SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT BYC/MC.AP.91/60

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, WHEN HE OPENED THE FIRST LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND ORIENTATION COURSE AT THE NATIONAL RECREATION CENTRE ON MONDAY, APRIL 25, 1960.

The subject of my discussion which opens the training class is "Social Discipline and Organisation".

This is the first time in the history of Singapore that a Government sets out to bring itself and its activities to the people. You as organisers, must bring the Government closer to the people, in their recreational, cultural, educational and other group activities.

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In the past, the Government was something distinct and separate. The people and their activities were one entity on the ground, and the Government and the Administration were something separate over and above, giving orders downwards. In between were the "brokers" who acted as middlemen between the Government and the people. These were the committees of social, cultural, clan and other organisations acting as buffers between the colonial administrators

and the people, making requests to the Government, with Government either responding or rejecting these requests. In the past, dissatisfaction first grew on the ground and when the people were acutely discontented they went to cultural organisations or clan associations who acted as "brokers", representing the people in the area and making representations to the Government. Otherwise, they got petition letter writers to write on their behalf. The Government would then accept or reject these representations.

Part of the process of making the people participate in the Government is for the administrative organs to grow roots in the hearts and minds by closer participation of the representatives of the Government in the people's social activities. In other words, no longer is the Government to wait until there is a request from the ground organisations before it acts. It is the business of the Government which has grown from the ground to keep its representatives on the ground, to ensure that long before a grievance or dissatisfaction reaches acuteness, remedies are put into motion.

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It is necessary to keep in constant touch with the people not only to know what their grievances are but also to conduct and organise them and inculcate in them social qualities which will be useful in the building up of our society. In the present phase of political development it will be easier to do this at a non-

Government level. For this reason we have decided to set up the "People's Association". In this Association, representation will be on the one hand from the mass organisations and on the other hand from the elected political leadership: this will function in a form which will be more to what the people are accustomed to.

If your job is done well, then at the end of four years we would have educated the people to the extent where they will work with the Government and the administration direct. You must bring to the notice of the administration the views and feelings of the people, the shortcomings of the Government, the difficulties the people are encountering, special problems of the farmers, fishermen and city dwellers. In this way, we will be better able to serve the people.

APRIL 25, 1960. (Time issued 1500 hours).

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