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# "ORIGINAL SIN"?

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# "ORIGINAL SIN"?

*Revising the Revisionist Critique  
of the 1963 Operation Coldstore  
in Singapore*

Kumar Ramakrishna



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# INTRODUCTION

## The “Alternate” Challenge to the Singapore Story as Context

While the first-ever school textbook on Singapore history — encompassing the period from the founding of modern Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 to independence from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965 — appeared in 1984, the more or less formalized “master narrative” of Singapore’s ensuing political evolution, the so-called Singapore Story, “coalesced in the late 1990s”. This was “when the key moments in the country’s political history as an emerging postcolonial entity were identified and plotted into a national narrative”.<sup>1</sup> In 1997, then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong formally launched the National Education (NE) programme, an official attempt to redress the prevailing poor knowledge of Singapore’s past on the part of young Singaporeans, many of whom had apparently not even realized that Singapore was once part of the Federation. The ultimate aim of the NE programme was to ensure that future generations of Singaporeans were adequately socialized into the Singapore Story, regarded as “objective history, seen from the Singaporean standpoint”.<sup>2</sup> This exercise was by no means idiosyncratically Singaporean. New nations, ever since the emergence of secular nationalism as a potent unifying ideology in Europe in the late eighteenth century, have tended “to rely on skillfully constructing the connections between the past (real or imagined), the present and the future”. The purpose of deliberately crafting such national narratives has been “to encourage members of a putative national community to imagine themselves as sharing a special bond and

destiny as members of a nation".<sup>3</sup> Hence in Singapore, it is acknowledged that government efforts "at yoking history to the cause of nation-building", even "if particularly insistent and didactic", are not unusual, for a "national history" that possesses "resonance and credibility" helps "foster national identity".<sup>4</sup>

The key themes of the Singapore Story can be summarized via a five-point narrative:<sup>5</sup> first, the founding of modern Singapore by Raffles in 1819 as a British trading post "where there had once been a sleepy Malay village", and the subsequent emergence of the post as a "thriving colony, attracting hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants and smaller numbers of Malays and Indians"; second, the wartime trauma of the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945, followed by the British return and planning for a "painless exit strategy" of eventual decolonization to a friendly post-colonial administration; third, the persistence of this colonial strategy of orderly constitutional advance toward self-government despite disruptions by largely Communist-instigated violence in the 1950s, culminating with the election of the nationalist People's Action Party (PAP) government in 1959; fourth, the difficult and ultimately unsuccessful twenty-three-month induction into the Malaysian Federation from 1963 to 1965, originally intended to resolve both the Communist threat as well as ensure Singapore's political and economic viability; and fifth, separation from Malaysia in August 1965 and under the PAP government's steady hand, the successful management of "racial discord and social disharmony", resulting in the country defying the odds and making the transition "from the Third world to the First". While seminal accounts of the Singapore Story had appeared in the mid-1980s to early 1990s,<sup>6</sup> the publication of founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs in 1998 and 2000, together with Albert Lau's account of Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1998 represented a milestone of sorts in the evolution of the established narrative.<sup>7</sup>

This standard PAP-driven narrative of the Singapore Story has since been challenged. Early criticisms emerged almost immediately, when Singaporean scholars questioned the apparent identification of the Singapore Story with the towering figure of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew alone, without due acknowledgement of his PAP Old Guard "lieutenants" such as Dr Toh Chin Chye, Dr Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam, Devan Nair, Ong Pang Boon and others — including Lee's one-time PAP colleague, eventual chief political rival and alleged Communist, Lim Chin Siong.<sup>8</sup> Other historians, influenced by evolving trends in the discipline of history away from a sole focus on political elites and towards including the previously marginalized lives and voices of ordinary people,<sup>9</sup> have agitated for a "New Singapore History".<sup>10</sup> In the latter case, fresh emphasis is placed on the social and political "paths not taken" by ordinary Singaporeans — workers, students, civil society — since separation

from Malaysia, due to post-1965 PAP government policy that is said to have neutered the “dynamism, great political movements, and high aspirations” of pre-independence Singapore.<sup>11</sup> Carl Trocki and Michael Barr argue in this regard that there is a need to articulate a “not-the-PAP” interpretation of “Singapore’s recent past and to focus on the positive contributions and efforts of those alternative movements”. While they take pains to assure readers that they do not seek to “present an anti-PAP or anti-Lee Kuan Yew approach to the study of Singapore’s social and political order”, they nevertheless concede that their research suggests that alternative social and political paths not taken in Singapore post-1965 were “often the result of forceful action by those in power”. They quip that as one “does not make an omelette without breaking eggs”, the “recent history of Singapore is littered with its share of eggshells”.<sup>12</sup>

### **OPERATION COLDSTORE: THE PAP’S “ORIGINAL SIN”?**

In this respect the consequences of the major internal security exercise, Operation Coldstore, launched on 2 February 1963 by the Internal Security Council — comprising representatives from the Singapore, Malayan and British Governments — and in which 130 suspected Communists and Communist sympathizers in political parties, unions, rural, educational and cultural organizations were eventually detained,<sup>13</sup> appears to be one of those broken “eggshells” Trocki and Barr had in mind. This episode, which the conventional account records as having been decisive in destroying the subversive threat posed by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), appears to have assumed particular importance in the ongoing construction of the alternative “New Singapore History”. This history, assiduously being knit together by a group of revisionist historians, political scientists and former political detainees who basically agree on the broad outlines, if not necessarily the finer, granular details — we shall call them “Alternates” for short<sup>14</sup> — appears to generally posit Coldstore as the focal point of perhaps the major “path not taken” post-1965: an ostensibly Progressive Leftist and pluralistic, Barisan Sosialis Singapura (BSS)-led Singapore, with conceivably the principal, charismatic BSS leader Lim Chin Siong as prime minister. Coldstore, in other words, was, according to Alternate historian Thum Ping Tjin, “more than just a footnote in history”; it “made modern Singapore”.<sup>15</sup> Hong Lysa, together with Thum and Loh Kah Seng, perhaps the leading Singaporean representatives of the Alternate perspective goes even further, arguing that “the very heart of the PAP myth” that “Operation Coldstore was necessary for national security” represents “the Party’s original sin”.<sup>16</sup> Against this backdrop, the Alternates make two main attacks on the conventional wisdom concerning Coldstore.

First, rather than targeting potentially violent Communists, Coldstore in fact decimated the "progressive left". The latter has been defined by Thum Ping Tjin as a "pro-labour left-wing movement" comprising a coalition of trade unions, civic societies and student groups united by an anti-colonial platform and agitating for better working conditions, "citizenship rights for Singapore's disenfranchised" and greater democratic freedoms, but was nonetheless committed to peaceful, constitutional processes in achieving political change.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the notion of a dangerous Communist United Front was nothing more than an invention by the PAP authorities — and in fact some senior British colonial officials themselves had deep misgivings about the allegedly weak grounds for the Coldstore detentions.<sup>18</sup> In short, the stock Alternate view is that Coldstore *was mounted not for legitimate security reasons as posterity appears to record, but rather, expedient political ones*:<sup>19</sup>

The arrests and detentions under the operation were intended to ensure that the British policy of Malaysia was realized, and the PAP was able to achieve dominance in the political sphere of Singapore.

In this view, the defeat of the Progressive Left and the political survival of the pro-Western PAP government was seen by the British as essential for stability in Singapore and the larger Malaysian Federation, which were together regarded as an important "anticommunist bulwark in Southeast Asia in their process of decolonisation during the Cold War".<sup>20</sup> Alternates thus lament that ultimately, "many of the best and brightest of our people were sacrificed in a struggle where the interest of the local population were of little consequence."<sup>21</sup> The Progressive Left in Singapore was thus sacrificed at the altar of Cold War geopolitics.

### LIM CHIN SIONG AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

A second, closely related attack by the Alternates on the Singapore Story narrative of Coldstore concerns by far the foremost leading light of the "best and brightest" of the Progressive Left who were politically eviscerated by that operation: Lim Chin Siong, who "appeared like a comet on the Singapore scene" in the early 1950s and who by 1963 "was the dominant political figure in Singapore".<sup>22</sup> Lim consistently publicly denied he was ever a Communist. In the Alternate narrative, Lim, a heroic but ultimately tragic figure who had consistently eschewed political violence in favour of peaceful constitutional struggle, fell victim to the power-obsessed PAP leader Lee Kuan Yew. The latter, anxious over public disillusionment with the PAP's performance in government; internal party dissent at the perceived authoritarianism of the

PAP leadership; and weakening public support as evidenced by the Hong Lim and Anson by-election losses in 1961, was driven to seek political union or Merger with the Federation and the Borneo Territories, principally as a means to eliminate the Progressive Left headed by Lim. The Alternates argue that the Merger Referendum in Singapore in September 1962 was cynically manipulated by the PAP, while the outbreak of the Brunei Revolt in December that year provided the perfect excuse for Lee and his British and Federation allies to mount Coldstore and arrest Lim Chin Siong and the key Progressive Left leaders. Lim was thus “destroyed in the atmosphere of the Cold War”.<sup>23</sup> Hong Lysa — with not inconsiderable hyperbole — goes so far as to argue that Lim Chin Siong has in fact been assigned a “timeless pivotal role” as “the other” in the Singapore Story, and the latter’s “humiliation is meant to extend beyond Lim’s lifetime and into history”.<sup>24</sup>

As Singapore approaches the fiftieth anniversary of independence in 2015, elements of the Alternate constituency have intensified their use of the online social media to propagate and defend — at times vociferously — their critiques of Coldstore and the PAP government’s role in Lim Chin Siong’s allegedly unjustified political demise.<sup>25</sup> The intensity of these debates between the Alternates and “establishment defenders” has not gone unnoticed in the blogosphere.<sup>26</sup> Most significantly, the logical implication of the Alternates’ New Singapore History project, that Singaporeans need to collectively consider anew those national political paths not taken, appears to have had increasing resonance since the May 2011 general elections, in which the incumbent PAP fared relatively less well compared to previous electoral contests. While the PAP won 75.3 per cent of the vote in the 2001 elections, ten years later it secured only 60.1 per cent — a drop of fifteen percentage points. This prompted observers to query if “Singaporeans’ trust in the PAP government — perhaps the most important commodity in the country’s system of elite governance” — had worryingly “diminished”?<sup>27</sup> Sensing and exploiting the shift in the political mood, the Alternate constituency launched a new book attempting to cast the radical Chinese student movement of the 1950s in a fresh light. According to Hong Lysa, one of the book’s editors, the late political detainee Tan Jing Quee “had already discerned that this time, it was fine to advertise the book launch widely”.<sup>28</sup> Increasing popular interest in the radical student politics of the 1950s — and in particular the career of Lim Chin Siong — appeared to have persisted into 2014, with one young blogger calling upon the younger generation to emulate the example of Lim and his comrades in fearlessly defying the establishment to fight for the good of the common man.<sup>29</sup> Hong, in a November 2014 post, sums up the Alternate position by knitting together Coldstore and Lim Chin Siong’s political fate.

She argues that Lim, in his heyday the PAP's "feared political nemesis" has nowadays "become the albatross around the party's neck". This is because any "hint that Lim was not a MCP member", and "not a subversive" would in effect "raise questions about Operation Coldstore", and more to the point, "the morality of how the PAP came to rule Singapore".<sup>30</sup>

It is perhaps tempting therefore to argue that a "Singapore Spring" may be just around the corner, in which the unjustly ignored political heroes of the historical Progressive Left will be rehabilitated, thereby providing the ideological impetus for an ostensibly new, more liberal, democratic and pluralistic path in Singapore politics to be taken. After all, as M. Rajakumar argues, "Singapore's history begins" only when Lim Chin Siong in particular "is given his proper place in its annals".<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the New Singapore History can perhaps be seen as the latest attempt by politically leftist and liberal scholars and activists at home and abroad to critique and delegitimize the almost fifty-year-old political system that Lee Kuan Yew and his Old Guard PAP colleagues set up post-separation, one in which, despite its admittedly unique, non-doctrinaire characteristics, has been widely recognized as having helped Singapore survive and thrive as a viable political and economic entity.<sup>32</sup>

### THE ALTERNATES' GREAT TEMPTATION: A GOOD STORY BEFORE FACTS

This book will have brief comments to make on the wider issue of tweaking Singapore's largely successful political system later. The main thrust here, however, is that while the Alternates, and for that matter, other observers are right that a broadening and enriching of the Singapore Story to include the richly textured micro-narratives of ordinary Singaporeans is both necessary and desirable,<sup>33</sup> *one nevertheless has to take care that egregious historical inaccuracies are not uncritically embraced in the process.* As shall be seen, in the eagerness of elements within the Alternate constituency to promote the New Singapore History as an ideological bulwark for political change in Singapore, they arguably do tend to succumb to the old temptation of "not letting the facts get in the way of a good story". Focusing on the case of Operation Coldstore in general and Lim Chin Siong in particular, and employing declassified archival material from the National Archives and other repositories in the United Kingdom, as well as still-classified documents made available by the Internal Security Department Heritage Centre (ISDHC) of Singapore, this book will reiterate that Operation Coldstore was utterly justified because the Communist United Front (CUF) was indeed a real-time threat. It will also

demonstrate conclusively that despite his many public protestations down the years, the leading light of the “Progressive Left”, Lim Chin Siong, was very much a leading member of the CUF, and hence his arrest as part of Coldstore was fully defensible. What is more, Lim’s *own* later painful recantation and repudiation of the all-too-real Communist creed will be revealed. In sum, this book serves as a reminder to heed Spanish philosopher George Santayana’s famous warning that those who “do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.<sup>34</sup> Hence one should not uncritically embrace the often highly politicized output of elements of the Alternate constituency — especially the suggestion that the allegedly “original sin” of Coldstore unjustly deprived Singaporeans of supposedly glorious liberal democratic, socialist, egalitarian “paths not taken”.

### PLAN OF THE BOOK

The rest of this book is divided into five chapters. First, it will defend in some detail the employment in this study of formerly classified records, including the old colonial Police Special Branch as well as more recent still-classified ISD reports, in the process anticipating and debunking the usual but at times self-contradictory Alternate objections to their use. Second, it will examine the theory behind the CUF, something given surprisingly short shrift by Alternate historians — and with the necessary detail and granularity — examine how the CUF emerged and evolved in Singapore in the mid-1950s. The basic question to ask is: are the Alternates right in arguing that there was actually no evidence of the fabled “Communist Tiger” of PAP lore? Third, the book will show that Alternate attempts to rehabilitate Lim Chin Siong as a Progressive Leftist leader whose political career was cruelly cut short by his politically opportunistic detention under Coldstore are wide off the mark. It will be seen that Lim was instead very much the central CUF leader in Singapore.

Fourth, the book will re-evaluate the actions of Lee Kuan Yew and his non-Communist PAP faction in its internal struggle with the pro-Communists within the Party — who later split off to form the BSS, in the years leading up to Coldstore. The issues to explore here are: were Lee’s actions really those of a power-obsessed opportunist as the Alternates allege and that Coldstore was mounted for crass political rather than legitimate security reasons? Fifth and finally, because the current debate on Operation Coldstore shows that a wider popular appreciation of Singapore’s history is sorely needed, the book will outline four key strategies for buttressing a



systematically “pluralized” *Singapore Story 2.0*, so to speak, that embraces not just the perspectives of the political elites but also of ordinary Singaporeans. In the final analysis, in 2015 the nation will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary of independence. Thus a Singapore Story that is seen as consensus-sustaining and widely embraced by the public — particularly the increasingly politically influential “Generation Y” of cosmopolitan, well-travelled and social media-savvy Singaporeans — would appear to be very much a *sine qua non* of the utterly ventilated city-state’s continued stability and vitality amidst a globalized, fast-paced and not infrequently dangerous world.

## Notes

1. Hong Lysa and Huang Jianli, *The Scripting of a National History: Singapore and Its Past* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), pp. 5, 14.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7, 21.
3. Michael D. Barr and Zlatko Skrbis, *Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-building Project* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008), p. 20; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
4. Hong and Huang, *Scripting of a National History*, pp. 2, 15.
5. Barr and Skrbis, *Constructing Singapore*, pp. 21–23.
6. For instance, John Drysdale, *Singapore: The Struggle for Success* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1984); Dennis Bloodworth, *The Tiger and the Trojan Horse* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1986); Alex Josey, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Crucial Years* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1980); Ernest C.T. Chew and Edwin Lee, eds., *A History of Singapore* (Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); C.M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore, 1819–1988* (Singapore and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
7. Lee Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings and Times Editions, 1998); *idem*, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story 1965–2000. Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings and Times Editions, 2000); Albert Lau, *A Moment of Anguish: Singapore in Malaysia and the Politics of Disengagement* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998).
8. Lam Peng Er and Kevin Y.L. Tan eds., *Lee’s Lieutenants: Singapore’s Old Guard* (St Leonard’s: Allen and Unwin, 1999); Loh Kah Seng, “Within the Singapore Story: The Use and Narrative of History in Singapore”, *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asia Studies* 12, no. 2 (1998): 8, n. 3.
9. Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997).
10. For a discussion of how a New Singapore History is needed to act as a “counterhegemonic programme to preempt the PAP’s self-celebratory propaganda on the eve of Singapore’s 50th anniversary as an independent state”, see <<http://>



- akikonomu.blogspot.sg/2014/07/living-with-myths-i-singapore-story.html> (accessed 7 August 2014).
11. Michael D. Barr and Carl A. Trocki, "Introduction", in *Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, edited by Michael D. Barr and Carl A. Trocki (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), p. 3.
  12. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
  13. Lee Ting Hui, *The Open United Front: The Communist Struggle in Singapore, 1954–1966* (Singapore: South Seas Society, 1996), p. 257.
  14. "Alternate" or "New Singapore History" output has become a broad church, spanning the gamut from scholarly works and the memoirs of former detainees, to online blogs, videos and articles. A broadly representative sample would include, *inter alia*, Hong and Huang, *Scripting of a National History*; Barr and Trocki, eds., *Paths Not Taken*; Barr and Skrbis, *Constructing Singapore*; Tan Jing Quee and K.S. Jomo, eds., *Comet In Our Sky: Lim Chin Siong in History* (Kuala Lumpur: INSAN, 2001); Poh Soo Kai, Tang Jing Quee and Koh Kay Yew, eds., *The Fajar Generation: The University Socialist Club and the Politics of Postwar Malaya and Singapore* (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2010); Said Zahari, *Dark Clouds at Dawn: A Political Memoir* (Kuala Lumpur: INSAN, 2001); Poh Soo Kai, Tan Kok Fang and Hong Lysa, eds., *The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore: Commemorating 50 Years* (Petaling Jaya and Kuala Lumpur: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre and Pusat Sejarah Rakyat Malaysia, 2013); Thum Ping Tjin, "The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore", 16 November 2013 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwviaaULeiY>> (accessed 7 August 2014). While some observers may question the need for labelling, it seems apposite to remind one and all that the Alternates have already traversed the labelling path themselves, referring to historians that defend the Singapore Story as "gatekeepers": see for example, Loh Kah Seng and Liew Kai Khiun, eds., *The Makers and Keepers of Singapore History* (Singapore: Ethos Books and Singapore Heritage Society, 2010) and Hong and Huang, *Scripting of a National History*. The current writer himself has been called an "establishment defender": See Geoff Wade, "Singapore's History Wars", 30 April 2014 <<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/04/30/singapores-history-wars/>> (accessed 7 August 2014).
  15. Thum Ping Tjin, "Merger, Acquisition, or Takeover? Singapore's Progressive Left, Merger and the Enduring Consequences of Operation Coldstore", talk delivered at Oxford University, U.K., 31 January 2014.
  16. Hong Lysa, "They Do Say the Darnest Things: What a To-Do About Operation Coldstore", 29 September 2014 <<http://minimyna.wordpress.com/2014/09/29/they-do-say-the-darnest-things-what-a-to-do-about-operation-coldstore/>> (accessed 2 October 2014).
  17. Thum Ping Tjin, "*The Fundamental Issue Is Anti-Colonialism, Not Merger: Singapore's 'Progressive Left', Operation Coldstore, and the Creation of Malaysia*"

- (Singapore: Asia Research Institute Working Paper 211, November 2013), pp. 3, 21.
18. Ibid., pp. 5, 15–16; Geoff Wade, "Operation Coldstore: A Key Event in the Creation of Modern Singapore", in *The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore: Commemorating 50 Years*, edited by Poh Soo Kai, Tan Kok Fang and Hong Lysa (Petaling Jaya and Kuala Lumpur: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre and Pusat Sejarah Rakyat Malaysia, 2013), pp. 38–40.
  19. Wade, "Operation Coldstore", in Poh, Tan and Hong, eds., *The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore*, p. 68.
  20. Ibid., p. 67.
  21. M.K. Rajakumar, "Lim Chin Siong's Place in Singapore History", in Tan and Jomo, eds., *Comet in Our Sky*, p. 111.
  22. Ibid., p. 98.
  23. Ibid. See also Poh Soo Kai, "Living in a Time of Deception", in Poh, Tan and Hong, eds., *The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore*, p. 191; Greg Poulgrain, "Lim Chin Siong in Britain's Southeast Asian De-Colonisation", in Tan and Jomo, eds., *Comet in Our Sky*, p. 123; Thum, "*The Fundamental Issue Is Anti-Colonialism, Not Merger*", pp. 17–19.
  24. Hong and Huang, *Scripting of a National History*, p. 38.
  25. On Lim Chin Siong, see the debate between the author and the Alternates Thum Ping Tjin and Hong Lysa: Thum Ping Tjin, "Lim Chin Siong was Wrongfully Detained", *The Online Citizen*, 8 May 2014 <<http://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2014/05/lim-chin-siong-was-wrongfully-detained/>> (accessed 7 August 2014); Kumar Ramakrishna, "Lim Chin Siong and that Beauty World Speech: A Closer Look", *IPS Commons*, 4 June 2014 <<http://www.ipscommons.sg/index.php/categories/featured/177-lim-chin-siong-and-that-beauty-world-speech-a-closer-look/>> (accessed 7 August 2014); and Hong Lysa's somewhat startling riposte: "What is History: A Glance at 'Lim Chin Siong and that Beauty World Speech: A Closer Look'", 10 June 2014 <<http://minimyna.wordpress.com/2014/06/10/what-is-history-a-glance-at-lim-chin-siong-and-that-beauty-world-speech-a-closer-look/>> (accessed 7 August 2014). The author's defence of the orthodox Coldstore narrative had drawn fire from Hong as well: Kumar Ramakrishna, "Revising the Revisionists: Operation Coldstore in History", *IPS Commons*, 19 February 2014 <<http://www.ipscommons.sg/index.php/categories/featured/159-revising-the-revisionists-operation-coldstore-in-history/>> (accessed 7 August 2014); Hong Lysa, "A Tale Outrageously Told: Days of Rage on the Hock Lee Riots", 23 February 2014 <<http://minimyna.wordpress.com/2014/02/23/a-tale-outrageously-told-days-of-rage-on-the-hock-lee-riots/>> (accessed 7 August 2014). Hong's reactions to the author's Coldstore piece come after her comments on the Hock Lee riot documentary.
  26. Geoff Wade, "Singapore's History Wars", 30 April 2014 <<http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/04/30/singapores-history-wars/>> (accessed 7 August 2014); Tan Bah Bah, "The Lim Chin Siong Story: Clash of the Singapore

- Historians”, *The Independent* (Singapore), 13 June 2014 <<http://theindependent.sg/blog/2014/06/13/lim-chin-siong-story-clash-of-the-singapore-historians/>> (accessed 7 August 2014).
27. Donald Low, “What Went Wrong for the PAP in 2011?”, in *Hard Choices: Challenging the Singapore Consensus*, edited by Donald Low and Sudhir Vadaketh (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), p. 168.
  28. Hong Lysa, “In Memory of Tan Jing Quee”, *The Online Citizen*, 14 June 2014 <<http://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2014/06/in-memory-of-tan-jing-quee/>> (accessed 7 August 2014). The book launched was *The May 13 Generation: The Chinese Middle Schools Student Movement and Singapore Politics in the 1950s* (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2011). It was edited by Tan Jing Quee, Tan Kok Chiang, and Hong Lysa. The book was launched a week after the May 2011 elections.
  29. Ariffin Sha, “Youth of Singapore: It’s Time to Rise”, 31 July 2014 <<http://ariffin-sha.com/arise-young-singaporeans/>> (accessed 7 August 2014).
  30. Hong Lysa, “The Battle for Merger Re-Staged: SG50 and the Art of Shadow Boxing”, *The Online Citizen*, 7 November 2014 <<http://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2014/11/the-battle-for-merger-re-staged-sg-50-and-the-art-of-shadow-boxing/>> (accessed 8 November 2014).
  31. Rajakumar, “Lim Chin Siong’s Place in Singapore History”, in Tan and Jomo, eds., *Comet in Our Sky*, p. 113.
  32. Singapore’s political system has long been the subject of intense debate in the comparative politics domain. Conventional political modernization theories posit that a country as affluent as Singapore should have become a Western-style liberal democracy a long time ago. Scholars variously label Singapore’s current system, *inter alia*, as “soft authoritarian”, “semi-democratic”, “communitarian”, “corporatist”, “illiberal democratic”, and a “networked autocracy”. See respectively, Gordon P. Means, “Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore”, *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 4 (Oct 1996): 103–17; William F. Case, “Can the ‘Half-way House’ Stand? Semidemocracy and Elite Theory in Three Southeast Asian Countries”, *Comparative Politics* 28, no. 4 (July 1996): 437–64; Chua Beng Huat, *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1997); David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1996), chapter 3; Hussin Mutalib, “Illiberal Democracy and the Future of Opposition in Singapore”, *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2000): 313–42; and Cherian George, “Networked Autocracy: Consolidating Singapore’s Political System”, in *Political Change, Democratic Transitions and Security in Southeast Asia*, edited by Mely Caballero-Anthony (London: Routledge, 2009), chapter 7.
  33. Chua Mui Hoong, “Many Singapore Stories, One Resilient Nation”, *Straits Times*, 3 August 2014.
  34. <<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/g/georgesant101521.html>> (accessed 2 October 2014).