

Sedition Act
(CHAPTER 290)

Table of Contents

Long Title

1 Short title

2 Interpretation

3 Seditious tendency

4 Offences

5 Legal proceedings

6 Evidence

7 Innocent receiver of seditious publication

8 Issue of search warrant

9 Suspension of newspaper containing seditious matter

10 Power of Court to prohibit circulation of seditious publications

11 Arrest without warrant

Legislative History

SEDITION ACT

(CHAPTER 290)

(Original Enactment: M Ordinance 14 of 1948)

REVISED EDITION 2013

(31st August 2013)

An Act for the punishment of sedition.

[28th May 1964]

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the Sedition Act.

Interpretation

2. In this Act —

“publication” includes all written or printed matter and everything whether of a nature similar to written or printed matter or not containing any visible representation or by its form, shape or in any other manner capable of suggesting words or ideas, and every copy and reproduction or substantial reproduction of any publication;

“seditious” when applied to or used in respect of any act, speech, words, publication or other thing qualifies such act, speech, words, publication or other thing as one having a seditious tendency;

“words” includes any phrase, sentence or other consecutive number or combination of words, oral or written.

Seditious tendency

- 3.—(1) A seditious tendency is a tendency —

- (a) to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the Government;
- (b) to excite the citizens of Singapore or the residents in Singapore to attempt to procure in Singapore, the alteration, otherwise than by lawful means, of any matter as by law established;
- (c) to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the

administration of justice in Singapore;

- (d) to raise discontent or disaffection amongst the citizens of Singapore or the residents in Singapore;
- (e) to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races or classes of the population of Singapore.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), any act, speech, words, publication or other thing shall not be deemed to be seditious by reason only that it has a tendency —

- (a) to show that the Government has been misled or mistaken in any of its measures;
- (b) to point out errors or defects in the Government or the Constitution as by law established or in legislation or in the administration of justice with a view to the remedying of such errors or defects;
- (c) to persuade the citizens of Singapore or the residents in Singapore to attempt to procure by lawful means the alteration of any matter in Singapore; or
- (d) to point out, with a view to their removal, any matters producing or having a tendency to produce feelings of ill-will and enmity between different races or classes of the population of Singapore,

if such act, speech, words, publication or other thing has not otherwise in fact a seditious tendency.

(3) For the purpose of proving the commission of any offence under this Act, the intention of the person charged at the time he did or attempted to do or made any preparation to do or conspired with any person to do any act or uttered any seditious words or printed, published, sold, offered for sale, distributed, reproduced or imported any publication or did any other thing shall be deemed to be irrelevant if in fact such act had, or would, if done, have had, or such words, publication or thing had a seditious tendency.

Offences

4.—(1) Any person who —

- (a) does or attempts to do, or makes any preparation to do, or conspires with any person to do, any act which has or which would, if done, have a seditious tendency;
- (b) utters any seditious words;
- (c) prints, publishes, sells, offers for sale, distributes or reproduces any

sedition publication; or

(d) imports any seditious publication,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction for a first offence to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both, and, for a subsequent offence, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years; and any seditious publication found in the possession of that person or used in evidence at his trial shall be forfeited and may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of as the court directs.

(2) Any person who without lawful excuse has in his possession any seditious publication shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction for a first offence to a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 18 months or to both, and, for a subsequent offence, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years, and such publication shall be forfeited and may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of as the court directs.

Legal proceedings

5.—(1) No prosecution for an offence under section 4 shall be begun except within 6 months after the offence is committed:

Provided that for the purposes of this subsection a prosecution shall be deemed to be begun against any person when a warrant or summons has been issued in respect of any charge made against that person and based on the facts or incident in respect of which the prosecution afterwards proceeds.

(2) No person shall be prosecuted for an offence under section 4 without the written consent of the Public Prosecutor. In such written consent the Public Prosecutor may designate any court to be the court of trial.

Evidence

6.—(1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Evidence Act (Cap. 97), no person shall be convicted of an offence under section 4 on the uncorroborated testimony of one witness.

(2) No person shall be convicted of any offence referred to in section 4(1)(c) or (d) if such person proves that the publication in respect of which he is charged was printed, published, sold, offered for sale, distributed, reproduced or imported (as the case may be) without his authority, consent and knowledge and without any want of due care or caution on his part or that he did not know and had no reason to believe that the publication had a seditious tendency.

Innocent receiver of seditious publication