

“Parang Panjang Group” in Mukim Sungai Manik, Perak : A Historiography

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Abstract : *The article put forth about the survival of the Malays in Mukim Sungai Manik, Perak following communist atrocities in Malaya. The effect of the Japanese military administration in Malaya has been granting to communist injustice in particular during the process of legitimizing their power. The Malays who were mistreated by the communist formed “ ParangPanjang Group” or a group of peoples using long machete as their weapon and began to rely on scholars, religious leaders and local as well as manifests jihad and sabilillah. Sungai Manik Parang Panjang group with their practice of salat were responsible for life and survival when killed and mistreated by Japanese and communist forces. Survival of the Malays in Mukim of Sungai Manik, Perak gave inspiration to the Malay community in the entire homeland for defending life, race and religion, during which Malaya was threatened by the communists. This study uses oral sources and library research methods, involving the collection of documents and files. The study found that the struggle of the Malays against the communist tyranny has triggered nationalism and motivation towards the liberation of the country.*

Keywords: *Parang Panjang Group, Bintang Tiga, Clerics (Ulama), Sabilillah*

I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is characterised through a plural society formed by a multiracial population. Inter-racial harmony and related issues are important issues in Malaysian history. This relationship were also characterised by demographic factors, British colonisation and Japanese occupation, communism and Malaya moved towards self-governance. Colonisation had given different implications and in turn brought new dimension in forming racial relations in Malaysia. This article will focus on the survival of the Malays in retaliation towards communist tyranny in Mulim Sungai Manik, Perak. Furthermore this article will also discuss the emergence of the “Parang Panjang Group” or a group of peoples using long machete as their weapon and began to rely on scholars,

religious leaders and local as well as manifests jihad and sabilillah in defending the lives and survival of the Malays when mistreated by the Japanese and the communist.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to examine the effects of the Japanese occupation which had played both ends against the middle and dampen the racial relationship in Malaya following the emergence of communist tyranny. The British colonisation and the Japanese occupation has led to a prolonged conflict especially between the Malays and the Chinese especially after the withdrawal of the Japanese troops. The situation became worse when the British and the Japanese had implemented a policy of prejudices and biased between the Malays, Chinese and Indians. This has led to the feelings of unfavourable preconceived ideas. The British and the Japanese administrative policies that acted unfairly to all ethnicities in Malayawere increasingly tenuous due to the communist tyranny which took over the government after the Japanese surrendered. Communist tyranny in Malaya had caused the Malays to shift reliance on the religious groups. The immediate impact was the emergence of the “Parang Panjang Group” in Mukim Sungai Manik aimed at maintaining the lives and survival of the nation. In the most desperate situation, the Malays also practiced martial arts namely “silat” and the “Selempang Merah or the “Red SlingScarf” in retaliating communist tyranny.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study uses historical approaches to see the efforts of the Malays in defending their lives and survival as Malaya was threatened by the Japanese and the communist. The Japanese government in Malaya has sparked tensions between the Malays and the Chinese. The situation became more complicated as the communists were crushed by the Malays following racial prejudice that had been triggered by the Japanese army. However, this article only analysed the war of “Parang Panjang Group” that erupted in the Sungai Manik, Perak as a result of communist atrocities. This study uses library research methods, involving documents and files. To get a clear picture, oral sources have been used to give the exact dimensions of storytelling.

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IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

There were many early works and accounts conducted by scholars regarding the colonial policy which had spawned racial tensions in Malaya. Among the renowned preliminary study was conducted by Kenelm O.L. Burridge in Batu Pahat, Johore. Burridge's writing titled “Racial Relations in Johore” had contributed in giving a reflection on the patterns of the local life that ultimately lead to the beginning of racial tension between the Malays and the Chinese. Burridge also provided important information on the relationship between the Malay and the Chinese in Batu Pahat, Johore following the spread of communism in Malaya. Furthermore, Burridge touched on the cruelty committed by the communists in the Malay settlement. Burridge's study was very significant for ethnic studies as it can provide an early reflection on the pattern of community life in Malaya during the Second World War. However, the study was limited only in the Batu Pahat area and did not include some other locations that ignited the Malay-Chinese fight (Kenelm Burridge, Vol. II, No. 2, May 1951: 157)

On the other hand, Cheah Boon Kheng's study was more focus on racial conflict that had led to the Malay-Chinese fights between 1945-1946. His account proved that the Malays had received communist's threat and atrocities once they did not supported their cause. Cheah Boon Kheng in his writing was not merely described the Malay-Chinese fights, but rather reflects the time period as a stage of Islamic revival. This was due to the Chinese communist-ideology that began to interfere with matters involving Islam, the religion of the Malays. Cheah Boon Kheng also insisted that the struggle of the Malays had widely combined the principles of sabilillah or jihad, the struggle on the cause of Allah in Islam together with Malay martial arts, the “silat”. (Cheah Boon Kheng, Volume 12, No. 1, 19)

Besides that, Cheah Boon Kheng's “Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict During and After The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946” was also important account and the basic material to be scrutinized in understanding and discussing the topic of racial relations in Malaya. This account had been written and divided into two particular parts. The first section discussed the beginning of tension between the Malays and the Chinese in Malaya. While in the second part discussed in detail the “power vacuum in Malaya” and its consequences resulted from the Japanese troops withdrawal from Malaya. Cheah Boon Kheng stressed on several factors that caused and triggered Malay and Chinese racial conflict in several Malay states. Among them were the introduction of various taxes by Malayan People Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA) and the Malayan People Anti Japanese Union (MPAJU) such as head tax and commodities that have burdened the Malays. The different culture and norms between the Malays and the Chinese had badly affected their relationship and led to a series of ethnic tensions (Cheah Boon Kheng, 1983: 197).

Equally important, Hairi Abdullah in his account “Kebangkitan Dan Gerakan Tentara Selendang Merah Dalam Sejarah Daerah Muar dan Batu Pahat” or “Resurgence

and Red Sling Scarf Army Movement in Muar and Batu Pahat District History” provided further information on the formation of the Red Sling Scarf Army (Tentera Selendang Merah) resulted from the communist tyranny in Johore especially in Batu Pahat and Muar. Hairi gave a glimpse history of the Malay-Chinese fights that had taken place in Muar and Batu Pahat districts. Furthermore, Hairi also asserted that there were three major goals that led to the establishment of the Red Sling Scarf Army. Among the goals of its establishment was to defend the honour of Islam and the mosque as their place of worship which was badly degraded and destroyed by communist's crimes and cruelty. They arised against the atrocities in order to protect the rights, dignity, rights and property of Muslims. However, his study was only limited in Johor and at the same time lacked of information on the sources used in his account (Hairi Abdullah, No., 3/4, 1973/4, 1974/5).

In addition, a Malay novelist, Zaharah Nawawi's account “Panglima Salleh Slempong Merah” provided an illustration of tormented life under the atrocities of the Japanese occupation in Malaya. This historical novel discussed thoroughly about the struggle of the Malays to defend the survival of their nation. This had happened especially during the “power vacuum” resulted by the Japanese withdrawal from Malaya which was manipulated by the communist. Zaharah's work provided an interesting overview pertaining to the survival of Panglima Salleh Slempong Merah or known as Kiai Haji Salleh in Batu Pahat, Johor. Zaharah has given an interesting picture and narration of Kiai Haji Salleh's efforts in uniting one group of Malays that held same faith, belief and goal in defending their religion, Islam. The group has finally played a role in defending the lives and survival of the Malays in Batu Pahat, Johor following communist tyranny. This novel has a great influence in describing the struggle of Kiai Haji Salleh bin Abdul Karim in Johor in the districts of Muar and Batu Pahat (Zaharah Nawawi, 1995: VII).

V. COLONISATION AND COMMUNIST ATROCITIES

Basically, the British colonisation has led to the unfairness distribution of economic resources. The policy to optimize wealth in Malaya has led to the influx of Chinese and Indian immigrants to Malaya uncontrollably. The British was later gave the Chinese permission to open agricultural areas to meet the needs of foodstuff due to the shortages caused by the Second World War. The issue of agricultural land ownership had subsequently been one important factor for the Malay-Chinese fights. Mukim Sungai Manik was the first location of the Malay-Chinese fights in Perak before it was later spread to other villages and subdivisions or “mukim” in the Lower Perak district or known as



“Hilir Perak” district such as Mukim of Pasir Panjang Hulu, Pasir Salak, Kampung Gajah, Durian River, Durian Sebatang, Hutan Melintang and Bagan Datoh. The law of the land introduced by the British had been manipulated due to its loose implementation. This situation had been used by many British investor and capitalists in their efforts to secure land owned property rights which was protected by the government. They were using the opportunity to acquire substantial number of land (Ahmad Nazri Abdullah, 1985: 21). Due to the importance of defending the Malay land ownership from falling into the hands of non-Malays had resulted in the Malay Reserve Land Enactment (TSM), No. 15 of 1913 been passed and legislated on November 25, 1913 (Ahmad Nazri Abdullah, 1985: 72-73). There were many unemployed Chinese and Indian laborers in occupying the land illegally in Selangor. This situation was once explained by T.S. Adam during his time as the Deputy Resident of Selangor in 1932 (Siti Rodziyah Nyan, 2009: 103).

On the other hand, the Japanese occupation of Malaya undeniably was also one of the factors that had escalated the tensions between the Malays and the Chinese (Mohamed Ali Haniffa, 2016). The Japanese’s goal to invade Malaya began since 1937, when Malaya exported 60.5 million worth of raw resources to Japan (FO 371/35924: 1). The Japanese continued to have a good policy with the Malays before the occupation. The Malays were given good service and employment in the mining and plantation sectors during the Japanese occupation. (Fall Of Singapore: Statements By Witnesses-Mar-July 1942, WO 106/2579 B [9]). However, there was account that described on the Japanese atrocities towards the Malay in Bagan Datoh and Sungai Manik. The Malay villagers were cruelly forced bowing to the Japanese army when they come across. The refusal would meant physical torture (Interview with Halimah binti Saidin). The famous Sungai Manik, the largest rice granary area in the Lower Perak (Hilir Perak) district was filled with blood due to the war between the Malays and the communists. The bloodshed event was considered to be the largest in the history of the state of Perak and it had left a great impact and nuisance to the Malays until today (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984).

Generally, the Malay-Chinese fight was rooted since the British rule and Japanese occupation. One of the important reason was the failure of the British to solve the issue of agricultural land ownership as well as the preservation of the Malay Reserved Land. This issue has resulted the Malay-Chinese fights in the village near the Perak River, and in several locations in South Ipoh in 1946. This fight had led to the death of 41 Chinese and 29 Malays (SECRET, War Diary Of, HQ Malaya Command, Intelligence Summary No. 11, Based On Information Received Up To 12 January 1946, WO 172/9773 [2]). Meanwhile in Dinding, Perak, the Chinese took the opportunity to invade the Malay Reserve Land to cultivate agriculture which later triggered another Malay-Chinese fights (SECRET, War Diary Of, H.Q. Malaya Command, Weekly Intelligence Review, No. 21, Week Ending 23 March 1946, WO 172/9773 [249-250]). However, the villagers unified and retaliated by taking fully armed

control at Bidor River railway bridge to stop any communists effort from entering Sungai Manik (Mingguan Malaysia, 11 March 1984).

In the meantime, economic factors in the form of wealth of food sources have also attracted Japan and communists to the Mukim Sungai Manik. The nature and potential brought by the Lower Perak (Hilir Perak) district as a farmland had been proved since the 1930s when the government took steps to expand the paddy fields in Sungai Manik. By the end of 1941, an area of 24,000 acres was opened for rice cultivation purposes (Food Production In Sungei Manik, M.U. 546/1946 Copy [D]). The opening of paddy fields has attracted the interest of the Banjar people to come to Sungai Manik and thus dominated the place. “Banjar Perantau” or the diasporic people of Banjar, was a group that was adamant in the matters involving Islam. The opening of new staged- agricultural land had to be stopped during the Japanese occupation era. Little progress had been made by the Japanese, especially in improving the agricultural area.

During the occupation, there was no problem with short supply of food faced by the people of Sungai Manik compared to the other areas. This was due to the fact that Sungai Manik has a capability to produce rice from the vast paddy fields existed in that area. And this was one of the catalyst agents for internal migration from urban areas to major agricultural areas such as Sungai Manik (Food Production In Sungei Manik, M. 546/1946). Although the paddy fields in the Sungai Manik were categorised as Malay Reservation Land, however during the Japanese occupation the land were granted to the Chinese and Indian agricultural area (Food Production In Sungei Manik, M. 546/1946 [4]). Therefore, a small number of farmers in the Mukim of Sungai Manik have been eliminated from their land ownership to fulfill the needs of the migrated Chinese and Indians (Food Production In Sungei Manik, Extract from a Report by Mr. Mc Nee D & I Department on a Visit to Perak Between Nov. 11th-15th 1945, MU 546/1946 [4]). Temporary Occupation of Land (TOL) had been issued to all races across Hilir Perak District. The circular letter to the head of all mukim in Lower Perak (Hilir Perak) district was issued to encourage the residents to plant more food-based crops. An area of 13,954 acres has been allocated for the purpose of agriculture in Mukim Sungai Manik (Statement of Temporary Occupation Licenses Issued by Nationalities, DOLP. 148/45).

In addition, lack of food causes many Chinese people from the Mukim of Changkat Jong, Langkap and town of Teluk Anson to move to the paddy fields in Sungai Manik. Malays were not able to engage in daily economic activity because of communist disturbances. They only planted rice as a family requirement and provide essential commodities especially food to the communists (Mingguan Malaysia, 11 March 1984). The increasing number of the Chinese had limit the economic opportunities of the Malays.

They were not only involved in paddy farming but have ventured into other fields such as business (Interview with Tuan Haji Osman bin Sabran). The migration of the Chinese population led to the existent of settlement area along the railway lines such as the Kerawai River, Chikus and Permatang (Ghazali bin Basri, 1974/75: 20). By 1945, there were approximately 1,000 Chinese in the area (Interview with Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said).

Furthermore, the hatred propaganda towards the Malays had been spread by the Malayan People Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA). Sensitive issues were deliberately disseminated among the Malays, hoping of internal fighting among them. Resulted from the failure to influence the villagers, the communists burnt down several Malay houses and schools in Sungai Tungku on 6 September 1945. According to Ungku Raja Musa, the Malays were supposed to be supplied with guns, grenades and explosives by Shocho Japan in the Lower Perak (Hilir Perak) district (Report On Banjarees Affairs, September 8, 1945, Pk. Sec. 2/46 [4]). The situation caused Tan Poh Aun, President, Oversea Chinese Association expressed in a letter to the Chairman of the Oversea Chinese Association, Penang, which stated that many Banjar farmers from Mukim Sungai Manik and the area close to Telok Anson had began killing several hundred Chinese including women and children in September 1945. District Officers Albakri and Ungku Raja Musa explained that three “silat” practitioners from Batu Pahat who owned magic or ability of immune from weapon or “weaponproof” spreaded the knowledge within the Banjar community in Sungai Manik (Tan Poh Aun, Chairman, Oversea Chinese Association to the Chairman, Oversea Chinese Association, Penang, September 1, 1945, Sec. 2/46 [10B]). The situation of the Malay at that time had become chaotic and always in fear following the communist threat and atrocities.

VI. PARANG PANJANG GROUP OF SUNGAI MANIK

The communists were served as supporters to the British in the pursuit of sabotage activities during the Japanese occupation (CO 537/3757: 7). On August 15, 1945, there was tension between the Malays, Chinese and MPAJA in the Mukim Sungai Manik near the town of Teluk Anson. It was due to the attempted action of MPAJA in their effort to took control on the Mukim Sungai Manik area and the nearby towns. The fights broke out until the arrival of the British army in September 1945 (Cheah Boon Kheng, Red Star, 1983: 134). Racial tensions worsened when the communists had set up "Kangaroo Courts" in most of their controlled area with the aim of imposing punishment on suspected populations who were collaborated with the Japanese (J.J. Raj (JR), 2007: 58). The Malays were mistreated by being locked in a basket of pigs, tortured, stabbed, slaughtered and kicked. There were also those who were buried alive with their heads on the ground to be kicked (Mingguan Malaysia, September 4, 2011). The atmosphere of fear and anxiety then enveloped every resident in the Mukim Sungai Manik. This fear was also because Bintang Tiga or “Three Star” had forced the villagers

to hand over their daughters to become nurses and cooks (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Majid bin Haji Bakri). Communist’s cruelty to the villagers had further added to the hatred and anger of the Malays.

In a particularly tragic situation, the Malays began to seek scholars, religious teachers including “Imams”, the Muslim scholar who led prayer and the local leaders in their quest to protect lives. The religious scholars had played a role as a strategist and protector of the villagers. Furthermore, it has become a routine for Mukim Sungai Manik residents to learn the Malay martial law or the “silat”. In Bagan Datoh, Perak, there were martial arts teachers such as Wan Sarbini who was said to have taught martial art called Silat Harimau (Rimau) or the step of tiger. There were also other local religious teachers such as Haji Yassin (Interview with Halimah binti Saidin). Most Javanese people in Bagan Nakhoda Omar, Sabak Bernam, Selangor learnt Silat Bunga, Silat Sendeng and others. Among other distinguished martial law teachers were Haji Semawing, Saidin and Basri. Normally the lesson began after Maghrib prayers and would end in the range of 10.00 to 11.00 pm (Interview with Tuan Haji Yasin bin Talip).

Moreover, when communist tyranny was rampant, many of the local clerics tried to practice mysticism like Hassan and Husin. They practiced the Ilmu Tali Pinggang Seratus or “the Hundreds Belt Knowledge” where practitioners were said to have the force of equal to 100 people. The knowledge was used to help villagers. Hassan pursued religious knowledge at Sungai Tiang, Sabak Bernam. Normally, most of them who studied the knowledge were Kiaior Kiyai, the highest level of Muslim cleric, from Java, Indonesia (Interview with Elya binti Ahmad). Despite among the leaders were killed by the communists, they did not thwart their enthusiasm to continue leading the Mukim Sungai Manik people to protect themselves and their families and to oppose the tyranny (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984). Among them, Mohd Yusof bin Hussein from Kampung Sungai Kerawai who was detained for three months at Sungai Tiang fishing village, Bagan Datoh. He was accused of being involved as a Japanese stooge and spy. Mohd Yusof and two other offenders were forced to work on mangrove timber on the seafront of the Straits of Malacca near the fishing village. (Weekly Malaysia, 11 March 1984).

On the other hand, there were also Malays who had to be stooges and staff to the Japanese army. Among the villagers who became Koco or head while serving as a Japanese military staff in 1941 was Salleh. Salleh was given the task of overseeing the villagers from Parit Lima to Kampung Head Work, located in Mukim Labu Kubung without being paid a salary but was given “Minami” and “Kua” cigarettes as wages (Mingguan Malaysia, 1984). Salleh also received a letter from five of the Bintang Tiga leaders who were incharged for the subdistricts of Hilir Perak, namely Koon Chin, Kok Meng, Loo Tong, Tong Chik and Chiang Tong (Mingguan Malaysia, 1984).



While Baharuddin Haji Salleh was appointed as the Bintang Tiga Youth Secretary of Sungai Lampam in the Mukim of Sungai Manik (Interview with Tuan Haji Baharuddin bin Haji Salleh). The position he held was not to his willingness but because he wanted to take care of his life. (Mingguan Malaysia, March 18, 1984). His job was recruiting Bintang Tiga members with a fee of \$1. The money will be handed over to the Bintang Tiga chief at town of Langkap (Mingguan Malaysia, 18 March 1984). In addition, Baharuddin Haji Salleh also served as a Koco helper to assist the Japanese administration.

The reaction of the Malays who began to oppose had angered the communist. As a result, several attempts had been made to accommodate communist members killed by the Malay-Chinese fight. In Sungai Manik, Bintang Tiga was looking for youths between the ages of 18 and 30 to be recruited. Among them were Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said at Parit 3 B, Sungai Manik along with his eleven friends (Interview with Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said). Unsecured conditions due to the communist threat led to some of the suraus and mosques that had become a major concern, was now slowly abandoned by villagers. Nevertheless, villagers still gathered to hold a confidential meeting to discuss the steps to be taken in defending their lives (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Majid bin Haji Bakri). Among them was the brave action that Salleh (Pak Salleh) had done with his friends. In an incident at Radang Punggor, Pak Salleh and his colleagues of 20 members came across a group of communists, who continued to besiege the area and caused Pak Salleh and his colleagues to pray to Allah SWT for them to survive. Pak Salleh with seven other colleagues prepared to face the communist armed with their long machete (Mingguan Malaysia, 4 March 1984). Once the decision was reached, one by one began attacking the communists. Pak Salleh succeeded in stamping the communist's collarbone and caused the machete to be stuck and hard to pull out. As he tried to pull out a machete from the dead communist body on the ground, suddenly another communist hiding in the bush had attacked Pak Salleh and struck his left wrist to break. Pak Salleh had been convulsed for a week. Pak Salleh was treated by his wife using coffee powder and sugar for nearly a month and a half (Malaysia Week, March 4, 1984).

In the meantime, the same thing happened to Andon bin Saino, who was hunted by the communists for two months and could not sleep at his house at Parit 2 C Sungai Manik. He spent the night hiding in the weeds far away from his home. During the day he would return to bath and eat after returning from the rice field or from the yard. Andon bin Saino had received training from Bintang Tiga on how to use a two-barreled shotgun and sent home to be the agent of the Bintang Tiga. During the training, he and his other colleagues had to find rice, cassava and yam for the needs of the Bintang Tiga. Andon bin Saino saw the communists flushing kerosene over sacks containing rice that was found to be not in good condition. This was to ensure that the food supplies were not released into the hands of the Japanese army. Communists also carried out inspection on the use of rice in each house.

Each family was allowed to store between 30 and 40 bushels of rice for their use within several months. The surplus of rice should be sent by the farmer himself to the communist base in Teluk Anson or Langkap Town. Therefore, most farmers in Sungai Manik would hide their rice in the forest after harvest period and only brought a few bushels at home for family needs (Mingguan Malaysia, 18 March 1984).

All these revenges and dissatisfactions were translated in the form of Malay-Chinese fights following the withdrawal of Japanese troops. The Malay-Chinese fights in the Mukim Sungai Manik took place between 15 August 1945 and 15 September 1945 (Seruan Ra'ayat, 11 November 1945). The local cleric who played an important role was Tuan Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman in Sungai Manik (Mingguan Malaysia, 15 April 1984). He acted as the bridge to unify the Malays by teaching religious knowledge at the Parit 2 B Sungai Manik mosque at night. The iconic leadership of Tuan Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman as the vicegerent or the caliph of Parang Panjang group of Sungai Manik became apparent when it became popular. Indeed, many people from Teluk Anson, Bagan Datoh, Sabak Bernam, Tanjung Karang, Tapah, Kampung Gajah and Bidor were also coming to get charms, stimulants, and also to study mysticism (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984).

Recognition as caliph and leader of the Parang Panjang group was given due to the degree of knowledge of Tuan Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Samad (Cheah Boon Kheng, 1983:231). He was also a consultant and helps villagers prepare amuletss, stimulants and teach martial arts. His duties include the Sungai Manik area, Sungai Tungku to Redang Punggul and was assisted by Tuan Haji Shukor who acted as vice caliph (Ghazali bin Basri, 1974/75: 35-36). Among his immunity was said to be bulletproof, having the advantage of bumping into the sand and obscuring the enemy's eye by throwing it at the enemy. He also played a role in determining the timing and good progression in the battlefield against the communists. However, there were other scholars who also became the focus of the Sungai Manik during communist tyranny such as, Tuan Haji Amir Hussin, Tuan Haji Shukor, Tuan Haji Marzuki, Tuan Haji Yusof, Tuan Haji Dahlan, Tuan Haji Mat Samad, Tuan Haji Amnuar and Tuan Haji Masmuda. According to Haji Hassan bin Haji Ibrahim, a friend and son of Tuan Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman, he had witnessed the advantages of his teacher. Among the advantages was that he did not bind the legs and head of the cattle as in the custom made by others and can slaughter the cow with only the hand. Tok guru was also said to had always carried a white rattan stick when walking. The stick will always be rotated while walking or standing anywhere (Weekly Malaysia, April 15, 1984).





Fig. 1 Parang Panjang or the Long Machete used by Sungai Manik Parang Panjang Group

The feelings of resentment and revenge on the Bintang Tiga had caused the Malays to defend their hometown because of their belief in the knowledge they had learned. Therefore, villagers have agreed to meet at Tuan Guru Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman's house at Parit 8 B, to discuss the steps they need to take. In each of these meetings, the Tuan Guru Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman emphasized the unity of the ummah against the communists (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri). Tuan Guru Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman's house became unofficial the headquarters of the Sungai Manik Parang Panjang Group due to the people's limelight for help (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984). The communist cruelty did not disturb the villagers, but the Malays were determined to defend the families, villagers and Islamic religion with a long machete. The day before the Chinese-Malay fight in Sungai Manik, a member of the armed Bintang Tiga members met the Sidang Haji Hassan bin Ibrahim, a village's chief, at 7.30pm to re-negotiate some of their demands but did not succeeded. Sidang Haji Hassan bin Ibrahim was one of the martial arts teachers and was extremely wanted by the communists in Mukim Sungai Manik (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri).

Unsustainable conditions caused the Parang Panjang group led by Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said to begin their preparations to defend their hometown. Together with their learned inner knowledge, they were confident in facing the communists. Therefore, the Malays began to agree to observe and look after the village with a long machete (Interview with Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said). However, there were Malays in several villages who had advised the Chinese in some of the places to immediately move or escape (Interview with Hanapiah bin Haji Salleh). As a result, most Chinese had left their homes and sought shelter when they knew about the preparation of the Parang Panjang group to defend themselves from communist attacks. The Communists have used the opportunity to restrict the progress of the Malays in several places inhabited by the Chinese such as in the Sungai Tungku, Chikus, Permatang and Sungai Kerawai.

The spirit and motivation to defend their hometown had led to the formation of the Parang Panjang group led by Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said and some of his colleagues have met with Tuan Guru Haji Bakri bin Haji Saman at his home in Parit 8 B, Sungai Manik. At the meeting, Tuan Guru Imam

Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman declared a jihad war against the communists who had disrupted peace and morals and the lives of the Malays (Interview with Tuan Haji Hanapiah bin Haji Salleh). The Parang Panjang group of Sungai Manik was given a drink of stimulants and given a stripped of red scarf. The number of red scarf followers was said to be in big number so that Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman was forced to provide the magic insulating water in a large tank. Although the Malays are only armed with long machetes, kris and knives, these deficiencies have been a factor that boosts their *fisabilillah* spirit. The task of producing a red scarf was done by Tuan Haji Abdul Majid bin Abdul Kadir with the guidance from Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri). Red scarf was only given to certain people who lead the group against the enemy (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984).

As a scholar and leader, he often conveyed advices and fatwa to his followers. *Selempang Merah* (Red Scarf) practitioners were prohibited from doing evil things and talking in disbelief when dealing with enemies. Instead they were required to read the holy verses of the Quran that have been taught. In order to generate the power of a Parang Panjang Group, the first thing he emphasized was the practice of reading Surah Yassin 40 times and reading the "Ayat Empat" or the "Fourth Sentence". After completing the Isyak prayer, they were taught with the words from the fourth verse of the Quran. Among them were readings for war, readings to attack, readings during the war in addition to other verses that must be practiced each time after performing the fardhu prayers. After mastering this practice, it will only be awarded a red scarf in a special occasion. This sling was written with the Quranic words and its practitioners were required to practice compulsory zikir consistently in order to conform to themselves. They are also prohibited from taking the possession of the enemy or the villagers either in the house or on the street. Parang Panjang group were also prohibited to cross the ditch or river when the enemy escapes. Anyone who violates these rules will be defeated in the battle (Mingguan Malaysia, April 15, 1984: 2).

The attacks that occurred between the Malays and Chinese had gained reaction from the Chinese living in Kampung Koh, Sitiawan, Ipoh, Kampar, Langkap and Chucap, to come to the aid of the Chinese who were still living in the Mukim Sungai Manik. It can be said that almost every day there will be a small fight involving Malay-Chinese. This fights were accompanied by some odd things that happen with the permission of Allah. Among them was the weapon used by the communists have not exploded when they shooting towards the Malays. Communists were also said to be unable to see the Malays clearly. However, not all of the battles of Parang Panjang group of Sungai Manik were successful.

The defeat of the Malays was caused by some members of the Parang Panjang group that violated the teachings they had learned. However, Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman, together with Tuan Haji Hassan, often monitored the level of defense and knowledge of the Parang Panjang group. He was also on the forefront of leading fighters for the Parang Panjang group (11 Orang Ulama Ditahan 7 Malam Sebelum Diam, Mingguan Malaysia, t.t.).

In order to destroy the Parang Panjang group of Sungai Manik, a delegation on behalf of a conciliatory committee comprising three Chinese representatives and a Malay representative had come to talk. The conciliatory committee had tried to convince local leaders to show the agreement signed by Raja Musa who served as Assistant District Officer, Hilir Perak (Lower Perak) district, Perak. Communist motives have successfully influenced Malay leaders. The talks were fixed on 4 September 1945 at 11.00 am (Zakaria bin Abdul Raof, Colonisation Officer, Sungei Manik, Teluk Anson to Civil Affairs Officer, Lower Perak, 7 January 1946, DOLP 33/45). Eleven people representing the Malays from the Sungai Manik had gone to Langkap to attend the talks. The representatives of Mukim Sungai Manik were headed by Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman, Haji Hassan bin Ibrahim, Zakaria bin Abdul Raof, Kurdi @ Kurdu, Haji Basri bin Ismail, Haji Dahlan bin Ismail, Haji Hassan Chikus, Pak Itam, Samad Othman, Ishak bin Yusuf dan Zainuddin bin Mohammad (Mohd Azhar bin Bahari, 1987/89: 58). They went separately to Langkap (11 Orang Ulama Ditahan 7 Malam Sebelum Diam, Mingguan Malaysia, t.t.: 2).

The original purpose of the communist was to kill all the ulama (Muslim clerics) and community leaders in order for the struggle of the Parang Panjang group to become weak (Interview with Tuan Haji Ugoh bin Haji Mohd Said). On Friday, all eleven members of the peace committee were in Langkap. They were taken to a building near a fish market at the Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Wah Keow (Wah Keow Langkap Chinese School). The Malays were very surprised founding there were many Chinese waiting for their presence. They were identified as communist members who come from outside Langkap and not local residents (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri). Penghulu Abdullah and Raja Musa, the individuals who promised to attend the consultation were not present when the time came. Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri and his followers were asked to hand over arms before being tied. At that time there were members of the group who began to cry. Sidang Hassan bin Ibrahim was said to have begun to cry for the fate that would befall them. In such a situation, Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman was said to have persuaded and seduced them by saying "patience, the god is the richest" (Interview with Tuan Haji Zakaria bin Awang). This detainee was intentionally tortured to give defense information to Bintang Tiga (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri).

The Communists had determined that the 11 captives would be killed on the same day at 6.00 pm (Ghazali bin Basri, 1974/75: 60). They were directed to dig a hole. The work started from midday until 7.00 pm. It was said that the work of

digging the hole was not ready within the period required by the communists. This resulted in the punishment of Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman's group for not implemented as determined. According to Ibrahim bin Ludin, all of them were transferred to the Bidor Police Station on the night (Mingguan Malaysia, 18 March 1984). Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman and his followers had undergone various forms of torture before being put into a detention room at the Bidor Police Station. After a week's stay in custody, all the detainees were allowed to bathe in turns in a strictly controlled manner. They have been detained for 27 days at the Bidor Police Station (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri). Meanwhile, the villagers were waiting hopefully for the negotiations to proceed. They made the assumption that the eleven representatives of their leader led by Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Samad were already been killed.

The long-term detention period gave the British a chance to return to Malaya and founded the British Military Administration (BMA). Major R.C Rose had run the besieged Bidor Police Station on October 2, 1945. At 3.00am, 20 Punjab soldiers came to rescue the detainees at the Bidor Police Station (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Majid bin Haji Bakri). The detainee was directed to a lorry waiting in front of the police station. Tuan Imam Bakri bin Haji Saman and his followers were taken to a detention camp in Batu Gajah, Perak and detained for two months. The cleric was detained for safety because fears of Malay-Chinese fights to continue. While in detention all the detainees were monitored by the British authorities. Major R.C Rose representative, known as Mustafa Al-Bakeri, had come to Zakaria bin Abdul Raof at Batu Gajah detention room. This opportunity has been used to send expenses to his family for almost two months (Zakaria bin Abdul Raof to His Majesty King Musa, Assistant District Officer, Telok Anson, 3 November 1945, DOLP 33/45 [Appendix V]). On December 2, 1945, all eleven prisoners were brought back by a military lorry to Telok Anson (Mingguan Malaysia, 18 March 1984). All the detainees were released on December 3, 1945 on BMA resolution (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Majid bin Haji Bakri). The news of the return of all Sungai Manik representatives had caused the uproar across the Sungai Manik. Upon his return, Imam Haji Bakri bin Hj Mohd Saman to Sungai Manik, continued to deliver religious knowledge to the villagers. The return of the Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri had led him to be honored by the local community for the degree of his knowledge and religion (Mingguan Malaysia, t.t.: 3).

Although BMA has been in power, the communist threat was still widespread especially in the Sungai Manik. Tuan Guru Imam Haji Bakri bin Haji Mohd Saman has anticipated any possibility that has arisen. Hence, a more precise preparation was undertaken to strengthen the Sungai Manik Parang Panjang Group to face the communist attacks.



Parang Panjang group continued their struggle to defend communist attacks on Manik River (Interview with Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir bin Haji Bakri). The women also set up a long line of machetes in the pursuit of the Malay survival of the Manik River, opposing the communist tyranny (“Women In Pikul Parang Panjang”, *Mingguan Malaysia*, t.t.). Among the top performers are Yon binti Sopi, Radziah Haji Ahmad, Hajah Salamah, Hajah Aisah and Zainon. Yon binti Sopi had undergone a detention situation at the Wahaw Chinese School (How the Three-Star Caught of 150 Prisoners”, *Mingguan Malaysia*, April 1, 1984). However, her diplomacy had helped her to help other villagers. Among them was the funeral of Suhaibah. (The Communist Wickedness of Soak² at the Padang River”, *Weekly Malaysia*, April 8, 1984).

There are also many other local figures who were also committed in preserving the lives of the villagers. At Sidin River there were figures such as Din Benggali, Tan Aris, Majid Khoyya, Yusof Lintang, Ibrahim Ludin, Mat Ali, Mat Yet bin Kulub Mohamad, Mat Nor Kulub Mohamad and Mat bin Yahya. Meanwhile in Pekan Rabu there was a vanguard defense headed by Haji Salleh Tasir, Haji Basri bin Haji Ismail and hundreds of villagers who stand firm behind. Similarly in Cikus town there is a defense line led by. And many more. In Parit 3, Sungai Manik appeared Pendekar Acil, Mat Yusof Hussein, Haji Hassan Kasim and Najmuddin Salleh. While in the Sungai Lampam area there was a hot-blooded group led by Baharuddin Haji Salleh. This group became the village defense fortress. It was said that in all the villages and ditches in the Mukim of Sungai Manik and Labu Kubung each had their own line of defense (“Three Stars of Anger When The Followers Make a Mouse”, *Mingguan Malaysia*, April 29, 1984: 2). The Malay-Chinese fights that was triggered by communist tyranny at the Manik River had left a negative impact on the Malay-Chinese ties. BMA had conducted several negotiations, but in its early stages there had been a failure. Communists accusations towards Malays blaming them for hating on peace was untrue. In addressing Malay-Chinese fighting in Sungai Manik, Raja Musa, Haji Aris and Haji Amin sent letters to religious teachers, clerics, priests and leaders in Sungai Manik to use their influence to stop the fights. Malay and Chinese leaders promised that both parties would not attack and all differences would be resolved collectively (Raja Musa to Poh Aun, August 26, 1945, Sec. 2/46 [16E]).

VII. CONCLUSION

The wealth of agricultural areas at Sungai Manik, Perak had caused the Japanese army to build an administrative headquarters in the area. The economic issue had become one of the factors that led to communist tyranny at Sungai Manik, Perak. Due to Malays’ courtesy in order to develop and maintain a harmonic life, they had given some land to the Chinese to survive before the Japanese occupation. But instead of land ownership by the Chinese in Sungai Manik had given them the chance to become landlords. Chinese dominance in the economy was not only as a farmers, but also as a

wholesalers and retail traders in the Malay village. Japanese threats and crimes and communists against the Malays persisted so long as they were forced to defend their livelihood. Sabil fighters armed with long machettes and red scarves appear along the Sungai Manik, Perak following the tyranny of Japanese occupation and communists. This uncontrollable feeling was translated in the form of racial conflict. Among the important effects of the fights was the rise of the hate of the Malays against Japan and the communists. The Malays also rejected their dependence on the Chinese who were then infused with the communist ideology. It turned out that the Malay conflict of communism that had begun before and after the Japanese occupation did not end so far. Communists had continued to spread ideology and commit tyranny. Consequently, elements of prejudice, violence and revengeful motives remain until Tanah Melayu reaches independence.

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