RED IS THE BLOOD OF THE PEOPLE:

PODCASTING THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

by

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Submitted to

Central European University

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary – Tokyo, Japan 2022

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Abstract

Red is the Blood of the People is a narrative podcast on marginalized stories of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1989). One of Britain's "small wars," the Malayan Emergency remains a controversial issue in public discourse, in part due to the chronopolitics of memory in Malaysia. The Emergency coincided with the global Cold War, but in the Asian context, one could argue that it was one of the more significant aftershocks of the Japanese Occupation during World War II. After Malaya gained independence in 1957, the guerrilla continued in hilly jungles of Malaya. The political elite who inherited the Peninsula also inherited an anti-communist stance. Ethno-nationalism, as well as the need to build a Malayan identity, continue to colour and censor public discourse on the event.

As a public history project catering to those interested in the history of Malaysia, this podcast will span five episodes. In this paper, I provide a concise historical context of Malaya and the Emergency. To show the academic considerations taken in the process of script-writing, I trace the state of public memory of the event, as well as show how chronopolitics, prior and after the Emergency, affect present collective memory. I then turn to a discussion of History Podcasts as a genre. After reflecting on the problem of "narrative," first posed by Hayden White, I review the sources used in the podcast. To conclude, I document the concept note and explain the next steps involved in producing the podcast.

Introduction: Project Overview

> Professional historians have made good use of the creation of the past as a distinct entity, a creation that paralleled the growth of their own practice. That practice, in turn, reinforced the belief that made it possible. The more historians wrote about past worlds, the more The Past became real as a separate world. But as various crises of our times impinge upon identities thought to be long established or silent, we move closer to the era when professional historians will have to position themselves more clearly within the present, lest politicians, magnates, or ethnic leaders alone write history for them.
>
> — Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

Trouillot's call-to-action considers the extent to which "The Past" is removed from the present. On one hand, the focus on The Past can also divert attention from "present injustices for which previous generations only set the foundations."[1] On the other hand, practices of power and domination will inevitably renew itself again and again, and this renewal only happens in the present.[2] Thus, to write an "authentic" history is to contend with narratives of the past, with an acute awareness that any narrative is "a bundle of silences."[3]

My capstone project tackles the topic of the Malayan Emergency – a guerrilla war fought between the communist fighters of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) and Commonwealth forces between 1948 to 1960. Public memory in Malaysia surrounding this significant event is scant, to say the least. Until recently, the Malayan Emergency has been the domain of academic historians. Artists, journalists, and performers have also attempted to bring the subject to life in film and theatre; these efforts are often met with state censorship.[4]

The Malayan Emergency officially lasted between 1948 to 1960. It began when three Europeans were murdered by Chinese killing squads in Sungei Siput, Perak. Employing

[1] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2015), 150.
[2] Ibid, 149-53.
[3] Ibid, 27.
[4] See Chapter 2.

guerrilla tactics, the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) fought an anti-colonial war against British and Commonwealth forces in the jungles of Malaya. When Malaya gained independence in 1957, the CPM's struggle seemed to have lost its justification and support base. The guerrilla force withdrew northwards to Southern Thailand. The Malayan government declared that the Emergency was over, but Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese statesman persuaded the CPM to resurrect the war in 1961. On June 1968, the CPM announced revival the armed revolution in Malaya – they perceived this phase of action as a continuation of its Anti-British Liberation war. The CPM finally disbanded its army in 1989, following the signing of the Hatyai Peace Treaty with both the Thai and Malaysian governments.[5] In this paper, the term "Malayan Emergency" refers to the event as a whole, from 1948 to 1989. I also use the term "insurgency" and "revolt" to refer to the war as a whole.

Red is the Blood of the People is a narrative podcast series that is scheduled to go live in May 2023. The podcast will span about five episodes. It is aimed at those interested about Cold War History, Malaysian History, or Colonial History. Named after a Malay revolutionary song, the podcast uses primary source materials like memoirs, documentaries, and interview recordings to contrast the perspectives of the different actors in the war.[6] Additionally, this podcast is also meant to be immersive and entertaining, to best capture the attention of listeners. Thus, the episodes are plot and character driven, with commentary by the narrator in between.

Red is the Blood of the People was first conceived as a staged performance in 2019. I was approached by my longtime collaborator, Ethan David, to write a script for the

[5] Weichong Ong, *Malaysia's Defeat of Armed Communism : The Second Emergency, 1968-1989* (London: Routledge, 2014), 47-50.
[6] Fahmi Reza, *10 Tahun Sebelum Merdeka* (Youtube, 2007).

Short+Sweet festivals in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. An experimental 15-minute play resulted in this collaboration. The show was written in verses, speaking from the perspective of the ghosts of the deceased guerrilla fighters. Three actors – two Malaysians and one Singaporean – were invited onto the show. This collaboration resulted in the team winning Best Script, Best Director, Best Overall Play, and People's Choice Award in the Abu Dhabi festival. A significant part of the rehearsal process was discussing this historical event, as well as sharing a sense of angst in the discovery that an important piece of history has been obscured from us.

The current podcast installment of *Red is the Blood of the People* builds upon lessons learnt in the staged version of the show. In this supplement paper to the project, my goal is fourfold: (1) to provide a succinct history of Peninsula Malaya and discuss factors that led to the Malayan Emergency; (2) to take stock of public memory of the Emergency; (3) to document the intellectual and creative process involved in making this podcast; and (4) to take stock of the next steps involved and reflect upon areas of improvement.

A Brief History of Peninsula Malaya

Introduction: The Great Asian War

Tim Harper and Christopher Bayly introduces the idea of the "Great Asian War," which contextualizes World War II within the longer duration of Asian history. The Great Asian War is a connected arc of conflict that began in 1931 and ended in 1945.[7] It connects the crescent of land stretching from Bengal, through Burma, the Southern borderlands of Thailand, down the Malay Peninsula to Singapore.[8] It had its own holocausts, massacres of civilians, use of slave labour, and mass rape. In this perspective, battles in Asia are not merely minor theatres of a global war based in Europe. Rather, they embody the shifts in society and state, identity and political allegiances.[9]

All in all, the Great Asian War claimed 24 million lives in Japan-Occupied Asia, 3 million Japanese, and 3.5 million more in India through war-related famine. The first skirmishes began in 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria. [10] In 1945, when World War II "ended," most of Asia only experienced a pause in armed conflict. In nations like Myanmar, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the worst internal violence had yet to come. The continuing toll of famine, struggle for national freedom, and communal conflict claimed millions.

According to Harper, the Great Asian War must also be seen within Japan's broadening commercial and political engagement with the region. The Meiji era's self-strengthening models influenced both in the Islamic archipelago and on the Buddhist mainland. After World War I, a pan-Asian response began developing, and Southeast Asians

[7] Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010), 516.
[8] Ibid, 8.
[9] Tim Harper, 'A Long View on the Great Asian War', in *Legacies of World War II in South and East Asia*, ed. David Koh Wee Hock, 1st ed. (ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2007), 8.
[10] Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars,* 7-9.

responded to Japan's idea of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. [11] In fact, before 1945, "Southeast Asia" was not a widely used term. It only came about when a separate South East Asia Command was formed in the Japanese military as an administrative unit. In a sense, Japan "made concrete" the idea of Southeast Asia.

Japan's occupation of Southeast Asia during World War II fundamentally changed the region's flow of people. Since medieval times, the Indian Ocean had been a cosmopolitan space of great social mobility. British colonialism brought an influx of Chinese and Indian labour. The diasporic networks also adopted politics from their homelands in Asia. For example, the Overseas Chinese community in Malaya followed the Second Sino-Japanese War in China closely, and raised funds for the war effort back home in the 1930s. However, during World War II, this free movement of people came to a halt. The largest migrations were enforced by the Japanese Army – they took the form of conscription for railway projects, as well as the flight of refugees from troubled areas.[12]

Regionally, other Southeast Asian countries underwent similar trajectories of anti-colonial armed struggle, but the political, economic, and social conditions that precipitated each conflict was unique – and so was the outcome. The Asian world, as Harper and Bayly puts it, was undergoing the most intense birth pangs.[13] In Vietnam, communists led the independence struggle, and waged war against the French between 1946 to 1954. In Indonesia, nationalists were firmly committed to independence when the Dutch returned in late 1945; Communists attempted to seize power in September 1948, but they were quickly overpowered and killed en masse.[14] The Malaysian case is thus not unique.

[11] Harper, 'A Long View on the Great Asian War', 9-10.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Christopher Bayly, preface to *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asian,* by Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010), xxvii.
[14] Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2021), 202-19.

Southeast Asia saw the drawing of new national boundaries in the wake of World War II. The forging of new national identities broke up older communities, who were now confronted by ethnic nationalisms. Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa writes that "The modern national state's need for geographical contiguity has almost everywhere seen ethnic enclaves included in larger, alien political units."[15] Indeed, as we will see, the forging of a "Malayan" or "Malaysian" identity in a multi-ethnic society had to contend with the status of the non-native immigrant community.

Pre-modern Southeast Asia and Malay States

But first, a brief history of the Malay Peninsula is in order. Before the British colonized Malaya, the peninsula was a part of the wider Indonesian-Malay world. Historians have used the mandala model to describe how power functions in the early kingdoms in Southeast Asia, as shown in Figure 1. Each kingdom is represented by concentric circles. Power rests in the centre, and as the circles move away, the influence of the king is attenuated. In the outer circles, the king might not govern directly, but employ local lords and strong men. In some places, the outer circles overlap. [16] Allegiance to more than one power-centre was possible, as there were no cut-and-dry land borders.

Along the sea coasts of the Malay Peninsula, sultans ruled states of varying sizes. Generally speaking, the northern states were linked to the Thai rulers, whilst the southern states had stronger diplomatic ties with sultanates in what is now Indonesia. [17] As aptly put by Harper, the Malay Peninsula was a fragmented and fluid political world – a constellation of

[15] Robert Cribb and Li Narangoa, 'Orphans of Empire: Divided Peoples, Dilemmas of Identity, and Old Imperial Borders in East and Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 1 (2004): 172.
[16] James R. Rush, *Southeast Asia: A Very Short Introduction*, *Southeast Asia: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press), accessed 21 June 2022, 29-32.
[17] Osborne, *Southeast Asia,* 95.

riverine kingdoms founded on state control of the river systems that winds into the hilly interior.[18]

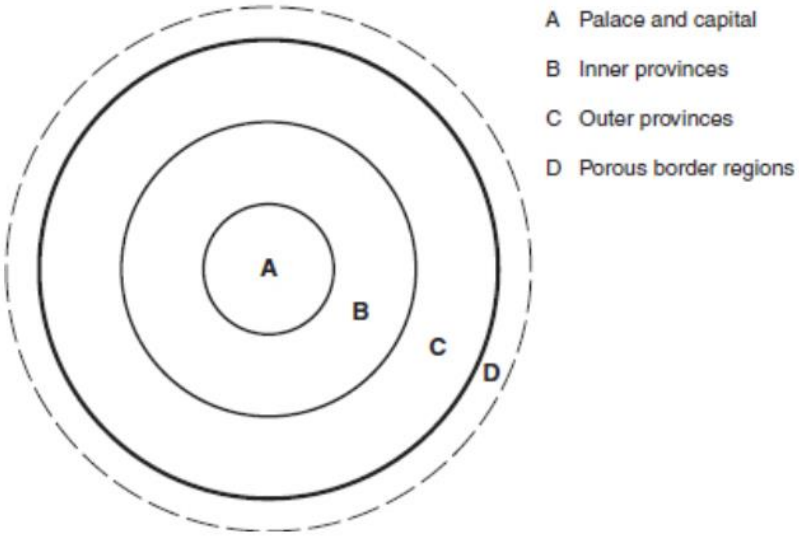

Fig. 1. The mandala model, showing the distribution of power in Southeast Asian Kingdoms. Source: Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2021), 54.

The first distinct early modern state in the Peninsula was Melaka, which served as an important entrepôt connecting the East and West. The mandala world of Melaka drew people and merchandise to the region, creating a cosmopolitan maritime state. Merchants near and far gathered to trade spices, porcelain, silks, and precious woods. The port also drew in Arabs, Indians, Chinese, and other Southeast Asian traders, some of whom chose to settle down and marry local women. The Melaka state is an integral part of the Malay, or Melayu identity. Courtly chronicles like Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals) and stories of Hang Tuah, its hero, continue to be a source of lineage and pride for the Malay cultural tradition.[19]

In early modern times, migration was a fundamental feature of Malay civilizations. It brought Hindu and Islamic influences to the region, as well as Chinese diplomats and

[18] T. N. Harper, *End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 16.
[19] Ibid, 15.

traders.[20] In the 18th and 19th century, the peninsula saw a series of interloping kings and communal colonisations of land by migrants from other parts of the Malay archipelago. Populations moved downwards on the Peninsula from Patani and Kelantan, and migrants from Sulawesi, Aceh, and Mandaling moved up to North-West region. [21] These Malay Settlements form distinct regional identities. The power struggle between these states would soon be exploited by the encroaching colonial force.

The Colonial Advance

European expansion into Southeast Asia begin in the early 16th century – when Portuguese forces captured Melaka in 1511. Following that, the Dutch became the rulers of Melaka in 1641. British colonization of the Peninsula formally began in 1786, when Penang Island became the first settlement. Subsequently, Singapore became a Settlement in 1819, followed by Melaka in 1824.

In the Dutch-Anglo Treaty of 1824, the British and Dutch defined separate spheres of influence in the archipelago, separated by the Strait of Malacca, which allowed each colonial power the freedom to expand without interference from the other. The Straits Settlements reported to the British East India Company in Calcutta, India. These territories were granted Crown Colony status in 1876.

The 19th century also saw local dynamics clashing with the new patterns of international trade. With the expansion of the Straits Settlements' economy, political change also took hold in the other parts of the Peninsula. For example, in 1873, a power dispute in Perak lead to the appointment of a British Resident. By 1909, "Malaya" began to take shape. British Malaya was a patchwork of administrative units, comprising of the Straits

[20] For more on the history of Chinese migration in Southeast Asia, see Gungwu Wang, 'Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia', in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 1–14.
[21] Harper, *End of Empire*, 16.

Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and the Unfederated Malay states. The gradual progress of British advance in the Peninsula is shown below.[22]

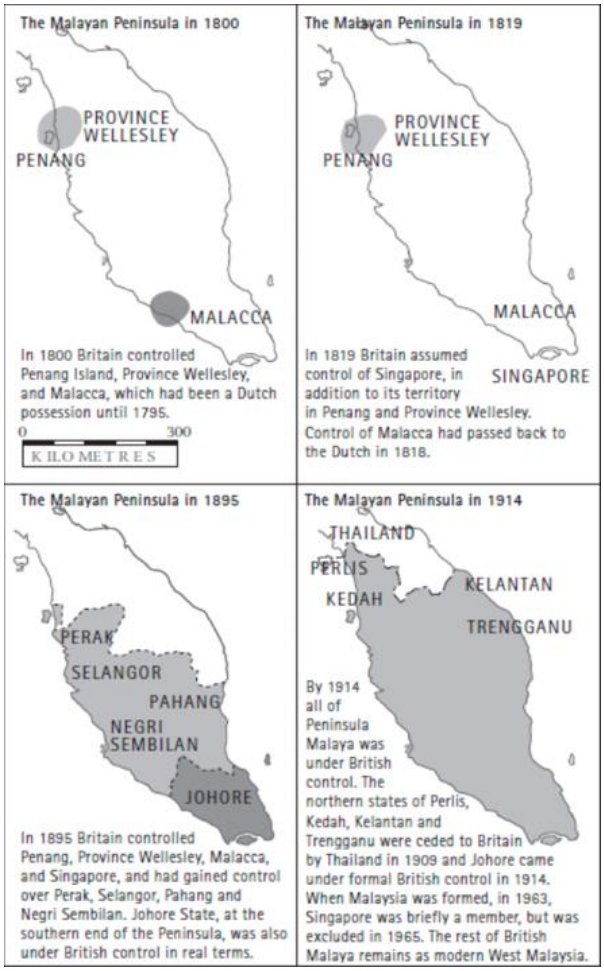

Fig. 2. The stages of British colonialism in Peninsula Malaysia (1800-1914). Source: Milton Osborne, *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2021), 97.

British Malaya in the Making: Tin and Rubber

The Industrial Revolution in Europe drove the acceleration of colonial exploration and conquest. Colonies were perceived as "essential elements" in the economic network, tasked to supply raw materials to the industrial countries of Europe.[23] In Malaya, tin and rubber were the top profiting exports for the colonial government, even after the Second

[22] Ibid, 18.
[23] Osborne, *Southeast Asia*, 102.

World War. The management of resources became a justification for extending the colonial frontier during the 19th century – at the expense of Malay States who were determined to keep some semblance of independence, but also keen on increasing revenue.[24]

Harper proposes that the colonial state was founded on four pillars: one, a reformed, professionalised administration; two, the introduction of the rule of property; three, the creation of new centres of power; and four, the enhanced technological competence of the government. Harper further posits that the goal of state-building was to impose increasingly effective controls over the labour of Malayan peoples. [25] One such instrument of control was forest laws and colonial forestry. In pre-colonial times, uncleared land was open to access and use – and the customary rights of usufruct apply. Without land taxes, rulers used to collect dues on jungle produce exports.[26] This changed in the 19th century, when rights of usufruct were changed to proprietary rights for settled agricultural land tenure. This new legal framework also gave the State custodial claims to all marketable goods.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, Chinese firms exploited tin with permission from local Malay authorities. The relationship between the miners and local lords was mutually beneficial, as the former would pay taxes to the latter. From the 1870s onwards, tin mining enterprises in the Malay states expanded rapidly, together with British political power in the Peninsula. Across the expansive wilderness that characterized most of the Peninsula, mining towns and camps would move on to new areas whenever the alluvial cassiterite deposits have been depleted. Osborne clarifies that although Chinese mining enterprises have existed in Malaya since pre-colonial times, the advent of British capital did much to expand its scale.

[24] Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature and Nation: Forests and Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 139.
[25] Harper, *End of Empire*, 23.
[26] Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, *Nature and Nation*, 12.

Malaya's tin mining industry remained out of the hands of the Malays, who was regarded by the British as the true "natives" of British Malaya.[27]

Next to tin, rubber was another important resource in the British colony. Vulcanisation – the stabilization of the raw rubber – was made successful by Charles Goodyear in the 1830s. Originally a South American cultivar, rubber was brought to Malaya by Henry Ridley, a botanist and entrepreneur. Peninsula Malaya had no rubber plantations before the 1880s, but by the 1970s, they have become a common feature on the Malayan landscape. Rubber plantations accounted for almost 65% of all cultivated land, with one-third of the agriculture labour force working in the industry. Again, this workforce was not drawn from the indigenous population, but from the British colonies of India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).[28]

In short, new forest laws shifted traditional ways of economy and living. Management of resources and extension of colonial power went hand-in-hand. The foremost commitment of colonial rule was to open up the peninsula for its resources. To commodify the forests, both land and people had to be administered. Traditional ways of agriculture, like shifting cultivation, became restricted by forest laws. The loss of free access to land impacted the Malays and forest-dependent aborigines the most, as the forest laws limited the fluidity of movement. While Malays became contained in "Malay Reservations" for paddy cultivation, the aborigines were displaced from the lowlands and forced to move inwards.[29] As immigration to the peninsula increased, migrant labour began settling according to their economic functions. The result was a policy of "divide and rule" that physically separated the different Malayan communities.

[27] Osborne, *Southeast Asia*, 106.
[28] Ibid, 111.
[29] For extended discussion on the "Original Peoples of Malaya," which includes the Malays and the variety of indigenous or aboriginal peoples, see Manickam, *Taming the Wild*, 1-5.

World War One and the Beginnings of Nationalism

Malaya's involvement in the First World War was limited. Beyond a gunship battle in the Straits of Malacca, known as the Battle of Penang, the Peninsula saw little action.[30] However, the First World War was still biting in terms of its economic impact. Rubber, as a source of considerable wealth, filled the coffers of the British government and provided an essential war commodity. In 1914, Malaya's rubber exports rose to 37.8% of the world's total. When the First World War ended in 1918, this number rose to 50.2%.[31] Still, the rubber industry was highly volatile to change, and those impacted occupied the lowest rungs of the economic ladder. For instance, when London temporarily suspended the transfer of funds to Malaya at the outbreak of war, many plantations workers' wages were left unpaid. On top of that, manpower in the plantations greatly reduced, as both Indians and Europeans left to fight the war.[32]

As aptly surmised by Harper, if the First World War shook the foundation of European power, a slump and a second war brought it to the ground.[33] The racialized labour economy of Malaya ensured that the depression of the inter-war years were felt unevenly by different communities in Malaya – and this discontent evolved into various strains of nationalism. Under war conditions, Chinese businesses remained resilient, but fears of land shortage began to worry the Malays. Muslim students returning from the Middle East brought along ideas of Reformed Islam, and they argued for its applicability in Malaya. By the 1930s, Malay political life began to flourish, with the publication of Malay newspapers such as

[30] The Battle of Penang occurred on 28th October, 1914, in which the German cruiser SMS sank two Allied warships.
[31] Embong Abdul Rahman, 'The First World War (1914-1918) and Its Economic and Political Impacts on British Malaya', *Southeast Asian Social Science Review* 3, no. 2 (November 2018): 88-9.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Harper, *End of Empire*, 27.

Warta Malaya and *Utusan Melayu*. The Malay ideologues were often divided on whether Malays drew their heritage from descent, history, territorial homeland, or Islam. [34]

The interwar years were a key time in the development of domestic politics. First, Malay disillusionment towards the British rose to new heights, and this discontent is translated into political activism. Elsewhere, the migrant communities also found political platforms on external issues. The Chinese community followed political developments in China closely. Chinese-led organisations launched fundraisers, night schools, boycotts, and reading clubs in response to Japan's invasion of Manchuria. The Malayan Communist Party was formed in April 1930, attended by Ho Chi Minh.[35] Malayan Indians also began their political activism by engaging with their compatriots on the other side of the Bay of Bengal. New structures of government, like the Agent of the Government of India in Malaya, allowed Indians to govern Indian labour for the first time.[36]

The Japanese Occupation and A Population Disarrayed

The Japanese invasion of Malaya began shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbour. The attacks began on December 8th, 1941, and by February 16th, 1942, all of Malaya and Singapore had fallen. The three years of Japanese rule devastated the economy and population. For Malayans who witnessed their British employers fleeing from the invaders, the myth of the White Man's superiority melted away. This shift propelled the budding independence and nationalist movements to new heights. At the same time, the pressures of war pushed the Chinese population out of urban centres and into the forest.

For the Chinese in Malaya, the invasion was a nightmare brought to life. As mentioned earlier, Chinese politics in Malaya responded to developments in China. When the

[34] Ibid, 27-8.
[35] Ibid, 33-4.
[36] Sunil S. Amrith, 'Indians Overseas? Governing Tamil Migration to Malaya 1870–1941', *Past & Present*, no. 208 (2010): 249-50.

Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-45) erupted, many Malayan Chinese responded by boycotting Chinese goods and organizing relief funds for the homeland. The Anti-Japanese campaign in Malaya involved Chinese of all social classes – merchants and laborers alike participated. [37] Shortly after Japan captured Malaya and Singapore, Japanese troops launch Operation *Sook Ching* (purification by elimination), massacring large numbers of Chinese in Singapore and Malaya.

According to Cheah Boon Kheng, this operation's objective is threefold: one, to eliminate anti-Japanese elements in the population that could pose a threat; two, to punish the Overseas Chinese for their support of China and anti-Japanese resistance; three, to extort the Chinese into shelling out 50 million yen as a "gift of atonement."[38] Under this scheme, an estimated amount of 5,000 to 50,000 men were killed by the 25th Army.[39] Communities were detained in concentration camps, where hooded informers silently pointed out individuals involved in anti-Japanese organisations.[40] The betrayals witnessed during this time sowed the seeds for future revenge. Many Chinese fled urban centres and townships to join the growing unemployed coolies on the forest edge. Without Forest Laws, these squatters eked out a living by farming, often encroaching into previously-designated Malay Reservations.[41] After the return of the British in 1945, this population dispersal also meant losing the robust labour reservoir. In addition, it also reflected the colonial state's loss of political control over remote areas.

[37] Souchou Yao, *The Malayan Emergency: Essays on a Small, Distant War* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2016), 27-8.
[38] Boon Kheng Cheah, 'Japanese Army Policy towards the Chinese and Malay-Chinese Relations in Wartime Malaya', in *Southeast Asian Minorities in the Wartime Japanese Empire*, ed. Paul H. Kratoska (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), 97–110.
[39] Depending on who you ask, this number varies. Japanese estimates range from 5,000 to 11,110, while Singaporean estimates run as high as 50,000. See Hayashi Hirofumi, 'The Battle of Singapore, the Massacre of Chinese and Understanding of the Issue in Postwar Japan', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Japan Focus, 7, no. 28 (13 July 2009): 2.
[40] Cheah, 'Japanese Army Policy,' 100.
[41] Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells, 'The Environmental Impacts of Japan's Occupation of West Malaysia (1942-45) and Its Socio-Economic Implications', *Global Environment* 5, no. 10 (2012): 113-4.

It was during the Japanese Occupation period that the Communist Party of Malaya began to take up arms, in the form of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). The MPAJA found support amongst the rural Chinese and aboriginal communities. According to British estimates, the MPAJA had a force of 3,500 fighting men and women.[42] The guerrillas depended on the supply lines of squatter communities on jungle fringes as well as the vital intelligence of the aboriginal people, who shared valuable knowledge of jungle survival.[43] The experience of the CPM during the Japanese Occupation would prove to be valuable during the Malayan Emergency.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a concise history of the Malay Peninsula up to the Second World War. The Malay archipelago has long been a region of intense migration and trade. The colonial advance on the Peninsula regimented this process, and legal frameworks on land use forced traditionally mobile populations into settlements. The making of a plural society in Malaysia began in early modern times – but colonialism systematized the relationship between ethnicity and economic function in the colony. The austerity of the world wars foregrounded the rise of nationalism and dreams of independence, but the returning British were eager to return to business as usual. As we shall see in the next chapter, the social crises proceeding the Second World War would erupt into a full blown war.

[42] C.C. Chin and Karl Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party* (NUS Press, 2004), 5.
[43] Kathirithamby-Wells, 'The Environmental Impacts of Japan's Occupation of West Malaysia,' 113.

Mapping the Memory of the Malayan Emergency

Introduction: The Cold War and the Empire's Retreat

Imperial historian Jack Gallagher once described Britain's global withdrawal as such: "At last, without convulsion, without tremor and without agony, the great ship goes down."[44] At the end of World War II, the British Empire dismantled in Asia and other parts of the world. India, Pakistan, and Burma gained independence in 1947, and in the following year Ceylon followed suit. The same happened in Malaya in 1957. In 1963, The Federation of Malaysia was formed with the addition of Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore. As stated by Souchou Yao, It seemed, on the surface, to be a "good" case of decolonization – it left a working economy, a Westminster system of government and a stable, peaceful multi-ethnic society.[45]

Gallagher's "great ship" imagery is not an uncommon narrative. At the end of the war, British politicians had to come to terms with the gap between Britain's post-war situation and her colonial responsibility. No longer could it afford to keep its empire. However, it was politically and economically beneficial to "make decolonization look good." Bernard Porter suggests three reasons for this outlook. First, the goodwill of former colonies was important as it could lead to "informal" ties, like trade and defence treaties. Second, the Labour government had to avoid giving the impression of a hasty retreat, and showing that they would "abandon" their responsibilities when the going gets tough – this was important for Britain domestically. Third, the British also needed to project strength and control,

[44]John Gallagher, *The Decline, Revival and Fall of the British Empire: The Ford Lectures and Other Essays*, ed. Anil Seal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 153.
[45] Yao, *The Malayan Emergency*, 1-2.

especially to show that their relinquishing of power was a calculated move that has been intended all along.[46]

For the colonies, decolonization was not "without tremor" nor "agony." The Malayan case has shown us that decolonization is a drawn out and messy process. Britain's counterinsurgency effort stretched worldwide – from Kenya (1952-56), Cyprus (1952-1959), Palestine (1947-1948), to Greece (1946-1949). When the Malayan Emergency began, many policemen called to serve in the colony had previously dealt with Jewish and Arab terrorist in Palestine.

In a sense, Malaya's experience of a communist, anti-colonial insurrection was not unique. Still, the Malayan Emergency remains one of the "forgotten wars" from the Cold War era.[47] At its peak in 1952, the Emergency involved 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops, almost 67,000 police and special constables, as well as more than 250,000 Home Guards.[48] The conflict saw atrocities unleashed by both the colonial forces as well as communist ones. The Emergency Regulations armed the government with draconian powers. It allowed the police to detail any person without trial for up to two years. Possession of arms and fireworks became a punishable offence. Police were also empowered to impose curfews and controls on movement and food.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first shows how the Second World War, the Malayan Spring, and the Malayan Emergency are connected. The second section concerns memory – how the Malayan Emergency continues to feature in public and scholarly

[46] Bernard Porter, review of *Trying to Make Decolonisation Look Good*, by Ronald Hyam, Peter Clarke, and Christopher Bayly, *London Review of Books*, 2 August 2007, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v29/n15/bernard-porter/trying-to-make-decolonisation-look-good.

[47] The term "forgotten war" has been used frequently in scholarship on the Emergency. See Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010), Tim Jones, *SAS: The First Secret Wars: The Unknown Years of Combat and Counter-Insurgency* (London: I.B. Tauris and Company, 2010), and Souchou Yao, *The Malayan Emergency: A Small, Distant War*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies 133 (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2016).

[48] Karl Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear: Malaya and the British Way of Counter-Insurgency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (1 October 2012): 671.

discourse, and how ethnic hierarchies and national ideologies continue to shape the collective memory of the Emergency.

Making a Deal with the Devil: The British-CPM Wartime Alliance

According to the memoir of the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) proposed an alliance with the British shortly after Axis powers invaded the Soviet Union. The CPM contacted the British's intelligence agency, the Special Branch, to offer CPM recruits for military training in preparation for an imminent war. This proposal was rejected.[49] However, as the Japanese advance progressed in December 1941, the British changed their tune. A stay-behind unit, Force 136, was set up by Chinese and British officers, to join the MPAJA in their jungle hideouts.[50] The agreement between the CPM and the British were written and signed on a notebook paper. It stipulates that the communists would help Force-136 in navigating the jungle and establishing contact with clandestine troops sent by the British military. In return, the British would equip the MPAJA with weapons, medical supplies, and funds.[51]

After the war, the CPM enjoyed official recognition as a legal entity. Its August 1945 statement welcomed the British's return and called for the introduction of self-government, administrative reforms, civil liberties and the improvement of livelihoods.[52] The CPM remained suspicious of the British, however, and after the MPAJA was disbanded in December 1945, many guerrillas did not surrender their weapons.[53] The CPM turned to other means of agitation and reform. A more defined "Malayan Left" emerged as a new political parties began working with one another. Together with other trade and labour unions, the

[49] Peng Chin, *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), 60.
[50] Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, 4.
[51] For the full print of the British-CPM agreement, see Chin, *My Side of History*, 12-13.
[52] Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, 256.
[53] Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 32.

CPM successfully organised multiple general strikes in 1947, threatening to cripple the colonial economy.

The End of World War II and the Malayan Spring

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 led to Japan's surrender to Allied forces. However, it took the British three weeks to recover Malaya. During this interregnum period, violence broke out in Malaya as the MPAJA descended from the mountains and set up skeleton governments in areas like Negeri Sembilan, Johor Bahru, and Selangor, among others. They also set up kangaroo courts to take revenge on alleged collaborators with the Japanese. Due to the tensions accumulated during the British and Japanese regime, the animosity between Malays and Chinese erupted into communal violence. Mustapha Hussein, a Malay radical activist, wrote, "Abductions and killings were rampant. Kampong folks, suddenly drawn to chaos, moved in indescribable fear."[54]

In early September 1945, the returning British were confronted by socioeconomic chaos. The British Military Administration (BMA) was set up to reinstall colonial rule. Determined that a "Malayan" national identity must be established, the BMA set out to revise many of its pre-war policies. Victor Purcell, the advisor on Chinese affairs in the BMA, insisted that " 'utmost freedom' be allowed so that political parties could emerge and 'achieve a balance of power amongst themselves."[55] The reasoning behind this policy was that home grown politics had to be cultivated so that colonial subjects would be loyal to Malaya. The main vehicle of Malay nationalism, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was founded during this time. Together with other ethnic-based parties, UMNO would go on to inherit post-Independence Malaya.

[54] Mustapha Hussain, *Malay Nationalism Before UMNO: The Memoirs of Mustapha Hussain*, (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publishers, 2005), 288, quoted in Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 42.
[55] Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 100.

As a result the BMA's new liberal approach, political activism flourished. Laws that previously controlled speech, assembly, trade unions, publications, and societies were suspended. These new governance strategy gave rise to a period known as the Malayan Spring, during which vibrant and diverse political activity took hold of Malaya and many prominent leftist leaders and parties came into being. Post-war economic troubles also contributed to the vibrancy of the Malayan Spring. Though the British were desperate to resume industries, they now face the problem of a scattered workforce, as well as a large population of squatter occupying useful lands. Beginning in late 1947, tensions began to intensify on rubber estates and land reserves. European companies called for the removal of squatter settlements in order to replant crops, while Malay politicians reclaimed their rights over Malay Reservations. Squatters and laborers – often one and the same – retaliated by evading officials, changing their names, and hiding crops.[56]

Population Control as Counterinsurgency

When the Emergency broke out in June 1948, British counterinsurgency measures were initially ineffective and time-consuming. Commanders learnt that for every one guerrilla eliminated, at least a thousand hours of patrolling was required.[57] Historian and veteran John Nagl describes the operations as "learning to eat soup with a knife."[58] At the heart of the problem was the dense tropical landscapes in which the guerrillas operated, as well as the popular support garnered by the CPM in wartime. While the state initially tackled

[56] Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*, 420-3.
[57] Ibid, 442.
[58] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, ed. General Peter J. Schoomaker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

the guerrillas by deploying traditional military tactics, it soon realized that killing off the insurgents were not enough.

In 1950, British General Harold Briggs became Director of Operations in Malaya, and instated the "Brigg's Plan." Scholars tend to agree that the Brigg's Plan involved "the complete reimagining and remapping of Malaya's landscape and social geography."[59] Although the plan purported to win the war through "hearts and minds," what it really entailed was movement control and detention. The Brigg's Plan tackles specifically the spatial distribution of the Malayan population, by a) designating "White" and "Black" areas, and b) forcefully relocating about 500,000 people into camps euphemistically called "New Villages."

The Brigg's Plan sought to resettle the Chinese population, now scattered across the peninsula across urban and rural areas. In 1945, the government estimated that 400,000 Chinese squatters lived in the colony.[60] The Brigg's Plan oversaw rural Chinese squatters pushed into new urban and village spaces located close to colonial infrastructure such as railways, roads, and rubber plantations.[61] Hence, beyond removing the guerrillas' support base, the counter-insurgency campaign was also able to confine the Chinese population into controllable, highly surveilled spaces, and clear up illegally occupied lands. Addressing the parceling and division of Malaya's landscape during this time, Baillargeon argues that the scheme not only aims to develop a new citizenry. It also addresses the "short term aspect of security" and the "long term aspect of land policy."[62]

In "Black" areas, people were subjected to curfews, food restrictions, and travel bans. In "White" areas, some of these measures were relaxed, though not entirely. The parameters

[59] David Baillargeon, 'Spaces of Occupation: Colonial Enclosure and Confinement in British Malaya', *Journal of Historical Geography* 73 (1 July 2021): 30.
[60] Baillargeon, 'Spaces of Occupation,' 31.
[61] Ibid, 30.
[62] Ibid, 32.

used to classify the two are ill-defined, as the state would base their classification based on the perceived degree of cooperation between local inhabitants and the communists. When the Emergency started, almost all of the Peninsula was marked black. In September 1953, the first "White" area was declared. Gradually, the government would expand the program, declaring large areas across Malaya as "White." According to Baillargeon, the declaration of a "White" area symbolized much more than freedom of movement – it also showed the public that there are benefits to resisting communism. [63]

The forced relocation strategy severed many of the squatters from their self-sustaining livelihoods. Coinciding with the Korean War is the boom in the business of rubber. Stripped of their livestock, the Chinese peasantry now became captive labour for British estates.[64] the Brigg's Plan proved to be more than a reorganization of space and population spread – it also changed the traditional lifestyles of those interned in the camps, ushering them towards racially segregated, urban living.

In order to win the Emergency, not only must the communists be confined away, they must be purged out of the forests and out of the country. Large-scale deportations to China were also carried out as part of the Brigg's Plan. In fact, the colonial state framed the Emergency as a racial one from the beginning. A state official said outright in 1948 that by deporting 25,000 – 50,000 Chinese per year might ease "the racial problem."[65] Between 1948-1955, over 31,000 people were deported, almost all of whom were Chinese.[66] As identity was conflated with political leanings, all Chinese became suspect to the colonial security forces. By racializing what was technically a civil war, the British were able to make

[63] Ibid.
[64] M. Sioh, 'Authorizing the Malaysian Rainforest: Configuring Space, Contesting Claims and Conquering Imaginaries', *ECUMENE* 5, no. 2 (April 1998): 157-8.
[65] Karl Hack, 'Detention, Deportation and Resettlement: British Counterinsurgency and Malaya's Rural Chinese, 1948–60', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43, no. 4 (8 August 2015): 16.
[66] Ibid, 17.

the problem a "foreign" one – one that can be resolved by reducing the Chinese population in Malaya.

Collective Memory and Chronopolitics

The raison d'être of this public history project is to address the silence surrounding the memory of the communist insurgency. Domestically, this memory is entangled with questions of citizenship, identity, and ethnicity. Internationally, the insurgency is often viewed in Cold War terms – as one of Britain's small wars in the East, in which the enemy has direct links to Moscow or Peking. Before diving into the writing process of the podcast, it was important to first identify the state of collective memory of the communist insurgency in Malaysia, as well as how the post-independence political climate shaped rememberings of this event.

What is collective memory, anyway? And how can memory be collective? The pioneering scholar Maurice Halbwachs states that no individual memory is truly individual, because "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."[67] For Aleida Assman, the term "collective memory" is just another title for ideology, because it singles out one particular explanation of the past to believe.[68] For other historians, like Patrick Hutton, memory is collective because it is preserved in the institutions of society, as laws, stories, rituals, rules, and tradition. The past is overtly institutionalized when it is nested in monuments and historical markers – in which case the memories is no longer individual.[69]

[67] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 43.
[68] Aleida Assmann, 'Transformations between History and Memory', *Social Research* 75, no. 1 (2008): 49–72.
[69] Patrick H Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Burlington: Univ. of Vermont, 1993), quoted in Katherine Walker, 'Collective Memory', in *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (Great Neck Publishing, 2021).

Carol Gluck argues that World War II saw the "nation-state" becoming the subject of sacrifice, and later, the subject of national memory.[70] As a result, war stories tend to meld into a single national narrative; victory, defeat, liberation or division congealed into an almost entirely national experience. Gluck surmises that "every country had its own 'chronopolitics' of memory, in which change in domestic and international politics over time created the conditions for changes in the memoryscape." [71]

Writing about the tragedy of October 6th, 1976 in Thailand, Tongchai Winichakul utilizes the term "chronopolitics of memory" to describe the "changing politics and discursive conditions that affect memories."[72] He argues that the present ambivalence and silence on the student massacre can be attributed to the layers of time and historical developments that has transpired in between. He also states

> forty years is not long enough to declare all the the memories dead, either the individual or the collective ones… But it is long enough for the memories of lived experiences to decline, shift, and alter through chronopolitics of memory and other conditions. It is long enough for the millennial generation to have acquired their secondhand memories from their elders and from living under the consequences and legacies of the massacre.[73]

In a similar vein to the Thai case, the Malayan Emergency's memory is not immediately apparent in the public sphere. The silences created under repression by martial law continued, especially as a new national discourse on Independence emerged. The united interests of Malaya's nationalist leadership and departing colonials ensured that "communism" retains a bad name in the peninsula. To sketch how chronopolitics affected collective memory in Malaysia, I look to a more recent event – the passing of Chin Peng, the Secretary-General of the CPM.

[70] Carol Gluck, 'Operations of Memory: "Comfort Women" and the World', in *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory, and the Post–Cold War in Asia*, ed. Sheila Miyoshi Jager (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2007), 44–77.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Thongchai Winichakul, *Moments of Silence: The Unforgetting of the October 6, 1976, Massacre in Bangkok*, *Moments of Silence* (University of Hawaii Press, 2020), 9.
[73] Ibid, 9-13.

Burying Malaya's Most Wanted

Born in Malaya in 1924, Chin Peng was the most wanted man at the height of the insurgency. At 23, he became the leader of the Communist Party of Malaya. Like Ho Chi Minh, Chin Peng fought in the local resistance against Japan, and later led the struggle against the post-war restoration of European colonialism. However, while Ho Chi Minh became a national hero, Chin Peng was cast out of his homeland. [74] Little was known about Chin Peng and his warfare experience until 2003, when he published his memoir titled *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History*.

At his deathbed, Chin Peng expressed his desire to return from exile in Thailand to visit his birthplace and pay homage to his parents' graves. Although the 1989 ceasefire agreement allowed former guerrillas to return to the Malaysia, Chin was completely barred from the country, and his citizenship disputed. When he passed in 2013, Prime Minister Najib Razak called him a "terrorist leader that waged war on the nation" and ordered a red alert at border checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle the guerrilla leaders' remains to Malaysia.[75] Nevertheless, in 2019, his comrades quietly smuggled the remains of the party leader into the sea near Lumut, Perak, as well as the jungles in the Titiwangsa Range, where the guerrillas used to operate.[76]

The announcement provoked varied reactions from different groups. The Deputy Inspector-General of Police stated that those who transported the remains will be taken into

[74] A. J. Stockwell, 'Chin Peng and the Struggle for Malaya', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16, no. 3 (November 2006): 279–97, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186306006201.
[75] Su-Lyn Boo, 'No Law to Stop Chin Peng's Ashes from Entering Malaysia, Lawyers Say', *Malay Mail Online*, 22 September 2019, https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2013/09/22/no-law-to-stop-chin-pengs-ashes-from-entering-malaysia-lawyers-say/529611.
[76] Tashny Sukumaran, 'Malaysian Politicians Spar after Return of Chin Peng's Remains', *South China Morning Post*, 27 November 2019, sec. This Week in Asia, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3039631/malaysia-politicians-spar-after-return-communist-leader-chin.

questioning. The Armed Forces Veterans Association condemned the act, saying that the group responsible for returning the ashes had "hurt the feelings of Malaysians." The sitting prime minister Mahathir Mohamad reacted to those criticizing his administration by stating "Are you telling us to pick up his remains and send him back? These petty things are being dug up to cast the government in a bad light." He also questioned why no fuss was made when other communist leaders returned to Malaysia, such as Shamsiah Fakeh and Rashid Maidin. [77] This question is mainly rhetorical. The unspoken answer, for most Malaysians, would be that Chin Peng was non-Malay. However, regardless of the real reason, it is clear that Chin Peng continues to be denied a place in Malaysian history.

Conclusion: What more do the Chinese want?

In 2013, the main Malay-language newspaper *Utusan Melayu* ran a controversial front-page story titled "Apa Lagi Cina Mahu?" (What More Do the Chinese Want?). The headline followed the weakened performance of the ruling coalition party, the National Alliance, in the elections. It had governed the country since Malaya gained independence. The article berated the Chinese community for voting against the Malay-led National Alliance, calling them an "ungrateful" and "arrogant." It further claims that the Chinese are fortunate to be in Malaysia, as they have been forced to leave in Cambodia and Vietnam.[78] In essence, it implies that those of Chinese descent should be thankful for being allowed to remain in the country by the "native" Malays.

[77] Zurairi AR, 'Should We Pick up His Ashes Then? Dr M Asks Detractors of Chin Peng's "Return"', *Malay Mail*, 28 November 2019, sec. Malaysia, https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/11/28/should-we-pick-up-his-ashes-then-dr-m-asks-detractors-of-chin-pengs-return/1814239.
[78] 'Utusan Revisits "Apa Lagi Cina Mahu?", Says Chinese Ungrateful', *Malay Mail Online*, 27 October 2013, https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2013/10/27/utusan-revisits-apa-lagi-cina-mahu-says-chinese-ungrateful/550891.

As stated by Sandra Khor Manickam, indigeneity in Malaysia is "tied to a particular understanding of racial identification and affiliation."[79] Malays and their related races are considered indigenous; non-Malays are not. [80] The rousing of Malay ethnonationalist sentiments during election season is not new. In 1969, racial riots broke out in Kuala Lumpur, in what is now called the 13 May Incident. The "truth" of what happened remains obscure, as official documents concerning the day is still classified. Officially, the Sino-Malay clash is said to be caused by the racialist victory parade held by Chinese supporters of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the Malaysian People's Movement Party (Gerakan). According to the report published by the National Operations Council, communist agents have infiltrated the campaign of these parties, and Chinese secret societies were employed to carry out subversive activities.[81]

In light of this precedent, the news article takes on a more threatening tone. The question of Chinese belonging in Malaysia dates back to the British years. Technically, British common law grants the status of British subject to anyone born within the territories of the British Crown. This right also extends to residents in annexed regions. Hence, while Indian and Ceylonese immigrants to British Malaya held the same legal status as they did before, Chinese immigrants were not British subjects unless they underwent a naturalization process. On the other hand, the Malays remained formally as subjects of the sultans, and thus, deemed as "British protected persons."[82] After independence, a deal was struck between the British and representatives of the different races. The Malayan, or Malaysian state would inherit all the features of a Malay state, with Malay Rulers as constitutional monarchs. The

[79] Sandra Khor Manickam, *Taming the Wild: Aborigines and Racial Knowledge in Colonial Malaya* (Singapore: NUS Press Pte Ltd, 2015), 2.
[80] For extended discussion on the "Original Peoples of Malaya," which includes the Malays and the variety of indigenous or aboriginal peoples, see Manickam, *Taming the Wild*, 1-5.
[81] Ying Xin Show, 'Narrating the Racial Riots of 13 May 1969: Gender and Postmemory in Malaysian Literature', *South East Asia Research* 29, no. 2 (3 April 2021): 215.
[82] Lynn Hollen Lees, 'Being British in Malaya, 1890-1940', *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 1 (2009): 80.

constitution stipulates that Malay Land Reservations would continue to be owned by Malays exclusively, and that a certain proportion of jobs in the civil service must be reserved for the Malays.[83] Thus, the disenfranchisement of the Chinese must be understood in a historical context. Racial hierarchies inherited from the colonial era, coupled with Malay ethno-nationalism, make it near impossible for the Malaysian Chinese to claim a stake in Malaysian history.

[83] Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation* (ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2002), 3-6.

Methodology and Sources: Narrativizing the Emergency

Introduction: The Podcast as a Public History Medium

In this chapter, I document the process of conceptualizing, writing, and producing the podcast series. As mentioned before, this public history project continues my research and writing on the communist insurrection in Malaya. I decided on the podcast as a medium for several reasons. First, the form is both accessible for the listener and the creator. Anyone with a computer or a smart device and listen in. Mobile applications like Spotify and Apple Podcasts provide a free-of-cost platform to upload and consume content. Additionally, the entry threshold to podcasting is relatively low, as one creator notes, "You just need 45 minutes of a subject and some listeners. And if your subject's good, your audience gets bigger."[84] I was also drawn to the versatility of the medium. Podcasts can take the form of a 15-minute conversation, or a 45-minute scripted fiction piece. The podcast medium also allows for a deeper dive into a subject, through a series of episodes.

Podcasts on history take a variety of genres, and are made by creators who may or may not have an academic background in history. The AskHistorians Podcast is an offshoot of an online forum on Reddit.com – a community of academics, amateur historians, and those interested in History. The podcast takes the form of a Q&A format, in which published academics converse with the host for 60-90 minutes. The topics are varied, ranging from 19th century China to Vikings in popular culture.[85]

Another example of History podcasts is Hallie Rubenhold's *Bad Women: The Ripper Retold.* Rubenhold is a historian of British 18th and 19th century social history, and in this podcast, she investigates the lives of the five women killed by the notorious Jack the Ripper.

[84] Jim Beaugez, 'Podcasting Turns Pro: An Explosion in Popularity Has Made Podcasting Serious Audio Business', *Systems Contractor News* 27, no. 4 (April 2020): 28–29.
[85] AskHistorians, The AskHistorians Podcast, accessed 27 June 2022, https://www.askhistorians.com/podcast-archive.

Using archival materials and interviews, Rubenhold paints a vivid picture of Victorian womanhood, and explores why the victims remain unnamed in popular culture. The podcast moves between the perspectives of the murdered women, academic and amateur historians, as well as the narrator herself. This podcast spans 18 episodes, each 30-40 minutes in length.[86] Rubenhold's interactions with her interview subjects broadcasts alongside vivid descriptions of the women and their living conditions.

In some cases, podcasts grew out of undergraduate or graduate research. Take *In The Shadows of Utopia* by Lachlan Peters, for example. After Peters completed his undergraduate thesis on the Khmer Rouge, he went on to create a podcast on the Cambodian genocide. Taking on the Narrative Podcast genre, Peters takes the listener on a deep dive into Cambodia's history, from pre-industrial times to the Cold War. These episodes span between an hour to two hours and a half. The narration is scripted, and meticulously researched, occasionally interjected by Peters' interviews with scholars of Cambodian history. What makes this podcast unique is that it is accompanied by a website, where Peters uploads relevant maps and archival photographs. In addition to that, he also reflects on his research and production process on a blog on the website. Thus, the podcast also opens up another world of materials, which can be accessed by listeners who are interested to learn more about the topic.[87]

Nevertheless, history podcasts are not exclusively made by academic historians. Another podcast I enjoy is Malcolm Gladwell's *Revisionist History*, in which the host examines a different event, person, or object in each episode. Gladwell is a journalist and author. Unlike the previous two podcasts mentioned, *Revisionist History* features the personality of the host more prominently. It often includes the host's journey in researching

[86] Hallie Rubenhold, Bad Women: The Ripper Retold, accessed 27 June 2022, https://www.pushkin.fm/podcasts/bad-women-the-ripper-retold.
[87] Lachlan Peters, 'In The Shadows of Utopia', In The Shadows of Utopia, accessed 30 June 2022, https://www.shadowsofutopia.com/.

the topic in question, narrated in a personal, conversational tone. The topics vary from episode to episode; they include US News and World Report university rankings, a lost Van Gogh painting, and cultural appropriation.[88] The present and the past are more tightly intertwined in this podcast.

Before entering the scriptwriting stage, it was important for me to further define the audience and goals of the project, as well as map out the sources and materials I can use. *Red Is The Blood Of The People* targets anyone interested in Colonial History, Cold War History, and Malaysian History. It attempts to make accessible the growing body of research on the Malayan Emergency, while keeping the audience engaged with descriptive scenes and real-life characters. The podcast recalls key moments in the Malayan Emergency, and contextualizes them with short commentaries on the socio-political lives of the characters. Beyond eliciting curiosity in a topic that has been relatively obscure, I also hope to communicate to the audience how the past continues to affect the present.

The problem of narrative, the craft of narrative

Narrative, as argued by Hayden White, is how knowing is translated into telling – it becomes a problem for any historian who wishes to give real events the form of story. [89] Writing about the relationship between narrative and objectivity, White posits that the value we attach to narrativity betrays our desire to have real events display the "coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life."[90] He concludes with an unanswered question: "Could we ever narrativize without moralizing?"

[88] Malcolm Gladwell, Revisionist History, accessed 27 June 2022, https://www.pushkin.fm/podcasts/revisionist-history.
[89] Hayden V White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, ACLS Humanities E-Book (Baltimore ; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1.
[90] Ibid, 24.

The question of whether narrative can ever be objective has long plagued historiography. In *The Burden of History*, White discusses how History as a discipline straddles the border between science and arts. He laments that historians believed that the "sole possible form of historical narration was that used by the English novel as it had developed by the late nineteenth century."[91] For historians who attempt to relate their findings in an "artistic" manner, they usually turn to literary techniques that have been rinsed and repeat by literary figures such a James Joyce and Henrik Ibsen.[92] White proposes that we view historical explanations not as purely imaginary, nor as literally truthful. Instead, historians should focus on generating work that "does not pretend to exhaust description or analysis of all of the data… but rather offers itself as one way among many of disclosing certain aspects of the field."[93]

Responding to White's scholarship, Robert Rosenstone, a narrative historian, asks the following questions: "Can the historians or one of his subjects use the dreaded 'I' word? Can you write in the present tense? Is it okay to have more than one narrative voice? How about flashbacks or flashforwards? Internal monologues?"[94] Rosenstone realized the limitations of traditional history writing while working on a book on the experience of American sojourners in Japan during the 19th century. Reflecting on the endeavor, Rosenstone admits "somehow the traditional way of writing did not convey what I wanted to say about the past; did not let me get close enough to my characters; did not let me see the world through their eyes, smell it through their noses."[95] These sensory experiences were important to him because the book was about how perception and belief systems change when a foreigner encounters sights, sounds, smells, and verbal exchanges.

[91] Hayden V. White, 'The Burden of History', *History and Theory* 5, no. 2 (1966): 127
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, 130.
[94] Robert A. Rosenstone, 'What's a Nice Narrative Historian like Me Doing at a Conference like This?: Rethinking History', *Rethinking History* 25, no. 1 (March 2021): 32-3.
[95] Robert A. Rosenstone, 'Experiments in Narrative', *Rethinking History* 5, no. 3 (November 2001): 412.

These same dilemmas in narrativity are also present in this capstone project. For one, public memory of the Emergency is fraught with chronopolitics, and thus, entangled with questions of belonging and nationalism. Thus, from the offset, I acknowledge that this account is "one way among many" to narrate the Emergency, to borrow White's words. As someone born as Malaysian Chinese, I inevitably carry some biases. Additionally, catering to a wide range of listeners, this podcast also puts audience experience first. Conciseness, clarity, and plot are as important as the content, given that the market is saturated, and listeners will tune away quickly if the story is dull.

Thus, the question now becomes, how do I go from historical research on the Emergency, to a podcast with a clear beginning, middle, and end? How do I decide which events to focus on, and how to move the story forward? This endeavour to narrativize history has been attempted by Rosenstone, who admits that there is no theoretical model to guide this leap; instead, he suggests an experimental approach to form.[96] Taking Rosenstone's advice, I turn to another field in which form and plot has been studied and discussed extensively – Creative Writing.

How to plot a plot?

Simply put, a plot is a series of events that constitute the action of a narrative, or a structure of interrelated actions. To achieve emotional responses from the reader, the plot has to be shaped cohesively. It is the key element to novels, theatre, film, and even poems. [97] For non-fiction writing, plot becomes an endeavour in composition. In a magazine article, journalist John McPhee states:

[96] For the different approaches to narrative and form, see *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice*.
[97] Meredith Eliassen, 'Plot (Narrative)', in *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature* (Salem Press, 2022), Research Starters.

> The approach to structure in factual writing is like returning from a grocery store with materials you intend to cook for dinner. You set them out on the kitchen counter, and what's there is what you deal with, and all you deal with… To some extent, the structure of a composition dictates itself, and to some extent it does not.[98]

Using McPhee's approach, the first step of my process is to review all materials available to me, and begin arranging them in different ways until a pattern emerges. For the historian interested in highlighting an underrepresented perspective or presenting an implicit argument, this approach can lead to some semblance of structure, but one can quickly lose track of the purpose of the story to begin with.

Elsewhere, writers have devised a wide array of plot structure. The "Freytag's pyramid" is one of the most commonly used models (Figure 3). The basic elements include exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, and denouement.[99] Dan Harmon, a well-known American TV writer, uses a Story Circle to guide character development (Figure 4). Thinking in terms of structures was especially useful for my project. Given my breadth of topic and material, it was difficult to decide which stories to tell, and what events to highlight. For the first episode, I begin with collecting information on the first day of the Emergency. Then, I experimented with multiple narrative structures, before deciding on what Rob Rosenthal describes as a "loop."

[98] John McPhee, 'Structure', *The New Yorker*, 6 January 2013, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/14/structure.
[99] 'What Is a Narrative Arc? A Guide to Storytelling Structure', Reedsy, 18 July 2017, https://blog.reedsy.com/narrative-arc/.

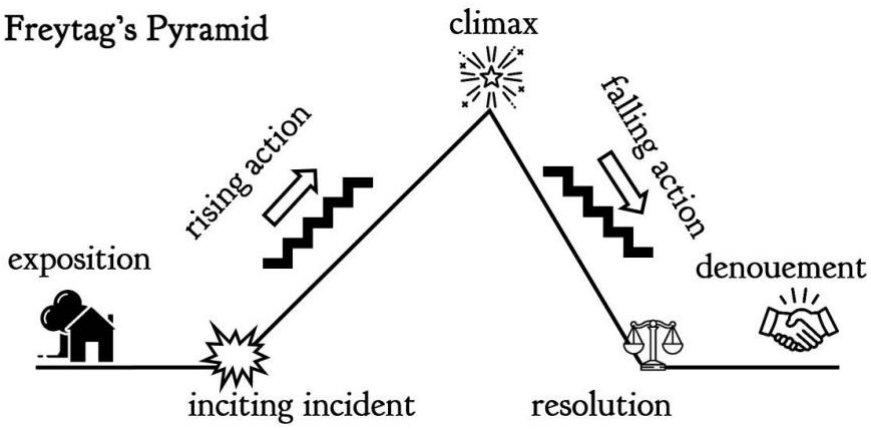

Fig. 3. Freytag's Pyramid. Source: 'Story Design (Freytag's Pyramid)', Rook Reading, 12 August 2018.

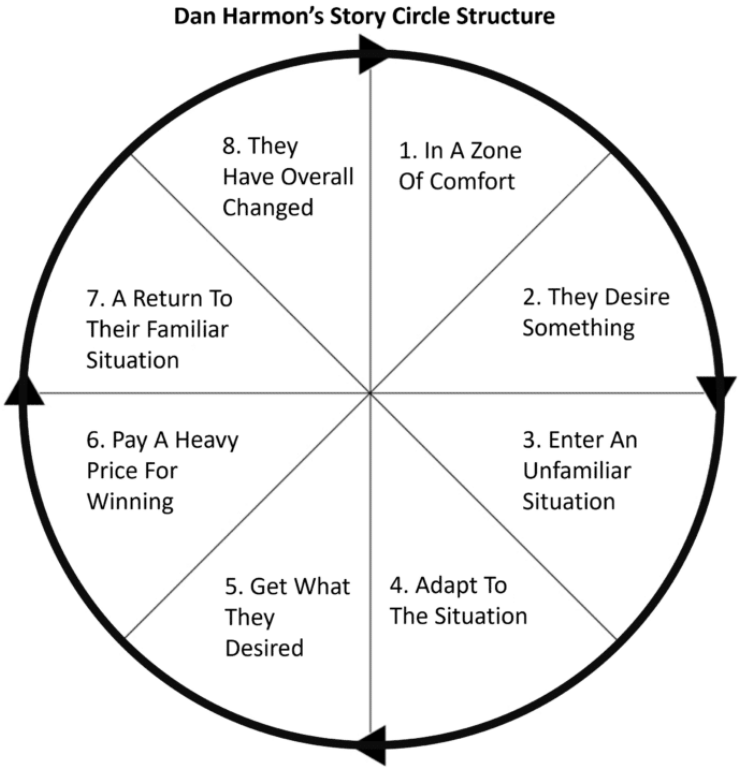

Fig. 4. Dan Harmon's Story Circle. Source: 'What Is Dan Harmon's Story Circle? And How to Use It (with Examples)', Industrial Scripts, 8 October 2021,

The Narrative Podcast: Genre and Structure

Podcasts come in many genres, subject matter, and production value. Depending on these parameters, the structure and process differs. For instance, one of the most popular

genres is the Interview Podcast, whereby the host interviews a different expert in each episode. In this case, the basic structure often goes:

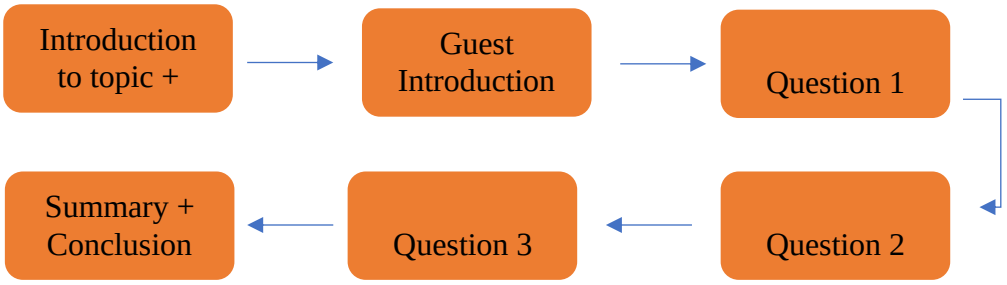

Fig. 5. Basic structure of an Interview Podcast.

For this project, I chose the Narrative Podcast genre. This genre is fully-scripted, integrating the elements of performance art like music, sound effects, and voice acting. In this case, it is possible to experiment a host of different structures. However, typically, this kind of podcast is character and story driven, resulting in a structure that is not dissimilar to that of fiction and non-fiction writing. The overall structure often looks like this:

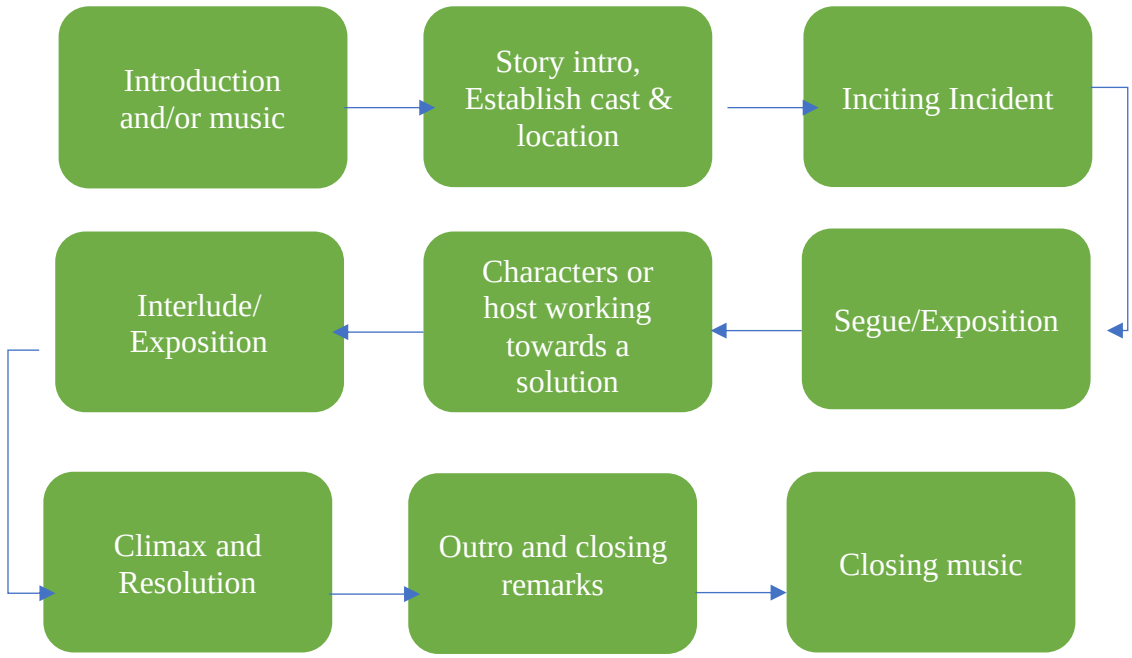

Fig. 6. Basic structure of a Narrative Podcast.

The narrative structure I decide on was the "loop." The loop essentially begins in the present. Then, the character goes through a sequence of events, looping back to the beginning. In this structure, the story goes from the present, to the past, and then ends in the same moment the story begin.

Review of Academic Sources

For the purposes of showing how I use historical scholarship in the writing of the script, I provide a brief literature review of the sources used in the first episode, *The Day in Question*. This episode introduces the Malayan Emergency by zooming in on the day the Emergency officially started.

Souchou Yao's *The Malayan Emergency: Essays on a Small Distant War* tackles the Emergency from different angles. The essays illuminates different aspects of the Emergency and combines analyses from the fields of History, Anthropology, and Economics. Using an interactive first-person voice, Yao compares and contrasts how the story of the Emergency has been told, versus what happened, in sections such as "On Communism: New Person in a New Era," (Chapter 2) and "On Revolutionary War: Making peasants into revolutionaries" (Chapter 4). This book provides historical context as well as chronological events of the insurgency. I referred to the third chapter, "On Violence: Imperial Policing and British Counterinsurgency" the most, as it takes the reader through the turbulence in the post-war years, when the British returned to a population displaced by war. Yao's analysis on the labour unrest connects the strikes of 1947 to the longer history of Chinese migration to the Kinta Valley:

> Yet for the insurgents Sungei Siput was far from being an operation of random killing. It was carried out against the backdrop of labour unrest over wage cuts by the estates at a time of declining rubber prices. A year earlier in November Chinese labourers had gone on strike over the issue, and rumours were circulating that Walker and Allison had mistreated their workers and connived with the police to break the strike. Sungei Siput lies in the Kinta Valley, a region of tin mines and rubber estates. At the region's jungle fringes were farmers squatting on government land since the Japanese occupation, trying to hack out a living in the wilderness. The labour conditions and the squatter- farmers had created the classic 'revolutionary situation' which the MCP were quick to exploit.[100]

Yao returns to the Kinta Valley in Chapter 4, in which he traces how the "classic revolutionary situation" evolved: "The Kinta Valley sits in the dip between the River Kinta and its estuaries… The topography is one of mountain ranges covered in thick jungle and sky-scraping trees, and flat land intersected by a system of rivers."[101] This detail stood out to me because it sets the scene for the day the Emergency started. Additionally, by showing that the killings of June 16th is a culmination of labour unrest, Yao destabilizes the oversimplified narrative that the plantation murders were the CPM's formal declaration of war. Borrowing from Yao, I included a brief description of the Kinta Valley, before connecting the landscape to the start of the Emergency.

Another secondary source I referred to is T.N. Harper's *End of Empire and the Making of Malaya.* Harper focuses on the post-war years to show that "a series of social and political crises that demanded the establishment of new forms of community."[102] In a similar vein, Cheah Boon Kheng's *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation* is an account of the competition between two different nationalisms: Malay ethno-nationalism and Malaysian nationalism in the making of a Malaysian state.[103] Arguing that Malaysia had not become a "Malay nation-state" thanks to the rivalling forces of multi-ethnic Malaysian nationalism, this

[100] Yao, *The Malayan Emergency*, 42.
[101] Ibid, 64.
[102] Harper, *End of Empire*, 1.
[103] Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*, *Malaysia* (ISEAS Publishing, 2002).

book provides detailed explanations on how ethno-supremacy plays a role in the chronopolitics of memory of the Emergency.

A more updated account of the Emergency features in *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia* by Tim Harper and Christopher Bayly. Adopting a transnational approach, the text explores Britain's Empire in the twilight years, and the "forgotten" wars in South and Southeast Asia. Bayly and Harper compares how and why radical ideologies gained traction in former colonies, and how these ideologies are connected across countries. The book also examines the British struggle to regain imperial control – how the colonizer's failure to appreciate the emerging nationalisms lead to clumsy, repressive measures to keep their colonies profitable.[104]

Journal articles have also been helpful in my project, as they provide concise accounts and research problems that I can use as a starting point. For the first episode, I consulted the work of Donald Nonini. Nonini argues that the Malayan Emergency was a conjunctural episode of dispossession for the working class. Nonini points out that "squatters" and "laborers" are one and the same in the post-war years. Nonini's analysis also covers the "disappearance" of class solidarity in the 1950s-1970s, citing that the Alliance government "continued an unrelenting strategy of disorganizing, disempowering, and segregating Malaysian working people from one another."[105] Nonini's perspective inspired me to reflect on the Chinese working class in Malaya in the first episode.

Although the podcast is narrative, each episode has an implicit research question and argument. The pilot episode, for instance, outlines the tensions between the British and Malayan narratives of June 16th, 1948. I chose to focus on the character of Chin Peng, the Secretary-General of the CPM. Using primary sources like his memoir, interview transcripts,

[104] Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Wars*.
[105] Donald M. Nonini, '"At That Time We Were Intimidated on All Sides": Residues of the Malayan Emergency as a Conjunctural Episode of Dispossession', *Critical Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (3 July 2015): 350.

as well as documentaries, the episode follows Chin Peng's childhood, his passage into communism, his rise to the uppermost echelon of communist leadership.

Primary sources and Meaning Between Silences

Reading Karl Hack and C.C. Chin's account of the Malayan Emergency, I was struck by what Chin Peng, as a historical figure, embodied:

> Chin Peng might at first seem a very untypical example of this generation… he is set apart by his meteoric rise to become Secretary General… while still in his early twenties… But in some ways, [he] is not so much exceptional, as typical of his generation: men and women who were born in the interwar period and went on to fight for the MCP in the 1940s to 1960s. Like many other pre-1945 recruits, he joined the MCP because it seemed the most effective anti-Japanese force…[106]

Born to parents who run a motor and bicycle repair shop, Chin Peng was initiated into the CPM by his Chinese literature teacher. At the peak of the Emergency, he was named Malaya's Most Wanted Man. The communist insurgents lived like "hunted animals"; moving camps each time they were discovered by the enemy. Hunger and disease were constant threats, along with wild beasts and the risk of ambush.

What motivates a person to join the CPM guerrilla force? Why join an armed insurrection? Writing in the Indian context, Ranajit Guha points out that British writings of peasant revolt often reiterate the myth that these insurrections were "purely spontaneous and unpremeditated affairs."[107] The same is perhaps applicable in the Malayan context. A classic example is Noel Barber's the *War of the Running Dogs*, published in 1971. It remains one of the most widely read book on the Emergency. Studying Barber's prose closely, Yao writes, "The authorial trick is to give British actions unignorable reasonableness and heroism, while the communists appear only in police mug shots or as withered corpses by the jungle path after an ambush."[108]

[106] Chin and Hack, *Dialogues with Chin Peng*, 4.
[107] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ranajit Guha, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45.
[108] Yao, *The Malayan Emergency*, 41.

My first episode aims to "demystify" the guerrilla insurgents, by presenting a subaltern perspective of how the Emergency began. To do so, I turn to several primary sources, including Chin Peng's memoir, titled *My Side of History*.

Chin Peng's memoir was published in 2008. Before that, the stories of the communist insurgents remained unknown to the public. The memoir reveals his scramble to escape from the police on June 16th, 1948, as well as his trek on foot to China in 1960. He rejects the British portrayal of himself as a "callous terrorist," and states instead that the CPM's purpose was anti-colonial:

> Propaganda would have it that I am still unrepentant. To a degree, this is true - but unrepentant of what, I ask. I do not regret having fought for what I considered - and still consider - a just cause. It was time the British quit, stop exploiting Malaya's resources and people to pay off her debts and maintain her Empire status. It was time for us to be independent in the land that belonged to us. I am unrepentant of this belief.[109]

The memoir, published in 2003, is shaped by the chronopolitics of the "Malayan" identity. Chin Peng admits that his political aspirations began with Chinese patriotism. When Malaya declared independence in 1957, the CPM's armed struggle did not end, because they viewed the succeeding governments of Malaya and Singapore as merely new iterations of colonial government. After 1989, Chin Peng's claim to Malaya as his homeland would be rejected by the Malaysian state. He lived in exile in Thailand until his death. In this light, Chin Peng's memoir becomes an attempt at reclaiming the communists' position in the story of Malaysia.

Keeping in mind Trouillot's statement that "narrative is a bundle of silences," I am aware that Chin Peng's claim holds its own silences and slippages. Without going into the

[109] Peng Chin, Ian Ward, and Norma Miraflor, *My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), 9.

quarrels of indigeneity and belonging, I presented the economic and social hardships experienced by the Chinese through Chin Peng.

Halfway, the podcast segues into stories of women in the Emergency. *Life as the River Flow*s is a product of Khoo's five-year fieldwork (1998-2003) in Banlang, Southern Thailand, where many of the insurgents now live out their older years. Each chapter is dedicated to one woman's story, written in first-person. Khoo explains that the English version of the interviews went through as much as nine revisions, and after which any inconsistency and duplication of events were eliminated. This is to say that Khoo played a major mediatory role in the presentation of these stories. However, the final version of the book was workshopped with sixteen of the interviewed women. Hence, the text can be said to be a presentation of the women's self-narratives. In the podcast, I feature the personal stories of three female guerrillas – Luo Lan, Zhu Ning, and Lin Guan Ying.

Execution Plan

Concept Note

A "Concept Note" refers to a short description of a specific episode or the podcast series in general. It is used on streaming platforms to provide an overview of the podcast. More importantly, it is used in invitations sent to guest co-hosts and potential interviewees. The draft concept note of *Red is the Blood of the People* is as follows:

> The Malayan Emergency remains one of the "forgotten wars" of the Cold War. Between 1948 to 1989, communist guerrilla soldiers of the Malayan Communist Party waged a revolt against the state. In response, the British colonial government instated martial law, surveillance tactics, as well as population control. The counter-insurgency effort was successful – tens of thousands were deported to China or India, and more than a million were displaced from their homes and ushered into concentration camps.
>
> *Red is the Blood of the People* is a podcast on Malaysia's fraught history, and her troubled relationship with the past. The podcast examines the different causes and effects of the Emergency. Using archival materials, oral history interviews, memoirs, and historical scholarship, this limited series takes you on personal journeys of young men and women who experienced the war.

Current Progress and Next Steps

Red is the Blood of the People is currently a work-in-progress. The full series is scheduled to be released in May 2023. Thus far, a draft episode, or a "prototype" has been produced; the script is attached in the Appendix I. This episode is a rough cut – meaning it still has to be sound engineered to become a high-quality production. The final product is estimated to hold four episodes. I have yet to decide on the specific scope of each episode, but the topics that I want to cover include: British military experience of the rainforest, the everyday routine of the communist guerrillas, and the failed peace negotiations between the CPM and the Malaysian government in 1955. Beyond the intellectual considerations discussed in the previous chapter, there are still practical steps required for the project to come to fruition.

First, I plan to continue to expand my use of source materials. Due to pandemic conditions, I have only been able to collect audio-visual materials on online archives. I plan to visit certain archives in person, like the British National Archive or the Imperial War Museum. For Malaysian sources, I plan to visit the Malaysian Archives and to speak to other local public historians. The artist Fahmi Reza, for instance, has been documenting the lives of Malay ex-guerrillas who now live in Betong, Thailand. *Red is the Blood of the People* will engage in the ongoing works of other scholars by incorporating their research, recordings, and personal perspectives, with their permission of course.

Second, I still have yet to fully exploit the materials I have collected. As mentioned in previous presentations on this project, I interviewed a few former guerrillas in 2019. The issue of privacy is important, given that the interviewees are still dependent on retirement funds distributed by the Old Comrades Association. These former guerrillas now live in "Peace Villages," where old hierarchies remain. Retired guerrillas were still beholden to the "Party line," which makes any expression of discontent towards the Party a social risk. To protect the identity of my interview subjects, I plan to have voice actors re-enact the recordings.

Third, as with any creative endeavour, collaboration is the rule. The script attached is copy and pasted as it is at the time of recording. Attached in Appendix II is my cues and instructions for the sound engineer, originally written by Tony Palermo, a Radio playwright.[110] This draft episode would not be possible without the help of voice actors and a sound editor. These roles are not only important for the final product – they are key to the writing process too. In the making of the draft episode, the script has gone through five rewrites. My collaborators made themselves available for two rounds of table reading, during

[110] Tony Palermo, '[How to Write Radio Play Cues for Dialogue, Music and Sound Effects](), Tony Palermo's Ruyasonic, accessed 4 July 2022.

which I also received feedback on the structure and sound clips used in the episode. Moving forward, I plan to gather an ensemble of collaborators with more defined roles, which include sound engineer, producer, composer, and project manager.

Fourth, I have yet to acquire permission to use some of the archival material. To be sure, most of the archival material can be used under the Non-Commercial license, which means that for educational purposes, the material can be used without manipulation from the researcher. This licensing applies to all materials from the Imperial War Museum. The sound effects are drawn from BBC Sound Effects and Freesound.org. The former allows for the use of clips under "educational exceptions to copyright," whilst the latter only contains content that are licensed under Creative Commons.[111]

Last but not least, *Red is the Blood of the People* has the potential to be more than just a podcast. As previously discussed in the Methodology and Sources Chapter, some history podcasts have an accompanying website, where listeners can glimpse into the creation process, look up works cited, and even view supplementary materials like photographs and maps. Additionally, the website could also be a platform for collaboration with others working on a similar topic – it could include a page listing the profiles of academics, artists, and public historians working on topics related to Malaysia's colonial history.

[111] 'IWM Non-Commercial Licence', Imperial War Museums, accessed 1 July 2022, https://www.iwm.org.uk/corporate/policies/non-commercial-licence; 'Can I Use BBC Content?', Using the BBC, accessed 1 July 2022, https://www.bbc.co.uk/usingthebbc/terms/can-i-use-bbc-content/; 'Freesound Terms and Conditions', Freesound, accessed 1 July 2022, https://freesound.org/help/tos_web/.

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Appendix I

Act 1: The Day in Question

INTRODUCTION

#1. Music: Krontjong Ensemble Pantja Warna/Terang bulan/00:00 - 0:21. LET IT FINISH

#2. Sound: Forest sounds. Fades in UNDER MUSIC.

#3. Narrator (Jiun):
June 16th, 1948. This is the day the Malayan Emergency officially began. The **first shots** of the Malayan Emergency were fired during the Sungai Siput incident, at 8.30am on 16 June 1948. On this day, three European planters were killed by Chinese men associated with the Malayan Communist Party. The British government reacted by declaring martial law nationwide. The war officially lasted twelve years.

Did the killing of three British men warranted a declaration of war? What happened in the days leading up to the Malayan Emergency? Who started the war, and does it matter?

#4. Sound: Forest sounds. Fades out at line "leading up to the Malayan Emergency…"

SCENE 1: Chin Peng escapes

#5. Narrator (Jiun):
We're in Kinta Valley, Perak, located to the northwest of the Malayan Peninsula. Tin — one of the oldest metals known to mankind — has been mined here since the early 1800s. The harvesting of the metal eroded the hills, leaving in its wake pockmarked wastelands and silt-laden rivers. In areas untouched by the tin industry, large tracts of mangrove forests separate the water and inlands. Connected to the valley is a long mountain range stretching from South Thailand to the southernmost state of Malaya, Johor. This stretch of mountain forests is the so-called backbone of the Peninsula.

#6. Sound: Forest Sounds. 0500401. BED. Quietly in Background.

#7. Narrator (Jiun):
Ong Boon Hua is a young man on an important mission in Kampar, in the Kinta Valley . On behalf of the Communist Party of Malaya, he is paying a visit to Tong Ching, who runs a tin mining business. Several years ago, Tong Ching joined the frontline troops, fighting against the Japanese invasion. After World War II, the Communist Party of Malaya parked some 50,000 Straits Dollars in Tong Ching's tin mine business, which proved to be highly profitable. Ong Boon Hua is there to collect the Party's share of the wealth.

#8. Chin Peng (Kevin):
Tong Ching was an ardent capitalist and I, a committed communist — still, we became quite good friends.

#9. Narrator (Jiun):
The trip up north is supposed to be quick, but Tong Ching is taking his time to collect the money. Left on the verandah, Ong Boon Hua paces back and forth, as he contemplates his next steps. After retrieving the money, he has plans to move South to the state of Pahang, where he is to set up an army base camp. He reads the newspapers front to back, and back to front. Every few minutes or so, he looks up to survey his surroundings. As late afternoon creeps in, Tong Ching has not yet returned.

A curved driveway sweeps from the back of the house to the main entrance. The well-trimmed rose bushes are bursting with flowers as red as gaping mouths. The villa is equipped with a swimming pool, kept immaculate by the many servants bustling in and out of the house.

#10. Chin Peng(Kevin):
I was in the front room of the bungalow when I first heard the rumbling of approaching vehicles negotiating the steep rise along the road to the rear of the property. I listened closely to the revving engines. There were two vehicles. Both lorries. They could only be military or police.

#11. Sound: BED. Revving engines gradually grind to a halt. Fade in on “bungalow”.

#12. Sound: STING. Doors slamming shut on “vehicles”.

#13. Narrator (Jiun):
Danger. There is no time to collect his belongings. No choice but to leave his passport behind, which he kept tucked away in the guest room. Ong Boon Hua runs through the main entrance, across the verandah, over the driveway and into the shrubbery.

#14. Sound: UNDER. Bushes rustling, sounds of forest during the night. Running footsteps, quiet but heavy breathing. Running stops, only breathing, then distant sounds of police shouting at each other.

#15. Chin Peng(Kevin):
I threaded my way through the rose bushes, and in the dim light spotted a jambu tree leaning against the wall. I saw my chance and went for it… The terrain offered little cover. I moved some distance away. By now the blackness of the night had settled protectively around me. In the distance I could hear orders being shouted to the police party rummaging through the bungalow.

#16. Narrator:
In the morning, Ong Boon Hua cautiously treads out of the bushes. He finds refuge in the nearby hut of an old female servant whom he knows he can trust. He appears calm as she recounts what had happened the day before. Tong Ching was arrested, and the police are now on a hunt for Ong Boon Hua. An Emergency Declaration has been announced all over the Perak state. It will be near impossible for Ong Boon Hua to reconnect with the Communist Party of Malaya, unless he gets to Ipoh, another mining town 25 miles away.

Accompanied by a female volunteer, Ong Boon Hua boards a bus from Kampar to Ipoh. They pose as a young Chinese couple visiting relatives.

#17. Chin Peng (Kevin):
I saw for myself the degree to which the British authorities were imposing their restrictions. Two-thirds of the way along the route, as the bus neared Gopeng, we lurched to a sudden stop. Looking out the window I saw a police roadblock. Uniformed armed men boarded the bus and walked slowly back and forth down the aisle looking at faces. I thought of my passport, probably picked up by the police in Tong Ching’s villa. I was convinced that my number was up.

#18. Narrator:
One of the police officers meets his eye. To Ong Boon Hua’s great relief, the police disembark and nod for the bus to pass.

#19. Chin Peng (Kevin):
Clearly, my passport, with its comparatively recent photograph of Ong Boon Hua, had yet to be linked to its owner’s alias, Chin Peng.

#20. Narrator:
Chin Peng is only 23 years old. He is about to become the most wanted man in Malaya.

INTERLUDE: Chin Peng's backstory

#21. Narrator:
Chin Peng was born in Setiawan, Perak, to parents who ran a motor and bicycle repair shop.

#22. Chin Peng (Kevin):
My childhood in Sitiawan was typical of any Chinese boy growing up in a rural township in colonial Malaya. I had various groups of friends. Games were played on a tropical calendar. There was a season for marbles, a season for football, a season for kites, a season for spinning tops.

#23. Narrator:
From a young age, he became aware of poverty and the power of money.

#24. Chin Peng (Kevin):
There were four or five Chettiar shops - Indian moneylenders - in the immediate vicinity of our shophouse. As the Great Depression hit, my family became regular clients. My parents were forced, from time to time, to use small land-holdings as collateral for loans. The most difficult years for them were 1930-33. There were six children in the family by this time… My father was nearly bankrupted by the Depression.

#25. Narrator:
Like many Chinese in Malaya at the time, Chin Peng paid close attention to the events in China. In his Methodist school, he was taught by intellectuals who were exiled under the Chiang Kai-shek regime. When the Second Sino-Japanese war began in 1937, he was too young to enlist. Instead, he began his political journey as a student activist. He read the works of Mao Zedong eagerly. At 16, his literature teacher recruited him into the Communist Party of Malaya.

SCENE 2: Bangkok

#26. Narrator (Jiun):
July 1947. Almost a year before the Emergency begins. Chin Peng is in Bangkok, Thailand. He is on a mission to hunt down a man by the name of Lai Teck. Lai Teck was the first post-World War II Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Malaya.

#27. Clip: BBC/The Undeclared War/ "Do you believe he was controlled by…cooperate with the British rather than to oppose it."/9:44-10:24

#28. Narrator (Jiun):
He arrived in Malaya one day, claiming to be a Communist International liaison chief from Hong Kong, who was here to help troubleshoot the crises faced by the Malayan branch. He claimed that he had studied communism in Russia and France, as well as helped the Vietnamese Communist Party in their resistance against the Japanese. His credentials impressed many. Within the Party, he was affectionately known as "Ah Lin," or "Malaya's Lenin," due to his extensive knowledge of communist theory.

#29. ~~Music: BED. To indicate a switch in mood.~~

#30. Narrator (Jiun):
Chin Peng first suspected something was strange about Lai Teck in 1943. A letter was sent by the Thai Communist Party representative, hand-delivered to Chin Peng's desk.

#31. Chin Peng (Kevin):
Lai Teck broke open the seal, scanned the correspondence blankly then pushed the letter back to me. "Read it yourself." It was unusual. He normally played most things very close to his chest — particularly communications with fraternal parties.

#32. Narrator (Jiun):
In the letter, Lao Hey mentioned that he had never heard Lai Teck's name in his career. He questioned Lai Teck's credentials.

#33. Chin Peng (Kevin):
Lao Hey had become somewhat of a legend in regional communist circles. Born in Hainan, he had migrated to Singapore as a young man and joined the Communist Party of Malaya. In 1932, he was detained by the Singapore police and eventually deported. He moved to Bangkok, where he became the Siamese movement's top official.

#34. Narrator (Jiun): In other words, Lao Hey would have known all the senior communists in the Southeast Asia region.

#35. Chin Peng (Kevin):
After reading the letter I returned it. Then came the remark that jarred. "Lao Hey," said Lai Te. "A very good man. I've known him for years." I thought to myself, the Secretary-General could not read Chinese!

#36. Narrator (Jiun):
Lai Teck did massive damage to the Communist Party of Malaya over the years. He served the British Special Intelligence initially, but then he was captured by the Kempeitai police, who began to use him as an intelligence agent as well. In August 1942, during the Japanese Occupation, Lai Teck organized a meeting near Batu Caves, ten miles away from Kuala Lumpur. He himself did not show up. 2,000 Japanese soldiers surrounded the meeting location. A gun battle ensued, killing 29 senior officials, and capturing 15 more. Lai Teck's betrayal was not found out until 1947.

#37. Clip: BBC/The Undeclared War/ "Did you have him killed…We came to know only after that."/10:51-11:17

#38. Sound: BED. 0707183. Bangkok streets. Fades in on "rickshaw."

#39. Narrator (Jiun):
Chin Peng hails a rickshaw after buying a flight ticket to Hong Kong. He had been in touch with the Thai and Vietnamese communists, who promised to help capture Lai Teck. From Hong Kong, he is to continue his journey to China to make a formal report of the treachery to the Chinese Communist Party.

As the rickshaw driver pedals down the humid streets of Bangkok, Chin Peng leans back and relaxes a little. The traffic is crowded. Food hawkers lean on their carts, chewing on betel nuts. The air smells like overripe fruits and exhaust. Suddenly, Chin Peng spots a familiar silhouette on the side of the street.

#40. Chin Peng (Kevin): Surely it couldn't be Lai Te! … He was taking a first puff on a freshly-lit cigarette. He raised his head and appeared to look in my direction. I ducked back behind the trishaw canopy and frantically shouted at my Thai companion "Stop! Stop the car!"

#41. Sound: Sound of cars honking. STING on "frantically shouted…"

#42. Narrator (Jiun):
By the time Chin Peng made his way through the crowd, Lai Te had disappeared on a tuk-tuk, leaving behind its blue-black smoke. A close call. Chin Peng rushed to the Vietnamese communist party headquarters to report on what he saw. At the time, the Vietnamese controlled a large paramilitary force in Bangkok. *Eyes and ears are around*, his comrade assured him, *it's only a matter of time*.

#43. Clip: IWM/ The Peacekeepers/ Whereabouts of Lai Teck/ "The communist saw… living in Bath now."/ 20:46-21:34

#44. Chin Peng(Kevin):
…the Siamese comrades had sent a three-man squad to meet Lai Te. Its members were obviously young and inexperienced. Instead of moving in quietly and engaging their target in conversation, they pounced as soon as Lai Te entered the premises. One grabbed him in a headlock. Another lunged for his throat. The man gripping him around the neck applied increased pressure. The struggling form began writhing and contorting. Then he frothed at the mouth, went limp and stopped breathing. At the back of the shophouse, the men conveniently discovered some lengths of hessian used for making sacks. They wrapped the body in these and waited for darkness. Late that night, the deposed and disposed leader of the CPM - surely one of Britain's greatest spying triumphs - was unceremoniously dumped into the swift flowing waters of Bangkok's Chao Praya river.

#45. Music: Chinese Opera. BED. Fades in on "Siamese comrades…" Fades out on "Chao Praya river.

#46. Narrator (Jiun):
After Lai Teck, Chin Peng was the most senior member of the Communist Party. At 23, he was elected as Secretary-General.

#47. Chin Peng (Kevin):
In the final weeks of 1947, we were envisaging an eight to ten year time-frame before we would be forced to launch guerrilla warfare. Plans of rushing into armed struggle couldn't have been further from our minds.

#48. Narrator (Jiun):
But in 1948, this policy of the Communist Party would change completely. On the day the Emergency started, Chin Peng came dangerously close to being arrested. He was on a trip to gather funds for the guerrilla war.

#49. Clip: IWM/ The Peacekeepers/ Description of Secondary Forests/ "Now that is a terrible… that most of this war was fought."/ 2:29-3:02

SEGUE: The other guerrillas

#50. Music: BRIDGE. Forest, bird chirping. Establish and under.

#51. Narrator (David):
Chin Peng was not atypical among the Chinese Malayans of his generation. Many men and women born in the interwar years had experienced the Great Depression, and survived massacres conducted by the Japanese Army during World War II.

Lin Guan Ying was 17 or 18 when she joined the Communist Party of Malaya, along with her sisters. After her father died from disease, her brother began working as a rubber tapper, while she stayed home and planted potatoes to sell at the local market.

#52. Lin Guan Ying (Jiun):
We did not have water to irrigate our plot of land. We had to walk a very long way to the nearest river to fetch water. We also kept pigs. We were so poor then; we could not buy rice with cash, so we kept some pigs and bought rice on credit.

#53. Narrator (David):
Not everyone who participated in the guerrilla war joined the army. Lin Guan Ying was part of the extended network of civilians serving the Communist Party, also known as the Min Yun.

#54. Lin Guan Ying (Jiun):
We did our Party work at night. I cycled around collecting funds. Now I think we were very daring, cycling through the jungles late at night! At that time, it did not cross our minds to be scared.

#55. Narrator (David):
For women, the resistance offered the possibility of a more equal world. Traditionally, women were expected to fulfill the role of a good housewife and mother. Zhu Ning was forced to marry at 15.

#56. Zhu Ning (Jiun): He later brought in a second wife to live with us. My mother-in-law used to scold us often. I was not allowed to go out to work. They even brought about 10 to 20 pigs for me to take care of and I had to cook for a family every day. It was really hard work. I rarely got enough sleep, I was always tired.

#57. Narrator (David):
Zhu Ning later joined the army, bringing all four of her children into the jungle.

#58. Zhu Ning (Jiun): We were constantly told that the police were after us, that they were trying to poison us, so we had to stay on the run.

#59. Narrator (David):
Zhu Ning's fear was not unfounded. It was not uncommon for people to report each other to the police, in exchange for cash rewards. Many Chinese peasants were subjected to surveillance and brutality by the police. This in turn inspired them to join the revolutionary movement.

#60. Luo Lan (Jiun) : My aunt was tapping rubber in our plantation one day. A traitor brought many British soldiers to our place. They found my aunt in the plantation. They demanded that she lead them to the guerrillas. My aunt, who knew where the guerrillas were, refused. She pretended that she did not know. However, the traitor knew very well that she knew. Consequently, the British shot her on the spot.

#61. Clip: BBC/The Undeclared War/ "Do you now regret…"/2:38-4:08

SCENE 4: Plantation murders

#62. Narrator (Jiun):
On June 16th, 1948, five plantation estate murders were reported in Malaya. Three of the murders occurred in Sungei Siput, only 40 miles away from where Chin Peng was staying.

#63. Sound: Forest sounds. Fade in. UNDER.

#64. Narrator:
At 8.30am, three Chinese men arrive at the Elphil Estate on their bicycles. They enter the office of 50-year-old Arthur Walker and salute him.

#65. Chinese man (David): Tabek, tuan.

#66. Walker (Ethan): Tabek.

#67. Narrator (Jiun): Walker tries to calm his dog, and then

#68. Sound: Dog barking. STING on "Walker."

#69. Sound: Two gunshots.

#70. Narrator (Jiun):
A.N. Kumaran, the clerk, sees the Chinese men ride away. Mr. Walker was shot through the head and chest. The $2000 he had in his safe was left untouched. The message is clear: the men had not come for the money.

#71. Music: TBD. Fade out.

#72. Narrator (Jiun):
Half an hour later, there's a similar attack at the Phin Soon Estate. John Allison, aged 55, and his assistant, Ian Christian, 21, are discussing the orders of the day when their office door is kicked open. One of the attackers says to the frightened clerk,

#73. Chinese man (David): Don't be afraid. We're only out for Europeans and the running dogs.

#74. Narrator (Jiun): Then, both Allison and Christian are tied to chairs and shot point blank.

#75. Sound: Four gunshots.

#76. Narrator (Jiun):
Two days later, the State of Emergency is extended nationwide.

#77. Clip: IWM/The Test of Nationhood/"During the early postwar years… basic industries."/2:39-3:10

#77. Clip: IWM/ The Peacekeepers/ Description of communist cruelty/ "... they tried to terrorize this whole country."/ 7:14-7:47

#78. Clip: AWM/ Malaya Patrol/ Description of wartime conditions/ "On the road… after 4pm"/ 2:12-2:45

Conclusion

#79. Narrator (Jiun):
Under the Emergency regulations, authorities could detain people without trial for up to two years. Possession of arms and fireworks was considered a capital offense, punishable by death. Curfews were imposed, movement controlled. News media became a propaganda machine for the state. Tens of thousands of migrants were deported back to India or China. Concentration camps and barricades became a common sight, and Malayans were subjected to intense surveillance every day.

On June 19th, local newspaper The Straits Times ran a report on the state of things. The article is titled "Reds Open Offensive Against Malaya."

#80. News (Ethan):“Malaya’s Communists have declared war against British rule in the Federation. This is the simple explanation of the murders and attempted murders of the last month… There is no secret about it. The pattern of aggression is clear.”

#81. Narrator (Jiun): To this, Chin Peng replies in his memoir,

#82. Chin Peng (Kevin): If I, as leader of the CPM, had sanctioned the Party’s declaration of war against Britain on June 16, 1948, what was I doing, 24hours later, stuck in an old woman’s hut?

#83. Narrator (Jiun):
In 1948, Malaya seemed to be on the brink of another war. In fact, World War II seemed barely over. Plantation workers went on strike often, and labor disputes between the European planters and their employees often led to violence. The June 16th killings were by no means an anomaly. The returning British were eager to jumpstart the economy again, especially because the Korean war created a high demand for rubber. The colony must continue to be profitable. But this time, the people of Malaya were much less willing to cooperate.

#84. Music: BRIDGE. Krontjong Ensemble Pantja Warna/Terang bulan/ Last 10 seconds (after vocal finishes).

Appendix II

Notes and cues

BRIDGE:
Music played between scenes with no dialogue over it. Also called "Act In" or "Act Out" music. In radio it is the equivalent of the curtain falling or rising on a scene.

BED:
Music that plays under dialogue, either as a brief intro before fading or under the entirety of a speech for dramatic use. A SOURCE BED cue has music being heard by the characters while they talk. Say, music playing in the background on a car radio while the characters are driving or an orchestra playing while the characters are whispering at the ballet.

STING: Music that arises suddenly to emphasize a line of dialogue. This was a cliché used in soap operas where a character would get to a certain word in a line and the organist would hold one long note emphasizing the speech. It's still used in film and TV, but with a bit more subtlety. Now, it often leaps out of a music bed as a single sustained note or chord.

FADE IN (begin playing the music and fade up the volume gradually)
FADE OUT (cut the volume gradually)
FADE UNDER (cut the volume once the actors begin to speak)
UNDER (let the music play under whatever the next cues are--sound effects or dialogue)
DUCK UNDER (fade slightly when someone begins speaking, but continue playing)
ESTABLISH (let the cue play a bit before any other sound begins)
QUIETLY IN B.G. (let this cue play quietly in the background)
CUT ABRUPTLY (often with a particular line of dialogue cited for when to cut) **CROSSFADE** (fade one music (or other cue) in while fading another cue out) **SELF-FADING** (indicating that the cue will fade itself out.
LET IT FINISH (play this cue in its entirety. Don't fade it out)
PLAY THROUGH AND OUT (this is the same as LET IT FINISH)