THE CALCUTTA CONFERENCE AND THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN UPRISINGS

RUTH T. McVEY

INTERIM REPORTS SERIES

Modern Indonesia Project
Southeast Asia Program
Department of Far Eastern Studies
Cornell University
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PREFACE

The Calcutta Conference of February 1948, has been the subject of a great deal of conjecture and very little scholarship. A number of writers, on the basis of the rather meagre knowledge available to them concerning the Conference, have drawn important conclusions, and these have often served as a significant part of the foundation for substantial theoretical edifices concerning the nature of Asian Communist movements and their relationships with Moscow. While in some cases their conclusions may well be correct, it is perhaps doubtful whether some of these writers have commanded sufficient reliable data to warrant the apparent assurance with which they have presented them.

Miss Ruth McVey has gathered and analyzed a large amount of material bearing on the Conference, much which was apparently unavailable to previous writers and which sheds some new light on its actual nature and its international context. While she does not pretend that her research is definitive--indeed, such a study may well never appear--she has, I believe, probed into this matter more deeply and more thoroughly than anyone who has written on it so far. Thus, I believe that our Project has performed a service by encouraging her to undertake this research and in publishing her results, even though her conclusions are limited and in part tentative.

Ithaca, New York
February 1, 1958

George McT. Kahin
Director

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In February, 1948, there convened in Calcutta a gathering imposingly titled the Conference of Youth and Students of Southeast Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence. The meeting was sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS), a parentage which predicted the political course of the conference's deliberations, for by the beginning of 1948 the WFDY and IUS had come well under Communist control. In itself, the political orientation of the conference was not significant: the meeting might simply have been one of the numerous Communist front rallies held to gain sympathy for the Soviet cause. The Calcutta Conference, however, was to be accorded greater status than this by many Western political observers, in view of the fact that later that same year conflicts broke out between Communist-led forces and the governments of Burma (March), Malaya (June), and Indonesia (September). The meeting, it was pointed out, had been the first Communist-sponsored meeting for that area held since World War II--or at least the first one held publicly. It had been harsh in its view of the Western powers and those who sympathized with them; there had been much mention of violence; and only two days afterwards the Indian Communist Party, convening its second congress in the same city, announced the adoption of a militant line against Nehru's government. Was the youth conference the place at which the "orders from Moscow" for unrest in Southeast Asia were passed through? Not a few observers decided it was; and in fact the Calcutta Conference has since become quite widely accepted as being the link between Moscow and the 1948 disturbances. (1)

If the Southeast Asian youth meeting actually ended in a discussion of violence, it does not seem to have been conceived with this in mind; for as it was originally scheduled, the confer-

(1) The Calcutta Conference was not, however, the only source of "insurrection orders" that has been suggested. Others include a conference of Asian Communist parties reportedly taking place in Harbin in June, 1947 /see "Secret Plan for Red Malaya," The Sunday Times, (Singapore, December 7, 1947), p. 6/; the Soviet legation in Bangkok, about whose activities there were so many rumors that the Thai government was forced to issue a denial that it was allowing the Russians undue advantages /see The Annual Register (1948), p. 334/; the Soviet ambassador to India /see John F. Cady, "Southeast Asia," Soviet Power and Policy (New York, 1955), p. 507/; and an All-Asia Communist Coference which purportedly took place in Nanking and established an Asian International Brigade. This last story reached such widespread acceptance in Indonesia that Indonesian Communist leader Aidit felt moved to deny it (see Antara news bulletin, Djakarta, August 13, 1955). For the record, there was also a Soviet trade commissioner in Singapore since early 1947; and at the end of October 1947 a TASS correspondent arrived in Indonesia.

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ence was to be held neither in Calcutta nor in 1948, and it was planned long before the shift occurred in Communist policy which helped bring about the clashes in Southeast Asia.

According to the WFDY's account, that organization's first executive council, meeting in late 1945, voted to send a delegation to visit the various Asian colonial countries. No action was taken on this decision, however, until the second WFDY executive council convened in 1946. Then it was arranged to send a commission to India and Indochina to investigate the situation of youth under colonialism and to establish contacts with youth groups in those countries. The delegation was supposed to begin its journey in November, 1946, but was delayed by the outbreak of fighting in Indochina and the absence of French government permission to enter that country. In the end, it was decided to leave for India and to wait there for authorization from the French to enter Indochina. The commission, by now considerably reduced in size from its original planned membership, left Paris at the beginning of February, 1947. (2)

Having arrived in India, the delegation waited in vain for two months for permission to enter Indochina. (3) Meanwhile, however, India itself offered an excellent opportunity for making contacts in the shape of the Asian Relations Conference then taking place in New Delhi. On March 27, the WFDY group invited the younger delegates to the Inter-Asian meeting to participate in a small youth conference, which it suggested be held in New Delhi in early April. (4) Three Burmese representatives attended, eight Indonesians, one Malayan, a Vietnamese, "several" delegates from India, and two from the Philippines. (5)

(2) Report of the WFDY Commission to South East Asia (WFDY, 1947), p. 1. There were, in the end, four members of the commission: from the USSR (Olga Chechetkina, a Journalist specializing in Southeast Asia, most recently Pravda correspondent in Indonesia), France (Jean Lautissier, a WFDY leader who was to play a major role in the Calcutta Conference), Yugoslavia (Rajko Tomovic), and Denmark (M.O. Oleson). There was also to have been a Vietnamese delegate who had been living in France, but he was refused permission to leave the country by the French authorities. Representatives from the United States, England, and China were also supposed to take part but, according to the WFDY account, they did not appear. The resolution of the 1946 WFDY council had called for participants from England, the USSR, USA, France, the Balkan countries, the Scandinavian countries, and Chinese and Vietnamese residents in Europe.

(3) Report of the WFDY Commission, p. 1.

(4) Information Service (WFDY), May 15, 1947, p. 2; June 15, 1947, p. 3.

(5) Information Service (WFDY), May 15, 1947, p. 2.

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At the meeting the WFDY commission explained its stand on the colonial question, and it was proposed that a conference of Far Eastern youth be organized in the near future by the WFDY. We do not know whether the WFDY group had had this in mind when it called the New Delhi meeting--according to the commission's report, the inspiration came from the Burmese representatives (6)--but at any rate the commission was certainly amenable to the suggestion. The Indonesian delegation, which was led by Communists Maruto Darusman and Suripno, volunteered to play host to the projected assembly. The offer was promptly accepted, and it was arranged that the conference be held in Indonesia sometime in November, 1947. (7)

WFDY and IUS headquarters responded to these developments by issuing a joint invitation to all youth and student organizations in the Far East to attend the meeting; they declared that "this conference must fully represent all segments of the democratic youth and student movements of the Far East; and all these organizations should participate in the work of preparation, whether or not they are members of the WFDY or the IUS." (8) The conference, it was maintained, should discuss the organizations' common problems; the WFDY and IUS would explain their programs, and ways and means of establishing close contact and mutual assistance between the represented groups would be considered. (9) It was suggested that an International Preparatory Committee be set up, to consist of youth representatives from India, Burma, Indonesia, China, Malaya, Korea, Ceylon, Thailand, and the Philippines. The committee would also contain a member of the WFDY's executive committee and a representative of its colonial bureau; while the IUS, for its part, would send two members of its executive. (10)

In June, the WFDY executive council met in Moscow. There it was apparently decided to limit the conference's scope to Southeast Asia, for from then on the proposed meeting was referred to as the Southeast Asian Youth Conference, and it was declared that only Southeast Asian representatives should have delegate

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(6) Report of the WFDY Commission, p. 1.

(7) World Youth (WFDY), No. 4 (spring 1947), p. 23; Information Service, May 15, 1947, p. 2; July 1, 1947, p. 4. Subsequent to the Delhi meeting, the WFDY delegation set off for Burma and Indonesia, to which countries it had been invited by delegates to the Asian Relations Conference. It never did receive permission to enter Indochina.

(8) Jeunesse du Monde (French edition of World Youth), No. 4 (spring 1947), p. 23. All translations in this essay are mine.

(9) Information Service (WFDY), June 15, 1947, p. 3; Jeunesse du Monde, No. 4 (spring 1947), p. 23.

(10) Jeunesse du Monde, No. 4 (spring 1947), p. 3.

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status. (11) The plan to hold the conference in Indonesia in November was approved, and it was instructed that the International Preparatory Committee begin work promptly in Indonesia, reporting to Prague in July at the WFDY-sponsored World Youth Festival. (12)

The Indonesians, meanwhile, worked enthusiastically at preparing for the coming meeting. The special attention granted the conference can probably be attributed not only to the leftist sympathies of a large part of the Indonesian Youth Congress (BKPRI), but also to the fact that Indonesian nationalists in general were eager for any contacts that might add to the international recognition of the revolutionary republic. The Southeast Asian Youth Conference would be the first international convention to be held in the new nation; and President Sukarno, Vice-President Hatta, and Premier Sjahrir were persuaded to become honorary members of the Indonesian Preparatory Committee. (13) The BKPRI elected to hold the meeting at Madiun, the Javanese city which was its headquarters. It was planned to set up a "youth village" outside the town to house the delegates; and the BKPRI further decided to publish a semi-monthly news bulletin on matters concerning the forthcoming conference, to be distributed to the various Asian youth organizations. (14)

All these elaborate plans came to naught, however, for in July the Dutch attacked the Republic in the first of their "police actions." While the fighting was still going on, the WFDY met in Prague for its annual World Youth Festival. In view of the alarming developments in Indonesia, it is not surprising that the Southeast Asia Commission's report to the festival suggested that the WFDY reconsider its plans for holding the Southeast Asia meet-

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(11) Delegates to the conference, it was decided, were to be from India, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, Viet Nam, and the Philippines, while observers would be invited from China, Korea, Mongolia, the Central Asian republics of the USSR, Australia, New Zealand, Iran, Iraq, and Egypt. In addition, guests from England, France, the Netherlands, the United States, the Scandinavian and Balkan countries, and Latin America would be asked to attend. Information Service (WFDY), July 15, 1947, p. 4.

(12) The committee, however, does not seem to have materialized until shortly before the conference itself, or at least nothing more appeared about it in either the WFDY bulletins or in available Indonesian news reports from that time. The Southeast Asia Commission and not the preparatory committee reported on the conference at the Prague festival.

(13) Information Service (WFDY), July 15, 1947, p. 4.

(14) Information Service, July 15, 1947, p. 4.

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ing in that country. (15) Indeed, Indonesia had never been a happy choice, for, with the Dutch blockading the country, travel to the conference would have been difficult and risky. The WFDY thus decided in its executive meeting following the festival to transfer the site of the conference to Calcutta and, in view of the additional preparations needed, to postpone it until the beginning of 1948. (16)

(15) Report of the WFDY Commission, p. 16. Otherwise, the Indonesian republic was treated with much favor by the WFDY at the festival. See "Vietnam et l'Indonesie appelent," Jeunesse du Monde, No. 6 (1947), p. 17; and "Jeune! Sois un vigilant defenseur de la Paix!," Jeunesse du Monde, No. 6 (1947) p. 1.
The Indonesian Preparatory Committee was not at all happy with the WFDY decision, as is apparent from the message it sent that organization on hearing of the change in plans: "We deeply regret the Council decision because preparations already made are in an advanced state and the entire Indonesian youth, from the front lines to the villages, is looking anxiously to the conference, where the unity of Asian youth will be realized. However, we will submit to the Council decision--convinced that world youth unity does not depend on place or time." ("Conference of South-East Asia for Freedom and Independence," Information Service (WFDY), No. 12 (January 1948), p. 31.

(16) Information Service, October 1, 1947, p. 6. Apparently pleased with the results of its Southeast Asian expedition, the WFDY Council announced plans to publish widely the report of the Southeast Asia Commission and to send similar delegations to Latin America, the Middle East, and China. The China commission was to consist of WFDY delegates from Italy, the United States, England, Poland, the Soviet Union, India, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, and Viet Nam; while the IUS was to be invited to include delegates from England, India, and New Zealand. The group would leave India just after the conclusion of the Calcutta Conference, the Council announced. From this statement we can gather that the members of the commission would be drawn largely from the group of Communist youth leaders who were being sent out to "manage" the Calcutta Conference; and this doubtless accounts for the rather arbitrary conglomeration of nationalities to be represented. /See "Commissions to Latin America, the Middle East, and China," Information Service (WFDY), October 1, 1947, p. 4./
The August 1947 Council meeting further declared that it planned to send youth representatives from Spain, Greece, Viet Nam, Indonesia, and China on international tours to propagandize the "anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggle" taking place in those countries; nothing seems to have come of this, though. The Council's promise to devote the coming year (1948) to intensive activity on the colonial question was, however, carried out. /See Information Service (WFDY), October 1, 1948, p. 8/.

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As it was finally scheduled, the conference took place in February, three months later than originally planned and almost a year since its conception in New Delhi. In that time, however, a radical change in Communist policy had taken place, the concrete formulation of which was reached shortly before the conference. As a result, what had apparently first been projected as a demonstration of Communist sympathy for the Southeast Asian nationalist struggle came forward in a different and more agressive garb.

Up until the early summer of 1947, the policy advocated by the Soviet Union for the Communist movement in Asia was still largely a reflection of the Communist course in Western Europe. There in the first postwar years the Communists could hope for power for themselves and advantage for the Soviet Union through parliamentary action and cooperation with non-Communist movements. Consequently, they followed a policy of a "united front from above," which, in its Asian adaption, meant cooperation with the major nationalist parties and moderation in Communist demands on the colonial powers. By 1947, however, the wartime alliance was rapidly becoming a thing of the past; the gulf between Communists and non-Communists widened, and in the Soviet Union there were signs that a new view of the world situation was taking shape.

Two analyses of the colonial situation were now brought forth by Soviet theoreticians commenting on the Asian situation. (17) The argument centered about the role of the "national bourgeoisie"--a term which referred, in Communist parlance, to that economic group which came between the petty bourgeoisie, reckoned to be consistently on the revolutionary side in the struggle against colonialism, and the compradore bourgeoisie, which was a tool of the imperialists. As a matter of practice, however, the term "national bourgeoisie" was almost synonymous with "non-Communist nationalists," which very likely was a major reason for the considerable importance which has been attached to it by Communist theoreticians.

One school of Soviet thought considered that the national bourgeoisie had come to side with the imperialists and that therefore the Communists must sever relations with the nationalist parties under bourgeois control. This meant, roughly, a return to the policy of a united front from below, which had been followed by both European and Asian Communist parties from 1928 to 1935. That strategy entailed an uncompromising course of extreme leftism, and had, in its previous application, generally succeeded in increasing considerably the gulf between Communists and non-Communists. Another group of theoreticians proffered the idea that the national bourgeoisie could indeed still render important service to the anti-imperialist movement, but that it could only

(17) For a more detailed and documented account of the Soviet analysis of the Asian situation during this period, see John H. Kautsky, Moscow and the Communist Party of India (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 24-32, and my essay on The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution (Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1957), pp. 27-34.

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be trusted as part of a front controlled by the Communist Party. This was the doctrine which was then being advocated with great success by Mao Tse-tung in the Chinese revolution.

To judge from Soviet writings on the Asian question, no choice between the two analyses was made during 1947 or the following year, and perhaps the difference was not then thought important by the Russians. What is of interest to us here, however, is that both theories rejected cooperation with non-Communist movements except on the basis of Communist supremacy, and both refused any compromise with the imperialist powers. This hardened attitude did not of itself call for armed action; but, cold war pressures and Southeast Asian unrest being what they were in 1948, it can readily be appreciated that it added little to the chances for peace.

The new viewpoint was made dogma in the fall of 1947, with the establishment of the Cominform. The world had become divided into two camps, Soviet spokesman Andrei Zhdanov declared. To the one belonged the United States, Britain, France, and other "imperialist" countries. In the other were allied the "anti-fascist" forces: the USSR and the people's democracies. To this second camp all other nations and movements must adhere if they were to have Communist support or sympathy, must owe fealty. In view of the Zhdanov doctrine's tacit assumption that those who were not with the Soviet Union were against it, it was not surprising that shortly after its promulgation the new dogma was extended to declare that Asian governments which were not prepared to declare for the Communist camp were lackeys of imperialism and enemies of the popular cause. This interpretation was made clear in December 1947, when E.M. Zhukov, writing in the party journal Bol'shevik, laid down the doctrine's interpretation for Asia. (18)

On February 19, 1948, the Southeast Asian Youth Conference held its formal opening. Attending it were representatives from Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam, (19) the Indonesian Republic, Ceylon, Burma, India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, and Malaya. (20) Observers

(18) Cf. E. Zhukov, "Obostrenie krizisa kolonial'noi sistemi," Bol'shevik, No. 23 (December 15, 1947).

(19) As a matter of convenience, I have adopted the Communist practice of using the term Viet Nam to refer to the Ho Chi Minh government in this essay.

(20) According to the IUS report of the conference, there were seven representatives from Viet Nam, all officers in Ho Chi Minh's army; six Indonesians from the BKPRI (twenty-five were supposed to attend, but the majority were prevented from doing so by the Dutch blockade); and a Ceylonese representative of the student unions of Colombo, North Lanka, Kandy, and Rahuna. There were two competing Burmese delegations; after some argument the International Preparatory Committee seated two delegates from the All Burma Students Union, one from the People's Volunteer Organization, two from the Democratic

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and guests came from Korea, Mongolia, Soviet Central Asia, Australia, Yugoslavia, France, Canada, and Czechoslovakia. (21)

Six representatives of the Communist Chinese student movement came to the conference. Though China had not originally been included in the group of countries whose representatives were allotted delegate status, its request for this was immediately granted--an act which apparently reflected the growing Soviet admiration for Mao's advances in China.

While a large number of the organizations represented at the

People's Youth of Burma, one representing the Burma Peasant Union and the Burma Trade Union Congress, and one representing the All Burma Indian Youth League and the Chinese Democratic League (of Burma). Five other Burmese attended the conference as observers.

The Indian delegation, according to the conference's report, was composed of representatives of the All-India Students Federation, the All-India Trade Union Congress, the All-India Peasants Association, the Socialist Unity Centre Bureau, the Andhra Youth Federation, and a part of the All India Student Congress. The Pakistani group consisted of representatives from the Pakistan Federation of Democratic Youth, the East Pakistan Muslim Students' Federation, the Democratic Youth League of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Trade Union Federation. The All India Muslim Students' Federation was also invited to take part in the conference, but, according to the IUS report on the proceedings, it refused to recognize the East Pakistan Muslim student group and declared it would withdraw from the meeting if it did not receive the seats set aside for that organization. This was not granted, and the AIMSF left the conference.

There were no representatives from Thailand present, a letter from an organization referred to as the Siamese Democratic Youth having announced that the recent coup d'etat in that country made political activity impossible. /Cf. Hands Off South East Asia, Conference of the Youth and Students of South East Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence, (special bulletin of the Colonial Bureau of the IUS, Prague, April 1948), pp. 1-3/.

(21) The foregoing account of the conference representation is taken from the IUS report on the meeting, Hands Off South East Asia, pp. 1-3. A somewhat different listing is given in the report of the 1949 congress of the WFDY, which declared that there were delegates from India, Pakistan, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Ceylon, and China; and observers and guests from Nepal, the Philippines, the Mongolian People's Republic, North Korea, Soviet Central Asia, Australia, England, France, and Yugoslavia. All in all, this account states, thirty-nine organizations with a total claimed membership of 7,000,000 sent representatives /Vtoroi kongres vsemirnoi federatsii demokraticheskoi molodezhi (n.p., 1949), p. 15/.

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conference were Communist-oriented, there was also a considerable group with no particular sympathy for Communism. The mixed nature of the meeting may have been due in part to the fact that the invitations to the conference had been issued before the adoption of the two-camp doctrine and thus before the rejection of neutralist nationalism by the Communists. Moreover, if the aim of the conference was to make propaganda for the Communist point of view, if was of course to the advantage of the Communists to get as varied a body to subscribe to its declarations as possible. The non-Communist groups, for their part, seem to have come to the meeting still imbued with the idea of Communist-nationalist cooperation, and they apparently had not reckoned that the conference would reflect exclusively the Communist line. When it became apparent how the land lay, a number of the delegates expressed serious discontent. A part of the All India Students Congress delegation walked out at the beginning of the gathering; another group from the same organization withdrew four days later, leaving only seven of the original eighteen Indian delegates. (22) All but two of the Burmese left, (23) while the Philippine delegates on their return home denounced the meeting as Soviet-dominated.

In spite of these differences, the conference remained safely in Communist hands. Controlling the meeting were Joseph Grohman, president of the IUS, and Jean Lautissier of the WFDY. It has been reported that considerable influence was wielded by the International Preparatory Committee, headed by Vidya Kanysa of the WFDY and Camel Brickam of the IUS. This body controlled the agenda and the seating of delegates and allegedly saw to it that the conference's observers and guests--who formed a hard core of Communist reliables--were given a strategic position at the meeting. (24) The presence among this group of several rather important Communist leaders--notably Australia's Sharkey and Burma's Than Tun--who had come to Calcutta for the Indian Communist congress which was to follow the youth conference gave the Communist group added authority and prestige.

For six days discussions were held and reports were presented. Whatever may or may not have gone on behind the scenes during this time has so far remained a secret. Possibly orders to Southeast Asian Communists for the 1948 disturbances were passed on then, although the nature and location of the conference would not seem to provide the best setting for such activity. As we have observed, the conference was attended by a large number of non-

(22) Hands Off South East Asia, p. 6. Cf. also Jean Lautissier, "Arrachons à griffe étrangere!", Jeunesse du Monde, No. 8 (1948), p. 14; Sally Whelan Cassidy, "Au printemps dernier dans L'Asie du Sud-Est," Etudes, Vol. CCLIX (October-December 1948), p. 101.

(23) Cassidy, p. 101.

(24) Cassidy, p. 96.

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Communists; moreover, the public nature of the meeting compelled the conference's delegates to enter the country legally and thus be subjected to police check on their movements. Located in what was for the Communists enemy territory and constituting an object of curiosity to the police, (25) the Calcutta meeting would seem a peculiarly inappropriate spot at which to pass through orders of such an important and confidential nature. This is not to say that the choice may not have been made; but it should be kept in mind that the Calcutta Conference's being the most obvious point of contact between Southeast Asian Communists and the USSR during the period does not mean it was the best one for all purposes.

It has further been suggested that the Calcutta Conference served to introduce to the Southeast Asian Communists the two-camp doctrine and its implications for the Asian scene. This implies that the Southeast Asian parties had not previously been informed of the new dogma, although Zhdanov had made his speech nearly five months before and Zhukov's interpretation had appeared two months previously. This may be so: we note that policies of most of the Southeast Asian parties apparently did not change until shortly after the conference. On the other hand, it has recently been pointed out that the Indian Communist Party changed its strategy to conform with the new line at a CPI Central Committee meeting held in December 1947; the party's second congress, convened in Calcutta two days after the youth meeting and heretofore considered a product of that gathering's work, merely ratified and made public the December decision. (26) We shall see, too, that the Burmese Communists also adopted the two-camp policy before the Calcutta Conference began.

In point of fact, we can only say with safety that the Calcutta Conference was the place at which the two-camp doctrine was introduced to non-Communists in Southeast Asia: when and how the Communists first became aware of it, we do not know; though perhaps this was the first point at which Communists from the more isolated nations--such as the Vietnamese and Indonesian republics--heard a detailed discussion of it. It is doubtless true that the conference in its discussions and reports helped clarify the new policy for the Communists of the region. It is possible that, having decided on the two-camp doctrine, the Soviet authorities considered that the conveniently scheduled conference would provide an opportunity for a discussion and explanation of the policy's impli-

(25) The Indian authorities showed no great enthusiasm for the meeting, and the conference's report complained that the governments of India and West Bengal "displayed a very hostile attitude towards the Conference," submitting the Soviet, Mongolian, and Korean delegations to search, confiscating documents brought by the Yugoslav delegate, and delaying the censorship of a Soviet film so that it could not be shown. See Hands Off South East Asia, p. 6.

(26) See Kautsky, pp. 34, 36-38.

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cations to the Southeast Asian Communists. For the conference did set forth the new doctrine, and in no uncertain manner. On the other hand, there is little published evidence of discussions concerning the implementation of the strategy in Southeast Asia. Perhaps the sweeping agitational tone of the conference's public utterances was tempered by private discussions of practical tactics; but, as we shall see, certain knotty problems seem to have remained unsolved.

Following the theory of the two-camp doctrine, the conference placed strong emphasis on the need for a complete break with the colonial powers and with the United States. "The USA is the most agressive imperialist power in the world today," the conference's main resolution declared. "...As part of their desire to enslave the whole world, the American imperialists are out to capture the markets of S. E. Asia; while helping the existing imperialist powers to their fight against the people to preserve the colonial order, the American monopolists are themselves out to dominate and enslave our peoples, with the British, French and Dutch colonialists as their junior partners." (27)

Only countries which achieved independency by bitter struggle could consider themselves truly free, it was indicated. Those nations which had gained self-government through negotiation and were maintaining good relations with their former masters were in reality still colonies. Their so-called independence was merely an imperialist sham designed to placate popular feelings by setting up puppet governments under the local bourgeoisie. (28) The only

(27) "For National Independence and a Lasting Peace. Resolution of the Conference of the Youth of S.E. Asia Fighting for their Freedom and National Independence," Hands Off South East Asia, p. 32.

(28) From the report on relief and reconstruction by the Aung Min Burmese delegation:

> The end of the second world war saw the biggest revolutionary upsurge in the countries of South East Asia, symbolized in the setting up of the Republics of Viet Nam and Indonesia. In other countries like India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon, the imperialists, unable to crush the post-war revolutionary upsurge changed their tactic and with the help of right wing leadership announced concessions, which was nothing more than a sharing of power with local reaction and compromising leadership. In those countries, the Government, dominated by the right wing and acting as the trustees of the vested interests, are calling upon the people to concentrate on reconstructing the country, and in the name of reconstruction and more production are busy in giving all help to vested interests and suppressing the democratic struggle of the people for better living and for land.

Hands Off South East Asia, p. 29. See also Satyapal Dang, "For Fighting Unity against Sell-Out to Imperialism," People's Age (VI, no. 36/37), March 14, 1948, p. 2.

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way to achieve true independence, the conference declared, was through the "total defeat of imperialism and its allies." (29)

Having stated this, the conference vigorously denounced the Renville Agreement between the Indonesians and the Dutch, which had been supported by the Indonesian Communists on its signing a few weeks before. The Indonesian representatives responded with a rejection of the truce, and the conference indicated its approval:

> The prestige of Indonesia, won through two and a half years of heroic struggle against the Dutch went up, when the Indonesian delegate in unequivocal terms declared that Indonesian youth will continue the fight for final independence despite the truce, signed between the Indonesian and Dutch Governments, under pressure of the Three Powers Commission, dominated by American imperialism. (30)

Similarly, a sharply critical attitude was taken towards the granting of independence to India and Burma by England--though the Nu-Attlee Agreement had had the approval of Burma's White Flag (Stalinist) Communists as late as January 1948. (31)

The rejection of governments which cooperated with the Western powers had its natural counterpart in a disavowal of all parties and movements which did not take an extremist view in the question of relations to the imperialist powers:

> Youth must firmly unite with the exploited masses in the common struggle against those who do not hesitate to sell out their countries to the foreign imperialists for a few concessions. It must expose and fight the compromising policy of right wing leadership. Ideas favoring compromise among any section of the youth must be eliminated. It must have complete faith in the invincible strength of the masses in the fight for a righteous cause. (32)

(29) "Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," La Jeunesse Combat la Colonialisme (Colonial Bureau of the WFDY), No. 1 (1948), p.5.

(30) Hands Off South East Asia, p. 4.

(31) Burma and the Insurrections (Burmese Ministry of Information, 1949), p. 5. According to this Burmese government account, the White Flag Communists had supported the Nu-Attlee Agreement until early January, 1948, on the grounds that it represented the first step towards the construction of a socialist state.

(32) "For National Independence and a Lasting Peace," Hands Off South East Asia, p. 32.

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At the same time, the necessity for cooperation between anti-colonial movements in Asia and Soviet-oriented forces elsewhere was emphasized. Indeed, the WFDY summary of the conference declared this to have been the most important result of the meeting. (33) A number of delegates, led by the Indonesians, reportedly urged the organization of a special movement to coordinate the struggles of anti-colonial Southeast Asian youth, only to be told by Jean Lautissier that the cause of Southeast Asian independence would be better served if its youth did not form a separate movement but concentrated their energies within the IUS and WFDY. (34)

This emphasis on internationalism and insistence that all anti-colonial movements place themselves under Communist-controlled international organizations was a typical feature of the "united front from below," which, as we have previously noted, had been followed by the Communists from 1928 to 1935 and was one of the two elaborations of the two-camp doctrine now proffered for Asia. Following the same line, the conference's resolution categorically rejected cooperation with the national bourgeoisie on the grounds that that class, "afraid of the revolutionary mass movement, has compromised with imperialism." (35)

The conference's preference for the united front from below over the "Maoist" method of dealing with the bourgeois nationalists contrasts interestingly with the prominent place given the Chinese delegates to the meeting. We have already noted the promotion of the Chinese representatives from observer to delegate status. At the conference, they presented a lengthy report on the Chinese Communist movement which ended with an appeal for cooperation between the Chinese and the Southeast Asians in the anti-imperialist struggle:

> The liberation campaign of the Chinese people can not be separated from the liberation campaign of the peoples of SE Asia. The affinity between them is much closer than that between other regions. The efforts for the strengthening of their unity is urgent. This solidarity will be advanced for the development of the national liberation campaign at this South East Asian Conference. The youth

(33) See "Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," p. 5. This report considered other major accomplishments of the meeting to have been: unmasking the collaboration of imperialists and native reactionaries against the independence movement; pointing out American leadership of the imperialist powers; presenting to the youth of Southeast Asia the experiences of Viet Nam, China, and Indonesia in armed combat; and reinforcing militant unity among the Southeast Asian countries in a common front against imperialism.

(34) Cassidy, p. 104.

(35) "For National Independence and a Lasting Peace," p. 31. See also Satyapal Dang, op. cit., p. 2.

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> and students know that the victory of the Chinese people will facilitate the struggle of the peoples of SE Asia and will greatly encourage them in their fight. (36)

The conference responded to this with a message to the Chinese people:

> The struggle of Chinese people and youth is of extreme importance to the struggle of the world youth for freedom and peace and is of special significance for us, the youth of South East Asia. The victory of the democratic forces in China will mean the biggest single blow against the manoeuvres and plans of American imperialism, aided by its agents, for world domination. It will mean strengthening of the democratic forces in our countries fighting for national independence against the penetration of the same Dollar Imperialism. Your struggle is encouragement and inspiration for all of us and we pledge ourselves to give all support to your struggle and to intensify our efforts for freedom and national independence. (37)

The important place given to the Chinese by the conference is certainly not without significance, particularly since prior to this time relatively little attention had been paid to the Chinese example in Soviet comment on the Asian revolutions. Hitherto, it had been Viet Nam and Indonesia rather than Communist China which were emphasized as "carrying high the banner of freedom, the banner of struggle for independence, into the very heart of Asia." (38)

However, as the passages quoted above seem to indicate, the conference was interested more in the fact of Chinese Communist successes than in the methods by which they were being achieved. The message that the Calcutta Conference appears to have drawn from the Chinese experience was "you can do it too" rather than "here is how you can do it."

This indifference as to method would seem to be the chief explanation for the curious divergence between the opinions of the conference and the previously mentioned interpretation of the Communist line for Asia made by E.M. Zhukov in the Soviet Communist Party journal Bol'shevik. Zhukov's analysis had been "Maoist" as regards the Communist attitude towards bourgeois nationalism; the conference, as we have seen, took the line of the united front from below. At this time the controversy between the two strategies had not yet been settled in the form of dogma, so presumably the

(36) Report of the Chinese delegation, Hands Off South East Asia, p. 22.

(37) Hands Off South East Asia, p. 36.

(38) E. M. Zhukov, "K polozheniu v Indii," Mirovoe khoziaistvo i mirovaia politika, No. 7 (July 1947), p. 3.

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difference was not a vital one. Nonetheless, it is interesting that a meeting which is supposed to have had such great import for Communist policy in Asia would have pronounced so strongly views that were coming into serious question in the Soviet Union.

In point of fact, the conference paid very little attention to any but the most primitive aspects of the cold war struggle in Southeast Asia. The meeting's purpose was, it would seem, to make clear the change in line as regards compromise with the Western nations rather than to mark out any new method of achieving power: in other words, its emphasis was agitational, stressing action rather than method.

The rough-hewn form in which the doctrine was presented naturally left a good many major questions unanswered, and the apparent newness of the doctrine to both the organizers of the conference and the Southeast Asian participants seems to have added to the confusion concerning the exact implications of the new line. This uncertainty was evidenced at the very first session of the conference, which opened with homage to Gandhi as a martyr to the struggle against imperialism (39)--though, as Soviet comment soon made clear, Gandhi was to be considered anathema under the two-camp doctrine.

Perhaps the most striking inconsistency in interpretation was displayed in the Vietnamese report to the conference. As we know, the general line of the meeting denied that India and Burma had achieved real independence from foreign rule. The Vietnamese spokesman, however, declared that "today, Burma and India find themselves the first countries freed from foreign domination," and he appealed to them to come to the aid of their less fortunate Southeast Asian brothers. (40) The Vietnamese report was the keynote message of the conference, and it is conceivable that this sharp deviation reflected a rift within the pro-Communist group concerning acceptance and interpretation of the new doctrine. The Vietnamese themselves were reportedly the object of some controversy when the Yugoslav representative denounced Ho Chi Minh's movement for placing national interests above the interests of the party--an ironical accusation, inasmuch as Tito was to be charged with the same offense a few months later by the Cominform.

The Vietnamese address is interesting for still another reason, and that is its strong emphasis on armed action. The Vietnamese spokesman, while he admitted that "the struggle for independence and democracy takes on a different character according to the actual conditions prevailing in each country," gave his special attention to the armed struggle of Indonesia and

(39) Lautissier, "Arrachons á griffe étrangère!", p. 13.

(40) "Viet Nam Youth Fight on to Victory," Hands Off South East Asia, p. 15.

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Viet Nam and went into a detailed discussion of guerrilla warfare. (41) We have seen that the Vietnamese view was not always that of the conference's sponsors; and the fact that the Vietnamese delegation consisted of officers from Ho Chi Minh's army may have had much to do with the military emphasis of the speech. Nonetheless, it is notable that none of the Calcutta meeting's reports in any way discouraged armed action against the imperialists. (42) Indeed, the main point made by the conference--that there could be no compromise in the struggle against imperialism--could have led easily to the conclusion that the only remaining path was that of armed struggle. This may not have been the intention of the Soviet Union, since the adoption of the two-camp doctrine elsewhere did not result in violence but in political non-cooperation and economic sabotage. Nonetheless, the militant tone displayed by the Calcutta Conference may well have given encouragement and added prestige to the more extreme elements among the Southeast Asian Communists. Later, when the Communists of Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia came to realize that they had no prospect of gaining power peacefully, they could look back on the conference's declarations as an ideological justification for their decisions to try the way of violence.

The whole question of the meeting's attitude towards non-cooperation and violence is made more complicated by the fact that, whatever the two-camp doctrine might claim, Southeast Asia did not divide into colonial black and pro-Communist white, but into a number of different views towards the West and the Soviet Union. Calcutta's call for an anti-imperialist struggle had been directed against the Western powers themselves. This had the advantage of being both good propaganda in Asia and a reflection of Soviet cold war aims. But should the struggle be directed in the same degree against the new-born neutralist states? On the one hand, the new Communist line declared that those who were not in the Soviet camp were against it, an opinion of which the Russians seem to have been quite sincerely convinced at the time; on the other hand, Communist violence against the new Asian governments would not enhance Russia's carefully nurtured reputation as a defender of

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(41) See "Rapport principal concernant la situation de la jeunesse en Asie du Sud-Est et son combat qu'il mène contre l'imperialisme, pour la liberté, l'independance, la paix, contre le danger d'une troisième guerre mondiale," La Juenesse Combat la Colonialisme, No. 1 (1948), p. 11.

(42) Thus, a WFDY report on the conference declared:

> ...The Conference presented directly to the youth of Southeast Asia the experiences acquired in the course of combat by the youth of Viet Nam, China, and Indonesia. The youth there have defended their liberties through armed resistance, as have the youth in other countries where combat has broken out, notably in India, Burma, and Malaya. In those countries the youth are the advance guard of the people and constitute the most combative element in the national movements.

"Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," p. 5.

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Asian independence, and it might even run more directly counter to Soviet foreign policy interests.

In fact, the Communists did distinguish between the neutralists states at Calcutta and elsewhere; and the grounds on which they did so point up quite well the purposes of the two-camp doctrine. We have noted that the Indian and Burmese governments were denounced as puppets of imperialism. The Indonesian Republic, however, was viewed with particular favor, being put forward along with Viet Nam as a model for Southeast Asia. The grounds for this were that the Indonesian government was carrying on an all-out struggle against Western imperialism--personified in this case by the Netherlands. The meeting's only criticism of the Republic was that its recent acceptance of the Renville Agreement indicated a willingness to compromise in the battle; when assured that the Indonesians would fight to the death the conference expressed its satisfaction.

It is quite possible that the lavish praise bestowed on Indonesia at Calcutta was the result of a technical error: the radical Sjarifuddin government had fallen only three weeks before, and perhaps the conference leaders had not been informed that they should take a more cautious view of its non-leftist successor. Nonetheless, when in the ensuing months the Hatta government showed little inclination to give in to the Dutch, Soviet comment on Indonesian remained favorable. We might suggest on the basis of this that the criterion by which the Soviet Union judged Asian governments at least in the early phases of the two-camp doctrine was less their sympathy for the Soviet system than their opposition to the "imperialist bloc." This seems borne out to some extent by the declarations of the Calcutta Conference, which placed the great weight of their emphasis on complete rejection of the Western imperialists rather than on the need for social revolution. The national bourgeoisie was denounced not primarily because of the horrors of bourgeois rule but because the bourgeoisie had sold out to imperialism. Indeed, the Conference made quite clear its feeling that social and economic improvement was a question of secondary importance, and that it tended to confuse the main issue of opposing the Western powers:

> The Conference has...warned the youth movements in Southeast Asia against the danger of allowing themselves to be seduced by the illusory slogans with which the imperialists and their lackeys, international reaction, are seeking to divide and confuse the youth of those countries. Thus, in discussing the needs and the situation of youth in Southeast Asia the Conference declared clearly that neither reforms nor so-called reconstruction within the framework of colonial exploitation will be able to alleviate the sufferings of the youth and that the only solution possible is the total defeat of imperialism and its allies. In this manner the Conference strengthened the will of Southeast Asian youth to continue their implacable struggle against world

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imperialism. (43)

This observation serves to remind us that, whatever its ultimate aims, the Soviet Union has generally dictated world Communist strategy not with an eye to touching off world social revolution but to the immediate foreign policy interests of the USSR. At this time, the Russians were interested in weakening the Western powers in any way possible short of world war; and they were particularly interested in injuring the United States. This reflection of the Soviet national interest is made most clear in the two-camp doctrine's designation of the United States as the prime imperialist enemy. This was also applied by the Calcutta Conference to Southeast Asia:

> ...The Conference pointed out the regrouping of the imperialist forces in Southeast Asia. It declared that in Southeast Asia, as in other areas, American imperialism is taking over from the old imperialist powers such as Great Britain, France, and Holland. The war of intervention unleashed by the Americans in China, the open aid accorded the French colonialists in Viet Nam by Washington, the role played by the United States in the 'Committee of Good Offices' in imposing the iniquitous treaty on the Indonesian Republic, the aid given by the American imperialists to the fascist regime in Siam and their political and economic policies in the Philippines are examples of this. (44)

For the duration of the two-camp doctrine's sway, orthodox Southeast Asian Communists were to view the United States as their true enemy, a policy which hurt considerably their efforts to capture nationalist enthusiasm and to clear themselves of the charge of being Soviet tools.

For the furtherance of Soviet cold war aims, in this period, a maximum of friction between Western governments and their colonies or areas of economic interest in Southeast Asia was desirable; and the Russians assumed that the new neutralist governments, born of compromise with the imperial powers and led by "bourgeois" forces, would not provide that friction. Quite the contrary, the two-camp doctrine and the Calcutta Conference maintained that the new independent governments were merely devices whereby the imperialists sought to retain control of Southeast Asia:

> In their desperate efforts to maintain their colonialist domination of the countries of Southeast Asia, the imperialists have unleashed open wars of aggression against the peaceful peoples of China, Viet Nam, and Indonesia. In other countries, in India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon, they have changed their tactic in the face of growing offensive of the national liberation movements from one

(43) "Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," p. 5.

(44) "Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," p. 5.

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> of direct to indirect domination; and with the unreserved collaboration of the ruling classes they have sought to create confusion among the popular masses by hypocritically granting them a so-called independence. (45)

The "neutralist" governments thus could not be truly neutral in the cold war; they were merely camouflages under which the imperialist order lived on. (46) It was clearly impossible in the two-camp view for the national bourgeois governments to resist their Western masters; it was, in other words, impossible for the Indonesian Republic to be doing what it was doing. Faced with the occurrence of the impossible, the Russians took a pragmatic view and chose to ignore for the time being the fact that the government was not in the proper hands. After the fall of Sjarifuddin's leftist government, Soviet comment on Indonesia no longer equated it with Viet Nam as an example for Southeast Asia, but it did continue to praise the Republic for its struggle against the Dutch. (47)

Indonesia was thus spared at Calcutta; but India and Burma were consigned to the outer darkness of the imperialist camp. Did this mean, however, that Communist rebellion against these governments was a necessary consequence? Apparently the Indian Communists, for their part, had not felt that so direct a course would be politic. Though the party reportedly discussed the possibility of a resort to outright rebellion, the political thesis it drew up in response to the two-camp doctrine specifically declared against all-out anti-government action on the grounds that, if the Communists considered Nehru a tool of the imperialists, the people did not: "...if we do not take into consideration the strong ties of loyalty that still bind the people to the Congress, our criticism will not impress the people and will not succeed in its aim

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(45) "Quittez l'Asie! Lachez prise," p. 5.

(46) Similarly, the thesis of the second congress of the Communist Party of India declared that:

> Menaced by the revolutionary wave, and finding the bourgeoisie also frightened by it and therefore agreeable to compromise, imperialism struck a deal with the bourgeoisie and proclaimed it as independence and freedom. Imperialism is thus basing itself on a new class, the national bourgeoisie, whose leaders had placed themselves at the head of the national movement and who are immensely useful in beating down the revolutionary wave.

Communist Party of India, Political Thesis Adopted at the Second Congress, February 28-March 6, 1948, p. 13. See also "For Full Independence and People's Democracy," World News and Views, XXVIII (no. 3), January 17, 1948.

(47) For a further account of the Soviet attitude towards Indonesia during this period, see my The Soviet View of the Indonesian Revolution, pp. 44-56.

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of making them break away from their collaborating leaders." (48) Instead, the CPI decided, the party would concentrate on fomenting strikes and peasant disturbances, since landlords and factory owners did not share the Congress' popularity. By this tactic, they could "expose" the government as a friend of the landowners and industrialists and thus weaken its hold on the people:

> The Communist Party, by exposing the national bourgeois leadership will accelerate the process of disillusionment of thousands, enabling the Democratic Front to grow and to develop sufficient strength to defeat the bourgeois policies and create the pre-conditions for the establishment of a democratic State, which will really be an instrument for implementing the full programme of the democratic movement and for simultaneously passing on to a Socialist construction, without an intermediary stage of capitalism. (49)

Needless to say, the extensive disruptions caused by this tactic did not endear the Communists to the Government of India; and very soon the CPI found itself the subject of numerous anti-Communist measures. Unlike the Burmese and Malayan Communists, however, the Indian party refrained from taking the final step and declaring outright war on the government. Instead it remained vaguely within the law and practiced the delicate art of brinkmanship. (50)

The Burmese and Malayan Communists, on the other hand, turned in the spring of 1948 to rebellion. Interestingly enough the most important claims concerning foreign influence on the uprising in Burma refer to Indian Communist influence as much as to that of the Southeast Asian youth conference. (51) These accounts assert that H. N. Ghosal, a leader of the White Flag (orthodox) Communists who also held membership in the Communist Party of India, attended the December 1947 meeting of the CPI Central Committee. Here, we will remember, the Indian Communists adopted a radically uncooperative program in response to their interpretation of the two-camp doctrine. Returning home, Ghosal brought with him a thesis prophetically entitled "Revolutionary Possibilities for 1948." Under the influence of this document, which dealt with the Burmese situation in two-camp terms, the Burmese Communist leaders reversed

(48) Communist Party of India, Political Thesis Adopted at the Second Congress, February 28-March 6, 1948, p. 45.

(49) Communist Party of India, Political Thesis Adopted at the Second Congress, p. 94.

(50) For a CPI account of measures taken against the party, see B. T. Ranadive, Nehru Govt. Declares War on Toilers (Bombay, April 1948).

(51) See Burma and the Insurrections (Burmese Ministry of Information, Rangoon, 1949), pp. 4-5; and Malcolm Kennedy, A History of Communism in East Asia (New York, 1957), p. 441.

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their previous policy of support for the Nu-Attlee Agreement and denounced Burma's independence as a sham. (52) The Ghosal thesis was adopted at a mass rally of the Communist Party at Pyinmana on March 14, 1948; shortly thereafter the insurrection began.

In discussing the relationship of the Indian Communist Party to the Southeast Asian insurrections, I am by no means implying that it was the CPI and not Moscow that ordered the Burmese revolt. In the first place, we have no trustworthy evidence that the insurrections as such were the result of orders from abroad rather than the decisions of the local leaders themselves. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the CPI had the power to dictate policy to the Burmese Communists. What I am suggesting is that the adoption of the two-camp doctrine by the Burmese Communists took place well before the Calcutta Conference and apparently along lines suggested by the Communist Party of India.

The CPI thesis, we will remember, decided against concentrating its attack on the Congress government itself on the grounds that that government's popularity might cause the Communist campaign to backfire; instead, it sought to foment popular unrest and to discredit the government through this. Up to a certain point a similar tactic seems to have been followed in Burma and also in Malaya, where claims have also been made for Indian Communist influence. (53) The outbreak of rebellion in these countries did not take the form of a sudden direct action against the government:

(52) The Burma Government pamphlet quotes Ghosal's thesis as declaring: "It should be clear that our position vis-a-vis the present Provisional Government is, no support of it, exposure and fight against its anti-people policies. That Government cannot be a 'strategic weapon' in the hands of the people. On the other hand, it is acting as a weapon in the hands of Imperialism against the people."
Burma and the Insurrections, p. 4. (The grammar is as given in the pamphlet.)

(53) The evidence so far produced for the Malayan case is less substantial than that for Burma. It has been asserted that "official documents" agree in attributing the Malayan uprisings to a plan formulated at the CPI's second congress, though there is admittedly no certain proof of the connection. This plan is said to have called for widespread labor unrest in the colony during April 1948, to be followed by political action on May 1 and armed violence in early June. A Communist Republic of Malaya was to be declared in August. See Victor Purcell, Malaya, Communist or Free? (London, 1954), pp. 60-61. In actuality, as Purcell points out, such a schedule was not followed, the violence of June being only an intensification of clashes that had been taking place for some time. See also Ian Morrison, "The Communist Rising in Malaya," Far Eastern Survey, December 22, 1948, p. 285.

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rather, there were a series of strikes and other disturbances, which eventually led the governments concerned to attempt the arrest of the Communist leaders. It was not until after this that the parties went underground and the all-out struggle began.

This suggestion does not imply that the Burmese and Malayan authorities forced the local Communists into revolt in any real sense of the word; (54) on the contrary, the Burmese and Malayan party leaderships appear to have been expecting, if not looking forward to, the day of reckoning which was for them the signal to abandon legality. We should remember that the primary consideration behind the CPI's relative caution was missing in both Burma and Malaya. In India, the Nehru government was popular, and its authority was generally unquestioned; a Communist revolt against it at that time would have been suicidal, as the party well realized. In Malaya, however, former guerrillas and Chinese squatters formed a considerable discontented element in addition to the restive and Communist-influenced workers' movement; Burma was seething with minority resentments and ex-querrilla restlessness. Both countries had had a taste of rebellion during World War II; the Communists had received considerable military training then, and they had gained positions of importance which they found being taken away from them in the post-war period. They thus had considerably less motivation to limit their anti-government campaigns; and they seem to have viewed the strikes as a prelude to revolt rather than an alternative to it.

One more caution before we conclude our speculations on the application of the two-camp doctrine to Burma and Malaya. The suggestion that the Indian party may have had some influence on the interpretation of the two-camp doctrine in those countries does not imply that there was any conflict between the formulas presented by the CPI and the Calcutta Conference. On the contrary, the Indian party's thesis dealth with the doctrine on the same lines as those presented by the conference, including the preference for a strategy of united front from below. What is different and important about the Indian thesis is that it also covered an area which the youth meeting seems to have largely ignored: the practi-

(54) The Soviet line on the Burmese, Malayan, and Indonesian uprisings has always been that they were the result of unbearable government provocations. (See, for example, I Alexandrov, "Events in Burma," New Times (no. 41), October 6, 1948, p. 12; "International Life" (on Malaya), New Times (no. 31), July 28, 1948, p. 17; G. Afrin, "In Indonesia," New Times (no. 45), November 3, 1948, pp. 30-32.) Thus no blame was placed on the Communists of those countries for having taken to arms in 1948, even after the international party line became friendly to the governments concerned. This is an interesting contrast to the frequent Soviet practice of blaming revolutionary failures on a misunderstanding of the international line by the local Communist leaders.

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cal application of the new line by the Asian parties. (55) If the opinions expressed at the youth meeting modified the views of the Burmese Communists at all, however, it seems likely that it would have been to strengthen their insurrectionary inclinations, in view of the enthusiastic publicity the conference gave to the more violent movements in Asia.

In the cases of Viet Nam, the Philippines, and Indonesia, no evidence has been produced for a direct connection between violence and the events at Calcutta. The Philippines delegates to the youth conference, as we noted earlier, were not Communists and showed themselves most unsympathetic to the meeting's attitude towards Philippines independence; it seems highly unlikely that they played a part in inspiring revolution on their return. Taruc's decision of August 1948, to renew the Hukbalahap revolt, if it had any connection with Communism, did not find it through the Calcutta Conference.

Though the Vietnamese representatives to the youth meeting were sympathetic to the Communist cause and undoubtedly reported the meeting in detail on their return home, there is no outward indication that this had any effect on the course of the Indochinese revolution during 1948; it was not until more than a year later that Ho Chi Minh's movement indicated clearly which of the two camps it would choose. (56) We have seen that the Vietnamese delegates showed no inclination to accept the meeting's declarations as law: they denied its most important point, the rejection of all compromise with imperialism, but stating their approval of Indian and Burmese independence. They were apparently unrepentant in spite of criticism by the meeting's leadership, and while returning from the conference expressed some irritation at its attempts to impose the international line on the Vietnamese movement. Perhaps their superiors in Viet Nam were somewhat more sympathetic to the Calcutta presentation of the two-camp argument; we can only report that the delegates seemed little impressed.

Indonesia, as we have seen, was viewed with particular favor by the conference; and, whatever may have been the role of later Soviet machinations in the Republic, there is little reason to suspect that the Calcutta meeting fomented the insurrection of

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(55) Both the Burmese and Malayan Communists had a good opportunity to hear the opinions of the youth conference, since representatives from the two countries attended it. The Burmese Communist leader Thakin Than Tun is reported to have attended the Calcutta Conference as well as the second congress of the CPI. Following those meetings, British, Chinese and Yugoslav delegates to the youth meeting traveled to Burma, where they held a mass rally in Prome. See Kennedy, p. 443.

(56) For an account of Viet Minh foreign policy at this time see Ellen Hammer, The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford, 1954), pp. 247-249.

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1948. What was emphasized at Calcutta was the need for all-out opposition to the Dutch; and shortly after the conference the Indonesian Communist line shifted from its former moderate stand to oppose all compromise with the Netherlands. (57) In the long run this change in policy did contribute to the breakdown of relations between the Hatta government and its pro-Communist opposition, for the government leaders considered it suicidal to press the anti-Dutch struggle to the extent demanded by the Communists and their allies; and eventually this led them to feel that the Communists were a menace to the Republic. The Communists, responding to growing Soviet pressure and domestic tension, grew increasingly insistent on the need for a strong anti-Dutch line; and this conflict was one of the major causes of the September rebellion.

In sum, the Calcutta Conference does not seem to have been the place at which the two-camp doctrine first became known to the Southeast Asian Communists, though it was the first time the new line was publicly discussed in that area and may have presented the first opportunity for Communist representatives from the more inaccessible countries to hear a detailed discussion of it. The meeting, insofar as it discussed strategy, hewed to the "united front from below" attitude towards the bourgeois nationalists rather than the "Maoist" interpretation then slowly coming into acceptance in the Soviet Union. The published reports of the conference do not indicate, however, that the implications of the two-camp doctrine were elaborated in any detail beyond the slogan of enmity for all who did not declare their unyielding opposition to the "imperialist camp." The conference did not openly declare for insurrection, but its mood was one of extreme belligerence towards colonial rule. Moreover, its condemnation of compromise and praise of armed anti-colonial struggle may well have encouraged Communist leaders in making their decisions for violence. We must remember, however, that the opportunity and incentive for Communist rebellion were already present in the countries where revolt occurred. It thus does not seem likely that the two-camp message lit the revolutionary spark in Southeast Asia, though it may well have added the extra tinder which caused it to burst into flame.

(57) We cannot be sure that this change was a result of the two-camp doctrine, however; the Indonesian Communist Party may have adopted this line because it was the popular though irresponsible one. Similarly, the non-leftist parties that formed the Hatta cabinet reversed their positions and adopted a more moderate stand towards the Dutch once they had been saddled with the responsibility of government.

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APPENDIX

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