

# When Activism Turns to Violence

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# The Riots

- Despite the increased restrictions, there were still moments when discontent in Singapore turned into violence
- There were 4 notable riots that happened in post-war colonial Singapore
- **You can read about the Maria Hertogh riots (pp. 49-50); the National Service riots (pp. 78-81); the Hock Lee Bus riots (pp. 81-84); and the Chinese Middle School Students Union riots (p. 90) in the textbook**



# The Maria Hertogh Riots

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- 11-13 December 1950
- Involved the custody of Dutch girl who was raised by Malay family during the war
- When the courts sided with the Dutch parents, the Malay community was outraged
- Protests and riots broke out, leading to 9 dead and 127 injured
- Infopedia:  
[https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_83\\_2005-02-02.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_83_2005-02-02.html)



# The National Service Riots

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- 13 and 22 May 1954
- British passed National Service Bill for compulsory conscription of young, able-bodied males
- Chinese students were unhappy and boycotted the NS registration
- Thousands of students from Chinese middle schools took part in the protests, leading to 26 injured
- Infopedia:  
[https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1202\\_2006-07-28.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1202_2006-07-28.html)



# The Hock Lee Bus Riots

- 25 April – 12 May 1955
- Workers from Hock Lee Bus Company struck for better wages and working conditions
- They tried to block the bus depot and interfered with bus services
- When police were sent to disperse the workers, it escalated into a riot which led to 4 dead and 31 injured
- Infopedia:  
[https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_4\\_2005-01-06.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_4_2005-01-06.html)





# The Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union Riots

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- Sep-Oct 1956
- Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union (SCMSSU) formed after police crackdown on the National Service Riots in 1954
- Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock banned the SCMSSU as it was believed to be a communist organisation
- Triggered series of protests and sit-ins involving thousands of students
- HistorySG:  
<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/event/s/376486b7-a68b-4a2b-acad-97e0b678a8e7>



# Task: Committee of Inquiry (COI)

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- The British Governor has requested for a full report on the riots that have plagued Singapore in order to make sure it does not happen again
- As a government official, pick one of the 4 riots we have just learnt about and submit your report and recommendations to the Governor





# Modern day example: COI on Little India Riots

Why is it important to conduct a full investigation into such events when they have already passed?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol6StICCLil>





# Task: Committee of Inquiry (COI)

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- Aside from the textbook, more information about the riots can be found on their respective Infopedia pages
- Feel free to make use of any other relevant resources
- Fill up Section F of your worksheet with your findings
- **Estimated duration: 20 minutes**