

History: A Char Kway Teow Stall In Fair Park

By Ian Anderson

On June 16, 1948, at 8.30am, Communist sympathisers killed three British planters in Sungai Siput. This marked the start of what is known as the ‘Malayan Emergency’, a period of confrontation with Communist guerillas that lasted 41 years until the tripartite Peace Accord in Thailand in 1989. Although not so many years ago, there is no doubt that the general population of Malaysia has no idea of the military skills and bravery of those who fought for the safety and security of this country. So many of our Police, British and Commonwealth troops, gave their lives to combat Communism. Without their sacrifice, Malaysia would be a very different place today. In a short article like this, there is little room to cover the exploits of the thousands of men and women who took on the Communists and overcame them, but I would like to tell you a true



story of our own Fair Park and a special Char Kway Teow Stall.

It was in August 1976 that the Ipoh Police, led by their Chief, the late Tan Sri Yuen Yuet Leng, discovered a Malaysian National Front (the Communists) communications centre in the heart of Fair Park. It was situated on the first floor of a shophouse, just about 60 yards from Yuen’s mother-in-law’s house, where he often stayed overnight. This centre, run by two men in a rented room, was very important to the Communists as it coordinated all couriers in Perak and to other states, including the many jungle camps still operational in the Northern States.

Clearly, surveillance was necessary, in the first instance, to gain as much intelligence as possible,

before arresting the Communist cell. Yuen's plan was simple. The Police team set up a daytime dhoby shop in an adjacent building and commandeered the famous "Spider's" stall, selling Char Kway Teow, set up right alongside it. Both were manned by Special Branch Officers who watched and waited until it was time to strike. The photograph is a composite from Yuen's album to demonstrate the siting of the stall.

On August 24, 1976, the police made their move. With Yuen conducting the raid, the building was sealed off and a fully armed FRU and SB team climbed the stairs. From the street, Yuen called for the communists to surrender.



When they knew that they were trapped the terrorists attempted to throw a grenade at Yuen's party, through the glass window pane. However, it bounced back into the room and killed them both, setting their bodies on fire. The Communist Terrorists were later identified as SCM (State Communist Member) Chew Yong and BCM (Branch Communist Member) Tan. Unfortunately, the main tenant's daughter had been knocking on their door when the grenade exploded and she was killed with them. Two FRU officers were injured.

Thanks to them and the thousands of others like them, we still enjoy our heritage.