WHERE ARE OUR CIVIL UNREST COMMEMORATIVE MARKERS?

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VICTORIA SCHOOL YEAR FOUR
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

ABSTRACT

HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED TO MARK THE LOCATIONS OF THE IMPORTANT RIOTS IN SINGAPORE

THROUGH

ENHANCING THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF CIVIL UNREST
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

DANGER OF LOCAL RIOTS

Definition of a country

Tradition

Memories

National Identity

Preservation

Civil Unrest

Commemorative Markers

Painful Reminder

Awareness
EXISTING MARKERS

• 20 around Singapore

“Konfrontasi”

“Rimau 10 Execution Site”

Memorial of the Konfrontasi Attacks on the MacDonald House

WWII Site
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

RACIAL HARMONY

- Uniting Ethnic Groups and Culture
- Maintaining this as Singaporeans

How?

Commemorative Markers
TECHNOLOGY

Academic Research

Surveying

Research Paper

results showed that 62 of the 64 people don't know the location of the survey.

Thus, this establishes the need for a heritage marker, a symbol that reminds us Singaporeans of the past existence of such significant events. These markers represent the importance of a past event in Singapore, embodying the sense of belonging and National identity within every Singaporean.

Following the news that the Dawson estate, one of our nation's oldest estates, is to be redeveloped, the need for heritage preservation has become more evident. Et bloc activities will cause the replacement of the old HDB blocks. While some think that it's a good initiative to revitalize the neighbourhood in order to further improve communal services to support the growing population, these places mean a lot to many people as many people have already grown up used the environment. Residents are taken aback and put out of their comfort zone in a short notice when they were told to move houses in the short time. This apprehension and shock in the Tanglin Hill Road residents is a clear sign that places with a long history contain sentimental value to many people and thus should be preserved.

To set communalism in context, these riots, if not commemorated visibly to the general public, might be lost in due time. It is definitely more reliable and effective to have public markers to commemorate events rather than leaving them with mime blog posts.
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HOW MANY REALLY KNOW

- Riot Sites
  - Random Sampling
  - Interviews at Riot Sites
e.g. Sook Ching Centre, kallang Gasworks

Sample Size: 62

Do not know: 97%
Know: 3%
Lau, Albert, A Moment of Anguish: Singapore in Malaysia and the politics of disengagement, 165.

The Singapore Riots

junction of Kallang Road and Kampong Soopoo, about seven to eight Malays (including the two who had earlier been involved in the incident with the Chinese cyclist) suddenly broke away from a section of the procession which was about a third behind the PAP contingent. The constable approached them and told them in Malay to rejoin the mainstream. Only one refused to return and he had to be pushed forcibly into line. “Lu Polis boleh tolak sama orang ka?” (You, Police, do you think you can push people around?) someone called, followed by jeering from the group. “Pukul, pukul sama dia,” (Strike, let’s all strike him) another shouted. A group of about 20 Malays then deliberately broke away from the procession and, ignoring the constable’s order to rejoin the marchers, surrounded him and shouted threateningly, “Pukul, pukul”. By now, the size of the group had swelled to about 50. A second FRU Chinese constable who came to his rescue was also surrounded by the unruly group. Seeing the commotion, a third FRU constable, a Malay, quickly intervened and tried to pacify the crowd, which was by now becoming aggressive, but without success. He immediately ran into a coffeeshop at
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS:

'64 RACE RIOTS

Singapore Street directory and Guide, 1963

APPEAL FOR CALM,
The Straits Times,
22 July 1964, Page 1

said: "This afternoon, shortly after five, when the procession of Muslims celebrating Prophet Mohammed's birthday was passing Lorong Soopoo, near the Kallang gas works, a member of the Federal Reserve Unit asked a group who were straggling away from the procession to rejoin the main stream.

"Instead of being obeyed, I was set upon by them. Thereafter a series of disturbances occurred as more groups became unruly and attacked passers-by and spectators.

First unconfirmed reports said fighting broke out along Kallang Road, near the gasworks, at about 5 p.m.

The disturbances occurred during a mammoth procession, which started from the Padang, where earlier in the afternoon about 25,000 Muslims had gathered to commemorate the birthday of the Prophet.

The incident which sparked the initial clash was not immediately known, but scattered incidents were reported as the main body of the procession moved eastward toward Geylang.
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: ‘64 RACE RIOTS
Singapore - An Illustrated History 1941-1984,
Information Division, Ministry of Culture,
Singapore, 165.

The atmosphere of communal distrust and suspicion was soon
to lead to an outbreak of racial
violence in Singapore. During a
Muslim procession (above) on
21 July 1964 to celebrate
Prophet Muhammad’s
birthday, a scuffle broke out
between some Malays and
Chinese which led to rioting.

Word of the fighting spread and
riots soon broke out in other
parts of the island. Vehicles
were burnt, houses set on fire,
and innocent people attacked.
Feeling betrayed by what they saw as the British taking sides with the Dutch, the supporters of Aminah at the Padang started to riot. Any European and Eurasian in sight was attacked. Cars were overturned and burnt. Serious rioting erupted in the vicinity of Sultan Mosque, North Bridge and Jalan Besar roads.

The seventy constables deployed outside the Supreme Court were Malays. This was both unwise and unnecessary because, although the Singapore police force was 90 per cent Malay, it did include about 400 Indians (some admittedly Moslem) and a contingent of 119 Gurkhas especially trained for dealing with riots – a force of particular value in a multi-racial city.

The Malay constables, who had been subjected to considerable propaganda by the Moslem ‘Action Committee’ which led the campaign for Maria Hertogh’s custody, allowed a small crowd of
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: MARIA HERTOGH RIOTS

FIVE DEAD, 100 HURT IN BUSES,
The Strait Times, December 12 1950, p. 1

Controlled Areas

“The disorders,” said an early police statement, “spread after the unauthorised firing of three shots by a civilian by which two Malays were wounded. The civilian has been taken into police custody.”

The disturbances broke out after the shooting outside the High Court. The rioting then spread to other parts of the town, and vehicles and people were indiscriminately attacked.

For several hours the rioters were in complete control of some districts. In front of the Beach Road police station, a retreating force of police were ordered to load their rifles.

They levelled them and an officer warned the mob that the police would fire. The crowd fell back.

In some streets, the rioters set up their own road blocks, stopped cars and buses, inspected the passengers and assaulted all Europeans and Eurasians.
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: MARIA HERTOGH RIOTS

HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: MARIA HERTOGH RIOTS

Singapore - An Illustrated History 1941-1984, Information Division, Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 133.
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: MARIA HERTOGH RIOTS

Supreme Court, today.
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: HOCK LEE BUS RIOTS


Events in the early morning of May 12 confirmed Lee’s worst fears. The pickets manning the gates of the Hock Lee bus depot shouted defiance with clenched fists as the police closed in on them. Fong Swee Suan urged the pickets, if they were ‘brave enough’, to stand firm, but the fierce jets of water from fire hoses swept the pickets away. The buses passed through the gates pelted by stones thrown by students and others who had gathered in their hundreds along Alexandra Road. By the afternoon, students of the Chung Cheng High School and the Chinese High School converged on Alexandra Road circumscribed 20 lorries. A pitched battle between police and 2,000 rioting students, 300-400 strikers and others, raged from the Hock Lee depot to Tiang Bahru. Stones, bottles and tear-gas were the main weapons of the day though the police also used firearms. Running battles continued into the early hours of the following morning. Some 60 Gurkha police were brought in to charge the crowd to no immediate effect.

By dawn the security forces had overcome the resistance. Four people had been killed and 31 injured. Among those who died was a journalist of the American United Press; he was set upon by a mob and received fatal injuries to his head. But when a 16-year-old student, Chong Loon Chuan, was shot and wounded in one lung, less than a mile from the nearest hospital, he became (involuntarily it must surely be assumed) an instant ‘martyr’, preferred dead than alive. Instead of taking him to the hospital, pro-Communist students carried him aloft, parading him...
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS:
HOCK LEE BUS RIOTS

Singapore - From Settlement to Nation pre 1819 to 1971, 68.

The Straits Times, Rioters Battle the Police, 13 May 1955, 1.

Police using fire hoses to control the rioters.

A scene during the Hock Lee Bus Riots.

The battle began at 2.10 p.m. when students of the Chung Cheng High School and the Chinese High School, in 20 lorries, converged on Alexandra Road Circus where the police, after an early-morning action against strike pickets at the depot, were standing by.

It continued throughout the afternoon, with the police using tear gas bombs at intervals, and well into the night.

Police throughout the Colony were put on standby at 2 p.m. when the Commissioner, Mr. Uigel Morris, decided that the situation throughout the town area had deteriorated.
ANATOMY OF RIOTS
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: HOCK LEE BUS RIOTS

Straits Times, Rioters Battle the Police, 13 May 1955, 1.


They had used water hoses and charged with batons and driven away the strikers after on a dispersal order given by a magistrate, Mr. J. M. Devereaux-Colebourn.

Strikers and their supporters had flung bottles and stones at the police who finally drove them from the depot to open ground nearby and from there to the four-road junction at Alexandra Circus.
HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: HOCK LEE BUS RIOTS

Interview with venerable at Kwan Yam Theng Temple, Alexandra Road.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2UPLLnAI7OtVIMwOXBCVVBKa0U/edit?usp=sharing
The Marshall Government's strength and resolve were soon to be tested by the communist united front of trade unions and Chinese middle school students.

On 23 April 1955 some workers of the Hock Lee Amalgamated Bus Co, who were members of the pro-communist Singapore Bus Workers' Union, went on strike (above) in protest against new work rosters and the formation of rival unions. The strikers attempted to stop the buses from leaving the depots. The dispute dragged on into the early weeks of May, with Chinese middle school students and other sympathisers joining the strikers in a show of support.
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HISTORICAL GROUNDWORK ON RIOTS: HOCK LEE BUS RIOTS

Hock Lee Garages today, a block of HDB Flats

Alexandra Circus today
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

DESIGN OF MARKER

Hock Lee Bus Amalgated Company
(Hock Lee Garages)

During the Occupation, the Japanese took over the building for their own propaganda purposes. They tried to impose the Japanese language on the local population through their radio broadcasts. The building was used as a Japanese propaganda center. Listening to these broadcasts was not only a requirement but also a way to improve Japanese broadcasts and linked their Japanese identity with the British broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for news.

The building later served as headquarters for Admiral Lord Bismarck, who occupied the Japanese nationals in 1945.
ANATOMY OF RIOTS

HENCE

• Commemorative Markers
  - Each Location

Race Riots ‘64

Race Riots ‘64

Hock Lee Bus Riots

Maria Hertogh Riots
THANK YOU