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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, SINGAPORE**

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His Excellency the Governor**

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**SINGAPORE CHINESE MIDDLE  
SCHOOLS STUDENTS' UNION**

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## SINGAPORE CHINESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS STUDENTS' UNION

### THE COMMUNIST TASK

In 1951, the Central Bureau of the Malayan Communist Party issued a directive on the "Party's Urgent Tasks", one of which was defined in this way:

#### *Cultural Working Personnel.*

Town organisations must train up working personnel, particularly young cultural working personnel, to send out to operate in the rural areas. To this end it is very necessary for the Party to be active among Middle School Students, and this aspect of our work must be completed satisfactorily.

Similarly, in a later M.C.P. directive dated 11th June, 1956 it was laid down that:

The work of winning over the school children is very important and must not be overlooked. Especially in circumstances where the enemy is stronger than we are, the work of winning support from school children and organising them to struggle is more important than military activities.

Clearly the schools were a target for Communist exploitation as another instrument for the achievement of power by the M.C.P.

A statement was made in 1955 by a Chinese Middle School student who was an official of the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union and at the same time an under-cover agent for the M.C.P. He said:

At one stage the Government was about to permit registration (of the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union) under the conditions that students should not take part in political activities or interfere with labour disputes. Representatives of the Preparatory Committee refused to accept this proviso and this was considered by the Party Organisation to be stupid . . . The Union should accept such conditions outwardly but carry on with political activities afterwards . . . The decision to register the Union with the proviso was undoubtedly made by the Party Organisation and accepted by the S.C.M.S.S.U.

Clearly the M.C.P. was in fact carrying out its directive through its members in the Middle Schools, and can be assumed to have had a direct interest in the inauguration of a Union, which both in the short run by agitation, and in the long run by controlling the electors of the future, was of the greatest value to them.

### POLICY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Meanwhile an All-Party Committee of the Legislative Assembly was considering the state of the Chinese Middle Schools in the light of the part which students had taken in the events leading up to, and during, the riots arising out of the industrial dispute in the Hock Lee Bus Company. The Committee consisted of eight members drawn from all political parties in the Assembly and sitting under the chairmanship of the newly elected Minister for Education, the Honourable Mr. Chew Swee Kee. Their report was unanimous in support of the following views:

All the best intentions in the world and the most carefully conceived plans cannot bring about the results we hope for *unless* the Chinese School students, in whose interests the Committee are concerned, will co-operate conscientiously and without reservations, will play their part as future responsible citizens in the glorious tasks which will be theirs when Self-Government becomes a reality and, in short, will identify themselves completely with the trend and the aim of a Singapore and Malayan-centered loyalty, a Singapore and Malaya in which they can have vital and enduring stakes and whose destinies they can help to share in the years to come.

. . . They (the students) should devote themselves to their studies and make good use of the educational and career opportunities which will presently be opened to them, and thus serve Singapore and Malaya (*italics*). Ill-considered attacks on and destructive criticism of constituted authority cannot but be a *disservice* to Singapore.

We noted with deep satisfaction, whilst this report was being finalised, that the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union had been accepted for registration as a Society, on stipulating that the members as a body would not participate in politics, nor in industrial strife of any kind. We endorse this decision.

. . . There is no doubt that amongst the senior students of the Chinese schools, because of the lively and even partisan interest shown in political development, there tended to be a vociferous clamour for action being taken to right what they considered to be things which are radically wrong in the body politic. There would be nothing wrong in holding opinions as such, but when the students started to agitate against constituted authority, this went against mere matter of discussion and became political action which must be reserved for the electorate acting along constitutional lines.

While taking such a sympathetic approach towards students' discussion of politics, we must beware of the fact that there is a danger that healthy student activities and enthusiasm could be misused by political groups whose intentions are to use these student activities to overthrow a lawfully constituted government unconstitutionally. In welcoming students' taking an intelligent interest in politics since they will shortly take their places as adult members of the population, whether they come from English Schools or from Chinese Schools, there should however be constant vigilance to see that any particular form of normal student activity is not perverted by groups whose sole intention is to overthrow a lawfully constituted government by unlawful activities. There should therefore be no political organisation by students within schools, designed to proceed to political action instead of mere academic discussion of the principles of democratic government as opposed to other forms of government devoted to informing the participants in such discussions as to their rights, privileges duties and obligations, etc., in the free democracy . . . The more they understand of the democratic processes, the rights and privileges of citizens in a democratic country as well as the duties and obligations such citizenship imposes, the more they will learn to love their country and the greater the chances of a loyalty towards Singapore transcending all other loyalties, and of a Malayan nation emerging from among diverse elements and races.

These were the views expressed by the Legislative Assembly in welcoming the registration of the Union. It is the considered view of Government that, neither in the spirit nor in the letter has the Union, fulfilled the role which they envisaged for it. It has neither taught the democratic way, nor has it taught loyalty to Singapore and Malaya. It has become the instrument for the teaching of un-Malayan loyalties and ideologies to the future adult citizens and voters of Singapore. It has set its own wishes against those of the Government, showing none of the respect for constituted authority which the Committee wished to have inculcated. It has not directed students' thoughts to their studies but has drawn their energies and interests to extra-curricular and basically political study and activities. Moreover it has not confined itself to discussion of the democratic ways; it has systematically undertaken the indoctrination of an undemocratic way of community life and action. It has not only used its organisation to influence the administration of the schools; it has taken part in public political activity, both by its own statements and in association with bodies of adult citizens. It is quite clear that it has misused and abused the trust which was put in it at the time of registration, and the Government has had no hesitation therefore in deciding to withdraw its registration in the interests of Chinese education now and in the future, and of the future health of the democracy which alone can give substance to the urgent wishes of the people for Self-Government.

#### HISTORY OF THE S.C.M.S.S.U.

It is important to remember that the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union did not arise out of any educational or cultural concern of the students, or anything connected with the schools. It arose out of an issue affecting the relationship of the students to the community, and to the government as the constituted authority of the community. It arose out of a matter concerning the obligations of students to the community, *i.e.* the issue of National Service. It is important to remember that at the time of the agitation the students were not the spokesmen for their contemporaries who had already accepted their civic obligation, peacefully and democratically. Moreover the obligation was not an onerous one either as defined in the law or as proved in practice. The law required part-time service

at times convenient to young workers and students alike. Their protest came from a limited self-interested group confined to the Chinese Middle Schools, four of which are girls' schools not affected by National Service.

The agitation by the Chinese Middle School students against National Service came to a head in their demonstration on 13th May, 1954, which led to a clash with the police. The Union have never ceased, whether in Singapore, or during their visit to the Cultural Festival organised in Kuala Lumpur in December 1955 by the Pan-Malayan Students Union, or during their visit to the Afro-Asian Students Conference in Bandoeng in May 1956, to recall and exaggerate this incident. They omit their own disregard of police warnings beforehand and their refusal to disperse when ordered by the police; they exaggerate the few minor casualties into extensive 'bloodshed'; they repeat the complete fabrication that troops took action against them; they make their account of the demonstration a basis for their continuous criticisms of the police; they build the "incident" up into a major one and a great achievement, though it had no effect either on Government policy or the effective administration of the call-up. On the second anniversary it was referred to as the "blood-stained" incident. Said Soon Loh Boon, President of the S.C.M.S.S.U.: "I want to tell you all that we must pay off this debt with blood." The fourth issue of the *Voice of Study* published by the Chung Cheng Branch of the Union included photos of the disturbances of 13th May, with the caption, "Bloody debt shall be paid in blood: the longer the debt is owed, the more interest shall be paid." Along with the photographs of the demonstration, a blood-stained shirt was displayed with the allegation on the label attached that it was worn by a student during the demonstration. The anniversary speeches were inflammatory in their attacks on National Service and "colonialism": and the claim was made that the incident had begun the mutual co-operation of workers and students, which is the aim of the Communist policy of the United Front. A similar "Commemoration Day" has been created for 30th March, the date of the students one day strike in 1955 against the refusal of registration of their Union. In their open letter on the first Anniversary in 1956, the day was hailed as "of extraordinarily great historical significance" and "an expression of the great unity of the fellow students of Singapore." The same statement ends with the slogan "Expand the great spirit of March 30th." Like the "May 13th" incident, it is used to build up the atmosphere of struggle as a basis for the disciplined totalitarian unity without opposition which the Union Committee seek to create. The moral the Union wishes their members to draw is that without the defiance of 30th March they would not have achieved their registration six months later.

On 18th May, the students formed a 55-man National Service Delegation to agitate for the exemption of students from National Service. The proposal to form a Students' Union was made public in a statement issued on 9th October, 1954, but the formal application for registration was not sent to the Registrar of Societies till 7th January, 1955. This application was refused on 14th January, 1955, as was also refused a subsequent request for re-consideration, because the Registrar was not satisfied that its purposes were non-political. During the election campaign for the present Legislative Assembly, a one-day strike was organised by the students on 30th March, four days before the election, to protest against the refusal of registration two months previously. On Election Day, 2nd April, the students sent a petition to the Governor. These were timed to remind electors and candidates of the wishes of the students.

The question of registration was taken up immediately by the newly elected Government in April 1955, but it was only on 28th July that the students accepted the condition, endorsed by the newly-elected Government, that the Union, if registered, should not participate in politics or industrial disputes. That the issue was a very urgent and fundamental one was illustrated in the active part taken by students between April and July in the Hock Lee riots and the public agitation against the Public Security Bill. During the period from July to October, the students and their advisers were concerned with the re-drafting and clarification

of the rules in English and Chinese. The students were informed by the Registrar of Societies on 6th October that registration had been approved and after a delay in complying with formalities the Union was finally gazetted on 5th December, 1955. Its span of life has been 10 months from that date.

The students regarded registration as a victory over the Government and a successful assertion of their strength, both by "the glorious bloodshed of May 13th" (the date of the demonstration of defiance of police and Government over National Registration) and by their one-day strike of 30th March. The leaders were determined that it should be seen not as a constitutional victory but as a chapter in their "struggle", to be commemorated annually as a basis for future agitation in support of their aims. Their speeches of self-congratulation already included attacks on the police and the Public Security Bill then before the Assembly. They celebrated "victory" against their enemy, their enemy quite clearly being established authority. Their purpose was more than the "mere matter of discussion" envisaged by the All-Party Committee; it was political action in the strained atmosphere of struggle in which they conditioned their members to live. By 20th October, 14 days after their Registration had been approved, they had begun the attack on the rule against political activity which they had just accepted as the basis of the registration of the Union.

After their inaugural meeting in the Happy World Stadium on 30th October, which again showed no appreciation of the wishes of Government or the Assembly in allowing registration, they attacked the Public Security Bill and the Government's Educational Policy. On 11th November, five weeks after registration, the Union Committee was warned by the Registrar of Societies that the Union would be dissolved if it continued its political activities. This warning, they replied, they could not accept. The Union called a meeting the following day to protest against the "No Politics" rule, and again attacked the Public Security Bill. The following day the Chung Cheng School Branch at their meeting decided to ask the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to forward their views on the S.T.C. strike to the Government, and threatened to defy the "No Politics" rule if students were not exempt from arrest under the Public Security Bill. The Union subsequently addressed the Minister for Education direct on the S.T.C. strike on the ground that they were affected by the strike. Yet on 26th September, 1956, the Students' Committee set up to agitate for the re-registration of the Union claimed that they had "strictly complied with the stipulation that they were not to take part in political activities or industrial disputes".

On 13th December officials of the Union sent food to express their sympathy with, and support for, the members of the S.T.C. Union who were on strike. They also acted on behalf of students applying for exemption from National Service Registration. For this purpose they set up "The Delegation to Appeal for the Exemption from National Service" and on 13th December called a meeting to discuss National Service which was attacked as affecting the studies and the health of students. They construed postponement as a right for themselves without leaving discretion to the administration to decide on the merits of each individual case.

A frequent demand of the Students Union was for a "peaceful and stable atmosphere for study", and, on this ground, it demanded the exemption of students from the provisions of the Public Security Bill. But, in fact, the Union used the atmosphere of "struggle", of aggressive self-assertion, and of constant agitation to build up a feeling of persecution which infected the schools and created the atmosphere for the existence of which they blamed the Government. Every grievance adopted by the Committee was conveyed immediately to each classroom for discussion and agitation to the damage of studies and of the authority of the masters. For instance, in mid-morning of 27th February, 1956, members of the Union Branch

Committee in the Chung Cheng School took time off in spite of the protest of teachers, to plan their coming Propaganda Week. While saying that until the end of colonialism, there would be no peace for study, the Union ensured by its action that there would be no peaceful atmosphere, thereby sacrificing the present education of students for the future political aims of the Union, in the same way as a Communist Trade Union would force a "go-slow" strike, against the immediate interest of the members for the political aims of the Party.

The S.C.M.S.S.U. has not confined its attacks to the Singapore Government. When their party was searched at the Johore Causeway on its way to the P.M.S.U. Cultural Conference in Kuala Lumpur in December 1955, and when during the Conference two of their items were deleted by the authorities from their concert there, they issued a strong protest and demanded apologies from the Federation Government. Similarly when the Federation Government imposed its ban on the touring parties from the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools, the Ministers were attacked as the "puppets of Colonial Officials".

During 1956 the S.C.M.S.S.U. has increasingly taken part in political meetings jointly with other bodies, not for political discussion, but for political action and agitation. On 3rd March, 1956, they joined with four cultural bodies to protest against the banning of a concert with pro-Communist items. On 8th March, their President, Soon Loh Boon appeared on the platform and spoke at the meeting organised in celebration of the Communist "Women's International Day". He attacked the Government for putting a "red hat" on individuals and organisations, and alleged that the Government was under the power of the official ministers and the police. For this celebration the Union published a special book of songs, under the title of "We want Peace." One of the songs to which the students gave the title "The Great Students Union" originates in the song "The Great Mao Tse-tung", printed in the "New Life Song Selection" published in Shanghai in 1953.

The words of this song as printed by the Union are:

The keeper of our garden is the Great Students' Union  
The conception of our life is the Great Students' Union

The chorus repeats:

We joyfully call for long life for the Students' Union  
Long live, long live, the great Students' Union

The original words are:

The Great Mao Tse-tung is our gardener  
The Great Mao Tse-tung is our conception of life

and the chorus similarly repeats:

Mao Tse-tung, we wish you long life.

Another song from the same book of songs for Women's International Day is called "The Song of Youthful Students". It is a song taken from a Soviet Russian film, and contained in the same Shanghai-published collection of songs as the previous one. Its original Russian title is "The March of the Women Members of a Collective Farm Village".

The S.C.M.S.S.U. was also represented at a meeting of Chinese cultural societies on 11th March, 1956, which demanded that the Government should give them freedom of speech and association. The Union was also a joint sponsor of the meeting in the Badminton Hall on 18th March immediately before the Merdeka Rally at the former Kallang Airport. Their President, Soon Loh Boon, addressed the meeting. It was on the instruction of the Union Committee that the Picasso Peace Dove banner which was unfurled at the rally, was painted on the Union's premises, although Soon Loh Boon was at the time to disclaim any responsibility for the Union. At the end of the rally, students danced the "Yanko" dance which has been adopted by the Union as their song, "Sing the Song of

Victory.” The music is taken from the Chinese Communist song “The Victorious Yanko”, the verses of which include the following lines:

. . . Some sing and others jump,  
 The dancing of the Yanko becomes more and more vigorous,  
 Welcoming the People’s Liberation Army,  
 Welcoming the People’s Liberation Army.  
 Beat up the gongs and drums, set off the fireworks,  
 The day of the People’s reckoning is at hand,  
 Thanks to our Chairman Mao  
 Everything depends on his decision . . .

The Union also took part in the sponsoring of the meeting of the Chinese Cultural Societies held after the failure of the constitutional talks in London. Since the launching of the Anti-Yellow Cultural Council by the Singapore Women’s Federation, dissolved on 19th September, 1956, the S.C.M.S.S.U. has been closely connected with its activities.

Yet again in the statement issued after the dissolution of the Union and quoted above, the Students’ Committee claims that “the Union had never started demonstrations of a political nature with other Communist Front Organisations”.

In December 1955, the Union began their “Hsueh-Hsih” or “Study” campaign and the organisation of picnics and meetings to carry it out. The Johore Police seized a “Study Outline” from the party of Middle School Students travelling to the P.M.S.U. Conference in Kuala Lumpur. On 13th February, 1956 the Union organised picnics at Johore Bahru and at Loyang. At the latter, the technique of general knowledge questions was used to ensure that those present knew what the Committee believed to be the key facts about the Union and its purpose and policies. From 25th February to 3rd March the Union organised a “Study Propaganda” Week on the Chinese Communist Party pattern at which representatives of all Chinese Middle Schools were present. The nature of the “Study” movement of which this was the first major activity is discussed later.

On 6th April, a political picnic was organised by the Union and was addressed by the President Soon Loh Boon who told them that the picnic was only a pretext to deceive the Colonial Government. They must struggle for independence and drive the rulers away and build the paradise gained by the struggle. He declared for collective leadership and asked that he should be called “Fellow-student” and not “President”. The following day Soon Loh Boon asked that notes should be destroyed after the picnic lest they fall into the hands of Government. On 9th May, the first phase of the “Hsueh-Hsih” campaign was considered finished and a meeting of the Union at which some teachers were also present, was held to assess its success. From 9th to 12th June, a “Summer Get-Together Party” was organised by three Middle Schools at a sea-side villa. Its topics of discussion included the World Peace Movement and the political situation in North Africa and the Middle East. The students attacked the Federal Emergency Regulations. From 18th June to 30th June, special indoctrination sessions were organised by the Union for the members of its Executive Committee. The directives (which are discussed later) included such Communist themes as Criticism and Self-Criticism, Anti-Sectarianism, and Collective Leadership. The different “Hsueh-Hsih” groups were given names such as Independence, Peace, Unity, Study, and Mutual Aid, all words to which the Communists give their own definitions and associations. The directives on which these discussions were based were later distributed in the Yoke Eng School. From 4th to 7th July, the Union organised a 4-day indoctrination session for the Girls Schools. At this gathering the students were divided into six groups: the 13th May Group (after the 13th May demonstration against National Service), the 22nd May and 6th June Groups (after the dates of the beginning and the end of the students “camping out” in the Chinese High and Chung Cheng Schools after the demonstration of 13th May), the 8th March Group (after Women’s International Day), the 30th March Group (after the date of the one day strike against the refusal of registration to the S.C.M.S.S.U.), and

the 30th October Group (after the date of registration of the Union). They discussed the spirit of co-operation as shown in the Afro-Asian Students Conference, and cited the demonstration on 13th May as an example of that co-operation. They also discussed the Baling talks and the Federation Chief Minister was attacked as a "war-mongering element", unable to co-operate with the M.C.P., the party which, in the students' view, was seeking the welfare of Malaya. In their discussion on Collectivism, Russia and China were held out as examples of the achievements of collectivism.

The first phase of this campaign began in January 1956 one month after the registration of the Union was gazetted. The main aim was to "unite the students and improve by mutual help their scholastic studies and healthy activities". The policy for developing "Hsueh-Hsih" was mapped out by the officials of the Students' Union. The slogan of this first phase was, "To Unite Firmly and 'Hsueh-Hsih' Well".

The second phase began in April 1956. The main aim was to consolidate the influence of the Students' Union and tighten its hold on students. Special attention was paid to the analysis of current news which was interpreted to suit the views of the Students' Union. The slogan of this phase was, "To consolidate the Results of 'Hsueh-Hsih'".

The third and present phase of "Hsueh-Hsih" began in July, 1956. An interim report was presented to Union executives at a meeting on 26th July in the Hokkien Association. The main aim of this phase is to intensify the indoctrination of the previous phases. It was for this phase that the Union held at the Students' Union premises the series of intensified indoctrination sessions previously referred to in order to prepare its executives for "their very important tasks of correct collective leadership, and criticism and self-criticism". Particular stress was laid in this phase on the Anti-Yellow Culture Campaign which had been launched by the Singapore Women's Federation. The slogan for this phase is "To Enrich the Life of 'Hsueh-Hsih' and to heighten the results of 'Hsueh-Hsih'".

The Union's concept of unity is that all students should subscribe to their policy. Any opposition was attributed to colonial "splitting" tactics and treated as "sabotage" by variously-coloured groups such as "yellow wolves" or "white terrorists" or "black forces". At the second anniversary of 13th May, Soon Loh Boon declared: "the Students will not allow any political body to infiltrate into the schools". The Union claimed to be non-political. Any counter-display of posters was attacked. A boy who tore down a poster at the Chinese High School was reported as having been compelled to sign a "confession" which the School branch of the Union did not consider acceptable. In the Chung Cheng School, the Union wrote a list of their opponents described as "traitors", on a number of blackboards in the School. On 27th April their publication "Voice of the S.C.M.S.S.U." attacked the "undermining elements". It reported that at the Chinese High School students were going to see a boy who had dared to tear down one of their posters, a grim form of ostracism, hinting worse to come for the students who dare to oppose "The Voice".

The reply to opposition was not by argument, but, as in the way of Stalin, by hyperbole of abuse. "The so-called 'Anti-Red' group", said a statement issued by the S.C.M.S.S.U. to criticise a *Straits Times* article on 20th August, 1956, "is only made up of a number of contemptible informers and rascals. Their task is to inform and sabotage. Their practical task is to undermine the Study Campaign." The attitude was that there was no argument requiring a reply.

Nor was this intolerant attitude confined to their opponents in their midst. It expressed itself towards any who opposed them. For instance, on the detention of their Assistant Director of Recreation along with the six arrested for banishment, the Union proclaimed on 19th September, 1956, "We as students can never tolerate any arrest of Chinese school teachers and fellow-students."



### WHAT IS "HSUEH-HSIH" (學習)?

The fact that the S.C.M.S.S.U. organises a "Hsueh-Hsih" or "Study" movement and calls for a heightening of "Study" appears on the surface to be highly laudable and strictly educational. And since the banning of the Union and the reference to the Study Movement, there are already comments in the Press that the Government is putting a "red hat" on this word. But the "red hat" was put on by the Chinese Communist Party which picked up this comparatively little-used word adopting it as their slogan and giving it a special Party significance, which is well known to the members of the S.C.M.S.S.U. who organise this activity. The nearest English translation is "study for action". That too seems an incontrovertible sentiment to be shared by many who are plagued with words which do not lead to action. But the phrase must be put clearly and simply in its proper setting in Communist philosophy and Chinese Communist history.

Communism is essentially a materialist philosophy. It contrasts itself with Idealism against which it claims to be in revolt. It teaches that human ideas and history are the reflections of material environment, and particularly economic environment. It assumes that all ideals, all religion, all art and all thought are of no value in themselves; and have no independent existence or influence on historical developments. They are merely the reflection of the material interests of the class from which they arise. As the Communist believes in the historical inevitability of the coming of the "masses" or the "proletariat" to power, all intellectual activity, and all intellectuals, must, of historic and scientific necessity, conform to the purposes of the "masses", of which the Communist Party claims to be the unchallenged spokesmen. Otherwise the intellectuals are not only going against history, but they are traitors to the ruling class. The Communist, believing in the subjection of mind to matter and of intellect to economic forces, believes in the subjection of intellectuals to their economic masters. He also believes that ideas must aim at action, which, if it is to be historically correct and fruitful, must serve the interest of the proletariat, and accept subordination to the Communist Party which rules and reigns on their behalf. It may be that a Communist regime will allow different views the luxury of contending, but it is only that they must be fattened, the better to contribute better service to their political masters. Any farmer prefers a fat to a lean cow, and provided the cow does not break out from his fence, will allow it the fodder and exercise which fattens it.

It is the same philosophy which is at the basis of Socialist Realism which is now being developed by certain Arts Associations in Singapore. Art is not self-expression; art is the illustration of the revolution, and artists and musicians are but fighters in the "progressive" battle for the achievement of the dictatorship of the Communist Party. If genuine strong feelings against social injustices exist, the Communist can achieve two aims—he can use the artist to create a pictorial pamphlet of agitation, and imprison him in a philosophy which will not allow him to develop any other form of art, or assert his artistic independence against the Party. The implication, therefore, of this phrase "study for action" is in effect to encourage study in order that the Communist lessons of the Marxist interpretation of history shall be learned and that the student shall play his part in the Communist revolution. It is the teaching of revolutionary thought; the diversion of teaching from its aim of a liberal education for a self-disciplined mind to the aim of a totalitarian education where minds are subject to an external social discipline which denies the freedom of the individual, except within the bounds set by the tightly disciplined group of a totalitarian Party.

#### **Collective "Hsueh Hsih"**

This philosophy is all the more clear in what the students call "Collective Hsueh-Hsih". This deprives the student of the individual atmosphere of study, or individual development of his studies. He must study in the group; he must be constantly subordinated to the pressure of the group; he must learn not to differ

from, and stand against, the group. And this in a Communist atmosphere means a subtle form of intimidation dressed up into a philosophy, and warmed by the normal gregarious instincts of young people to hide its subtle washing away of the individual features of the mind. It is practised by public self-criticism, the public confession with all the pressure of public opinion, and the fear of the sanction of being ostracised; it urges the individual not to find himself, but to be the best model according to the approved pattern of the group. All individual thought which refuses to conform is labelled as disloyalty to the group. It is a pressure against which adults find it difficult to stand. How much more difficult is it for a youngster, how much more the damage to minds at a malleable stage, and how much more cruel the philosophy which encourages it? The practical effect, and the fair-seeming guise given it are illustrated later from the texts of the students.

Not only is the phrase a summing up of Communist philosophy, it has been deliberately adopted by the Chinese Communists and clothed with Communist associations. It is a word of "double-talk" which means a word which means different things to differently conditioned groups. It is a word which a Communist government can use because they know that their non-Communist listeners will put their genuine interpretation on it, while those in their own domains will have been so conditioned as to give the limited meaning which the Communist wishes it to have for them.

#### "Hsueh Hsih" and Communism in China

Mao Tse-tung started the "Hsueh Hsih" campaign among the rank and file of the Chinese Communist Party in October 1938. To the Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in Yen-an, he said:

Generally speaking, all those members of the Communist Party who are fully qualified to 'Hsueh Hsih' must study the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the history of our nation and the circumstances and trends of the present movement; moreover, through these comrades, we must organise education for Party members whose cultural level is relatively low . . .

It is impossible for a party to lead a great revolutionary movement to victory if it has no knowledge of revolutionary theory, no knowledge of history and no profound understanding of the actual movement.

The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is a "universally applicable" theory. We should not regard their theory as a dogma but as a *guide to action* . . .

I hope that, after this Plenary Session of the Central Committee, a competition in 'Hsueh Hsih' will be started throughout the Party, and we shall see who really learns something, and who learns more and better.

The phrase "Hsueh-Hsih" was adopted and given its definitive meaning by Mao Tse-tung in his essay "Reform our Study" published in 1941. In an editorial in a Peking newspaper, the *Jen Min Jih Pao*, on the fifteenth anniversary of the publication of this essay, it was hailed as "an outstanding militant document . . . for safe-guarding the fundamental Marxist-Leninist theories of our Party". The article defines the "dogmatism" against which Mao Tse-tung was fighting at the time as "the divorce of theory from practice," and goes on to say "it was necessary to launch first of all a struggle against the non-proletarian ideologies and to smash dogmatism which contradicted Marxism-Leninism . . . The basic spirit of dogmatism seeks to separate theory from practice, while the basic principle of Marxism-Leninism advocates the unity of theory and practice". It is this unity of theory and practice which "Hsueh-Hsih" implies and makes its study an essential part of Communist teaching, and inimical to the teaching of any other political philosophy. This is considered *the* scientific theory and the "only one true kind of theory". The theory emphasises that "it is scientific, that it requires the study of facts, but only within the orbit of Marxism-Leninism." Mao Tse-tung is specific:

We must rely not on subjective imagination or the spur of the moment or on lifeless books, but on facts existing objectively, on the data obtained in detail, and must draw from these data correct conclusions *under the guidance of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism*.

Whatever doubt others may have of, the precise significance of the two Chinese characters juxtaposed to form this idea translated into English as "Study for Action", there is no doubt in the authoritative mind of the author of the syllabus of "Reform our Study" who called on his readers "to study the status quo, history, the international revolutionary experience and Marxism-Leninism with the attitude of uniting theory with reality", study with practice.

This essay was not a political aside by the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. It is a basic document for all Party Organisations, and particularly the Youth organisations. According to the "Working Programme of the Youth Corps",

The basic mission of the Chinese New Democratic Youth corps lies in 'Hsueh-Hsih'.

In his speech at the First National Congress of the Youth Corps, the Secretary of its Central Committee said:

The main task of the Youth corps in schools is 'Hsueh-Hsih', to help and lead the student bodies and organisations in carrying out extra-curricular activities and 'Hsueh-Hsih' and to prevent the tendency of, 'study for study's sake'. Members of the Youth Corps should study Marxism and Leninism.

#### **"Hsueh-Hsih" and the S.C.M.S.S.U.**

In the leading article of the paper called "Strengthen Unity and Do 'Hsueh-Hsih' Well" published by the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union on 28th April, 1956, the leading article signed by "the Secretariat" replies to the criticism that the "Hsueh-Hsih" movement is merely "propaganda" and "shouting slogans". The paper significantly says,

Yes, we do propaganda because we want to cultivate a good atmosphere for 'Hsueh-Hsih'. We shout slogans because we want to propagate the Truth in the hearts of each and every fellow student. It is a large scale student movement. It definitely won't do without propaganda or without good propaganda. 'Do 'Hsueh-Hsih' Well' is not merely a propaganda slogan of the S.C.M.S.S.U. What is more important is that it is the long term policy of the S.C.M.S.S.U."

These thoughts are repeated by Soon Loh Boon, the President of the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union. In an article under the title of "Welcome the Year 1956" which inaugurated the campaign, he wrote:

The present main task of the Middle School students is 'Hsueh-Hsih'. Only by 'Hsueh-Hsih' can we continue to obtain progress in our life and study. 'Hsueh-Hsih' is a method of life, not only learning a few dogmas by heart. It is important that we should study our lessons well, but to concentrate on books in our class-room is not the correct way to study. We must combine the 'Hsueh-Hsih' within and without the class-rooms. Only by doing so will we avoid losing the purpose of study.

And again in an article in March 1956 on "The importance of carrying out 'Hsueh-Hsih' on theories", he wrote:

In the colonial society . . . there is no freedom of speech and 'hsueh-hsih' . . . that is why it is so difficult to buy or find the correct type of theoretical books.

It is "Hsueh-Hsih" which is represented by the white open book in the badge of the Union.

#### **Collective "Hsueh-Hsih"**

The Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union, in its publication "Voice of Study" dated 7th March, 1956, said:

. . . The theory is expounded that 'Hsueh-Hsih' groups should be organised and popularised as against individual 'Hsueh-Hsih'. The main aim is again to enforce uniformity within the 'Hsueh-Hsih' groups and carry out criticism and self-criticism within the group.

The coincidence of idea and phrase with Chinese Communist texts is too close to be accidental, particularly in the political climate of the Chinese Middle Schools. The Study Propaganda Week organised by the S.C.M.S.S.U. from 25th February to 3rd March, 1956 used slogans making its purpose clear. The slogans during the week were:

1. Extend the 'Hsueh-Hsih' competition, raise the tide of 'Hsueh-Hsih', contest to be a model of 'Hsueh-Hsih' and accomplish the task of 'Hsueh-Hsih'.

2. To conduct our 'Hsueh-Hsih' well is our basic task and to consolidate our unity is our basic 'Hsueh-Hsih'.
3. Follow the route of the Students' Union, heading towards brightness and victory.

At the second Congress of the All-China Delegates of the Chinese National Democratic Youth Corps in 1953, Liu Shao-Chi, now Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, in his congratulatory address said "The members of the Youth Corps should forever remember Lenin's teaching:

'Hsueh-Hsih', 'Hsueh-Hsih' and again 'Hsueh-Hsih'.

This was used as one of the slogans in the S.C.M.S.S.U. Propaganda Week.

For the definition of "Collective Hsueh-Hsih" it is best to turn to the authoritative definition of the practice in the Chinese Communist "New Knowledge Dictionary" which is as follows:—

The collective 'Hsueh-Hsih' system includes general theory, business or trade theory and technique and policies, but it has still to be co-ordinated with political study . . . An outline is to be prepared first regarding measures for 'Hsueh-Hsih', and thereafter everyone can express his or her views, begin discussions and reach conclusions. This sort of organised 'Hsueh-Hsih' urges, helps and leads everyone to progress in one definite direction. At the same time, this sort of collective 'Hsueh-Hsih' organisation can be utilised to carry out criticism and self-criticism so that everyone can continually rectify the former bad habits of being anti-collective, individually heroic, liberal, loosely organised . . .

The stand is clear; but perhaps liberalism, individual heroism, organisation without discipline, and anti-collectivism (in the Communist sense) are more acceptable in the eyes of the people of Singapore than they are in the eyes of this Communist lexicographer.

It is clear therefore that when the Union is organising its rites of "collective Hsueh-Hsih", they are not non-political, and their activities are not innocuous. They are teaching a political creed and attitude which is undemocratic and intrinsically and intentionally Communist. They seek not education, but the control over the minds of their members in the interests of the views of the Committee, and their prepared questionnaires the answers of which are corrected by the leaders, are a form of spying on the political views of the members to sort out their faithful followers who earn commendation and presentation of red silk scarfs, from the less faithful followers who require more intensive collective Hsueh-Hsih.

#### **Criticism and Self-Criticism**

A similar instrument of enforcing the power of the group over the individual members lies in the apparently innocuous and even praiseworthy words "criticism and self-criticism". For the operative word which is conveniently omitted is "public". It is not the criticism or self-assessment which an individual may, indeed must, make of himself and his actions, if he is to develop. It is the self-criticism in public, the public confession which is dangerously akin to the public trials which operate under Communism in China. Nor is it the mutual criticism among friends—it is the public denunciation before the group which puts loyalty to the group above personal loyalties. It is not the ordinary give-and-take of school-life when children in working and playing together learn to take the rough with the smooth and to test themselves against their contemporaries learning from their own experience their own capabilities and standards. "Criticism and self-criticism" for the Students' Union is a technique to be acquired according to an organised system of "criticism meetings" and under experts in this form of "education" in an "atmosphere of earnestness and enthusiasm". The technique is "significant", for "historical developments have up to now shown that criticism and self-criticism have already become the prime force of society. It is only in this way that criticism will become the spontaneous demand of those taking part". These quotations are from the Union's Study Outline of 12th June, 1956.

The technique aims to mould the outlook and the way of thinking of the students. But it is not initiated, planned or carried out by the teachers or parents

whose responsibility it is to train the younger generation, but by what the Union call their "little teachers", students selected and trained by the Union according to the "Hsueh Hsih" Study Outlines. The Union aims to become the dominant influence in the schools, setting the pattern of thought and leaving the teachers the humbler job of providing the details to be put into the pattern. No community can abdicate the responsibility for the training of its children to those who are still students: even less can it do so when the system is used for the purposes of Communist indoctrination. The Government is seeking to liberate Chinese culture from a political strait-jacket and restore to the teachers the dignity and authority which must be properly theirs in any community and particularly among the Chinese whose strong love of scholarship is traditional.

This practice is described in the Communist texts. According to the "Basic Knowledge Text-Book" of the China New Democratic Youth Corps:

Criticism and self-criticism are the powerful weapons of the Youth Corps when educating its members and the young masses in Marxism, Leninism and the ideology of Mao tse-Tung. There are some who fail to understand its importance. Some may have views of their own but they will not voice their opinion in the meeting. They elect to make 'little broadcasts' behind one's back. This is a rotten type of liberalism. All the revolutionary youths and Corps members who are loyal to the Corps, should oppose liberalism and carry out criticism and self-criticism.

More explicit still was Liu Shao-Shi, now Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, in his message to the Second National Congress of the Youth Corps:

In order to consolidate their own organisation, the entire body of members of the Chinese New Democratic Youth Corps must learn how to manipulate the method of criticism and self-criticism so as to carry on a struggle against all the bad phenomena which are harmful to the enterprise of the People and the undertakings of the Party.

The same train of thought is followed by Soon Loh Boon when he writes in his article "Welcome the Year 1956" as follows:

We must lay stress on the importance of the unity of members and the development of the Union. All the members should be able to reach mutual understanding and have a correct hold the weapon of criticism and self-criticism. Our Union affairs can be conducted smoothly only when our internal unity is consolidated and healthy.

The meaning is clear. Criticism is not a habit which is good for the individual; it is a weapon to achieve the unity of the Union, which is defined as the elimination of all opposition, overriding—politely but firmly—by this weapon the individual wish or view. There must not be a majority view, the democratic concept; there must be unanimity, the totalitarian concept. The practice is defined in an article in the Singapore *Sin Pao* on 31st July, 1956 as a "symbol of our revolutionaries". It is the mind on the revolutionary barrack-square—the mind drilled and disciplined till it is the willing, uncritical, unquestioning and well-fashioned instrument of the group. The individual by being moulded to the pattern of the group becomes important, not for himself, but as a part of the group.

### Study Outlines

The practical effect of "Hsueh-Hsih" as practised by the S.C.M.S.S.U. in the Middle Schools is clear from the Study Outlines prepared in June 1956, in spite of their use of words and ideas which are democratic in origin but which have acquired Communist content and association. In these outlines is no discussion of how to study in the class-rooms. They are not concerned with matters of Chinese language or culture, or the standard or method of teaching the normal academic subjects. They are not concerned with any purely educational matter. They aim to teach a uniform political outlook. Their purpose is "to learn the correct theories and to rectify our ideological understanding." The members of the Study Group were executives of the Union, and this therefore we may consider was chosen as the subject of their first conference because it was of the first importance in achieving the purpose of the Union as defined by the Union's Committee. Nor

were they meeting for their own enlightenment. They were leaders and must study how to win the active support of the students for their policies. The techniques of investigation and propaganda play an important part in their study. Again their thinking must have its outcome in practical action. No study for study's sake. There was not the calm of study and peaceful debate: not "the discussion of the principles of democratic government" envisaged by the All-Party Committee of the Legislative Assembly. The Study outline its introduction in this spirit:

Then let us, like joining a gallant struggle and with a zealous heart and exercising a gallant fortitude, train ourselves up through study. Let the burden of thought be far away from us.

The first theme is again criticism and self-criticism which is defined as "just like a search-light enabling us to check at once the actual conditions of a certain working department or section." If an individual stands out against the group, it is not considered that he has the right to do so, or that he might, although in a minority, be right. If he defends himself, and persists in his 'mistakes', he will lose respect, for:

everyone can see that standing before them is a weakling who has not the courage to admit his mistakes, a bad worker who is unwilling to rectify his defects, or a self-respecting person who is paltry and common. He is decidedly not a person who possesses the quality of a leader.

The section on "Sectarianism" emphasises the undesirability of allowing cliques to form, *i.e.* groups opposed to the union. With cliques there will not be the strength of unity, and the practice of self-criticism will not be fully carried out. This section reflects the concept of the masses as one group with one already known purpose; opposition must therefore be malicious and intended to weaken, and therefore traitorous.

As "Unity is Strength", "individualist heroism and subjectivism", to use their own words, must be overcome. Unity is above freedom. Their social analysis is quite explicit:

Sectarianism, bureaucracy, functionalism, individualist heroism, the cult of idols, and the extremist democracy which is totally without principle, are all produced from the narrow-minded ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie and the handicraft industrialists, who try to protect their own interests . . . We are living in a complicated commercial society of the capitalist world. The bad tendency of this society is harming us. Added to this is our rotten character typical of our class . . . The serious mistakes of liberalism or subjectivism are made . . . It is not easy to overcome these mistakes . . . It is a matter of ideology, to rectify and to consolidate . . . This is necessary in a period of ideological struggle . . . It is a struggle between the old and the new.

The following sections deal with the means by which the aims of the Union can be carried out; the need "to grasp firmly the central task and do it well"; the methods of carrying resolutions into effect, of keeping in touch with the students at all levels; (or, as they express it "to go deeply into the masses") and of carrying out investigations; and finally collective leadership, in an attitude of suspicion and defiance of the "colonial rulers", who are seeking to "undermine their strength of unity".

It is emphasised in one of the Union's papers that "collective leadership" means leadership in ideas and not in administration. And the system of which it is a part is the system of "democratic centralism" which operates in Communist countries. The initiative lies at the centre to educate the students, and to express their points of view. There must be, as in a Communist country, a group of leaders, trained to lead and educate the people, but a self-conscious and self-selected elite. Those who aspire to collective leadership "must not speak for colonial rulers". (Whether they do or not is presumably the decision of the Union committee.) Again they must voice their opinions and criticisms fully so that their fitness can be judged. Their method of keeping the link with the students:

is to ask the member representatives, the school committees and the executive and supervisory committee members to go back into the midst of their fellow-students, to listen to their voices, their demands and their aspirations and to bring their wishes before a meeting, so that the fellow-students may thereby be able to participate in the work of formulating policy and making decisions.

If the Union Committee consider the views of the students to be right, they will be adopted: if the Union Committee consider their views wrong, "it is necessary to explain patiently, carefully and clearly to the fellow-students."

The process is taken a stage farther:

Similarly after the S.C.M.S.S.U. has collected the numerous but loose and un-systematic views, they will be adjusted into complete systematic common views which will be handed back to the fellow-students. The school committees will lead the fellow students in carrying them out. Of course, before carrying them out, the school committees should first patiently and carefully make propaganda among the fellow-students about the meaning and contents of the resolutions passed. The fellow-students are then allowed to give the matter consideration and discussion so that thereafter the resolution may be turned into the students' own views and demands and carried out accordingly.

#### THE S.C.M.S.S.U. AT WORK IN THE SCHOOLS

The branches of the S.C.M.S.S.U. in the schools were organised to achieve the closest organisation of the 10,000 members they claim and the most complete and rapid distribution of their directives to their members. Every aspect of school life was brought under their influence, so that all roads—all study, all sport, all entertainment and all outside visits—would lead back to the Union.

The Union was based on supervision from above throughout its organisation, the School Branches supervising the class units and the Union itself supervising the school branches. The Union Committee laid it down that a correct system of "inspection of work" was an "important weapon of ideological leadership". Regular investigations were made and detailed reports submitted on the organisation of the branches, on propaganda and the extent to which the central resolutions were carried out, on student relations with the teachers, on current events and collective study, with a final assessment of good and bad points. Where the class organisation was weak special "cells" were set up to raise its standard in the eyes of the Central Committee. This is illustrated by the following extract from a report to the Union on the work of one of the School Branches:

*Junior Middle 1:* A 15-man cell has been formed by the Branch to help the Junior 1 to carry out the task in the class. The class-executives of this Form, though elected by the students, are found to be inefficient. Thus the 15-man Cell was formed to assist them. On 5th August, this Cell specially convened a meeting of the class-executives, and there were discussions concerning world problems such as the Suez Canal, etc. A representative of the Branch explained, during this meeting, the Central resolutions and the directives concerning work. The Class-executive replied that Junior 1 would give the assurance that it would complete the task entrusted to it. The class-executives will make collective 'Hsueh-Hsih' so as to be able to teach the fellow-students in turn.

In another branch "in order that work can be carried out step by step, the effectiveness of publicity increased, and the leadership or guidance of the Branch strengthened, the branches have therefore set up a 'Thoroughly Carrying Out of Resolutions Directing Sub-Committee' with the Branch as the main body". Finally, the executive officers of the Schools Branches were called to answer at the high seat of judgment of the Union Committee. For instance, one resolution of the Central Committee reads as follows:

To call a meeting of the executive officers of the Branch Schools and those of the various classes, so that from the meeting and from the answers to the questions put to them by us, we may obtain a true reflection or picture of the conditions and the methods employed by them to carry out their work. That the representative from each unit attending the Result-Assessment Meeting should be allowed to make supplementary statements or even to contradict the judge's decisions so as to show that the judgments on results passed by the judges or assessors are democratic.

#### Chung Hwa Girls School

The following long extract from the General Summary of the work of the First Phase of the "Hsueh-Hsih" campaign, issued by the Union on 26th August, 1956, describes in their own words, the way in which the Union work was carried out by the Branch in "model" Chung Hwa Girls School:

A proper grasp of the principles of 'unified direction' and of "respective individual controls" not only will enable the work to be proceeded with in an orderly

way, but will also fully bring out the creative and independent working ability of the working personnel. In order to do this kind of work well it was first necessary to put on a sound basis the entire organisation system. Therefore, before starting work, the Branch had already made a review of the completely, unscientific organisation system, and of the confusion in work caused by the various Sections in applying their respective individual controls. After having studied all these experiences, the Branch established a directing nucleus composed of 4 Sections (the General Affairs Section, the Art Section, the Recreation Section and the Propaganda Section), unified the liaison officers of the various classes, overcame the past manifestations of confusion in work, and avoided the defects of routine-ism.

Due to the adjustment of the 'organisation' system, the working personnel of the various classes were able, in accordance with the principle of their respective individual controls, to bring out their independent working ability, to create various lively and subtle working methods, to carry out resolutions on propaganda work, more especially by the various small-scale activities, such as lunches, tea-parties, enacting plays, collective visits to cinema, swimming, etc. All these small-scale activities suit the taste of fellow-students very much. Consequently, the majority of the fellow-students were organised in this way.

During the Resolutions Study Week, the Branch employed this scientific working method: adopting various small-scale activities in widely educating and uniting the fellow-students. At the same time, by means of various large-scale activities, such as meetings of working personnel, meetings of fellow-students, reunion dinners, etc. the Branch encouraged and educated the fellow-students, strengthened the working spirit of the fellow-students and nurtured their collective ideas. The programme of the Branch in publicising the working resolutions were as follows:—

- (a) Meeting held by the working personnel of the Branch to review and study the resolutions;
- (b) Issued an 'Express News';
- (c) Meeting of fellow-students;
- (d) Meeting of working personnel of the classes;
- (e) Issued wall-newspaper and black-board news;
- (f) The various classes proceeded with small-scale activities and studied the resolutions;
- (g) Reunion dinner.

What must be specially pointed out was the fact that at the time of making propaganda for the resolutions, the past stereotyped form of propaganda was rejected, and novel and lively recreational activities were resorted to in conducting the work of propaganda. In the lunch parties and reunion dinners, the working personnel were able to treat the resolutions as the important matter and to create various recreational activities to educate the fellow-students. As they were in novel and lively forms, they were very much welcomed by the fellow-students. For instance, performing the 'Resolutions Lantern Dance', explaining fully to the young fellow-students, regarding the resolutions, enacting short sketches, shouting 'Long live the S.C.M.S.S.U.' etc. are things which the fellow-students like. For this reason the purpose which the recreational activities served during the Resolutions Propaganda Week could be said to be practical.

A similar report describes the publicity and organisational work in the Chung Cheng Branch in this way:

Regarding Publicity and Organisation work, the Chung Cheng Branch has performed the following within 2 weeks: Distributed and read aloud 'Express News'; organised the 'Fill the Blank' Game; broadcast to the whole school; organised study by working Personnel, and study of resolutions and methods of how to carry them out by all classes; visited tutors and fellow-students; tests on current affairs and the holdings of tea-parties by the various standards; black-board newspapers and other matters like competition work and the winding-up of the work of the Publicity Week.

The Report describes the different media used. In the "Filling the Blank" game, the missing words to be filled in, after debate by the group, were taken from the resolutions on the third stage of "Hsueh Hsih." The Report comments that this sort of debate would "assuredly make fellow-students remember the resolution always." Of the third type of activity, the broadcast to the whole school, the Report says that the school authorities had allowed the Branch to increase the number of amplifiers so that "fellow-students by the lake-side" could hear the broadcasts. But, lest any student should miss even this propaganda, the broadcasts were printed and distributed in each class where the General Affairs officer



would read them out aloud in place of the loudspeaker. This, the Report comments, was a "concrete example of perseverance in work". The fourth type of work is "the study by the working personnel" which was carried out by distributing material to classes for group discussion. Of the fifth type of work, the study of the Union resolutions by the different classes, the report says that as the resolutions required action, this work was considered as "connected with the problem of organising nuclear cells in the different classes". The cell consisted of "9 class officials and students who can do work efficiently and will form the backbone of each class and provide leadership in the work of development". The Report however confesses that there are about four to eight saboteurs in each class. The class organisation is described in this way:

Each class is divided into 3 or 4 cells to carry out their study. This will not only solve the problem of insufficient classrooms but will also cure the bad habits of some students who dare not say what they think in front of many people. They will be able to reveal all their views in the cell meetings.

The sixth type of work is "visiting our fellow students to ensure that students who cannot take part in the collective study of the resolutions are visited separately at their homes." During these visits they will explain the Central Resolutions, "invite these students to cinema, swimming or ball games and even invite them to proceed with the class officials to visit other students. This will induce them to realise the fun of collective life". The seventh type of work is visiting the teachers. "It has been decided that the branch officials and all the committee members in school should jointly select 36 teachers for the purpose of repeated visits, to ask their views concerning the Central Resolutions and explain the content of these Resolutions to them." The eighth type of work is the test on current events. (A current event test paper is reproduced in Appendix II.) The ninth type is the class "tea party" where students "swore to give assurances on the completion of their tasks". The tenth type is the blackboard newspaper. The eleventh type of work is described as "completing the work". It aims to ensure that each class should call a meeting to assess its work in "free talks" and submit a written report to the Branch. No detail and no student is omitted: it is an independent school within each school.

In one school the Branch Committee were not satisfied with the efficiency of their chain of command and contact:

Previously, the system of contact with classes was based on the directions given by the General Affairs Department. All sections had direct contact with each individual class, and decisions for work were transmitted to the classes by the sections, thereby causing complications in the work in each class. Responsible fellow-students had to run from class to class on trivial matters (e.g., notifying the time of meetings, and distributing leaflets). But this sort of thing could only be done after the lessons and when school was over.

The system was changed to reduce "routinism", the carrying out of routine work by the leaders:

. . . fellow-students of the Branch working personnel have set up a Correspondents' Sub-Committee for the express purpose of allocating work and distributing schedules of work. This is to enable the working personnel, who are responsible for liaison, aid, scrutiny, supervision and execution and who understand conditions, to break away completely from the mistake of being busy in working routine and to concentrate their energies on the standards for maintaining which they are responsible, so that the organisation system and the practical methods of publicity work will improve.

It was reported of another school that:

. . . every fellow-student had the opportunity of listening to the analysis given by fellow-students of the General Affairs Department at the 'Winding-up Ceremony' to discuss the results of the 1st and 2nd phases, the present conditions and the central work of the 3rd phase which is about to be launched. Thus it can be said that, before the launching of the Publicity Week, this has been beneficial in raising sentiment, stepping-up unity and facilitating publicity work.

In the classes, the organisation was no less detailed, both of "little teachers" and organisers:

... the student-teachers are selected from fellow-students of outstanding merit by the various classes themselves. There is a section head in each class, a senior head for each standard and a subject head for each subject. Before the beginning of study, the section head urges members of all subject groups to make preparations for work, and student-teachers of the various classes can, under the guidance of the section heads, also do their own work well.

This work was not confined to members of the Union, but extended to neutrals, as the following report from the "model" Chung Cheng School Branch shows:

Fellow-students selected from the 'Express News' two articles entitled 'Enrich the 'Hsueh-Hsih' life' and 'Raise the 'Hsueh-Hsih' results for the sake of building up an independent Malaya, and after study by the Class Working Personnel and after full preparations had been made, a few elected fellow-students (neutrals) rose up and read them out. Further analysis and supplementary explanations were given by the working personnel, who had prepared themselves. This way did not only make the neutral fellow-students pay attention to this problem, but, what was more important, it educated fellow-students (because time for reading them was asked from the teacher when the class resumed lesson) so that every fellow-student, including the backward ones, had the opportunity of listening to this resolution and the contents of the articles. This was to make propaganda or publicity penetrate deep amongst the fellow-students and to overcome the shortcoming of lack of reading by fellow-students. It can be said with pride that this resolution has not only given fellow-student working personnel the opportunity to study, but at the same time had made the general fellow-students understand that the resolution of our 3rd phase was "enrichment of the 'Hsueh-Hsih' Life and raising of the 'Hsueh-Hsih' results" and understand the contents of this resolution.

#### Attitude to Teachers

The co-operation of the teachers in their work is important to the Union whose attitude is clearly that they are right and have rights, and teachers must be judged good or bad by their attitude to the Union and its work.

The teachers must change, not the students. Of one school, they report:

... As the school authorities did not sufficiently understand the significance of the 'Hsueh-Hsih' movement, it was consequently unavoidable that they should adopt the attitude of onlookers. However, after the opening of the school for this school term, the attitude of the school authorities had considerably changed. As the school authorities had re-adjusted the time for extra-curricular activities, the fellow-students were able to participate in collective 'Hsueh-Hsih' unaffected by the extra-curricular activities.

The position they sought was achieved in another school where:

... the Principal had suggested the formation of a study section for student-teachers to study the method of teaching. At the same time, the Principal herself promised the student-teachers to give every fortnight a talk concerning the problems of teaching, and to prepare and give prizes in commendation of those fine student-teachers. The school would give to the fellow-students all facilities for study and the teachers would give their help.

Their attitude when the teachers do not support them is reflected in this quotation from the Unions' report on one school:

The majority of teachers are in sympathy with, and support the "Hsueh-Hsih Well Movement", but they are afraid lest they should meet with trouble from the Government. . . There are, however, individual teachers who are biased against the proper activities of the students and do not support the Movement. If only they will change their hostile attitude towards the students, we are willing to respect them and to co-operate with them. However, if they still continue with their unreasonable actions, there is, of course, no reason for students to sit tight and let their own interests be jeopardised.

The implied threat of the last sentence is clear.

This attitude has been illustrated by recent events reported in the Press. On 28th August, 1956 it was reported that the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students'

Union had resolved to "unite and fight" the Schools Management Committees which did not co-operate with them. On the same day it was reported that 1,000 pupils of the Kim Yam Road Branch of the Chung Cheng High School had asked the principal to dismiss the teacher who, they said, had taught politics in class and had not "co-operated with the Students Union". The following day girls from the Nanyang Girls' School went on strike because the school refused to dismiss their English-language teacher. Two days later they returned to all classes except the English class, although the Principal told them that their allegations were unfounded. When, however, the Principal promised that the teacher would change her attitude, the girls returned to classes.

The account of these manifold extra-curricular activities of the S.C.M.S.S.U. leads to the reflection that the Union grew out of a determined and defiant agitation against a few hours of extra-curricular activity a week in fulfilment of their civic obligations (4 in the Singapore Military Forces, or 2 in Civil Defence); and that the Union which praises and practises the Communist-modelled discipline of collective "Hsueh-Hsih" over their thoughts and emotions grew out of agitation against the physical discipline which is taught in training for National Service in the Singapore Military Forces or Civil Defence Services.

#### INFLUENCE OF MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE SINGAPORE CHINESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS STUDENTS' UNION

The S.C.M.S.S.U. is a Communist Front organisation in the accepted use of the term. It follows a Communist line of policy and adopts Communist tactics. It is penetrated by members of the M.C.P. The Council of Ministers have found it necessary to detain 3 officials and 1 member of the Union since its approval in October 1955. One of these officials handed over to the Police a large number of M.C.P. documents, including a series of secret Party education publications entitled "Study". In one document, study is enjoined because "it helps comrades to gather sufficient strength to meet the high tide of revolution." Criticism and self-criticism are defined as "the propelling power of the revolution". Another document asks "What is the sum of the experience of the victory achieved in China's revolution?" and gives the answer "It has placed reliance on the three magic weapons—the leadership of the Communist Party, armed struggle and a United Front". This experience, it continues "is fundamentally suitable for use in the National Liberation movement in colonies and semi-colonies. The history of the Malayan revolution has also proved that when we are able to make use of these three weapons properly, the revolution will further expand."

In further definition of the United Front which includes the "students movement" the document says that the Party must "seek similarities while restraining dissimilarities", but without foregoing the revolutionary "advocacies and activities of the Party," which must be "co-ordinated with the armed struggles of the party".

Another source of M.C.P. influence is illustrated in a series of M.C.P. "Hsueh-Hsih" documents, for the possession of which a Middle School Student was convicted in court in January 1956 and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment.

M.C.P. influence was used to ensure dishonest acceptance of the "No Politics" rule in order to get the work of the Union as a Communist Front organisation under weigh, and there was known to be M.C.P. influence on the elections of the officers and members of the Executive Committee. Again, their badge had the red and yellow of all Communist flags. While the M.C.P. flag incorporates a yellow star on a red background, the S.C.M.S.S.U. flag incorporated a red star on a yellow background. Both use the Communist five-point star.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper deals with the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union and with neither the Chinese Middle Schools as such, nor the individual students in these Schools. The integral place of the Chinese Middle Schools in the educational system of Singapore is fully accepted. But the activities of this Union are undermining the essential characteristics of Chinese education and preventing the full contribution of the Chinese Middle Schools to the development of a Singapore and Malayan loyalty. While it is not assumed that every Chinese Middle School student knows the facts set out in this paper, the facts are known to the leaders of the Union who are using their power and position, and the organisation of the Union, for purposes which are not revealed to, or appreciated by, all their members.

The hopes which were expressed by the All-Party Committee on Chinese Education in the passage quoted in the early part of this report have not been fulfilled. The Union has prevented the Chinese Schools from becoming a centre of Malayan loyalty. In spite of the conditions of its registration, it has taken part in political activities and industrial disputes in a way which proves it has been used as a Communist Front Organisation. The Union has indulged in the "ill-considered attacks on, and destructive criticism of, constituted authority" which the All-Party Committee considered could only be a "disservice to Singapore". The Union has developed the Communist-modelled system of study known as "Hsueh-Hsih" and has transferred not only the method but its Communist content to the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools. It is not therefore primarily a students body concerned with matters of education and welfare but an instrument of political indoctrination which uses all its organisation to exclude all other political views from the schools. This is not the democracy which is the wish of the Government and people of Singapore: but a totalitarianism which inevitably infects the whole atmosphere of the schools. The Union has used its power to establish a dominant influence in the discipline, organisation and policy of Chinese education, not hesitating to dominate committees of management, principals and teachers, to achieve its will. The Union has prevented teachers and parents from exercising their responsibilities for the education of the young people of Singapore and its leaders are arrogating these responsibilities, particularly in political matters, to themselves.

The Union has attempted to control Chinese Education and distort its cultural and educational purposes to political and un-Malayan ends. In order therefore to restore a free and healthy atmosphere to the Chinese Schools, the Government dissolved the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union on 24th September, 1956.

**SINGAPORE CHINESE MIDDLE SCHOOLS STUDENTS' UNION DISSOLVED****Press Statement by the Minister for Education on 24th September, 1956**

The Council of Ministers, acting in the best interests of the people of Singapore, have ordered the dissolution of the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union (S.C.M.S.S.U.). This step has been taken after a thorough review of the activities of the Union since it was registered, a review which shows that the Union is nothing less than a Communist Front Organisation.

Although the Union was registered only on the specific condition that it did not take part in politics it has persistently flouted this condition and has combined with other Communist Front Organisations to organise and take part in demonstrations the purpose of which was political.

The Government has in the past been obliged to detain under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance several student members who have had Communist connections, one of them a Union official who produced copies of M.C.P. secret and illegal publications on subversion.

The organisation, policy and behaviour of the Union follow closely the organisation, policy and behaviour of Communist student bodies elsewhere. An outstanding example of Communist policy and behaviour has been the "Study" (Hsueh-Hsih) campaign which has been systematically organised by the Union since February 1956. Under the laudable guise of encouraging members to work hard this campaign is nothing less than a systematic development of Communist collective study and self-criticism methods in Singapore's Chinese middle schools. This is clearly apparent from the programmes for holiday indoctrination classes held for over 300 Union executives in June and July 1956.

The members of the Union have used intimidatory methods to encourage "striking" children to flout the authority of their teachers, have organised "protest" meetings on school premises without the authority of the schools, and have intimidated teachers and students who have refused to accept their domination. As a result, the atmosphere of the middle schools has been corrupted; neither teachers nor pupils have been able to work normally, and educational standards have been seriously endangered.

These unlawful activities have been brought to a climax in today's meetings, which were organised in open defiance of the school authorities and the elected Government of this territory. No Government can allow its policy to be dictated by subversive elements in schools and your Government has therefore decided to cancel the registration of this Union. The Union from now on is an unlawful organisation and parents of middle school pupils are urged to warn their children of the serious consequences of any further participation in its activities.

The Government is convinced that its action will be welcomed by all responsible citizens.

## Appendix II

Name .....

Class .....

**GENERAL KNOWLEDGE TEST SET BY A BRANCH OF THE S.C.M.S.S.U.**A. *Yes or No.*

1. The disharmony between the Chinese and Malays is causing obstruction to the independence movement and is most favourable to the colonialists. (     ).
2. Abdul Rahman agrees to the merger of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya. (     ).
3. The people in the new villages in the Federation of Malaya are leading a very free life. (     ).
4. The All-Singapore Races Anti-Yellow main organ was formed by the women's bodies throughout Singapore. (     ).
5. Most of the educational bodies and educationists in the Federation of Malaya are opposing the methods of testing the teachers employed by the Education Department. (     ).
6. Mr. Lim Su Gan, a member of the Board of Directors of our school, and Principal Chuang fully agree to accept full grants-in-aid. (     ).
7. The Commissioner of Police of the Federation of Malaya welcomes extremely the Singapore Chinese school students to tour Malaya. (     ).
8. Yellow culture is greatly beneficial to our country's independence movement. (     ).
9. To realise our country's independence we must first of all end the war and repeal the Emergency Ordinance. (     ).
10. The police have made use of many hot-tempered Gurkha soldiers during "Operation Dagger", thereby causing many people to be innocently involved. (     ).

B. *Selection*

1. What is the present membership of the Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union—9,000 or 13,000 or 11,000? (     ).
2. Out of the various newspapers in Singapore which one contains news which most untrue and with most distortion of facts—the *Nanyang Siang Pau* or *The Standard* or *The Straits Times*? (     ).
3. After the registration of the Singapore Federation of Old Boys' Associations had been turned down, they have decided to appeal to—the Legislative Assembly or the Council of Ministers or the Governor. (     ).
4. Which one is claimed to be the gallant warrior who safeguards vernacular education Chew Swee Kee or Chan Si Hoe or Lim Lian Geok or Too Joon Heng? (     ).
5. The Singapore Chinese Middle Schools Students' Union's 3rd stage Central resolution is—"to rouse the enthusiasm for study" or "to enrich our study life and increase our study results" or "to consolidate our study results and perfect our study materials". (     ).
6. For how long did the Japanese occupy Malaya—three years eight months or four years seven months or five years six months or six years five months? (     ).
7. The Emergency Regulations were enforced on—20th June, 1948 or 21st July, 1949 or 22nd August, 1950. (     ).
8. The total population of Singapore and Malaya is—8 million or 7 million or 6 million or 9 million? (     ).
9. Malaya is situated in—South-East Asia or North-East Africa or South-West Europe. (     ).
10. The reason that brought about the breakdown of the April talks between Singapore and Britain is that Britain refused to give Singapore control over internal security or Britain refused to give citizenship rights to Singapore or Britain refused to give the rights to vote to the Singapore people. (     ).

C. *Fill in the following:*

1. The total area of Malaya is about ..... sq. miles; it includes two capital cities, ..... and .....
2. The Federation of Malaya includes ....., altogether 11 States.

**Appendix II—continued**

3. The longest river in Malaya is ....., and the highest mountain is .....
4. The chief products of Malaya are ..... and ....., each ranks first and second in the world.
5. The largest rice producing area in Malaya is ..... State, and the largest tin producing area is ..... State.
6. Malaya has been ruled by the British colonialists for about ..... years..
7. In the course of striving for peace and independence, the most powerful and resolute movements that have been carried out by the Malayan people are ..... the 3 great movements.
8. The tragic incident of "May 13th" occurred in ..... (year) at ..... Park and ..... Road.
9. The Malayan peace-talks were held on 28th December last year at ..... Government's representatives were ..... and the M.C.P. representatives were .....
10. The Singapore Minister for Education has announced that if Chinese schools refuse to accept ..... then it will cancel ..... next year.