

SPEECH MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER,

MR. LEE KUAN YEW, WHEN HE MOVED THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE YANG DI-PERTUAN NEGARA, FOR HIS POLICY SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON 14TH DECEMBER 1965.

The Prime Minister:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in moving the motion of thanks to the Yang di-Pertuan Negara for his Address, I am faced with the unusual duty of recounting to the House, first, the unusual circumstances in which we have found ourselves as a sovereign and independent legislature; and next the problems that arises in order to ensure that our sovereign status shall always be safeguarded and respected by our neighbours.

It is not often, Mr. Speaker, Sir that a people achieve independence in the way we have. There were a number of unusual features about Singapore and its geographic, economic and demographic nexus with Malaya.

There have been cases in history where nations have fallen apart into independent halves -- like Syria and Egypt. But then Syria was already an independent nation before she went into voluntary federation with Egypt. There

have been federations like the Central African Federation or the West Indian Federation which did not succeed and component parts of the federated whole then became sovereign, as in the case Zambia, Malawi, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago.

But, I think in the annals of nation-making, Singapore must occupy a unique place. For, one of the most strategic islands in the whole world acquired sovereignty over its Western, European bases without violent revolution.

This is not so say that I altogether disapprove of violent revolutions but it is doubtful however violent we could have become -- and the Cypriots in their revolution were extremely violent -- whether we would ever have achieved sovereignty over important base installations, important not just to Britain but to a whole host of other countries whose security and survival is intimately linked with certain checks and balances of power in the region. When eventually Cyprus emerged as an independent Republic, her bases remained British and sovereignty remained with the British.

For the price, Mr. Speaker, Sir, of about \$70 million in loss of revenue over two years which my colleague, the Minister for Finance recounted yesterday -- an excess of payment over actual federal expenditure in Singapore of \$25

million per annum making approximately \$50 million for two years -- and the loss of two years of currency profits at \$10 million a year, we acquired sovereignty without bloodshed. If we could put things in pecuniary terms, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that was the price we paid in place of blood -- not that the British would have taken that price for I think they knew the value of this real estate in Singapore. But, be that as it may, perhaps it was our good fortune that you get a circumstance where someone with an antique, gold sovereign goes and exchange it for a bag full of sweets. And, who are we to explain when we have found ourselves the proud possessor of an antique gold piece.

But there was another price which we paid, Mr. Speaker, Sir, besides the \$70 million: two years in which we came face to face very rapidly with the stark realities of conflict -- conflict over race, over language, over religion. Very quickly all the cliches of inter-communal co-operation were shorn off as we found ourselves confronted with a somewhat crude and blatant attempt to subdue us as a submissive member of a federation, the inner workings of which we were not so conversant with before Malaysia. Whilst we laid the emphasis on the constitutional framework and good faith -- intending to bring the territories and the peoples closer together as they operated within one national unit, sharing one economic system, irrevocably wedded together by ties of common experience and the fact that their destinies have been so closely interwoven in the past -- we

found that there were certain inarticulate major premises upon which others had based their calculations. And the constitution which was written, and the inarticulate major premises of race, language and religion which were unwritten, were irreconcilable.

All that is over, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for us for the time being. Not that the problem has been solved but that for us, the problem does not immediately arise. What we wish to do now is to get into a new working relationship with our former partners in Malaysia. And this working relationship is likely to come about only if we approach it on a matter-of-fact basis of what is the common benefit to be derived in any act of economic or other co-operation.

Our problem for the time being is that it is difficult for us without being accused of intransigence to bring about that spirit of co-operation whilst some people believe that Singapore out of Malaysia means a relationship which existed between Singapore and the old Malaya. Then, for many years wanting merger, wanting reunification and seeking a more enduring basis for our future, Singapore -- not just the Government but the people -- was prepared to tolerate a relationship which was not altogether mutual; certain advantages accrued to Malaya without corresponding advantages to Singapore. Their products find markets in Singapore whilst our product did not find markets in Malaya. So in

fact, in a large number of fields in economics and finance, it is not possible to go back to the relationship.

Before a new working relationship is established, we must first dispel the illusion that because we wanted merger in Malaysia, therefore we were vulnerable without merger. Whilst politically an independent Singapore holds hazards in the long-term, not just for ourselves but for all in Southeast Asia, economically it does not follow that it is within the dispensation of our neighbours to decide our economic destiny. Two years of confrontation have given us an opportunity to demonstrate that we do not live on the bounty of our neighbours. We did them a service and if the service was not required, the services could be extended elsewhere for other returns. And, it may take some time and no little efforts before the same axiom is demonstrated with other neighbours. But eventually, I am reasonably confident that we can reach a rational relationship -- not one in which the bigger assumes automatically that we must get the greater benefit, but a relationship in which each and every step is weighed in accordance as to whether it is of value to them and to us. In other words, a relationship based on a quid pro quo. If we are not to get something out of it, naturally it is not our intention that we should give up something which is valuable. Similarly, we ask nothing of our neighbours unless we give them something in return. And in this way, we hope to establish in the course of the next year, a new balance which

has now become necessary as a result of our emergence as a sovereign State living with the Government of Malaysia not as a State Government to central authority, put as two independent and sovereign regimes.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I go into the programmes for this session of Parliament, I would like to put forward the difficulties which, I think, we are going to be confronted with as a result of the decision of the Opposition to boycott this Parliament. I do not know for how long they intend to absent themselves from this Chamber, and I would like to say that despite their absence, we will attempt to put forward every act of legislation, every decision of policy fairly and squarely before this House and before the people to whom we are ultimately responsible. It means, in other words, an added responsibility of not only putting forward our point of view but of putting forward all the conceivable opposing points of view which we considered before we decided to overrule them. And, there must be a scrupulous presentation of the reasons for and against legislations and policies.

To begin with, I would like to remind the House why the Opposition has decided to absent itself. On the day we assembled, the Barisan Sosialis issued a special edition of its Party publication called, "Shih Chen Pau". On page 4, it sets out why it was not going to participate in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker:

Could the Prime Minister give the date of the Publication?

The Prime Minister:

It is on the 8th of December, 1965, the day when His Excellency, the Yang di-Pertuan Negara, addressed this Assembly. It is in Chinese, and if I may just read the relevant extracts before I give an interpretation of what I think it means ... It says here: (The Prime Minister read in Mandarin which he then translated into English as follows:

They have attributed three reasons why we have convened this Parliament.

"First, to give legal seal to our departure from Malaysia which was a neo-colonialist plot to divide and rule. Second, to get legal cover for our abuse of public funds. Third, to use this Session of Parliament as a platform for propaganda to cheat the people and confuse them." They, therefore, came to these conclusions:

"Under these circumstances to attend Parliament and to lend support and credence to the mockery enacted by the PAP, either intentionally otherwise, is to help the PAP to cheat the people with regard to Singapore's false independence."

And the final conclusion is:

"Therefore, if we are to oppose them, we must resolutely expose the PAP, the falseness of their parliamentary democracy and their anti-the people's views. Also, we must go a step further and expose the falseness of Singapore's independence. And in this way we can raise the level of consciousness of the people. Therefore, we must oppose the debate in this Assembly and it is something which must be done."

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think it is important that we should understand how they have come to this conclusion. It is pretty dreary reading, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to follow the tortuous paths that they have followed since they started off with "Phoney merger" ending up in "phoney Malaysia", and now finding themselves denouncing Singapore as a "phoney, independent country". But I would ask Members to bear with me in my reading out certain extracts which they have published on their Party philosophy and their analysis since the 9th of August. I would like to start off with this. This was their latest publication, on the 8th of December, and the one before that which is of relevance in

understanding their mind, is that published by the Malayan Monitor -- a publication by Mr. H.B. Lim, a member of the Malayan Communist Party, who has been in London for many years and who runs this particular publication. And he carried in full a statement by Dr. Lee Siew Choh, who styles himself in this statement as Chairman of Malayan People's Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. This is of the 30th November, 1965.

"We met Assistant Secretary, Comrade Murshi Said El Din recently in Singapore. (He is the Assistant Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization) and he asked our views in the recent political developments in Malaysia and especially on the so-called separation of Singapore from Malaysia and the phoney independence of Singapore. Our views on this matter have been made abundantly clear in the various Press statements issued by the Malayan People's Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and jointly by the Party Rakyat and the Barisan Sosialis Party. We have repeatedly pointed out that the separation of Singapore from Malaysia is yet another Imperialist plot designed to save Malaysia. The independence of Singapore is phoney and is clearly seen in the Agreement of Separation released on the 9th of August, 1965, the day of proclamation of "Independence" of Singapore. This agreement stipulates that British troops and bases will continue to remain in Singapore; that Malaysian troops and bases will also occupy Singapore, and that Singapore

Government cannot establish diplomatic or trade relations with foreign countries unless approved by the Malaysian Government. Further, the British and the Malaysian Governments can send Singapore troops to suppress the national liberation struggle in Kalimantan Utara and this is being done.” And it ends up in this flamboyant fashion:

"We are Malayan patriots."

So much so, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that they refer to Sabah and Sarawak as Kalimantan Utara.

"We cannot and must not accept the British/U.S. imperialist manipulated constitutional separation of Singapore from the rest of Malaysia. Neither can we in our thinking and in our struggle for national liberation accept the new imperialist plot of divide and rule. The withdrawal of Singapore has not brought any drastic change to Malaysia. There is only a change in form but no change in content. As far as Malayan internal politics is concerned, the present constitutional arrangements are merely intended to isolate and confine the Lee Kuan Yew clique to the island of Singapore and to prevent them from competing for status in the wider arena of Malaysia.

Our struggle is a most difficult one." -- This is about the sanest of all the comments that they have made.

"But with the Solidarity support of the peoples of Afro-Asia, we are absolutely confident that our struggle for a genuinely democratic Malaya, that is including Singapore, free of foreign troops and free of foreign control will be crowned with success."

Mr. Speaker:

Will the Prime Minister give the date of the publication?

The Prime Minister:

30th of November, 1965. Mr. Speaker, Sir, they started off with a special edition of the Plebian Express of August 1965 with the title Singapore

"Independent"? And I will just read our phrases from it, and I think the phrases themselves will convey the kind of reason and logic with which they have

mesmerised themselves into believing that white is black, that black is white, and

that independence is phoney; that Malaysia does not exist; that Malaya includes

Malaya; the Peninsula, and Singapore.

"So-called independence of Singapore. Phoney independence. A humbug intended to confuse, hoodwink, side-track. Change of form, no change in content. Singapore's limited powers; and in fact, it is little better than a City Council. The British Imperialist backed and supported by U.S. still rule over the Federation and Singapore. The special clauses which stipulate that Singapore cannot enter into any separate treaty or agreement with other countries without the consent of the Federation Government; that Singapore has to enter into a treaty for external defence and mutual assistance with the Federation Government and that Britain can continue to maintain the bases in Singapore and use them as and when they like without even the usual pretence of consultation with the Singapore Government -- all show that Singapore is not truly independent. It is a private agreement, arrangement between the British agents on the one side and British puppets on the other with the active encouragement and support of the British Imperialists." -- I am not quite sure who are agents and who are the puppets. But obviously, both are viewed with considerable disfavour.

"It will be noted that few countries have recognised Singapore, its so-called independence; the few countries are mostly U.S. puppets and pro-Western countries." I don't know whether the editors of Barisan Express really understand what this is all about. But I think they derive a great deal of their

inspiration from a group of revolutionaries who believe that revolutionary thinking consists of the emphatic repetition of dogmatic slogans.

In the September issue of the PLEBIAN EXPRESS, they carried an analysis of Singapore by Mr. John Eber, whom they have very modestly described as a Malayan now staying in Britain. He is also the Secretary-General of the M.C.F., which means the Movement for Colonial Freedom. He is many things besides just being General Secretary of the M.C.F. Heading, "who decides on Singapore's Eviction?"

"Federation was phoney. The decision was primarily a British one. The British decision to evict was based on the necessity to preserve Malaysia, and it is important to realise that Singapore is today still a part of Malaysia and all but name. This fact is very pointedly underlined by the continuing presence under the "secession" agreement of "Malaysian" troops in Singapore, together, of course, with the massive British force there. All that has happened is that Lee Kuan Yew and his colleagues have now been excluded from the struggle for status in the wider federation. One speaks of status and not of power, for no man or Party can have power in Malaya while it remains under the shadow of 55,000 British troops."

"Malaysia was a fake. So is independent Singapore." That is conclusive authority for our revolutionary heroes in Barisan Sosialis.

Mr. Speaker:

The date of the document?

Mr. Lee Kuan Yew:

That document is the BARISAN EXPRESS of September 1965. Having read Mr. John Eber's erudite analysis, an editorial appeared in another edition of 21st September -- another edition for the month of September of the PLEBIAN EXPRESS.

"Controversial Question concerning the Present Situation", says the Editor.

There are two views about the Independence of Singapore. The first view holds that this is a purely Alliance-PAP affair, that the British knew nothing about it before hand, and that the British have merely accepted the Alliance-PAP fait accompli in good grace. The second view holds that this is a British plot, that the British knew about this from the very beginning and have jointly initiated this new agreement with the full agreement of the Alliance and the PAP governments."

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, they came to the second conclusion.

They said:

"From all this we can confidently come to the conclusion therefore that though the timing could be a surprise, the Separation of Singapore from "Malaysia" was not a TUNKU-LKY affairs, but was British-inspired. The leaders in the Alliance and the PAP are merely actors who play different roles." And under the heading "Why Do The British Want This New Arrangement?" :-

"Hence the new arrangement which, in essence, is still the same old thing. There are no drastic changes. It is a change only in form with no change in content. What was once a Federation now becomes a

Confederation....."
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But there again the plaintive note at the end, which is the only note of sanity:

"All this would create immense difficulties for the Left in Malaya (i.e. Singapore and the Federation.)"

And so they went on to October this year. Again talking on the Algiers Conference which was abortive, they wrote in the editorial, "PHONEY INDEPENDENCE OF SINGAPORE" --

"The question of the Lee Kuan Yew "Government" must also be considered in the same category as the above-mentioned. The "Separation" of Singapore from "Malaysia", carried out by the British imperialists, is a trick."

And so they recite all the arguments.

Mr. Speaker:

What is the date of that publication?

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Mr. Lee Kuan Yew:

October 1965.

But, I think, more important for our purposes, Mr. Speaker, Sir, than just understanding how they arrived at the conclusion that this independence is phoney, that in fact this is the old Malaysia dressed up a new in order to persevere

British interests -- I think more important than that is their approach to parliamentary democracy, because in this bigger problem, on this wider issue, we have a glimpse of their real Party ideology. And in November and December, they have published three instalments of an article which bears the title, "British Parliamentary Democracy -- what it means"-- No.1, No.2, No.3 for November and December. At a subsequent date I will be able to tell the House about No.4 because series is still running.

The gist is a simple Marxist-Leninist line -- it is their hard-line, and none of this revisionism of Khrushchev, of wishing to win power by constitutional means, the musical chairs, the bourgeois Parliamentary democracy. What is important is: here is a denial of the value of any democratic institution, not if this House, not of Singapore's phoney Parliament, but the denial of the worthwhileness of the constitutional struggle of winning power via popular elections.

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November, 1965: "British Parliamentary Democracy -- what it means"
(No.1): "A brief survey of the British State machine in relation to democracy.
Starting with this issue,

"THE PLEBIAN EXPRESS is publishing a brief survey of the British constitutional institutions and State machine in order to give our readers an insight into the British system of Government which is being so loudly acclaimed by the propagandists of the Western Power and their local stooges. We feel an understanding of the workings of the British system of Government is useful as so many of our so-called 'leaders' have made it an object of imitation."

-- "Leaders" in inverted commas; therefore it does not include Barisan Sosialis leaders because they are not going to make this the object of any imitation.

"The following is first instalment of the article. Further instalments will be published in future issues of the PLEBIAN EXPRESS. (Signed) Editor." It does not say who the author is, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but obviously he is no revisionist.

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Now, I will just read out the pertinent extracts so that Members will get the flavour of their approach to this House, what it implies, the folly and the futility of the whole parliamentary machinery.

"The same brand of democracy is being sold to our people in

Singapore and Malaya and we have seen how this crude imitation of the British Parliamentary system has worked in our country."

It goes on:

".....it is necessary for us to discover and understand the true nature of this so-called "democracy" which is being peddled to us by the stooges of the Anglo-American imperialists and colonialists."

They always seem to find stress in repetition of tautologous phrases. I mean, if you just say, "you are a stooge of the imperialists", it does not carry the same conviction as if you said, "you are a stooge of the imperialists and the colonialists." Presumably there must be imperialists who are not colonialists, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

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They went on, at the end of the first article, to recite this fact:

"This ownership of the means of production allows the monopoly capitalist class to maintain a tight grip over the State machinery and over the lives of millions of wage-earners and salary-earners who have no choice but to work for them and constantly enrich them. It is in this

context that the issue of freedom and democracy in Britain must be seen and judged."

Second instalment -- mid November 1965 -- "Parliamentary Democracy -- What It Means!"

"A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND"

"..... Even the apparent continuity is deceptive. While the old feudal institutions have retained something of their original forms, they have undergone tremendous changes in the past 600 years.

Not all the institutions have this appearance of continuity. Some of the organs of the British State (such as the Armed Forces, the Civil Service, the Police and the Secret Police) are essentially products of the modern industrial capitalism of the past 150 years, or even less."

Next heading, "THE STATE SERVES MONOPOLY CAPITAL", "MONOPOLY CAPITAL USES COERCION AGAINST THE PEOPLE". And it ends up, "CAPITALIST RULING CLASS FEARS DEMOCRACY".

"The attitude of the capitalist class towards democracy has always been clear. They fought for an extension of democratic rights in the last century in order to dislodge the landed aristocracy from their exclusive control of all the key position in the State apparatus; but they have become increasingly hostile to these very rights and liberties in the course of the present century owing to the growing strength of the working-class movement which threatens in turn to dislodge them.

They so fear democracy now that it has led them to be oppressive in a variety of indirect forms in Britain and in direct and brutal forms in the colonies against the national liberation movements. The striving of the peoples of Malaya (including Singapore), North Borneo, Kenya, British Guiana and more recently Aden for national independence, were met with the most savage repressions which completely unmasked the bitter anti-democratic nature of the British ruling class.."

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Article (3), December 1965, "What It means!"

"POWER REMAINS IN HANDS OF CAPITALISTS CLASS" --

So the whole state machine and other institutions under the control of the monopoly capitalists have manoeuvred the voting rights of the people in such a way that in a general election, the people are compelled to choose between two parties, both ready to serve their interest. For the Labour Party too has proved itself, during office, willing to subordinate itself to the monopolies!

This is made possible by the nature of the two main political parties. The common features of both parties is that their leaders have accepted without question the capitalist foundation of society. Their Parliamentary leaders have always been free from control by the rank and file of their party. However much they may have paid homage in public to the principles of democracy, they have never tolerated the application of these principles to the relations between themselves and their followers.

So long as the official top leadership of the Labour Party has the control of the Party and are prepared to serve the interest or the monopoly capitalist class, they will be tolerated and even welcomed by this class. But in case the attitude of the Labour Party changes, the capitalist class has built-in safeguards within the State machine which will be discussed later.

So we see that the 2-party system places serious limitations on the democratic rights of the people which they achieved in the form of universal suffrage."

Sir, I shall be looking forward with interest to the continuing articles, because I hope, from them, ultimately to know just how far Barisan Sosialis are prepared to go.

This is not a negation of this Chamber of Singapore's "phony" independent Parliament. This is a challenge to the whole system of Government. They consider that system to be the handmaid -- to put it in orthodox Marxist-Leninist verse -- the handmaid of the capitalist monopoly. And whether it is the Parliament of Singapore or whether or whether it is the Parliament of Westminster, it is the instrument of repression of the revolutionary working-class which the Communists say they represent.

Logically, Mr. Speaker, Sir, arising from those attitudes, not only must they boycott formal sessions of this House -- since this is a ruse and guise to confuse the populace with the false independence that we have acquired to get legal sanctions and respectability for votes on public expenditure which we are seeking -- but they have to carry the battle one step further.

They have to carry the battle one step further -- wreck it. The question is how.

And, for all these years, we strenuously sought to prove that, a fact, they were operating on the twin premises of (1) work the system and shake it and rock it (2) undermine it altogether. In other words, use constitutional forms of struggle which the bourgeois enemy is foolish enough to afford the communists, use the public forum, not to work it better but to denounce the system and break it -- shake public confidence in it. And the other: the armed revolution, where State power is wrested from the hands of the monopoly capitalists and wrested in the hands of the vanguards of the proletariat -- the Communist Party.

I am not quite sure whether the present leaders of the Barisan Sosialis intend to pursue this to its logical conclusion or whether they intend to go back to the much more subtle line which they used to follow of pretending to be a constitutional Party whilst at the same time operating on directive issued by illegal and unconstitutional parties seeking to usurp power by violent means. But I think it is useful for us to remember that whatever the shifts and turns of policy or tactics, from time to time, their objective never changes. Fortunately, for us this time, a series of false premises has led them into so blinkered a situation that

they have come to a series of repeated defeats and into more illogical, absurd and untenable propositions. They have mesmerised themselves by repeating words like "phoney". And from the false premises, they have gone to the next spurious conclusion. The plain fact of the matter is, right at this moment, they are so confused by defeat and worse, demoralised by the prospect of further defeats that the leadership is now questioned.

Sir, whenever an army goes to battle, generals are never questioned when battles are being won. But when a general leads the army to one disaster after another, the younger officers and eventually even the privates begin to question the wisdom and the authority of the general. And in this case, the generals in apparent authority were only recently privates and corporals. So, without the prestige of long years in positions of leadership, it is only natural that the Barisan Sosialis should face these problems of challenge to the Party leadership.

And if it were just a question of the Party leaders being in constant conflict with their ground because they have failed to bring about confidence in the wisdom and success of their policies, it would not be so much for us.

But I make it my duty, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to read these dreary tracts because behind it all, whether we like it or not, there are people in higher authority than the apparent leaders of the Barisan Sosialis. There is a

consistency of line of policy which dovetails with broadcasts of policy statements made by the Malayan National Liberation League recently formed in Jakarta, consisting of a number of quite well-known Malaysians closely associated with the Malayan Communist party in pre-Emergency days and who disappeared during the days of the Emergency. And they have formed themselves into a group before the recent coup in Jakarta on 30th September. And if one were to compare what comes out in the PLEBEIAN and the SHEH CHEN PAO with the words and phrases which have come out from the M.N.L.L. in Jakarta and from other radio stations which broadcasts the policy statements of the Malayan People's Liberation Army, one finds a consistent pattern.

The only problem that has arisen for them in this case, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is the unexpected separation of Singapore from Malayasia which entailed a serious reassessment of the policies which they were about to initiate in order to succeed in armed conflict. Had there been no separation, then the policies which they were espousing just before separation, if continued to its logical conclusion, were designed for, and would inevitably have led to, a situation in which armed revolution was not only feasible but was most probable, and success was not altogether that remote. Unable to win by the open argument, it was their intention to seek discard principally by changing their policy on language and, via racial conflict over language issues, to create a situation in which the use of

armed force with the Malayan Communist Party as the instrument and the holder of that armed force shall emerge triumphantly.

In 1955, at Baling when they last pronounced their programmes and policies, the M.C.P. accepted Malay as the national language. Recently we had information -- which was corroborated by the statements made by the M.N.L.L. - - that certain members of the united communist open-front organisations who journeyed to Algiers and other conferences had received instructions that they should withdraw support for any language as the national language and that they should insist on the other hand that there should be four official languages.

The distinction between their policy and ours, Mr.Speaker, Sir, is a very subtle one but a very important one: that there shall be no national language -- there is no need for a national common language -- and that there shall be four official languages. And if on the one hand the Language Action Committee who represent the ultras in the linguistic field espouse one language to the exclusion of all others, here was the M.C.P. fanning the desire, a very natural desire of everybody to preserve their own linguistic and cultural heritage -- a situation which must have led to conflict. And in that situation, of course, both the Parliament in Kuala Lumpur and the Assembly in Singapore were valueless. And

the policies and the statements they have made would have made very good sense if in fact separation never came about.

I am not sure, M. Speaker, Sir, how long it will be before the Communist Party comes out with its new policy, new tactics in view of the different circumstances they are faced with as a result of Singapore's emergence as a separate, distinct and independent nation. Undoubtedly, they will pursue the same clichés for some length of time, but I would not be surprised if in the end their top leaders did not make the necessary adjustments which are inevitable to meet this new situation. But for our part, whatever their policies may be in the Peninsula, what they call Kalimantan Utara, I think we have given them all fair notice that any exploitation of issues of language or culture, any divisive policies designed to create racial discord and conflict will have to be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

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I would like, by way of illustration, to just refer to the kind of difficulties which I anticipate will occur from time to time, the kind of mischief which they are bound to peddle. This was the PLEBEIAN of the 16th of October, heading on page 8:

“Demand to make Chinese an official language is correct
and just !

If in putting forward a just demand someone has said that Singapore has 80 percent Chinese instead of 75 percent, is this such a monumental error? If so, then this is also an error which the PAP Ministers themselves have frequently committed in the past. So why the fuss about the 5 percent error?"

This is in the English text, Mr. Speaker, Sir. In the Chinese text, it has got subtle overtones of chauvinism which I think the translator will find difficulty in bringing out. But this was the same publication which joined the Communists in denouncing our analysis that in Malaysia -- with Singapore a part of Malaysia -- it is not possible for any one racial group to dominate the others to the exclusion of their languages and cultures. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Barisan Sosialis joined in the condemnation of the analysis 40:40:20 as a communal provocation because it was designed to arouse chauvinistic feelings in the various component parts. 40:40:20 is communal; but exaggerating 75 to 80 is not a monumental error!

I would like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the course of this session until such time as they either decide to re-appear in this Chamber or, if they do not, then until such time as elections are held either generally or to fill up the vacant seats caused by continual absence of Members who are at full liberty to represent the views of their constituents in this House, that you would give considerable latitude to Members on this side.

My colleagues and I will try as scrupulously as we can to put forward all the pros and cons of every legislation and every policy in the hope thereby, of discharging the duties of the Opposition. But more so, I hope you will allow considerable latitude amongst the back-benchers on the Government side to take up more of their time to playing the role of the constructive critic. It is part of the technique of the open society that the wisdom of certain policies, of certain programmes is tested in the open argument.

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It is difficult for us to propound the kind of criticism which the Barisan Sosialis, if they were here would propound, because I do not think they would want to go into the merits or demerits of the legislative programme we have placed before this House. But, nevertheless, I think there are certain valuable points which can be brought out by Members of the Government side if they were given considerable latitude in appearing, so to say, to speak against the

Government. Not that they are against the Government, but that they are thereby in a position to bring out the underlying problems which have led to certain policies being decided the way they have been.

Mr. Speaker, meanwhile, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Five-Year Programme that we have outlined in the Address of His Excellency the Yang di-Pertuan Negara. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, Sir, His Excellency mentioned the land reclamation projects which are going on: 620 acres in Toa Payoh, excess land from which is being used to reclaim 400 acres in the Kallang Basin --

Mr. Speaker:

Order. The Prime Minister is running into difficulties with Standing Order No.43, sub-paragraph (8). But possibly in view of the exceptional circumstances, is it the general wish of Members that the Prime Minister continues his speech without being affected by that particular Standing Order? Is that the general consent of the House?

Hon. Members indicated assent.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister:

Next, the reclamation of land from Bedok to Tanjong Rhu of about 1,000 acres, giving in turn another 600 acres of available land from sites where excavations are now being made for the filling. Then, the Housing and Development Board plans for 60,000 units in the next five years. I do not think there is much doubt that these targets will be achieved.

But I would like, if I may, in the next twenty minutes before I close the argument for the long-term objective which have been set out in the policy statement, to explain first the interim measures which we have had to take to stabilise and limit our liability; and second, our long-term attitude on the future of Singapore and of the people that we consider one with Singapore, the people in Malaysia.

In the short-term, Mr. Speaker, we have had to introduce certain new measures in order that we can take stock of what our liabilities are -- our immediate liability to give jobs to our own people, our own citizens, provide schools for their children, hospitals and social and community services, housing and so on. To this end, identity cards and work permits will be implemented.

The problem becomes particularly acute, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because it has been said since the 9th of August this year, the flow of migrants, the flow of people across the causeway, has ended up with considerable credits on our side. The rate of inflow into Singapore has increased to twice the normal rate prevailing before the 9th of August, and whilst I have not got the complete figures for November and December, the rough gross turn-over of people crossing the Causeway on both sides since the 9th of August shows an increase or a credit or plus on the Singapore side of about nearly 50,000.

It is true that quite a number of these people may have come to Singapore in order to take ships to go abroad or aircraft. But I do not think it is feasible to explain this away on the basis that more than perhaps 5,000 could have travelled in this way. Assuming that 10,000 went abroad by ships and aircraft, we would still be left with a net credit of about 40,000 people.

Sir, I would like to emphasise this point, that our policy is not designed to exclude Malaysians.

It is designed to limit our liabilities so that we know what it is we have to cater for. For only by making our problems unite will be able to know what it is that we must do in order to ensure the economic viability of Singapore. And only

then will we be able to define the problem and the solutions to these problems which we hope will come by way of new markets being made available to us.

I would like to emphasise that so far as we are concerned, we are one people in two countries. All that separation has done is to divide the one society into two not altogether dissimilar parts. But whereas before we would have sought one solution for the whole, now there are two experiments being carried out in these two halves. And the policies, experiments on how to find a solution to the problems of multi-racialism, multi-lingualism and a multiplicity of religion -- the policies pursued in any one is bound to have a repercussion on the attitudes and assessments on the other side. And the side which produces a successful solution is the side whose views will ultimately prevail.

I have said that this is one people now divided into two arenas. But in the last resort they are one people, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and work permits and everything else notwithstanding, in extremis, in an emergency, it would be inhuman to believe -- and unrealistic on our part to believe -- that we can maintain a separate and a disinterested posture if major catastrophe were to take place in South-East Asia.

And this brings me to my last theme: the danger of a major catastrophe which we can precipitate if we are not conscious of the problems of finding a

new balance in South-East Asia to take the place of a balance which was maintained by the European Empires before the war.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the multi-racial character of the population of Singapore and the states of Malaysia creates the probabilities of two different trends. As long as British rule put everybody in place, multi-racialism or the problems of having a multiplicity of communities of different races, languages, religions, never gave rise to any problems of law and order. The British Raj decided who should do what and who fulfilled what roles in their system. The disappearance of direct political control has brought about the necessity of finding an authority indigenous to the peoples who now reside in these territories and a compromise was found in certain forms of elected representation weighted to hold the balance between people who were supposed to have been longer here, indigenous and those who were supposed to be more recent immigrants.

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As long as we were one Singapore and Malaysia, the danger of multi-racial communities going their separate ways was less than they are now. If we are not conscious of this and we each play only to our won immediate electorate, then having two halves of one whole -- and not a very equal halves of one whole ... one in which the accent is inevitably that in Singapore, in numbers, that the migrant community or people of migrant stock and on the other in Malaya

peoples of indigenous stock, a polarisation of policies and attitudes would take place which, in the end, may well bring major calamity for all in South-East Asia, with repercussions throughout the whole of Asia.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the problem is popularly presented to the Western world as the problem of a "Third China", which is the title of a fairly readable dissertation by a scholar in the Australian National University. And, in historical terms he puts it in this way -- this is a recent publication called "Third China" by C.P. Fitzgerald, Professor of Far Eastern History in the Institute of Advanced Studies in the Australian National University.

He said -- talking about the Second World War and its aftermath:-

In the latter part of the war (page 50) the Japanese decided that for both military and political reasons, it would be desirable to grant a measure of self-government to the peoples of the occupied countries of South-East Asia. They did not see any reason to respect the arbitrary boundaries which the play of European political parties had imposed upon South-East Asia. They perhaps remembered that in the middle ages before the rise of the colonial powers or the intrusion of the Europeans, there had been a powerful state comprising both Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula,

Sri Vijaya. They proposed to revive this State under the name of Maha Malaya -- Greater Malaya.

General Terauchi, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Army in South-East Asia, summoned various Malay and Indonesian, Sumatran leaders to his headquarters in Saigon for consultations. On other occasions he flew to Ipoh in Malaya and held similar meetings there. These were attended by amongst others Hatta, the Indonesian nationalist leader in Sumatra, and Dato Onn bin Jaffar. There is nothing in the record to show that the Japanese proposals were unwelcome to these leaders and the project began to take shape. The end of the war made it abortive. Maha Malaya was never proclaimed.

This wartime incident revealed the fact that among the Malay leadership, there had already arisen a new nationalism which looked for a political order should the British and the Dutch never return, which would secure Malay majority rule. This was agreeable to the Japanese who knew well that they would never obtain the allegiance or loyalty of the Chinese community. Singapore under this plan was to remain a Japanese naval base and colony excluded from Maha Malaya.

It will thus be seen that the separation of Singapore from Malaya devised by the British project of the Malayan Union agreed with the abortive Japanese plan of Maha Malaya, a fact which certainly did not escape the notice of the Chinese. On the other hand, the Malayan Union offered the Malays a great deal less than Maha Malaya would have given them, for under that plan they would have been a large majority in the new State with Sumatra added to Malaya, and Sumatra is the ancestral home of a great part of the present Malay population of Malaya.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to quote another extract from Professor Fitzgerald's short treatise:

"Singapore has always resented and deplored the policy, first conceived by the Japanese and later implemented by the British, by which the city on its relatively small island was separated from the rest of the Malay Peninsula and treated as a different community with lesser political rights. This separation was the one feature of the abortive Malayan Union which survived the demise of that ill-fated scheme. It was also the one feature of the Malayan Union which the Chinese thoroughly detested.

The British could not deny their responsibility for this development, but the reasons why they had originally separated Singapore were still present. Singapore added to the Federation would give the Chinese community a clear majority of the population, and thus ultimately, of the voters."

That was pages 88 and 89. And on page 101:

"Internal changes in the political representation of the States giving more equitable distribution of seats would do something to effect such a change of attitude, but it may well be that more than this would be required before the allegiance of the younger generation of Chinese is won. They will require some positive evidence that Malaysia is to be a progressive and increasingly democratic community; not continue as an aristocratic society dominated by the Malay feudal families. If these changes do not materialise, the opposition of the Chinese will continue and probably be intensified, ultimately veering more and more towards the support of the communist movement."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I quote these extracts to show there are dangers to which we are inevitably going to slide into if we begin to think in terms of race and

racial hegemony. And hence, the recurring theme of multi-racialism, of tolerance, of understanding and sympathy, and forbearance of other people's habits, customs, susceptibilities.

If, on the Singapore half, account is taken only of the Singapore sector of this one people, then the solution that will be derived out of that one sector will be very different from the solution which will be derived if we took into account the whole. And the very different solution attempted here, based on the demographic features of Singapore, will in turn act as a spur to contrary measures being taken on the other side. And so it could go until inevitable conflict. Conflict, Mr. Speaker, Sir, not only between two independent and sovereign nations but between two independent and sovereign nations both with plural societies.

We are no longer in a position to decide or in any way to influence the course of political events in Malaysia. That was the price of independence for Singapore. But I think we would be dishonest to ourselves if we did not express a profound interest in the policies and the consequences of such policies upon the relationship between the communities in Malaysia which would, in turn, help to influence attitudes and relationships between communities in Singapore.

I see the future more fraught with danger than before separation -- the long-term future. For, if there is a failure to understand this nexus between us, then it is extremely easy for one to embarrass and to influence attitudes and policies in the other which, as I have said, must end up in the polarisation of two opposing attitudes based on two opposing assumptions of superiority of race, language, and culture, which can only spell disaster for all.

But whilst we have no control over events there, independence has given us a unique opportunity to order our way of life, and I would like to believe that the two years we spent in Malaysia are years which will not be easily forgotten years in which the people of migrant stock here -- who are a majority -- learnt of the terrors and the follies and the bitterness which is generated when one group tries to assert its dominance over the other on the basis of one race, one language, one religion. It is because I am fortified by this that my colleagues and I were determined, as from the moment of separation, that this lesson will never be forgotten. So it is that into the constitution of the Republic of Singapore will be built-in safeguards insofar as the human mind can devise means whereby the conglomeration of numbers, of likeness -- as a result of affinities of race or language or culture -- shall never work to the detriment of those who, by the accident of history, find themselves in minority groups in Singapore. There will be this commission which will hear the views of all the minority communities, and it may well be that the recommendations would be sufficiently wide to

ensure not only the individuals shall not be penalised or discriminated against by reasons of race, language or culture, but also that their views should always be taken into consideration when formulating policies which affect their collective interest. It is more than just an idealistic desire to create a just new world that has motivated us.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have a vested interest in multi-racialism and the secular state for the anti-thesis of multi-racialism and the anti-thesis of secularism holds perils of enormous magnitude not just for the people living here in South-East Asia but dangers of involvement by bigger powers who see in such a conflict fertile ground for exploitation of either the ideological or other power interests.

The future is not ours to see, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but we can safely conclude that there are two possible trends in which events can unfold themselves. One, the emergence in one half -- helping the emergence in the other half -- of a tolerant society not based on the concepts of exclusiveness of race, language, religion which means an ultimate re-association, a political re-association, of the parts which form the one larger federation of which we were a member of until so recently; and the other, a trend towards a bias and emphasis on exclusiveness of race, language, religion, which must have fissiparous effects, divisive effects, on the other.

There is an element of urgency in this; and we are reassured to see an air of more confidence in dealing with problems of language and culture now that we are out of Malaysia. This in turn helps us in our solution of the problems on this side and for us, we can only hope that ultimately our policies will also be able to help our neighbours in reaching similar rational adjustments in their own domestic arrangements.

In the meantime, the business of life and administration has to go on. I do not wish to go into the figures given by my colleague, the Minister for Finance, yesterday, but I would like to add this comment: that however important statistics are in giving weight to an argument or to demonstrate the validity of certain premises, statistics are never able, in themselves, to give a complete picture of what the performance is going to be for they fail in bringing forth one important quality -- the effectiveness of the digits of the units that the statistics comprise.

Sir, we are nearly two million people -- 1.9 million -- in an island 224 square miles with a few adjacent islands. The statistics do not tell the world the factor that really decides performance -- the quality of each individual digit, the intensity of the effort that the digits are capable of and the efficacy of the

framework within which the digits can be marshalled and organised for high performance.

For us, survival has always been hazardous. We sought to make it less so by seeking the larger framework of Malaysia, but it was not to be. We are on our own, not friendless, not helpless, but nevertheless in the centre of an extremely tumultuous arena of conflict. And our survival depends upon our capacity first, to discern where the dangers are for us as a distinct and separate community in South-East Asia; and second, our ability to convince the bigger powers interested in this region that it is in their interests to ensure our separate survival and, in the end whatever happens, to ensure that we have got enough will and capacity to see that no policies, no solutions are attempted which will destroy our right to be ourselves in this corner of South-East Asia.

Whilst we are unable to say, having gone through so many changes in a matter of two years, what will happen in the next two years, I think we can safely predict that in two decades, either there is a tolerant multi-racial society comprising us in this region or this will be an area of constant strife, very much like what the Balkan States were before and after the First World War.

We are here in South-East Asia for better or for worse and we are here to stay, and our policies are designed to ensure that we stay peacefully in South-East Asia in accord and amity with our neighbours but with a right to decide how we order our own lives in our own home. And every action, every policy must be decided by this yardstick. Any policy which endangers can long-term interests as a separate and distinct community in this region must be eschewed; and any act, any programme, and decision which will help to secure a more enduring future for ourselves and our progeny in this region must be pursued whatever the sacrifice.

We have not sought this particular formula of survival, but it is now the basis on which we move forward; and, with independence comes an independence of action in policy and planning which can help establish that enduring basis for ourselves in South-East Asia. It is with confidence -- a confidence born out of the past performance of our people -- that we feel we can overcome problems of economic development, problems of unemployment.

But in the other wider fields of inter-racial harmony, tolerance, there are so many other factors that even though we are independent, we have not got an exclusive prerogative to decide what is to be, that relationship even between our own citizens. For as I have said, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are other factors, factors

outside our dispensation which can affect our own position. But whatever the result will be, I think we would like those who come after us to believe -- and who have grounds for believing -- that we did not leave a stone unturned in seeking a just and enduring future for all the people who made up the society -- those who were here when the British were in control and those who are, willy nilly, now rooted in this corner of South-East Asia and whose destinies are interwoven -- whatever we would have wished it to be.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

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