

JUNE 1957

TANJONG PAGAR BY-ELECTION RALLY - TO THE VOTERS OF TANJONG  
PAGAR

On 2nd April 1955 I was elected to represent you in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. I have done this as best as I can for the last two years, always putting the interests of the majority of the people over the interests of the privileged minority.

You will remember that my party stated at the last elections that we were not fighting to get into power. Our main object was to expose the present Rendel Constitution as a sham and in this we have succeeded.

Now an All Party Delegation have got the Colonial Government to agree to a new constitution granting us complete internal self-government, i.e. a fully elected

legislature of 51 with full powers in all internal matters. This constitution will come into force next year after the persons who will be eligible for, under the new law,

Singapore citizenship rights have been registered as voters. But the British have imposed a condition, that all those detained for alleged subversive activities cannot contest the first elections. The P.A.P. opposes this condition. It is undemocratic to deprive a citizen of his political rights without proving his guilt in open Court. We must fight to remove this condition before the constitution is implemented.

These proposals for the new constitution were debated in the Legislative Assembly in April. My party's stand was that the constitutional proposals were acceptable as a step forward towards merger with the Federation and thereby complete independence, but that the condition is bad and must be removed before the elections are held with new Singapore citizens registered. During the debate Mr. Marshall the former Chief Minister attacked our party stand. His view was that the constitutional proposals was bad but the ban on suspected subversives was good. But any way he wanted the constitutional proposals with the ban on subversives implemented straight away without waiting for the new Singapore citizens to be registered. My party's stand was therefore just the opposite of Mr. Marshall's. He challenged me to fight a by-election in Tanjong Pagar. I accepted and I handed my resignation to the Speaker of the Assembly. But before the debate was over Mr. Marshall announced that he would not contest the elections in Tanjong Pagar but would retire from politics.

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My party decided that I should not withdraw my resignation because after all the confusion caused by the debate I should place the record of my actions in the Assembly before my voters. It is for you to decide whether I should continue to be your representative.

I have not wavered from the program and platform on which you elected me. My party and I have done and will do our best for your welfare. We believe in an independent and democratic united Malaya. We shall strive to establish by peaceful and constitutional methods a socialist Malaya where no man shall be allowed to exploit his fellow man, and where all regardless of race, sex, or religion will be given equal opportunities to contribute their best to society.

Because our Socialist platform was successful in the last elections, others who are not socialist now come forward with Socialist labels, hoping to win your support. The now dead rich man's Democratic and Progressive parties have combined and changed their name. They now call themselves Liberal Socialists but never forget who they represent and what their true intentions are.

The Liberal Socialist candidate is the President of the Bus Owners' Association. One of his objects must be to protect the interests of the bus owners, a privileged minority. To do this he must keep down the interests of the bus workers and the bus travelling public, the majority. So how can he be a socialist? The other candidate is an independent. He has no party although he created the Labour Front out of a collection of Assembly seat seekers. He is no more a socialist than any of his friends and "comrades" in the Labour Front.

My opponents have put forward all kinds of fanciful programmes. But the present Assembly has only about a year more before the next general elections. They know that these programs they have announced cannot be carried out. If I am elected for the last term of the Assembly, my duty is to see that the new citizens are registered as quickly as possible, that the ban on alleged subversives is removed, that actions which are contrary to the interests of the people are exposed, and that the peoples' interests are properly safeguarded. Then at the next elections my party will present you with our 5 year program for the new Assembly under the new constitution.

Several of my party colleagues have been detained by the Government. They should be brought to trial in open court or released unconditionally. We shall continue to fight for their democratic rights. They should not be deprived of their liberty or their political rights unless it has been proved that they have done or committed an offence.

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You can judge what I have done in the past 2 years. On that record I ask you to vote for me.