

History written in blood

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TODAY marks an important date in the history of Malaysia. A State of emergency was declared on June 16, 1948 that started a 12-year-long war led by the Setiawan-born Chin Peng.

The quest for independence from the British by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) proved to be a long, hard one.

Together with others, the CPM formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army which fought the Japanese occupation forces. Chin Peng was conferred the Order of the British Empire which was subsequently withdrawn.

For a short period after World War 2, the party was legal but hostilities between CPM and the Malayan colonial government led to it being declared illegal again.

In slightly over a decade, more than 6,000 guerillas were killed and over a thousand captured by security forces, 2,702 of them surrendered during the conflict and about 500 more surrendered at the end.

On the other side of the conflict, over a thousand Malayan troops and police were killed along with 500 Commonwealth personnel. Some 2,500 civilians were also killed and about 800 more reported missing.

The following chronology lays out significant events of that painful history.

June 16, 1948: Three European plantation managers killed by CPM members at Sungai Siput and a State of emergency is declared. CPM is declared illegal.

Oct 6, 1951: CPM kills British High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney.

Sept 8, 1955: An amnesty for Communists was issued by the government of the Federation of Malaya.

Dec 28, 1955: Baling peace talks held at the Government English School. Chin Peng's demands are dismissed after which Chin Peng retires to Thailand and is replaced by Ah Hai as acting secretary-general in Malaya.

Feb 8, 1956: Tunku Abdul Rahman withdraws amnesty.

Aug 31, 1957: Malaya gains independence.

July 31, 1960: The Malayan government declares the State of emergency over. Chin Peng leaves south Thailand for Beijing.

Dec 2, 1989: A peace treaty is signed between CPM, the Malaysian government and Thailand.

2000: Chin Peng applies to be permitted back into Malaysia.

July 25, 2005: Chin Peng's application is rejected.