

Re-Visiting the Communist Party of Malaya: Is there Room for Truth and Reconciliation?

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Abstract

This paper re-examines the controversy regarding the Communist Party of Malaya, that was involved in an armed insurgency against the Malayan/Malaysian government until it ended its struggle in 1989. Using the legal doctrinal method, this essay shows that despite a peace treaty signed in 1989 between the Communist Party of Malaya and the governments of Malaysia and Thailand, the British colonial policy and model that was used by the colonial authority during the period of communist insurgency prior to independence continue to be utilised and that the legal system together with the State and the society are still occupied with the national security issues posed by the Communist Party of Malaya. It is argued that the inheritance of the colonial power's modality must be seen to be a concern in a post-colonial set up. It is proposed that further research needs to be done mirroring the steps taken leading to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Keywords: Communist, Malaya, British, Cases

Introduction

The Communist Party of Malaya ("CPM") was established in April 1930 at Buluh Kasap in Johor and "it was attended by a representative of the Comintern, Ho Chi Minh" (Colin Abraham, 2006, 123) It had had a long history of involvement in trade unionism, agitating the labourers against British business interests and it ironically later assisted the British to fight against the Japanese army during the times of Japanese Occupation of Malaya. In the aftermath of the 2nd World War, the British returned to Malaya and the CPM took up its earlier struggle against the colonial power. The CPM was banned in July 1948 (Colin Abraham, 160). After the initial fight against the British colonial government, the CPM continued its guerilla warfare against the Malayan (Malaysian) government and both parties later signed an agreement to the effect that both parties would cease hostilities. Despite the *Haadyai Peace Accords of 1989* that was signed by the Communist Party of Malaya and the Malaysian government, there seems to be a fear of anything related to either the communist/socialist ideology and/or the CPM in Malaysia. For instance, the Malaysian police security intelligence division listed "investigating and dealing with communist threats" (Lee Shi-lan, 2013) as one of its activities in 2013. It is as if there has been no peace treaty signed between the CPM and the Malaysian

government, and even if it did take place (which it did), it is as if the peace treaty is of no value at all.

Not much has been done regarding the historiography of the CPM during the post *Hadyaai Peace Accords*' era in comparison to the historiography of the Communist Party of Indonesia of which many books and movies have been produced and many intellectual discourses have been held to deconstruct the "official" history of the Communist Party that had been dictated by the State. Malaysian history books "almost make no mention of the trade union movements, workers' movement, students' movements, other political parties (notably the Communist Party of Malaya) and other actors.." (Farish A Noor, 2014) There have been a few memoirs written by the old CPM leaders but these memoirs have been condemned by some as despicable attempts to cloak such terrorists with the image of heroes. It is not surprising to note the official Western stand and/or propaganda regarding "communist terrorists" in which western colonialism had failed to put down in their rush to exploit the natural resources of their respective colonies. It is similarly unsurprising to note as to how the powerful elites of the countries that had achieved independence from the western colonial powers to perpetuate their colonial masters' stand against communism since colonialism did not cover just the physical control of the country and that it also includes the subjection of the minds of the colonized peoples to the agenda of the colonial masters. In fact, it has been written that "from the precolonial era to the present our histories in this region have invariably and predictably been official state histories, written by statist elites for the sake of regime maintenance, perpetuation and reproduction, if little else".

This essay attempts to deconstruct the official and conventional history of the CPM using the legal doctrinal method. (Jason NE Varuhas, 2023) The legal responses in the forms of law and judicial decisions would be examined in the background of their related historical significance. While it is not the intention of this writer to glorify the communists and/or the ideology of communism. With the death of *Chin Peng* on 16th September 2013 (Malaysia Day) in Bangkok, it appears that many stereotypes and misinterpretations of history are still kept alive by those in power and it is high time that a concerted effort is launched to cut through the thicket of suspicion and vengeance that has been left behind by the British colonial power.

History of the CPM

It has been written that CPM owes its existence to the ideology of anarcho-communism by some left-wing Chinese anarchists who "arrived in British Malaya during the First World War to take up positions as Chinese vernacular school teachers or journalists (Yong C.F., 1991). Clearly, it would be obvious to anyone reading about the history of CPM that there is a stamp/persona of "foreign" or "otherness" in anything related to communism (the ideology) and the Communist Party. In a British War Document entitled "The Cold War in Asia (1945-1960)", it recorded the establishment of the "*Nanyang Communist Party*" in 1927, which was later dissolved and replaced with the "*Communist Party of Malaya*". This British record also stated that both organisations were established by "foreign elements" aligned to the *Chinese Communist Party* and the *Comintern* (Communist International). The British authorities also alleged that in line with the communist movement, the CPM "was ordered to concentrate on penetrating and controlling labour organizations and on spreading its influence in youth circles."

CPM was established in the 1930s, and when one examines the communist ideology, one could understand the reason for its establishment in the British colonies such as in Malaya. The paltry conditions of the labour force during such a period in British Malaya was certainly ripe for the realization of the *Communist Manifesto's* emphasis on creating a classless society and to get rid of the tyranny of the bourgeois. (Marx, 1848) British Malaya was a lucrative supplier of wealth to the British empire due to its natural resources such as rubber and tin. For instance, in 1928 Malaya's contribution to Britain was nearly 20 million pound Sterling. (A.Bowie, 1991) During the colonial days, exploitation of the natural resources for the sole interest of the colonial power was the natural order of business and as such, the British had a total control over all land and natural resources in Malaya. Due to the demands of plantation and mining industries, there was an easy supply of cheap labour from India and China. Although Chinese immigrants have been coming to Malaya to participate in some minor commercial plantations prior to the intensive industrialization of the mining industry by the British (for example, the *gambier* and pepper plantations in Johor), a greater number of Chinese and Indian immigrants came during the British colonial days since "it was British economic considerations that gave rise to the large-scale migration of Chinese and Indian labour in the early twentieth century to cater for the demands of the new export industries...".(Michael Gary O'Shannassy, 2012) Chinese and Indian immigrants were thus treated merely as a source of cheap labour to be used (and abused) solely for the benefit of the British economic interests in British Malaya. Despite the huge number of immigrants in British Malaya, the official policy was to treat them as "aliens" in order not to alarm the Malay Rulers and the Malays themselves:

"So long as Malaya remains politically unsophisticated and is firmly controlled by British administrators... it is possible to call it a Malay country and assume that Chinese and Indians are aliens without implying any intention to take drastic action against them"(TH Silcock, 1949)

During the Great Depression, it was estimated that 450,000 Chinese labourers were jobless and were simply abandoned in Malaya without any support.(A Bowie, 1991) Although they were brought in to serve the economic interests of the British, there were no unemployment benefits for them since the "colonial government did not accept that it had any responsibilities towards their welfare and regarded the immigration of alien labour as being regulated merely by prevailing market conditions".(Cheah Boon Kheng, 2009) Despite the change in immigration policies during that time that favoured repatriation of the "decrepit and derelict Chinese"(Loh Kah Seng,2006) back to China, many of the Chinese immigrants remained in Malaya and "many refused offers of free repatriation as they regarded themselves as permanent settlers in Malaya".(Loh Kah Seng, 2006) The Chinese immigrants also faced abuses and cruelties at the hands of some of the more established and wealthy Chinese in Malaya under the earlier indentured immigration system that had brought them to Malaya. With all these facts, it is unsurprising that the communist movement was very popular among the Chinese ever since the Great Depression in Malaya.

While the avowed stance of the CPM was against British colonialism and despite the fact that many of its members and leaders had been detained and banished to China by the colonial government,(Chin Peng, 2003) the Second World War saw the close collusion and cooperation between the CPM and the British forces. After rejecting the offer from the CPM, the colonial

authorities quickly reversed their stand and accepted the offer from CPM and even went to the extent of “training communist recruits to become guerilla fighters behind enemy lines”. This close cooperation between the CPM and the British army during the 2nd World War was made clearer with the signing of an agreement regarding arms and medical supplies, military training on 31 December 1943. Nowhere was there stated any recognition of the CPM’s contribution towards fighting for the independence of Malaya/Malaysia, that the CPM was actively fighting against the Japanese military with the full assistance of the British army and in fact they were given special training by the British for this purpose. There was also no official recognition given to the CPM that they were also fighting to free this country from the British colonialists. In a Malayan government’s White Paper (No.23) dated 24th February 1959, the newly independent Malayan government made no mention at all about the CPM’s contribution towards independence, as to how the CPM was an active organization in fighting both the Japanese army and the British colonialists. This White Paper merely continued the British colonial propaganda regarding the communists as terrorists who did not have any loyalty to Malaya and were controlled by foreign powers, namely the Communist Republic of China. This has been disproved in later studies which found that the movements and actions of the CPM were based on the local social, economic and political exigencies instead of mere puppets of China and/or Russia. (CC Chin, 2009)

Communist Ideology and the Malays

It is certainly difficult to imagine that the Malay community from the pre-war until post war period would largely subscribe to the Communist Party’s ideology of “anarcho-communism” (CF Yong, 1991) that targets traditional authority since the traditional malay concept of loyalty to the *raja* is absolute/unquestioning obedience. (Chandra Muzaffar, 1979) This pre-Islamic/Indian notion rests on the belief that the *raja* is God’s representative/shadow on earth and such his commands/directives have to be obeyed unquestioningly. This concept of loyalty to the *Raja* had been extended to the malay elites as well in which although it seemed that the Malay rulers were powerful in their respective States, in reality the power was shared by the Rulers and their nobles. (Chandra Muzaffar, 1979) Furthermore, social conditions among the Malay community in Malaya were not conducive to any concept of enlightenment. The Malay Rulers together with the malay nobles and elites were practically beholden to the British Colonial power for their place and prestige in the colonial government since under British colonialism, the Malay Rulers received fixed monthly income and accoutrements of wealth from the colonial power and their favoured nobles enjoyed employment benefits in the colonial economy. (Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, 2011) The education system of the Malays during that time was severely backward during which the colonial power had no interest at all to provide real and beneficial education to the Malays, preferring to produce “better farmers/fishermen”. (William R Roff, 1980)

It is easy to dismiss the significance of communism to the Malay community since they were to a large extent an agrarian community having less contact with the colonial capitalist economy as compared to the other ethnic groups. However, it was the British colonial power’s wish to entrench and enshrine the Malays in paddy planting/subsistence agrarian mode of living. (Anne Booth, 2007) The British Colonial authority in Malaya had no intention of changing the social and economic structure of the traditional Malay society. (AJ Stockwell, 1979) Even when rubber became the golden crop in British Malaya, the Malays were strongly discouraged and penalized from planting rubber. (Anne Booth, 2007) The colonial

government's wish to see that the Malays do not venture into other fields of plantation was also supported by the Malay elites who advised the Malay peasantry "to give up notions of increased income from rubber as a sacrifice so that the Malays way of life can be maintained". (Collin Abraham, 2006)

During the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, the Chinese community suffered tremendous hardships due to the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945. Therefore it was not surprising that the Chinese members of the CPM had a greater degree of militancy against the Japanese when they set-up the MPAJA ironically with the assistance of the British army. After the war, the MPAJA was forced to disband by the returning colonial power who allowed the continued existence of the CPM as a political organization. Conditions after the war in British Malaya were severe. On 30th August 1945, the British Military Administration of Malaya declared that the Japanese War time currency would not be accepted as legal tender and that inflicted a terrible amount of hardships on the people. (British Proclamation 1945) Food was scarce, and the colonial power was only interested in exploiting the economy to make up for the losses incurred by the colonial power during the war. (Collin Abraham, 2006) The war had certainly educated the Malays on the value of nationalism and the importance of independence. For the first time in history, the myth of the superiority of the White colonialists had been shattered. However, since food was scarce during the post-war period and conditions of labour were far from satisfactory in which the workers' demand for better working conditions and higher wages were ignored, it was natural for the CPM to come into the picture and defend the rights of the workers. The British colonial power on the other hand treated British Malaya as just another colony that was no different than the pre-war period. In fact, the colonial power seemed to be exploiting the economic resources of Malaya with full fervor since Malaya was Britain's best dollar earner during the post-war period.

The British colonial power wanted to further entrench their occupation of British Malaya by creating *The Malayan Union*. While it was far from satisfactory, it offered the immigrant communities the opportunity to legally and permanently belong to Malaya under the citizenship principle of "*jus soli*". (AJ Stockwell, 1979) After the Malay community vigorously protested against it, it was abandoned. However, the negotiation for a political set up to replace the ill-fated *Malayan Union* was only done by the British colonial government together with UMNO and the Malay Rulers which kept out the Malay left and other ethnic groups. Undaunted, the other parties banded together and drafted a "*People's Constitution*" that was seen as more inclusive as opposed to the *Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948*. (Syed Husin Ali, 2017) With the rejection of the *People's Constitution* proposal it was unsurprising that the Chinese were unhappy.

Benefits to the Colonial Power

After examining all of the above, it became clear as to who benefited the most with the banning of the CPM. The British colonial government detained many local politicians after the 2nd World War after the declaration of the emergency in 1948, specially targeting the leftists and the first local political party that was banned was the leftist *Angkatan Pemuda Insaf* in which its leader, Ahmad Boestamam, was charged and convicted for sedition. (Ahmad Boestamam, 2004) With the arrests of so many leaders of the Malay left, the power vacuum was taken over by UMNO, a party set-up and controlled by English educated Malays with strong ties to the Malay Ruling elites. In postcolonial studies, it has been noted that the

notions, prejudices and biases of the colonial masters are shared and continued to be adhered to by the country's elites. (Frantz Fanon, 2005) Likewise, in Malaya/Malaysia, the British colonial war against the CPM had been further continued and legally entrenched by the newly independent government in which the emergency that was declared by the British colonial power in 1948 was only formally ended in 1960.

In ending the emergency in 1960, the Malaysian government still felt that there was a grave threat from the CPM, hence the *Internal Security Act 1960* came into being. During the second reading of the Bill, the Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak clearly referred to the threat posed by the CPM as a reason for the *Internal Security Act*. (*Hansard*, 1960) While actual reference to the Communists was only made in the fifth paragraph of his speech, reading the *Bahasa Malaysia* version of the speech would show that Tun Abdul Razak was clearly referring to the Communists in his first and second paragraphs for the reason behind the Bill in which the reason why the government wanted to have formal statutory powers to detain certain people without trial was due to the communist threat. This is an example of a norm of the colonial power that had been transplanted into the colony which is then perpetuated and enshrined by the elites post-independence into the legal system which is also controlled by the elites. It has been argued in a number of cases that the purpose of the *ISA* was only to combat communists and unfortunately the Malaysian judges have never accepted such an argument.

This argument was raised in *Theresa Lim Chin Chin & Ors v Inspector General of Police* [1988] 1 MLJ 293 in which the Court was invited to refer to Tun Abdul Razak's speech in Parliament in tabling the *Internal Security Bill*. The Lord President, Tun Salleh Abbas replied that *Hansard* records could only be used to appreciate the legal history of the law and that it could not be used as a basis to determine the way the law should be interpreted. His Lordship then concluded that the *Internal Security Act 1960* did not contain any provisions to limit its use only on matters and people connected to communism.

In *Mohamad Ezam Bin Mohd Noor v Ketua Polis Negara & Other Appeals* [2002] 4 MLJ 449, in reply to the Appellants' arguments, Dato Azahar Mohamad, Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor, argued that the *ISA* was for subversion which need not necessarily be on communists only and that there was nothing in the *ISA* that says it is only to be used against the communists. The learned Senior Deputy Prosecutor also made an intriguing argument when he said that "...we cannot go behind the *ISA* and ask if it was in fact designed to stop or to prevent such action...". It is perplexing to note as to why the entire submission of the learned Senior Deputy Prosecutor did not deal with the actual speech of Tun Abdul Razak when he tabled the *ISA* Bill in *Dewan Rakyat* in 1960. While the Federal Court Justice Abdul Malek Ahmad remarked that the *ISA* was indeed directed to communist activities that was a threat at the time the law was enacted, he followed the ratio in the earlier case of *Theresa Lim* in which restricted the reading of the the *ISA* to other acts of subversion.

It was only in *Abdul Ghani Haroon v Ketua Polis Negara & Another Application* [2001] 2 MLJ 689 a Malaysian judge recognized, being an *obiter dicta* notwithstanding, the origin of the *ISA* which was in response to the communists. Justice Hisyamuddin stated that:

“with the greatest respect and in all humility, perhaps it is high time for Parliament to consider whether the ISA, which was originally meant to counter Communist terrorism in the early years of our independence, is really relevant to the present day situations of this nation of ours; or, if at all it is to be retained, at least whether its provisions need to be thoroughly reviewed to prevent or minimize the abuses which I have highlighted in this judgment.”

Even the previous Malaysian Prime Minister in 1989 had refused to acknowledge the sole purpose of the *ISA* regarding the communist insurgents and this was even addressed as a reply to a question in Parliament on 7th March 1990 regarding the possibility of repealing the *ISA* after the signing of the peace treaty with the Communist Party of Malaya in Hadyai on 2nd December 1989. (Hansard, 1990) In September 2011, the Prime Minister (Najib Razak) announced the government's intention to repeal the *ISA*. (Luke Hunt, 2011). Instead of abolishing it altogether, the government replaced it with *Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012* (Act 747) which also allows preventive detention. When the *Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill* was tabled in Parliament on 16th April 2012 by the Prime Minister to replace the *ISA*, there was no acknowledgment by the government on the use of *ISA* on communist insurgents and also as to how *ISA* had been used on politicians. There was no attempt to address the issue as to whether the *ISA* was a legitimate and proportionate response to the communist insurgents.

Postcolonialism

While there are arguably valid reasons to distrust the Communists on one hand, they are also frequently used as a tool to further the political interests of others. In the USA, the witch hunt against communists and communist sympathizers by Senator McCarthy was finally condemned as a self-serving act that had nothing to do with national security but instead was only for the political interest of Senator McCarthy himself. (Ellen Shrecker, 2004) Similarly in Malaysia, communism had been used as a political weapon. A lecturer from University of Malaya, Dr Syed Husin Ali, was detained under *ISA* in the 1970s allegedly for connections to the CPM and for spreading subversive ideas to university students. He wrote that during one of his interrogation sessions, he was pressured to confess that he was the go-between link between the CPM and Dr Mahathir Muhammad, who was the Deputy Prime Minister during such time:

“I was surprised when he said, "Syed. We know that you have connections with the underground. We know you were the intermediary between underground elements and [current Prime Minister] Dr. Mahathir [Mohamad] and [former deputy prime minister] Musa Hitam. You must tell us about this.”” (Syed Hussin Ali, 1996)

Further, when Dr Mahathir's own political secretary, Siddiq Ghouse, was detained by the Special Branch under the *ISA* as a communist suspect, that was nothing more than just an attempt to politically discredit Dr Mahathir in a political rivalry. (Mahathir Mohamad, 2011)

Understandably due to the nature and magnitude of national security issues posed by the CPM in the 1970s, there seemed to be a reluctance in dealing with such allegations of political opportunism. But since 1989 after the signing of the peace treaty in Hadyai, there has yet to be any constructive engagement with this issue, even after Dr Syed Husin Ali had passed away in June 2024. (Teh Athira Yusuf, 2024)

In *Public Prosecutor v Mohammad Bin Sabu* [2017] 10 MLJ 273, Malaysia was presented with an opportunity to address the different historical perspectives concerning the CPM. In this case, Mohammad Bin Sabu, a politician from the opposition party of PAS (he left PAS later and established AMANAH), was charged for criminal defamation after he gave a speech in a political rally. He complained that the Malaysian government was unfair in giving coverage to the local freedom fighters and patriots and that only the ones affiliated to UMNO were publicly lauded. He referred to Mat Indera, as part of the Communists who attacked the police station in Bukit Kepong before the independence and he said that those who attacked the British should also be acknowledged as “heroes” instead of being labeled as “terrorists”. In this case the High Court approved the Session Court’s judge’s acquittal of Mohammad Bin Sabu. Even this case had its share of controversies. In the midst of this case, some academics proposed the idea that Malaya was not a British colony during the time when Mat Indera and the communists attacked the Balai Kepong Police Station and that Malaya was just a British Protectorate in which real power and authority was with the Malay Rulers. (Abdul Rahim Sabri, 2011). It was clear that the point of this idea was to taint the communists with the “*derhaka*” (treason) brush. However the opinion from Malaysia’s *National Professors’ Council* drew several criticisms from the academic community who pointed out that the notion of British indirect rule in the form of “Protectorate” in Malaya was just a fiction. (Rachel Leow, 2015)

Chin Peng

In *Ong Boon Hua @ Chin Peng (suing in his own capacity as a representative of all members of Parti Komunis Malaya and other related parties) & Anor v Kerajaan Malaysia* [2010] 2 MLJ 794, Chin Peng filed a legal action representing himself and the CPM against the Malaysian government regarding some allegedly defamatory statements by the Deputy Information Minister which were published in the mass media that gave rise to the communists as terrorists. The learned judge agreed with the submission of the senior federal counsel that allegation against the Plaintiffs were not defamatory and that it was a historical fact. The judge also remarked that every Malaysian citizen would be aware of the atrocities committed by the CPM and what CPM had done to Malaysia.

The judge did not offer any explanations regarding the *Hadyaai Peace Accords of 1989* that was signed by the CPM and the Malaysian government in which reconciliation was the spirit of the treaty instead of “surrender”. (Chin Peng, 2003) The learned judge chose to settle the dispute strictly under the four corners of the law of defamation, preferring to treat the words complained of as “the truth” in which conventional wisdom has it that the CPM was an organization of terrorists and that as terrorists, the communists had perpetrated many acts of cruelty. While truth is indeed a powerful defence in libel actions, “truth” regarding the CPM has always been coloured by “official” and “colonial” versions in which the CPM had been bandits and terrorists. Of course one cannot deny the violent acts committed by the CPM in the past and that the CPM could not deny that they did attack innocent civilians in the past. (Cheah Boon Kheng, 2012) But what has been missing in this discussion is the overall history of the CPM as a colonial construct. In *Ong Boon Hua @ Chin Peng v Menteri Hal Ehwal Dalam Negeri, Malaysia* [2008] 3 MLJ 625, Chin Peng’s legal action against the Malaysian government was concerning his application to return to Sitiawan, Perak and the Court focused more on the government’s request for his official citizenship documents and absolutely relied on the affidavit of the director of the Registration Department that there was no official record of Chin Peng’s birth in Sitiawan, Perak. It is a bit difficult to reconcile this decision with

the *Haadyai Peace Accords of 1989* which did not require any CPM member's furnishing of official Malaysian registration/citizenship documents to the authorities. The *Haadyai Peace Accords of 1989* do not contain any such requirements. The *Administrative Arrangement Between The Government Of Malaysia And The Communist Party Of Malaya Pursuant To The Agreement To Terminate Hostilities* in fact allows the replacement of any lost or damaged documents and it further allows for any non-Malaysian member of the CPM to apply to settle down in Malaysia by virtue of paragraph 6.3.3. (Kitti Rattanachaya, 1996)

In the above cases, there seems to be an unwillingness on the part of the Malaysian government to consider whether the colonial propaganda regarding the communists as terrorists was justified, which is typical in post-colonial societies in which the elites have been trained and conditioned by the system inherited from the colonial power. In the cases concerning the *ISA*, there was no attempt at all to minutely examine the exact speech of the Deputy Prime Minister when he tabled the Bill in Parliament. There was no attempt to address the legal history of such statutory instruments holistically. In *Theresa Lim's* case, the concern was that the Courts might be dictated in statutory interpretation by any content delivered by the Minister in the legislative assemblies. However, taking into account of the *Hansard* and thereafter considering the purpose and the history of such statutory provisions does not necessarily mean that the judges' prerogative in interpreting the law would be heavily circumscribed by the other branches of the government. The notion that law, including statutory provisions, does not exist nor operate on its own had not been fully appreciated in these cases. When its complete legal history is ignored, most of the judges had taken the path of literal interpretation in allowing such detentions under natural security. It is ironic that although the Chief Justice in *Mohamad Ezam's* case found that "there was much force...that the detentions were for the ulterior purpose and unconnected to national security", the Court did not rule that the detention order made by the Minister was void. When this state of affairs is examined in light of the Court's refusal to take cognizance of the legal history of the *ISA*, then the allegation that detainees under the *ISA* were a threat to national security was left unchecked. In the *Chin Peng's* cases, the result of the legal actions had continued the image associated with the CPM as a "non desirable". Instead of looking at the *Haadyai Peace Accords* under the comprehension that it was not an agreement for the surrender of the CPM, the Court had indirectly continued the colonial propaganda of communists being terrorists.

The authorities have consistently refused to acknowledge *Chin Peng* as a freedom fighter by pointing out that the CPM have been responsible in killing many members of the security personnel of Malaysia during their guerilla warfare. (Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, 2013) Ironically, Datuk Abdul Rahim, the Director of the Malaysian Special Branch (who later became the Inspector General of Police) while representing the Malaysian government during the *Haadyai Peace Accords* said that the contribution of the CPM in the struggle towards independence could not be denied nor disputed. (Chin Peng, 2003) This inconsistency and failure to refer to the actual proceedings that took place during the *Haadyai Peace Accords* is certainly perplexing.

Conclusion

While the CPM's purpose was anti-colonialism, one needs to examine it further especially in the context of communism in Asia. Was CPM's anti-colonialism merely an end in itself or a means to an end? There is a dire urgency to answer this question especially when the late Prof Khoo Kay Kim warned that CPM's aim was far from achieving local autonomy. (Azril

Anuar, 2019). There has yet to be a full and frank disclosure regarding the communist insurgency in Malaysia in the scale of the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” in post Apartheid South Africa in the interests of justice and national harmony in Malaysia. While there have been some books and memoirs relating to some CPM personalities published and sold in Malaysia, there have also been cases in which some books relating to this subject that had been banned by the authorities. (Kuan Chee Wah, 2023) While the motivations of the CPM might be questionable particularly in its choice of violence and guerrilla warfare, Malaysians need to see CPM as what it was, full of errors and all, instead of being merely used as a convenient political weapon long after its dissolution.

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