



HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE
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REPLY TO DR POH SOO KAI'S REJOINDER

1. Dr Poh Soo Kai's rejoinder ("Singapore's 'Battle for Merger' revisited – Part II") in *New Mandala* on 14 Jan 2015 to my article of 18 Dec 2014 ignores the evidence I had cited from the British archives and the memoirs of senior Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) leaders.
2. Dr Poh claims that the CPM was "a decimated force in Singapore by the 1950s", so it could not have been a security threat in the 1960s, and therefore Operation Coldstore could not have had a security basis.
3. Indeed by the mid-1950s the CPM's armed insurgency in Malaya had been blunted. But its communist united front (CUF) was still active, especially in Singapore, having infiltrated trade unions and other mass organisations, and almost taking over the governing People's Action Party. CPM Secretary General Chin Peng himself said in his memoirs that "the Party [CPM] had been able to **amass and maintain a huge following among the working classes**" (emphasis added) in Singapore by 1959.¹ He noted that left-wing trade unions and their members "well appreciated **they were under the control of the CPM**" (emphasis added).
4. On whether Dr Poh had provided medical aid to an injured CPM bomber and then failed to report the matter to the police, Dr Poh disingenuously claims that "I have not treated any bomber". What he did was to provide medical aid to the injured bomber through an ex-detainee known to him. This ex-detainee had said unequivocally in a public statement that he had approached Dr Poh twice at his clinic for medication for the injured bomber and that Dr Poh had obliged. Contrary to Dr Poh's claims, this was included in the statement of facts supporting his detention in 1976.

¹ Chin Peng, *alias Chin Peng: My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), p. 409.

5. Interestingly, Dr Poh does not deny that he had supplied medicine surreptitiously to the CPM in the 1970s (long after Malaysia and Singapore had become independent). In a statement made public at the time, an ex-detainee revealed that she had obtained medicine from Dr Poh at his clinic on three occasions between 1974 and 1976 for the CPM 6th Assault Unit operating in Malaysia. Her statement was corroborated by another ex-detainee.

6. Dr Poh, as the second most senior office-holder of the Barisan Sosialis (Barisan), insists that it was an ordinary political party. But CPM leaders themselves, including Eu Chooi Yip, have disclosed that the Barisan was formed on the instruction of Fong Chong Pik aka the Plen. Chin Peng confirmed that the Barisan was under the CPM's influence.² (Fong was the chief CPM representative in Singapore and Eu was his superior, based in Jakarta and in overall charge of the CPM's operations in Singapore.) The Plen also wrote that the Barisan "stood at the front of the struggle" to launch mass organisation work to expand "our [CPM] strength".³ Clearly, the Barisan was the CPM's principal political vehicle and was taking instructions from the CPM.

7. On Lim Chin Siong's CPM membership, which Dr Poh denies, Deputy UK Commissioner Philip Moore wrote that "we accept that Lim Chin Siong is a communist",⁴ and CPM Central Committee members Siu Cheong and Ah Hoi described Lim as "a very important CPM member".⁵

8. Dr Poh admits that Lim was a member of the Anti-British League (ABL), but claims that "the ABL was not the CPM". In fact, even CPM and ABL activists, including Eu Chooi Yip, have acknowledged in their memoirs that the ABL was a CPM-directed underground organisation formed to further the communist cause.

9. Dr Poh further asserts that the documents in Lim Chin Siong's own hand that Mr Lee Kuan Yew published in the *Battle for Merger* "are ABL and not CPM documents". One of these documents was Lim Chin Siong's notes of a talk he gave to his ABL subordinates on the occasion of the death of Joseph Stalin (1878-1953).⁶ Far from criticising Stalin, Lim Chin Siong praised him as a paragon of revolutionary virtue!

² Chen Jian 陈剑 (Chin Chong Cham, Lang Jian Zhu Meng – Yu Zhu Ye Kou Shu Li Shi Dang An 浪尖逐梦 – 余柱业口述历史档案 [Chasing Dreams on the Wave's Crest] (Malaysia, Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2006), p. 209; Chin Peng, *alias Chin Peng: My Side of History* (Singapore: Media Masters, 2003), p. 438.

³ Fong Chong Pik, *Fong Chong Pik: The Memoirs of a Malayan Communist Revolutionary* (Petaling Jaya: SIRDC, 2008), p. 171.

⁴ CO 1030/1160, Moore to Wallace, Tel. 363, 18 Jul 1962.

⁵ Aloysius Chin, *The Communist Party of Malaya: The Inside Story* (Kuala Lumpur: Vinpress, 1995), p. 67.

⁶ Lee Kuan Yew: *The Battle for Merger* (Singapore; National Archives of Singapore and Straits Times Press; 2014), pp. 85, 106.

10. Dr Poh's evasive reply and disregard for the overwhelming evidence confirm that his purpose is not to establish historical truths, but to obfuscate and justify his own past. Hundreds of millions of people suffered misery and deprivation under the yoke of communist regimes, resulting in the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc in 1989. Yet Dr Poh asserts in all seriousness that Singapore would have enjoyed a glowing future if the communist-backed Barisan had gained power.

11. CPM Secretary-General Chin Peng signed a peace treaty with Malaysia in December 1989, a month after the Berlin Wall came down. Many senior CPM leaders like Eu Chooi Yip and PV Sarma made their own peace with history and returned to Singapore. Dr Poh is among the die-hards who persist in denying the verdict of history.



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