

The Nanyang Revolution

In this innovative reading, the development of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) is explored in the context of an emerging nationalism in Southeast Asia, the interplay of overseas Chinese networks and the Comintern. Based on extensive new archival material, Anna Belogurova shows how the MCP was shaped by the historical contingencies of anti-imperialism in Southeast Asia, long-term Chinese migration trends, networks, identity, and the organizational practices of the Comintern. This is the story of how a group of left-leaning Chinese migrant intellectuals engaged with global forces to create a relevant and lasting Malayan national identity, providing fresh international perspectives on the history of Malaysia, Chinese communism, the Cold War, and decolonization.

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The Nanyang Revolution

*The Comintern and Chinese Networks in
Southeast Asia, 1890–1957*

Anna Belogurova

Free University of Berlin



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Note on Transliteration

All Chinese proper names are spelled using pinyin romanization with the exception of proper names which are commonly used in English in a different Romanization, i.e., Chiang Kai-shek, Canton. Names of individuals are spelled in Pinyin if the characters are known. When it was impossible to identify a person's name in Chinese characters, I used the English Romanization of their names found in the original text. For the place names that were Romanized from Mandarin or a Chinese dialect pronunciation that I was unable to identify, I used the Romanization that I found in the original English-language text and italicized it. As a rule, I provided Chinese characters only for the personal names which are commonly not available in English-language studies of the MCP. The original English language of the documents has been minimally corrected for better flow and easier understanding.

Terms and Abbreviations

AAIL	All-American Anti-Imperialist League
AEBUS	Anti-Enemy Backing-Up Society
AIL	Anti-Imperialist League(s)
ASCWPRA	Alliance for the Support of the Chinese Workers and Peasants Revolution in America
CC	Central Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CI	Communist International
CO	Colonial Office Records
CP	Communist Party
CPPI	Communist Party of the Philippine Islands
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
CYL	Communist Youth League
DEI	Dutch East Indies
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Third Communist International (the Comintern)
FEB	Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern
FESLAI	Far Eastern Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism
GMD	Chinese Nationalist Party, Guomindang
<i>huaqiao</i>	Chinese overseas
ICP	Indochinese Communist Party
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Union)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KUTV	Kommunisticheskii universitet trudiashchikhsia Vostoka (Communist University of the Toilers of the East)
LAI	League Against Imperialism
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MFLU	Malayan Federation of Labor Unions
<i>minzu</i>	“nation,” “nationality,” “people,” “national”

List of Terms and Abbreviations

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Minzu Guoji	“International of Nationalities”
MPAJA	Malayan Peoples’ Anti-Japanese Army
MRCA	“Monthly Review of Chinese Affairs”
Nanyang	The areas of Chinese migration that roughly correspond to the contemporary English-language definition of Southeast Asia
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NEI	Netherlands (Dutch) East Indies
NGLU	Nanyang General Labor Union
NIANKP	Nauchno-issledovatel’skaia assotsiatsiia po izucheniiu natsional’no-kolonial’nykh problem (Academic Research Association for the Study of National-Colonial Questions)
NKVD	People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs
NPC	Nanyang Provisional Committee of the CCP
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia)
PPTUS	Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat of the Red International of Trade Unions (Tikhookeanskii sekretariat Profinterna)
PTI	Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (Chinese Party of Indonesia)
RGASPI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (Russian State Archive of Sociopolitical History)
SCP	Siamese Communist Party
SIRD	Strategic Information Research Department
SMP	Shanghai Municipal Police
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics