

Did the Soviet Union instruct Southeast Asian communists to revolt? New Russian evidence on the Calcutta Youth Conference of February 1948

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This article uses recently declassified archival documents from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) concerning the Calcutta Youth Conference of February 1948. This evidence contradicts speculation that ‘orders from Moscow’ were passed to Southeast Asian communists at this time, helping to spark the rebellions in Indonesia, Malaya, Burma and the Philippines later that year. Secret working papers now available to researchers show no signs that the Soviet leadership planned to call upon Asian communists to rise up against their national bourgeois governments at this point in time. This article outlines the real story behind Soviet involvement in events leading up to the Calcutta Youth Conference, showing both a desire to increase information and links, and yet also a degree of caution over the prospects of local parties.

Introduction

There has been considerable speculation among historians of the Cold War and of Soviet policy towards Indonesia, right up to the present, concerning the communist-sponsored Southeast Asian Youth Conference held in Calcutta in February 1948. There, it has been claimed by some, ‘orders from Moscow’ were passed to the Southeast Asian communists, giving rise to the rebellions in Indonesia, Malaya and Burma and the increased unrest in the Philippines and Vietnam which occurred later in 1948, actions which were aimed at seizing power from the national bourgeoisie and turning these countries into socialist states.¹

Recently declassified archival documents of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) [CC AUCP (B)] concerning the Calcutta conference and Soviet policy towards Indonesia do not corroborate this theory. Instead, they allow us to construct a more complex picture of Soviet policy-makers attempting to collect information on a region about which they were relatively

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1 There has also been debate over the role of a contemporaneous conference of the Indian Communist Party in Calcutta. For the argument that these Calcutta conferences were important, see J.H. Brimmell, *Communism in South East Asia; A political analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 255–63.

poorly informed, encouraging more links with it, and yet remaining uncertain if not cautious in their assessment of the immediate prospects of local parties there.

Speculations by Western scholars

Ruth McVey's *The Soviet view of the Indonesian revolution*, written under the auspices of Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program, remains the most serious analysis of the early period of Soviet policy towards Indonesia.² McVey states that the Soviet policy towards the newly independent Republic of Indonesia, proclaimed on 17 August 1945, clearly changed at the beginning of 1948 and links the communist uprising in Indonesia (the Madiun uprising of September 1948) with this change.

The Soviet archival documents corroborate McVey's opinion that towards the end of the Second World War, the USSR had no clear-cut Asia policy and certainly no Indonesia policy. Indonesia at that time was on the periphery of Soviet interests in Asia. After the colonial war started in Indonesia between Dutch troops on one side, and the Indonesian national liberation movement on the other, the USSR inclined to the Indonesian side. Although the Indonesian liberation movement was led by the national bourgeoisie, it was directed against Western domination in the region and this was the main argument for the Soviet Union to support those fighting for national liberation. At the same time, McVey points out, the Soviet leaders considered that the united front should remain under the leadership of the bourgeois nationalist movement.³ She explains this decision as due to the Soviet leadership not believing in the possibility of a communist victory in any Asian country at that time, not even in China.⁴

Late in 1947 and through early 1948, as McVey states, Soviet policy drastically changed. She links this change with the establishment of the Cominform and the declaration of the Zhdanov 'two camp doctrine', which divided the world into two opposing camps — socialist and capitalist. The independence of former colonies, now ruled by representatives of the national bourgeoisie, was declared fake. Real independence could be reached only under the leadership of left wing, especially communist, groups and such independence had to be followed by radical social reforms and the creation of people's democracies. The Chinese concept of 'new democracy' and the Chinese revolution was gradually but increasingly being proclaimed as a new ideal for Asian peoples.⁵

Western scholars, even those who doubt that the Soviet Union issued any overt orders for revolt in Southeast Asia in 1948, base their analysis of this period mainly upon the political rhetoric on the colonial question as seen in Soviet official publications, as well as the general Cominform line.⁶ They do not give any concrete or

2 Ruth McVey, *The Soviet view of the Indonesian revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1969).

3 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.

6 Hence even Ruth McVey's *The Calcutta Conference and the Southeast Asian uprisings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1958), pp. 13, 18 and 24, while arguing there were no instructions for revolt conveyed at Calcutta, concentrates analysis on the dissemination and discussion of the new Soviet line. Lacking access to Soviet documents, she argued that the implications of the new public line were not as clear as previous scholars had suggested.

archival evidence to prove changes in the Soviet attitude towards the situation in Asia or Soviet subversive activity in Southeast Asia.

But if growing militancy can be seen in Soviet and international communist propaganda materials, nothing of the kind can be found in secret working papers from the archives of the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC AUCP (B). There one can see neither growing militancy nor emphasis on armed struggle. The political rhetoric maintains its usual reserved character. The researcher can find no hint of preparation on the part of the Soviet leadership for calling upon Asian communists to pursue uprisings against their national bourgeois governments.

In order to prove this assertion, and to reveal for the first time how Soviet policy towards the region was actually developing at the time, a number of recently declassified documents from the archives of the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC AUCP (B) will be analysed. These include: documents of the Soviet youth organisations, documents of the international pro-communist youth movement and internal documents of the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC AUCP (B), connected with the youth movement.⁷

The Indonesian question in the communist-oriented World Youth Movement

After the Second World War, the main contacts between the Indonesian Left and international communist-oriented organisations were conducted through the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS).

On 25 October 1946 the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth (AFC-SY), which maintained contacts between Soviet youth and young people in other countries, was separated from the SovInformBureau and attached to the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) – the only political youth organisation in the USSR – as its foreign department. Both organisations worked under the absolute control of the Communist Party.

The Central Committee (CC) of Komsomol, through AFC-SY, played the key role in establishing WFDY in November 1945 and IUS in August 1946. Communist-oriented leaders and organisations from various countries dominated these two world youth organisations. As was noted in a Foreign Affairs Department of CC AUCP (B) document, the main result of their activity was ‘that under conditions of a constantly aggravating international situation and intensifying reactionary intrigues, these organisations and first of all WFDY, have proved their vitality while maintaining an anti-imperialist position’.⁸

Up to the beginning of 1946, the main political task of the world youth organisations was the support of leftist groups in Western countries. Then, early in 1946, the

7 The Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RSASPH) was created in March 1999. It contains documents of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) [CC AUCP (B)] for 1898 and 1903–91, and documents of Soviet youth organisations, including the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) from 1918–91 and the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth (ACSY), 1941–56.

8 Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RSASPH) fond (f) 17 opis (o) 128 delo (d) 428 list (l) 74.

USSR began an anti-colonial campaign and the world youth organisations were thus drawn into anti-colonial propaganda activities.

When the USSR declared its support for the Indonesian national liberation struggle, from January 1946, the world youth organisations also started an anticolonial campaign. Practically every activity they engaged in included in its agenda the question of solidarity with Indonesian youth fighting for independence. For example, in a secret document 'Directives for the Soviet representatives at the meeting of the executive committee of WFDY' dated 21 January 1946 prepared by AFC-SY and approved by CC AUCP (B), the Soviet delegation was directed to express its full support for the demands of Indonesian youth organisations and ensure that WFDY come out in favour of stopping intervention in Indonesia.⁹ At the same time the Soviet representatives were to publicise the efforts undertaken by the Indonesian representatives in order to draw the attention of the world's progressive community towards the anti-colonial struggle of the Indonesian people and to enhance its support. In a report to the CC AUCP (B) on the Soviet delegates' activities during the International Students Congress in Prague from 18 August to 3 September 1946, the Soviet representatives pointed out that the Indonesian delegates, including Soeripno, very strongly insisted on the inclusion in all IUS and Congress resolutions of the aims of anti-colonial struggle.¹⁰ Soeripno was elected as a member of IUS Council.

In 1946, the WFDY Executive received an invitation from the All-India Student Federation to send a WFDY commission to India. The commission also planned to visit a number of countries in Southeast Asia to survey the colonial situation there and make contacts with youth organisations in the area. In February 1947, the WFDY commission, comprising several delegates – Olga Chechetkina (a Soviet journalist specialising in Southeast Asia), J. Lautissier (France) and R. Tomovic (Yugoslavia) – arrived in India, where they stayed for two months. In New Delhi these delegates had a meeting with the young participants of the Indian-sponsored Inter-Asian Relations Conference from Indonesia and other Southeast Asian polities (eight Indonesian representatives, including two communists — Soeripno and Maruto Darusman, attended the conference). It was there decided that a full-scale Asian youth conference should be held in the near future. The Indonesians, under Soeripno's leadership, volunteered to play host to the projected meeting, and the conference was scheduled to be held in Indonesia in November 1947.

The WFDY commission was also invited to travel through Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. It spent two and a half months in Southeast Asian countries, including three weeks, during May and June 1947, in Indonesia.

The WFDY Commission's visit to Southeast Asia prior to the Calcutta Conference (May–June 1947)

In June 1947 the WFDY commission presented an account of its travels through the Southeast Asian countries to the WFDY executive session in Moscow. Soviet members of this executive session received secret instructions prepared by the

⁹ Ibid., f.17 o.128 d.71 l.42.

¹⁰ Ibid., l.106.

Komsomol CC and approved by the Foreign Affairs Department of CC AUCP (B). On the issue of 'the state and the needs of colonial youth', the document directed the Soviet representatives to insist upon the Executive adopting a statement in support of the national liberation struggles of colonial youth in India, Vietnam, Indonesia and Egypt aimed at attaining full independence and democratic liberties. For the commission which travelled through the Southeast Asian countries, the Soviet delegates were instructed to insist upon the adoption of practical proposals aimed at:

- strengthening ties between WFDY and the youth of the colonies and semi-colonies;
- organising the youth of the world to carry out campaigns of assistance to colonial youth in order to improve their political, economic and cultural situations;
- presenting reports on the problems of colonial youth and defence of their rights to the United Nations;
- organising a wide-scale campaign in the press concerning the problems and needs of colonial youth.

It was pointed out in the instructions that the Executive should approve the proposal to hold in late 1947 or early 1948 a conference of the youth of colonial and semi-colonial countries, and that one of the main tasks of this conference should be the creation in colonial and semi-colonial countries of active coordinating organisations of working youth, linked to the WFDY.

The Soviet delegates were directed to endorse the idea of holding the youth conference in India or Indonesia, and support the proposal that not only representatives of the progressive youth and student unions should be invited to participate in it, but also guests from Mongolia, Korea and some Soviet republics, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and others.

The Soviet delegates at the Executive were instructed to insist on their membership of a preparatory committee, which would comprise representatives of organisations in the Southeast Asian countries and also of the WFDY and IUS. The preparatory committee was to work in the country of the future conference. It was to start its activity in summer 1947 in Prague during the World Youth Festival.¹¹

This instruction came with a covering letter by the deputy chief of the Foreign Affairs Department of CC AUCP (B), L. Baranov. This said that the main points of the directives had already been approved by the Department and that the recent idea about a conference of the youth in colonial countries was supported by the Department as well. It was sent to Mikhail Suslov's Secretariat for agreement. Later Baranov wrote on the covering letter: 'Suslov agreed. You may act. 11.6.47.'¹²

After the Moscow WFDY Executive session of June 1947 ended, the Soviet members of the Executive presented a secret account of its work to CC AUCP (B) Secretaries A.A. Zhdanov, A.A. Kouznetsov and M.A. Suslov. The account advised that the WFDY Executive had approved the report of the Commission and declared

11 Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RSASPH) fond (f).17 opis (o).128 delo (d).247 list (l).183.

12 *Ibid.*, l.182.

its full support of the national liberation struggle of the colonial peoples and the democratic youth of these countries; called for granting complete independence and democratic liberties to the peoples of India, Vietnam, Indonesia and others; considered it necessary to provide assistance to the youth of the colonial and semi-colonial countries; and commissioned the Secretariat to send letters to the youth of these countries calling for the struggle against imperialism.

The account stressed the decision to hold the conference of Southeast Asian colonial youth in November 1947 in Indonesia, with the aim of strengthening the unity of the democratic youth of these countries. As delegates to the conference it was decided to invite young people from India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia, Siam, Vietnam and the Philippines; as observers, they proposed inviting young people from China, Korea, Mongolia, the Soviet Central Asian republics, as well as from New Zealand, Iran, Iraq and Egypt; while young people from Britain, France, the Netherlands, USA, as well as the Scandinavian and Latin American countries would be invited as guests.

The WFDY Executive considered it necessary that the commission which had travelled to the Southeast Asian countries should now visit Britain, France, the Netherlands, the USA and other countries with the task of propagandising the Executive decisions on the colonial question. The Executive also discussed a letter from Republican Indonesian youth to the Federation, requesting support for their demand addressed to the Dutch government that they stop dispatching troops to Indonesia, and that the Dutch should withdraw their forces from Republican territory. In this connection, WFDY sent letters to the UN and the Dutch authorities supporting the demands of Indonesian youth and called on young people living in ports where Dutch and French war ships docked to boycott their despatch to Indonesia and Vietnam.

The Soviet members of the WFDY Executive proposed that CC AUCP (B) and the Komsomol CC should permit the sending of representatives from the Soviet Central Asian and Caucasian republics as observers to the forthcoming Southeast Asian youth conference, as well as allowing Olga Chechetkina to travel together with other members of the WFDY commission to a number of capitalist countries (Britain, France and others) to inform young people of these countries about the conditions of colonial youth and about the WFDY decisions concerning the struggle of these young people for their rights and needs.¹³

The issue of the Asian youth conference was discussed at the WFDY Council meeting in Prague in August 1947. The Soviet delegates received the following directives concerning the needs of colonial youth and the preparations for the Asian youth conference. They were required:

- To ensure that the WFDY Council approve the Executive's decisions supporting the national liberation struggles.
- To ensure that the WFDY Council adopt a concrete programme of assistance to the youth of the colonial and semi-colonial countries and organise a widespread campaign in defence of the rights and needs of the colonial youth.

13 Ibid., 1.187–191.

- To support the proposal that in November 1947 a Southeast Asian youth conference should be convened in Indonesia with the aim of strengthening the unity of the democratic youth of these countries.
- To propose that the members of the WFDY commission who travelled to India and other Southeast Asian countries should go to various countries (first of all to Britain, France, USA and the Netherlands) in order to inform the broad masses of young people about the living conditions and the needs of the colonial youth.
- To agree with the WFDY Secretariat decision to accept the Indonesian Youth Federation for WFDY membership.¹⁴

Olga Chechetkina's secret report

Besides the official report of the WFDY commission to the Executive, Olga Chechetkina prepared another secret account of her travels to the countries of Southeast Asia for the Komsomol CC and the Foreign Affairs Department of the CC AUCP (B). The account was dated 12 September 1947. In it Chechetkina expounded her own views on the situation in the Southeast Asian countries she had visited.¹⁵

Officially Olga Chechetkina was a journalist, and a representative of Soviet youth in the WFDY journal *World Youth*. But this post was included in the so-called 'party nomenclature', that is, the list of important posts which were to be occupied by persons chosen by the Communist Party leadership from amongst the Party's most competent and trusted members. Chechetkina was appointed to the post in the WFDY by the Secretariat of the CC AUCP (B). She was well versed in party politics, and evaluated international relations and the inner situation in the Southeast Asian countries from the Communist Party point of view. Her main aim during her travels to the countries of Southeast Asia was to gather information not for publishing in the press, nor for the WFDY, but rather for the Soviet leadership and specifically for the CC AUCP (B). That is why her analysis is important for understanding Soviet policy in the region.

Her country by country analysis of the situation in each Southeast Asian country she visited was introduced by a general description of the major features of domestic politics common to all Southeast Asian countries. Chechetkina noted the heightening of political activity and political consciousness of the masses as a result of World War Two and the Japanese occupation. A consequence of this was, according to her, the strengthening of positions and widening of influence of the communist parties, trade unions and peasant and youth organisations in the region. All this had led to the heightening of anti-imperialist struggle. Chechetkina also noted the rise of class struggle. All this had provoked a reaction on the part of imperialists, who in collaboration with the local bourgeoisie, were striving to suppress political activity by the colonial peoples.

In response to the unity of global opinion, there was also an increased unity of colonial peoples. 'Now there exist great opportunities for expanding this unity of

14 Ibid., f.17 o.128 d.247 l.199.

15 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.249 l.23–52.

the masses of colonial peoples both inside the countries and outside, with the working masses of Europe and America.’ Chechetkina stressed the interest of the Southeast Asian peoples in whether they could receive real support and assistance in their struggle on the part of democratic forces of Europe and America. ‘The colonial peoples are not satisfied any more with mere resolutions (although the resolutions help in maintaining in the peoples the spirit of resistance). They need something more essential.’¹⁶

Chechetkina underlined that the major expectations of the colonial peoples were connected with the USSR. ‘In every country we travelled through I saw extraordinary interest in and love towards the Soviet Union. ... Despite desperate anti-Soviet propaganda, which is carried on there through British and American newspapers, the belief in the USSR has not died out among the masses. Quite on the contrary, hopes for Soviet assistance are growing there with renewed strength.’¹⁷ Further, she wrote that in the remotest villages she was asked whether they were doing the right thing in starting uprisings, whether the USSR would be able to send arms to them; and whether we would support them if they started a revolution.¹⁸ ‘We shall overcome the British, but we must be sure that you will support us.’¹⁹

Chechetkina was speaking exclusively about the national liberation struggle of the peoples of India, Indonesia and other countries of Southeast Asia, about their readiness to rise up against imperialism, and to start an anti-colonial revolution. She underlined their hopes for assistance from the progressive forces of Europe and America, and primarily the USSR, in the struggle for national independence. The colonial peoples’ words cited by Chechetkina testify to their disappointment with the solely moral and diplomatic support from the Soviet side and their desire to get from the Soviet Union more practical support, including the provision of arms. These expectations of the colonial peoples, which were stimulated by active Soviet anti-colonial and anti-imperialist propaganda in the international arena, have also been noted by Western scholars.²⁰ Nevertheless it should be stressed that Olga Chechetkina’s secret account addressed to the CC AUCP (B) did not contain anything which could be considered as implying that the colonial peoples’ were striving for radical socialist-oriented reforms or communist revolution.

In the chapter concerning Indonesia in this account, Chechetkina gave a description of the complex political and economic situation under the Dutch blockade and the anti-colonial war, at the moment that the Dutch presented an ultimatum to the Republic of Indonesia in the summer of 1947. Chechetkina provided interesting descriptions of a number of Indonesian leaders, and evaluations of the Republican internal situation, which differed from previous Soviet assessments.

First of all, she gave a description of the Republican Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir, who was a member of the Indonesian Socialist Party and was regarded by the Soviet leadership as well as by the Indonesian communists as a leftist leader. This positive

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 ‘Revolution’ here meaning ‘anti-colonial revolution’.

19 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.249 l.23–52.

20 See, for instance, G. McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963, pp. 26–9).

attitude towards Sjahrir is clearly seen in a letter by an Indonesian communist leader Maruto Darusman to the CC of the Communist Party of the Netherlands dated 18 June 1946, which has been found among the documents of the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B). Maruto considered Sjahrir to be very close to the communists. 'When Sjahrir got the opportunity to form his first government, it was the first step on the way to the right Marxist policy.'²¹ Maruto underlined the similarity of the positions of both the communist and the socialist parties in Indonesia. 'The struggle of the Socialists and the Communists is commonly directed both against foreign domination and those groups which with their radical slogans are actually weakening the revolution.' This implied the 'Trotskyists' Tan Malaka and Soebardjo, who were Soekarno's opponents at the time. It was stated in this letter that the socialists exerted strong influence on the peasantry and women's organisations.²²

An anonymous article on the situation in Indonesia, apparently written under the influence of this letter, was published in the classified Bulletin of the Information Bureau of CC AUCP (B) on foreign policy topics of 1 October 1946, as N.18(42).²³ In its closing paragraph, the following conclusion was drawn: 'The rise of the national liberation movement, the masses' readiness for every kind of sacrifice in the name of obtaining freedom, and the inclination of the broad working masses towards everything linked with socialism and communism create favourable conditions for the Communist and the Socialist parties to deal with the grave situation in the country and to seize the leadership of the national liberation movement.'²⁴

Apparently, Olga Chechetkina's attitude towards Sjahrir was also initially positive. But in the account of her visit to Indonesia she drastically changed her opinion of Sjahrir. 'I must say, that the changes which occurred in Sjahrir's views subsequent to when we met him on the first day of our visit to Batavia were conspicuous. On that evening he was telling us about the government's firm determination to confront the Dutch pressure.'²⁵ But later Chechetkina wrote: 'Nevertheless at our last meeting with him on the eve of our departure [and after the Dutch ultimatum] it became clear that his determination was melting away and obviously he wanted to persuade the Cabinet to make a compromise with the Dutch. As far as our delegation was concerned, he 'feared', as we were informed, that our stay in Republican territory and meetings with the Indonesian youth, where we expressed our support for their struggle, possibly might be "harmful" for the Republic, as the Americans and the British had begun to write more and more about the "Communist nature of Indonesia".'²⁶

Chechetkina's initial appraisal of President Soekarno did not much differ from the rather negative attitude that was typical of the Soviet leadership, although she brought to the fore some details and nuances, concerning his role and place in Republican political development. During the first years of Indonesian independence, the Soviet leaders did not pay much attention to the newborn Republic and its

21 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.216 l.39.

22 *Ibid.*, l.42.

23 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.94.

24 *Ibid.*, l.9.

25 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.249 l.44.

26 *Ibid.*, l.44–5.

President, apparently because they did not have enough firm information about the processes which were going on there. From the beginning of 1946, the USSR had started to actively support the anti-imperialist struggle in Indonesia, but at the same time did not demonstrate much sympathy towards its leader. Evidently, this was an effect of the international press, a part of which considered Soekarno to be a Japanese agent, as well as of the negative attitude towards the President on the part of the Indonesian communists. In the aforementioned letter of Maruto Darusman, Soekarno was appraised as 'a petit-bourgeois leader, hesitating, with weak disposition', 'a sheer conciliator' (towards the negotiations with the Dutch). 'Taking into consideration the internal situation in the country, we are forced to let him stay for the time being', wrote Maruto Darusman.²⁷

However, after personal meetings with Soekarno, Chechetkina appraised him as a person definitely smart and witty, although 'full of self-conceit to the extreme'. 'He is doing his utmost in order to win love and popularity among the people.' 'You can feel that he is determined to defend all rights of the Republic and full of concern about the future.' He was worried about the Soviet recognition of the Republic. When he asked about it you could hear in his voice a request and fear of refusal. Soekarno also expressed the desire to establish trade relations with the USSR.²⁸ Chechetkina stressed Soekarno's tremendous popularity among the Republican population. 'And it is very typical, that for them, these thousands of peasants and poor people, Soekarno is not a human being, but the symbol of the Republic.'²⁹

Chechetkina was much more sympathetic in her description of Amir Sjarifuddin, who was at the time the Defence Minister of the Republic of Indonesia. 'He is a Socialist, but as we were told by the comrades [the communists] that he is very close to the Communist Party.' But Chechetkina's sympathy was based not so much on this information as on Sjarifuddin's determination to fight against the Dutch without compromise. She reported that Sjarifuddin had stated that, 'the Republicans will fight to the end. They will start a ruthless guerrilla war with scorched earth tactics.' She added that, 'the Republicans are preparing their army for the guerrilla war. He showed to us a map of the deployment of the guerrilla and the army divisions and of the people's militia. Divided if needed into smaller groups they will scatter over the country...'³⁰

Olga Chechetkina drew the special attention of CC AUCP (B) to the very poor state of the Indonesian troops' armaments. 'Nevertheless in order not to create a big illusion, I should say that the state of the Republican troops' armaments is very bad. We inspected some of the Republican divisions, saw many soldiers, visited some guerrilla areas and had a very grave impression of the armaments of the Republicans.' The most they had was the arms left by the Japanese, a few American and British machineguns, seized from the Dutch, and the rest was just self-made arms: mortars and hand grenades.

The people's militia consisted of peasants armed with sharpened bamboo spears. Chetchetkina noted that: 'Certainly a guerrilla war presupposes the seizure of arms

27 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.216 l.47.

28 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.249 l.49.

29 Ibid., l.46.

30 Ibid., l.45.

from the enemy. But if we want to speak of real assistance to Indonesia it should take the form of sending arms to them. They are receiving some arms from China and India through Singapore to Sumatra and further to Java.³¹ Thus Olga Chechetkina reminded the Central Committee once more that those peoples struggling against colonialism, among them the Indonesians, regarded the sending of arms by the USSR as a concrete method of assistance.

Despite the militant spirit of the most part among the Indonesians, Chechetkina also pointed out the lack of discipline and proper vigilance. 'But at the same time there exists in the Republic absolutely unfounded carelessness, including among the Communists: scores of American, British, and Dutch "observers" are freely travelling throughout the Republican territory, and near the Republican leaders, including the President and the former Prime Minister Sjahrir there are constantly hovering Dutch women.'³²

The journalist devoted a special paragraph to the deep frustration growing among the Indonesian masses. 'Until now the proclamation of the Republic has brought to the masses moral relief, rather than social and economic changes. In their everyday lives the peasants, who are still landless, have not received any fruits from the Republican regime. They think this to be a result of the blockade of the country and of the need to mobilise all the resources in case of new military actions. But even now they are more decidedly presenting their demands to the government.'³³ Chechetkina added that, 'Among the peasantry, as well as among the workers one can see a certain dissatisfaction with the Republican government, which in many matters did not go further than the proclamation of the Republic. And I think that this dissatisfaction will be increasing as time goes by, if the government does not carry out social and economic reforms, which will free the people from the many yokes of the pre-Republican period.'³⁴ While speaking about the urgency of the reforms, Chechetkina was implying not radical socialist changes, but anti-feudal reforms, namely those included in the Socialist Front Programme adopted in spring 1947: the reduction of taxes, land reform and the creation of peasant cooperatives.³⁵

While describing Indonesian political parties and mass organisations, the journalist pointed out that 'during recent months the Socialist Front [which comprised the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Youth Union] has been significantly strengthened and has great influence over the whole political and economic life of the country. ... The Socialist Front maintains close ties with and is supported by the trade unions, the peasant organisations, the people's army (the guerrillas, student detachments and the like).'³⁶ Nevertheless Chechetkina underlined the weaknesses of the Indonesian political and mass organisations, and the major weakness was the lack of experienced personnel. The communists were trying to solve the problem by means of training personnel both for the Party and the trade unions and the peasant organisations in Marx House — a school of Marxism established in

31 RSASPH f.17 o.128 d.249 l.45.

32 *Ibid.*, l.46.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*, l.45–6.

35 *Ibid.*, l.47.

36 *Ibid.*

Jogjakarta. But the journalist expressed the opinion that ‘while organising the school CC CPI had made a grave mistake of including in its curriculum “the study of Trotskyism”. The comrades explained that this was included because of the danger of the penetration into the Party of Trotskyist influences.’³⁷

Olga Chechetkina did not pay special attention to the Indonesian communists, possibly because the WFDY Commission intended to establish contacts with as wide a circle of the Indonesian parties and organisations as possible, not only communists. Nevertheless the Commission certainly met the communists and the Indonesian communists discussed with the Soviet journalist their difficulties. ‘As in other countries the Secretary of the Indonesian Communist Party, Comrade Alimin, asked me to inform CC AUCP (B) about their urgent needs in terms of everyday help and links with other parties. He asked me to deliver his frank admission, that without advice from and links with Moscow it is sometimes very difficult to resolve issues. He also asked me to pass on his request for a rapid return to Indonesia from the USSR of Comrade Muso — one of the activists of the Indonesian Communist Party (“where he is staying now I do not know”) and a request that a TASS press agency correspondent be sent to Indonesia.’³⁸

Naturally Chechetkina paid much more attention to the Indonesian youth movement. She noted that ‘in no other Asian country do youth organisations play such an important role as in Indonesia’. She pointed out that ‘the general recognition of the young people’s important role in the revolution and in the national liberation war have turned some of the youth leaders’ heads and there exist among them some indications of avant-gardism. More serious and politically experienced people have already understood this danger and are trying to eradicate it.’³⁹

Another important topic in Olga Chechetkina’s account was the unity of the Indonesian people and its various factions under the national liberation struggle conditions. ‘The main feature of the Indonesian people at present is its cohesion.’⁴⁰ ‘The Socialist Front has taken as its task cooperation with other parties.’⁴¹ The same was said about the possibility of unification of all Indonesian young people.⁴²

In the concluding part of the account the journalist drew the attention of the CC AUCP (B) to the need to resolve ‘a number of big and serious questions’. The first and most serious question concerned the communist parties in the Southeast Asian countries she travelled through, including Indonesia.

‘The Communist Parties of all the countries, especially in the colonies, unquestionably need regular and serious help and guidance. There exists a need for links among the parties, without which they are in grave danger of isolation and will find it impossible to swiftly adopt correct orientations on the most serious international and domestic problems. Until an international organisation of workers’ parties is created (in some form), it is absolutely necessary to establish bureaus linking the parties of all the

37 *Ibid.*, 148–9.

38 *Ibid.*, 149.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, 145.

41 *Ibid.*, 148.

42 *Ibid.*, 151.

countries. Such bureaus may be regional, but linked with each other, or international ones. In particular, I think, the Indonesian Socialist Front could take the initiative to call an International conference or just a meeting of representatives of various countries.'

The second important proposal by the journalist dealt with the sending of trade representatives to the region. 'I suppose that it would be to our political and economic advantage if we had permanent trade representatives of the USSR in ... Indonesia.' Further she urgently recommended the sending of a TASS press agency correspondent to Indonesia. 'It is absolutely necessary (and I suppose possible) that TASS send correspondents to ... Indonesia...'

Olga Chechetkina proposed that inviting students from these countries to study in the USSR be made one of the ways of Soviet influence in the colonies as well as of personnel training. She stressed the urgency of the issue, because the Americans and the British were already very active in this sphere.

She also recommended that more films and magazines including pro-Soviet propaganda be sent to Asian countries, that the hours of Soviet radio broadcasting to Asian countries be adjusted to local time, and that the exchange of youth delegations be intensified.⁴³

We can thus draw the conclusion that Olga Chechetkina in the autumn of 1947 saw neither the signs nor the necessity of a socialist revolution in Indonesia. On the contrary, she stressed the unity of the Indonesian people in the anti-imperialist struggle, despite the fact that the working masses were disappointed with their grave living conditions. She pointed out the lack of experienced cadres in the Indonesian leftist and communist groups, and their poor knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. Chechetkina urgently recommended that the USSR assist in establishing close and permanent contacts among Asian communists, help them with advice, and also intensify agitation and propaganda work in the Asian countries in favour of the Soviet way of life.

Based on Chechetkina's account, we can tell that the ties between the Indonesian Communist Party and the AUCP (B) were practically non-existent in that period and that the Indonesian communists had expressed a strong interest in establishing more regular and close links among the communists of Southeast Asia as well as with the CC AUCP (B).

Olga Chechetkina's account appears to have been negatively received by the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B). To the Secretariat of a member of CC AUCP (B) Mikhail Suslov, who was responsible for Soviet foreign policy, was sent not the whole text of the account, comprising 30 typewritten pages, but only a brief report of four pages, prepared a month later — on 17 October 1947.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the report it was stressed that the account 'presents personal observations and conclusions from discussions with leaders of the parties and organizations the delegation met'. In this way the political importance of the information and proposals contained in the document, was significantly reduced. The annotation mentioned Indonesia only once: 'About the situation in Indonesia the account contains no data which was not already known.'

43 Ibid., 1.51–52.

44 Ibid., 1.58–61.

The summary authors – the head of the Southeast Asian section of the Foreign Policy Department of CC AUCP (B) Plishevskii and an instructor Kozlov – included in their document only the following of Chechetkina's proposals, the realisation of which, in their opinion, 'would contribute to the popularisation of the USSR and to the rise of sympathy for it on the part of Southeast Asian peoples':

1. To include representatives of Southeast Asian countries in trade union, women, youth, and cultural workers' delegations which are invited to the USSR;
2. As in Southeast Asian countries there exist no Soviet film-projecting organisations, it should be recommended to the Soviet women's, trade unions, and youth organisations that they assist in distributing Soviet films in Southeast Asian countries;
3. To recommend that the Soviet Radio broadcasting Committee take effective measures for improving the quality and the timing of broadcasting to Southeast Asia.⁴⁵

The summary was first brought to the attention of the deputy head of the Foreign Policy Department, L.S. Baranov. In Plishevskii's covering letter dated 22 October, it was stressed, that 'the summary includes only those issues which are new to us and are of some value'.⁴⁶ Chechetkina's proposals, especially those about Asian communist parties and Soviet trade representatives, were harshly criticised as of too general a nature and of no practical significance. 'For instance, the conclusion that the communist parties of Southeast Asia need help and feel the necessity of closer ties among them is indeed correct. But to make proposals at present to the leadership of the CC AUCP (B) on the advisability of the establishment of any regional union of the communist parties of these countries is hardly expedient, taking into consideration the political status of these countries and the role the parties are playing there now. Rather, I believe, we can speak about assistance in the future in the form of advice to these parties on the part of the Information Bureau which has been created in Belgrade through its publications and by other possible means.'

Chechetkina's proposal to send a Soviet trade representative to the Southeast Asian countries was rejected too. Plishevskii remarked that this question was not as simple as Chechetkina believed it to be and proposing it could only mean that she did not know the real situation in the countries. Concerning Indonesia, Plishevskii pointed out that 'the very existence of the Republic is questionable as a result of the Netherlands' war aimed at restoring colonial domination in Indonesia'.⁴⁷ He stressed that the summary included only those proposals which could be put practically into effect.

On 10 December 1947, a deputy of the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B), V. Moshetov, sent a note to Suslov's Secretariat, in which Chechetkina's account was criticised even more harshly. It was pointed out in the note that her account was mostly of an informative nature and stated that Olga Chechetkina had been dismissed from work as a Soviet representative on the WFDY magazine

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 1.56.

47 Ibid.

The World Youth in connection with the compromising of information. It was stressed in the note that 'for the most part, the proposals were not thought through'. Furthermore, the note repeated the wording of Plishevskii's covering letter: 'the conclusion that the Communist parties of the Southeast Asian countries need help and feel the necessity in closer links with each other is indeed correct. But to make proposals to the leadership of the CC AUCP (B) on the question of the advisability of the creation of a regional union of the Communist parties of these countries is hardly expedient, taking into consideration the political status of most Eastern countries and the role the Communist parties play there.' Furthermore, 'Putting to the CC AUCP (B) the question of sending Soviet trade representatives to Burma, Malaya and Indonesia without considering the general political situation and our economic relations with them is not considered.' Furthermore, the document supported the proposals contained in the summary and its covering letter prepared by Plishevskii.

Chechetkina's account was thus being considered in the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP(B) for about two months before its contents were presented to Suslov. In the process, the account was emptied of the most important and acute observations concerning the ideological and organisational weaknesses of the Indonesian communists, their isolation from the world communist movement and their absolute unpreparedness for any serious actions in the Indonesian political arena, as well as her comments concerning the bad armaments of the Indonesian troops, and the avant-gardism and lack of self-control of the Indonesian young people.

Based on the information contained in Chechetkina's summary presented to Suslov, and the fact that she was dismissed from work in the world youth organisation, we can come to the conclusion that the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B) held a generally negative opinion of her views on the situation in the Southeast Asian countries, and felt that her evaluation of local communists and other leftist groups and her recommendations concerning them, were too radical and far-reaching, going far beyond the moderate position maintained by the Foreign Policy Department, which manifested CC AUCP (B) views.

The Conference of the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries (Calcutta, February 1948): The Soviet approach

The Conference of the Youth of Southeast Asian Countries took place in Calcutta from 19 to 26 February 1948. There were 93 participants who represented various youth organisations of leftist orientation from 25 countries. The delegates included 18 representatives of youth organisations in India, nine from Pakistan, seven from Burma, one from Malaya, five from Indonesia, six from Vietnam, one from Ceylon, two from the Philippines and seven from China. There were a total of 56 delegates with formal votes. The Conference also included 15 observers from North Korea, Mongolia and the Soviet Asian republics; 22 representatives from Canada, Britain, France and some other countries, including three persons from the USSR, were invited as guests.

The Soviet youth delegation to the Conference received the following secret 'Instructions'⁴⁸ approved by the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B):

To agree to the following agenda:

1. The struggle of the Southeast Asian countries youth against imperialism, for national independence and freedom, peace and democracy;
2. The situation and needs of the youth of Southeast Asian countries, who are struggling against imperialism;
3. The tasks of strengthening the unity of the youth movement inside the countries and developing ties with the world democratic youth via WFDY and IUS.

On the question of the struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism, and for national independence and freedom, peace and democracy, they were:

To adopt a resolution supporting the national liberation struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism, for complete national independence, democracy and freedom of the peoples of Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Malaya, Burma and other colonial and semi-colonial countries, for peace and democracy in the whole world.

The Conference should call upon world democratic youth to support the colonial peoples' struggle against imperialist oppression, because this struggle constitutes a part of the common struggle for peace and democracy.

To condemn the imperialist policy of the governments of the USA, Britain, the Netherlands and France, which carry on criminal colonialist wars in Indonesia and Vietnam. To call on the democratic youth in France and the Netherlands to boycott arms shipment to Indonesia and Vietnam, and to organize mass actions against the criminal policy of their governments.

This paragraph ended with a call to condemn British policy towards India and Pakistan.

In the paragraph 'On the situation and needs of the Southeast Asian youth struggling against imperialism' it was recommended to hear the reports of the delegates from India, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Ceylon and Vietnam on the problem and to suggest as urgent tasks, for the realisation of which the youth should struggle, the following:

for youth in general – concession of political and major social rights;

for working youth – guaranteeing jobs and social security;

for peasant youth – acquisition of land, lessening of exploitation by landlords and so on;

for students – free education and assistance in acquiring education;

for everybody – concession of rights for free unions and democratic organisations.

In this connection it was recommended that restrictions of democratic rights in a number of Asian countries (China, Egypt, South Korea and Iran) be condemned.

48 Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RSASPH) fond (f).17 opis (o).128 delo (d).432 list (l).21–24.

All demands worked out at the Conference were to be directed to the UNO. 'The Conference should call on the world democratic youth to more decidedly support the national liberation struggles of Southeast Asian youth, and in particular of the Indonesian and the Vietnamese youth, who are defending the freedom and independence of their peoples with arms.'

The Conference should address to WFDY the request to enhance ties with Southeast Asian countries. In the concluding part of the paragraph it was stated that: 'It should be stressed in the Conference decision that the youth of the colonial and semi-colonial countries will achieve the realisation of their rights only through the irreconcilable struggle for their freedom and national independence, against the forces of imperialism and reaction.'

In the last paragraph of the 'Instructions' entitled 'On the tasks of strengthening unity of the youth movement in these countries and the development of ties with the World Democratic Youth via WFDY and IUS', the importance of the struggle against efforts on the part of leaders of some bourgeois national organisations to divide the youth was stressed, as was the importance of the creation of mass organisations of working youth in factories, schools and villages in Southeast Asian countries. It was suggested that in India and Indonesia a youth magazine should be published for Southeast Asian countries. The importance of training personnel and leaders for the youth organisations was further stressed. It was suggested that 'the Soviet delegation should agree to a proposal to leave one or two WFDY activists for a long period of time in one of the countries which participated at the Conference for the realisation of this task' and should also 'adopt a resolution on the creation in India of a permanent section of the Colonial Bureau, which would work under the guidance of the WFDY Secretariat'. The Soviet delegates were also instructed to advocate widely the success of the building of socialism in the USSR, especially in the Asian republics.

On 22 March 1948, the Soviet delegation presented to the Secretaries of the CC AUCP (B) – Zhdanov, Kouznetzov, Suslov and Popov – a secret account 'On the results of the Youth Conference of Southeast Asian Countries' signed by the Secretary of the CC of Komsomol N. Mikhailov.⁴⁹

The account began with general information about the participants, the agenda and the proceedings of the Conference. On the first issue 'The struggle of the Southeast Asian youth against imperialism, for national independence and freedom, peace and democracy', reports were presented by China and Vietnam, while a number of other delegations, including Indonesia, Burma and Malaya, took part in the discussions. The account pointed out that 'all speeches were of a militant anti-imperialist character. The delegates spoke about the treacherous role of the national bourgeoisie, which made deals with Anglo-American, French and Dutch imperialism.'

On the second issue, 'The situation and needs of the youth of Southeast Asia', reports were presented by delegates from India, Pakistan, Malaya and Burma. In the reports and the discussions they advised of the grave situation of, and the deprivation of civil rights among, youth in these countries. At this session, a Soviet delegate, Kharlamov, delivered a salutary address in the name of Soviet youth.

49 Ibid., f.17 o.128 d.427 l.46–58.

'His words about the Soviet Union and Comrade Stalin were greeted with a great ovation, many cries from the audience in honour of the Soviet people, and Comrade Stalin.' The account noted that the 'reports of the representatives from Uzbekistan and Khazakhstan, in which they depicted in detail the life of young people in the Soviet Central Asian republics, were listened to with great attention'.

On the whole the Conference proceeded in a convivial atmosphere. Only once was there discord, when the brothers and associates of Subhas Chandra Bose tried to force the participants of the Conference to endorse Bose's actions during the World War II, directed against the Western powers. The account noted that 'The Preparatory Committee members were taken aback and were ready to meet Bose's demands. But after talks with the leadership of the Soviet youth delegation, the members of the Preparatory Committee understood their mistake' and the Bose brothers' proposal was rejected.

According to the account, 'the Conference on every issue adopted resolutions which are in accordance with the "Instructions" given to the Soviet delegation'. The Conference unanimously supported the national liberation struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism, condemned the policies of Dutch and French imperialists, who were being assisted by Anglo-American imperialism, and called on youth to prevent their realisation, and advocated the rights and needs of colonial youth, in particular the elimination of the feudal land system and the nationalisation of key branches of industry. The Conference underlined the importance of the unity of young people and pointed out that the struggle against the American warmongers, which was being carried on by WFDY, constituted direct and important assistance to the Southeast Asian youth.

Further, the account described mass actions which were carried out during the Conference: a demonstration under the slogan 'Hands off Asia!' where the young people also cried 'Young people unite, attack, win!', 'Long live the Soviet Union!', and 'Long live the People's Revolution!'. At the meeting which followed, participants glorified Generalissimo Stalin. All this was repeated at other meetings and mass actions.

The Soviet delegation had meetings and discussions with youth delegations of other countries. The account advised that these discussions dealt with problems of the Southeast Asian youth movement and topics on life in the USSR, its achievements in the sphere of science, culture and education. A Soviet documentary film about the lives of Soviet youth was shown to the Conference participants and great numbers of people. These film shows always turned into manifestations glorifying Stalin and the USSR.

The account noted that the Indian government had a 'far from favourable' attitude towards the Conference, that the government-controlled newspapers ignored the Conference, and that the Soviet delegates' speeches were published in detail without distorting its essence. Furthermore, the account gave an evaluation of the political, economic and social situation in India as seen by the Soviet delegates. They noted the absence of any desire in the Indian government to carry out reforms, aggravation of the bourgeoisie's reactionary nature, and the growth of US propaganda. The account proposed that Soviet propaganda in India as well as work among the country's youth should be activated.

For our research the concluding pages of the account are of the utmost interest. 'During the Soviet youth delegation's stay in India it was contacted by Dr Ram Nook Tak.⁵⁰ On 27 February 1948 in Calcutta Dr. Tak expressed the following considerations:

On the situation in Indonesia. Dr. Tak said that the latest developments in Indonesia and in particular the conclusion of the Renville agreement testify to the opportunistic and capitulatory policy of the Indonesian party [Communist Party], which was unable to head the mass movement and transferred the leadership to bourgeois parties. Dr. Tak is of opinion that all that was won with blood was surrendered without struggle. In Indonesia during their war the progressive forces were too much busy with international propaganda, the establishment of diplomatic relations and the like, but did not pay enough attention to the real unification of inner forces and as a result lost them.

In Burma, according to Dr. Tak, the situation is not bad. Everything is under the control of the 'Marxist League', which coexists with the Communist party. According to Dr. Tak, there is no principal difference between them, the programs and the slogans on the whole coincide, but there exist disagreements and personal enmity in the leadership of the League and the Communist party...

In the situation of Southeast Asia nowadays, Burma in Dr. Tak's opinion, is the most progressive democratic country after Vietnam. It is very important, Dr. Tak stressed, to establish diplomatic relations between Burma and the USSR, because Vietnam has very close ties with Burma. The Vietnamese people's army is moving, fighting towards the Burmese frontier in order to have an opportunity to receive arms and materials, which were promised by the Burmese, without hindrance.

Dr. Tak is of opinion, that the common feature of the Southeast Asia's parties is the abundance in the 'ultra-left' groups. They can not see the difference between strategy and tactics, between principles and tactics. After they acquired the ABC of Marxism-Leninism they are now suffering the growing pains of 'leftism'. There are a lot of Trotskyist elements which are hostile to the Soviet Union. Tak stated, that almost all the Communist parties are lacking trained and experienced personnel, have almost no connections with the Informbureau of the Communist parties in Yugoslavia and have no possibility because of the lack of currency to receive sufficient copies of the newspaper 'For the Lasting Peace, for the People's Democracy'. Tak asked to assist in the matter.

... Further Dr. Tak asked to inquire if the Soviet Union were able to help Vietnam in the matter of foreign currency (American dollars, British pounds), referring to the information that in China and in the Philippines it is possible to acquire a sufficient amount of arms.

Tak was stressing the urgency of getting assistance in Party and military personnel, as until the present the fighting was carried mostly with guerrilla methods. Now that the decisive phase is approaching, there is need of experienced military personnel. ...

50 Phạm Ngọc Thạch (1909–68), head of the Vietnamese delegation to the Delhi youth conference. He had led a revolutionary youth group in Vietnam prior to 1945, was later appointed as a member of the provisional Nam Bo (southern) administration and then as the chairman of the Sai Gon-Gia Dinh Administrative Resistance Committee. Subsequently he became the first Health Minister of the DRV. He was also famed for his research on malaria, and a hospital and medical university were posthumously named after him. For some biographical details in English, see Ham Chau, 'Pham Ngoc Thach: A physician and revolutionary', *Vietnamese Studies*, 147 (2003): 48–52.

Especially there is a need for air power (it is lacking altogether) and heavy artillery. ... Tak asked to help in every way in the propaganda of the Vietnam Constitution all over the world and in dissemination of other materials...

Dr. Tak arrived in India with the official mission to express condolences to the Indian government headed by Nehru in connection with Ghandi assassination. At the same time the Party commissioned him to lead the Vietnam delegation at the youth Conference and to establish ties with the Communist parties of Burma and other countries. ...

In conclusion Tak asked to pay fraternal regards to the AUCP(B) and the great leader Comrade Stalin.

The Soviet delegations' Calcutta Conference account was apparently first of all read in the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B). Regarding the account, there was sent to Suslov's Secretariat the following covering letter, written by the head of the Southeast Asian sector Plishevskii:⁵¹

The issues connected with Vietnam were reported separately to Comrade Suslov M.A. on 16.III.48. Besides on 2.IV.48. an information letter from Pham Hgok Thak dated 27 February 1948 which was received through Com Kharlamov (CC of Komsomol) was directed to Com Suslov. In the letter there were stated all the issues, which the present note contains.⁵²

Concerning the situation in Indonesia a special report was written in February 1948 for the members of Politbureau. The situation has not changed since then. On the issue of bad connections with Informbureau and difficulties in getting the newspaper 'For the Lasting Peace, for the People's Democracy' Com Yudin will be informed during his next visit to Moscow.

In other respects the material contains information and does not need action.

Conclusion

While the Soviet leadership instigated the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist ardour on the part of the Soviet and the world communist-oriented youth in their propaganda activity, in resolutions, speeches and in the press, the CC AUCP (B) strongly rejected all practical efforts of the Soviet youth leaders to put these slogans into practice. The Soviet leadership harshly criticised the youth activists who took seriously the propaganda rhetoric and tried to realise it.

Though the Foreign Policy Department of the CC AUCP (B) tried to follow the situation closely as well as developments in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, especially the communist activities; the Soviet Communist party up to the spring of 1948 kept a certain distance from communist activity there, and tried not to get involved in inner developments in these countries.

Although the Southeast Asian communists were eager to get more assistance from the USSR, including material help such as arms shipment, the USSR refrained from this and did not even maintain regular ties with Southeast Asian communist

51 Ibid., 159.

52 Apparently this covering letter was attached to the short paraphrase of the Soviet youth delegation's account.

parties. The Soviet leadership was not even sure about the victory of the national liberation struggle in these countries.

The main aim of the USSR in the period still was the confrontation with the Western powers both in the region and in the world, including the weakening of American, British, French and Dutch influence in Indonesia and other countries of Southeast Asia.