

TRANSCRIPT OF A SPEECH MADE IN ENGLISH BY THE PRIME
MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, ON 3RD OCTOBER, 1965, AT THE
28TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE LIQUOR RETAILERS'
ASSOCIATION, HELD AT THE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Gentlemen:

To those who do not speak Chinese or Malay, may I just say very briefly that I am very pleased to be here tonight, because it so happens that I have a very long association with this particular group of merchants, the Liquor Retailers. They are very small merchants; they are small traders.

But, you know, people with long histories have long memories. And I happen to have a long memory. Ten years ago, in 1955, I went to Tanjong Pagar to fight an election, with nothing... I just decided ... We had just formed a party; elections were on, and I decided to fight. And I had to look for a headquarters from which to fight the election. And at Burnham Street in Tanjong Pagar, Mr. Ang Kok Seng lent me his Liquor Retailers Association premises for my headquarters. And from there, the PAP took root and flourished. You see, we have got long memories:

I have come pretty sunburnt from the seaside, and without coat and tie because I have been at the seaside today. But ten years ago, this Association and Mr. Ang did me a good turn which I will never forget, just as we do not forget when people do us a good turn.

You know, we may forgive; but we seldom forget. And that is the test of whether a people survive or perish. Because if you have got to learn by trial and error, and you keep on forgetting and you commit the same errors, then you perish.

Once you have made a mistake, never repeat it. Remember it, note it down and say "Yes, these are dangerous people." Make a note.

The Communists are dangerous; so are American imperialists dangerous for me. They are crude people. So I say, "Please stay out". And so are chauvinists dangerous. I have not forgotten Mr. Tan Lark Sye. And I am quite sure Mr. Tan Lark Sye will never forget me as long as he lives. And the chances are: I will live longer than he does.

But he took a gamble; he took a chance: he financed the Communists and (the) Barisan Sosialis for two years from 1961 to 1963, and I have got all the

evidence. We watched it and we said, "No, don't touch him. It will be a mistake if you kill him, if you arrest him. Because then you arouse the whole Chinese merchant community. Leave him alone; let him do his worst; let him give Barisan money." The Barisan Sosialis were fed by Tan Lark Sye's money. That is how they fielded 45 candidates. You know, for one candidate fielded, you must have \$500! Where do the Barisan Sosialis find the money? Mr. Tan Lark Sye.

So we watched. But when the cards and the chips were down, and he lost, he also lost his citizenship. And that is the way life is. If you want to say what the country should be, then you must be prepared to die. If you are afraid to die, it is better to stay on the sidelines and just cheer; don't enter the arena. The arena is only meant for those who are prepared to die.

I am not saying this because I don't want people to enter the arena. I want more people to come in; more people to fight and die for a just and equal society.

Then my task is easier because I have more friends to spread the task around.

But to people who were quiet, quiescent, subservient when the Malay Army and the Malay Police were in control, and who now say, "Oh, 80% Chinese, therefore Chinese language!" -- to them I say, "Brother, pipe down.

You are not cutting any impression on me. You should have said that when Tan Siew Sin came to this hall in July."

You know, the man who proposed that resolution in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce bowed deeply to Tan Siew Sin when he came here in July, and they gave him dinner. They bowed deeply to the emperor: "Hail Caesar"!

You know, don't try and be funny! If you have got no guts to tell Caesar off, I will tell Caesar off. I told him before we were kicked out; I tell him after we are kicked out.

And I say that, knowing full well that by saying it, one, we could have been arrested; two, the Constitution could have been suspended; three, there could have been a riot in which accidentally, we could have been killed.

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But at the same time, we made all adequate precautions to see that if any such folly took place, the highest price was paid. You know, I didn't travel to Bombay, Delhi, Rangoon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Vientiane for nothing. (Do) you think I travelled just for fun? (In) every capital, I laid a line; and if you take a knife and plunge it, then I say, "Brutus, you die with Caesar!"

And so, you see, nobody dared be Brutus; so we did not have to die like Caesar. And this is just as well.

So I say to those who want to be language heroes: "Just pipe down." (They had better) calculate very carefully before they say these things. And if they do not know what (it) is all about, better leave these things to those who know what this is all about. And then they can do business, and this place will boom.

I know that they are unhappy now. Why don't we open trade with Indonesia? We will; don't worry about it. Plenty of time; don't be in a rush. All the lines are open. My colleagues are travelling around Africa. We are meeting everybody including Indonesians, Chinese, every one. Messages coming to and fro, and all the the time we are calculating in terms of our survival. And "our" means Malaysia and us; not Singapore because you see, as I have told them in Chinese just now, you are a fool who believe that Singapore Suddenly from two million, Singapore becomes seven million like Hong Kong, you know, and I have skyscrapers in Pulan Ubin and Pulau Tekong ... That is not my idea.

I am calculating not in terms of the next election; that is no trouble: '68 is no trouble. I am calculating in terms of the next generation; in terms of the next 100 years; in terms of eternity; and believe you me, for the next thousand years,

we will be here. I won't be here, but people like me, and like my friends here tonight, will be here: recognisable, identifiable, a thousand years from hence. And it is people who calculate and think in those terms that deserve to survive.

And that is why I came here tonight. Ten years, but I have not forgotten. I owe them a debt. You know, ten years ago, I might have lost the election; the Labour Front might have persecuted them and they would have been in trouble. But they said, "This is a good man, a good friend, support him." Well, I say to them: they are my good friends: I would always support them.

And I say to all those who are my friends. I never forget. Just as I say to those who are my enemies: I sometimes forgive, but I seldom forget.

Good night.

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