



Emergency committee for human rights
in Singapore

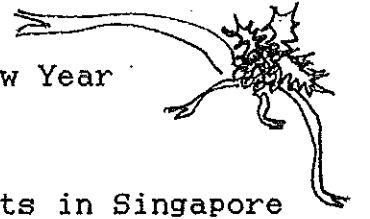
UPDATE NO. 16
SINGAPORE HUMAN RIGHTS ALERT

21 DECEMBER 1987

Season's Greetings for Christmas and the New Year

With thanks for your support and solidarity

From the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore



GOVT GIVES IN TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE. SINGAPORE-MALAYSIA CONSPIRACY THEORY EXPECTED. CHRISTIANS, COMMUNISTS & CASH. SINGAPORE GOVT CHANGES VOTING SYSTEM TO ENTRENCH ITS POWER. ARCHBISHOP CHALLENGED BY SEMI-RELEASED DETAINEES. GOVT DESCENDS TO THE GUTTER AS PREDICTED. PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION CONTINUES. MAIL SPYING QUESTIONED. REGULAR MASSES HELD. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SLAMS GOVT IN DEFINITIVE REPORT. ASIA WATCH (USA) VISITS. PM'S CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE TAKES UP DETENTIONS. US DEPT OF STATE AND CANADA KEEP UP PRESSURE. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CONTINUE TO EXPOSE GOVT'S CREDIBILITY GAP. DIPLOMAT GIVEN LONGER LEASH. BOB HAWKE SINGS FOR HIS SUPPER. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN DOUBT?

GOVT BUCKLES UNDER PRESSURE

Yesterday the Singapore govt "released" 5 more detainees under severe restrictions on their civil rights. They are: Mr CHIA Boon Tai, Ms LIM Li Kok, Mr TAY Hong Seng, Mr Kenneth TSANG Chi Seng, Mr William YAP Hon Ngian. This is a humiliating admission of the weakness of the govt's case against the detainees. In May of this year the govt was stating that it had uncovered an extremely dangerous "Marxist conspiracy". Six months later all except one of those arrested have been released. The credibility of the "threat" is now completely demolished.

Why the release? First, the govt has achieved its objective of closing down all possible avenues of democratic opposition and inducing a higher level of fear in the general population. Using the fabricated "conspiracy" it has cancelled the citizenship of Mr TAN Wah Piow, law student at Oxford, to prevent his return to Singapore as a popular focus for parliamentary opposition. It has also cancelled the citizenship of Mr Paul LIM, doctoral student in Louvain, Belgium. These "achievements" will enable it to proceed with unpopular measures to undermine what is left of

parliamentary democracy and to ensure an unchallenged transfer of power from the Prime Minister to his son.

Second, the international political cost of continuing to hold well-known political detainees under draconian legislation has become too high. Many of Singapore's foreign embassies have spent the last 6 months fending off strong condemnations of the detentions and Singapore has become known very widely as a repressive state. The international campaign for the release of the detainees has therefore been very successful in raising the political cost of repressive acts by the Singapore govt.

THE TASK CONTINUES

Still held in detention without trial under a two-year renewable detention order is Mr Vincent CHENG, Executive Secretary, Catholic Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission, and alleged local "ringleader" of the "conspiracy". Clearly the only thing keeping Vincent in prison is that his release must be later than the others since he is alleged to have been the central figure in Singapore. To release him now would be openly to admit the detentions were for cynical party-political ends.

The international task now focuses on:

1. The release of Mr Vincent CHENG.
2. The release of Mr CHIA Thye Poh, university lecturer and opposition MP, who is now entering his 22nd year of detention without trial in Singapore.
3. The repeal of all repressive legislation especially the Internal Security Act.

ANOTHER "CONSPIRACY FOR DEMOCRACY"?

The 60 day period for the Malaysian detainees will be up just after Christmas. At this time the Malaysian Govt must either serve a detention order under the Internal Security Act (and thus continue to hold them without trial) or release them. The Malaysian Govt has already indicated that a White Paper on the detentions will be published in the New Year once it has extracted "evidence" from the more than 100 people detained (a few of whom have already been released).

It is expected that another conspiracy theory will be concocted by means of torture and forced confessions. The conspiracy theory may also connect the Malaysian and Singaporean detentions. Since the arrests in Singapore there have been many instances of collaboration between the two govts. For example:

- Malaysian secret police tried to intimidate Malaysian citizens who were publicly objecting to the Singapore detentions and who were organising solidarity actions.

- two of the detainees in Singapore were Malaysian citizens but the Malaysian Govt has not actively pursued their cases (one is still in prison).
- the two prime ministers are known to have discussed their respective use of the Internal Security Act against democratic dissent during and/or after the Commonwealth Heads of Govt Meeting in Vancouver.
- two of the Malaysian detainees were actually arrested in Singapore and handed across the border.
- Ms CHEE Heng Leng (detained by the Malaysian Govt) has not been active in Malaysian political life for the last two years as she was working on her PhD thesis. Although still a member of the Institute for Social Analysis (INSAN) and women's organisations, she had not been active for some time and was on leave. It is not credible that her INSAN connection is the reason for her arrest. It is probable that she was arrested because she was coordinator of the Malaysian solidarity group for the Singapore detainees and, in this role, facilitated the visit to Singapore of the International Mission of Jurists in July. All the correspondence and accounts for this Mission were confiscated from her Kuala Lumpur home by the secret police at the time of her arrest. Her arrest is at least partly in collaboration with the Singapore Govt.
- on October 31, as the Malaysian mass arrests were continuing, the Singapore Govt's Ministry of Home Affairs issued Prohibition of Entry Orders against four prominent Malaysian leaders which will prevent them from entering Singapore. The four were all of Indian race: Mr Param Cumaraswamy, President of the Malaysian Bar Council; Dr K S Jomo, Prof of Economics and Director of INSAN (now on sabbatical leave at Cambridge University, UK); Dr Chandra Muzaffar, President of Aliran, a social reform organisation and an outspoken critic of racial politics and corruption, (arrested the previous Tuesday in Penang and held without trial); Mr Gurmit Singh, President of the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia and the Selangor Graduates Society.

The reason for their banning was because they had "interfered in the internal affairs of Singapore" and "they mounted agitation over the Singapore Govt's arrests of Marxist conspirators in May and June". Such laudatory acts may be worthy of banning in the eyes of a govt suffering from a credibility gap with its own professionals and academics with whom the four banned persons have close and warm relationships (e.g. National University of Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore Law Society). But, as usual, the govt is not telling the whole truth and there is a deal of some sort with the Malaysian Govt.

Mr Cumaraswamy as head of the Bar Council and host to the Lawasia conference in KL did object to the detention of lawyers in

neighbouring Singapore as an act of concern in solidarity with the Singapore Law Society. Dr Chandra Muzaffar (who was in New Zealand at the time of the Singapore detentions on May 21) also expressed public condemnation of the detentions in his role as president of a civil rights organisation and as a Commissioner of the Hongkong-based Asian Human Rights Commission. However, neither Dr Jomo nor Mr Singh played a very prominent role. It is likely that Dr Jomo was targeted because his absence from the country meant the Malaysian Govt could not arrest him for his leadership of INSAN and his strong opposition to the Israeli President's visit to Singapore last year severely embarrassed the Singapore Govt. He had to be fingered by any means, fair or foul.

CHRISTIANS, COMMUNISTS AND CASH

The Malaysian conspiracy theory may include the accusation of foreign interference and that those arrested were pawns of or collaborators with foreign organisations. To "prove" this, references might be made to international Christian organisations or to human rights and development bodies which have assisted Malaysian groups in terms of funding or have worked with them in various ways. The confiscation from the homes of several Malaysian detainees (Ms Chee, Dr Nasir, Dr Chandra ...) of publications by the Youth Dept of the Christian Conference of Asia along with books on political theory and theology from others, may be built into some kind of perverse allegation of a plot. A list of the main international Christian connections of the detainees and related persons is appended for further reference should a conspiracy theory be floated by the Malaysian Govt and should any attempt be made to connect it with the Singapore detentions.

The links that many academics, religious and civil rights leaders have with their counterparts in the Philippines may be used to create the impression of communism penetrating Malaysia and Singapore from there.

CHANGING THE RULES IN MID-GAME

On 30 November the Singapore Govt tabled two bills which will entrench its power (ie the power of the People's Action Party) by changing the one-person, one-vote system. In 1980 the PAP took 75.55% of the votes cast. In 1984 it slipped to 62% and two opposition MPs got into a house of 79 MPs. (One of them, Mr J B Jeyaretnam, has since been expelled.)

Clearly the govt has been worried that, with its slipping popularity worsened by the recent detentions, its share of the popular vote will decline further and significantly more opposition members will get in at the general elections in 1988 or 89. Fearing this, it is changing the rules.

Under this legislation up to 39 of the 79 constituencies will be grouped into units of three constituencies called Group Representation Constituencies. Electors in these "super" constituencies would cast one vote for an entire slate of three candidates. The slate receiving the largest total would win all three seats. Thus, Anson constituency (formerly represented by Jeyaretnam and now vacant) which is now so anti-PAP that it would elect any opposition candidate, could be grouped with two strongly pro-PAP constituencies ensuring that the PAP also wins Anson. Thus the PAP can surround and absorb opposition strongholds. It will also use boundary changes, media control and secret police methods to shorten the odds further.

GUARANTEE FOR MINORITY REPRESENTATION

Cynically, the Govt is claiming that the GRCs or super-constituencies are to guarantee minority representation in Parliament for Malays, Indians and others. Overall the slates some slots will be reserved for minority races according to their proportion of the population. However, most observers discount this as sales talk which does not bear examination. In the last election in 1984, all the PAP's minority race candidates won. The only two candidates who were defeated were Chinese and one of these was defeated by a minority race candidate, namely Jeyaretnam himself.

To ensure that the plan does not bite back at them, the PAP is setting up committees to vet minority candidates to ensure they are "genuine representatives of their racial community". With professional bodies, religious groups and community organisations all cowed by the recent detentions, the govt, as predicted, is bringing in a raft of unpopular and undemocratic measures to ensure its predominance in the leadership transition process as Mr Lee Kuan Yew ascends to the presidency and his son takes effective control of routine government.

ARCHBISHOP ASKED TO GIVE HIS EVIDENCE

Semi-released (they are only conditionally released) detainee lawyers Ms TEO Soh Lung and Ms TANG Fong Har wrote to Catholic Archbishop Gregory YONG on 13 & 23 November respectively challenging him to give them the evidence he has that they "used the church for their purposes". Both lawyers expressed shock and disappointment that the Archbishop naively accepted the Govt's version of events. They outlined their voluntary work with Catholic organisations. Then Ms TEO wrote, "I am not a Catholic but I was interested in working with the poor. I was then a firm believer of the Catholic teaching that one should do good deeds and not just speak about such deeds...At that time, it did not occur to me that I would one day be accused by you of making use of your Church."

Both lawyers outlined how they were invited to assist at the Geylang Catholic Centre and did so in a purely professional

capacity without being involved in its daily administration. They pointed out how it took a good deal of their time which they were happy to give free. "In rendering free legal aid, I did not expect any reward from your Church," said Ms TEO. "Neither did I make use of your Church to further any cause, be it Marxist, Capitalist or Socialist. I helped because there was a human being in need of help. I did not care if that person was Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim... You may want to know that during my detention, ISD officers could not understand why I, a non-Catholic, should render free services to your Church. They felt that I should have billed you as your Church is rich. You have accused me of making use of your Church. From the foregoing, I too can accuse your Church for making use of me but I am not so naive. It is my hope that you will one day realise that your words have hurt me deeply because you did not search for the truth before you made your statement... I should be pleased to know the evidence you have against me."

In similar detail, Ms TANG outlined her work for the Catholic Church and concluded, "I do not ask you to heap laurels on my work. But for you to make wild accusations of me making use of your Church is a gross injustice done to me. Please let me know the basis of your accusation, if you have any. I only request you to search for the truth this time. It is not too late."

Archbishop Soter Fernandes of Kuala Lumpur and other Malaysian bishops spoke out strongly against the recent ISA arrests there and ordered a pastoral letter to be read from every pulpit deeming the Internal Security Act "immoral". By comparison, Singapore Archbishop Gregory YONG's flawed spiritual leadership has been highlighted.

NOT AWARE

In a letter on 19 November to the president of Singapore women's organisation, AWARE, Ms TANG wrote, "I felt outraged at your society's complete and absolute paralysis in respect of the detentions of [AWARE members] Lim Li Kok, Chng Suan Tze, Wong Souk Yee, Low Yit Leng and myself... If you had the courage to request for our release or for us to be charged in court, I would salute you. If you had the compassion to request that we be treated in a humane manner, I would appreciate your concern as caring women. You have more than amply demonstrated that you have neither the courage nor the compassion. I dissociate myself from this society forthwith."

DESCENT TO THE GUTTER

The long-awaited govt attack on Fr Edgar D'Souza (former editor of CATHOLIC NEWS in Singapore) has finally come. He was one of the four priests dismissed from their positions by Archbishop Yong when he capitulated to the Prime Minister. It was known when Fr Edgar left Singapore for a holiday in Australia that the govt wanted to smear him with accusations about his personal life

in order to discredit him politically. The govt put pressure on Archbishop Yong to order him back to Singapore from Australia where his family is living. When Fr D'Souza acquired permanent residence status in Australia, the govt realised he would take his time returning. It decided it had better run its story without being able to display him physically in Singapore or a good piece of gutter surveillance would go stale.

Thus, beginning with an allusion in the govt-run STRAITS TIMES on October 16 to "a woman lawyer from Singapore to whom he is said to be very close", the govt orchestrated a smear campaign against Fr D'Souza which culminated this week in his resignation as a priest.

The govt set up a parliamentary question for answer by the Home Affairs Minister whose reply in the House on November 30 revealed that Fr D'Souza had been under intensive surveillance for at least 3 years with his hourly movements watched (the dates and times he entered and left the woman lawyer's house were enumerated in parliament) and church mail being routinely opened by the secret police. The reason for this dirty politics: the govt is angry, the minister indicated, at the priest for "mounting a campaign to stir up local and international opposition against the detentions". The Minister concluded ominously that the secret police might still want to interview Fr D'Souza to see whether he was a "cat's paw or an agent" for a radical group abroad.

On 8 December the STRAITS TIMES reported Archbishop Yong as saying that Fr D'Souza acted in a private capacity when he discussed the so-called Marxist conspiracy and the Internal Security Act with groups in Australia and New Zealand. He said Fr D'Souza was exercising his right of freedom of speech. "How the Govt responds is the concern of the Govt," he said. He also stated he would not publicly discuss the question of the priest's relationship with the woman lawyer saying, "Jesus Christ came to save people, not condemn them... The Church does not condemn anyone simply on allegations and accusations... [or] without giving the accused a chance to defend himself." Neither is it "the practice of the Church to wash dirty linen in public... The Church will not be party to any action of the news media that may destroy a person's character or reputation."

It is a great pity that the Archbishop did not apply these same principles when the first detentions of lay people took place in May and now appears to reserve them for a fellow professional whose supposed transgressions are a complete red herring.

Fr D'Souza has released statements rejecting the govt's attempt to undermine his ministry by personal smears together with documents which detail the discussions the Archbishop had with his clergy, the secret police and the Prime Minister in the days immediately following the detentions. They confirm that the Archbishop was pushed hard by the Govt to deny his pastoral

responsibility for the detainees and buckled under to the standover tactics of the Prime Minister who, in the same meeting with the Archbishop, admitted that he regarded the detainees as small fry and probably not Marxists.

MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION

Detainee Mr Vincent Cheng is reported to be still unsure as to what legal avenues he can take, if any. The secret police continue to convince him of the hopelessness of taking any legal steps to obtain either a fair hearing or release. Ms LIM Li-Kok, before her release yesterday, was said to be living with the family of a secret police officer within the prison compound but this psychological manipulation has yet to be fully verified. To keep detainees and their families from taking legal action, planted rumours continued until yesterday to leak from the prison concerning the possible release of more detainees. The semi-released detainees have had difficulty in finding jobs and some continue to see their secret police case officers. All remain under surveillance and little attempt is made to disguise it. Whenever they meet together agents loiter nearby. Ms TANG Fong Har has written to the secret police to complain about her mail from the Law Society being opened.

MEETING IN CHURCH

Some semi-released detainees, mainly Catholics, meet regularly after Sunday mass. A special mass is scheduled on 23 December.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RELEASES FULL REPORT

On 26 October, Amnesty International released the report of its fact-finding mission which visited Singapore June 14-22, 1987. AI regards all the detainees as "prisoners of conscience detained for their legitimate, non-violent activities in church, community, arts, workers' and students' groups and in the opposition Workers' Party".

AI found "no information to substantiate the government's allegations" of a Marxist conspiracy. The report describes how "confessions" were extracted from the detainees "during prolonged solitary confinement, under threat of indefinite detention without trial and after continuous interrogation under conditions of aggravated mental and physical stress amounting to severely cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment". AI called for the release of detainees (including Chia Thye Poh who now enters his 22nd year of detention) and for the lifting of restrictions on all those let out of prison. (On 4 November, the BANGKOK POST headlined its article on the AI Report, "S'PORE BLASTED FOR MISTREATING 22 DETAINEES".)

ASIA WATCH VISITS SINGAPORE

Investigators from the Washington-based human rights organisation, ASIA WATCH, have recently been in Singapore to conduct their investigation of the situation. A very influential organisation in US political life, the report of this team will be of considerable concern to the Singapore Govt. After initialling agreeing to meet with the delegation, the Govt then declined citing a critical letter from the chairperson of Asia Watch, Jack Greenberg, in the 26 November issue of the Far Eastern Economic Review. Rebutting propaganda spread by the Singapore Embassy in the US that the Singapore Govt can do what it likes because the people keep voting for it, Mr Greenberg stated, "To suggest that abuses are justified because they are accepted or even endorsed by a majority of citizens is a striking departure from the most basic principles of justice. The world community has long recognised that certain fundamental freedoms cannot be denied, the "popularity" of a government not withstanding".

PM'S OLD COLLEGE WAGS ITS FINGER

Members of Amnesty International at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, UK, are exploring the possibility of its student body adopting Singaporean political detainee Chia Thye Poh as an honorary member. Fitzwilliam was the College where PM Lee Kuan Yew read Law as an undergraduate. The student body passed a motion requesting students to telephone the Singapore High Commission in London to remind them of the 21st anniversary of his detention.

On October 9, the President of the Cambridge University Students Union (Sian Griffiths) sent a letter to Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong MP (son of the PM), to express CUSU's "serious concern" at Chia's continued detention without trial and the "infringement of natural justice". Amnesty Int'l regards Chia as a prisoner of conscience who, as an opposition MP and university lecturer, never advocated violence. He is one of the longest-serving political prisoners in the world. The CUSU letter also demanded the release of the 6 detainees still being held from the sweeps in May and June of this year.

US DEPT OF STATE REAFFIRMS POSITION

In an October 20th letter to US Congress member Matthew McHugh, State Dept Asst Secretary Richard Schifter wrote: "We firmly oppose the arrest and imprisonment of people simply for expressing their political opinions and the corollary practice of detaining persons for long periods without trial. The subject of Singapore's Internal Security Act detentions was raised with the Singapore government by Secretary Schultz during his June, 1987, visit there and again during his September meeting with Singapore Foreign Minister Dhanabalan in September in Washington. The State Department and U.S. Embassy in Singapore continue to remind

the government of Singapore of our deep concern about these cases, and we are following them closely."

CANADIAN ACTION

Amnesty International-Canada reported on 22 October that External Affairs Minister Joe Clark "had raised the cases of Vincent Cheng, William Yap and Chia Thye Poh in a recent bilateral meeting with Singaporean government representatives." Mr Clark also raised the matter with Singapore's Foreign Minister in early June.

Canadian groups of AI have adopted these 3 prisoners of conscience: Vincent Cheng (Group 121 Estevan, Saskatchewan), William Yap (Group 131 Sault Ste Marie, Ontario) and Chia Thye Poh (Group 19, Winnipeg). The other Singapore detainees have been adopted by AI groups in other countries.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Surprisingly, the international media continues to give a lot of space to the Singapore detentions. A long-running vigorous correspondence in the Far Eastern Economic Review includes regular exposures of the untenability of the Singapore govt positions followed by wooden replies from govt public relations officers.

In Australia, the November issue of NATIONAL OUTLOOK carries an in-depth article by Singapore specialist and Anglican priest Jim Minchin who published the popular book on Singapore "No Man is an Island" earlier this year. The article "The Singapore detentions: defending SE Asia's Israel?" In graphic detail, Minchin relates the detentions and their background. Noting that with the Chinese-educated or Malay detainees of the past "there was no remedy like straight-out torture", the newly detained English-educated women and Catholics "however pliable initially, may go on to acquire surprising sticking points. A leader as free as Lee Kuan Yew is of personal bonds or religious loyalties must revel in the chance to observe the spiritual character of his emerging citizenry under laboratory conditions...Somewhat chillingly, it is becoming clear that Lee wants to know what makes these detainees tick."

The Australian SUN HERALD on 15 November ran an article by Bill Mellor entitled "The World of Annie Tang" detailing the detention of Ms TANG Fong Har and relating it to the large number of Singaporeans who are now leaving the country because "they want a better quality of life for their children in a less paternalistic, more tolerant society".

On 18 October the UK SUNDAY OBSERVER carried a report by Steve Vines on the strong-arm tactics used on political prisoners in Singapore, discounting the govt's disclaimers.

Canada's prestigious national daily, THE GLOBE AND MAIL, editorialised against the Singapore detentions on October 14 (see Update 15). On October 24 a letter from the Singapore High Commissioner was printed repeating already discredited govt positions and allegations that Chia Thye Poh, arrested in 1966, was a member of the Communist Party of Malaya and had advocated armed struggle. Both of these allegations are completely untrue and have been shown to be so over the past 20 years to everyone's satisfaction except the Singapore govt's. Alongside this letter was another from Margaret John of Amnesty International, Ottawa, stating that Mr Chia and the recent detainees are "detained not for any criminal offence, but because of the non-violent expression of their opinions." She also rebutted the allegations about Mr Chia, expressed her agreement with the editorial and stated that AI's "call for the immediate, unconditional release of Singapore's prisoners of conscience deserves Canadian support".

DIPLOMAT BILAHARI KAUSIKAN GIVEN LONGER LEASH

First Secretary at Singapore's Washington Embassy, Bilahari Kausikan, has been given a bit more rope by his superiors. In the ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKLY (AWSJW) of August 17, Linda Lim, a Singaporean economist teaching at the University of Michigan, wrote an extensive article "Singapore's Heavy-Handed Detentions" which Update reported previously. On September 7, Kausikan replied with an article "Must Marxists Be Miserable?", a shallow polemical piece which is a mixture of abuse and intellectual dishonesty. (He may be used as a journalistic successor to the cantankerous senior minister Rajaratnam who has a similar scatter-gun disregard for the truth.)

On 26 October Prof Linda Lim replied to this article in the following vein: "Bilahari Kausikan asserts that the Singapore political detainees' activities were directed by the Communist Party of Malaya. But no such connection has been proved or even alleged by the Singapore government, let alone confessed to by the detainees themselves." She rebutted Mr Kausikan's assertions point by point. She has since received a warning to desist. But the Singapore govt ought to be more worried by the loose cannon it has in its Washington Embassy.

A WINED-AND-DINED BOB HAWKE EQUIVOCATES

Interviewed along with PM Lee Kuan Yew on 28 November in Singapore, Australian PM Bob Hawke equivocated when questioned on the Internal Security Act. As reported in the next day's STRAITS TIMES, the interview went as follows when Mr Hawke was asked whether he approved of laws such as the ISA:

"Mr Hawke: It's somewhat presumptuous of us simply to say from our experience, well, we haven't got those instruments, they haven't been necessary. Therefore, you are unequivocally wrong to use them. As far as we're concerned, where there is the use

of those instruments - we don't like them from our point of view, from our experience. And we say so. But that doesn't mean that we don't understand that in Singapore and in Malaysia, given the threat they have had to their survival and continue to have, they are going to approach the handling of the problem in the way they find necessary."

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew then said, smiling: I don't want to be defended by you Bob. I can look after myself."

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN DOUBT?

Dr Raj Vasil, head of the Politics Dept of the Victoria University of Wellington, has just published a book "Governing Singapore: Interviews with the New Leaders" in which he discusses Singapore politics entirely within the acceptable limits of the ruling party's policies. He agrees with the Deputy Prime Minister that the two party system is divisive and contrasts New Zealand and his native India unfavourably with Singapore for which his admiration appears to be unreserved. He states: "The parliamentary system can easily be a source of serious political instability" and discusses with Singapore's "new leaders" how they might increase stability. This uncritical support for the ruling system in Singapore gained him full page coverage in the STRAITS TIMES of November 17 and 18 and an article on 20 Nov entitled "Singapore's Young Leaders a committed lot, says don". It included the paragraph, "On political freedom, Dr Vasil said there must be limits in this area to preserve racial harmony and political stability in Singapore."

CORRECTION

On p.3 of Update 15 we referred to "letters signed by 39 members of Congress condemning the detentions". The figure should be 55 as previously reported.

OMISSION

In Update 15 we omitted to put the addresses of organisations which have copies of the Report of the International Commission of Jurists available for distribution. If you would like a copy, please write either to us or to:

International Commission of Jurists, P O Box 120, 1224 Chene-Bougeries, Geneva, Switzerland.

Asian Human Rights Commission, 57 Peking Road 4/F, Kowloon, Hongkong.

Asia Watch, 739-8th Street SE, Washington DC 20003, USA.

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EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SINGAPORE
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Emergency committee for human rights
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SPONSORS

The sponsors of the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore (NZ) are:

1. Mr Jim Anderton, M P for Sydenham, Chairperson of Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, past-president of the NZ Labour Party.
2. Mrs Jocelyn Armstrong, General Secretary of National Council of Churches and (from Jan 1988) Coordinating Secretary of the new ecumenical body, the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa; member of the General Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia (Singapore).
3. Ms Katie Boanas, peace educator, NZ Foundation for Peace Studies; member of NZ Government Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control.
4. Professor J Burrows, Law Faculty, University of Canterbury.
5. Very Rev Dr Alan A Brash, former Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (Geneva) and Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of NZ.
6. Ms Jan Cormack, president of Conference of Churches in Aotearoa-New Zealand, past-president of Christian Conference of Asia (Singapore).
7. Father John Curnow, former national coordinator of the Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development.
8. Ms Sonja Davies, M P for Pencarrow and trade unionist.
9. Mr Manuka Henare, Executive Officer, National Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development.
10. Canon Hone Kaa, priest-in-charge, Auckland Anglican Maori Mission; Commission member of the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches (Geneva); formerly member of the Commission for Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Singapore).
11. Mr Michael Knowles, Barrister and Solicitor, Christchurch.

12. Ms Margaret Lovell-Smith, writer.
13. Archdeacon Alan McKenzie, Vicar-General, Anglican Diocese of Christchurch.
14. Sir Guy Powles, former Chief Ombudsman of NZ, Member of the International Commission of Jurists.
15. Rev Barbara Stephens, Director of Christian World Service of the National Council of Churches, former Education Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia (Singapore).
16. Rev David M Taylor, Amnesty International and former General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in NZ.
17. Rt Rev Whakahuihui Vercoe, Anglican Bishop of Aotearoa; member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (Geneva).

The Chairperson of the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore (NZ) is Pat McCarthy. She is active in the Christchurch Catholic Commission for Evangelisation, Justice and Development.



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THE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONNECTION

With the high probability that either the Singapore or Malaysian governments will attempt to include international Christian organisations in their emerging conspiracy theories, we are publishing a list of those with known international Christian connections who have been persecuted by these two govts. We do this because:

- we wish to attest to the character of the persecuted persons by establishing that they associated openly with reputable international organisations in a relationship of mutual support and trust;
- we wish to inform people of conscience around the world who object to the use of the Internal Security Act to silence democratic dissent so that these supporters may be able to respond in an informed manner to any concocted "conspiracy";
- we wish to further publicise these already well-known connections to diminish even further the credibility of any claim that a "conspiracy" of any sort has existed.
- we wish to show that people of other faiths and persuasions have been ecumenically involved and that there can be no question of some kind of "Christian conspiracy" to convert others or to influence political decisions by means of sectarian pressure.

The list is subject to correction and addition.

A. SINGAPORE

1. Mr Vincent CHENG (still detained)
Related to (R/to) Office of Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (Manila), Urban Rural Mission (URM) Desk of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), previously r/to Student Christian Movement (SCM) & World Student Christian Federation (WSCF).
2. Mr CHEW Kheng Chuan (detained & conditionally released)
R/to CCA in professional capacity as managing director of Wordmaker typesetting firm which handled CCA publications in Education, Youth and for the CCA Assembly, Seoul, 1985.

3. Mr TAN Tee Seng (detained & conditionally released)
R/to CCA YOUTH Dept (attended Asia Youth Resource Conference, Japan, 1982 and Philippines, 1983; CCA YOUTH Intern in Philippines 1983, subsequently assisted with CCA publications in professional capacity as staff of Wordmaker typesetting firm.

4. Ms LOW Yit Leng (detained & conditionally released)
R/to CCA YOUTH Dept (attended Asia Youth Resource Conference, Japan, 1982), subsequently assisted with CCA publications in professional capacity as staff of Wordmaker typesetting firm.

B. MALAYSIA

5. Dr CHANDRA Muzaffar (detained in Malaysia, released 18 Dec)
R/to CCA through attendance at interfaith and human rights conferences in his capacity as founder-president of Aliran, a social reform movement, and a commissioner of the Asian Human Rights Commission (Hongkong).

6. Ms CHEE Heng Leng (still detained in Malaysia)
R/to CCA YOUTH through attendance at Asia Youth Resource Conference, Philippines 1983; attendance as resource person at Asia Youth Assembly, Delhi, 1984; through membership of the Institute of Social Analysis (INSAN) which was part of the CCA YOUTH Rural Youth Development Programme (RYP) network; by representing CCA YOUTH at the INFOS Conference in Mindanao, 1985.

7. Dr JOMO K Sundram (banned from entering Singapore)
R/to CCA YOUTH through being speaker at Youth Committee meeting, Singapore, 1981; resource person at Asia Youth Assembly, Delhi, 1984; as Director of INSAN which was part of the CCA YOUTH RYP network.

8. Mr Julian JAYASEELAM (still detained in Malaysia)
R/to to CCA Urban Rural Mission (URM) through his work as a trade union organiser.

9. Mr John Sebil JOSEET (still detained in Malaysia)
R/to CCA-URM and is a social worker organising workers.

10. Ms Theresa LIM Chin Chin (still detained)
R/to CCA through working as coordinator for the Resource, Research and Communications Unit of the Council of Churches of Malaysia which is a member of the CCA. She previously worked for the Office of Human Development (OHD) of the Catholic Archdiocese in Malaysia.

11. Dr NASIR Hashim (still detained)
R/to CCA YOUTH through attending the Asia Youth Resource Conference in Philippines, 1983 and as chairperson of INSAN which was part of the CCA YOUTH RYP network.

12. Dr Cecilia NG (still detained)
R/to CCA YOUTH through her membership of INSAN.

13. Mr Harrison NGAU (still detained)
R/to CCA YOUTH through the RYP network for several years and
attended the RYP workshop in the Philippines, 1980.

14. Brother Anthony ROGERS (still detained)
R/to Office of Human Development of the Catholic Church in
Malaysia as deputy-director of OHD. R/to CCA through attendance
at CCA Development Conference, 1984.

15. Ms Irene Patricia Lourdes XAVIER (still detained)
R/to CCA-URM as a social worker among poor urban Indian
Malaysians.

Released by the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in
Singapore, P O Box 28-100, Christchurch, Aotearoa- New Zealand.
December, 1987.

ANNOUNCEMENT

In response to the detentions in Malaysia, another organisation
has been set up. The new organisation is different from our
organisation but we are happy to pass material and correspondence
on to them.

If you wish to contact them directly and to receive up-to-date
information on the Malaysian human rights situation, their
address is:

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA
P O BOX 8502
RICCARTON
CHRISTCHURCH
NEW ZEALAND

Please give this new group every support in their important task
of informing the public and pressing for the release of the
Malaysian detainees.