



Emergency committee for human rights in Singapore

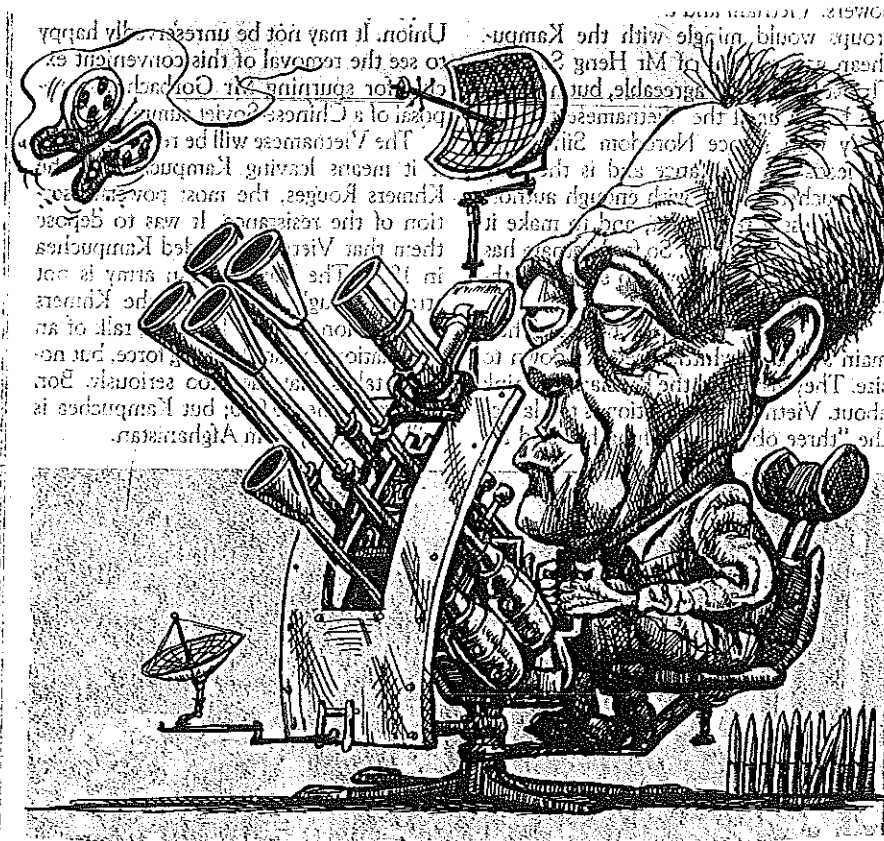
UPDATE 22

10 JUNE 1988

MEDIA SUPPLEMENT

Part A: Selection of major editorials and articles.

Part B: List of media coverage noted by UPDATE.



Cartoon: THE ECONOMIST (UK), 28 May 1988.

* Jim Anderson M.P. * Jocelyn Armstrong * Katie Bozsa * Prof J Barrows * Very Rev Dr Alan Brash * Jan Cormack * Fr John Currow * Sonja Davies M.P. * Manuka Hare * Canon Hone Kaa *
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Asia's Touchy Tiger

New York Times, Editorial 16 May 88

Someone shrewdly described Singapore as a capitalist society run by a Leninist party. That's the People's Action Party, whose unquestioned boss is Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. For 29 years, Mr. Lee has been a largely benevolent autocrat, helping guide Singapore's 2.6 million people to the third-highest living standard in Asia, with an annual per capita income of \$7,000. But more recently, the regime seems to have lost its balance, indulging in ugly police-state repression.

Reportedly, Mr. Lee wants to prepare for the succession of his son, Brig. Gen. Lee Hsien Loong. General Lee is expected to assume power in September when the Prime Minister turns 65. It's possible that Singaporeans, of whom 76 percent are ethnic Chinese, would welcome such a transfer.

But the truth is hard to determine since Mr. Lee doesn't tolerate opposition, stifles the local press and slashes the circulation of insufficiently admiring foreign publications, like Time and The Asian Wall Street Journal.

More sinister is the nasty use of a left-over British Internal Security Act to detain Singaporeans without trial. The Government a year ago detained

22 young men and women, many of them active Roman Catholics, on charges of plotting a Marxist revolution once Mr. Lee stepped down.

Their more likely offense is suggested by a purported "directing figure," Tan Wah Piow: "My primary political concern, especially after coming to Oxford to read law at Balliol, is how best we Singaporeans can strengthen the guarantee of civil liberties which are espoused in the Constitution."

After the 22 dissidents were released, eight of them bravely issued a statement alleging that they had been mistreated. They were rearrested at once. Last week, incredibly, Francis Seow, a former Solicitor General, was also detained when he sought to represent two jailed Singaporeans. And now the Government has forced the removal of a U.S. diplomat, Mason Hendrickson, after he gathered information about the controversy.

Thus Singapore retreats into repression while democracy makes dramatic gains in those other Asian tigers, South Korea and Taiwan. Does Lee Kuan Yew believe that stifling debate and jailing opponents somehow won't be noticed as he tries to maneuver his son into the saddle?

Singapore goes too far

NO government is anxious to have foreign diplomats or journalists interfering in its internal affairs and the complaints of Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, about criticism of his country's record in civil liberties are not very different from those made by many ministers throughout the world.

Mr Goh has struck a familiar note in his warnings to foreigners that, although they are welcomed in Singapore, they face the risk of expulsion or detention without trial if they "meddle" in Singapore's politics.

Warnings of this kind have come quite often from dictatorships and semi-dictatorships at both ends of the political spectrum, although Mr Goh has been rather more threatening than many other disgruntled government spokesmen in such circumstances.

His uncompromising statement has followed the expulsion of the first secretary of the United States Embassy, and protests made in Western democratic nations which have, throughout Singapore's brief history as an independent nation, generally been its closest friends and warmest supporters.

In most of these countries, including Australia, criticisms have long been made about aspects of the Singapore Government's measures to safeguard its internal security. These criticisms have often been made more in sorrow than in anger because, although Singapore has never qualified as one of the most exemplary democracies, it has been a relatively free and open society by the standards

of its region, if not of the world.

Singapore could not be seriously accused of totalitarianism and, although Mr Lee Kuan Yew seems to have shown increasingly authoritarian tendencies since he first won government as a young social democrat, he has held his office because he won elections with the votes of the majority of Singapore's citizens.

It has also been recognised by reasonable foreign observers that Singapore lives in a much more dangerous environment than other democracies such as Australia or Sweden.

It has had to face the prospect of violent racial and religious conflict. It has, at least in its early days, been threatened by Chinese-backed communist subversion and it is surrounded by larger nations with little respect for democratic institutions.

None of this, however, is a sufficient excuse for the repressive measures that its Government has applied to citizens expressing legitimate dissent and taking part in political activities that should be lawful in any country calling itself a democracy.

Singapore has benefited from the economic and political co-operation of the world's democracies. What its Government does inside its own borders is indeed its business. But it should recognise that, if it shows contempt for the values of its traditional friends, it could find the world a very lonely place to live in.

The Australian, Editorial, 25 May 88

Democrats in Singapore

Compliments are due the Singapore government for finally letting his lawyers see Francis Seow, a former solicitor general and potential opposition candidate for Parliament, after only 10 days of incommunicado captivity. We're grateful that Singapore has not yet become the kind of place where former high officials simply disappear, and that the rumors of Mr. Seow's heart attack while under interrogation proved unfounded.

Compliments are due the Singapore government, too, for releasing a "confession" that reflects great credit on its prisoner and little if any credit on itself. Mr. Seow signed a 28-page statutory declaration that describes in detail how he sought views, even from foreigners, on how to enter party politics. Mr. Seow's declaration also notes that he defended free speech, attended a number of legal and human-rights conferences outside Singapore, and collaborated with a former Singapore president, Devan Nair, in writing an article critical of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, which was published May 11 in this newspaper. The details add up to a reasonable and, indeed, routine picture of someone preparing to head an opposition slate in parliamentary elections. In short, Mr. Seow has confessed that he is a democrat.

Mr. Seow also confessed that he looked for a country of possible asylum, should his venture into opposition politics prove overly hazardous. On the evidence, that was prudent. It is now 18 nights since Mr. Seow was arrested under the Internal Security Act—which permits detention without trial—for investigation into the above activities. He is still in captivity. Perhaps he is being offered the opportunity to make further confessions.

But in Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore, Mr. Seow may have confessed already to the unforgivable offense—that he is a person of real stature who has attempted to stand up to Lee Kuan Yew. Mr. Seow is not the first person to find his political career in jeopardy for such an attempt. In recent years we've seen one of the two opposition members of the 79-seat Parliament,

Joshua B. Jeyaretnam, forced to resign after investigation into the finances of his Worker's Party. Now it seems the Singapore government is digging through a vanload of documents, confiscated from Mr. Seow's offices, to discover how Mr. Seow paid his phone bills.

In 1985, former President Devan Nair was forced to resign after Mr. Lee denounced him for alcoholism—a charge Mr. Nair later controverted. In any event, Mr. Nair didn't deserve the treatment he received from Mr. Lee's government. Now we're seeing Mr. Nair denounced again, this time for offering political advice to Mr. Seow. The problem is not simply that Mr. Nair might have worked on the article published May 11 on these pages, something that strikes us as hardly enough to threaten the state security of Singapore. But according to Senior Minister S. Rajaratnam, Mr. Nair also committed such offenses as not advising Mr. Seow to disclose his political plans first to Singaporeans rather than to foreigners.

The fear of "foreign interference" in Singapore's affairs raises an important point. Were there a forum in Singapore where people such as Francis Seow and Devan Nair could present their case, there'd be far less need to look for outlets abroad. Having deterred criticism in the domestic press, Mr. Lee has driven his critics into the international publications as a last resort. Whatever role this newspaper might now play in Singapore's domestic politics is not one we sought; it was thrust on us by Lee Kuan Yew himself. And after observing the ordeal of Francis Seow, what responsible Singaporean preparing to enter opposition politics wouldn't seek contacts and assurances of asylum abroad?

Singapore's argument is not with the foreign press or the U.S. government. That is a pretext. The reality is that having brought Singapore so far, Lee Kuan Yew now chooses to sacrifice further development rather than allow any hint of internal political opposition.

Editorial

WALL ST JOURNAL, NEW YORK
24 MAY 88

Interrogation in Singapore

By JEROME A. COHEN

SINGAPORE - The arrest of Francis Seow in Singapore earlier this month helps focus attention on a Kafkaesque scenario that has been playing for some time in the island republic. It is now 17 nights since Mr. Seow—a former solicitor general and former president of the Law Society—was picked up under the Internal Security Act. Last week, the Singapore government released a statutory declaration signed by Mr. Seow while in custody. It is not yet clear whether this is the full "statement" the Singapore government has promised he will deliver. Mr. Seow has been held incommunicado for most of the time since his arrest. As of last night he was still in custody.

Mr. Seow's lawyers, who saw him briefly last week, reported that he seemed in good condition. But it's worth bearing in mind that the Singapore government's precedents for extracting statements from detainees can be ugly. Based on the accounts of a number of the 22 alleged "Marxist conspirators" who were rearrested last month after recanting their confessions of last year, it's possible to piece together a picture of state interrogation as sometimes practiced in Singapore:

Late one night, security officers descend upon the homes of a handful of intellectuals. The men and women they arrest are mostly Christian social activists and lawyers who have recently been challenging certain government policies. The plainclothes officers take them away, some blindfolded, after telling the concerned families only that the case involves a conspiracy to undermine the security of the state. At the detention center, the officers remove the suspects' blindfolds, and make them exchange their clothes, including underwear, for prison garb. The frightened detainees are taken, barefoot, to separate, cold and windowless rooms. There, the around-the-clock interrogation begins.

Continuous Bombardment

The individual suspect is defenseless, unable to contact relatives, friends or lawyers. Six or seven interrogators encircle him and focus spotlights on him. From the shadows, they continuously bombard him with questions, charges and shouts. They urge him to confess, hour after hour. When the interrogators tire, a fresh team is brought in to renew the pressure.

The increasingly exhausted detainee is permitted only the briefest of rests. After two or three days and nights, he is finally taken to a tiny, bare cell. Although its concrete bed lacks a mattress, blanket and pillow—amenities he is told will come if he is cooperative—he falls asleep. An hour later, he is awakened and taken for more grilling.

Usually, for "soft" intellectuals, roughly three or four days of such continuous questioning is required to break their resistance, as the alleged conspirator becomes increasingly weak, confused and demoralized. If he is stubborn or unwise enough to talk back, an interrogator may slap him repeatedly, threaten greater violence and make him stand for 20 hours at a stretch under a high-powered air conditioner, perhaps enhancing the chill by dousing him with water.

Of course, such harshness is not always necessary. The Singapore authorities have other methods as well. "Persuasion" is more effective and leaves no visible scars. Its ingredients are simple. Isolation—no one can help you but yourself; you will be here indefinitely and alone, perhaps for as long as 20 years, unless you

confess. Guilt—you have caused great worry to your family and unless you confess we may have to arrest them as well; but as soon as you answer these questions, they will be fine and you will see them. Resentment—you probably didn't even know about the conspiracy; the ringleader duped you into becoming a foil. Deceit—the others have already confessed and are being treated leniently; only you will be the fall guy because of pointless resistance. Hopelessness—a lawyer will only make your plight worse and waste your money, and the courts can't interfere in cases of subversion. Sympathy—you're essentially a good person who was misled. Your friendly case officer will help you re-integrate into society after you

Usually, for "soft" intellectuals, roughly three or four days of such continuous questioning is required to break their resistance, as the alleged conspirator becomes increasingly weak, confused and demoralized.

tape a confession for the state's television station, assuming you say your lines as rehearsed.

Small wonder, then, that the 22 political activists detained without trial last year confessed to a Marxist conspiracy to undermine the government. Or that 10 days after their rearrests for repudiating those confessions on April 18, eight of the original detainees then signed statutory declarations (SDs) in which they apparently recanted their recent allegations against the government. A few other detainees also signed SDs, under the threat of rearrest.

Yet the surprisingly skimpy SDs in no way substitute for an independent commission of inquiry—an idea the Singapore government first endorsed, and then dropped when it got the SDs. All were made under apparently coercive circumstances—most during incommunicado detention. The one April 18 signer not in custody—because she is still abroad—has reaffirmed the detainees' public statement and has expressed her admiration for the eight who "held out for so many days" before being forced to recant. Even if one takes the SDs at face value, a close examination reveals that, while some of the detainees state they were not physically tortured, others are conspicuously silent on this issue. Moreover, none have renounced the claim made in the April 18 statement that most of the signers were subjected to physical assaults while in detention. The SDs also confirm the application of—as one put it—"certain disorientation techniques" based on sleep deprivation and "protracted stressful questioning," and reveal the profound resentment of the accused at government editing and distortions of their taped and televised "confessions."

With the prolonged detention of Mr. Seow, the Singapore government's credibility continues to ebb. Less than four hours after he appeared in court on May 6, initiating a habeas corpus petition to try to test the legality of such detentions without trial, he was apprehended while at the detention center to interview his clients. Mr. Seow, like some of the original de-

tainees, was reportedly preparing to enter party politics in an effort to shore up the opposition to Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party. He was arrested, government sources claimed, not because of his representation of the detainees but because of his alleged involvement in "foreign interference in Singapore's internal affairs."

Given the government's efforts to convince the public of a close connection between the so-called Marxist conspirators and the Communist parties of Malaysia and the Philippines, one might have expected the alleged foreign interference to come from those sources. Instead, a day after Mr. Seow's arrest, the government declared that the sinister foreign influence was that of America's. According to Singapore's Home Affairs Ministry, U.S. diplomats had been meeting younger lawyers, including the detained Patrick Seong, to urge them to enter politics against the P.A.P. Moreover, in a press release brimming with innuendo, the government suggested that Mr. Seow may have received funds from the U.S. government, which also allegedly offered to finance the campaigns of a large number of opposition candidates.

Whatever the truth of these assertions, which are denied by the U.S., this protest fits in neatly with a series of actions by the Singapore government designed to intimidate into conformity various segments of the population—opposition politicians, the church, the press, the legal profession, the unions, and the universities—and to diminish their contacts with foreigners. The overall goal appears to be to perpetuate one-party rule at a time when significant two-party systems seem to be evolving in Taiwan and South Korea; and Singapore is confronting the prospect of losing its charismatic first generation leadership.

'Buried in Slime'

The end of the affair is not in sight, but everything that has thus far transpired brings to mind what David Marshall, Singapore's former chief minister, once said: "Unfortunately, . . . in our tradition . . . a citizen who criticizes his government is a traitor and a political opponent is an enemy who must be buried in slime of abuse and vicious distortion." Or, as former Singapore President C.V. Devan Nair put it last year, ". . . the government is known to react like a scalded polecat to even mild criticism."

If these quotations are distasteful to Prime Minister Lee and his able colleagues, perhaps they will prefer to recall the future prime minister's own remarks during the 1956 parliamentary debate on the Emergency Regulations that were an antecedent of the ISA. When Singapore was still a colony and its domestic and international security position was not as robust as now, he said, "If you believe that men should be free, then they should have the right of free association, of free speech, of free publication. Then no law should permit those democratic processes to be set at naught, and no excuse, whether security, inconvenience to the traffic, or inconvenience to police officers, should allow a government to be deterred from doing what it knows to be right, and what it must know to be right."

Mr. Cohen visited Singapore recently as a representative of the human rights organization, Asia Watch. He is a former director of East Asian Legal Studies at Harvard University and now an international lawyer based in Hong Kong.

Singapore arrests signal tough line

News analysis

Tony Kahane

THE re-arrest in Singapore on April 19 of eight former detainees, who had issued a press statement the previous day describing the maltreatment they had suffered while in prison and refuting charges against them of a "conspiracy", is in keeping with the increasingly intolerant and dictatorial nature of the Singapore Government — in particular of the veteran Prime Minister himself, Lee Kuan Yew.

The eight were all arrested during May and June last year, together with 14 others, and held under the Internal Security Act (ISA), an inheritance (as in neighbouring Malaysia) of colonial legislation from the "Emergency" period, which allows the authorities to detain without trial those it suspects of subversive activity, in practice for indefinite periods.

Indeed, after Nelson Mandela, the world's longest political prisoner is Chia Thye Poh, who is still held under the ISA in Singapore after a period of 22 years.

Of last year's batch of 22 ISA detainees, all but one, Vincent Cheng — a Catholic theologian and community worker — had been released by the end of the year.

Most were in their late 20s or 30s — professional people working as lawyers, publishers, journalists, lecturers or typesetters — and several were connected with the social work of Catholic bodies.

All 22 were accused by the authorities of being part of a Marxist conspiracy to overthrow the Government, something they have strenuously denied when not under the duress of imprisonment in Whitley Road Detention Centre.

The clumsily staged television confessions most of them were forced to undergo only helped convince an already sceptical public of the implausibility of the Government's claims.

The statement was drawn up by the eight now re-arrested, five of whom are women — plus a ninth, Tang Fong Har, a lawyer whose husband is British, and who was in Britain at the time of the arrests.

It drew attention to the physical and psychological abuse suffered in detention. Apart from beatings, and being held for long periods in extremely cold rooms, they were subjected to various forms of mental disorientation — long interrogations, deprivation of sleep, glaring lights — and threats against their families, friends and fellow detainees if they did not co-

Tang Fong Har, for whom an arrest warrant has now been issued in Singapore, relates how she was held in solitary confinement for all but the last 10 days of her three months' imprisonment.

She was "dissuaded" from taking on the lawyer she had chosen to deal with her case, Patrick Seong, by means of the threat of his arrest.

Seong, who did handle some of the detainees' cases, both during and after their detentions, was subjected to harassment and surveillance, and was finally arrested himself on 19 April with the eight ex-detainees.

The case of the staged television confessions is instructive. According to Tang Fong Har, once the detainees had been induced to cooperate by the prospect of early release, they spent long periods "remembering" all their past actions and writing them down.

If their accounts were not sufficiently exciting, or did not bring out the required "flavour", as their interrogators put it, they were made to rewrite them.

Eventually, after considerable editing, a script was produced, which they were ordered to memorise. When the day came, they were led to the bungalow where the filming was to take place.

All of them were interviewed separately, often with several attempts on certain questions before they got them right, though at the end they were made to sit around for group pictures with the interviewer, as if they had been interviewed together.

One detainee, the lecturer Chng Suan Tse, concluded her interview with the answer: "Before my arrest I found it difficult to believe in the conspiracy; now I find it even more difficult."

For this affront, which was edited out, she was punished by serving a longer detention than her friends.

The arrests bear the imprint of Lee Kuan Yew, who is sensitive to the slightest criticism of or challenge to his authority.

Lee returned from the United States in April to find the ex-detainees' statement published by the Singapore Straits Times.

For Lee the action was simply a sign of media softness he all along suspected.

His anger was equally directed at the Special Branch and the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, whom he held responsible for bungling the arrests and confessions last year.

A third target of Lee's was a group of some of his senior ministers — including the first deputy Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, and the Education Minister, Mr Tony Tan — whom he also regards as too soft.

Goh, Tan and others were doubtful about the value of last year's arrests, and clearly are even more unhappy this time. They form a block of middle generation politicians who are trying to resist or delay the accession to power of Lee's son, Lee Hsien Loong.

Were Lee Hsien Loong — whose performance as minister has been less than brilliant — to become Prime Minister, Lee senior would be expected to become president, under a revised constitution creating an executive presidency.

Lee Kuan Yew ordered the arrests to impose the discipline he regards as lacking, and out of revenge against the various targets of his anger, including the signatories themselves.

He may also be considering making the case an election issue.

Although his People's Action Party (PAP) won all but two seats last time, its proportion of the vote has decreased considerably over recent elections.

From his point of view, an early election on the theme of "Communist conspirators," followed by the reshuffle involving him and his son, might appear a good option.

He will be quietly but firmly opposed, though, by Goh, Tan, and others who, while loyal servants of the PAP machine, doubt that the "conspiracy" will arouse any greater public enthusiasm that it did last year, and who are anxious to keep Lee Hsien Loong (also known as Lee-Clone Yew) at bay for as long as possible.

For them, an early election is the last thing they want. While in the past, Lee Kuan Yew could expect to get his way on every issue, it is possible now that his grip is beginning to weaken.

If that is the case, the elections which some commentators have already been predicting for this year, may not be held for another two years. As for the arrests, it would seem that Lee has overlaid an already weak hand.

He could be vulnerable to domestic unease; but especially to international criticisms of Sin-



Tang Fong Har, facing an arrest warrant...

Making witnesses in short order

By Margaret Scott



The arrest of lawyer Francis Seow, only hours after he appeared in High Court on a habeas corpus petition on 6 May, has compounded the disquiet among foreign human-rights groups about the detentions. Former Harvard law professor Jerome Cohen, who observed the hearing for the Washington-based Asia Watch committee, said: "It is really upping the ante when you go against lawyers. It is blatant interference with the right of detained persons to get minimal justice."

Cohen, an authority on East Asian legal issues for nearly three decades, was meeting Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew around the time Seow was arrested. "He was handed a message in the middle of the meeting that looked pretty important. This had to have been the very time Seow was arrested." However, Lee never mentioned the arrest. Cohen would not reveal the content of his talks with Lee and other ministers but said: "They were perfectly rational, perfectly courteous, moderately frank — I guess that's all you can say about it given what they were doing in the back-ground."

Cohen has known Lee for nearly 20 years, and said they have had several long, sometimes contentious discussions at Harvard and in Singapore. Over the years, Cohen said, he had refrained from commenting on the Singapore Government's human-rights record, primarily because it seemed to strike a

reasonable balance given its regional setting.

Now he considers Singapore to be "Orwellian."

On both legal and human-rights grounds, Cohen said the most disturbing feature of these ISA arrests has been the "assertions made very baldly [by ministers] that as long as you don't physically beat somebody, anything else is fair. It doesn't matter whether you deny them sleep for up to six days running so that they are vegetables and cannot give a coherent statement . . . as long as you don't beat them, it's legal."

Government leaders such as First Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Minister of Trade and Industry Lee Hsien Loong, who is Lee's eldest son, have endorsed the use of "psychological pressure" by the ISD. A Home Ministry statement on the re-arrests said such pressure was used "to break down the defences which every detainee builds around himself, and uncover the truth that every guilty suspect wishes to conceal."

Cohen called this view a "gross misconception" of civilised standards of treatment and a false re-definition of torture. "They are saying you can use psychologically disorienting techniques: fear, coercion, deceit, offers and inducements. Anything is possible, especially sleep deprivation, and that's considered fair because you are tearing away their psychological defences because you have to get the other people before they flee, you have to get the evidence before it is destroyed."

In the sworn declarations of those in detention, described by the government as recantations of the joint statement, Cohen noted that most referred to their interrogation during the first few days in detention last year as a period of severe psychic stress. "A lot of them seem to share this false definition of torture. To me, it's physical abuse, it's cruel and unusual. It's cruel by the standards of civilised society. What does *Darkness at Noon* [Arthur Koestler's novel about Nazi Germany] mean? What is thought reform all about? These are rampant evils associated with communist regimes," Cohen said.

From his discussions with Lee and other ministers, relatives of those arrested and those in the legal community, Cohen said "you cannot escape the conclusion that this is part of an ongoing attempt to strike down, destroy anyone who looks like he might be an intelligent, articulate, credible political candidate of an independent nature."

Given the ISD techniques, Cohen said, any statements from anyone detained used to substantiate the government's charges would be suspect. "You can make your witnesses to order if you give them four or five days. They figure with soft people, the intellectuals, it's quicker," Cohen said.

While the government claimed the detainees had not made specific allegations about being hit during interrogation, Cohen said several accounts in the public domain, if not the statutory declarations made in detention, do give the names and position of ISD officials allegedly involved. "There is lots of detail there if they chose to look at it," he said.

It was not good enough for ministers to state their trust in the "professionalism" of ISD personnel and their belief these officials were not capable of violence. "How do they know?" Cohen said. In his meetings with Prime Min-



ister Lee and Home Minister S. Jayakumar — both of them lawyers of long standing and the latter a former dean of law at the National University of Singapore — Cohen urged them to revive the proposal for a commission of inquiry into the alleged assaults, and also to institute safeguards such as taping all interrogations.

The arrests and the leadership's approval of the ISD's techniques, Cohen said, had created a perceptible climate of fear, especially among lawyers. "Law faculties are usually in the vanguard in such cases . . . but you don't hear the word 'boo' out of these people," he said. Long-term legal colleagues in Singapore were saying "please don't call me" or "call me from a pay-phone."

Seow's arrest also has robbed the detainees of their main counsel for the 18 May habeas corpus hearing, Cohen said. "Who will they get as their lawyers? It is a thoroughly intimidated legal community," he added. "The PM has really put the fear of Lee into people." □

THE AGE

Lee's iron fist still felt after 20 years

IN his photograph, Chia Thye Poh looks fresh-faced: young, with protruding ears, thick, black-rimmed glasses and with the grin of his mouth about to turn up a corner. He must look different now. The photograph is more than 22 years old.

On 29 October 1966, Chia, then 25, was detained under Singapore's Internal Security Act, allegedly for promoting Communist United Front activities in Singapore. According to Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs, the CUF was the front of the outlawed Communist Party of Malaya, which aims to overthrow the governments of Malaysia and Singapore by force.

Chia is still under detention. He has never been charged with any offence, let alone brought to open trial, and he never will be. That, says Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, is not Government practice. The Singapore Government's practice is the use of the draconian (to Western eyes) Internal Security Act as come unceremonious and brought reminders of Chia, for periods a forgotten man.

Amnesty International, which has adopted him as a prisoner of conscience, wrote to the Government urging unconditional release.

Then last year Lee Kuan Yew quashed a now-banned Opposition parliamentary debate. Mr J. B. Jayaretnam in a debate. Mr Jayaretnam had been foolish enough to ask whether Mr Lee hated him. "I'm sorry to disappoint you," Mr Lee said, "but it requires a certain energy, a certain momentum." Mr Lee went on to mention Chia. "If people like him, he said, there was

Chia, he doesn't want to confess guilt as a price for freedom.

Lee Kuan Yew, one of the iron men of world politics, is no mean feat. What has Chia done to deserve it?

He was a parliamentarian, a member of the Barisan Socialist Party, a leftist movement that had a mass base but was thrashed tactically by Lee Kuan Yew. In a debate in Parliament in 1985, the Home Affairs Minister, Professor Jayakumar, said Chia had been a member of the Communist Party of Malaya and had been specifically instructed by the CPM to penetrate the Barisan Socialists and engage in agitation to destabilise the Government.

In October 1966, when the Barisan Socialist quit Parliament, claiming that Singapore's independence was spurious, Chia said the party was taking its struggle to the streets. "We are going to strengthen our extra-parliamentary struggle. It takes various forms — street demonstrations, protest meetings, strikes."

The Government's evidence of Chia's Communist United Front activities included "participating actively" in a month-long camp-in by Chinese high school students protesting against the disunion of the "pro-communist" Singapore Chinese Middle Schools, Students Union.

With five Barisan Socialist assemblymen, he visited striking naval base workers and gave them \$1000 and four bags of rice to help sustain the strike.

Chia also organised pro-Vietnam, anti-US demonstrations, and his detention came when he was organising demonstrations to coincide with the visit of President Johnson to Kuala Lumpur.

In Australia in the sixties, Chia's activities would have been regarded as, proba-

bly at worst, annoying student radicalism. In Singapore, the authorities saw them as a real threat to security — the region, after all, was in turmoil: the Emergency in peninsula Malaya had been followed by confrontation and a bloodbath in Indonesia. However, critics would say that the Singapore Government made the most of a golden opportunity to use the Internal Security Act against its opponents.

The ISA is heavy artillery. One section allows for the detention of anyone who "has acted or is about to act or is likely to act in any manner prejudicial to the security of Singapore, or any part thereof", and the Singapore Government is prosecutor, judge and jury.

Late last year, Mr Lee and Australia's Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, took part in a television panel discussion in Singapore with four Australian journalists. (It became known as the Bob and Harry show.) Asked about the use of the ISA in Malaysia and Singapore, Mr Hawke said he did not like the ISA powers but that sovereign nations were entitled to make their own decisions.

"Some of the methods and instruments they have are not the methods and instruments we have in our country and that reflects a difference of background, a difference of the challenge to their integrity."

"Singapore has had to fight to survive against real challenges. So has Malaysia. We haven't had those pressures upon us."

Mr Lee interrupted to say: "I don't want to be defended by you Bob — I can look after myself." He spoke of the fragmentation of the emerging Singapore, of the racial communal, religious and language divides. He defied "any democrat, any human rights champion" to take his

place and keep Singapore one nation, keep it from being a basket-case.

But the question is whether Singapore now a newly industrialised country (and regarded by the United States as one of the four economic dragons of Asia, along with Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong) is still vulnerable and threatened.

The Singapore Government's answer, of course, "yes". Otherwise their claim would be no justification for the ISA. The claim is that there is a threat from "new hybrid pro-communist types". The CPM in a last gasp, is making a bid to infiltrate the English-educated, using English-educated intellectuals.

Detention without trial does not allow any independent testing of such general claims or of the particular cases of Chia Thye Poh or the new detainees, and ISA provisions that detainees may argue their case before an advisory board seems a small check against the sweeping powers of the act.

It is not possible to judge at present how the general Singapore population views the use of ISA. Do people, increasingly well-educated and a generation or so away from the struggle for identity and independence, if not survival, think it is a far more anachronism?

The Government has said it will make ISA powers an issue in the election which could be held this year. And while it is very difficult to see Mr Lee's People's Action Party in any danger, it will be interesting to see whether there is an element of protest voting. In this so very efficiently managed society, this is little to vote against — unless that management is regarded as an intrusion on lives and rights.

Media Supplement

There has been a lot of newspaper coverage of recent events in Singapore, in many different parts of the world. To give some idea of the extent of the interest, we have compiled a list of articles which have come to our attention in recent weeks. The list is not exhaustive.

Key:

HKS = Hong Kong Standard
 SCMP=South China Morning Post
 AHSJ= Asian Wall Street Journal
 NYT= New York Times
 FEER= Far Eastern Economic Review.

From Australia

April 19. Sydney Morning Herald. We were tortured say alleged plotters.
 April 20. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore Rearrests Former Detainees. by Cameron Forbes
 April 21. The Age, Melbourne. MP Faces uphill battle on Singapore 'dissidents' - by Cameron Forbes.
 April 22. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore claims it has conspiracy facts by Cameron Forbes.
 April 23. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore says the communist emergency continues.
 April 23, 1988 The Australian "Singapore Defends Arrest Over 'Marxist' Plot"
 April 23. The Weekend Australian. Singapore defends arrests over 'Marxist plot'
 April 26, 1988. "Church Urges Protest Over Arrest" -(through Singapore Airlines).

May 2. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore's Inscrutable Spy Catcher. by Cameron Forbes.
 May 2, 1988. The Age, Melbourne. "Lee's Iron Fist Still Felt After 20 Years." By Cameron Forbes. About Chia Thye Poh.
 May 4. Catholic Weekly. Australia. Singapore detainees - said to have 'recanted.'
 May 5. The Australian Financial Review. Singapore accuses the US of meddling. by Michael Byrnes
 May 9, 1988. The Australian. Call for Singapore Tourist Boycott, Ean Higgins
 May 9. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore rearrests detainee.
 May 9. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore Expels US Diplomat by Cameron Forbes

May 9. The Australian. Call for Singapore tourist boycott.
 May 9. The Australian. Singapore ready to prove US 'meddling'
 May 10. The Australian. Lee 'lost head' over US envoy charges
 May 10, 1988. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore Warns of More Arrests After Envoy Storm.
 May 10, 1988. The Age, Melbourne. Church Alarms on Singapore-Christian group fears threat to missionaries. By Mark Broily.
 May 11, 1988. Melbourne Herald. "Singapore Protest Welcomed" (Opposition MP in Singapore JBJ welcomes Australia's concern)
 May 12. The Australian. US expels Singaporean diplomat tit-for-tat style.
 May 12, 1988. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore Rebukes Canberra for Criticising Detentions.
 May 12. The Age, Melbourne. US evens Singapore score. by Cameron Forbes.
 May 13, 1988. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore High Commission condemns Committee of 100. By Mark Broily.
 May 13. The Age, Melbourne. Singapore denies detentions. by Mark Broily.
 May 14. The Age, Melbourne. Lee remains silent on row. by Cameron Forbes.
 May 14. The Age, Melbourne. Bishops seek fair deal for church workers detained without trial. by Mark Broily.
 May 19. The Age, Melbourne. Three detainees to be released.
 May 23. The Age, Melbourne. Bishops Myopic: Singapore.
 May 25. Sydney Morning Herald editorial "Foreign Affairs Singapore Style"
 May 25, The Australian (editorial) Singapore Goes Too Far
 Foreigners" by Gavin Bell.
 May 26, Advocate (Melbourne ,Catholic) "Bishops Reject Cultural Myopia Charge"
Hong Kong
 May 24, 1988. Hong Kong Standard. Lee Demands Apology and Threatens to Sue Nair.
 May 24, SCMP. Nair Urges Lee to Resign
 Parallels with Communist Dictatorships (letter)
 May 21, 1988. HKS Government Must Uphold Rule of Law
 May 21, HKS .Singaporeans Urged to Back Government in Row with US
 May 21 SCMP Singapore Lawyer "Meddled in Politics"
 May 19 SCMP Singapore Frees Three Dissidents
 May 19 HKS Singapore Frees Three Top Political Dissidents
 May 20 SCMP Singapore to Amend Constitution

May 22 US Regrets Singapore Government's Allegations of Interference
 May 22 SCMP Held Lawyer Cites Ex-President
 May 23 SCMP Ex-President Under Attack
 May 23 HKS Lee Aide, Ex-President of Singapore Exchange Barbs
 May 28 SCMP Lee Defends Use of Internal Security Law
 May 28 HKS Ex-President Relays Message to Singapore From Here
 May 28 HKS Detentions to Stop Communists Seeking New Recruits: Lee
 May 27 HKS Singapore Backs US Role in South East Asia
 May 26 SCMP Lee to Serve Libel Write on Ex-President
 May 26 HKS Hong Kong 'Banker Gave Seow Money'
 May 26 HKS Lee Seeks Damages, Sues Nair
 May 25 HKS Opposition Parties Join Forces Against Singapore Ruling Power
 May 24 HKS Lee Demands Apology, Threatens to Sue Nair
 May 21 SCMP Reprint of NYT Editorial of May 16
 May 29. HKS. Church Drops Special Services for Detainees
 May 31. HKS ISA puts investment in Singapore in Peril
 June 1. SCMP Singapore Growth Tipped To Fall This Year and Next
 June 1 HKS US Embassy Staff May Be Cut: Singapore
 June 1, SCMP Singapore threat for diplomats
 May 8. SCMP. editorial. No room for rights in headline Singapore
 May 9. SCMP. Singapore Row grows as US Envoy Recalled.
 May 8. SCMP. "Exposure threat after diplomat expelled" Singapore warns US over envoy.

Asia Region

April 28. FEER. Singapore. Behind Bars Again. Claims of torture lead to the re-arrest of ex-detainees. by Margaret Scott.
 May 5. FEER. We Put it To You Again. "The government doubts torture claims but orders inquiry"
 May 6 Asiaweek .Unequal Bargain. (About the misuse of the ISA in Singapore)
 May 6 Asiaweek. Now Going Head to Head (Long article about the detainees, their re-arrest, the allegations against them, and the effects of the detentions on the country.)
 May 12. FEER. Singapore- Truth-Latest. "As ISA detainees recent, government cancels inquiry" by Margaret Scott
 May 16. Asiaweek. Singapore, Now Aiming at America
 May 19, 1988. FEER. Enemies Left and Right; Fear of the Future; Making Witnesses in short order; The Singapore sting: US evens the score.
 May 23, 1988. AWSJ. Interrogation in Singapore
 May 23 AWSJ. Singapore Hits The US Again For Interfering

May 24, 1988. AWSJ :Democrats in Singapore
 May 24 AWSJ Lee Requests Ex-President to Apologise
 May 27, 1988. Asiaweek. More Fireworks.
 May 27-28 AWSJ Singapore's GDP Increase Mirrors Booming Economy
 Lee Sues Nair for Alleged Libel
 May 30. AWSJ. Singapore High Court Dismisses Trio's Writs
 June 1 AWSJ. Soh Threatens More US Embassy Cuts
 June 1 AWSJ Seow's Fiancee Suddenly Finds Her Credit Cut
 June 2. FEER: All Teamed Up: the PAP Votes in a New Electoral System - by Margaret Scott.
 Radio Interference: BBC Presence Raises Question Over Government's Media Views - by Philip Browning
 An Interview with the Young Mr Lee - 5th column. by "a senior Singapore journalist."

Thailand

April 28, 1988. Bangkok Post. "A Tightening of the Screws" (Reprinted from the Economist)
 May 15. Bangkok Post "Police Sink Nautical Lee Protest"
 May 15. The Nation Bangkok "Police Prevent Human Rights Groups from Protesting"

United States

April 20. Washington Post. Singapore rearrests Eight Human Rights Activists. by Keith B. Richburg.
 April 20 International Herald Tribune. Singapore Rearrests 8 Political Activists
 April 20 WSJ. The Press and Mr Lee
 May 8. NYT. Singapore Asks Removal of US Envoy
 May 8. Washington Post. Singapore Denounces US Official. Charges denied but Envoy Recalled.
 May 8. Boston Globe. Singapore says US Envoy Interfered, asks recall
 May 8. NYT International. Singapore Asks Removal of US Envoy
 May 9. Christian Science Monitor. US Diplomat Withdrawn from Singapore Embassy
 May 11. Washington Post. Singapore Diplomat Ordered to Leave US
 May 12, 1988. The New York Times. Asian Exemplar Moves Towards Authoritarianism/Singapore Opposition Finding the Mood Tougher. Repressive Climate Troubles a Once Hopeful Singapore. Outcry from Some Singapore Detainees

May 15, 1988. The New York Times. The Price of Occupation. (About Israel but refers to Singapore as a "tyranny" comparable to Israeli occupied Gaza)
 May 16, 1988, New York Times. Asia's Touchy Tiger.
 May 22. NYT. Singapore Releases 3 Held as Political Detainees
 May 22. NYT "How Tyranny Creeps" -Anthony Lewis ("The attack on the press was a signal that a once enlightened leader had become a tinpot tyrant")
 May 23, 1988. Time. Singapore: New Questions- A US Diplomat is Expelled.
 May 26. NYT Singapore Opposition Plans Vote Challenge
 May 30. NYT: Singapore's Loss of Perspective, by Jerome Cohen

New Zealand

April 11, 1988. Dominion, New Zealand. "Cunning Old Marford May Yet Battle On" (about Lee Kuan Yew) Reprinted from the Daily Telegraph
 May 5 The Press NZ. Lee Kuan Yew and the 'Marxists' of Singapore (Reprinted from the Economist)
 May 8. The Dominion Sunday Times NZ. Arrests Likened to Nazi Era
 May 8, 1988. Zealandia, Catholic, NZ. Report of the April 18 statement endorsed by Catholic JPD Commission.
 May 10, 1988. Auckland Star, NZ. "Singapore Hides Get Touch of Lee's Whip" (Reprint of Guardian Article by Tony Kahane)
 May 17, 1988. Evening Post, NZ. Miss Singapore, MP tells tourists. (Jim Anderton)
 May 17, 1988. The Press, NZ. Rights record condemned. Jim Anderton. Repression Worrying NZPA Reuter. Report of New York Times Editorial Name?" (Reprinted from the Economist)
 May 14, The Dominion, NZ. ASEAN risk seen in human rights issues.
 May 18. Evening Post. NZ. Singapore Envoy Raps MP.
 May 19. The Star. NZ. Anderton told to mind own business.
 May ? The Press. NZ. Singapore tells Anderton to 'mind his business.'
 May 20. Evening Post. NZ's Uncomfortable Seat at ASEAN Table-by Roger Foley.

June 3 The Press, NZ. "Why is the Popular Mr Lee Hurting His Own Good Name

United Kingdom

April 19 Financial Times. Singapore Detainees 'ill-treated' in prison
 April 20 Financial Times. Singapore Rearrests Eight Who Denied Marxist Plot

April 30, The Guardian. U.K. "Singapore Arrests Signal Tough Line" by Tony Kahane
 April 30. Financial Times. Singapore Warns Foreign Press. by Roger Matthews.
 May 1. The Guardian. UK. Singapore Silences Torture Claim.
 May 14, 1988. The Economist, London. What Lee Said in 1964
 May 21 Financial Times :Singapore Alleges Political Interference by Diplomat
 May 28 The Economist. Trigger-happy in Singapore.