

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

The Government today ordered the arrest and detention of Lee Mau Seng and two senior employees of the Nanyang Siang Pau, a daily newspaper published simultaneously in Singapore and Malaysia.

Lee Mau Seng was until recently the general manager of Nanyang. The other two detained persons are Shamsuddin Tung Tao Chang, editor-in-chief and Ly Singko, senior editorial writer.

The newspaper is owned and controlled by the family of the late George Lee. In May 1969, after the riots in Kuala Lumpur, Lee Mau Seng returned to Singapore from Kuala Lumpur, where he had been staying for several years, and became manager of Nanyang Siang Pau. A few months later, he became general manager and took charge of the day-to-day running and management of the newspaper. He is English-educated, and does not read or write Chinese.

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In March 1970, Lee Mau Seng brought in Shamsuddin Tung as managing editor of the newspaper.

Shamsuddin Tung Tao Chang is a Chinese Muslim. He is the son-in-law of the former KMT Consul in Malaya. Tung has for many years, as a working journalist, written strongly anti-Communist articles in Singapore and Malaysian newspapers. He was awarded a scholarship through the help of USIS to study in an American university. In addition to being a journalist he has, as he is entitled to, been actively involved in politics. He was Vice-President of the Singapore Alliance Party. In 1963 he stood for elections as Alliance candidate and was defeated. He subsequently moved to Kuala Lumpur, where he established a Muslim restaurant and later a Taiwan-financed departmental store.

He was in Kuala Lumpur from 1965 until March 1970 when he returned to Singapore and was made managing editor of Nanyang Siang Pau. Within a few months he was promoted editor-in-chief.

Under Tung's editorship, Nanyang's policy gradually changed to one of glamourising Communism and stirring up communal and chauvinistic sentiments over language and culture.

Under his editorship in February 1971, Ly Singko was brought in to reinforce Nanyang's new policy. (Ly Singko was working for the Sin Chew Jit Poh before joining Nanyang as editorial writer.) Like Tung, Ly Singko has a strong KMT

background. He was, until the collapse of the KMT, head of the KMT-financed Central News Agency Office in Vietnam. He then moved to Malaya and then to Singapore. In 1952 he became the chief editor of Ih Shi Pao, a Catholic-sponsored, anti-Communist newspaper.

He has six children, all but one of whom are, or have been, in English language schools and universities. Nevertheless, he has always taken a militant Chinese chauvinist line, especially on Chinese language education and culture.

The Nanyang Siang Pau has made a sustained effort to instil admiration for the Communist system. This is done by presenting the Communist system as free from blemishes and endorsing its policies, while highlighting in the domestic news pages the more unsavoury aspects of Singapore life.

The glamourising of the Communist way of life at this juncture of Singapore's history is made all the more sinister by the fact that both Shamsuddin Tung and Ly Singko are journalists with a Kuomintang and anti-Communist background.

A study of the Singapore and Malaysian editions of the paper in the last six months shows that the policy in regard to Singapore was deliberate and calculated. In the Malaysian edition, no attempt is made to play up Communist achievements or to stoke communal sentiments over Chinese language and education. On the contrary, in the Malaysian edition there is general support for that Government's education policies. On the other hand, in the Singapore edition, not only are Communist achievements played up, but the impression is built up of Chinese language and education fighting desperately for survival against a hostile Government. None of the editorials which appeared in the Singapore edition to work up fears over Chinese language and education appeared in the Malaysian edition.

These propaganda changes first started in the last quarter of 1970, several months before the recent spate of news about China and the American ping-pong team visiting China in April 1971.

In its campaign to work up disruptive and dangerous emotions, the paper continuously echoes the pro-Communist cry that Singapore's independence is "phoney" by maliciously referring to Singapore as having undergone "150 years of colonial fetters", and that Singapore has not "in fact enjoyed real political freedom".

In a deliberate campaign to stir up Chinese racial emotions, the paper sets the mood of tension, impending conflict and violence by persistently reminding its readers of the violence, turmoil and unrest of the turbulent 1957-59 period of Singapore's history.

By April 28, the Nanyang had reached the stage in its campaign when it was prepared to use conscious falsehoods to whip up communal fears. In its editorial of that day, the paper, under the pretext of criticism, openly incited communal hatred against the Government.

Having over the weeks depicted the Government as the oppressors of Chinese education and language, it went one step further. It branded the Government as "pseudo-foreigners who forget their ancestors". This is the battle-cry that was once used by Malay chauvinists in Singapore against their multi-racial compatriots before the island was plunged into communal violence.

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