



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I have heard some people snicker – or comment negatively – about the way that the Lee Kuan Yew Family governs Singapore. But I, for one, don't feel that way. It is true that, in some ways, Singapore is a dictatorship, but as far as I can see, it is a paternal dictatorship, with Mr Lee Kuan Yew as the father of the country, patting the backs of his good little boys and girls and, sometimes, spanking those of his children that are a little naughty. From time to time, there are very fair elections in the Republic, but, since 1965, the people of Singapore have voted in Mr Lee Kuan Yew as the head of the government, either as the eminence gris or having him don the purple of office. Today, it is the turn of his son, Brigadier Lee Hsien Loong, to pick up the reigns of power and follow in the footsteps of the man who created one of the miracles of Asia, known as The Republic of Singapore. There have been those who have criticised Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his Family members for the way in which the law is administered in order to silence the political opposition, but the fact remains that the people of Singapore like their lifestyle and the methods of their government under the leadership of 'Lee Kuan Yew Incorporated'. You know, it is very easy to criticise another person for this and that, but there are not many people in this world, who can claim to have achieved the feats of Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his Family members. Probably, in the history of the world, there has never been a leader of any territory, who has bankrupted as many people as has Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his sycophants. One must realise, however, that whenever Mr Lee Kuan Yew brought a legal action against a member of the political opposition, the highest judges in Singapore came down on the side of this outstanding statesman with an international reputation for intelligence and perspicacity. Clearly, if Singaporean judges determine that their Prime Minister/Senior Minister is in the right, then, one has to accept the fact that the law has made a determination, based on the facts as presented to the Singapore High Court.

*You know, My Dear Grandchild, there is not just one kind of democracy in this world of ours, as has recently been proved with regard to the West Bank when HAMAS – HAMAS is the acronym for **H**arakat **a**l-**M**uqawama **a**l-**I**slamiyya, or Islamic Resistance Movement – became the official government of the Palestinian people. HAMAS makes no bones about the fact that it wants to see the State of Israel, along with its six million-plus human inhabitants, wiped off the face of the earth. Nevertheless, the good Palestinian people voted in the terrorists as their legitimate government in a free election. One must respect the will of the people. In Iran, there are free elections, also, but in this fundamentalistic Islamic nation, it is a theocracy, not a democracy. This is a country where there is a system of government by sacerdotal order. The head of the government is voted in during free elections, just like in the United States or the United Kingdom. In most countries of the world, today, it is an accepted fact that one man has to be responsible for the administration of a government, be it a president, prime minister, Ayatollah, King, dictator, Pope, etc. This is because, as in any well-organised family, it is almost impossible for a woman to have two husbands because the husbands, clearly, cannot get on together. There can only be one head/husband/ruler of a territory/family unit and his or her determination points the direction for the future welfare of all of the charges beneath that chosen leader. The trouble with some of the leaders of the so-called free world is that they seem to think that they know and understand everything about everybody and every other society in this wonderful world of ours. Getting back to Singapore, there is good reason that the Lee Kuan Yew Family continues to rule the Republic. It is because it is determined by the good people of Singapore that there is no other candidate as qualified as the members of the Family of Lee Kuan Yew. Today, it is the oldest son of paterfamilias Lee Kuan Yew. Tomorrow, it may well be the son or daughter of Prime Minister Lee Hsien*

Loong. Again, you may criticise, but you have to understand that, in Singapore, there is only a very limited number of people from which the electorate may choose their leader. According to the 2005 census, there were only about four million five hundred thousand people in the Republic. Brunei is in a similar position as Singapore because, in this country, there are less than four hundred thousand people, who are ruled by a Sultan. Executive authority of Brunei is held by the Legislative Council of twenty members, most of whom are members of the royal family. The Council is presided over by the Sultan of Brunei, himself, and by the chief minister (mentri besar), who is responsible, directly, to the Sultan. The Sultan has ruled by decree since 1962. This legal system is based on Islamic law. It is a very democratic system of government, too, and the people are well cared for by the paternalism of the Sultan, who is one of the richest men in the world, thanks to the amount of wealth that he has amassed due to the country's oil and natural gas fields, the revenue of which goes into his bank accounts. I have never heard of anybody in Brunei, complaining about the Sultanate. In fact, I am told that everybody is very happy in this country where, although the people are quite poor, there is no taxation system – except if a foreigner wants to start a new business in the Sultanate, in which case, it is required that a member of the royal family be a shareholder.

So the next time that you want to criticise a government, reread the above and consider carefully the implications of that which you are about to utter: Do not libel your betters – especially when they hold positions of power.

Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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