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Archives & Oral History Department  
Singapore 27 AUG 1982

# Singapore Government

# PRESS RELEASE

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09-1/82/08/20.

**SPEECH BY MR S RAJARATNAM, SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (FOREIGN AFFAIRS)  
AT THE ANSON CONSTITUENCY NATIONAL DAY DINNER AT MAXWELL COMMUNITY CENTRE  
ON FRIDAY, 20 AUGUST '82 AT 8.00 PM**

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In his National Day Rally last Sunday Mr Jeyaretnam told the people of Anson what he thought of the Government. So it is only fair that I return the compliment by giving a preliminary report about Mr Jeyaretnam's performance as an M.P. since last November. Nine months is time enough to get a fair idea of what he really has in store for the people of Singapore.

When nine months ago he persuaded 51 per cent of the voters of Anson to elect him as an M.P. his sales talk then was that his role was to be a loyal opposition. He told you that through constructive criticism and exposure of Government's shortcomings and errors he could get the Government to do the right thing by the people of Anson.

He told the people of Anson that by having an opposition in Parliament he could put right some of their grievances such as the rising cost of living, increasing cost of H.D.B. flats and the grouses of the residents of Blair Plain.

Well what has the Miracle Man of Anson done for you in respect of these and other problems in the past nine months? If you look through the reports of Parliamentary proceedings you will discover that the problems of the people of Anson featured only minimally in Mr Jeyaretnam's rhetoric. As far as I know Mr Jeyaretnam did not come out with the ideas on how to bring down the cost of living or how to deal with the rising tide of recession and unemployment; how to build cheaper flats for the people, or, for that matter, to satisfactorily resolve the problems of the residents of Blair Plain.

Most of his time in Parliament was taken up with repeating rumours of corruption by the P.A.P. and then retreating into a funk

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hole when the Prime Minister asked him to put up a motion requesting the setting up of an inquiry commission to look into Mr Jeyaretnam's allegations.

Going by his performance the past nine months, my considered view is that for the rest of his term all the help Mr Jeyaretnam will give the people of Anson is a friendly wave of his hand during his periodic walkathons in Anson. He is not going to solve any of their major problems.

For example, all that he has done for residents of Blair Plain is to tell them to simply stay put. Mr Jeyaretnam knows the consequences of his reckless advice. Come May 1983 and all the P.S.A. blocks will be torn down to make way for expanded container facilities to make sure that the port of Singapore remains a major port. So the workers who take Mr Jeyaretnam's advice and stay put would end up with no homes at all. At the moment there are some 400 such families.

Mr Jeyaretnam knows that his advice must lead to clashes between PSA workers who are being misled by bad advice and those who will be sent to evict them. Mr Jeyaretnam further knows that neither legally nor morally have the P.S.A. workers the right to stay put for, had the workers such right, Mr Jeyaretnam, as a lawyer, would have been the first to take the matter to our courts. So Mr Jeyaretnam knows the consequences of "staying put". When he told the Straits Times of August 4 that "he would wait and see how the problem was going to be solved", there was no more to it than met the eye.

One of the first comments I made after Jeyaretnam's victory last November was that some people were out for "fun-and-game" politics as in the fifties and early sixties and I believe that is what Mr Jeyaretnam is out to provide us with.

As evidence, I refer to an interview he gave in May this year to a University student publication, the Undergrad. In this, for the first time, he confessed that the role of an opposition is not "constructive criticism" but, and I quote, "to defeat the Government where an opportunity presents itself".

Now I am not denying the right of any political party to work for the electoral defeat of a ruling party and itself become the governing party. But the point I am making is that before he got into Parliament, Mr Jeyaretnam went around telling you that all he aspired to was to be a critical opposition. But now, as he says in the Undergrad. one of his objective is to "weaken the Government" to "bring down the Government". ↙

This objective has been repeated in a Workers' Party circular to the people of Singapore begging for money to pay debts incurred by both the Workers' Party and by Mr Jeyaretnam as a result of unsuccessful law suits.

The circular begs for money on the grounds that the financial hardship of Mr Jeyaretnam was the result, and I quote, of "all the sacrifices" Mr Jeyaretnam had made on behalf of the people of Singapore.

This is yet another instance of Mr Jeyaretnam's propensity to pass off fiction as fact. The debts were not incurred through some heroic feat of self-effacing sacrifice but simply through recklessly financing on unwinnable law suit.

The same circular gives another reason why the public should cough up money to help meet Mr Jeyaretnam's and the Workers' Party debts. Says the circular: "The Party will not be able to carry on with its work of providing an alternative government for our people if these costs are not paid".

According to the circular the Workers' Party needed \$50,000 in all to clear its debt. So you see how crucially balanced is the future of Singapore at the moment. If the people of Singapore can cough up the \$50,000 then, according to the circular, they can joyfully look forward to a Workers' Party Government in the near future. Now this works out to about two-and-a-half cents per head of population and that, on the face of it, is a pretty cheap price to pay for the blessings of a Workers' Party government.

But before you rush to contribute your two-and-a-half cents consider one very important question. And it is this. Can you entrust the fate of a prosperous and wealthy Singapore to a group of men whose leaders have to turn to public charity to pay debts

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incurred in unsuccessful litigation and who have so managed their Party's finances that it has now been placed in the hands of the Official Receiver?

I think the last fact deserves mention in the Guinness Book of Records. I know of no instance where a political party had to get out of its financial predicament by finding sanctuary in the comforting bosom of the Official Receiver.

Yet this same group of men cheerfully and hopefully ask you to cough up \$50,000 so that they could be given a chance to manage the finances of Singapore.

Now why has Mr Jeyaretnam changed his party policy - from playing the role of a constructive opposition to now seeking the defeat of the P.A.P. and replacing it with a Workers' Party Government.

In my opinion there has been no change of policy and objectives on the part of Mr Jeyaretnam. He never believed in the role of a constructive opposition. Nor does he really believe for one moment that there can ever be a Workers' Party Government in Singapore. The appeal in the circular that without the \$50,000 the Workers' Party cannot carry on its work of providing an "alternative government" is a lot of eyewash. Of course the Workers' Party hopes that this approach can mitigate their financial troubles and even if the appeal fails I have not doubt that there is a sugar daddy somewhere to help out the Workers' Party.

But whether the target is reached or not, none of its leaders really believe that a Workers' Party Government is possible in Singapore. So if it cannot be the government, then what role has this party set for itself? Since it cannot ever be the government and since, according to Mr Jeyaretnam, the new policy is to weaken the present government, then the only role open to the Workers' Party is to go in for "fun-and-games" politics. The objective is to create turmoil, unrest and uncertainty under a P.A.P. Government. This has been Mr Jeyaretnam's sole sight from the start.

Here again, my authority for this assertion is Mr Jeyaretnam himself. In his National Day rally speech in Anson last Sunday, the

Straits Times quoted him as emphasising that what Singapore needed was more and more dissent. In fact, this is what Mr Jeyaretnam has been doing the past nine months as M.P. I have yet to read constructive speeches by him on how he would cope with the hundred and one problems that affect the life of the people - of what we should do to mitigate the effects of inflation; how to cope with rising cost of fuel and imported materials; how to prepare ourselves to meet the strains and stresses of a recession; on education, on foreign policy, security and so on.

By providing alternative ideas of his own, he would at least have given pungency and credibility to his criticisms.

His performance during the past nine months was to use smears, reckless rumours, half-truths and even falsehoods to bring the government into disrepute.

Let me give you an instance of his propensity to resort to falsehoods to smear the government. In his speech last Sunday at Anson he alleged that the P.A.P. was driving away talented people who disagreed with the government into exile.

To back his allegation of P.A.P. intolerance he mentioned the case of a Nanyang University graduate who stood on a Workers' Party ticket and later fled Singapore to elude arrest after losing the 1976 general election.

It is typical of Mr Jeyaretnam to charge the government with persecuting talented people without either mentioning the name of this talented Singaporean or relating the circumstances which led him to flee Singapore.

So let me fill in the facts about this presumed Leonardo da Vinci whose talents have been lost to Singapore - facts which understandably and characteristically Mr Jeyaretnam forgot to mention.

The name of this alleged brain-drain is Ho Juan Thai, a B.A. from Nanyang University. On graduation, this talented and brainy man worked as a labourer, a machine operator, a carpenter and a factory worker. Mr Super Brain, it would appear, was a versatile job hopper.

He joined the Workers' Party and unsuccessfully contested the general elections of December 1976.

During the elections he openly and recklessly exploited Chinese chauvinistic sentiments with allegations that the Government was killing Chinese education. Mr Ho knew that he was playing with fire. He also knew that during the election campaign the Government would do nothing lest it be accused of persecuting a political opponent. But when the campaign ended, he knew that the police would question him and so he prudently disappeared from Singapore.

Now Mr Jayaratnam cannot plead ignorance that Mr Ho was playing with communal fire because extensive extracts of what Ho said were released by the Ministry of Home Affairs to the press.

Furthermore, Mr Ho was associated with Mr Tan Wah Piow who is still wanted for arrest for evading National Service and also with Juliet Chin and several others who were deported from Singapore for subversive activities. So Mr Ho was no political innocent.

Mr Ho is now in London and collaborating with Mr Tan Wah Piow in the activities of the Federation of United Kingdom and Singapore Students Organisation (FUEMSSO). One of the regular activities of FUEMSSO is the sustained slandering of Singapore and Malaysian Governments as undemocratic tyrannies.

FUEMSSO is currently championing for the release of Tan Chay Wa, a C.M.P. leader sentenced to death last year by the Malaysian Government for illegal possession of firearms.

FUEMSSO also initiated and coordinated the visit of an International Lawyers Mission which arrived in Malaysia early this month to study the Internal Security Act, presumably with a view to recommending its abolition.

So this is one of the talented superbrains who Mr Jayaratnam believes could do great credit to Singapore were he brought back. Considering Mr Ho's credentials and experience he would undoubtedly be a source of strength for the Workers' Party in its "fun-and-game" politics.

Mr Ho is not the only odd character which the Workers' Party has attracted. In January this year, the Government arrested five Malay extremists dedicated, so they confessed in a public statement, to the overthrow of Government through revolutionary violence. Towards this end, they had prepared inflammatory literature to spark off clashes between Chinese and Malays.

Again, two of the five extremist leaders were Workers' Party members and one of the two a Workers' Party central executive council member.

I cannot say whether Mr Jeyaretnam knowingly admits people like Mr Ho and Malay extremists into the party. All I know is that so long as Mr Jeyaretnam goes in for "fun-and-game" politics he will wittingly or unwittingly provide cover for men intent on destabilising Singapore.

During the next few years Singapore together with the rest of the world will enter a period of great economic and political strains and stresses. Mr Jeyaretnam's openly declared embracing of "fun-and-game" politics, his new battle-cry that dissent is the order of the day will make the Workers' Party a cover for the really dangerous men. A political party which is financially in a precarious state and which is steered by leaders who are not very particular about who they admit into their ranks is ripe for take over by men out to make real mischief for Singapore.

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