contact between the PKI and Peiping.

Another important affiliate of the PKI is the Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI, Indonesian Farmers Corps), which holds three seats in the Parliament. It is strongest in Central Java. The PKI has many other affiliates, in almost every facet of Indonesian life, particularly among the youth. It has a militant arm, PERBEPESI, an organization of veterans. The PKI probably receives most of its funds through these affiliates.

The PKI is an example of what is called a "soft party." The top echelons of the party are well-trained and well-organized. Once past this upper crust the party tends to fall apart except in carrying on the simplest activities, requiring only blind obedience. This softness is largely due to the low literacy rate in the country, which limits the teaching of doctrinary Communism to the masses.

At present the party is following a national front policy and has indicated in its last Congress that it would continue this policy at least until the national elections, which are scheduled to be held in 1955.

Partai Murba (PM, Proletarian Party)

The party has, at times been called a Trotskyite group. This description is fervently denied by the Murba, which considers itself a nationalist Communist party rather than an internationalist party. Although the party does not advocate world revolution and does not recognize the leadership of Moscow, its domestic line and its attitude toward the US and the rest of the world is hardly

distinguishable from that of the PKI or other Moscow-oriented Communist parties throughout the world.

The Partai Murba was founded in November 1948 by Tan Malaka, the Moscow-trained Communist who had been ejected from the Third International because of his nationalist principles. He was an early leader of Communism in Indonesia. In the spring of 1949 he was reported to have been executed by the Indonesia Government as a danger to the security of the nation; however, these reports often have been denied.

The present chairman of the party is Sukarni Kartodiwirdjo. Maruto Nitimihardjo is vice-chairman and Sjamsu Udaya is secretary-general. In the current Indonesian Parliament, which is not an elected one, the party holds four seats, including the second vice-chairmanship of the Communications and Public Works Section.

Sukarni claims for the party a dues-paying membership of 200,000 and about 500,000 fellow-travelers. These figures seem grossly inflated and the actual membership is probably much less than that of the PKI. In the field of labor the party controls the Sentral Organisasi Buruh Republik Indonesia (SOBRI, the Central Organization of Indonesian Workers), a rival of the PKI-dominated SOBSI. In addition to the approximately 50,000 members in SOBRI, the largest group of which is formed of gas and electric workers, SOBRI reportedly has infiltrated many SOBSI unions.

A propaganda arm of the PM is the Pelita Murba (Lamp of the Proletariat), a weekly published in Bandjermasin. The Party also has a small militant arm of veterans of the rebellion against the Dutch, called the Laskar Rakjat Murba (Proletarian Peoples Army).

Recent attempts of the Partai Murba and the Partai Komunis Indonesia to settle their differences and unite into one party have failed because of the insistence of each on its own position on Moscow leadership, the PKI accepting Moscow leadership and the PM rejecting it.

Activities of Overseas Chinese Communists

The overseas Chinese in Indonesia are not organized into formal political parties. Instead of the traditional party structure, Communist and anti-Communist elements have used the community organizations of the overseas Chinese. The major Communist front organization in the Chinese community is the Chung Hua Ch'iao T'uan Tsung Hui (General Organization of Overseas Chinese Organizations), which is a federation of social, cultural and benevolent organizations, schools and publications. Included in this federation is the Min Chung Sheng Huo She, usually called the Min Sheng She (Peoples Livelihood Society), which is in turn a sub-federation of societies and is considered to be the leading Communist group in the larger federation and in Indonesia. Leading figures among the Chinese Communists are ANG Jan-goan and SU To-tjan. The organizations are in direct contact with the Chinese Communist Embassy in Djakarta, which orders their policies.

The Chinese Communists control many schools, publications, labor unions and guilds and chambers of commerce. The influence exercised through these groups and the hierarchy of community organizations, particularly youth groups, gives the Communists an important advantage in molding Chinese public opinion throughout the country. And the important economic role of the Chinese in Indonesia makes them a considerable factor in the life of the country.

There is no organized Chinese Communist Party in Indonesia. There is very little organized cooperation between the Chinese Communists in Indonesia and the Indonesian Communists, even though the Chinese Communist Embassy in Djakarta may be acting as a communications center between Moscow, Peiping and Djakarta. Most observers believe, however, that if the money, skill and organizing ability of the Chinese in Indonesia were linked with the Indonesian Communist movement, the result might well be an extremely strong Indonesian Communist Party, capable of threatening the Indonesian Government.

D. Malaya

Malaya, including the Federation of Malaya and the colony of Singapore, is the last major country in Southeast Asia which still has a colonial status. Malaya differs from other Southeast Asian countries also in other ways, most notably in the status of its Chinese. In the colony of Singapore the overseas Chinese are in the overwhelming majority, making up at least 80 percent of the population. In the Federation they form a very important minority, about 38 percent. In all Malaya the Chinese formed about 44 percent of the population in 1947 or slightly more than the Malay and Malaysian population of the country. Thus the Chinese cannot be considered a minority group but one of two major elements in the national community.

The members of the MCP are drawn from the Chinese peasant and laboring groups. The membership of the MCP is augmented by two important arms, the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) and the Min Yuen or Peoples Movement. The MRLA is the guerrilla force that has been battling the British in the jungles since 1948. Recent news reports from the area indicate that the guerrillas have been contained although the job of wiping them out will be a long and bloody one. The Min Yuen is the logistical arm of the MCP and the MRLA. Its function is to obtain food, funds, military supplies, and recruits for the guerrillas and, in the course of doing this, spread propaganda, train party workers and organize attempts to

disrupt the national economy. The combined strength of the MCP and its two arms is about 15,000 with about 5,000 of these armed.

Support for the guerrilla operations, both voluntary and forced, comes largely from villages on the fringes of the jungle, on both the Malaya and Thailand sides of the border. Such villages of "squatters" were found in other parts of Malaya. Because of their assistance to the guerrillas, the British have moved the larger part of these people, mostly Chinese, to villages further from the arena of combat, greatly handicapping the work of the guerrillas.

The arms and equipment of the guerrillas have come from two major sources. One source is material captured from the British in the course of the fighting since 1948, the same year that fighting broke out in Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia. The other source is the arms left from World War II, when the MRLA predecessor, the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) was posing as a nationalist group driving the invader from Malayan soil. The methods of obtaining arms is comparable to that of the Huks in the Philippines.

The MPAJA and the MCP-MRLA set-ups are the most recent aspects of the Communist movement in Malaya. In the early 1920's pro-Communist Chinese started the movement in Malaya under the guise of nationalism and anti-colonialism. It followed the same general pattern of Communism in China, working through the Kuomintang until the KMT ousted the Communist elements in 1927. In 1928 Malayan Communists were included in the formation of the Communist Party of the South Seas (CPSS). Directed by the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern,

the CPSS helped develop Communist growth and organization in each Southeast Asian country. When the CPSS was dissolved in 1930 in favor of national parties, the MCP came into existence. The party continued its underground operations under the Far Eastern Bureau until the beginning of World War II hostilities in the Pacific, when it emerged as the MPAJA. During the 1930's the MCP endeavored to build up its strength, particularly in the labor field. Other activities included infiltration of schools, the press and organizations. Those activities are still being carried on, but with very limited success.

The outlawing of Communist activities in 1948 has hampered severely the work of the MCP since the war. Publications of the party are irregular and appear in limited numbers. Documents captured by the British or turned in by surrendering defectors indicate the clear purpose and direction of the party. They call for creation of a "peoples' democratic republic" based on the principles of "democratic centralization." This repetition of the standard line indicates that the international Communist origins of Malayan Communism, and in particular, its Chinese Communist orientation, have not changed from the days of its founding in the 1920's.

The severity of the jungle campaign and its lack of pronounced success has created certain difficulties within the MCP itself. Dissention and defection increased during 1953 and some leaders, notably AH Kuk, were slain by guerrilla members. Guerrillas surrendering to the British brought AH's head with them.

E. The Philippines

Two Communist parties exist in the Philippine Islands, one native and one Chinese. Because Communism is illegal in the country, these groups do not function as political parties running candidates for election. Being illegal, they carry on some of their activities through front organizations. The Philippine Communists have received wide notice because of their militant arm, the Huks. Capture of various leaders has weakened this arm and attempts to negotiate a truce have occurred. There has been little known formal contact between the Chinese and Philippine Communists, but some degree of informal liaison is believed to be maintained.

Partido Komunista de Filipinas (PKP, Philippine Communist Party)

The impetus leading to the formation of the Philippine Communist Party was mostly from within the country but with some aid from the CPUS. Burma is the only other such case in Southeast Asia; groups in other countries received impetus from the USSR or China. The party developed as an outgrowth of a laborers and peasants movement. The earliest organizations in this movement were the Union Obrera Democratica de Filipinas (Democratic Labor Union of the Philippines), founded in 1902, and the Congreso Obrera de Filipinas (Philippine Labor Congress). The Congress, usually called the COF, was founded in 1912, uniting almost all existing labor groups in the country. It became a means for dissemination of Marxist thinking and supplied many of the early PKP leaders.

In the 1920's, the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern and the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat of the Internationale of Red Trade Unions (Profintern) made some attempts to spread Communism in the islands. They worked through foreign Communist agents in the Philippines, including Tan Malaka of Indonesia, and attempted to indoctrinate Filipinos abroad at international labor conferences. Of the latter-day PKP leaders Crisanto Evangelista and Guillermo Capadocia were active in these efforts. During this period, Chinese Communist agents were active in the country, but mostly among the Chinese minority.

In 1927 and 1928 Evangelista formed the Partido Obrero (Workers Party), which was a direct forerunner of the PKP. At the Profintern Conference in Shanghai in 1928, Evangelista conferred with Malaka and Chinese and American Communists. In 1929 the party split over the issue of the class struggle, and Evangelista and his "Red" faction organized a rival group called the Congreso Proletario de Filipinas (Proletarian Congress of the Philippines). This organization carried Communist banners for the first time in the 1929 May Day parade. Although it worked closely with leftist peasant groups, leadership came mostly from the labor elements.

The PKP, established on 7 November 1930, also had labor leadership. Shortly after its formation, it set up close contact with the Communist Party of the United States. In May 1931 many of the most prominent PKP leaders were arrested, and in 1932 the Philippine Supreme Court declared the PKP to be a seditious and illegal organization and sentenced the leaders to prison terms.

From 1933-1937 the party operated underground. By this time the PKP was a member of the Comintern. In 1937 President Quezon pardoned several of the imprisoned Communist leaders. Party records indicate that this action was negotiated through the influence of US Communist elements. From then until the Japanese invasion, the PKP operated along peaceful "united front against Fascism" lines in accordance with the international policy of the Comintern.

During the Japanese occupation an armed peasants movement took over leadership of the party, which had been a small, weak group dominated by trade union leaders. Remnants of Philippine Chinese Communist influence in the party were greatly reduced during the occupation. In January 1942 the Japanese arrested some of the top PKP leaders, including Evangelista and Capadocia. Evangelista was executed and a "Comrade Vy" assumed the leadership. It is believed the Vy was Vincente Lava, the first of the Lava family to become prominent in PKP leadership.

In 1942 the PKP joined other radical groups to form the Hukbalahap (Huk) guerrilla units to fight the Japanese, eventually gaining full control of the Huks. In 1943 the Japanese drove the Huks to the mountains. About the same time the Socialist Party and other peasant organizations were abolished. The Chinese elements

in the party and their own guerrilla units were placed under the PKP Politburo in a "Chinese Bureau". From this point on the influence of the Chinese in PKP activities declined. In 1944 the Central Committee of the PKP decided to abandon its waiting policy and recommenced active aggression against the Japanese. It also established local Huk-dominated governments in the provinces for post-liberation use. At this time Pedro Castro and Geruncio Lucuesta were installed as party leaders. When the US invaded the Philippines in October 1944, the Huks seem to have become disorganized; the local government system did not go into effect and many Huks surrendered their arms.

In the post-war period the PKP grew stronger, reaching its apex in 1950, although in 1947 and 1948 a struggle for party leadership disrupted party activities. Jose Lava, Jesus Lava and Luis Taruc, with the support of the Huks, challenged the leadership of Castro and Lucuesta. The Lava-Taruc group came out on top. In 1948 President Roxas declared the Huks illegal. The Central Committee then committed the PKP to armed conflict.

In 1949 President Quirino's attempts to arrange an amnesty failed, and an investigation of the PKP was started by the Special Committee on Un-Filipino Activities of the Philippine House of Representatives. From January to October 1950, when PKP strength was at its peak, the combined PKP-Huk membership was only about

one-tenth of one percent of the population, but it was a strong and well-organized group. In June of 1950 Balgos and Capadocia, two of the PKP leaders, left Manila and joined the Huks in the mountains. In a reorganization of the guerrilla units, the name of the Huks was changed to Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) (The Peoples Liberation Army). However, the name Huks remained in common use. In October 1950 several leaders were captured, and another group was taken in June 1951. In early 1952 the Huks were eliminated from the island of Panay, after military action brought a mass surrender. In the battle, Capadocia, one of the last of the pre-war leaders was slain and in November 1954 Balgos was killed in South Luzon.

At present the strength of the illegal PKP and Huks is small. The PKP claims about 3,000-5,000 members and the Huks about 4,000 of which only about 2,500 are armed. However, actual membership is believed to be much smaller. The party is closer to Communist China than to other Communists in the Philippines or elsewhere. It is believed to have /received technical assistance and advisers from the Chinese, but few supplies or funds.

Leadership of the PKP is currently in the hands of Jesus Lava who is secretary-general and leader of the party. His most likely successor, in case of death or imprisonment, is Casto Alejandrino, chairman of the National Military Department of the PKP and commander-in-chief of the Huks. Luis Taruc, publicized commander of the Huks in 1942, was the "grand old man" of the liberation movement but

was expelled from the party in 1954. Taruc recently surrendered to the government and was tried, receiving a prison sentence that Magsaysay complained was too light. Jose Lava, in prison since 1950, also may be directing operations of the PKP through his brother Jesus.

Communist Activity Among Philippine Chinese

Communist Chinese activity is centered in three areas of the Philippines--Manila, the Bicol region of Southern Luzon and Iliolo and environs. The structure of their organization, however, is not clear. It appears to include at least two facets: The Chinese Board (CB) of the PKP and an undefined underground organization, which at times has been referred to as the Chinese Communist Party of the Philippines and about which little is known.

The Chinese Bureau is listed under the National Organization Department of the PKP. It is headed by a secretariat consisting of a secretary-general and the heads of four sub-departments--education, organization, communications and finance. Reorganization along these lines was effected in 1952 and is significant in that it provided no military department like that in the PKP set-up. This omission seems to indicate that the active Chinese Communist guerrilla forces of the occupation period and after had been disbanded by 1952. The Bureau was originally founded in 1942 as a liaison unit between the PKP and the Chinese Communist Party in China. Since its founding, the CB seems to have lost most of its influence, having fallen from a strong factor in the PKP and among local Chinese Communists to a minor dot on the PKP organizational chart.

The structure of the underground arm is perhaps one of the best-guarded secrets in the realm of Asian Communism, if, indeed, such a structure does exist. Some Communist documents obtained by Philippine authorities and some reports from the islands mention a Chinese Communist Party of the Philippines. Little exact information on such a party is available and it is assumed that, if such a group exists, it is the underground organization. It is known that Communist Chinese have been very active in the Philippine Chinese community.

They have infiltrated many schools and organizations and attempted to gain control of the newspapers. These methods have been the basic Chinese Communist tactics to gain control of Chinese Communities in Southeast Asia since the Communists were ousted from the Kuomintang in 1927.

Operating under instructions from Communist headquarters in China, Chinese Communists for the most part have cooperated with the PKP, although usually acting on their own in matters pertaining to the Chinese community. During the war several Communist Chinese guerrilla units cooperated with the Philippine Communists. Most famous of these were the Hua Chi detachment and the Hsueh Kan militia.

In addition to infiltrating various components of the Chinese community, the Communists have taken advantage of some of the well-established vices of the area--gambling, bribery, smuggling and prostitution--to further their causes. Smuggling and the extortion campaign directed at Chinese throughout the world have helped swell the Communist coffers.

Estimates of Communist Chinese strength in the Philippines have varied from a few thousand to fifty thousand, with party membership probably numbering a few thousand.

F. Thailand

The pattern of Communist activity in Thailand has differed from that of other Southeast Asian countries in a few important respects, largely because it has been an independent nation for many years. Thailand's independence prevented the Communists from masquerading as nationalists as they did in Indochina and elsewhere. For the same reason Communism did not appeal to the Thai and grew up mostly among minority groups, the Chinese and the Vietnamese.

Communism also has run into other difficulties in Thailand. It has not been popular with many of the devout Buddhist Thai, who regard it as an alien heresy. Although the Communists have achieved a minor infiltration of elements of the Thai Buddhist priesthood, most Thai have not been attracted by the Communist appeals. Furthermore, Thailand is, by Asian standards, a fairly prosperous country. Most Thai are well-fed, well-clothed, own their land and have savings. Under such conditions Communism does not flourish.

At the same time, however, the Thai may have unwittingly spurred the growth of Communism among the Chinese. Thai are alarmed at Chinese ambition. The Thailand Chinese outnumber the Thai in the country's trade, a situation which does not please the Thai people or the Thai Government. To counteract the growing foreign influence on the Thai economy the government has passed certain restrictive measures on

aliens, excluding them from certain professions and limiting their landholdings according to type and conditions. The regulation of aliens were aimed at the Chinese, but they also affected the Vietnamese minority. The Communists have played up these restrictions to stir discontent among the Chinese.

Chinese Communist Party of Thailand (CCP (T))

The largest Communist Party in the country is the Chinese Communist Party of Thailand. Membership estimates for the party range from 2,000 to 40,000. The actual membership is probably about 2,000-4,000 hard-core members, with the remaining strength in Communist-led organizations, such as labor groups and some of the regional associations.

The CCP(T) probably dates back at least to 1927. The party remained underground regardless of changes in its legal status. For a brief period after the 1932 coup overthrew the absolute monarchy, Communism was permitted to exist openly. In 1933 the Communist Party was declared illegal and remained so until 1946. In that year the Thais repealed the anti-Communist law to secure Soviet approval of Thailand's application for UN membership. In November 1952 Communist activity was again declared illegal; a series of mass arrests of suspected Communist leaders and sympathizers followed, and several pro-Communist Chinese publications were suspended. However, few of the top leaders were apprehended.

Infiltration of the Chinese community is mostly within urban labor, some of the dialect associations, schools and some newspapers and periodicals. The strong grip Communists once had on the important Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok has been broken.

The Chinese Communists in Thailand represent only a small percentage of the Chinese population of more than 3,000,000, about one-sixth of Thailand's population. Many of the pro-Communist sympathizers are only weakly attached to the party and may easily desert the cause. Yet, their general political apathy causes them to follow the line of least effort and of allegiance to the homeland. Because of the strong Chinese hold on the Thai economy, pro-Communist inclinations in the Chinese community make it a potential fifth column of Peiping.

Thai Communist Party (TCP)

There is a Thai Communist Party (TCP), but reports citing the Communist Party of Thailand often have not been clear as to whether they refer to the TCP or the CCP(T). While some sources state that the TCP dates back to 1928, it appears that these references are to the Chinese organization. Because many Chinese have also adopted Thai names, the mere noting of unidentified Thai names does not indicate which group is meant. The TCP appears to have been of virtually no importance until a few years ago and of not much more importance now.

The CCP(T) may have established the TCP to attract the Thais to Communism by disguising its Chinese sponsorship. Its small membership, believed to be only in the hundreds, is probably composed mostly of Sino-Thais who are also members of the parent Chinese group. Except for a few members of the intellectual or professional community, it has attracted little response.

Tong Hoi Viet Kieu Cuu Te Tai Thai (General Association for Mutual Assistance to Overseas Vietnamese in Thailand)

The Vietnamese Communists in Thailand, numbering 40,000-50,000 include long-time Thailand residents and refugees from the recent war in Indochina. Some reports say that about half of this group are Communists or pro-Communist sympathizers favoring or working with the Viet Minh and HO chi Minh of Indochina. In 1929-1930, HO was in Thailand forming Vietnamese emigre units. The Vietnamese Communists are organized into the Tong Hoi Viet Kieu Cuu Te Tai Thai (General Association for Mutual Assistance to Overseas Vietnamese in Thailand). The association is not active in internal Thai affairs, but is believed to have supplied funds, medical supplies and perhaps some recruits to the Viet Minh.