HY4227: Sources of Singapore History - 1939

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What will we be looking at?

1. Introduction
2. Using and borrowing Microfilms
3. Newspapers
4. Legal Case Files
5. Municipal Council and Rural Board Files
6. Colonial Office Records
7. Tips
8. Useful Links
Resource Librarians

• Winnifred Wong (winnifred@nus.edu.sg)
• Han Ming Guang (hanmingguang@nus.edu.sg)
• Diyana (clbndak@nus.edu.sg)
• Chow Chai Kim (clbcck@nus.edu.sg) - Chinese Resources
Library Guides

https://libguides.nus.edu.sg/sgprimarysources

https://libguides.nus.edu.sg/history
A Sense of History

Bibliography compiled by the library in 1998

Contains primary and secondary sources that the library has

The bibliography is called: A Sense of History
Index to Colonial Office files pertaining to British Malaya. 12 vols.
Covers CO 273, CO 717, CO953, CO 1022, CO 1030…
Compiler, Paul H. Kratoska.

Call no. Z3261 Kra.
Kratoska’s Index
Located near the Central Library RBR
Where is the Kratoska Index?
Writing Historical Fiction

- Meticulous Historical Research Needed
- Facts and events must be accurate
- Must capture the zeitgeist of the period
- Accurately depict the way people spoke and wrote
- Still a fictional piece of work, needs to be entertaining
Timeline of Singapore History
Important because...

- Different administrations file things differently, which affects the final location of the files.
- Years and dates are important clues.
- Name of administrators and their official roles can be further leads.
Context of Singapore in 1939

What was the social/economical/political context of Singapore & Malaya in 1939?

Need to know the major events that happened in Singapore, Malaya & Globally during & before 1939
Context of Singapore (1939) - Impact of Global Events?

- Singapore is a port city - Ideas, people, goods and global events have an impact on Singaporean society.

- What are some of these events? How do they impact Singapore & Malaya?
  
  - **Second Sino-Japanese War**
  - **German invasion of Poland**
  - **India Independence Movement**
  - The Great Depression
Context of Singapore (1939) - Nationalist Movements

Late 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of anti-imperialist/nationalist movements within Singapore & Malaya, as well as in Asia.

What are some of these movements? What impact did it had on the populace and the Colonial Authorities?

- National Salvation Movement (Anti-Japanese)
- Rise of Malay Nationalism
- Rise of Indian Nationalism
- Formation of SEA Communist Parties
Context of Singapore (1939) -
Demographic Changes

- 1930s also saw major demographic changes in Singapore & Malaya
- Chinese & Indian sojourners started to settle and bring their families over in the late 1920s
- By the 1930s, their offsprings who were borned here now started to come off age
Context of Singapore (1939) - Economy & Local Defense

1929 to 1939 also saw one of the worst financial crisis in the world - The Great Depression

Private Business: Decline in rubber/tin exports; business failures in Singapore and Malaya

Construction of Singapore (Sembawang) Naval Base in 1938 - which was smaller than originally planned because the British did not have the funds and were eventually preoccupied with events in Europe
Context of Singapore (1939) - Technology & Entertainment

- **Street Operas** and **Bangswan** still popular but the 1930s saw new technologies in the realm of entertainment

1. **Proliferation of Radios** in Malaya and Singapore

2. **Cinema going** as a popular past time

- **Visiting amusement parks such as The Worlds** was also another thing people did
Context of Singapore (1939) - Newspapers

- Newspapers in Singapore existed since 1824 (Singapore Chronicle)

- Early 1930s saw a huge growth in the newspaper industry and the number of newspapers published and readership increased

- Was true for the English & Chinese Press

- Likewise for the Malay newspapers
HY4227 - Quiz

Get ready to compete!
Using and Borrowing Microfilms
Using and Borrowing Microfilms

- Similar to requesting and borrowing a closed stack book

- 2 microfilm scanners at the RBR for you to use but please bring a thumb drive or portable HDD (First come, first serve)

- You can also print them at the photocopying shop next to the RBR

- More information about using microfilms at NUS Libraries
Newspapers - What do we have?
Bible to Newspapers in Singapore and Malaysia

- Singapore, Malaysian and Brunei newspapers: an international union list

- Compiler, Patricia Lim Pui Huen

- Call no. Z6958.12 Lim
Bible to Newspapers in Singapore and Malaysia

Introduction
Acknowledgements
Symbols and Abbreviations
Singapore Newspapers
  Malay and Arabic 3
  English 13
  Chinese 27
  Indian Languages 49
  Other Languages 53
Bible to Newspapers in Singapore and Malaysia

Very useful in tracking smaller, independent newspapers of different languages

While it tells you what newspapers are out there, information about where to find it is outdated
NewspaperSG

- NLB digitized newspapers from Singapore and Malaya
- Most of them can be accessed remotely
- Some newspapers which are not digitized can be found as microfilm at Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at Bugis
- Constant updates by NLB
Jawi Newspapers

Transliteration project where 2000 Jawi newspapers that were published between 1931 to 1940 were transliterated into romanized Malay and searchable

This project can be found online: https://sea.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/SEAImages%3AJa
wi
International Newspapers

- **Proquest Historical Newspapers:**
  
  - Chicago Defender (1910-1975)
  - Chicago Tribune (1849-1989)
  - Los Angeles Times (1881-1989)
  - The New York Times (1851-2009)
  - The Times of India (1838-2003)
  - The Washington Post (1877-1996)
International Newspapers

- **Gale NewsVault:**
  - The Economist historical archive, 1843-2009
  - The Financial Times historical archive, 1888-2009
  - The Sunday Times digital archive, 1822-2006
  - The Times Digital Archive, 1785-1985
  - Times Literary Supplement historical archive, 1902-2008
Chinese Newspapers in the Library

- NUS Libraries’ digitised Chinese newspapers:
  - **Lat Pau 叻报** (Aug 19 1887 to Mar 31 1932)
  - **Union Times 总汇新报** (1908-1946)
  - **Sin Kok Min Jit Pao 新国民日报** (1919-1933)
  - **Penang Sin Poe 槟城新报** (1895-1941)

For more information, refer to “Chinese E-Resources” libguide > E-Newspapers:

http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/ch-e-newspapers
Malay Newspapers in the Library

- NUSL also has some Malay Newspapers:

  2. *Utusan Melayu*

- The rest can be found at *Newspaper SG*
Let’s Search for some Newspapers

1. What newspapers were in circulation in the territory of Malaya in 1939?

2. In which month in 1939 did the various groups of people in Singapore realize that war is real in their backyard?
Legal Cases Files of Malaya and Singapore
Legal Case Files of Malaya and Singapore

- Legal Case Files also a useful historical source

- The library has both hard copies and soft copies of legal case files

- Not every case is recorded, only key judgements are recorded

- Often quite salacious
Legal Case Files of Malaya and Singapore

Here are some that might be useful:

- Straits Settlement Law Reports (1868-1931)
- Straits Settlement Law Reports (1927-1950)
- Federated Malay States Law Report (1922-1941)
- Malayan Cases (1908-1936)

For more: [http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/SGlawhistory/cases](http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/SGlawhistory/cases)

Note that almost all of items listed can be accessed via [LawNet](http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/SGlawhistory/cases)
Singapore Municipal Commission
Singapore Municipal Commission

- Municipal Commission created in 1887 and later renamed Singapore City Council in 1951

- Focus was on governing the town area of Singapore

- Dealt with local government issues like water supply etc

- Was in constant conflict with the Colonial Government over money and ‘taich-ing’ responsibility
Two major documents you can look at:

1. Minutes of the Proceedings of the Municipal Commissioners
2. Administration report of the Singapore Municipality

More local government documents can be found:  
http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/c.php?g=145666&p=956446
What are Colonial Office Records? What are the different types?
What are the Colonial Office Records?

- Covers the period from 1867 to 1965

- 6 main series for each Colony but other CO Series exist

- Documents/Memos from Straits Settlements were sent to Whitehall (London) and archived there

- We have some stuff in Electronic, some in Microfilm
# Documents from the British Colonial, Dominion, & Foreign Offices

|-------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Catalogues, Finding Aids, & Indexes | **Kratoska’s Index to Colonial Office Files for British Malaya**  
Comprehensive index for selected CO Original Correspondence series covering British Malaya | None online  
Use year, contents/index page, or browse to navigate full-text | | | | |
| | **UK National Archives Discovery Catalogue**  
(Post 1926. File title search mainly.) | | | | | |
| Full-Text in NUS Libraries | • Check FindMore/LINC using Series no. (e.g. CO273)  
• NUSL holdings of Original Correspondence series (British Malaya)  
• Selected DO & FO files covering South Asia, China, & Japan | • Check FindMore/LINC using Series no.  
• NUSL holdings of Govt Gazettes, Sessional Papers, Dept Reports, Acts, Statistics, Annual Reports series for Malaya | | | | |
| Full-Text in National Archives of Singapore | Check also Archives Online for series not in NUS Libraries | | | | | Some duplicates available at NAS Archives Online |

**Documents from the British Colonial, Dominion, & Foreign Offices**

- **Series Type**
  - 1. Original Correspondence (CO 273 & CO 1022)
  - 2. Sessional Papers & Departmental Reports (CO275/CO940)
  - 3. Government Gazettes (CO276/CO932)
  - 4. Acts/Ordinances (CO274/CO975)
  - 5. Miscellanea (Statistics) (CO277/CO939)
  - 6. Annual Colonial Report

**Catalogues, Finding Aids, & Indexes**

- **Kratoska’s Index to Colonial Office Files for British Malaya**
  - Comprehensive index for selected CO Original Correspondence series covering British Malaya
- **UK National Archives Discovery Catalogue**
  - (Post 1926. File title search mainly.)

**Full-Text in NUS Libraries**

- Check FindMore/LINC using Series no. (e.g. CO273)
- NUSL holdings of **Original Correspondence** series (British Malaya)
- Selected DO & FO files covering South Asia, China, & Japan

**Full-Text in National Archives of Singapore**

- Check also **Archives Online** for series not in NUS Libraries

- Some duplicates available at NAS **Archives Online**
CO 273 & CO 1022: Original Correspondence

- CO 273 covers 1838 to 1946
- CO 1022 covers 1950 to 1960
- Contains memos, telegrams and letter sent throughout the colonies
- Haphazardly arranged
CO 275 & CO 940: Sessional Papers and Department Reports

- CO 275 covers the 1850s to 1946
- CO 946 covers 1946 to 1965
- Contains annual department reports and legislative assembly papers
- Arranged by year
Other CO Records?

- CO 276/CO 932: Government Gazettes aka ‘newsletter’

- CO 274/ CO 975: Acts and Ordinances

- CO 277/ CO 939: Blue Book of Statistics

- CO 953: Original Singapore Correspondence but only from 1936 to 1951 (moved to CO 1022)

- Others: Please see the Singapore Primary Sources Library Guides
How do I search for CO Records?
How Do I Search for Them?

- Use the SG Primary Sources Library Guide

- Use the LINC or Library Portal to search for the CO records by the Series Name

- However for the Original Correspondences series (CO 273/ CO 1022) things are not that simple…
How are the archival materials labeled in the UK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. REPOSITORY</strong></td>
<td>National Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. FONDS or RECORD GROUP</strong></td>
<td>Colonial Office (CO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest level of arrangement usually used to describe the whole of the archives of an organisation or the papers of an individual.</td>
<td>Admiralty (ADM)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2a. SUB-FONDS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fonds may be divided into sub-fonds if necessary.</td>
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<td><strong>3. SERIES</strong></td>
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<td>Fonds are in turn further subdivided into series (can be directly below fonds without any sub-fonds).</td>
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<td><strong>3a. SUB-SERIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Series may be divided into sub-series if necessary.</td>
<td>ADM 1/1-5494</td>
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<td><strong>4. FILING LEVEL</strong> or VOLUMES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. ITEM LEVEL</strong></td>
<td>CO 273/534/1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The smallest archival unit, and is usually indivisible.</td>
<td>Usually not described at this level</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5a. SUB-ITEM LEVEL</strong></td>
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<td>Usually not described at this level</td>
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</table>
How do I read the CO citation?

**EG:**

**CO 273/547/2** - Children Ordinance 1927

- **CO** - stands for the Colonial Office and represents where the file came from
- **The series number**
- **The volume number**
- **The actual document number**
- **The actual document title**
Importance of the Kratoska Index

- CO 273 & CO 1022 has tons of file and documents inside

- Arranged haphazardly

- The index fixes this by indexing all the documents
Kratoska Index

- Comprises of 2 sections:

- **File List**
  - It lists sequentially the different items in a volume
  - Useful for finding out where the item is at in volume as not everything is sequentially archived

- **Index**
  - Basically it is like a book index
  - Uses keyword to search
  - Useful if you want to know if you can find the things you want in them
## Kratoska Index

### CONTENTS

<table>
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<th>VOL</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<td>Straits Settlements (1838-1900) File List</td>
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<td>CO 273</td>
<td>(1838-1900) Index (Abaca - Governor)</td>
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<td>(1838-1900) Index (Governor - Pk)</td>
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<td>Far Eastern Department File List and Index</td>
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**Kratoska Index**

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<td>PILGRIMS TO MECCA AND MEDINA</td>
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<td>535/28026</td>
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**Take note of title and ref. code**

Go to Library portal: www.lib.nus.edu.sg

Search for series no. (e.g. CO 273)
Corpus Name: Great Britain. Colonial Office.
Title: Straits Settlements original correspondence [electronic resource]. CO 273.
Imprint: 1838-1946.

Click on the following to:
View the electronic version (full-text)

Description: v. : ill. ; 4 3/4 in.
Note: Title from National Archives website. In PDF format.
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<td>Proposed civil air services</td>
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<td>CO273/535/4</td>
<td>Pilgrims to Mecca and Medina: Report on the Pilgrimage, 1927; rules for pilgrimage passes; communist propaganda activity directed at pilgrims</td>
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<td>British Official Wireless News Services: commencement of broadcasts</td>
<td>1926 - 1927</td>
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<td>1927</td>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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Let’s try using the Kratoska Index
Find the Documents and Document Number

- **Volume 2** – Alleged Abuse of Madras Coolies
- **Volume 3** – Opening of New Library and Museum
- **Volume 4** – Rubber Cultivation
- **Volume 6** – Amended Chandu Farm Rules 1906
- **Volume 7** – Opium and Liquor Monopoly
- **Volume 8** – Repatriation of Chinese Prisoners at Singapore
Answers

- Volume 2 – CO273/53/11451
- Volume 3 – CO273/148/2321
- Volume 4 – CO273/235/5591
- Volume 6 – CO273/331/45161
- Volume 7 – CO273/350/22509
- Volume 8 – CO273/377/25491
Using the CO Records
Using the CO Records

- Written by Colonial Civil Servants for other Colonial Civil Servants. Some possible implications:

  - Certain racial biases could be found in their writings
  - Office politics
  - Generally concerned about money and security
  - Need to read the files in context of the period
Using the CO Records

- File cover has scribblings and names of people who read the files
  
  - May be important if you have the time and resources to do a deeper dive
Some useful tips when searching for archival materials
Tips on navigating the archival materials

- Make friends with the archivist or librarians!
- Find out if there are searching/finding aids for your source
- Use other primary sources to pinpoint dates
Tips on navigating the archival materials

- If you need dates for a particular event/ordinances passed try searching Newspaper SG to get hold of primary sources:

- **EG**: If you are trying to look for articles in a microfilm only newspaper, try searching for the event in Newspaper SG and try to match the dates with the microfilm

- **EG**: If you need to look for a particular ordinances/bill, try searching again in Newspaper SG so that you know which seating the bill was discussed
Useful Links
Useful Links

- Singapore Primary Sources Guide – http://libguides.nus.edu.sg/sgprimarysources
- Borrowing Microfilms - http://libfaq.nus.edu.sg/faq/71544
- Scanning Microfilms - http://libfaq.nus.edu.sg/faq/71573
- Printing Microfilms - http://libfaq.nus.edu.sg/faq/71545
- UK National Archives - http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
Please Help us with the Survey!

Workshop Title: HY4227
Sources of Singapore History

Date & Time: 24th January
2020, 10am to 1pm

Link to Survey:
HAPPY NEW YEAR
YEAR OF THE RAT
2020
鼠