

Serving a new nation: Baey Lian Peck's Singapore story

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Abstrak

The story of Dr Baey Lian Peck should be well known, but it is not. Not even among Singaporeans, and especially not among the young. This tells us a lot about a Singapore caught in pathological haste and prone towards ignoring values that do not add to the financial bottom line. The innovativeness of Dr Baey did not only make him a very wealthy man before he was forty, it also made him an indispensable actor in the implementation of urgently constructed national policies. Political leaders such as Dr Toh Chin Chye, Lim Kim San, Chua Sian Chin and Dr Goh Keng Swee picked him to solve pressing problems such as skyrocketing inflation in the early 1970s, the crisis in prisoner ward in the late 1970s, and the drug addiction epidemic in that same latter period. His one condition for taking on public positions was that he should not be paid. It was exactly this independent trait that made him so highly effective.