INTRODUCTION

Democracy is that form of a political system in which the mass of people possess the right to share in the exercise of sovereign power. Democracy literally means the rule of the people. Abraham Lincoln, a former President of America, defined it as the "government of the people, by the people and for the people".\(^1\) It is a system of governance in which the people are given constitutional rights to participate in the decision making process. It may be either direct democracy or representative democracy. Direct democracy existed in ancient Greek city states where all the people assembled together to discuss their problems.\(^2\) But this is not suited to the present situation in the world. It is impossible for millions of people to get together and solve their problems through discussion. Therefore, they elect representatives through general elections to represent their interests and take decisions accordingly.

In 1960, Lee Kuan Yew, the then Prime Minister of Singapore in a radio interview explained democracy to mean that "there is some measure of popular support" and the government "trying to act in accordance with the wishes of the

\(^1\) Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln: Tge Prairie Years and Won Years (London, 1955), pp.444-5.

He emphasized that the government should be elected by the free choice of the people by a secret ballot at periodic intervals. He also emphasized that power should be exercised in the interests of the whole community.

S. Rajaratnam who was the Labour Minister in 1970 was credited with the view which emphasized the role of opposition in a democracy. In his opinion, the opposition must not only be capable of effective and intelligent criticism but also be able to present itself as a practical alternative to the ruling party as a government. 4

The general characteristics of democracy are that the form of government should be supported by general consent, laws should be made by the representatives chosen by the electorate, the opportunity to serve in government should be open to all the citizens, equal enjoyment of fundamental rights, free and fair periodic elections, universal adult franchise etc. 5 Democracy is considered as the best form of government because it reposes confidence in the peoples' capacity and makes the government responsible to the people. On the other hand, democracy is also criticized as being inefficient. Since it is based on equality it gives the common man an opportunity to elect representatives and a share in the

3 Ibid., p.8.
policy making. Lee Kuan Yew did not support the idea of one-man one-vote system. According to him, in a "country where majority of the people are illiterate, the constitution cannot protect the people against bad elected government". He said that "if I were in authority in Singapore indefinitely without having to ask those who are governed whether they like what is being done, then I have not the slightest doubt that I could govern much more effectively in their own interests".  

The only solution could be that the electorate is educated and hence can protect its own rights and duties. It is also necessary that people enjoy fundamental rights without any danger of encroachment by the government.

The present thesis makes a review of the parliamentary system of democracy both in theory and practice.

The thesis discusses the constitutional provisions, party system and nature of polity in Singapore. It makes a study of the measures used by the government that led to the negation of the principles of democracy provided by the constitution of the country. The thesis also explores the factors that led to the elimination of opposition and establishment of "one-party" rule. The thesis also discusses the factors that resulted in the establishment of an

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6 Ibid., p.252.
"administrative state". The present chapter traces the constitutional developments and evolution of party system in Singapore before 1965. It also discusses circumstances that led to the Singapore’s merger with Federation of Malaysia and its separation from the Federation in 1965, when Singapore declared itself an independent country.

Among the newly independent countries in the world, Singapore occupies a pride of place as one of the most advanced countries. With its highly developed wholesale retail commerce, banking system, insurance, shipping and storage facilities, Singapore ranks among the greatest commercial centres. Following independence in August 1965, Singapore adopted a parliamentary form of government as it had inherited it from the British. In this period, 1965-1980, Singapore had been under the rule of the People’s Action Party (PAP) led by Lee Kuan Yew. During this period, it won substantial number of seats in all the elections. The one party rule ensured political stability and economic development. The situation continued till 1980 when the PAP thought it fit to encourage the younger generation leaders to come up and participate in the decision making process. The purpose was to provide for a second generation leadership in the coming decade.

Singapore owes its prosperity to its geographical location because of its importance in international trade. It lies between the sea routes which connects the Indian ocean

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8 Ibid., p.vii.
with Pacific, one of the cross roads of world shipping and traffic. Located at the southern tip of Malay Peninsula, Singapore is the centre of world’s richest areas of natural wealth. Also its deep water harbour had made it the natural outlet for products of Malaya and the neighbouring countries. The straits of Malacca, along which it is based on the southeastern tip of peninsular Malaysia is the major channel through which east-west trade must pass.\(^9\) Singapore is a small country of 626.4 sq km with its large neighbours - Federation of Malaysia to the north and Indonesia to the south.\(^10\) Though Singapore does not have any natural resources, because of its strategic location Singapore achieved significant economic development and importance in regional and global politics.

Demographically, Singapore is a multi-ethnic state. It consists of 77.7 per cent Chinese, 14.1 per cent Malays, 7.1 per cent Indians and 1.1 per cent others.\(^11\) Malay is the national language while Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil are the official languages. There are different religious groups in Singapore. Twenty eight per cent are Buddhists, 19 per cent are Christians, 16 per cent are Muslims, 15 per cent Taoists,

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\(^9\) Ibid.


5 per cent Hindus and 7 per cent others.\(^\text{12}\)

Democracy was introduced in Singapore in stages under the British rule. Before the World War II the British had ruled over Singapore as one of the three straits settlements, the other two being Penang and Malacca.\(^\text{13}\) In 1946 the straits settlements were reorganised. Penang and Malacca joined Malay states to form Malayan union. Simultaneously, Singapore was made a crown colony. On 1 April 1946, a new Constitution was introduced to pave way for establishing self rule. It provided for a legislative council consisting of governor, nine officials and thirteen unofficials, of whom four would be nominated by the governor, three chosen by the Chambers of Commerce (previously known as Chinese Commercial Association) and remaining six elected by adult British subjects who had been residents in Singapore for one year prior to election scheduled to be held in March 1948.\(^\text{14}\) In the same year in June, a new party called Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) the first non-communist political party, was formed in Singapore. It opposed the legislative council on racial basis and urged that the legislative councillors should represent geographic constituencies.\(^\text{15}\) The governor retained powers over reserved

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\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., pp.15-17.  
\(^\text{13}\) Singapore, Singapore 1994 (Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore, 1994), p.15.  
\(^\text{15}\) Straits Times (Singapore), 4 July 1947.
subjects. He also retained the power to veto the legislative council's proceedings. He, however, remained subject only to the ultimate control of the Secretary of State for Colonies in London.

Unsatisfied by the constitutional reforms MDU collaborated with Malay Communist Party (MCP), the oldest political party in Singapore, to fight against colonialism. It also decided to boycott the elections and staged mass rallies to protest against the new Constitution. On 25 August 1947, three lawyers, C.C. Tan, John Ley Cock and N.A. Mallal formed the Progressive Party. They were prepared to cooperate closely with the colonial authorities in working with the post-war constitutional reforms.

Thus followed the first elections in Singapore in March 1948. The Progressive Party was the only party to fight for this election. It campaigned for merger with Malaya and equal rights for all. The electorate was confined to British subjects only by birth or naturalisation. The exclusion of immigrants and those not educated in English meant that about one-half of the Singapore's adult population was disenfranchised. Out of 250,000 potential voters 22,000

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16 Josey, n.2, p.17.
17 C.M. Turnbull, n.14, p.236.
were registered and of these only 13,458 persons voted. Majority of those who voted were Indians. Six legislative councillors were elected. Three seats were won by progressives and the other three by independents.20

With the replacement of the Malayan Union Constitution of April 1946 came a new Constitution of the Federation of Malaya. With it came a new constitution in Singapore. It provided for an Executive Council which would have six officials and four nominated unofficials and a Legislative Council having nine officials and thirteen non-officials. Of these, thirteen non-officials were to be nominated by the governor and three were to be chosen by members of Chambers of Commerce and the remaining six elected by the adult British subjects who had been residing in Singapore one year prior to election.21

The second elections were held in 1951. The colonial authorities increased the number of elected seats to nine in the assembly of twenty-five.22 The legislative council was to be chaired by Tan Chin Taun, the chief of the executive committee during the absence of the governor. For the first time, non-officials would equal the officials in the executive council. But the governor retained his casting vote and had

20 Josey, n.2, p.32.


22 Josey, n.2, p.33.
reserved powers over currency, banking, trade related duties, treaties, defence and racial and religious privileges. 23

From 1948 to 1951, though political parties were established, there was no competitive party politics. Understandably, the party system had just started developing. The politics was not mass politics. The people had to voluntarily register themselves in the voters' list. The candidates who contested belonged to English educated professionals.

Out of the twenty two candidates who contested for nine seats in 1951 elections, fifteen were Indians and one Cylonese. Eight candidates belonged to the Progressive Party led by C.C. Tan and seven to the Labour Front led by Francis Thomas, P.D. Nair, Peter Williams and N.A. Maji. The Progressive Party opposed the immediate merger of the Malaya and Singapore on the grounds that the Malayan constitution failed to give equal rights to Malays and non-Malays. Most of the progressive party leaders were professionals. Also, most of them were of British nationality or British protected status. Seventy percent of its members were from the middle income groups. Out of 48,000 voters only 25,065 voted. The Progressive Party won 6 seats, Labour Front 2 seats and one seat was won by an independent who was the first woman to be elected to the Council. 24 From 1948 to 1954, Labour Front was

24 Josey, n.2, p.33.
the chief rival of the Progressive Party.

In 1953, the British government appointed George Rendell to head the Constitutional Commission for a reviewal of the constitutional status of the colony and to recommend changes. Its report was published in 1954 and came into effect from 1955. The Rendell Constitution provided for a Legislative Assembly of 32 members. Of these, 25 were to be elected and 3 were to be ex-officio ministers. The Chambers of Commerce were to lose their special voting privileges. The Rendell Commission declared voluntary registration ineffective. So it recommended for automatic registration. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly was to be appointed by the governor from outside the assembly and not elected by the House.

The Commission suggested that the Executive Council be replaced by a council of nine ministers. Of them, three were to be appointed by the governor and the remaining six recommended by the leader of the strongest party in the Legislative Assembly who was appointed by the governor. The cabinet would have full powers over all matters except external affairs, internal security and defence. The elected assembly men would gain control over commerce, industry, labour, immigration, social welfare, education, housing, Communication, public works and health. But the important

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ministries such as finance, judicial system and information services were under the control of the three colonial ministers nominated by the governor. The Commission recommended for retaining English as the sole official language. The governor retained reserved and veto powers over legislation by the assembly. If the assembly failed to pass a bill, the governor would enact it if he considered it essential. The first elected government would hold office for four years but would resign if the Chief Minister suffered a defeat in the assembly.

Rendell Constitution marked the beginning of constitutional developments for self-rule and sought to encourage popular participation in politics by increasing the number of elected members in the legislature and by the introduction of automatic registration. But the areas of external affairs and internal security remained in the hands of the colonial government with the governor of Singapore as the British Queen's representative. In fact the Rendell reforms introduced a sort of dyarchy. The popularly elected government had to share the burden of running the government with a governor and his colonial apparatus.

The constitution also rejected the demands of large


number of public organizations which enjoyed popular support.\textsuperscript{29} The Joint Action Committee, the most powerful of all the public organizations advocated immediate internal self-government. This was rejected on the pretext of communist subversion and the fear of communists capturing power in the island. No doubt the Rendell Constitution provided for some of the important characteristics of democracy like providing for a government comprising largely of locally elected politicians, subordination of civil servants to the political leaders and the principle of ministerial responsibility. But the effectiveness of these recommendations was diminished because the British colonial interests were represented by the appointment of three civil servants as ex-officio ministers in the Cabinet. According to the constitutional report, the presence of the three officials was crucial when policy decisions were to be made in the Cabinet meetings.\textsuperscript{30} It was clear that the three bureaucrats would have more influence than the elected ministers.

In 1953 two significant anti-colonial parties were established. They were People's Action Party (PAP) led by Lee Kuan Yew and Labour Front (LF) led by David Marshall. These two parties considered the provisions of the Randell Constitution below their aspiration for self government, and campaigned for immediate self-government and merger with

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p.104.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
The PAP consisted of both communist and moderate members. Most of its leaders were trade union leaders coming from the Chinese middle schools. Realising that a large mass of Chinese population could not be ignored, Lee Kuan Yew sought to project the PAP as a revolutionary party. Its demands were "repeal of emergency regulations which the British had imposed during the communist insurrection since 1948, independence for united Malaya and Singapore, grant of official recognition of Chinese and Tamil languages and universal adult franchise". Lee Kuan Yew knew that the pro-communist members of the party like Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Sandra Woodhull, James Puthucheary, S.T. Bani and Jamit Singh insisted on repeal of emergency regulations. Hence the inclusion of the demand in the PAP set of demands. This, according to Lee Kuan Yew, would alone ensure the support of the communists for gaining independence. He had to work in cooperation with the communists, simultaneously, however, he had to be careful about the communists capturing the leadership of the PAP.

**Elections Held Between 1955-1963**

After the Rendell Constitution came into effect the elections were held in 1955, 1959 and 1963 providing for popularly elected governments. The number of voters and even

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31 Le Poer, n.19, p.4.
32 George, n.7, p.38.
33 Ibid., p.32.
those who contested the elections increased due to automatic registration. In 1955 elections 76 persons including two women contested.\textsuperscript{34} The PAP chose not to attempt an electoral victory because of the belief that their political interests would suffer if they came up to forming a government under Rendell Constitution.\textsuperscript{35} Progressive Party and Democratic party, though prominent political parties at that time, lost elections because they made little attempt to woo the masses. Labour Front won ten seats and formed coalition government along with United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and the Malay Chinese Association (MCA) and Singapore Malays Union.\textsuperscript{36}

In 1959 general elections the number of voters increased to 555,655 as compared to 30,070 voters in 1955 elections because of the 1957 Citizenship Ordinance according to which all the people born in Singapore automatically became the citizens of Singapore.\textsuperscript{37} Citizenship by registration was conferred on citizens of UK and colonies born in the federation of Malaya and Borneo territories and on citizens of Commonwealth after two years of residence in Singapore and taking an oath of allegiance to the new constitution and on all other persons citizenship was conferred after four years.

\textsuperscript{34} Josey, n.2, p.33.
\textsuperscript{35} George, n.7, p.37.
\textsuperscript{36} Chan Heng Chee, \textit{Dynamics of One Party Dominance: The PAP at the Grass-roots} (Singapore, 1976), p.189.
of residence. Voting was made compulsory. The names of those who did not vote would be cut off from the voters list and would be registered only if valid reasons were given. A fine of 500 Singapore dollars was fixed in such cases.

The main contestants were PAP and Labour Front. Both criticised each other as corrupt and inefficient while trying to project themselves as honest and competent. PAP won a stunning majority with 43 out of 51 seats.

From 1946 to 1959 elections grew in importance. The number of elected seats increased from 6 in 1948 to 9 in 1951, to 25 in 1955 to a fully elected legislature in 1959. Even the number of political parties increased from one in 1948 to two in 1952 to six in 1955 to thirteen in 1959.

Quite practicably in 1963 elections also, the PAP won a clear majority winning thirty seven seats. Barisan Sosialis won thirteen seats, United Peoples' Party won one seat. There was only nine days' time for campaigning. The reason for the failure of Barisan Sosialis was that it depended exclusively on Trade union base. It failed to attract English educated moderates and middle class intellectuals because of its extremist policies. Most of its leaders were arrested under Internal Security Act. The 1963 election was the "last


40 Chan Heng Chee, n.36, p.190.
attempt of opposition challenge to the PAP through constitutional means". 41

On 16 April 1955 David Marshall of the Labour Front assumed powers as the first Chief Minister of Singapore. 42 He formed a government with the support of the three alliance members, three ex-officio members and two nominated non-officials in the assembly of thirty two members. The opposition comprised of six liberal socialists, three PAP members and three independent candidates. 43

From the very outset David Marshall had problems with the colonial authorities. The Rendell Constitution did not define the powers of the Chief Minister. The Governor, Sir John Nicoll made it clear that "Marshall’s victory did not give him clear mandate". 44 The Rendell Constitution laid down that the Governor must consult his Chief Minister. It did not however specify that he must act on the latter’s advice. Nicoll had anticipated that the leader of the House would be the Minister of Commerce and Industry, but David Marshall insisted on making the office of the Chief Minister a full time appointment and created a separate Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Nicoll attempted to treat him as a figurehead even

41 George, n.7, p.70.
42 Singapore, Singapore 1990 (Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore, 1990), p.23.
43 Turnbull, n.14, p.258.
44 Ibid., p.259.
refusing to allot him a room until David Marshall threatened to set up his desk under a tree in front of the secretariat.\textsuperscript{45}

David Marshall’s victory in these two tasks created difficulties for PAP moderates who tried to project a more radical image to attract the masses. Therefore Lee Kuan Yew had to work with the left wing leaders in order to get the support of the Chinese educated majority. In July 1955 the new governor Robert Black refused David Marshall’s demand for appointment of four assistant ministers. David Marshall threatened to resign unless Singapore was given immediate independence.\textsuperscript{46} Fearing the take over of a more radical government the colonial office ruled that the governor should henceforth act according to the advice of the Chief Minister. David Marshall succeeded in appointing the ministers. He also appointed an all-party committee to investigate into Chinese education. His government passed a labour ordinance in December 1955 to restrict hours of labour and drew a proposal for a single Singapore citizenship.\textsuperscript{47}

In April 1956 David Marshall took an all party delegation to London for constitutional talks.\textsuperscript{48} The delegation included Lee Kuan Yew and Lim Chin Siong of the People’s Action Party.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Josey, n.2, p.22.

\textsuperscript{47} Turnbull, n.14, p.263.

David Marshall demanded full internal self-government by April 1957 leaving foreign policy and external defence. He also demanded that Singapore should be given rights of consultation on foreign affairs and a veto on defence. There was an agreement on many details such as making Singapore a state, abolition of nominated and ex-officio members of the assembly, increasing the strength of the assembly to double, Malayanisation of civil service and the Prime Minister to preside over the Council of Ministers etc. But the British government retained internal security, defence and external affairs.\(^49\) The constitution offered by the British provided that defence and Internal Security Council would be presided by a High Commissioner. It would also include twenty other representatives of Singapore government.

David Marshall agreed to accept these proposals on the condition that these powers would be used on the recommendations of Defence and Security Council which would have a Malayan Chairman and the British should have minority of votes. The British government insisted that they would have powers for suspending the constitution something which they could use in emergency. Singapore delegation was of the view that the British would have no such powers except the ultimate powers to suspend the constitution.\(^50\) The British government


\(^{50}\) Turnbull, n.14, p.263.
was fully aware of the unstable foundation of the David Marshall’s government. They did not consider his government as alternative which would safeguard the British interests and prevent Singapore from falling into communists’ hands.

The demands made by him were rejected. The British refused to give up control over internal security and defence. Nine members of the David Marshall’s All-Party Delegation voted against the constitutional provisions provided by the British and four members abstained.\(^{51}\) The talks failed and David Marshall resigned on 6 June 1956 and his deputy Lim Yew Hock became the second Chief Minister.\(^{52}\) This was the first experience of change of government in Singapore.

In March 1957 Lim Yew Hock sent a second All Party Delegation to London to renew the constitutional talks.\(^{53}\) The British proposed to create a seven-member Internal Security Council consisting of the British and three Singapore members and one member of the Federation of Malaya. The casting vote was to be in the hands of the federation which was interested in suppressing the communists.\(^{54}\) Ex-officio and nominated members of the Assembly would be removed and elected members


\(^{54}\) Turnbull, n.14, p.266.

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would be in the hands of the British government. The British governor would be replaced by a High Commissioner. The head of the state would be known as Yangdi Pertuan Negara and would be chosen from among the distinguished Singaporeans to become the Queen's representative for a period of four years. The head of the state had the power to appoint Prime Minister who in his judgement would have the command of the majority support in the legislature. The Prime Minister would preside over the Council of Ministers. The persons known to have been engaged in subversive activities should not be eligible for election to the first legislative assembly of the new state of Singapore. Aliens who had been residing for eleven years in Singapore would be registered as citizens if they took an oath of loyalty and gave up allegiance to any foreign state. The British reserved the right to suspend the constitution in case of dire emergency. David Marshall criticised Lim Yew Hock for accepting the constitution. This was a compromise because the British did not intend to give up control over security matters completely.

The Singapore Legislative Assembly accepted the proposals and a delegation was scheduled to go to London in 1958 for a

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55 Shee Poon Kim, "The Evolution of the Political System" in Jon S.T. Quah, n.28, p.4.
third and final round of talks on the new constitution. In 1956 People's Action Party's new Central Executive Committee (CEC) was elected and the strength of the pro-communist members increased to four. The non-communists numbered eight. The communists were pressurising for a constitution which would allow the party branches to nominate members to CEC. But in September 1956, as a part of a general campaign to counter subversion the government led by Lim Yew Hock, detained all four members including Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan and Devan Nair. In August 1957 they tried again and gained six seats in the CEC. Realising that they had lost control of the party, Chairman Toh Chin Chye refused to take office. The communists sought to consolidate their strength by planning to capture the leadership of the PAP Trade Union Congress.

The government reacted to the situation by arresting thirty-four communists including five of the members of the PAP branches. It crippled the power of the extremists based in the PAP without incurring unpopularity for moderate leaders in it. Quite interestingly, the Lim Yew Hock government had, by taking action against the extremists in the PAP, benefitted the moderates led by Lee Kuan Yew.

59 Clutterbuck, n.57, p.146.
60 Lee Kuan Yew, n.58, p.25.
Being wiser by the events that took place, the PAP changed the party's constitution which created two kinds of membership - ordinary membership and cadre membership. Ordinary membership was open to all. Cadre members had to serve on probation period, and their membership had to be approved by the CEC. Only the cadre members could contest for and elect CEC. This ensured the supremacy of moderates in the PAP. But Lee Kuan Yew on the surface continued to support the pro-communist leaders agitating for the release of the imprisoned associates to keep up his revolutionary image. As a part of All Parties Development Committee appointed by David Marshall to deal with the problems of education and also as a member of the two delegations to London for constitutional talks, Lee Kuan Yew took an active part without being identified with the ruling regime.

Meanwhile Lim Yew Hock government continued to make future progress on issues related to self government. The Education Ordinance passed in 1957 gave equal status to all the four languages, Tamil, Malay, Chinese and English and had opened hundred new elementary schools and made efforts for the promotion of Malay and Chinese languages. The Citizenship Ordinance passed in 1957 had provided citizenship to all the people born in Singapore, The Federation of Malaya and for British citizens of two years residence and naturalised

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62 Turnbull, n.14, p.266.
subjects who had resided in Singapore for two years and had sworn loyalty to the government of Singapore.\textsuperscript{63}

In April 1958, Lim Yew Hock led a Singapore delegation to the third round of constitutional talks. This resulted in an agreement giving Singapore full powers of internal self government with the British retaining external defence and internal security. Subsequently in August 1958, the British Parliament passed a State of Singapore Act which had declared Singapore a state with control over all domestic affairs including finance.\textsuperscript{64}

In June 1959 the new constitution came into force and Lee Kuan Yew became the first Prime Minister of Singapore on 4 June 1959. Lee Kuan Yew refused to take office unless the PAP political detainees were released. The government ordered for their release and Lee Kuan Yew was sworn in as the Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{65} He appointed Lim Chin Siong and three other ex-detainees as political secretaries in the new government but in ministries where they could exercise little power. He also reorganised the Central Executive Committee of the party and did not give the ex-detainees cadre membership. His cabinet comprised of Toh Chin Chye the party Chairman, Goh Heng Swee an economist and S. Rajaratnam, an able journalist who displayed excellent political skill and talent. Sir William

\textsuperscript{63} Singapore, Singapore \textit{1990}, n.42, p.23.

\textsuperscript{64} Le Poer, n.19, p.52.

\textsuperscript{65} Josey, n.2, p.40.
Goode, who acted as Yangdi Pertuan Negara for first six months was succeeded by Yusobin Ishak, former Chairman of the Public Service Commission in December 1959.

The office of the Governor was abolished. The British Commissioner though remained in the background, was entitled to see the agenda of the Cabinet meetings. He was also the Chairman of Internal Security Council and had the power to suspend the Constitution and assume charge of the government.\(^6^6\)

With the release of the arrested pro-communist members the intra-party struggle within the PAP reemerged. In 1960 PAP leadership was challenged by its own pro-communist member Ong Eng Guan, the party Treasurer and National Development Minister. At a PAP special conference on 18th and 19th June 1960 he introduced sixteen resolutions criticising PAP's decision for merger with Malaya and absence of democracy within the party. He also accused Lee Kuan Yew of nepotism. The resolutions were supported by 10,000 party members.\(^6^7\) But the party Chairman Toh Chin Chye refused to admit these resolutions arguing that it was an issue of challenge to the unity and collective leadership of the party. The pro-communist were also not prepared to break with the PAP. Therefore, Lim Chin Siong, Sandra Woodhull and Fong Swee Suan signed a statement dissociating themselves with Ong Eng Guan

\(^6^6\) Turnbull, n.14, p.272.

\(^6^7\) George, n.7, p.54.
and supporting PAP's policies. Ong Eng Guan was expelled from the party. He resigned from the legislative assembly and contested by-election from Hong Lim constituency in 1961 where he won a sweeping majority. 68 In the same year David Marshall defeated PAP candidate in Anson by-election. 69 The PAP government considered the defeat a result of popular discontent over the party rule and contemplated resignation.

After the defeat in both the by-elections, Lee Kuan Yew called for a motion of confidence in the assembly. Twenty seven members voted in favour of the government and twenty four including thirteen left wing members either abstained or voted against the government. The thirteen PAP assembly members resigned and formed Barisan Sosialis under the leadership of Lee Siew Choh in July 1961. 70 The split in the PAP was complete.

One of the major reason for the split in the PAP was that the pro-communist were dissatisfied with the attitude of moderate leaders, especially Lee Kuan Yew in the party, towards them. Other reasons were, continued detention of pro-communist leaders, government's attempt to control Singapore Trade Union Congress (STUC) and PAP's efforts for merger with

68 Clutterbuck, n.57., p.53.
69 Lee Kuan Yew, n.58, p.74.
70 Singapore Legislative Assembly Debates, vol.18, 29 July 1961, Col.361.
Malaya. The moderates had formed united front within the communists to fight British colonialists and gain independence. However, for the extremists the objective was communist take over. It was an uneasy alliance between these two groups for their own different objectives. The tensions increased and finally led to a split in July 1961.

After the split, all but two of the PAP branches were captured by the Barisan Sosialis. In the PAP headquarters only three or four members of the staff remained. But this did not make much difference in the functioning of the party activities as they were carried out by the government departments. Citizens' Consultative Committees and Community Centres were formed to replace the party organizations, role and functions and to establish a linkage between the people and the government and to fight the communists effectively. To consolidate the legitimacy of the government, the PAP had to rely on bureaucracy. The civil servants were encouraged to meet the ministers to learn the values and aspirations of the party.

These developments in Singapore created tensions in Kuala Lumpur. In view of the possible overthrow of Singapore government and the rise of more extreme left wing leaders

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71 Tremewan, n.39, p.28.
73 Josey, n.2, p.43.
Tunku Abdul Rahman feared that Singapore might achieve independence as a communist state. Therefore in a speech in Kuala Lumpur to the Foreign Correspondents Associations on 27 May 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman made a proposal for the establishment of a federation of Malaysia including Singapore. 74

Tunku Abdul Rahman feared that a simple merger of Malaya and Singapore would create Chinese dominance as they consisted of 43 per cent of the total population as compared to 41 per cent of Malays in a united Malaya and Singapore. Therefore, he planned for a Federation of Malaysia, i.e. consisting of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei. 75 The proposal was approved at a regional conference of the Commonwealth of Parliamentary Associations in July 1961 with representatives from Malaya, Singapore and British territories. It was agreed that Singapore should be a special state with greater autonomy than other units. However, Singapore citizens would not automatically become Malaysia’s citizens, since the terms for obtaining citizenship were more stringent for immigrant communities in Malaya. Also Singapore would have smaller representation in the federal government than it was actually entitled to on the basis of its population. The British Government agreed to their terms for merger but it retained control of Singapore military bases. The Barisan Sosialis

75 Lee Kuan Yew, n. , p.58.
expressed its opposition to this merger plan and even denounced it as a "sell out".76

A referendum on the issue of merger took place in September 1962. But the choice was not that of merger or no merger. The people had to choose between different types of merger. They were:

a) merger based on PAP government's negotiations with Malaya as set out in the White Paper giving Singapore autonomy on education and labour,

b) merger which would give Singapore the same status and citizenship provisions as Malaya and Penang, and
c) merger in terms no less favourable than those given to Brunei.77

Voting was compulsory. Barisan Sosialis asked the opponents of the merger with Malaya to cast blank votes.78 Lee Kuan Yew, however, announced that the blank votes would be counted as votes in favour of merger. Seventy one per cent of votes were cast in favour of 'a' type of merger with Malaya, and twenty five per cent cast blank votes.79 An agreement to establish Malaysia was signed in London in July 1963 by Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak; Brunei opted out.

According to this agreement, Singapore was given the

76 Le Poer, n.19, p.54.
77 Singapore, Legislative Assembly, Debates, n.65.
78 Clutterbuck, n.57, p.158.
control of labour and education. In the Federal Parliament fifteen seats were allocated to Singapore.\textsuperscript{80} Financial relations were embodied in a white paper giving legal force by the Malaysia Act. As regards the federal structure was concerned, the new constitution followed the Indian pattern of having three lists, federal list, state list and concurrent list. In case of a clash between the federal and state law, the federal law would override the state law. Thus, on 16 September 1963 Singapore became independent as part of the Federation of Malaysia.\textsuperscript{81}

Although Singapore had succeeded in its policy of merger with the Federation of Malaysia, lack of majority within the Legislative Assembly, particularly since the split in 1961, had rendered the political situation unstable. A majority in the legislative assembly was necessary for passing the bill for merger. Hence Lee Kuan Yew decided to hold elections for the legislative assembly. The election was held on 22 September 1963. PAP won the majority.

Following the merger, from the very beginning there were frictions on various issues between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and it finally led to the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965. Various political, economic and ideological factors contributed to this development. Lee Kuan Yew regarded merger with Malaya as a key to Singapore's

\textsuperscript{80} Lee Kuan Yew, n.58, p.38.
\textsuperscript{81} Singapore, \textit{Singapore 1990}, n.42, p.29.
economic development. He described independent Singapore as a "political, economic and geographical absurdity." He felt that merger would sustain Singapore's entrepot activities. Singapore was interested in Malaysia's agreeing to the idea of a common market by which Singapore's exports would enter the Federation without payment of any import duty. Leaders in Kuala Lumpur were averse to this idea because of their own scheme for industrialization. The merger proposal was hastily drafted. It was ambiguous in regard to financial matters.

Kuala Lumpur demanded sixty percent of Singapore's revenues for defence purposes which Singapore refused to pay. The Malaysian Finance Minister stated that since Singapore refused to pay its fair share for defence purposes, the remaining states had to pay large shares. Hence the Federal government would not take steps meant to increase economic advantages for Singapore and hence depriving other states of the same.

As the problems between Singapore and Malaysia got aggravated and led to an eventual expulsion of Singapore from the Federation, Indonesia under President Sukarno started opposing the (idea of) the Federation of Malaysia. Considering it a British neo-colonialist plot, Indonesia had already launched a "crush Malaysia" policy as early as January 1963. Aspiring for regional role and for Indonesia Raya

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82 Cited in George, n.7, p.74.
83 Le Poer, n.19, p.56.
(Greater Indonesia) comprising of Indonesia, Borneo and Malaya, Indonesia cut off all diplomatic and trade relations with the Federation of Malaysia after the merger plan was put into effect. Singapore was very much affected by the loss of Indonesian barter trade. Indonesian terrorists bombed the Ambassador Hotel in Singapore on 24 September 1963 and launched propaganda creating communal unrest.  

There was a dispute over Bank of China. The Federal Government forced the Bank to give up its business in Malaysia. Singapore was not willing for this, because it would affect its overall trade in China. Another issue of dispute between Malaysia and Singapore was that Singapore was given only fifteen seats in the 159 member Federal Parliament while it was qualified for twenty five seats on the basis of its population.  

Lee Kuan Yew insisted on retaining the title of Prime Minister even after joining the Federation.

Both Singapore and Malaysia conceived the merger plan as an attempt to curtail leftist element in Singapore. PAP wanted to surrender internal security to the Federal government in order to contain the threat of Barisan Sosialis. But it wanted to retain control over education and labour to ensure that support of the Chinese educated in Singapore. Once the communist threat was over, the importance of merger

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84 Ibid.

85 R.S. Milne, "Singapore’s Exist From Malaysia", Asian Survey (Berkeley), vol.6, no.9, March 1966, p.17.
diminished. Merger created two types of citizenship status. Malaysian citizens who were also Singapore citizens and Malaysian citizens who were not Singapore citizens. This reflected lack of consensus over the issue of nationality.

One of the important reasons for clash was, the PAP's decision to put up more candidates in 1964 general elections in Malaysia. Leaders of United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) thought that PAP leaders would confine themselves to the politics of Singapore. The PAP leaders, on the other hand, thought that the Malaysia agreement provided them with an opportunity to extend their political influence in the mainland. They continued to build up PAP branches on the mainland. In fact the PAP tried to replace the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) by supporting UMNO and opposing MCA. But Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman defended MCA as "honest, sound and absolutely trustworthy" and refused PAP's entry into the alliance.

Malaysia agreement brought no special privileges for the Malays of Singapore. It specifically stipulated that the special privileges to Malays existing in Malaysia should not extend to Singapore. From the beginning the PAP campaigned for "Malaysian Malaysia", a policy of multiracialism with no

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66 Le Poer, n.19, p.56.
special privileges to any ethnic community. The Malaysian Malays felt it as a direct threat to their special position guaranteed by the constitution. The policy of the alliance government in Malaysia was to achieve interracial harmony. The PAP wanted to impose multiracialism right away. The difference in approach disturbed the political tranquility of Malaysia.

In 1965, the PAP along with the People’s Progressive Party and United Democratic Party of Malaya and United People’s Party and Party Machinda of Sarawak formed a National Solidarity Convention. It aimed at the promotion of parliamentary democracy and questioned the continuance of Malay supremacy in politics of Malaysia. It virtually united non-Malays against Malays and rather tended to strengthen racial antagonism. It called for doing away with special privileges of Malays and emphasised confrontation between them. Lee Kuan Yew called on all the states that supported the concept of "Malaysian Malaysia" to come together. UMNO saw it as PAP’s plot to take over control of Malaysia.

Consequently the growing tensions reached a boiling point on 21 July 1965 on prophet Muhammad’s birthday when the Muslims took out a procession. Communal riots broke off and curfew was imposed. More than 200 people were killed and 450

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89 Singapore, Declaration by the Conveners of the Malaysian Solidary Convention, 1965.

90 George, n.7, p.85.
Fearing further outbreaks of communal violence and faced with the demands by the UMNO extremists for the arrest of Lee Kuan Yew, Tunku Abdul Rahman was left with two alternatives. They were: (i) separation of Singapore constitution and governing Singapore through a national operation committee and (ii) separation of Singapore from the Federation. Tunku decided for the separation. Lee Kuan Yew was summoned to Kuala Lumpur. He tried in vain for a compromise. Thus on 9 August 1965, with Singapore delegation not attending, the Malaysian parliament passed a bill favouring separation. The number of members voted in favour of separation was 126 and no body voted against it. Thus on 9 August 1965, Lee Kuan Yew in a televised press conference declared Singapore a Sovereign, Democratic and Independent State. Singapore was immediately recognized as an independent Republic within the Commonwealth by Britain, Australia, New Zealand and also by the United States and in September 1965 it was admitted to the United Nations.

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91 George, n.7, p.81.
92 Singapore, Singapore 1992, n.11, p.29.