

SPEECH BY MR. LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER OF DEFENCE, AT
THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE P.A.P. CENTRAL
CULTURAL BUREAU'S CONCERT AT THE VICTORIA THEATRE
ON FRIDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 1968, AT 7.30 P.M.

Friends, Fellow Citizens, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to see such a large attendance at this musical night held by the P.A.P. Central Cultural Bureau and I would like to take this opportunity to state the problems that we in Singapore face in building a national culture.

The P.A.P. is a non-Communist Democratic Socialist Party in close touch with all sectors of our population. Though in the task of nation building, priority is usually given to the development of politics, economics and defence in which we by virtue of the fact that we are the ruling party must necessarily take the lead, it is also our duty to see to it that in the cultural and recreational fields, we also should play an important role and be in the forefront of their development. And we have been doing this.

Last year, thirteen dramas were staged in Singapore, and out of this, eight were organised by the P.A.P. Central Cultural Bureau and several P.A.P. Branches.

Though priorities are given to developing our economy and defence and social projects, the development of cultural and sporting activities must also be pursued with the same vigour. Positive action must be taken to promote a culture of our own and here we come up against this problem. How do we build a national culture in a multi-racial immigrant society with its multifarious national cultures of its own?

I don't think I need go into the reasons why we need healthy cultural activities. You all know physical activities alone is not sufficient for the needs of mankind. In order to live a full life, he must be activated physically, mentally and spiritually.

If there is no healthy cultural activities, there will be a vacuum and nature hates a vacuum. It must be filled and filled it will be by what we all know as yellow culture and by abnormal and

corrosive activities such as the 'hippies' and 'flower people'. Yellow culture and abnormal activities need no direct encouragement to seep through society. Prohibitive and restrictive measures will not stop them. The only thing that can prevent them from spreading and especially in an urban society is for our people to participate in healthy cultural activities.

We must remember Rome was not built in a day. A national culture takes a much longer time than a city to develop. With our new found independence, a start must be made not only to build a nation, but to develop a national culture. In our multi-racial, multi-cultural society, it will never do to encourage the culture of one race to the exclusion of that of another. Culture like languages is an explosive subject and can lead to racial conflict as we have seen in other countries. The multi-racial way is the way for us. I believe by distilling the best of the varied cultures we have with local contents, we can in time develop a culture all our own. There can be no national culture without local contents and you will see that the P.A.P. Central Cultural Bureau is exactly doing this. In the items that have been shown and to be shown, we have a Singapore background with the P.D.F., the red-head-dressed women construction workers and the Singapore River as the theme. We have made a start and may I wish all those who are interested and engaged in building our national culture every success in this difficult task.