

BROADCAST TALK - II

Many of the urgent problems we face are related to the struggle for power of the Communist ideology by its supporters in Malaya. I shall have to talk to you about the nature of the challenge which the Communist system and the Communist party of Malaya are posing to us in terms which may never have been used before. For years since the beginning of the Emergency in 1948, Communism has been painted in terms of violence, terror, brutality and evil. There was violence, there was terror, there was brutality, and there were evil men. But that is not the whole story. For if it was as simple as that, the Communists would have died and perished with the collapse of their armed revolt. It is because, together with these weaknesses, they have some strong qualities that they have been able to survive in spite of the collapse of their armed revolt.

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For the foreseeable future the Communists have no chance of capturing power in the Federation or Singapore by force of arms. But they have been able to continue the struggle for the Communist cause through new methods. Many of their old supporters in the jungle have died or been banished. Some have drifted back anonymously into the towns. Only a hard core remains on the Malayan-Thai border. But new recruits have been found. These are the idealistic young

men and women, largely from the Chinese middle schools of Malaya both the Federation and Singapore. These are new men fighting under different conditions with different methods and tactics to create a Communist Malaya. Partly by persuasion, mainly by fanaticism and faith that the future belongs to the Communists, these new recruits are continuing the struggle. They press on capturing the leadership of trade unions, cultural organisations and old boys' associations. Most important of all they try to capture the power to manipulate the lawful political parties.

Past governments called this subversion. Because the Communist party is illegal in Malaya none of its followers go about telling people that they are Communists. Publicly they will always pretend to be democrats; privately they keep on recruiting as many effective persons as they can persuade to join them in the Communist cause.

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The Communists and their supporters say that I have raised the bogey of Communism in order to confuse the people. They blame us for splitting the so-called unity of the left and they list our failures - the failure of no intra-party democracy, the failure of not consulting them, the failure of not taking their Communist mass line and being isolated from the masses -- in other words, the

failure of not espousing the Communist cause. The truth is they do not want their quiet and relentless erosion of our society to be made public.

The time has come for me to tell you what is going on in Singapore, why these things are going on, and what the future is likely to be. You have to decide on your future and you must know the truth. When I talk of these problems I shall be talking from the personal experience and knowledge which my colleagues and I have gained from over 10 years of activity in the trade unions and active politics. I shall not be telling you something which I have learnt from Police files or secret reports, not because these reports are not true, but because I can speak so much better of the things that I have personally seen and heard and participated in.

My colleagues and I are that generation of young men who went through the Second World War and the Japanese occupation and emerged determined that no one -- neither the Japanese nor the British -- had the right to push and kick us around. We determined that we could govern ourselves and bring up our children in a country where we can be proud to be a self-respecting people.

When the war came to an end in 1945, there was never a chance of the old type of British colonial system ever being re-created. The scales had fallen from

our eyes and we saw for ourselves that the local people could run the country.

In fact the local people did run the country for the Japanese military administration. The Europeans had a better life in our country -- more pay, bigger houses, bigger cars and a higher standard of living -- not because they were more capable but because power and military might was on their side.

When that power went they were stripped literally naked as prisoners of war and became ordinary people. It was the Japanese 10-cent storeman who, backed by Japanese military might, suddenly became the big boss who occupied a big house and had a better life.

Three years after the end of the Second World War a violent revolution started in Malaya. The Communists who were almost a non-existent force in the years before the war were allowed to arm themselves as a force just before the British surrendered. They went underground with those arms. Over 3½ years, partly with the arms they took underground and partly with more arms parachuted in by the Allies, they build up a tough little army in the jungles. With the surrender of the Japanese, they came out into the towns. For the first time, the M.C.P. emerged as a legally recognised political force in our country. But it was not for long. In 1948, they retreated to the jungles and the armed insurrection which the British called the "Emergency" started. That was a fierce and grim revolt. The angry young men from the Chinese middle schools, who

hated colonialism and the British, joined the Communists to rid the country of British imperialism.

In those tough years 1949 and 1950 we got our first taste of the practical realities of politics. We had learned the theories of Socialism, Communism and Capitalism in books, and read the histories of our revolutions. But we now began to understand the meaning of revolution in terms of life and blood, liberty and incarceration, hate and fear, love and comradeship. We have learned one important thing during the last decade: that only those count and matter, who have the strength and courage of their convictions to stick up and stand up for what they believe in, for their people, for their country, regardless of what happens to themselves.

Parts of this narrative are concerned with friends of personal courage and deep political conviction who have gone over to the Communist side. Because they have accepted the Communist doctrine and dogma, they would have not the slightest compunction if the time comes, to destroy us, the non-Communists, if we do not bend to their will. On the other hand, other friends have been so disgusted by the stupidities of the leadership of the Communist party that they have abjured the Communists and come over and joined us, at great personal peril.

So the battle goes on for the hearts and minds of the political activists of the country. Some I will be able to tell you by name. Others I shall refer to by nicknames. But they are all real living people, men of my generation, fierce men on both sides. They will be listening to these talks wondering how much I will disclose, whether I will take an unfair advantage over them. My colleagues and I, not being ruthless Communist cadres, have different standards of conduct from them. With us, personal friendship and sentimental regard for old friends matter.

In my next talk I shall tell you how we joined the fight against the British and got to know the Communists, how it all began in the PAP and how it ended up with us being in the Government.

SEPTEMBER 15

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