



2009 CONFERENCE

IDENTIFYING THE PERSON: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

St Antony's College, University of Oxford

26-27 September 2009

Abstract

Identifying 'Agents' in Asia: The Political Intelligence Services, the Passport Control System, and the Communist International in Asia in the 1920s and 30s

TAKESHI ONIMARU, GRADUATE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES (GRIPS), JAPAN

The Communist International was one of the major threats against the British Empire in the 1920s and 1930s. The Communism International was led by the Third International (the Comintern). The Comintern distributed its agents all over the world in an attempt to penetrate the West. In order to prevent their infiltration into the colonies, the British Empire constructed a surveillance network consisting of the Political Intelligence Services (such as the Political Intelligence Bureau and the Special Branch in a colonial police) and the Passport Control System. This paper uses the 'Lefranc Affair' as a case study to demonstrate how this British Security Service policed the Comintern Network, particularly in Asia. The 'Lefranc Affair' was a case in which a French agent of the Comintern named Serge Lefranc, alias Joseph Ducroux, was arrested in Singapore on 1 June 1931. As a Comintern agent, Lefranc worked in Asia from 1926, and the British Political Intelligence Services starting monitoring his activities as soon as he arrived in Shanghai. This paper describes how the British surveillance network monitored his activities and took action against him, and summarizes the structure of the network by focusing in particular on the cooperation between the Political Intelligence Services and the Passport Control System.

The Documentation of Individual Identity:

Historical and Comparative Perspectives since 1500

An international network of academics sponsored by The Leverhulme Trust

<http://identinet.org.uk>