

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT MC SE 47/61/TKC

EMBARGO: NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 1900 HOURS

ON 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1961.

TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER'S BROADCAST

OVER RADIO SINGAPORE ON MONDAY,

25TH SEPTEMBER, 1961, AT 7.30 P.M.

For some time before the Hong Lim by-election difficulties had been growing up between the Communists and us. It is not just Lim Chin Siong, for he only represents one aspect of open-front Communist activities.

For the first year after we took office from 1959-1960 there was sweet reasonableness. Lim was trying to find his way back into the fold of the Party. He was probably hoping he would be accepted back as an official in the Executive Committee of the P.A.P. and from such a position influence the party policy. But he did not get this. On the very day of his release from prison of 5th June, 1959, Lim, Devan Nair, Woodhull, Fong Swee Suan, James Puthucheariy and Chan Chiaw Tor met the Central Executive Committee at P.A.P. HQ, South Bridge Road. There in the presence of all of them I told the Central Executive

Committee that from my monthly and sometimes fortnightly discussions with all of them in Changi camp over 2 1/2 years I was prepared to accept the good faith of all the others who signed the declaration. I said I could not vouch for Lim Chin Siong's sincerity. So right from the start he knew that we wanted him to prove his sincerity and good faith.

I accepted Fong Swee Suan's sincerity. He had sent me earlier before his release another letter which Lim did not sign in which he denounced in clear and unequivocal terms the folly of the M.C.P. revolt and its policy of continuing it after the Federation had already got its independence. Let me quote passages from it. Devan Nair, Woodhull, James Puthucheary and Chan Chiaw Tor were joint signatories.

"It is clear, beyond possibility of doubt, that whatever justification there may have been in the past for the resort to armed insurrection by the MCP no justification whatsoever exists today for the continuance of this insurrection. No sane person can claim today that the MCP revolt is directed against British Imperialist domination of Malaya. Malaya today is ruled by a popularly elected Government which is in full political and administrative control of the country, a Government which has been freely and openly recognised by the Governments of

all nations in the world, including the Governments of the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China."

"Furthermore, a violent struggle between a popularly elected Government directly supported by almost the entire Malay population and large sections of the non-Malay population, and an insurrectionary group whose support comes entirely from a section of the Chinese community, can easily take on the characteristics of an inter-communal struggle which can do incalculable harm to the country."

"Unfortunately however, instead of taking a positive and intelligent political attitude, certain left-wing elements in Singapore have so far forgotten themselves as to join forces with the communal right-wing groups in Singapore in demanding complete independence for Singapore as a separate entity. They fail to realise that economically and socially Singapore is an organic part of the Federation of Malaya. It is just as intelligent to ask for an independent Singapore as it would be for a man's right hand to ask for independence from the rest of his body. They fail to realise that the only way for the people of Singapore to achieve independence is to merge as one of the units of

the independent Federation of Malaya. In fact, these infantile left-wing elements in Singapore have been guilty of a woeful ignorance of elementary Malayan economics. They have also been guilty of surrendering the interests of the indivisible unity of Malayan nationalism to communal prejudices and suspicions."

Not only from this but also from long discussions I had with him in camp, I was convinced of Fong's sincerity. But I knew that he was a very intimate friend of Lim Chin Siong. They had been close friends since Chinese High School days. I knew that Lim would try everything and strain every nerve to win him back to the C.P. cause. I discussed the matter with my colleagues after we assumed office. We decided to take a calculated risk and appointed him Political Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and Law. The thing that made us undertake this risk was that Fong had told Devan when he was released that he was being snubbed by the pro-Communists in the unions. He and Lim were then visiting unions in celebration after their release, and they made it clear to Fong that they knew where he stood.

Unfortunately for our calculated risk, intellectual argument and perception which had convinced him of the correctness of the PAP approach to the problems of revolution in a multi-racial society in Malaya, could not prevail over his

personal attachment to Lim and the emotional pulls of the hot house atmosphere of revolution in the pro-Communist unions like the S.G.E.U. which got Fong re-absorbed again on their side. After 9 months, by about March, 1960, we knew that he had been won back to the Communist side. So we prepared for trouble ahead. It was a worthwhile risk to have taken to win him over to our democratic side. But we had to be prepared to lose.

After he went over, it was only a matter of time before he had to leave the Labour Ministry. We had to wait until he made his first open move against our policy before we acted, as we did not want to antagonise the many neutral trade unionists who liked him as a man.

From about March, 1960, when Lim had got him back to the Communist side both he and Lim quietly began denigrating the PAP Government to the workers. Openly they were with us in the Government as Political Secretaries. But privately they told Union Committees and rank and file workers what a reactionary lot of fellows we were and how all our actions and policies which were benefiting the workers were all a result of their pressure. These sly propaganda lines all of course came back to us and hastened the antagonism that grew between the pro-C.P. and us the non-C.P. All these antagonisms were

fought out between the two factions in the T.U.C. Secretariat. Kandasamy and Devan Nair will tell you more of these quiet in-fights in the T.U.C.

Meanwhile just to show how skilful and thorough a Communist open-front worker Lim was, let me tell you an incident which showed how ready he was to exploit every difference and disagreement between the non-Communists in the PAP.

Shortly after we assumed office in 1959 Ong Eng Guan became unbalanced with power and tried to build up a personal empire for himself in the party and the Government. Lim Chin Siong one day came to my house and mentioned the trouble Ong Eng Guan was causing in the Government and party and offered his help. I told him there was no big trouble and his help was not required. At the next Cabinet meeting I reported this overture to all my colleagues, including Ong Eng Guan. The following year we had to expel Ong Eng Guan for unprincipled activities. Ong then, to embarrass us and for his own benefit, began to support and voice Communist slogans and causes like the release of the detainees and the immediate re-opening of Constitutional talks.

He was lending himself to Communist use. I openly denounced this. The PLEN, plenipotentiary of the M.C.P. in Singapore, whom I told you about in my

last talk wrote to me in August last year and told me how unkind it was that I should have said these things. He said they were not true. He also raised several other matters. I sent him a reply shortly setting out my comments on the points he raised.

Then came the Hong Lim by-election and the call by Lim Chin Siong for left-wing unity. In other words, the unity of all those, Communists and non-Communists who wanted to be rid of British colonialism. We responded in agreement, provided the objective of the unity was to the benefit of the people, for the establishment of democratic, non-Communist, socialist and independent Malaya. But Lim Chin Siong began to talk about anti-colonialism and the struggle for freedom without any reference to merger with the Federation. His talk meant struggle for an ultimately independent Singapore and he never mentioned merger as part of the objective. An independent Singapore was never a part of the PAP's program. What we wanted was merger. Lim had unequivocally endorsed this when he was released from prison in June, 1959.

Clearly this unity of the left-wing front which the MCP wanted was not for the purpose of establishing an independent, re-united Malaya, but for the purpose of establishing an independent Singapore from which the Federation could be subverted to Communism. So we openly stated during the Hong Lim by-election that we did not believe in an independent Singapore.

Some time after I assumed office, in September and October, 1959, I went around the various Ministries, including the Special Branch. There on the 6th of October at about 4 p.m., I was shown a bundle of files of people on the "arrest on sight" list. I came across a file which had a photograph I recognised. It was the PLEN. I mentally noted who he was. But I did not tell and have not told the Special Branch what I knew of him. The Special Branch would have to, and probably will one day, find out for themselves in their own way.

The PLEN made contact with me again through a courier in March this year. He asked me to indicate a secret non-de-plume that I would use. He had always used the name "Lee Yuck Han" as his non-de-plume. He used my surname as his non-de-plume, and characters Yuck Han is Chinese for John. I then gave him as my non-de-plume a name using his surname which, for the sake of anonymity, I shall say is "Chen" and Pin Ann, Chinese characters meaning peace and tranquillity.

After we lost Hong Lim, on May Day at the T.U.C. rally at Jalan Besar Stadium I openly and publicly told Lim Chin Siong and his friends where we stood, where we were going, and that if they were not coming with us they could go their way. A few days after that on May, 11, I met the PLEN again in



Singapore. He thanked me for having been very kind to one of his relatives whom I had occasion to help. In this way he indicated that he knew by fact I had used his surname in my non-de-plume, that I knew who he was. We had a 4-hour session in which discussion ranged over many subjects such as more democratic rights, more cultural freedom, more free importation of books and more free immigration permits, all of which means in short more opportunities for Communist activities. He was concerned about the talk of the resignation of the PAP and wanted to know our intentions.

He asked me whether I was likely to get merger soon from the Tunku. I told him that there was no immediate likelihood of it but that I was hoping for common market arrangements with the Federation.

We discussed many other subjects which I shall tell you about some other time, as they are not directly connected with the immediate subject of my talk tonight, of how over merger the Communists suddenly and openly fought us.

Finally, he pressed me to agree to the abolition of the Internal Security Council as the immediate target for the 1963 Constitutional talks while deferring the question of independence for Singapore alone or through merger with the Federation. I left with the impression that he was determined to commit us at

least for this next step of the Communist cause. I did not commit myself and did not say anything directly on this. I told him that it was best to assume that the PAP would do what it publicly stated it would do.

Three weeks later on June 2nd Lim got five other friends to join him in a statement to demand the abolition of the ISC in the 1963 Constitutional talks. I knew that, like Chang Yuen Tong, he had received his instructions from his organisation, the Communist underground.

I discussed the matter with my colleagues. On June 9th, we announced our program that in the 1963 Constitutional talks we would ask for independence through merger with or without the Borneo territories. This was how the fight started.

In my next talk, I shall tell you how the British by playing the line of correct constitutional attitude to the Communists' open-front workers misled them into an exposed and false position.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1961.

(Time issued: 12 noon)