

THE MAKING OF A COMMUNIST LEADER

Musa was a star pupil, says teacher

PENANG, Tues. — Musa Ahmad, chairman of the outlawed Communist Party of Malaya, was an "excellent" pupil, a former teacher of his recalled today.

Sheikh Mohamed Hussein bin Bakar Rafee, 82, who "praised Allah" when he read in the newspapers of Musa's and his wife's surrender to the government, said: "I'm so glad."

He said Musa joined the Al-Mashhur Islamic Religious School at Tek Soon Street here in 1930 at the age of 12.

Musa studied the Quran, Arabic and English until 1938 when he passed with "flying colours."

"He excelled in his studies, and was always the first in his class. He was a good orator. He spoke fearlessly against British colonialism. He wanted independence for the country," said Sheikh Mohamed Hussein, who taught Musa Arabic.

Sheikh Mohamed Hussein who now runs a Muslim orphanage at Pierce Road, said: "I was very sad when I heard that he had joined the communists and gone underground. Before that, he used to visit the school to look up his old teachers."

"I had prayed long and often to Allah that he would return to the right path. And thanks to Allah, he has at last come round."

Sheikh Mohamed Hussein said Musa knew his Quran well, and was qualified to be an "Ustaz" (Islamic religious teacher).

"I hope he has now fully realised his errors and repented," he added.

According to historian Dr Cheah Boon Kheng, Musa was announced by the Communist Party of Malaya as its chairman just before the Baling peace talks in 1963.

Chin Peng was then the secretary general.

Musa, however, did not accompany Chin Peng to the historic Baling meeting with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the late Tun Tan Cheng Lock and the then Chief Minister of Singa-

pore, Mr David Marshall.

Chin Peng went with Rashid Maidin and Chen Tien, both executive members of the CPM to meet the Tunku.

Dr Cheah, a lecturer in Malaysian History at Universiti Sains Malaysia, said Musa joined the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) during the Japanese Occupation.

Later, Musa became the head of the peasant's bureau of the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP).

An Islamic scholar, he was also involved in the formation of the "Hizbul

Muslimin" — an Islamic left movement — in Gunung Semanggol, Perak.

When the Emergency was declared in 1948, Musa went underground and joined the communist guerrillas in the jungle.

There, he married Zainab Mahmud, a district committee member of the CPM.

Soon after he was appointed chairman of the CPM in 1955, he was based in Peking where he also functioned as the head of the CPM delegation abroad.



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Negara Malaysia