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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

CD NO. [REDACTED]

COUNTRY India/Burma

DATE DISTR. 29 March 1949

SUBJECT Communist Party India (CPI) Document Concerning
25X1A6a the Opening of a Book Shop at Rangoon

NO. OF PAGES 4 25X1A2g

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

DATE OF INFO 25X1X6

The following document is a copy of a paper seized by the Bombay Police during their raids of Communist Party Headquarters during March and April 1948. This document is signed by one Kanti*. No attempt has been made to edit this document.

On Opening the Book Shop at Rangoon

Why The Bookshop?

From my talks with Com. Ghosal and Com. Amar De, and also from the orders and inquiries we received since the resumption of communications after the end of work, I think, there is a considerable scope for the sale of our Party publications, Marxist classics and other progressive literature in Burma. There is a good demand of such literature in English and some of our vernacular languages among the Indians residing in Burma, particularly in Bengali and Telugu.

But there is no organized effort to make such literature available in Burma. There are no publishing houses bringing out such literature. As regards getting the literature from other countries, barring one or two progressive booksellers who occasionally get few copies of only a few of many books published by Lawrence & Wishart, there is no organized machinery to take upon itself the important job of getting all available Marxist and progressive literature from India and other countries in Burma and to reach out to the people already interested in this literature.

Therefore opening up of the bookshop for Marxist and progressive literature at Rangoon has not only the possibility of a success financially, but also can be of great assistance in strengthening our movement in India and also the Communist movement in Burma. Particularly after recent split in Burma Party. I am, therefore, in favor of opening the bookshop at Rangoon.

Prospects.

We have as yet no definite knowledge about the likely sales, condition

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of book trade in general, book demand, types of books demanded, price scales, trading facilities, rate of expenditures, and also general conditions prevailing in Burma and therefore, it is not possible to state the prospects of such a bookshop, but on the basis of the expected minimum sales every month and maximum expenditure estimates given by Com. Ghosal and Com. Amar De, I think, there will be no difficulty in running the proposed bookshop self-sufficiently after about three months of the starting.

<u>Estimate of Monthly Running Exp.</u>		<u>Estimated Monthly Income</u>	
Rent, Electricity, etc.	Rs. 100/-	Sales expected	Rs. 2000/-
Wages, 2 comrades	Rs. 150/-	Rate of Commission	Rs. 20%
Miscellaneous	Rs. 50/-	earnings	
Total	Rs. 300/-	Therefore, monthly income	Rs. 400/-

In case the shop can be secured at lower rent, the running expenses may come down up to Rs. 250/- per month.

Within three months of opening of the bookshop, sales are expected to reach to a minimum of Rs. 2000/- per month. Because of inflated prices, general rate of margin in the book trade in Burma is likely to be higher than in India. However, taking at a minimum to that of our other bookshops in India, 20%, the bookshop can have monthly income of about Rs. 400/- from commission earnings which means with careful ordering of the books so as not to allow deadstock to accumulate, the bookshop can run self-sufficiently within three months of the starting of the bookshop. With ... whatever increase in sales to Rs. 2000/-, the bookshop can also be in a position to make payments against initially invested cash. I think in Rangoon, with the stock of about Rs. 7000/- to Rs. 8000/-, it should not be difficult to have the sale of more than Rs. 2000/- in that case we have the prospect of returns in this very year.

Finance Necessary.

For a fairly good bookshop we shall need to invest about Rs. 12,000/- as follows:

'Paghadi' to secure the shop	Rs. 2000/-
Furnishing the bookshop	Rs. 2000/-
Office and other requirements	Rs. 500/-
Stock of books: English, Bengali, & Telugu, etc.	Rs. 7500/-
Total		Rs. 12,000/-

The investment is not so big as it looks. Because of the long distance it would be necessary to have comparatively larger stock at Rangoon. Normally in India, we would need only a stock of about Rs. 5000/- for a sale of Rs. 2000/- every month. Moreover, in the proposed stock of about Rs. 7500/-, stock worth about Rs. 2500/- will be of PPH books in English which will involve no additional investment. The rest, Rs. 5000/-, will be distributed for getting books in vernacular languages and books other than PPH-foreign and Indian publishers. The cash to be spent on furniture is the minimum necessary and can be realized back within a year if the sale reaches to Rs. 3000/-.

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The only item in which we have to sink cash is 'Paghadi.' It is no doubt a waste. If the place can be secured without paying 'Paghadi', well and good. But it seems extremely difficult to get any place. As the proposed bookshop is to confine itself as a retail bookshop in Rangoon only a good site for real bookshop can draw in the customers. Therefore, I think we have no alternative but to go in for the shop even by paying the 'Paghadi'. Only care to be taken is to get a real central place so that 'Paghadi' may be compensated by the sales. PPH is in a position to finance this proposed bookshop as the plocked (sic) capital will be about Rs. 5000/- with little prospects of any return if the sales do not exceed Rs. 2000/- per month. But PPH will be compensated by the sale of the literature through Rangoon bookshop which will be an added sale to the present one.

RELATION WITH PPH.

Though a branch of PPH, for political reasons not to be announced, it should be run as a private independent bookshop run by Com. Amar De having the sole selling agency for all our party organs and publishing houses, run Centrally and by Provinces.

Though a branch of PPH, it cannot be possible for it to guide Rangoon Bookshop on organizing the sales, on the books to be ordered and pushed, in what quantities the books to be ordered, etc., which are very important factors to make the bookshop a success. It will have to be the sole responsibility of Com. Amar De and, therefore, for the success of the bookshop much will depend on Com. Amar De.

PPH should guide Com. Amar De with its experiences of running the bookshop in India, on general managerial work, organization of the bookshop, and help him in getting the supplies from other publishers in India, from London, from Moscow, and from all countries from where PPH are getting the books. As far as possible the proposed bookshop should establish direct connections with all the publishers of its interest. PPH should use its influence to get them sole selling agencies for as many publishers as possible.

Com. Amar De to send his monthly report on the progress of the bookshop to PPH to enable PPH to know the position and report to the Party.

Functioning of the Bookshop.

It should deal only in Marxist and progressive literature on all subjects - philosophy, economy, science, medicine, politics, novels, story books, biographies, and autobiographies, etc. Care should be taken not to allow it to become a general bookshop for all books. Our bookshop has a political aim and therefore all our efforts in introducing the literature should be in keeping in line with that aim.

It should in the beginning confine itself as a retail bookshop at Rangoon selling the literature to individuals and institutions without commission. Later on, if possible and necessary, it may take up to serve as wholesalers.

Pricing of the books should be worked out after studying local book trade at Rangoon. Minimum margin on the sales should be at the rate

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of 20% to 25% net. If other booksellers' price scale is much higher, our bookshop can sell at cheaper rates, but it will not be wrong to have a higher margin than 20% or 25% if possible.

The most important point is to guard against accumulation of dead-stock. Study the demand and order the literature accordingly.

All other organizational details in connection with setting up of the bookshop, arrangements for the supplies of literature, account keeping, etc., should be discussed by Com. Amar De and Kanti, no sooner if Party approves of this suggestion of opening the bookshop at Rangoon.

It may not be possible to get the suitable site for the proposed bookshop even by paying 'Paghadi'. In that case I would suggest that Com. Amar De should try to take a residential place which he is likely to get with a nominal 'Paghadi', stock the books there, name it as the bookshop and start selling the literature by going round locally in Rangoon and through correspondence, etc., in other cities. In that case the investment necessary will not exceed Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 6000/- and the running expense too will not be more than Rs. 150/-, as he should be able to manage by himself. To meet these expenses he will need to have the sale of about Rs. 1000/- every month which may not be difficult to have. Selling of the literatures need not wait till the shop is secured. No sooner a suitable place is available, the bookshop should be transferred there.

11.9.46

Kanti.

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* [REDACTED] Comment. Kanti is the author of another Communist document concerning a sales promotion scheme in [REDACTED]

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