

THAT WE MAY DREAM AGAIN: REMEMBERING THE 1987 'MARXIST CONSPIRACY'

Preamble

More than 2,500 Singaporeans have been detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) since the 1960's. The ISA, which allows the arrest and indefinite detention of citizens without trial, is a blunt instrument open to abuse by governments which can and have used, in the decimation of legitimate organisations and individuals opposed to their social, economic and political directions.

25th Anniversary of Operation Spectrum

"Operation Spectrum" was mounted by the Singapore government on 21 May 1987 under the ISA. Sixteen individuals were arrested in the first wave, with another six detained soon after. Two of the lawyers (including a former Solicitor-General of Singapore) who represented these individuals were subsequently detained as well. The 24 arrested were mainly professionals such as lawyers, journalists, community and church workers and entrepreneurs.

The government alleged that the detainees were "Marxist conspirators", without giving them the right of defence in an open trial. Instead, public "confessions" were elicited under the threat of indefinite detention without trial.

These "confessions" were repudiated in a press statement by nine of these individuals some months after their release. Eight of them were immediately re-arrested the next day, while the ninth signatory was in England at the time of re-arrest.

Nothing substantial or credible was ever produced to corroborate the government's allegations. Later documents showed even greater ambiguity in the reasons behind the detentions in 1987. An injustice was perpetuated and continues to linger to this day.

Function 8 Limited and *MARUAH* have come together as informal partners to remember the 25th anniversary of Operation Spectrum through a series of activities that will run till May 2013.

The first session which includes an outdoor exhibition themed ***That We May Dream Again. Remembering the 1987 'Marxist Conspiracy'*** will be held from 3pm to 7pm on Saturday 19th May, 2012 at Speakers' Corner, Hong Lim Park.

Programme

- 3 pm: Exhibition opens
- 3.30 pm: Music performance by Patrick Chng and Joshua Chiang
- 4 pm: Speeches by Braema Mathi, Martyn See, Ravi Philemon, Jeannette Chong Aruldoss, Yap Hon Ngian, Alfian Sa'at, Jolovan Wham, Siew Kum Hong and Vincent Wijeyesingha
- 5.40 pm: Statement by Maruah, Statement by Function 8
- 5.45 pm: Press session
- 5.50 pm: "Lim kopi" sharing sessions with 8 ex-detainees of 1987

Members of the press are invited to attend a Press Conference at 5.45pm, 19 May 2012 at Speaker's Corner where representatives from *Function 8 Ltd* and *MARUAH* will be available to answer queries.

Desired outcomes

We hope these activities would:

- a) help in healing the mental sufferings of the country's ISA survivors and victims who had been unjustly incarcerated by the authorities in the past;
- b) raise awareness on the misuse of the ISA and its continued existence which may lead to complacency in dealing with real security threats to our country;
- c) work towards the abolition of the ISA; and
- d) persuade the government to welcome the return of those who have been forced into exile because of the ISA, such a move being the first step towards national reconciliation and healing for all parties.