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Race, Space, and the Malayan Emergency: Expelling Malay Muslim Communism and Reconstituting Malaya's Racial State, 1945–1954

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This article analyses the physical and discursive displacement of Malay Muslim advocates of a cosmopolitan and multiracial form of Malayan citizenship from the arena of "legitimate" national politics between the Second World War and the mid-1950s. It discusses the trajectory of the Malayan Left during this period, with a special focus on the work of Abdullah C. D., a Malay Muslim leader of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). Abdullah's work included helping to build the Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya (PKMM) under the MCP's United Front strategy from 1945, creating the MCP's Department of Malay Work in 1946, and establishing the Tenth Regiment of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) in 1949. This work was essential to the MCP's outreach to Malay Muslims after Malaya's failed national revolution, which collapsed into racial conflict without achieving independence for the British colony. The Malayan Emergency was declared in 1948, and its military and social campaigns eliminated or displaced the MCP's leadership and much of the MNLA, including Abdullah and the rest of the Tenth Regiment, to Thailand by 1954. Despite his continued engagement with political movements in Malaya, Abdullah's vision for a new politics for Malay Muslims was effectively displaced into the realm of nostalgia. His ideas, outlined in MNLA pamphlets and periodicals like *Tauladan* (Exemplar), never made significant inroads in Malaya, whose racial state the Emergency re-established, using race to manage the threat to its interests posed by leftist politics.

Keywords: Malaya, Islam, Emergency, Tenth Regiment, Malayan Communist Party

Introduction

The Malayan Emergency (1948–60) has stood out in British Empire historiography as a "successful" counterinsurgency, through which the restored colonial state eliminated the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) before granting Malaya its independence in 1957.

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Essentially a war against the MCP, the Emergency drove a process of reconsolidation for Britain after its displacement from Malaya by Japan during the immense political turbulence of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific (1941–45). This process began with Britain reoccupying Malaya after Japan's own defeat and the collapse of its occupation in 1945. It continued by reconciling the tensions of Britain's wartime and brief postwar collaboration with the MCP, which was marked by rising social, political, and industrial militancy, threatening British and elite Malayan interests.[1] The Emergency's operations were wide-ranging in nature, and included banning the MCP and many other Left organisations, pursuing many of their members through lethal military campaigns, and sweeping the Malayan landscape clean of their supporters. Indeed, the Emergency's effectiveness stemmed from the way it deployed techniques of "enclosure," described by historical geographer Gary Fields as a practice of territorialisation which draws on law, violence, and discourses of improvement. As Fields argues of Palestine, the Emergency established "exclusionary spaces on territorial landscapes," on which enclosure's practitioners "replace[d] the disinherited as sovereigns," including by "redistributing people" to "ever-diminishing territorial spaces."[2] At the same time, it enclosed and bounded the space assigned to national politics to exclude the MCP, operating as a process of intellectual boundary production that characterises some contemporary meanings of enclosure.[3] In this way, the Emergency reorganised relationships between territory and population, and restructured a variety of other parameters of Malayan social and political life.

This article addresses one of these parameters, namely the way the Emergency and its enclosures reinforced the centrality of "race" as the key organising principle of Malayan society, through both the waning trajectory of British rule and into its postcolonial future. It argues that in addition to anything else the Emergency might have represented, it was also a project for engineering a specific transition to independence, and for managing, suppressing, and eliminating alternative models for how this transition might have been conducted. The transition it produced was to a postcolonial racial state, existing and operating through processes of racial definition, as discussed by South African philosopher David Theo Goldberg.[4] As Goldberg writes, states "are intimately involved in the reproduction of national identity [and] the national population . . . in and through the articulation of race, gender, and class." The state is therefore entangled with "identity processes, cultural and commodity flows, and state institutions, apparatuses, and functions." It manages social and economic life to structure "opportunities or possibilities" in line with racial categories, whose experience it routinises in the context of a "complex global arrangement," or a world order also racially structured by the experience of colonial rule.[5] Just as Goldberg argues that the racial state is delivered by colonial conquest, assisted by techniques and technologies of power and subjugation, so postcolonial Malaya was founded on a landscape swept clean of attempts to envision multiracial politics.

The Emergency deployed race to enclose both the territorial and ideological arenas it assigned to "legitimate" national politics, conflating it with the elite politics espoused by UMNO, the United Malays National Organisation, which has dominated Malaya and

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Malaysia since. It also cleared the ground for new forms of elite Chinese and Indian politics, which it brought together with UMNO in the consociational Alliance coalition after displacing the MCP from Malaya by the early 1950s. The result was the creation of a system of government which reinforced the importance of racial categories and divisions, while also purporting to share power across these divisions, which it portrayed as natural and irreconcilable if not for structured elite power-sharing.[6] Indeed, this process of creation established Malaya as an anti-communist Southeast Asian bulwark, nested under a Western security umbrella led by the United States, in the context of the bipolar Cold War international order then under construction.[7] It also suppressed the possibility of constructing a nonelite post-racial citizen equally comfortable with Islamic piety and multiracial cosmopolitanism, and of placing this citizen at the centre of Malaya's national narrative, as the MCP espoused. This act of suppression allowed Malaya's elites to claim consociationalism as the nation's political foundation, while eradicating the threat posed to their interests by its antithesis, the multiracial mass politics of the 1940s. So successful was this act of claiming, performed as it was after eliminating all alternatives, that the practice of governing Malaya, and later Malaysia, through a "grand coalition" of its "races" has remained constant through most of its postcolonial history.[8]

Yet building a grassroots cosmopolitanism and entrenching it as a subaltern quality was a key MCP priority through its post–World War II United Front period (1946–48) and the Emergency, especially in work led by Central Committee member Abdullah C. D. Abdullah led the MCP's efforts to help create and influence the Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya (*Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya*, or PKMM) from 1945. He also established its Department of Malay Work in 1946 and established the Tenth Regiment of the MCP's Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) in 1949.[9] Abdullah's ideas, however, were limited in their impact and unable to transcend the racial politics of the period. Targeted by the Emergency along with his Tenth Regiment comrades, Abdullah was displaced to Thailand by 1954 like many others from the MCP, never to re-enter Malaya. His displacement, however, did not stop him from continuing his work of trying to imagine an alternative way of reconciling Islam with the programme of the nationalist movement. In this way, Abdullah's behaviour paralleled that of S. M. Kartosuwiryo [see Chiara Formichi's article in this special issue]. Although his vision differed from Kartosuwiryo's, like him, Abdullah tried to use his new vantage point, that of an exile in a peripheralised territory outside the central space of the new nation, to make claims that its new leaders were determined to render unacceptable. In Abdullah's case, the symbiosis between his ideas and the MCP's communism, which the Emergency strongly associated with "Chinese-ness," was a toxic connection in the context of Malaya's postwar racial divide, which the Emergency also exacerbated. The Emergency therefore effectively ended the possibility of creating a multiracial independence movement, with the result that the taint of communism continues to bedevil movements aimed at advancing Malaysian multiracialism today.[10] Despite its failure, however, Abdullah's work forms a critical part of the record of attempts by Malayan political actors to displace race as the primary category through which the state has "read" its population.[11] Given today's heightened awareness of the limits of racial and religious

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politics among some Malaysian policymakers and civil society organisations, reconstructing this record is therefore a critical project for Malaysian history and historiography.[12]

This article contributes to this project of reconstruction by analysing the experience of the Malay Muslim Left, particularly the MCP and Abdullah C. D., including through a discussion of its experience through the Second World War and the Emergency. It uses Tenth Regiment sources like pamphlets and periodicals, and Abdullah's relatively unexamined memoirs, to consider the experience of displacement in the way Abdullah envisioned a new Malay Muslim political subject for the national movement that he was cut off from.[13] Drawing on this experience, the article argues that the Emergency was a state-making operation for a postcolonial racial state, working through processes of enclosure. Experiencing these processes conditioned Abdullah's work so that it reflected his isolation from mainstream, Malayan political life. As Tenth Regiment sources reveal, Abdullah's politics stood in stark contrast with the Cold War zeitgeist, in which organisations like UMNO presented Islam and communism as antithetical. In the face of such claims, Abdullah drew on circulating Maoist discourses and a vernacular Malay idiom to reveal his persistent identification as a Muslim and a communist, and to present Islam and communism as fundamentally compatible. Ultimately, the Emergency reinscribed race as Malaya's organising principle, forcing Abdullah to imagine alternatives from an external refuge, not to mention from outside the bounds of political acceptability.

War, Occupation and Failed Revolution

Abdullah first began to develop his politics during a period of extraordinary political turbulence in which rapid social transformations were repeatedly imposed on Malaya's racially divided society, only to confirm and deepen its divisions at every step. Complex and racialised (re-)constructions of Malayan society were unleashed during the Japanese occupation from 1941, followed by Britain's return to colonial power from 1945 and the resulting contest between nationalists for control over Malaya's direction. In the context of regional decolonisation, each new phase reflected interacting Malayan, Southeast Asian, and global developments, each with its own history and dynamics, and all intertwined in the politics of the Peninsula.[14] As a result, the period between the War and the colonial state's military defeat of the MCP in the 1950s was marked by worsening communal relations between Malay Muslims and Malayan Chinese, the experience of which shaped Abdullah's politics for the long term.

To begin with, the Japanese occupation, achieved after a three-month campaign that removed the British from Singapore in February 1942, upset the structures of Malayan social life and their embedded race relations.[15] In a society that was already formally organised in racial terms, despite the everyday solidarity exhibited by many Malayans, the various impacts of the Japanese occupation were also racially differentiated. Most importantly for the MCP's political trajectory, Japanese authorities targeted ethnic

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Chinese Malayans in a campaign of "naked repression" known as the *sook ching,* or the "vetting and summary execution of perhaps 40,000 [people]." In effect, Malayan Chinese were subjected to collective punishment for the prominent role played by ethnic Chinese activists around Asia in opposing Japan's occupation of China during the Second Sino-Japanese war.[16] The anti-Japanese activity of the 1930s had boosted the MCP's cause. Although it was ostensibly a multiracial party, with links to Malay Muslim nationalists and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) through the 1920s and '30s, the anti-Japanese activity of the 1930s and '40s especially boosted the MCP's cause among ethnic Chinese.[17] Its membership became predominantly ethnic Chinese, and it became tightly embedded in Chinese networks sponsored by the Comintern (Communist International), which "became launching pads" for its anti-Japanese activities.[18] By 1939, it had brought together "perhaps as many as 700 associations, with over 40,000 members and ten times as many sympathisers," under the banner of the anti-Japanese struggle.[19] Facing Japanese persecution from 1941, this constituency created the infrastructure—including camps, materials, and supply networks—to support a clandestine army.[20] By 1942, this army, the MPAJA (Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army), had formed relationships with British agents who remained in Malaya throughout the Japanese occupation (known as Force 136), and started leading hit-and-run attacks on administrative targets such as police stations.[21]

Meanwhile, in addition to their political persecution, the deprivations of wartime took their toll on ethnic Chinese Malayans. Large numbers began leaving the cities and towns to form informal settlements on Malaya's forest fringes, supported by new economies of small-scale cultivation, smuggling, and guerrilla fighting.[22] The MPAJA camps existed in symbiotic relationships with these new squatter settlements and their interactions with each other and nearby rubber estates, along with forests and forest-dwelling Orang Asli communities deeper in the interior.[23] These settlements formed semi-autonomous "little republics" that between them potentially occupied 70,000 acres of plantation and 150,000 acres of forest reserve. The number of ethnic Chinese Malayans involved reached "as many as 4–500,000," embedded in supply and protection relationships with the MCP and its MPAJA.[24] Despite this strength, however, the MCP and MPAJA were compromised by the multiple deceptions of one of their key leaders, Lai Teck, who assisted the Japanese to find and kill most of the MCP and MPAJA senior leadership at a meeting in 1942.[25] A new leadership emerged, however, and British secret forces were "entirely dependent" on the MCP by 1944, by which time both the MCP and the British were beginning to make their plans for Malaya's post-Japanese future. Again, in great part due to Lai Teck and despite its position of strength, the MCP and Britain came to an agreement during this period in which Britain would return to Malaya after the war. The Party later held that it had received a guarantee that it would not have to submit to registration as a political party under the British when they returned, nor would it be disarmed. Either way, with the terms of the agreement still unclear, Britain returned to Malaya and began its postwar encounter with its new partner, the MCP, whose MPAJA was now an army of five thousand people, most, but not all of whom, were ethnic Chinese.[26]

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This sequence of developments reflected the broader Southeast Asian pattern where processes of decolonisation underlay complicated relationships between colonial regimes and nationalist forces.[27] It also reflected a Malayan pattern in which forms of political expression were organised by race, with the communist movement apparently developing as an expression of ethnic Chinese politics, while Malay Muslims organised in separate political channels. Demonstrating this dynamic, while the MCP collaborated with the British against Japan, Malay Muslim nationalists began to collaborate with the Japanese Malay Military Administration (MMA), with varying degrees of comfort and success. For its part, in contrast with its treatment of Malayan Chinese, Japan extended important, if inconsistent, forms of sponsorship towards Malay nationalists, reflecting its policy of co-opting the anti-colonial, pan-Asian politics then growing in influence across colonised Asia.[28] Not all Malay Muslims comfortably assimilated the experience of Japanese occupation and melded it to their political aims, and some joined MPAJA or other resistance organisations, like *Wataniah* (Homeland) and the *Askar Melayu Setia* (Army of Loyal Malays).[29] In fact, as Kenneison and Abdullah have both argued, the true extent of Malay Muslim anti-Japanese activity is not widely understood.[30] For some Malay Muslims, however, the Japanese occupation seemed to deliver better access to good jobs and upward social mobility than the previous British colonial status quo. For example, the Japanese authorities recruited Malay Muslims into the police force in large numbers, often with the responsibility of suppressing anti-Japanese activity, especially by the MCP and the MPAJA.[31] Malay Muslims were also recruited and promoted in growing numbers in the civil service, as well as trained in specialist training schools.[32] Likewise, groups of nationalists agitating against British rule, like the KMM (*Kesatuan Melayu Muda,* or Young Malays' Union), formed in 1938, also adjusted to life under the Japanese. Led by two radical nationalists, teacher Ibrahim Yaacob and civil servant Ishak Haji Mohamed, the KMM initially enjoyed only weak influence, with "neither a mass following nor a grass roots organisation, nor did it have the support of the established traditional ruling class."[33] It was not surprising, therefore, that it saw the Japanese occupation as its opportunity for transforming itself and Malaya's direction along with it. In return for their support, these KMM leaders hoped that Japan would help them achieve their political aims, namely Malayan independence within a political union with the Dutch archipelagic territories in a state called "Indonesia Raya" (Greater Indonesia).[34]

As with so many of the complicated relationships between nationalists and imperialist powers during this period, however, the two groups' divergent aims meant that Japan could not support all the aspirations harboured by the KMM. In 1942, the KMM, then claiming ten thousand members, pressed Japan for independence, only to find that its support for Malay nationalist politics did not extend as far as granting independence, and the Japanese administration responded by banning the organisation.[35] KMM leaders were not arrested, and several of them joined Japanese militias like the *Giyutai* and the *Giyugun,* also known as PETA (*Pembela Tanah Air* or Defenders of the Homeland), an organisation that played a central role in the Indonesian revolution. Yet their very mobility between Malaya and Sumatra reflected another way in which Japan's aims did not match those harboured by the KMM, because they were enabled by the MMA's move

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in 1943 to consolidate the two territories into a single administrative unit.[36] While this consolidation might have assisted Malaya to join the Indonesian revolution, as leaders like Ibrahim had hoped, only half of the formerly British Malay States were included. Japan had used Thai territory as a launching pad for its Malayan occupation and in return, it had split Malaya nearly in half by "returning" Siam's former tributaries—Perlis, Kedah, Terengganu, and Kelantan—to Thailand. With this territorial carve-up resulting not in an Indonesia Raya but a truncated Malaya, it was clear that the hopes and possibilities KMM activists saw in the Japanese occupation had expired.

Despite its extraordinary impact, the Japanese occupation lasted only four years, and in 1945, Japan's World War II defeat caused its forces to withdraw to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, leaving Malaya's smaller towns and hinterlands available for the MPAJA to take over. Japan's defeat came two days before KMM leaders aimed to claim independence for Malaya in connection with the fast-moving Indonesian revolution, whose leaders acted immediately to anticipate the developing power vacuum. Malaya was not included. Yet the MPAJA, and by extension, the MCP, had probably achieved enough military and political strength by this stage to take power and declare independence for Malaya, and indeed it possibly could have. Its cause and leadership, however, were compromised by the party's infiltration by intelligence agents and low funds, not to mention its ethnic Chinese profile, its identification with Chinese nationalism, and its collaboration with the British. In addition, due to the largely Malay Muslim profile of Malayans working with the Japanese MMA, the MCP was also infected by a virulent strain of chauvinism against Malay Muslims, who it collectively held responsible for collaboration with the Japanese administration. As the MMA collapsed, and failed KMM leaders fled for Indonesia, the MPAJA emerged from the forests and began to take over the towns.[37] They quickly demonstrated that they had failed to consider the racial stakes being weighed by its traumatised and deeply divided domestic audience. The MPAJA's actions played directly into these divisions, as they waged a campaign of retribution against Malay Muslim collaborators, especially police and district officers, and members of Japan's volunteer army. As Harper outlines, "goods were seized, houses burned, and in the general mood of denunciation and reprisal, there were wholesale killings."[38] Sometimes these killings were authorised by "People's Courts" which the MPAJA established directly, turning Malay Muslim sentiment against the MPAJA.[39] The Malayan revolution was, by now, a nonstarter and Malaya descended into racial conflict, triggered by the MCP's "large scale" killings and abductions.[40] Some Malay Muslims began to form self-defence groups, including those that articulated their resistance to the MCP as a *perang sabil* (holy war), which began to inflict collective punishment against ethnic Chinese for the crimes of the MPAJA.[41] Formal systems for maintaining social cohesion broke down.

Malayan Union and Political Polarisation

The returning British walked straight into this deeply traumatised political environment and introduced a sequence of yet more rapid changes. None of these changes escaped

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Malaya's established cycle of racialised reaction and counterreaction, in fact, they exacerbated them. Through this period, Abdullah witnessed a rapid turnaround in the MCP's fortunes as a result, eventually forcing him to adapt from open organising to life as an underground insurgent. Although their actions were premised on collaboration with the MCP, an organisation committed to both communism and decolonisation, the British authorities were determined to retake and not relinquish Malaya, their most profitable Southeast Asian colony. Malaya was also a strategic asset in Britain's campaign to assist the United States, then emerging from the war as the world's global hegemon, to contain the rise of regional communism as revolutionary movements declared independence elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Within about three weeks of Japan's collapse, British forces led by Lord Mountbatten arrived to reoccupy Malaya, supported by the MCP, which by this point no longer had a revolution to lead. The collaboration agreement struck between the MCP and Mountbatten's Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) was that the party would comply with its orders. "Beyond that," as Harper and Bayly point out, "political issues regarding the future status of Malaya and the MCP were scrupulously avoided."[42] This avoidance was understandable—there was no way of reconciling Britain's interests with those of the MCP. Further, Britain's decisions were not guided by the changing politics in Malaya. Rather, British authorities worked to plans drawn up in London in 1943 to "refashion" colonial government according to the Labour government's Fabian principles. Under these principles, empire would be a "partnership" with colonised peoples—a way of framing empire which also worked in line with Britain's need to demonstrate to the United States, which did not favour direct colonial rule, that it was releasing its grip on its colonies.[43] Working within this new framing, the British Military Administration (BMA), created to reestablish British rule in Malaya, worked quickly to stop the racial clashes, which continued until late in 1945. By November, they had resulted in four hundred deaths and fourteen thousand internal refugees in Malaya's southern states.[44]

To address the collapse in social trust, along with the broader economic and political problems causing immense hardship to Malayans in the immediate postwar period, the BMA implemented a set of sweeping reforms.[45] These reforms included lifting restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, and the registration of societies and publications, effectively legitimising the MCP's entry into mainstream public life as the dominant political force in 1945 Malaya.[46] The party used this open political climate to rebuild its forces and to begin working to transcend Malaya's bitter racial divide, adopting a "constitutional" approach to activism and launching a series of "open and legal" front and umbrella organisations.[47] This process reflected its new United Front strategy, which prioritised collaboration with other, non-communist, "patriotic democratic" forces, in line with the latest policy advocated by the Comintern. As part of this strategy, the MCP involved itself in campaigns for social and political rights under British rule, working through trade unions and other parties and associations.[48] One such party, led by former members of the KMM, was the Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya (*Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Muda,* PKMM). The PKMM was formed in October 1945 with the collaboration, networks, and financial support of the MCP, and included several communists and KMM activists who had joined the MPAJA, including

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Abdullah C. D.[49] The party was, from its inception, an accommodation between Malay Muslim nationalism and communism. Accordingly, it also drew in former KMM member and Japanese propagandist Ahmad Boestamam and the homeopathic physician Burhanuddin al-Helmy, who became its president in 1946. Fashioned as a mass organisation, the PKMM worked together with its militant women's and youth organisations, known as AWAS (*Angkatan Wanita Sedar* or Aware Women's Contingent) and API (*Angkatan Pemuda Insaf* or Conscious Youth Corps). Yet even while the United Front organisations grew from strength to strength, the MCP's internal politics were growing increasingly tense as the party disbanded the MPAJA in 1945 in return for a "small payment" of compensation by the British, angering many of its militant rank and file members.[50] By this stage, these members had experienced not only a severe Malay Muslim backlash, but repeated betrayals by Lai Teck and other informers and the experience of collaborating with their former and present colonisers—in short, the failure and betrayal of their revolution.

The political limits of this situation were demonstrated over the next two years, 1946–48, when the BMA launched Britain's greatest experiment with restructuring British colonialism in Malaya by establishing the Malayan Union, a unitary Malayan state. This structure was Britain's response to Malaya's new domestic and geopolitical situation and was intended to replace the federal structure that Britain had administered before the war began. It aimed to radically transform Malayan citizenship to resolve the racially striated experience of war and move past previous colonial practices of managing Malaya's ethnic and cultural diversity by applying racial categories to order and control it. Further, with the population disconnected from the state after years of informal self-government during the war, the British authorities felt a new, "multiracial" civic nationalism would help create a more inclusive society capable of achieving self-government.[51] The Malayan Union, therefore, would collapse the "special" rights of Malay Muslims into a common citizenship for all Malayans who qualified, including minorities such as ethnic Chinese. It would do so by means of treaties with Malaya's Sultans, folding their respective Malay States into the unitary state and collapsing their jurisdictions.[52] The PKMM, then the dominant party of Malay nationalism, initially supported the Malayan Union because it downgraded the position of the Malay Sultans, who its leaders saw as feudal relics, and because it established a means to a new common identity for Malayans. It preferred the creation of a "Malay" identity that included Malaya's minorities within the malleable definition of this term, as distinct from categorising them within separate racial categories as the British and Japanese had done.[53] The Malayan Union, however, along with the MCP's move to back its top-down multiracialism by attempting to create a grassroots politics to match it, was ultimately a project in inculcating an elite-driven cosmopolitanism in a population unready to trust it.[54] As a result, it generated a series of escalating reactions and new, racially polarised, contests, including over Malaya's character and direction as an independent nation-state.

One of these forces was the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), founded in May 1946, which rallied quickly to the cause of the Sultans, who concluded that the treaties they had signed to enable the Malayan Union were coercive and contrary to their

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interests.[55] UMNO's founder, aristocrat Onn bin Jaafar, also argued that Malay Muslims' special position would be diluted or dissolved by having to share the rights of citizenship with Malaya's minorities, and Malaya should not be set on a path to independence on these terms. Further, according to UMNO, the multiracial and anti-aristocratic civic nationalism the Malayan Union fomented would lead to another Indonesian revolution in Malaya. In the background, the recent massacre of royal elites in Sumatra by Indonesian revolutionaries in March reinforced this message. The group blamed for the massacre was led by Indonesian communist leader Tan Malaka, whose association with the PKMM had been promoted at the party's first congress.[56] In contrast, UMNO's leaders mobilised the "traditionalist" Sultans in their own defence, linking their interests with the identity and welfare of all Malay Muslims and discrediting the PKMM's anti-aristocratic republicanism.[57] They also intersected with the British administration's declining tolerance for MCP-led economic and political militancy. For its part, the PKMM withdrew its support for the Malayan Union, arguing that the proposal was effectively dead, and in any case, nothing but full independence would be acceptable, which UMNO opposed.[58] Malay Muslim royalist elites turned sharply away from the PKMM and capitalised on the momentum of their Malayan Union campaign to mobilise against it and the MCP's United Front organisations. In this climate, the question of how to approach race and citizenship stimulated increasingly active political mobilisations on both sides. UMNO succeeded in forcing the British to abolish the Malayan Union and replace it with a new Federation of Malaya in February 1948, re-empowering the Sultans and delaying independence.

The Malayan Union debate reorganised Malaya's racially polarised politics, just as the war had in the preceding few years. The British authorities conducted their negotiations on the terms of the new Federation with UMNO and the Sultans in secret, effectively authorising this elite group as the official spokespeople for Malay Muslims, and by extension, for Malayans in general. This development marked a significant change of approach on the part of the British authorities, who had, until very recently, recognised the MCP and the United Front organisations as their primary Malayan partners. Stemming from this recognition, communists served on many advisory councils and even represented Malaya at important international events like the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, organised by Indian leader (and later, prime minister) Jawaharlal Nehru.[59] Malaya's delegation consisted of a group of activists, trade unionists, and nationalists, including Abdullah, and the PKMM's Burhanuddin al-Helmy, who led the delegation; and it participated in discussions on citizenship and majority-minority relations, among others.[60] Yet by transferring the colonial state's recognition of the MCP to UMNO and the Sultans, the British were effectively delegitimising their former partner. This transfer was met with a strong counterreaction by the MCP, and as Stenson has pointed out, the "inevitable consequence of these secret negotiations . . . was to array radical forces in opposition."[61] The MCP redoubled its investment in United Front initiatives, an investment that should be understood as an attempt to renew its multiracial mandate to speak for Malayans. The campaigns the MCP involved itself in from 1946 were based on calls for reforms that Malayans could mobilise around on a

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multiracial basis, including: self-rule, a constitution, the right to vote and an elected National Assembly, democratic government, and improved civil rights.[62] By 1947, the United Front's reach extended to national conferences of Islamic scholars, when the PKMM sponsored the first pan-Malayan Islamic conference at the Ma'ahad al-Ehya *madrassah* (Islamic school) at Gunung Semanggul in Kedah. One of the PKMM's founders, Islamic scholar Ustaz Sheikh Abu Bakar al-Bakir, ran the *madrassah,* and the conference created a Supreme Religious Council (*Majlis Agama Tertinggi,* or MATA) for Malaya. MATA's conference the following year "reflected the internationalism and cosmopolitan outlook of some of its leaders," discussing anti-colonial movements worldwide. Its second conference featured invited guests from Indonesia's Masyumi, and resulted in the founding of an Islamist political party called Hizbul Muslimin. Its aim was to push for Malayan independence, while working to influence the nation's direction so it would be founded on Islamic principles. Both UMNO and the British authorities immediately registered MATA and the Hizbul Muslimin as threats, understanding that they offered the opportunity for the MCP and the PKMM to develop a Malayan nationalism that saw Islamists and communists come together in a joint push for independence.[63] By working to reach across the divide between Malay Muslims and Malaya's minority communities, especially ethnic Chinese, the MCP's aim was for the United Front to reclaim the authority that Britain had assigned to UMNO and the Sultans. It also aimed to recreate a racial unity lost during the various ethnic reprisals during the Japanese occupation. Its multiracial strategy was explicitly announced in publications outlining the need for "racial cooperation in Malaya and between Malayans and the British working class."[64] Indeed, this strategy marked a return to the MCP's pre-1937 efforts to bring all of Malaya's "races" to a common struggle, before its name became synonymous with anti-Japanese Chinese nationalism. The MCP also ramped up its industrial and political militancy during this period, due to "increasing clamour from [its] restless cadres for revolutionary action" after being forced to accept British recolonisation. In 1946, one MCP-led general strike involved 170,000 workers in Singapore alone, coinciding with the Party Central Committee's Eighth Enlarged Plenum from 21 January to 4 February.[65]

The MCP had also established a Department of Malay Work in 1946 to coordinate its outreach to Malay Muslims, led by now Central Committee member Abdullah C. D. Its Malay Muslim membership began to climb again, further enabling and reinforcing the rationale for its sponsorship of the PKMM.[66] The British began to reconsider their open policy towards the MCP as its organisations increased their levels of militancy from 1946, prompting the party proper to reduce its public profile, allowing the United Front organisations to carry on their public work.[67] As the British authorities and UMNO began negotiating a constitution for a future independent Malaya in December 1946, a group of other organisations formed the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA). This organisation was initiated by the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU), a United Front party established in Singapore in 1945, bringing together English-educated intellectuals.[68] The AMCJA also included the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions (PMFTU) and the MPAJA ex-Comrades Association, among others. The PKMM joined but under pressure from UMNO, it later pulled out to create the

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Malay Muslim-oriented PUTERA, which worked with AMCJA to develop a People's Constitution as an alternative to the elite-driven Federation.[69] In a significant multiracial initiative, PUTERA-AMCJA organised a national "*hartal,*" or a strike combined with a business shutdown, in October 1947, winning no concessions from the authorities on the constitution it proposed. Its campaign gave way to a wave of communist-led industrial and political agitation in which union and MCP militancy became increasingly violent.[70] As levels of militancy increased and British counterreactions grew more ferocious, in 1948, the MCP dropped its United Front strategy and turned to revolutionary vanguardism instead—a decision that was also fuelled by MCP leader Lai Teck absconding in 1947.[71] Yet during its period of United Front activity it had come close to moving Malayan politics beyond racial polarisation to "draw out a road map whereby racial distinction could be minimised in the long run."[72] Nevertheless, it did not succeed and in June 1948, the colonial state declared the Malayan Emergency, banning the MCP, the PKMM, the PUTERA-AMCJA formation, PETA, AWAS, and the Hizbul Muslimin, along with other United Front organisations.[73]

Emergency, Cosmopolitan Armed Struggle, and Retreat to a Racial State

This series of proscriptions, so fundamental to the Emergency's denial of legitimacy to these United Front organisations, became part of a colonial campaign to drive a racial wedge into the Malayan nationalist movement, a critical part of the Emergency's character and purpose. The Emergency declaration appears to have caught the MCP by surprise—raids and arrests "smashed" the party along with its capacity for urban organising, including in workplaces and university campuses. The party went underground, with many of its activists fleeing into the forests, where they began an armed insurrection for which they were ill-prepared after demobilising the MPAJA. The party did not have enough money to feed its underground cadres, and many devised ways to tap the goodwill of the informal settlements that housed the many Malayans who had migrated out of the cities and towns during the war. Owing to the voluntary and involuntary subscriptions they organised, the party was able to create its Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), which spread out across the peninsula to conduct stealthy military operations against the colonial Security Forces (SF). The MNLA was relatively successful until 1951, attacking police stations, killing security personnel, and capturing arms and ammunition, along with rubber estates, tin mines, and transport networks.[74] The SF's response, as Hack has outlined, consisted of "counterterror" operations, "population control" measures under the Briggs Plan drawn up by Lieutenant General Harold Briggs, and a "hearts and minds" campaign. All three elements made ethnic Chinese Malayans, especially those living in the informal settlements, the racialised targets of the SF troops, who swept through the settlements to search for hiding insurgents. The racialised character of these counterterrorism actions was overlaid by the SFs lax attitude to the law and notions of military restraint, resulting in a "climate of permissiveness" towards burning homes and summary shootings of individuals under suspicion. This permissiveness made it possible for the Batang Kali massacre to take place, triggering a series of appeals for a public inquiry by the victims' relatives,

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including one as recently as 2015. Such forms of violence prevented the MCP from establishing liberated areas that communist fighters could have held against the SF and earned the SF a poor reputation among rural Chinese.[75]

The MCP responded with a campaign of widespread sabotage against British interests. Having failed to reduce the number of communist attacks, the SF implemented population control, resulting in a social and spatial restructure of the peninsular interior, effectively clearing its informal settlements. Under the Briggs Plan, effectively a blueprint for the enclosure of Malaya's hinterland, half a million rural Chinese were moved to New Villages created by the SF to draw communist insurgents out of their forest positions by moving their supporters and supplies. Executive Committees were created at every level of administration from the district upwards, combining civil, military, and police representatives to patrol the villages and authorise immediate action, thereby involving the civilian population in surveillance measures.[76] In many cases, New Villagers were offered land tenure, a security they had not enjoyed in the settlements, thereby recruiting them in a state-led project to "improve" and "modernise" the state-led management of Malayan land, forest, and agricultural resources.[77] In contrast with the fates of the New Villagers, however, more than 20,000 ethnic Chinese—most of whom lacked Malayan citizenship under the terms of the new Federation of Malaya—were deported to China, while 11,000 Chinese languished in detention centres at any one time. A system of identity cards, which continues to operate in contemporary Malaysia—was created to help the authorities monitor race, citizenship, and spatial mobility among Malaya's population, which totalled fewer than five million in 1947. Malaya's forests, which covered four-fifths of the peninsula, came to be described as "jungles," their dense foliage increasingly framed as an obstacle to the authorities who sought to "see" the insurgents they were hunting. Yet even these measures failed to stop the insurgents, whose total numbers peaked in 1951 at an annual average of 7,292, even without counting up to a million additional sympathisers. In 1951, communists ambushed and killed High Commissioner Henry Gurney, who was replaced by Gerald Templer and his purportedly softer, more sophisticated, and ultimately successful, "hearts and minds" campaign.[78]

The Security Forces' tactics in the Emergency strongly emphasised the purported "Chinese" character of the communist threat to the state in the interest of tighter British control over Malaya's transition to independence. They also cleared the nationalist political field to enable a clear line of succession for UMNO to ascend to power over any future Malayan nation-state. The Emergency thereby made Malaya one of the many theatres around the world in which Islam and communism became juxtaposed against each other in the context of the Cold War.[79] In Malaya, as in many other parts of the world, this juxtaposition was imposed by violence and displacement of Muslim communists, whose existence became an aberration. Indeed, due to the Emergency, Malaya's path to independence diverged significantly from that of Indonesia, whose revolutionary discourse of national liberation accommodated both Islam and communism until the mid-1960s, as Fogg has most recently shown.[80] Yet throughout these years, a small proportion of Malay Muslims was present in both the MCP and the United Front, working through the Department of Malay Work to coordinate with the PKMM and the Hizbul

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Muslimin, then founding the Tenth Regiment of the MNLA in 1949. Indeed, writing in 1998, Abdullah C. D. pointed out that through the 1940s, Malay Muslim nationalist politics had consisted of a range of responses to the racialised experience of the war, reoccupation, the Malayan Union period, and the Emergency. In his memoirs, Abdullah writes that he, Burhanuddin, and Ahmad Boestamam became aware that the relationship between the British and the MCP was breaking down. According to Abdullah, the three met and concluded that Abdullah and Ahmad would commence an armed struggle through membership in the Tenth Regiment while Burhanuddin would continue to work openly, albeit in a manner that reinforced the others' aims. At the end of May, the MCP, through its Malay Work Department, held a gathering in the forest at Lubuk Kawah, in Pahang, attended by thirty-six people. This was the *Kem Se-Malaya* (Camp Pan-Malaya) party school, aimed at "ideological and organisational preparation" for the armed struggle that they felt would certainly follow.[81] The arrests of activists began two days after the Emergency declaration, and many of Abdullah's Malay Muslim comrades were taken in, along with many of the MCP's ethnic Chinese cadres.[82] Many of those left behind formed guerrilla militias that in 1949 were formalised as the MNLA. At the same time, as Abdullah outlines, even non-MCP members active in the United Front organisations took cover in the interior, joining and forming militias, especially in Pahang and Perak. One of these militias, based in Temerloh, Pahang, was the forerunner of the MNLA's Tenth Regiment, one of its special and little-known Malay Muslim regiments.[83]

In September, Britain appointed Henry L. G. Gurney to head the SF and troops from around the Empire who arrived in Malaya to assist the British. According to Abdullah, the SF's military approach consisted of a series of *kepung basmi* (encircle and eradicate) campaigns, and as Arditti elaborates, the troops' preference was to drive guerrillas towards prearranged ambushes.[84] These tactics, combined with the Briggs Plan, rendered the Regiment's Pahang bases unviable. They pushed the Regiment into Kelantan, then towards and across the Thai border by 1954, in a forced migration that a Regiment leader, following Mao Tse-tung, would later describe as their very own "long march."[85] The Regiment had grown from seventeen to more than four hundred people between 1948 and '49, but its only military successes were a few hit-and-run attacks on SF positions.[86] In the border area, the Regiment worked to build relationships with local people, who offered them important forms of support, such as sending them new recruits and replenishing their supplies. By the time of the failed Baling peace talks between the CPM and UMNO for the emerging postcolonial nation in 1955, the Tenth Regiment had been exiled across the border into southern Thailand, from which Abdullah C. D. has never returned to Malaya or Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Burhanuddin had been conducting his open struggle from Singapore, where he spent some time in prison and then joined forces with Ahmad Boestamam and others to form the People's Party (*Parti Rakyat*) in 1955. Soon afterwards, in 1956, Burhanuddin joined and emerged as a leader in PAS, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (*Parti Islam Se-Malaya*), from which vantage point he witnessed Malaya's independence in 1957. Later, in 1966, Abdullah began an attempt to influence PAS, then an organisation of the broadly nationalist Malayan Left, by founding the Muslim

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Brotherhood Party (*Parti Persaudaraan Islam,* PAPERI), an important "Malay work" initiative in the MCP's second attempted United Front phase.[87] This later phase marked a second high point for Abdullah's brand of cosmopolitan Muslim socialism, which managed to influence the rural agitation of the 1960s. For all intents and purposes, however, the MCP's postwar attempt to build a broad, multiracial nationalist movement that could steer Malaya to independence had already failed by the 1950s. Since this failure, including in contemporary Malaysia, the history and reputation of the MCP has been, as Cheah puts it, "appropriated (or captured) by the proponents of the race paradigm . . . [so that] it profiles the inter-race dimension."[88] The negative reputational impact of the association between ethnic Chinese Malaysians' political participation on the one hand, and "communism" and the MCP on the other, continues to bedevil attempts to develop a multiracial national politics. This impact is a legacy of the Emergency as the founding moment of the Malayan and Malaysian racial state, and accusations that minority political agendas are inherently "communist."

Opportunity Lost, Exile, and Multiracial Nostalgia

During and after its displacement to Southern Thailand, Abdullah and the Tenth Regiment began to move away from active armed insurgency towards a campaign of suasion and publication in Malay. It embarked upon a propaganda campaign that could promote a vision of cosmopolitan solidarities across racial and religious boundaries. As Harper has pointed out, such MCP publications began to emerge "as counter-insurgency slowly began to detach the guerrillas from their main sources of intelligence, recruitment, and food," making the continuation of armed struggle a challenge. Moreover, the publications emerged as part of a new recognition that both the SF and the MCP's own tactics during the Emergency were wearing down their supporters. Where the MCP's Emergency strategy had emphasised building bases and supply lines, in December 1949 the new plan called for deep jungle bases. These bases were established in an area spanning Perak, Kelantan, and southern Thailand; as well as in remaining pockets of safety farther south, including Pahang around Kuala Lipis and Raub; and the forests connecting the Bera Lake with Endau and Segamat in Johor. Maoist pamphlets sent from China reached the MCP from Hong Kong, where they appear to have been translated from the safety of the northernmost cluster of bases described above.[89] Some of these pamphlets appear to have been aimed at resolving debates internal to the MCP, including by shifting its militants away from the "substitutionism" of armed struggle, where a vanguard of activists conducted the struggle on the people's behalf. As other pamphlets show, their other aim was to reorient this vanguard towards building wider solidarities with activists who were not communists but were broadly sympathetic to many of the MCP's reform aims. Analysed together with the MCP's own publications of this period, the translated pamphlets signal a recognition on the Tenth Regiment's behalf that new forms of outreach were now necessary.

One such pamphlet was Chinese communist leader Mao Tse-tung's "Reform Our Study" (1941), based on a report Mao gave to Chinese Communist Party cadres in

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Yunnan after the Long March, which the MCP translated into Malay. As the introductory preface outlines, Mao's aim in the pamphlet was to discourage petty bourgeois ideology, especially the tendencies of subjectivism and dogmatism.[90] Its translation reads as a signal to MCP members to accept their displacement and turn towards new study projects while tending to wounds sustained to their egos. Another pamphlet, "Rectify the Style of the Party" (1942), strongly critiqued many of the "empty" revolutionary slogans of the communist movement, another signal to dispense with the methods of the past.[91] The MCP also translated "Oppose Party Formalism" (1942) into Malay, along with one of Mao's most important works, "On Contradiction" (1937).[92] Some of these translations were published by the *Jawatankuasa Penerbit Kutipan Kerja-Kerja Mao Tse Tung,* or the Committee for Publishing Extracts from the Work of Mao Tse-tung—likely a small group of people producing cyclostyled pamphlets for internal and external use.[93]

Of special interest in some of these translations—which might have come from English translations rather than directly from Chinese originals—are the translators' notes, which sometimes reframe obscure Chinese historical references into terms that would have been intelligible for Malayan, and specifically Malay Muslim audiences. One explanation of the story of "Shan Hai Chung," for example, tells how he was a "*sakti*" or a holy man possessed of extraordinary powers, who chased and entered the sun, then, thirsty after this achievement, drank from a river. Thus, the alloy of Marxism and Taoist mysticism, with its imagery of flying into the sun, was rendered legible for a Muslim audience more familiar with the Sufi saints of the Indian Ocean world.[94] It remains unclear how such pamphlets might have been received by Malay Muslims, but the influence of an inventive mystical tradition upon religious nationalist and socialist audiences in Indonesia in the 1940s and '50s, suggests these translations could have resonated.[95]

Beyond the translations of Mao's work, the Tenth Regiment also began producing new publications of its own, creating a new resource base for communicating with Malayans. These resources would have come up against stiff competition, given that the authorities in the New Villages had ramped up production of their own communications resources, including film screenings, study tours, publications, and school and college curricula.[96] Nevertheless, in 1955, the Regiment began producing two periodicals, *Tauladan* (Exemplar) and *Kebenaran* (Truth), whose front pages announce that they were published by the *Suloh Kebenaran* (Light of Truth) office on the Perak-Kelantan border. While *Kebenaran* reads like a publication for party cadres, *Tauladan* attempted to speak to a wider audience. It declared its aim as explaining the truth to its readers about the "spirit of sacrifice and heroism of the communists, people's warriors, and ordinary *rakyat* educated by the communist party while struggling to fight their cruel enemies." A further aim was to discuss "the cruel actions of colonisers and oppressors," and finally, to show the "views of communists and the conscious and aware *rakyat* regarding authentic morality, values, happiness, enjoyment, and prosperity for humanity." All the stories included in *Tauladan* were therefore to be examples to readers, aimed at inspiring all who read them.[97] What followed were stories of women warriors, daughters of the party, and comrades who "sacrificed their personal interests without a second thought,"

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for their party and their class.[98] Subsequent issues discussed the strength of the Soviet army, brave Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese activists and fighters, and, in 1956 and '57, three special issues worth of stories of Malay Muslim communists in particular.[99]

The front cover of the first issue of *Tauladan*, a periodical launched by the Tenth Regiment in 1955. Malayan People's Army. 10th Regiment Archives, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam)

These issues contained stories of communists who moved beyond the bounded forms of politics that the state associated with their race—a genre particularly suited to Abdullah C.D.'s "Malay Work" aims. For example, one issue carries a longer story about Comrade Ah Tai or Hassan, an ethnic Chinese MCP member who became a guerrilla during the Japanese occupation. His mission was to guide other comrades living in *kampung*s (villages). Because he was so used to mixing with Malay Muslims, he became a messenger specially tasked with the duty of communicating with them. After the war, he worked in Raub to organise a movement of Malay Muslims. When the Emergency was declared, a Malay Muslim MCP leader arrived to convene a meeting, and Ah Tai/Hassan attended also. Unfortunately, the *Tauladan* story continues, an "evil *penghulu* (village head)" had informed the police and the meeting place was surrounded. Everybody was arrested. Ah Tai/Hassan was handcuffed to the Malay Muslim leader and both were brought to the station, but that did not stop them from whispering and making signals to each other. They managed to bring their handcuffs down on the head of one undercover policeman (*matamata gelap*) and then get them off. The two comrades separated and Ah Tai/Hassan returned to Raub, where

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he continued to organise Malay Muslims in nearby Benta. In February 1950, Ah Tai/Hassan was sent to work in secret with Malay Muslim cultivators who were "betrayed with a vengeance" by their enemies. In June 1951, Ah Tai/Hassan was killed by traitors in Ulu Timur village in North Pahang. He remained, however, an example for being able to read and speak Chinese *and* Malay, all the better to contribute to the (multiracial) struggle. Everybody loved him, along with his communist spirit and his internationalism—Ah Tai/Hassan was a fighter not only for his race, but for all Malaya's *rakyat* (people).[100] In short, he was precisely the kind of multiracial subject that the MCP argued all Malayans were capable of becoming, especially by cultivating the forms of behaviour the characters in these stories exemplified, such as perfecting cultural adaptivity and respect.

While many of the stories of this genre read rather didactically, repeating the same few points many times, they were generally written in an entertaining, often charming, colloquial style. Charm aside, however, the bitter result for the MCP and the Tenth Regiment was that the stories of exemplary Malay Muslim communists they were publishing in *Tauladan* appear to have had no impact on Malaya's direction as it approached independence in 1957. Indeed, they are also shot through with nostalgia and melancholy—they read like a lament for the multiracial future Malaya could have had, becoming more emphatic precisely as the possibility slips away. Other MCP pamphlets of this period accompany this melancholy with an element of defiant iconoclasm, taking aim at the new, "traditionalist" and royalist Malay Muslim identity cultivated by UMNO. At one point in the 1950s, the Tenth Regiment published a pamphlet titled "Atheists and Theists Can Work Together Politically, Following the Path of Socialism," in which they identified Islam as a force deliberately pitted against their struggle. In contrast, the Regiment argued instead that the Chinese revolution, too, included Muslims. China too was a nation of many religions, the Regiment continued, including some that did not correlate with race in the manner that Malayness and Islam were often conflated in Malaya. Religion carried its contradictions, acting both as an ideology or belief system that belonged to the many, even while it could also serve as a weapon of the ruling class. The pamphlet concluded that the United Front should approach religion not as an ideological problem but as a simple reality. The party should act to bring those who embrace religion along with it so that a politics of unity could be created in the interest of the people.[101]

Historian Enzo Traverso has written about the nostalgic melancholy associated with the European Left after 1989—as the decline of communist possibility eclipsed Marxism's visionary utopianism, the Left has occupied a world "without a visible, thinkable, or imaginable future."[102] For the MCP's Malay Muslim activists, this recognition came not in 1989 but as early as the mid-1950s, triggering a response of constant renarration in the Regiment's publications of the liberated, multiracial nation that activists like Abdullah had aimed to build. The possibility of fashioning a new Malay Muslim, a multiracial citizen embracing of minority politics and cosmopolitan imaginaries, gave way to the consociationalism of UMNO and the Alliance, whose creation was hastened by the MCP's success.

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Conclusion

Abdullah, born in 1923, continues to live in southern Thailand and turned 98 in October 2021. The materials he and his comrades continued to publish, right up to 1989, moved forward with developments, but grew ever more adamant that the Malaya they lost could still be created. Abdullah has encouraged visitors over the years and has also filled "every room in his home" with photographs of his, and the Regiment's, activities.[103] The Regiment has also created a museum. Nostalgia aside, however, the experience of displaced Malay Muslim MCP activists like Abdullah C. D. carries important lessons for contemporary efforts to displace the racial framework that governs Malaysian public life. These efforts continue to be associated with communism and Chineseness by some Malay Muslim nationalists, including in statements that link multiracial politics with communism, precisely because such politics recognise ethnic Chinese as authentic participants in Malaysian public life.[104] For example, recent attempts by Malaysia's previous government to penalise racial discrimination have also been characterised as a "Malayan Union 2.0" by protesters who mobilised to prevent such attempts in 2018.[105] This characterisation is a reference to the "top-down" operation of the Malayan Union as a project for reconstituting Malayan citizenship, a project the MCP supported through its outreach to Malay Muslims, including through Abdullah's Department of Malay Work, the PKMM, and the Tenth Regiment of the MNLA. Most critically, it also points to how efforts to deracialise Malayan society can trigger countermobilisations to defend and protect Malaya/ Malaysia's racial state. The Emergency was one such mobilisation—indeed one that brought the violent capacity of the state to bear on proponents of multiracialism. The Emergency eliminated and displaced multiracial advocates like the Tenth Regiment, leaving the prospect of a multiracial Malaysian imaginary in the realm of memory and nostalgia.

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Notes

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1 There is an enormous literature on all aspects of the emergency. While earlier contributions largely focused on its value as a successful counterinsurgency, more recent work has, in addition, developed new themes related to its social and political aspects. This "social" literature includes Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*; Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory*; Harper, *The End of Empire*; Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars*; Wong, *From Pacific War to Merdeka*; Wong, "View from the Other Side"; and Tan Teng Phee, *Behind Barbed Wire.* For an overview of trends and developments in the Emergency literature, refer to Keo, "A Small Distant War?"

2 Fields, *Enclosure: Palestinian Landscapes,* 3–6.

3 For more details, refer to Gedacht and Malhi, "Introduction to Coercing Mobility."

4 Goldberg, *The Racial State.*

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5 Refer to Goldberg, *The Racial State,* 235, 242, 253.

6 Practices of "consociational politics," or institutionalising elite power-sharing across purportedly irreconcilable differences such as race or religion, are understood in the political science literature as important approaches to managing "plural" or divided societies. In addition to foundational works like Lijphart's, it these approaches are discussed in work on Southeast Asia by scholars like Horowitz in "Ethnic Power Sharing"; and Mauzy and Milne in *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir.*

7 Refer to Lau, "Introduction."

8 See Saravanamuttu, *Power Sharing in a Divided Nation.*

9 Note that the MNLA is also sometimes known as the MRLA, or the Malayan Races Liberation Army, with the difference hinging on how the Malay term *bangsa* is translated.

10 For a longer discussion on the taint of communism in contemporary Malaysian politics, refer to Weiss, "Legacies of the Cold War."

11 There is a growing literature on the various historical processes of contestation between different ways of understanding Malayans and the political communities they have seen themselves as members of. Some of these understandings, such as the concept of the *bangsa,* have been both racial and national, while others have used religious and other "people-grouping concepts" to offer Malayans a sense of shared political identity. See, for example, Ariffin, *Bangsa Melayu*; Funston, *Malay Politics*; Hiroyuki et al., *Bangsa and Umma*; Milner, *The Malays*; Milner and Ting, "Race and Its Competing Paradigms"; Mustapha, *Malay Nationalism*; Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism*; and Syed Husin Ali, *Ethnic Relations in Malaysia.*

12 For example, the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (or *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia,* ABIM) has invested in recent years in developing a new politics of Muslim cosmopolitanism. Of course, the present political context differs markedly from that of the 1940s and '50s, and is marked by the failure of the Pakatan Harapan government (2018–2020) to decentre race in national politics, despite having declared it one of its most important political projects.

13 These sources are held in the Tenth Regiment's archive at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam. My research for this article was supported by a small grant from the Australian National University's College of Asia & the Pacific and a Postdoctoral Fellowship for Transregional Research in Inter-Asian Contexts and Connections from the Social Science Research Council, with funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. I used part of these funds to digitise this archive for easier public access. I wish to thank the staff at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, especially Eef Vermeij and Jack Hofman, for their assistance.

14 On this point, refer to the various treatments of this question offered by Cheah, including in *The Masked Comrades*; "The Social Impact of the Japanese Occupation"; *From PKI to the Comintern*; *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*; "Japanese Army Policy"; *The Challenge of Ethnicity*; and *Red Star over Malaya.*

15 Ooi, "Borne of the Cold War," 82.

16 On the *sook ching,* refer to Cheah, "Japanese Army Policy"; and Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation*, 98–102. On Japan's wartime pan-Asian ideology, see Prashad, *The Darker Nations,* 27.

17 See Cheah, "The Social Impact"; Cheah, *From PKI to the Comintern.*

18 Refer to Anna Belogurova, *The Comintern.*

19 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 23.

20 Ibid., 151–2.

21 Ibid., 262.

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22 Ibid., 331–2.
23 Ibid., 343.
24 Ibid., 415.
25 Ibid., 263.
26 Ibid., 150–1.
27 Lau, "Introduction," 3–4.
28 Prashad, *The Darker Nations,* 27.
29 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 317; Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 6; Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* locations 1215–29.
30 Abdullah C. D., *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 8; Kenneison, *The Special Operations Executive,* Introduction.
31 Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 7; Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation,* 105.
32 Cheah, "The Social Impact," 100.
33 Yoji, "The Japanese Occupation," 66.
34 Ariffin, *Bangsa Melayu,* 20.
35 Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory,* 221.
36 Cheah, "The Social Impact," 98; Funston, *Malay Politics,* 36.
37 Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 16.
38 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 449.
39 Blackburn and Hack, *War Memory,* 223–4.
40 Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 17.
41 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 449–50; Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 17.
42 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 350.
43 Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 419; Harper, *The End of Empire,* 56.
44 Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 19.
45 Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* location 4195.
46 Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 16.
47 Refer to Cheah, *The Masked Comrades*; Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya.*
48 See Belogurova, *The Comintern*; Cheah, *The Masked Comrades*; Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya,* 24–6.
49 Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* locations 2851–8. Also, Abdullah C. D., *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 8.
50 Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation,* 29.
51 Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* location 2189.
52 Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* locations 2168–74.
53 Refer to Ariffin, *Bangsa Melayu*; Cheah, *Red Star over Malaya*; Funston, *Malay Politics*; Harper, *The End of Empire*; Hiroyuki et al., *Bangsa and Umma*; Milner, *The Malays*; Milner and Ting, "Race"; Mustapha, *Malay Nationalism*; and Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism.*
54 For an analysis of how such projects have operated in the colonial Philippines, refer to Gedacht, "The 'Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines.'" Gedacht has called these top-down projects "coercive cosmopolitanism."
55 Refer to Amoroso, *Traditionalism.* See also Harper and Bayly, *Forgotten Wars,* locations 2836–43.
56 Fujio, "The Malayan Communist Party," 37; Poulgrain, *The Genesis of Konfrontasi,* 42–4.
57 See Amoroso, *Traditionalism.*
58 Cheah, *The Masked Comrades,* 14.
59 See Stolte, "'The Asiatic Hour.'"
60 "Asian Relations."
61 Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism,* 118.
62 Cheah, *The Masked Comrades,* 26.
63 Farish, *Islam Embedded,* 33–5. On Masyumi, refer to Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution,* chapter 8.
64 Cheah, *The Masked Comrades,* 55–6.
65 Ibid., 27, 38.
66 Ibid., 63. See also Abdullah C. D., *Memoirs Part One,* chapters 18–21.
67 Cheah, *The Masked Comrades,* chapter 4.
68 Ibid., 59.
69 Harper, *The End of Empire,* 89–90.
70 Cheah, *Malaysia,* 22.
71 Hack, "Malaya," 29–31.
72 Cheah, *Malaysia,* 33–4.
73 Abdullah C. D., *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 14. See also Farish, *Islam Embedded.*
74 Hack, "Malaya," 22.
75 Ibid., 20.
76 Hack, "Malaya"; Tan Teng Phee, *Behind Barbed Wire.*
77 Tan Teng Phee, 140–1.

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78 Hack, "Malaya."
79 Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game.*
80 Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution.*
81 Abdullah C. D., *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 12–13.
82 Ibid., 14–15.
83 Ibid., 16–18.
84 Arditti, *Counterinsurgency Intelligence,* 128.
85 Abdullah C. D. *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 24. Refer also to Tenth Regiment Archive, *Pilihan Ucapan Kawan Pimpinan,* 22.
86 Lamry, "A History of the Tenth Regiment's Struggles," 47.
87 Abdullah C. D., *Darurat dan Kemerdekaan,* 33.
88 Cheah, *Malaysia,* 35.
89 Harper, *The End of Empire,* 162.
90 "Memberbaiki Pelajaran Kita." Tenth Regiment Archive.
91 "Membarui Gaya2 Parti." Tenth Regiment Archive.
92 "Menentang Baku Parti" and "Pertentangan." Tenth Regiment Archive.
93 See front matter in "Pertentangan."
94 "Pertentangan," fn 17.
95 Fogg, *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*; Formichi, *Islam and the Making of the Nation.*
96 Tan Teng Phee, *Behind Barbed Wire.*
97 *Tauladan,* vol. 1, 1955. Tenth Regiment Archive.
98 Ibid., 1: 21.
99 Ibid., 3: 2–20. See also *Tauladan,* vols. 5–8.
100 *Tauladan,* vol. 4.
101 "Kaum Atheist dan Kaum Theist." Tenth Regiment Archive.
102 Traverso, *Left-Wing Melancholia,* xiv.
103 Muhammad Sayuti, "Mengunjungi Kampung Perdamaian Rejimen Ke-10." Despite the Tenth Regiment's work to overcome Malaysia's racial and religious divide, according to Sayuti, the villages are allocated by race: Kampung Chulabhorn Pattana 11 and 12 in Narathiwat and Yala are for Malay Muslim communists, while Kampung Chulabhorn Pattana 9 and 10 in Betong and Yala are Chinese and Indian.
104 See, for example, Radzi Razak, "DAP a Party of Modern Communists?"
105 See, for example, Hafidzul Hilmi Mohd Noor, "1,500 join ICERD Protest."

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