CHAPTER I

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Introduction

In the domain of international politics the fragility of small states has been a marked feature. Historically, small states have succumbed to pressures or have been forced to amalgamate with larger neighbouring units. At times many small units had for self interest joined together to form a larger territorial state. Worse still many had simply been forcibly annexed and gone out of existence. Despite this general trend a number of small states did survive and prosper, especially in Europe. In the main, however, in the period before the Second World War, the operating rule was simple: the major powers were on the giving and the small states on the receiving end. Very often the small states would ensure their security through close cooperation with a powerful neighbour. This pre-World War II order soon crumbled. The end of the war saw the general weakening of all the major powers as well as the emergence of many newly independent states in Asia and Africa.

1For a study pertaining to small states' security, see Lawrence Ziring, "The Insecurity of Small States", BIJSS Journal (Bangladesh Institute of International Strategic Studies), vol.8, No.2, 1987, pp.125-35.
Assessed by various criteria of territorial size, population, Gross National Product and military capabilities, most of the new states could be classified as small states. Additionally, decolonization led to a structural transformation of the international political system. Interestingly, whereas earlier the small states were in a minority; now they constituted more than 70 percent of the states in the international system. Also the Cold War prevented the two superpowers and their allies from acting in concert and this provided a degree of manoeuvrability for the small states. The growth and democratization of international organizations also provided small states with a voice, often influence, beyond their size. In a number of ways since the Second World War the security of small states increased because of bloc representation in international forums and a greater awareness of events elsewhere in the world, because of more specifically delineated superpower interest, and because of the scale of sophisticated weapons systems all over the world.²

Notwithstanding this general trend, small states have been constantly under military, political and economic threats. The reasons for this are inherent in the logic of their being small. It would be useful here to come to a

working definition of a small state. It generally refers to states which recognise their inability to obtain security through their own resources and must rely on assistance, direct or indirect, from other sources. It also refers to states whose deficiencies in regard to their own security and survival are recognised by other states in the international system.

Obviously, keeping in view their vulnerabilities the small states have always devised a variety of strategies to enhance their options for security and survival. Strengthening of their defense capabilities, seeking security through arrangements with like-minded regional or extra-regional states, active participation in regional and international organizations, enhancing national unity and employing skillful diplomacy are significant among them. A prudent and well thought out foreign policy is generally considered the first line of defense for a small state. Its military, economic and political deficiencies can be compensated for through a skilful management of its foreign policy. It could realize its security objectives through diplomacy, if it could first avoid, then mitigate or resolve conflicts in which it was involved. Foreign policy, if effectively and skilfully managed, could tap hidden sources of national strength and indeed, increase the effectiveness of the meagre security forces a small state could mobilize. It is through effecti,
management of its foreign policy that a small state could hope to persuade powerful nations to enter into meaningful and advantageous relations with itself without entailing any limitations on its own sovereignty and independent status.

But, what would be the conditions of a small country that suffered from inherited limitations of resources in practically all spheres of national life? What would happen if a country was unable to acquire an effective and diplomatic corps capable of functioning effectively and hence deliver the goods? In such a case, perhaps, it is through a judicious utilization of scarce resources that it might possibly derive benefits even from such a poor state of affairs. The objective is to extract the best of what the country's resources would permit. Equally pertinent is how a small state thinks about foreign policy. What are its underlying assumptions and precepts which guided its foreign policy?

It is against this backdrop that this study discusses the foreign policy imperatives of Singapore from 1968 to 1980 — indeed an epitome of a small state in terms of its security concerns, perceptions, interests and strategy and tactics.

Broadly stated, the purpose of this study is to examine and analyse Singapore's foreign policy after 1968 covering internal and external factors which had an effect on its

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3 This is one element which the Republic's leadership has repeatedly stressed since 1965. See Lee Kuan Yew, "Basis of Singapore's Foreign Policy", The Mirror, 14 August 1965.
formulation. The year 1968 is an important landmark in
the history of Singapore's foreign policy for two reasons:
(a) the announcement of British government to accelerate its
withdrawal of forces "east of Suez", which created an un-
precedented security problem for Singapore; (b) Singapore
for the first time had to fend for itself (on and off the
shore). The few available studies on this subject have so
far been generally confined to Singapore's relations with
particular countries and areas or its reactions to particular
international crisis and developments. Not much attention
has been paid to the basic problems and challenges posed by
the British decision to withdraw its military forces "east
of Suez" in 1968 and the security concerns it aroused in a
small state like Singapore. Nor have the study of the basic
determinants - domestic and foreign - and of the nature and
role of Personalities involved in the making of the foreign
policy been thoroughly investigated. 4 This study is intended

4Studies on Singapore's foreign relations and foreign
policy include: V. Suryanarayan, Singapore-Malaysia Relations,
1957-1965, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Indian School of Inter-
national Studies, 1967); Peter Boyee, Malaysia and Singapore
in International Diplomacy: Documents and Commentaries(Sydney,
1968); Chan Heng Chee, "Singapore's Foreign Policy, 1965-1968",
Journal of Southeast Asian History, vol.10, No.1, March 1969;
George G. Thomson (ed.), Singapore's International Relations
(Singapore, 1966); pp.177-191; Joseph Frankel, "Malaysia and
Singapore: Two Foreign Policies in Interaction", Year Book of
World Affairs, vol.24, 1970, pp.102-124; Lau Teik Soon,
Malaysia-Singapore Foreign Policies in Southeast Asia, 1965-
University, 1971); Seah Chee Meow, "Singapore's foreign policy
in Southeast Asia: Options for National Survival", Pacific
to an extent to fill this gap.\textsuperscript{5}

In the course of this study an effort would be made to determine whether it would be feasible to utilize some of the analytical, theoretical frameworks proposed by various scholars to guide research on foreign policy. Noted theorists in the field of comparative foreign policy have suggested that theory building can only advance if researchers are willing to process their data through a common framework. They have put forward such frameworks expecting that these would be used by area specialists, undertaking case studies.\textsuperscript{6}

The first theoretical framework considered suitable for foreign policy studies was the decision making model advanced by Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{5}The present study would hopefully contribute to the understanding of small states and their problems, survival, and their strategies in relation to the neighbouring states as well as to the international environment.


According to these authors there are three main variables that determine the making of foreign policy decisions: (a) spheres of competence, (b) communication, and information, and (c) motivation. There are limitations in this approach. The difficulty in this scheme is that it identifies so many different variables that practically speaking it is not possible to investigate all of them. This approach, moreover, does not suggest any means of analysing the relationship among the many variables it mentions. Another drawback of this scheme is that it implies that the process of policy making may be better viewed as a series of discreet, autonomous decisions than as an on-going process. This may make it useful for the analysis of a single decision but less useful for the type of comprehensive subject with which the present study is concerned. Third limitation is that this scheme focuses upon the authoritative decision as the unit of analysis. This presents serious obstacles in situations where an issue never appears to be formally decided or when it is impossible to identify when and by whom a decision was made. Finally, this model is designed for the analysis of policy-making in complex organizations as it emphasises on organizational relationship and communications networks. It is not applicable to a developing and very small city-state where governmental organization, lacks the complexity and influence of a more developed policy, where policy-making is less structured, and communication network often poor, and where the personalities and values of key decision-makers often
have a decisive impact on policy.⁸

Another foreign policy framework has come from Michael Brecher. Brecher has operationalized his framework and demonstrated a procedure for determining the relative importance of ten variables, which he considers important. According to him "Simple frequency count of articulated elite images", derived through a content analysis of public documents (speeches, interviews, press conferences, and writings) and supplemented by the analysis of unarticulated images, allows a ranking of the variables in order of importance.⁹

However, Brecher's reliance on content analysis and a simple frequency count as the main source of his data raises the question of the validity of his findings. It is yet to be clearly demonstrated that he attempts to deal with this problem through speculations about "unarticulated images"

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⁸See James N. Rosenau, "Pre theories and theories of Foreign Policy", The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (New York, 1971), pp. 95-149.

⁹The methods suggested by Brecher for researching "unarticulated images" also appear rather inexact and include: (1) "extrapolating the content of unknown images from articulated images pertaining to other decisions", (2) "relying on the composite body of assessments of the decision-makers' motivations"; (3) deducing the content of an unknown segment of the elite image...from the known content". See Brecher et al, "A framework for Research on Foreign Policy Behaviour", Journal of Conflict Resolution, vol. 13, No. 1, March 1969, p. 89.
into his quantitative framework. These speculations are to be combined with the frequency counts to produce a single figure that will reflect importance, but how this is to be accomplished is not indicated. Another basic question which can be raised is whether the images contained in the public statements of government leaders reflect the sources or products of policy decisions. If they generally reflect the latter then these images would not constitute a variable that could be distinguished from the decisions themselves.

Thus the difficulties inherent in the formulations of Snyder, and Brecher indicate the inadequacies of theorizing in the study of foreign policy. Given this premise and the relative lack of knowledge about foreign policy formulations in Singapore, it might not be that meaningful to try to apply these highly structured theoretical models in this study.\(^{10}\) A degree of rigidity of this approach might restricted the collection of data, because many of the categories of the above schemes might be considered less relevant to the concerns in the present study.

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\(^{10}\) In this text, two earlier theoretical works by George Modelski and Joseph Frankel have demonstrated that the concept of system is a useful and no less valid in foreign policy analysis than in the study of domestic policies. See George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign Policy* (New York, 1962), and Joseph Frankel, *The Making of Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decision-Making* (London, Oxford, 1963).
Thus, it would be preferable to adopt a simple and flexible conceptual framework which could accommodate diverse sources of information input, and something that would focus on the general impact on policy formulation of such aspects as domestic politics, economic and military capability, administrative structure, external pressures and the behaviours of decision makers. A degree of simplicity and flexibility of approach in this sense might be considered more meaningful than those discussed above.

The theoretical framework applied in this study is, thus, basically a systems framework and is adopted from the conceptual model put forward by Michael Brecher in his research framework discussed above. Despite the inadequacies referred to above, it has the potentials of being more relevant to the objective situation in Singapore. It is a framework within which the interaction of different variables could be easily observed. Quite meaningfully it involves viewing the foreign policy process as a "linkage system" between the domestic environment and the international environment. Like other systems of action, a foreign policy system comprises "an environment, a group of actors, structures, through which they initiate decisions and respond to challenges, and process

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11 Brecher, et al., n.9, p.79.
which sustains or alters the flow of demands and products of the system", and is concerned with the demands made on, the support given to, and the content and consequences of foreign policy.

Thus the present study would involve discussing and analysing (1) the internal environment - the states' political culture and structure, its domestic politics in general and political parties and its economic and military capability; (2) the external environment - the position of the state in relation to the total international system, i.e. its role in regional and total international system, and its interaction with great powers; and (3) foreign policy content-foreign policy objectives, foreign policy decisions and the consequences and effects of these on both the internal and external environment with especially regional dimension.

The Background

To understand Singapore's foreign policy and its security concerns, it would be necessary to explore the nature of interests, and other vital considerations, both internal and external, by which it was influenced during the period of this study. In order to have a correct understanding of these aspects, it would be useful to study the historical and the recent background and the data that are relevant to the objectives of Singapore's policy.
The ancient history of Singapore remains a matter for speculation. Chinese sources (231 A.D.) mention an Island, "Pu-luo-Chung", which is said to correspond to the Malay "Pulau Vjong", or the Island at the end of the Malay Peninsula. The "Sejarah Melayu" (Malay Annals) suggested that the early name for Singapore was Temasek, or the 'sea town' but whatever name the city bore, the island, on which it is situated, has for more than a millennium been the focal point for navigation and trade at the eastern entrance to the straits of Malacca.

In August 1511, the Portuguese, under Alfonso d' Albuquerque arrived in the region of the straits of Malacca and conquered the town of Malacca. About one hundred and thirty years of their control of Malacca, however, did not bring them any significant commercial rewards. The Dutch East India Company that followed the Portuguese in the Southeast Asian waters, liquidated the latter's interests in Malacca by 1630 and captured it in 1641.

The British followed the Dutch. Prompted by the twin objectives of naval strategy against their European rivals in the area and commercial motivations, the British East India Company started looking for ports in the Malay archipelago.

In 1786 British Captain Francis Light succeeded in acquiring Penang, an island off the West Coast of Malaya on the condition of the company's support to the Sultan of Kedah against an anticipated Thai invasion. Eventually the British occupied Malacca in 1795.13

**British Settlement of Singapore**

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, an English colonial administrator and a student of the Malay language, history and culture, was appointed governor of the island of Java when the British acquired it in 1795 from the Dutch. Twenty three years later, in 1819, in order to remove irritants with the Dutch, the British agreed to return Java to them. Raffles then was shifted to Bencoolen on the West Coast of Sumatra.

Raffles was aware of Singapore's strategic position in the straits of Malacca region. For him it was a potentially significant vantage point from which the British could counteract increasing Dutch influence. Early in 1819, he sailed from Bencoolen, without instruction from the East India Company in India, and on 29 January 1819, landed on the island of

Singapore, where he hoisted the union jack. On 30 January he concluded a 'preliminary agreement' with Temenggong (defence Minister of Johore) to set up a trading post in the island.

On 6 February 1819 a formal treaty was signed with both Sultan Hussein of Johor and Temenggong Abdul Rahman, the respective de jure and de facto rulers of Singapore island. 14

Raffles established the new settlement of Singapore as a dependency of Port Malborough at Bencoolen. However, in acquiring Singapore, he had exceeded his mandate. The East India Company officials in India and Britain tended to view his act as one of disrupting Anglo-Dutch relations in Indonesia and Malaya. But "Raffles' Child", as Singapore came to be called, was growing. By the end of 1822 value of trade between Singapore and neighbouring countries had reached $8,680,000. In two years it almost doubled to $15,773,000. 15 Singapore drew people from every country in the area and its population was rapidly growing. It replaced Penang (a Malay Port on the Straits of Malacca

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(and a British East Indian Company's acquisition since 1785),
as a trade centre. By 1825, the Indian and English textiles
merchants were using it as their distribution centre.

Although Raffles left Singapore in 1823, his visionary
action, planning, and organizational ability established a
pattern for future British colonial administration in
Southeast Asia. He initiated policies which ensured freedom
of trade, freedom from piracy in local waters and an open
market atmosphere in which people of all races could meet
and trade.

**Evaluation of a plural society**

Prior to the establishment of Singapore as a British
settlement, a small number of Chinese engaged in growing
amber (kind of resin) lived on the island. Raffles and other
British colonial administrators that followed him, created an
environment favourable for economic prosperity. It were the
Chinese and the Indians who provided the labour and industry,
ammassed personal fortunes and developed Singapore as an
emporium. The Chinese and Indians found growing number of
commercial openings. This is clear from the first census
in January 1824. It shows 4,073 of the total number of
inhabitants in Singapore were either Chinese or Indians.
The growth in the number of Chinese labourers is ascribed
to the depressed conditions in China during the early and
middle of the nineteenth century. Frequent incursions of the Western powers and the political events like the Nien and the Taiping rebellion in China created pressures for thousands of jobless and poverty-stricken Chinese to emigrate. In addition there were other factors such as potential economic rewards and personal political persecution that encouraged emigration to Southeast Asia.

The main concern of the British East India Company government in Singapore was to promote the importance of the settlement as a trading port. This was being achieved through the growing Chinese and Indian communities. Their major contribution lay in their labour and their demand for consumer products. As long as they did not disturb the peace, the government left them to police their own group.

Among the divisive and unlawful activities prevalent among the Chinese were those of the secret societies, which they had brought along with them from China itself. In Singapore the secret societies preyed upon the coolies,


shopkeepers, and others within the Chinese community. Riots among the Chinese in Singapore were attributed to the Secret Societies' intra-society rivalry for fiscal control of gambling, prostitution, and import enterprises.19

While the government in China permitted any number of men to emigrate, it prohibited women from doing so for economic reasons. The consequent scarcity of Chinese women in Singapore posed severe social problems and helped in making the population transient and restive. Men tended to save money and return to China, or to remain unmarried, thus increasing the problem of prostitution and illegal traffic in women and girls. It was only in 1921 that the government passed a law permitting the emigration of women. Thereafter, the social situation improved.

Most of the Chinese who emigrated to Singapore were merchants, artisans, and in some cases, farmers. Skilled as they were in their professions, they made their own contributions to the economic development of the colony.

During 1823 and 1867 the Straits Settlement of Singapore, Penang and Malacca were governed as part of British India. The Indians followed the British flag and tended to be easily willing to work in Singapore and Malaya.

Initially, a trickle of Indians arrived in Singapore to work as sepoys, troops, and domestic servants. The local government also decided to use convicts from India for projects requiring hard labour. Statistics on the Indian population in Singapore, during the early nineteenth Century are difficult to obtain. In 1870 the Indian population in Malaya was approximately 30,000; in 1891 it stood at over 75,000 and by 1901 it had grown to approximately 120,000. While most of the early Indian emigrants were domestic workers and labourers, by the end of the nineteenth century increasing number of English educated clerks, shop-assistants, and merchants had settled in Singapore.

The first census in Singapore in January 1824 showed that the Malays, with 4,850 persons constituted the majority community. Their number went on growing and by 1901 it had risen to 23,000.

Life for the Malays in the Chinese-dominated city of Singapore was not that easy. The average Malay was economically not very competitive and was forced by rising land prices to find housing on the outskirts of the city. Urban Malays found employment as policemen, watchmen, office personnel, petty traders, and domestic servants.

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21 Ibid.
Then there was the problem of mutual adjustment among the three racial groups - Chinese, Indians and Malays. This was exacerbated by living in single ethnic community enclaves, speaking their own language and following their own customs and religions. A compartmentalized type of living among them restricted their contacts only to commercial activities in the market place. This environment which inhibited social contacts tended to reinforce the prides and prejudices of the three ethnic groups which they had inherited from their own past rich civilizations and cultures.

Political and commercial development

As one of the three British settlements, Singapore remained under the control of the British East India Company until 1867, when authority was transferred to the colonial office in London. Singapore, in 1867, assumed a central role in the Malay area. This resulted from a British Parliament's decision to intervene in the Malay States. Singapore thus became the seat of colonial government. Among the many reasons enumerated for the decision was the recognition in London that the rapidly developing trade routes to China and other states in Asia had to be protected from pirates in the Straits of Malacca.\(^23\) Also internal

government and control in the Malay States was poor, and there were frequent conflicts disturbing economic development.

Over a period of time, Singapore, Penang, and Malacca started enjoying increasing prosperity as banking and investment centres. In cooperation with the Malay Sultans, Singapore Chinese and British businessmen were financially assisting the tin-mining industry in the Malay states. But there were frequent disruptions resulting from quarrels among the Chinese societies. It was this that partly explains the British political intervention and control in the entire Malay region. According to Victor Purcell, business interests in the Straits settlements and the Malay states brought pressure to bear in Parliament in order to assure economic and political intervention.\(^\text{24}\) There were also concerns expressed in London that if it did not intervene to ensure peace and a favourable economic climate, some other European power might be invited to do so.\(^\text{25}\)

Singapore's commercial development strategy might be attributed to Stamford Raffles's establishing a system of free trade through its port. From 1822 the Singapore port had been thrown open to the vessels of all nations alike,

\(^{24}\) Ibid, p.48.

in spite of frequent attempts to impose duties. Buying and selling activities were brisk, and from 1824 to 1826 import and exports were in balance.

Over a period of time, Singapore became the headquarters for the British commercial development policy, when protectorates were established over the Federated and Unfederated states of Malaya, the title of High Commissioner for the Malay states was added to that of Governor of the Straits Settlements.

By 1864 the trade of Singapore had increased five times and was approximately three times that of Penang and more than sixteen times that of Malacca. The most rapid increase in trade came during the period from 1820 to 1840. Soon after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, trade jumped to $70,789,586. Singapore served as the exchange point of products from Europe, India and China and the other countries of Southeast Asia.

By the nineteen twenties it had become the distribution centre for export of these raw materials/products of tin and rubber. By the early 1930s, its economy was dominated by the British and other Europeans through investments and brokerage.


relationships. However, wealthy Chinese residents of Singapore owned considerable holdings, whereas many of the Europeans represented wealthy interests located elsewhere. Singapore owed its prosperity to the industry and versatility of the Chinese working in concert with the investments, political control and authority of the British. This was the situation when the Japanese struck in early 1941.

Political Developments in Post-World War II Period: Japanese Occupation

World War II was a traumatic experience for Singapore. The Japanese occupied it on 15 February 1942 and gave it a new name, Syonam (Light of the South). It remained under the Japanese occupation for three-and-a-half years.

The people had faced severe hardships during this period. By showing enmity towards the Chinese who formed more than three-fourth of the total population, the Japanese gave an edge to the existing communal differences in Singapore. They also made impossible the restoration of the political order established by the British before the war by pursuing policies which spurred Asian nationalism.

Following the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945, the Malayan Peoples' Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA) used the period of about five to six weeks before the arrival of the British forces to make a bid for seizer of power. As the British returned in September 1945 and set up a British Military Administration (BMA), they found a qualitatively
different environment. The people in Singapore (and Malaya) had lost much of their respect for the British for their utter incapability to protect and defend them. The situation during the Japanese occupation had rather initiated them into a sort of political activism.

The Malayan Union Proposal

Prior to World War II the only domestic political party was the Malayan Communist Party, which functioned underground. By 1945 both Malays and Chinese were in the process of forming political parties. The Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) founded in Singapore mostly by the Chinese teachers and other professional men, and the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) founded in Malaya by some radical Malay nationalists, were established in that year. The following year in Malaya saw the founding of the United Malay's National Organization (UMNO) by Dato Onn bin Jaafar the Chief Minister of Johore State. All these parties had followers among various communities in Singapore, and were in opposition, in principle, to the post-war British colonial policy. Objections to British policy were diverse and complex and must be viewed in the larger context of the British immediate post-war plan for Malaya and Singapore.

It was during the war itself that the Malayan Union Scheme was conceived and developed in the colonial office in London. The Malayan planning unit, set up in 1943 to plan for the postwar era, was run by the British army under the direction of the British Cabinet. Its purpose was to


establish a scheme of government for Malaya and the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca) by creating order out of region's prewar administrative structure.

**Singapore as a Crown Colony**

According to the Malayan Union proposal, which came into operation on 1 April 1946, the Malayan Union included the nine states of British Malaya and the two Straits settlement of Penang and Malacca. However, for various reasons Singapore was kept out of it and it became a separate crown colony. A primary consideration in reaching this decision was its racial composition. The inclusion of Singapore (with more than 75 percent Chinese) in the Union of Malaya would have resulted in a racial imbalance there in favour of the Chinese. Furthermore, Singapore's growth depended on maintaining its status as a free port and its unique role in the area as broker and financier. Besides, security and British long-range military planning were also significant considerations in the establishment of Singapore as a Crown Colony, a status which guaranteed continuation of British political control.

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32 Saul Rose, Britain and Southeast Asia (Baltimore, 1962), p.139.
Political/Constitutional Developments in Singapore

Singapore remained a crown colony up to 1959, the year when it was granted self-government. This period virtually overlapped with the period of emergency that began when the MCP (Malayan Communist Party) had launched an armed insurrection in July 1948. Although Singapore was not a theatre of Guerilla warfare during the 12-year long emergency, there were sporadic cases of arson and murder, and government used emergency powers against subversive elements. The communist insurrection and the imposition of emergency curtailed to some degree the normal development of political activity in Singapore. During this period political/constitutional developments in Singapore were characterized by the conflicting political aspirations of its citizens and the policies of the colonial government.

Until 1954, however, political participation and interest remained quite limited. It was during this year when a constitutional commission led by Sir George Rendel formulated major reform policies, including the automatic registration of voters. Among the main features of the Rendel Constitution of 1955, was the suggestion that the

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Executive Council be replaced by a Council of nine ministers with collective responsibility for all matters except defense, external affairs and internal security. The Governor, who would preside over the Council of Ministers, had to consult the Chief Minister (leader of the strongest party in the Legislative Assembly) on important matters. The Chief Minister could recommend six of the ministers, with the remaining three appointed by the Governor. The Council was to be responsible to the legislative Assembly of 32 members.\textsuperscript{35}

As the elections scheduled for April 1955 approached, new political parties and alliances came into existence. Of the political parties formed in Singapore at this time, were the formation of the Labour Front in July 1954 under the leadership of David Marshall in July 1954 and of the People's Action Party (PAP) under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew in November 1954 were the two major parties that came up.

In 1955 elections the Labour Front won ten seats and thus became the leading party in the assembly. The PAP, which had put up only four candidates won three seats. This election marked the demise of the conservative pro-British parties which had until then dominated Singapore politics. The

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Singapore Year Book, n.24, p.26.}
Progressive Party won only four seats and the Democratic Party (comprising a group of Chinese businessmen) won not more than two.\footnote{Straits Times, 4 May 1955, p.4.}

This election clearly pointed up the political apathy among the Chinese, who formed the major ethnic core group in Singapore. David Marshall, a lawyer, was able to form a coalition government including three parties - Labour Front, UMNO and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). But it lacked a strong political base, and was exposed to criticism from the Peoples' Action Party (PAP) which had been rapidly gathering mass support.

The David Marshall Government pressed for independence. However, the colonial government in London proposed in 1958 that Singapore be granted internal self-rule with Britain remaining in control of external affairs, external defense, and internal security. It also reserved the right to suspend the constitution and to intervene in cases of clear necessity.\footnote{Great Britain, Singapore Constitutional Conference (London, 1956), Command 1977, p.12.} David Marshall resigned in protest and Lim Yew Hock became the new Chief Minister. The main problem was the issue of internal security and it was on this issue that
negotiations for self-rule had broken down.

Although David Marshall failed in his attempt to achieve self-government, he began the process which ultimately led to limited independence in 1959. Quite importantly, it galvanized the people of Singapore with a new nationalistic spirit. In 1957 and 1958, Lim Yew Hock moved against the Communist front groups and agitators with a strong hand, jailing MCP cadres who were active in fomenting unrest both in labour and in the Chinese schools.\textsuperscript{38} His anti-communist campaign coincided with the independence of Malaya on 31 August 1957. Interestingly, Lee had sought to demonstrate to the new Malayan government in Kuala Lumpur that Singapore was taking steps to curtail and control the activities of the MCP. Even at this early stage political leaders in and out of government in Singapore were aware of the importance of merger with Malaya. They were making efforts to stabilize Singapore's political climate and to minimize Malay leaders' fears of the MCP and of the economic superiority of Singapore's Chinese.\textsuperscript{39}

Lim Yew Hock reopened negotiations on self-government with colonial office in London and, in 1957, he succeeded in obtaining partial independence. The thorny issue of the

\textsuperscript{38} Singapore Year Book, n.24, p.28.

\textsuperscript{39} Straits Times, 13 August 1962, p.13.
internal security was resolved by the creation of an internal Security Council composed of three British, three Singaporeans, and one Malayan representative. The make-up of the Internal Security Council gave Malaya the deciding vote on matters concerning Malaya, and also gave credence to the fact that Malaya had an interest in and considerable concern for Singapore's political stability.

Following the elections of 30 May 1959, the PAP, which won forty-three of fifty-one seats in the Legislative Assembly, formed the government under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew. It assumed control over all matters, other than external affairs: external defense and those relating to the Internal Security Council (United Kingdom, Singapore-Federation of Malaya Council in matters of internal security.

When Singapore became a self-governing state in 1959, the PAP obtained a considerable measure of self-government. Simultaneously, however, the British continued to enjoy economic and political influence with the newly elected government. The political style of the new government differed greatly from the old, and the scene was set not only for a new style of politics in Singapore but for the formation of policies.

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which would affect inter-state relations in the region. This was notwithstanding the fact that foreign affairs and defense still remained in the exclusive domain of the British colonial government. The oppositionist role of Barisan Sosialis is discussed briefly later in this chapter.

Logic of Merger with Malaysia

In the nineteen fifties, relations with the Federation of Malaya dominated the thinking of the Singapore politicians. The issue of "Merger" - the political reunion with the Federation - was inextricably mixed up with the question of Singapore's achievement of independence and recurred at all stages of its constitutional development.

The logic of merger grew obviously from the realization that the small island city-state of Singapore could not survive alone with its meagre natural resources. David Marshall, made repeated attempts to woo the Malayan Government. Speaking in the Singapore Legislative Assembly during the debate on London Constitutional talks in 1957, he recalled these attempts:

I say, to you, Sir, that I have times without number in this house and outside indicated that our ultimate destiny, the true destiny of the Federation and Singapore is in unity. That I do not question, I have never questioned, and I have even struggled for it before the Tunku took office, immediately he was elected; and he, who is an honest man, will admit it.(41)

In April 1956 he presented, on behalf of all parties and in the name of the people of Singapore, a memorandum to the British Government regarding the political future of Singapore. It stated:

We have at all times been conscious that geographically and ethnically, culturally and economically, the Federation and Singapore are one entity - ours is a common destiny calling for political unity. No concept of parochial aggrandisement inspires our desire for unity - we recognize that financially and in our Social services we will suffer - but we believe that the people of Singapore and the Federation as well as the people beyond our shores, will benefit considerably by the stability and stature of a United Greater Malaya. (42)

David Marshall resigned after the failure of the constitutional talks in 1956, but he retained the idea of reunion with Malaya as an essential point in the Manifesto of the Workers Party which he formed in December 1957:

The basis and framework of all policy must be recognition of the fact that Singapore is geographically, ethnically, and economically part of Malaya and the only healthy ultimate solution is integration with Malaya on an equal basis with other states ..... (43)

Lim Yew Hock who succeeded Lim in office, continued to strive for a closer association with the Federation. While participating in the debate on the proposal for the establishment of a Federation of Malaysia in the Singapore Legislative Assembly Debates, vol.15, No.7, col.557.
Assembly in November 1961, Tun Lim recalled having stated earlier that "a merger is just like a marriage and happy marriage cannot take place unless there is some courting being done...". He recalled, "how during the time when I was in office, I did all I could in this technique of courting. I went up to the Federation. I was as friendly as possible and I believe I had made some headway".  

It was, however, the PAP, which after having swept the polls and formed the government in 1959 gave the merger issue the most businesslike treatment. As early as 1954, when it was formed, the PAP had declared reunion with the Federation of Malaya as an essential objective. The statement explaining the PAP's objectives noted:

To end colonialism and establish an independent national state of Malaya comprising the territories now known as the Federation of Malaya and the colony of Singapore. (48)

The stand was repeated and elaborated upon in the coming years. In a major policy statement issued in 1958 the party tended to view merger with Malaya as a sort of pre-condition for freedom and stated:

44 Ibid, vol.15, No.6, col.452.

45 Excerpts from the Straits Times, 22 November 1954. It reported the launching of the PAP. Reproduced in the Battle for Merger (Collection of speeches by Lee Kuan Yew) (Singapore, 1961), Appendix 5, Emphasis added.
On 21 November 1954, we stated: "Though, because of the division of Malaya into two territories, we are technically a political party operating in Singapore we shall in all our approach to the problems of this country disregard constitutional division. We are as actively interested in the problems of our fellow Malayans in the Federation as we are in those of Singapore. This is even more true now than four years ago. For to achieve freedom in an island we must achieve merger." (46)

This statement also faced the realities of political life. However attractive the reunion might be to Singapore, the Federation had shown no favourable response to such suggestions.

To achieve the objective of merger, the PAP leadership even prescribed the course for action that would bring the desired results. Being fully aware of the apprehensions of Malay leaders in Malaya about the merger of Singapore with it Lee Kuan Yew observed: "We must allay there fears and create the conditions for merger. This is our immediate task. To achieve freedom it is no longer just a simple question of fighting the British. We must also resolve the two fears which make the Malay majority in the Federation not want the Chinese majority in Singapore.

It must be demonstrated to three million Malays in the Federation that the one million Chinese in Singapore are ready, willing and willing to be absorbed as one Malayan people, all

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(46) The Battle of Merger, n.45, Appendix 6, Part I, p.147, emphasis added.
able to speak Malay, and willing to work together for the economic betterment and upliftment of the Malays as equals of the other races.\textsuperscript{47}

The P.A.P. reasserted these beliefs after assuming office in 1959 and gave a concrete shape to the measures it thought would make the merger possible.\textsuperscript{48} The P.A.P. was firm in its belief that independence was useless for Singapore as it would virtually destroy the possibility of the merger.\textsuperscript{49} After showing the weakness of the case for an independent Singapore the P.A.P. also pointed out an aspect that was often neglected in discussions on the merger issue - the importance of Singapore for the Federation of Malaya: PAP asserted that:

So far we have emphasized the importance of the Federation to Singapore. Lest there is any danger of forgetting it, let us remind people that Singapore is important to the Federation, Militarily and politically. Singapore and the Federation are one unit. . . . He who conquers Malaya conquers Singapore. The Japanese proved it. And conversely, he who holds Singapore absorbs Malaya. Stanford Raffles proved it. . . . Every political action in the Federation, in language, education, taxation and all other fields of government, affects and has repercussions in Singapore, and the converse is equally true, however, much people may try to minimise the reaction.\textsuperscript{(50)}

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid, pp.149-50.


\textsuperscript{49}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{50}Petir (Singapore), the official organ of the PAP, vol.8, No.18, 26 January 1961.
During a visit to the British Borneo territories in August 1960, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had expressed his hope of having a closer relationship with the Borneo territories. 51

Although Dr. Tbh Chin Chye, the Chairman of the PAP, had referred to the Borneo territories in the context of a failure to bring about the merger with the Federation it was quite unlikely that the "alternative" was seriously considered. The difficulties in a political union between Singapore and the Borneo territories were obvious. It seems that the "broader political question of association" including Borneo territories was brought in in order to facilitate Singapore's joining a broader federation of Malaya. The racial balance would not be upset in the federation if Barneo territories also joined along with Singapore in a regrouping. It appears that the solution to the problem of Singapore Chinese upsetting the racial balance was suggested by Singapore itself.

Malaya's Attitude

The persistence of the Singapore leaders in advocating the merger was matched by the stubborn refusal of the Alliance Government in the Federation to have anything to do with a merger with the island. The attitude of the Federation towards

51 The Times (London), 13 August 1960, p. 4.
a merger was reviewed by Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman while moving a resolution on Malaysia in the Dewan Ra'ayat in October 1961: The idea of Malaysia did not come to me by Chance. "As a matter of fact, the plan had been forming in my mind for a considerable time. Originally, it arose as a result of discussions. I had with a number of responsible citizens of the Federation and Singapore who asked me from time to time whether there was a possibility of integration of the two territories of the Federation and Singapore firstly for economic seasons, secondly for security reasons and thirdly for peace, prosperity and well being of Malaya as a whole. The same question was posed wherever I happened to be .... In fact, anywhere I went, the one question which faced me was, "Are we to have a merger with Singapore - if not why not?" I always ignored the question conveniently but on the whole my answer has always been a negative one.

I was not in favour of the idea of this merger with Singapore as I was of the opinion that integration of the two territories would spell trouble and trouble galore - trouble for all of us, trouble for this country and the security part of our life. The differences in outlook of the people of the federation and Singapore were so pronounced that for me a merger at that time was out of question.  

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The Tunku then went ahead to enumerate the reasons which in the past had made the Federation wary of suggestion for a merger with Singapore:

In the first place, the majority of people here have accepted the idea and you might say the ideal, of Kingship and Sultanate, of Malay as the national language and of Islam as the official religion of the nation.... The idea of kingship, the Malay language and Islam as the official religion would not, I appreciated, be readily accepted to the people of Singapore.\(^{(53)}\)

The Tunku was less specific about his government's suspicions regarding the left-wing extremists in Singapore. He however referred to the fears about the "extreme socialist policy" which was disturbing the stability of business in Singapore since the P.A.P. had come to power in 1959.

Towards the end of May 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman visited Singapore. On 27 May the Tunku made a speech at a luncheon given by the foreign correspondents. The Tunku said in the course of his speech:

Malaya today as a nation realise that she cannot stand alone and in isolation. Outside of international politics, the national one must be broad-based. Sooner or later she should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak.

\(^{(53)}\) Ibid, col.1592.
It is premature for me to say now how this closer understanding can be brought about but it is inevitable that we should look ahead to this objective and think of a plan whereby these territories can be brought closer in political and economic cooperation. (54)

Although the Tunker's speech only vaguely referred to "political and economic cooperation" it clearly hinted at a qualitative change in Kuala Lumpur about the question of Singapore's merger with Malaya. In this sense the Tunku's statement in Singapore in May 1961 assumed a historical importance.

**Agreement in Principle on Merger and the Merger Plan**

Meanwhile negotiations were underway between the governments of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya to work out the details of the merger plan. A joint statement issued on 25 August 1961 at the conclusion of a series of ministerial level talks announced that an agreement on merger was reached "in principle". The Central Government would control the External Affairs, Defense and Internal Security and the Government of Singapore would retain autonomy over education and labour. (55)

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54 *Straits Times*, 29 May 1961.

After a working party had gone into the details, the Singapore government published the Heads of Agreement for merger (excluding the financial arrangement) in a White Paper as command 33 of 1961. It stated:

Singapore will be state within the Federation but on special conditions and with a larger measure of local autonomy than the other states within the Federation. Defense, external affairs and security will be the responsibility of the Federation Government; Education and Labour that of Singapore Government.\textsuperscript{(56)}

The two most controversial provisions besides the control of the Internal Security by the Central Government were those related to citizenship and the size of Singapore representation in the Federal Parliament. Under the agreement reached it was provided that Singapore and the Federation would have separate citizenship while people in both the territories would share the same nationality. Under law all the nationals of Malaysia were to have the same rights:

Nationals of the larger Federation whether Singapore citizens or the Federation citizens, will as nationals have equal rights, carry the same passport, enjoy the same protection and be subjected to equal responsibilities under the constitution of the larger Federation.\textsuperscript{(57)}


\textsuperscript{57}Ibid, p.6.
The number of Singapore representatives in the Federal Parliament was fixed at fifteen. This number was fixed after considering the Singapore autonomy in education and labour and the fact that none of the Singapore citizens could lose their citizenship rights in the larger federation. It could be agreed upon after much bargaining and some compromise by both the parties. 58

It was over these issues that the battle for merger was fought in Singapore between the P.A.P. and the Barisan Sosialis (Socialist Front). The issues inspired lot of debate in the Legislative Assembly. Simultaneously, the fight raged outside the Assembly as well.

The Barisan's Sosialis (Socialist Front) Opposition to Malaysia:

In its denouncement of the merger plans the Barisan did not wait for the publication of the White Paper on the merger arrangements. Towards the end of August, when the joint statement announcing the agreement in principle regarding merger was issued, the preparatory committee of the Barisan had made its opposition clear. The Barisan charged that the merger was a "phoney" one and a "sell-out." 59 The Barisan

58 Lee Kuan Yew disclosed that the Federation had suggested that Singapore accept twelve seats in the Federal Parliament while Singapore had asked for nineteen seats. Singapore, Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. 15, No. 16, cols. 1407-12.

59 Stand of the Barisan sosialis on our Constitution, n.d., cited in, Pushpesh Pant, no. 48, p. 66.
pointed out that the way ahead for a "real reunification" of Singapore and Malaya lay in one of the two directions:

(a) An immediate and complete merger with Singapore
Joining the Federation as a constituent state, like Penang or Malacca;

(b) As an autonomous unit within a confederation with the Borneo territories coming in when possible.

Barisan announced that it would exert to influence the people of Singapore to accept the first alternative of a complete merger "with Singapore citizens automatically becoming Malayan citizens with proportionate representation in the Federal Parliament...."60

In publishing their stand on the constitutional status of the Singaporeans the Barisan had overlooked the fact that if Singapore were to merge with the Federation like Penang and Malacca a large number of Singapore citizens would lose their right of citizenship.61 The P.A.P. got hold of this weak point in the Barisan's argument. When in the course of a radio forum (date not available) Gol Keng-Swee confronted

60 Ibid.

61 When Penang and Malacca were included in the Federation all had not been granted the Federal citizenship automatically. Those at least one of whose parents had not been born in the settlements or the Federation or the British colonies had to apply for registration. For detailed provision, see Federation of Malaya (Agreement 1948 in Malayan Constitutional Documents (Kuala Lumpur, 1959), pp.249-50.
Dr. Lee (a Barisan member) with the fact that only about 325,000 or half the Singapore citizens would qualify automatically for the Federal citizenship, he could not get out of the dilemma. Subsequently, the Barisan dropped the demand for a merger on the pattern of Penang and Malacca and started calling for a "genuine merger" in which all the Singapore citizens would automatically become the citizens of the Federation on the merger day. This was the stand taken by the Spokesman of the Barisan in the Singapore Legislative Assembly.

The Merger Debate in the Assembly:

The debate in the National Assembly on the White Paper on merger provided another exchange between the P.A.P. government and the Barisan members. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew claimed that:

(The White Paper) represents the widest consensus of opinion after thorough and frank discussions. It represents how we believe merger can be achieved with the least possible upset for either side. (63)

In his marathon speech Dr. Lee (Barisan's spokesman) launched a massive assault on the merger plan. He called the White Paper "an unholy scheme whereby the people of Singapore

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became politically castrated by being segregated with separate citizenship and without proportional representation in the Federal Parliament. 64

While explaining the Barisan view, he observed:

Our stand is that every Singapore citizen should become a federal citizen on merger. That is, on merger, all 624,000 Singapore citizens irrespective of whether they were born in Singapore, India, China or Timbuctoo, will automatically become 624,000 Federal citizens.... on this there can be no compromise, no retreat. (65)

The Barisan stand received the support of the workers Party and United Peoples' Party. The Singapore Peoples' Alliance and the Singapore branch of U.M.N.O. on the other hand considered the merger proposals negotiated by the P.A.P. as the best possible under the circumstances and lent their support to the government. 66

The Singapore Referendum

The P.A.P. government refused to yield any ground to the Barisan's demands for it to resign and hold fresh elections. However, it was declared that a referendum would be held to enable the Singapore electorate to decide on the merger issue. 66

65 Ibid, cols. 327-8.
66 For the speeches of various party leaders refer to the Singapore Legislative Assembly Debates. The references are: Ong Eng Guan (U.P.P), 27 November 1961, cols. 731-44; David Marshall (Workers' Party), Ibid, 23 November 1961, cols. 549-93; Lion Yew Hock (Singapore Peoples Alliance); Ibid, 21 November 1961, cols. 429-32 and 438-72; Dato Abdul Hamid (Singapore U.M. N.O.), ibid, 22 November 1961, cols. 491-8.
After the conclusion of the debate on the White Paper on merger, Barisan shifted its criticism to the terms of referendum. The referendum did not provide the alternatives such as acceptance or outright rejection of the merger plan but presented a choice between different forms of merger. The government pointed out that since all political parties had accepted the merger in principle the issue that remained to be decided was the terms of merger.

In July 1962 an Assembly woman member Madame Hoc Phay Choo resigned from the P.A.P. and joined the ranks of the opposition. This reduced the P.A.P. into a minority in the house. This did not cause much concern in the government circles. With the support of the Singapore U.M.N.O. and the S.P.A. it succeeded in securing the passage of the Referendum Bill without any difficulty. The government also survived a no-confidence motion on 13 July 1962 and Lee Kuan Yew reiterated the determination of the PAP to bring about merger:

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67 Straits Times, 18 and 21 September 1961.


We are on the final phase towards our goal. There is no question of our quitting and leaving the job unfinished. Until the opposition outvotes us, we are constitutionally the government...we shall see the referendum and merger through.(71)

On his part, Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman also made a brief but subtle contribution to the merger debate in Singapore. He made it clear that he considered the threat posed by the extremists in Singapore to be very grave.

Speaking before the Singapore U.M.NO. in March 1962, he said in a warning tone:

If the extremist and the opposition parties want to create trouble and cause bloodshed after merger then it is better we do not have merger.(72)

Some three weeks later he repeated his fears more explicitly and warned that the Federation might have to close down the Johore Causeway if Singapore did not join Malaysia. It is reasonable to assume that these statements impressed upon the Singapore people the possibility that the increasing militancy of the Barisan sosialis could well jeopardise the merger plan which was essential for the survival of the country. This undoubtedly strengthened the hands of the Singapore Government for soliciting support for its merger plan in the referendum.

71 Straits Times, 14 July 1962.


73 Malayan Times, 16 April 1962.
When the Government finalized the terms of the referendum in July 1962, it offered three alternatives to the electorates:

(a) The constitutional arrangement set out in the command paper 33 of 1961 giving Singapore autonomy in Education and Labour;

(b) a complete and unconditional merger as a state on an equal basis with the other eleven states in accordance with the constitutional documents of the Federation of Malaya; or

(c) to enter into Malaysia on terms no less favourable than those offered to the Borneo territories.74

The Barisan did not consider any of the three alternatives acceptable and appealed to the electorate to cast blank votes in the referendum in protest.75 The Barisan also formed a Council of Joint Action (C.J.A.) with the Workers' Party, the Liberal Socialist Party, the Party Rakyat and the United Democratic Party to petition the UN Committee on Colonialism.

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74 Singapore, Legislative Assembly Debates, vol.19, 4 July 1962, col.392. The third alternative was suggested by Lim Yew Hock and accepted by the government, although it was not then known what terms would be offered to the Borneo territories.

75 Straits Times (Singapore) 18 July 1962, p.4. See also The Pelbeian (Singapore) A Party Journal of Barisan Sosialis, 18 July 1962.
In its memorandum sent to the UN Committee, the C.J.A. maintained that "the proposed transfer of sovereignty over Singapore to the Federation would take place otherwise than through the free expression of the wishes of the people of Singapore and contrary to the spirit and letter of Resolution 1514(XV) of the UN General Assembly of 14 December 1960". 76

In its wisdom, the UN Committee decided not to take any cognizance of the petition. Later, it consented to receive a representation from the petitioners. Lee Siew Choh, Woodhull, wee Soon Bee, Lion Hock Siew and David Marshall comprised the C.J.A. delegation. In their representation they attacked the Singapore Referendum along the lines followed by the opposition groups in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. 77 The Singapore Government's side was presented by Lee Kuan Yew and Dr. Goh. 78 The UN Committee finally decided not to take any action on the C.J.A. petition.

Before the electorate went to the polls, Lee Kuan Yew announced while campaigning for alternative "A" in the referendum that there would be common citizenship in Malaysia to which all citizens in Singapore would be entitled. 79


77 A/AC.109/SR 86(UN Document) dated 12 September 1962, cited in Ibid.


79 Straits Times, 15 August 1962. The Barisan called it a bluff. In fact it was no more than a semantic change. The Common nationality was now called the common citizenship...
Following an intense publicity campaign the referendum took place on 12 September 1962. Of 624,000 voters 561,559 cast their votes. Of these 71 percent (397,626) voted for alternative ‘A’—the merger plan as outlined in Command 33 of 1961 published by the Singapore Government—9,422 or 1.7 percent for alternative ‘B’ and 7,911 or 1.4 percent for alternative “c”. 144,077 electors or 25 percent cast blank votes. No doubt, it was a massive 71 percent vote in favour of government favoured alternative ‘A’. Nevertheless, the pro-Barisan 25 percent votes casting blank votes could not be considered less significant in any sense.

For the PAP and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew it was a massive victory. In a jubilant mood he observed:

Not to have held the Referendum would have been a terrible error, for we would have allowed the communists to make people believe that the so-called masses are against merger... Except for a minority of people, most of whom have been misled by the communists and their United Front Leaders, the people of Singapore are solidly behind merger and Malaysia.(81)

As opposed to the PAP leaders views, the Barisan leaders refused to accept the verdict of the referendum. In the latter’s view it did not reflect the will of the people.82

81 Straits Times, 3 September 1962.
The value of the referendum, as one scholar noted, was less a real political victory than "an exercise in political gamesmanship". Besides, giving a great advantage in the field of propaganda it revealed the extent of the hard core of the opposition to the P.A.P. It also exposed the areas of influence of this opposition constituencywise.\(^8^3\)

Tension over the issue of merger lessened after the referendum, as the Barisan leaders (alleged by the Lee Kuan Yew's government to be known communists) realized their helplessness in preventing the merger of Singapore with Malaysia. Apprehending threats of sabotage, however, the Internal Security Council on 2 February 1966 ordered 'Operation Coldstore'. More than a hundred pro-communist political, trade union and student leaders were arrested. These included half of the Barisan Sosialis' Central Executive Committee members. Follow-up operations further weakened the communist movement in Singapore. Malaysia was finally inaugurated on 16 September 1963. It consisted of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sahah, (North Borneo) and Sarawak. It did not include Brunei with the Sultan having at the last minute decided against merger. President Sukarno of Indonesia refused to acknowledge the existence of Malaysia and worked actively against it during the period of Indonesian confrontation which lasted for the next three years.

\(^{83}\) Pant Pushpesh Kumar, _n.48_, p.74.
Although the leaders of PAP were happy over the merger of Singapore in the Federation, the merger was bound to lead to confrontation between their leaders because of many unresolved communal, political and economic issues inherent in the merger agreement. This eventually led to the separation of Singapore from the Federation in August 1965.

Communal Issue

The communal issue was one of the most important unresolved issues between the PAP and the Alliance leaders in Kuala Lumpur. The continued prevalence of traditionally inbred mutual mistrust and misconception between the PAP and UMNO and between the Chinese and Malays created an atmosphere in which cooperation became difficult. This, in fact, hindered the achievement of any political compatibility between the two.

The special position of the Malays as granted by the 1957 constitution was inherent in the social make-up of Malaysia. The Malays were considered as "sons of the soil (Bhumi putras) and the granting of special privileges to them stemmed from British colonial policies and practice. The British had tacitly recognised Malay supremacy in politics and government and Chinese and Indian influence in technical
and commercial sectors. In short, the Malays were guaranteed political supremacy vis-à-vis the economic pre-eminence held by the Chinese and to a lesser extent by the Indians. The compulsive circumstance of living in a multiracial society had controlled the racial prides and prejudices. Under the system of Malay political predominance and non-Malay economic influence, the Malay elite were able to take advantage of the non-Malay technical skills and economic entrepreneurship as long as they hold political control in the Parliament and shared, in a nominal way, political power with the Chinese and Indians within the Alliance.

Lee Kuan Yew's concept of a "Malaysian Malaysia", meant that the nation and the state were not identified with the supremacy, well being, and interests of any one particular community or race, and that the question of Malay privileges was the most important area of contention between the PAP and the UMNO. Lee Kuan Yew himself summed it up quite succinctly when he once observed:


85 An analysis of Malay rights in Malaysia may be found in B. Simandjutak, Malaya's Federation 1945-1963 (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1969), p.175-213.

We both want to get a Malaysian Malaysia, but we propose route 'A', direct from many states together into one federation, from many groups towards into one multiracial, united Malaysia. They say no, let us go slowly - separate state-Singapore different from Malaya. You keep to Singapore, please don't interfere in Malaya. We will run things for you, but we will still try to get to the point of a multi-racial Malaysia. (87)

Whatever the rationale in Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's approach, the desire of the PAP leaders "to such things" was not acceptable in Kuala Lumpur. While explaining his approach Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman commented:

"Young men ... want to rush things. Instead of doing what they want in a quiet and practical way, they tread about on everybody's toes, knock everybody's lead and bring about Chaos, suspicion, misunderstanding, hatred and trouble.... The suggestion from these young leaders is that you can do this (demolish the dividing wall among the races) overnight without making any attempt to put the timbers in shape. Why rush? After all, the nation will live many long years. Why not take time to make a strong nation. (88)

A spokesman of UMNO advocated a longer route to the establishment of a non-communal society in these words:

There are two ways of establishing a Malaysian Malaysia. First is the platform of the PAP - non communalism straight-away. The other - the method adopted by the alliance - requires two steps. First inter-racial harmony: second, an ultimate state of non-communalism. (89)

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87 Straits Times, 25 May 1965, p.2.
88 Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), 8 March 1965, p.1.
89 Straits Times (Singapore), 1 June 1965, p.1.
Although the PAP and the UMNO were ostensibly working toward the same objectives, the PAP's proposal would ultimately lead to an elitist policy a sort of "meritocracy" and probably its own political superiority, while the UMNO plan would lead to the continuance of Malay pre-dominance for an unlimited period of time. The Constitution of Malaysia guaranteed the Malays a special position under the law. Article 153 of the Constitution stated:

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King or Supreme Sovereign) shall exercise his functions under this constitution and federal law in such a manner as may be necessary to safeguard the special position of the Malays and to ensure the reservation for Malays of such proportion as he may seem reasonable of positions in the public service. (90)

According to Robert O. Tilman's study of the Malay bureaucracy, most positions that required general education and most non-professional bureaucratic positions (police, customs, and immigration officers) were filled by Malays, while most positions that required technical, scientific, and professional training (natural and physical sciences, engineering, and medicine) were filled by non-Malays. (91) However, the provisions of Article 153 were not extended to Singapore.

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91 Robert O. Tilman, Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya, no.82, pp.74-5.
As regards Singapore, the PAP government was scrupulously ignoring ethnic consideration in filling administrative posts. See, for instance the pressure from the Malay Chamber of Commerce in Singapore for additional appointments of Malays to administrative posts. The government response to the Malay's demand was certainly not positive. It indicated that appointments made on the basis of race would serve neither the government nor the Malays.\textsuperscript{92} It, however, posed no problem as regards the requirement that Malay be the national language and that Malays be upgraded in educational qualifications. Singapore had already accepted the necessity of both and, in fact, had been a multi-lingual state since the beginning.

In a speech to the consular corps in Singapore on 30 July 1964, Lee Kuan Yew discussed the escalating communal problems.\textsuperscript{93} He stated that the success of Malaysia depended upon all men being loyal to the elected central government of Malaysia which represented the interests of all races and economic groups.\textsuperscript{94} According to him, the aspirations and activities of the Chinese Chauvinist, the communists, and the Malay "ultras" constituted one of the most pressing problems. In Singapore, the suppression of Chinese Chauvinists and communists did not present as much of a problem as did dealing with the Malay "ultras".

\textsuperscript{92}\textit{Straits Times}, 18 September 1962, p.13.
\textsuperscript{93}\textit{Straits Times}, 4 August 1964, p.13.
Political Issues

Apart from the communal issues that arose in the debate on the question of merger, political issues were not less significant. They played an important role in determining the future of Singapore in the Federation. The differences witnessed at the time of negotiations for merger prior to the inauguration of the federation of Malaysia influenced the nature of political relationship between Singapore and Malaysia.

With only 15 members out of a total of 159 as provided in the merger plan, Singapore could play only a marginal role in the Federal Parliament. This in fact led to the isolation of Singapore from the politics of Alliance. Its population alone would have warranted nearly twice that number. It had been tacitly agreed that Singapore would accept this small representation in return for a large measure of local autonomy. However, under the Malaysian Federal Constitution Singapore was prohibited from increasing its seats in other areas of the Federation. Other factors inhibiting active participation were that Singapore citizens could neither vote nor run for federal or state offices in the states of Malaya and all elected officials of Singapore had to be citizens of Singapore.

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96 This could be accomplished by PAP representatives standing for election and winning in Sarawak and Sabah.

These political hindrances reflected more than just competition between the PAP and the Alliance. It included the PAP challenge to and competition with the MCA for Chinese votes in Malaya. It also included the ongoing PAP-UMNO controversy over the Malays' predominant position versus a "Malaysian Malaysia". By early 1964, it had become evident that the London Agreement was little more than a weak truce. The first of many significant internal political events occurred when the Singapore elections were held on 21 September 1963, five days after the inauguration of the Federation. The PAP had promised to hold elections sometime after the inauguration but because of the death of its Minister of Labour, who had represented the PAP's working majority of one seat in the Singapore Legislative Assembly, it felt compelled to arrange the elections immediately.98

Finding a valuable opportunity to test its own mass support in Singapore, the Alliance party decided to enter the electoral contest with the PAP. This marked a sort of hostile relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.99

Many of the old political opponents of the PAP joined the Alliance platform. Inspite of this challenge, the PAP won thirty seven of fifty one seats. The failure of the MCA and

98 Straits Times, 26 June 1963.

UMNO to win a single seat reinforced the sense of bitterness which had already been created in Kuala Lumpur by the preponing of elections. The Alliance leaders in Kuala Lumpur had a feeling as if Singapore was functioning as an independent political entity and had little respect for the sensitivities of the Federal government. On its part, Singapore did little to reduce this feeling. The Malayan Alliance was upset by the results because it had fully supported its Singapore branch. Tunku Abdul Rahman had campaigned in Singapore, and high UMNO leaders had predicted success. A further disquieting note was that the PAP had garnered significant number of Malays as well as Chinese votes. 100

After the elections, matters came to a head in a verbal exchange between Lee Kuan Yew and Tunku Abdul Rahman. As a result of which, 1 Lee Kuan Yew declared that Singapore would cooperate with the Central Government only on a fair and equal basis. When Tunku Abdul Rahman responded by asserting that the government of Singapore was in the hands of the Central Government, not in those of Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP, Lee replied that indeed the ultimate authority in Singapore was the central government, but the two governments must cooperate on equal terms if Malaysia was to progress and prosper. 101 The PAP and its leader Lee Kuan Yew injected still

100 A detailed analysis of the election is given in a series of articles in The Straits Times (Singapore), September 1965.

101 The Times (London), 30 September 1963, reported in Fletcher, n.87, p.30.
another element of disharmony in the relationship by announcing that they saw their role in the Federal Parliament as that of a friend's loyal opposition and critic.\textsuperscript{102}

In this situation the PAP decision to contest the Malaysian elections of April 1964 and thereby move into the political/electoral arena in Peninsular Malaysia quickly magnified the Alliance's feelings of animosity and distrust for the PAP. Each ethnically oriented party in the Alliance viewed it as a threatening gesture. The MCA saw it as a threat to its own standing in and political control over the Chinese community in Malaya. In fact, the move reflected the PAP's implied long-range goal of political dominance over the Malaysian political scene, which it hoped to accomplish through a moderate platform of "social justice and non-communalism" directed at all ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{103}

For the realization of its political goals, the PAP concentrated its attack on the socialist front (an allegedly pro-communist party in Malaysia) and the Malaysian Chinese Association, charging the latter with corruption, greed and inaptitude. In its campaign which it had directed towards the urban Chinese, the PAP insinuated that the MCA politicians had let them down and the PAP could better negotiate with the

\textsuperscript{102} The Straits Times (Singapore), 13 October 1963, p.2.

\textsuperscript{103} People's Action Party, Election Manifesto of the PAP (Singapore, 1964), p.4.
Malay controlled Alliance government in Kuala Lumpur. 104

While the PAP campaign in Malaya had been put in operation quickly and without a party organization, it was effective in that it played upon differences on serious ethnic issues between the MCA and UMNO in the Alliance. Lee Kuan Yew, in his campaign speeches, harped upon saving the Tunku from his MCA compatriots and at the same time kept up the appearance of not attacking the UMNO. Lee said:

Half the problems Malaysia faces have been — — created by his old friends who skilfully and cynically exploit his personal loyalties. We have repeatedly said that we want the Tunku to win the elections and we want to help him to implement a more intelligent economic and social policy in the urban areas. (105)

On his part Tunku Abdul Rahman was angry over the PAP's participation in the elections and believed that it violated the spirit if not the letter, of the understanding which he had with Lee Kuan Yew. 106

The 1964 Federal elections resulted in a landslide victory for the Alliance partners with the PAP winning only one seat in a constituency heavily dominated by the Indian community. 107 The victory was ascribed to Alliance's campaign theme of a united Malaysia in support of the Alliance against the Indonesian


106 Tunku Abdul Rahman believed that Lee Kuan Yew had tacitly agreed to keep out of Malaysian politics during the 1960s. For additional information and background data, see Fletcher, The Separation of Singapore from Malaysia, n.99, p.30.
President Sukarno's inspired and launched policy of "confrontation with the Federation of Malaysia. The PAP had expected to make a better showing and conceded that its lack of experience in Malaysia and incorrect assessment of issues were generally responsible for the poor response of the voters. Soon after the elections the PAP announced that it would open branches in the states where it had contested the elections. Undeterred by the election results, it stated that it had arrived as a Malaysian party, and that there existed a large audience interested in the PAP ideology.108

At this crucial stage just as the PAP was launching its campaign in Malaysia to win the Chinese support at the expense of MCA, the UMNO confronted it in Singapore.

For this purpose, the UMNO sent its secretary General, Jaffar Albar, to rebuild its branch in Singapore. Albar organized a series of meetings in the Malay community in Singapore at which he advocated unity among Malay citizens of Singapore along ethnic lines, and derided the PAP's multi-ethnic form of government. As a result of Jaffar Albar's visit, UMNO leaders helped in the establishment of an action committee which would press Malay demands for job quotas, scholarships, land reservation, and other benefits.109

107 Straits Times, 13 September 1964, p.4.
108 Ibid.
The UMNO accentuated the problem of housing in Singapore and accused the Singaporean government of discriminating against the Malays. At this stage, the Singapore government was in the process of implementing its urban renewal scheme which had led to the demolishing of a large number of low-cost dwellings inhabited by the Malays. As a result, the families that were moved from this area were Malay, who objected to being moved into large multi-family housing units where they were required high rents charged by the Housing Board. For the local UMNO branch, it came as a useful opportunity to rally the Malays under its banner. It accused the Singapore government of discriminating against the Malay community. Soon after the dispute over housing began, the Malay National Action Committee published leaflets. These were addressed to Malay brothers and sisters and stated in an inflammatory tone:

Let us unite to resist the Chinese, who want to kill us Malays. Before Malay blood flows in Singapore, it is better to flood the state with Chinese blood. (110)

In 1964, on Prophet Mohamad's birthday, 21 July, a few days after the discovery of the leaflets, racial riots between Malays and Chinese broke out in Singapore and continued sporadically for nearly a week. (111) There were reports of twenty-two deaths with approximately five hundred having sustained injuries.

110 Bloodworth, An Eye for the Dragon, Southeast Asia Observed, p. 311.

111 The Straits Times (Singapore), 27 July 1964, p. 1.

112 Ibid.
The clashes began when the Malay extremists, while celebrating the Prophet's birthday, provoked the Chinese.\textsuperscript{113}

In the weeks and months following the riots, the PAP and the Alliance blamed each other for the riots. Both sides were alarmed at the highly disturbed communal situation and felt, perhaps sincerely, interested in lowering the level of inter-communal tension. In September 1964, Lee Kuan Yew reported that he and Tunku Abdul Rahman had reached an agreement to avoid political discussions on communal issues for a period of two years.\textsuperscript{114} However, because of the UMNO's commitment to control the PAP in Singapore and the PAP objective of competing with the MCA in Malaya, the agreement failed to click and within two months it was no more. In subsequent months, while the Malay ultras became restrained and the bitterness of their comments got reduced, Lee Kuan Yew kept up the pressure on the central government for greater concessions for the PAP in Malaysia. Nevertheless, following the riots, there had been discussions between the PAP and the Alliance on seeking ways to mitigate communal tension and thus consolidate Malaysia. The PAP had strongly advocated that it be admitted to the Alliance as a partner.\textsuperscript{115} Tunku Abdul Rahman

\textsuperscript{113}An eye witness account is provided by Michael Leifer, "Communal violence in Singapore", \textit{Asian Survey}, vol.IV, No.10, October 1964, pp.1115-21.

\textsuperscript{114}The Times (London) 19 October 1964.

\textsuperscript{115}The Straits Times (Singapore), 29 July 1964, p.24.
had, however, stated that there was no support for the PAP's suggestion in the UMNO, and that he did not foresee any such support for at least two years. 116

As competition for political power between the PAP, UMNO and MCA grew intense, prompted by the hope of thwarting the intensified efforts of the UMNO in Singapore, 117 the PAP formed the Malaysian solidarity convention. 118 Although that organization represented a great diversity of races, it subscribed to Lee Kuan Yew's concepts of a "Malaysian Malaysia" and a non-communal political system.

Supporters of the Federal Government accused the PAP of manoeuvring to make Lee Kuan Yew the Prime Minister of Malaysia. A heated debate ensued, and Lee Kuan Yew reportedly said that he would like to become Prime Minister only if his doing so benefited Malaysia, but that a Malay should be Prime Minister "for at least several more years". 119 A. Rajaratnam, the Minister of Culture in the government stated that making Lee Kuan Yew Prime Minister of Malaysia was, indeed, the

116 Ibid.

117 The UMNO had, in April 1965, formed the Malaysian Alliance Party. The front was formed by the merging of the four separate Alliance Parties of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. The Straits Times (Singapore), 18 April 1965, p.6.

118 This organisation was composed of the PAP, the Peoples' Progressive Party (Malaya), the United Democratic Party (Malaya), the Sarawak United People's Party and Machinda (Sarawak).

119 The Straits Times (Singapore), 9 June 1965, p.7.
objective of the PAP political activity. 120

In March 1965, the three-sided struggle for political influence reached the point where the Alliance in Malaya was in the process of severe self-examination and internal criticism. The Ultras in the UMNO were castigating the MCA leaders nearly as blatantly as they had been harassing the PAP leaders. 121 The Alliance blamed the PAP for causing the problems inherent in the Alliance to erupt with such vehemence. 122

As the inter-party wranglings were reaching a boiling point, Tunku Abdul Rahman left for London in June 1965 to attend the meetings of the commonwealth Prime Ministers. There he was held up with a case of shingles. Lee Kuan Yew, the UMNO, and the MCA, all relying upon the Tunku to mediate among them on various disputes and arrange some settlement awaited his return from London.

Economic Issues

As regards the economic issues Singapore's position was clear. The PAP government was ever averse to any compromise on two vital issues of concern to Singapore. These were, (1) control over its finances; and (2) rapid development of a common market.

120 The Straits Times (Singapore), 9 June 1965, p. 7.
121 The Straits Budget (Kuala Lumpur), 11 August 1965, p. 4.
Lee Kuan Yew and Tan Siew Sin, the Minister of Finance in the Central Government were in disagreement on most economic issues, including the one relating to quantum of funds Singapore would allocate to the Central government. The difficulty lay in the type of images they had of each other as well as their parties. For the PAP Tan Siew Sin and the MCA (of which he was secretary general) represented the kind of Chinese for whom it had no respect. In the eyes of the PAP leaders, both Tan Siew Sin and the MCA were neglectful in their duties to the working class Chinese and that both represented the interests of wealth and privilege. Absence of any personal support and differences between the negotiations, combined with the political and economic interests of both sides, had created a rift which, subsequent to merger, had only tended to grow.

The viability and necessity of a scheme for the establishment of a common-market was agreed to early in the negotiations. It, however, became such a contentious issue that following the merger the Central Government apparently felt that the scheme was not in its best interests and thus delayed action on implementing the arrangement. The important economic issue for Singapore was a growing market for its industrial goods in a duty-free category. Indeed, one of the most important aspects that prompted Singapore to merge with Malaysia was the economic benefits that would accrue to it.

Although Malaya had less to gain from a common-market scheme than Singapore, the Malaysia had guaranteed it. In this connection it would be interesting to see the following provisions of the Malaysia Agreement (Annexure J):

(1) The Federal Government, in order to facilitate the maximum practicable degree of economic integration of the territories of Malaysia, while taking account of the interests of the entrepot trade of Singapore, Penang and Labuan and the need to ensure a balanced development of these territories, shall progressively establish a common market in Malaysia for all goods or products produced, manufactured or assembled in significant quantity in Malaysia, with the exception of goods and products of which the principal terminal market lie outside Malaysia.

1. (a) Where the same protective duties or revenue duties are applicable throughout Malaysia in the case of any class of goods or products, then no tariff or trade barrier or trade restriction or discrimination shall be applied to such goods or products in regard to their circulation throughout Malaysia. (125)

Nevertheless, the Federal Government leaders did not seem to be in a hurry to allow Singaporean manufactures to compete in Malaysia as the Malaysian manufacturers were competing with the cheaper cost in Singapore in the manufacture of the same product.

By mid-1964 the Common market question had got linked up with another dispute between Singapore and the Central government. This related to the amount to be contributed to the


125 Great Britain, Malaysia, Agreement Concluded Between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and North Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore, Command 2094 Text (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, July 1963) Annex J, p. 228, hereafter cited as the Malaysia Agreement.
Central Government by Singapore. The Malaysian leaders apparently thought that until Singapore became less intransigent on the sharing of funds, the common-market scheme would be a mere rhetoric.

Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee, and other PAP leaders had used every means possible to fight this trend prior to merger. In fact, talks had been broken off and only a last minute conference in London had produced a compromise. The Arrangements that were finally concluded on revenues to be collected in Singapore provided:

All revenues collected in Singapore, shall be paid into a separate fund in a branch of the Central Bank to be established in Singapore and the fund shall be divided between the two governments and paid to them at least once in every year, in the proportion of 60 percent to the Singapore government and 40 percent to the Federal Government. (126)

Both sides had agreed that the arrangements thus concluded would remain in operation until 31 December 1964, at which time they would be reviewed and possibly revised. There would also be a subsequent review every two years. (127)

The final agreement on allocation of revenues prior to merger represented a compromise which had settled nothing in terms of Lee Kuan Yew's view of Singapore as a partner in the federation and Tunku Abdul Rahman's view of Singapore as one of the many states in the Federation.

127 The Straits Times (Singapore), 5 December 1964, p.2.
Not surprisingly, in December 1964, Tan Siew Sin announced that he wanted a review of the financing agreement and indicated that it would probably be more equitable if sixty (60) percent of Singapore's revenue went to the Central Government. In a virtually blunt response, Lee Kuan Yew said: "Give him! what for? In order that the poor in Singapore pay taxes so that the rich in Malaya need not pay any." Thus, this question was never resolved to either side's satisfaction and was finally submitted to the arbitration of the World Bank.

As part of the financial arrangements prior to merger, Singapore had agreed to finance development projects in East Malaysia, i.e. Sarawak and Sabah on the island of Barneo. In the course of discussions, Federal Government officials had requested that Singapore give M $50 million for development funding. Their counterparts in Singapore had countered that Singapore was too poor to give this money but would enter into a loan transaction.

Interestingly, not only had Singapore avoided presenting the development funds as a gift, but also at the last minute in the London meeting, Lee had forced the inclusion of a rider which provided that fifty percent of the labour employment on projects built with Singapore's funds must come from

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129 The Malaysian Agreement, p.231. Also see The Straits Times (Singapore), 27 July 1965, p.1.
130 The Malaysia Agreement, p.231.
Singapore.131 The money was never transferred to Federal Government accounts because Lee Kuan Yew viewed the giving of loan as nothing more than a promise which would be fulfilled when the Federal Government would uphold its agreement to place the common market in operation. Thus, Singapore's failure to fund the development projects in East Malaysia complicated the Federal Government's relations with those state governments. This still further embittered relations between Malaysia and Singapore.

Some other financial, industrial, and economic disputes developed during 1964-65. Most of them stemmed from the fact that Singapore regarded its economic status within the Federation as special, and demanded that it be allowed to exercise its prerogatives in these and other areas as it had been accustomed to doing as an independent state. Among the many issues of this nature were the pioneer status;132 a trade dispute with the United Kingdom over quota for textile goods allocated to Singapore,133 and the squable over the question of closing the Bank of China,134 a question which had international implications.

131 Fletcher, n.99, p.19.

132 Pioneer status was offered to developing industries. It allowed them to operate for a five-year period without paying taxes. The Malaysian Agreement, n.129, p.233. The Federal Government was accused by Singapore of misusing its powers to withhold this status during the period from September 1963 to August 1965.
Separation from Malaysia

Probably, as early as December 1964 discussions had been held between Lee Kuan Yew and Alliance leaders for the framework in which a more flexible relationship might be developed. In this prospective relationship Singapore was to have had responsibility for its internal defense in return for which the PAP would withdraw from the Malaysian politics.\textsuperscript{135} This scheme was never carried out probably because of objections by the British government.

The available evidence suggested that when Lee Kuan Yew was refused partnership in a coalition government with Alliance during and immediately after the riots in Singapore in July and September of 1964, he began quietly seeking a compromise scheme that would give Singapore more latitude within the Federation.\textsuperscript{136}

The PAP's "Malaysian Malaysia" campaign of April-May 1965, plus a series of critical speeches by Lee Kuan Yew, gave credence to the contention that Lee Kuan Yew was trying to force the issue, in a speech in June 1965 he said: "either a Malaysian Malaysia or nothing".\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{133}The crux of this issue was the interest of the Federal Government in expanding this sector of the economy in Malaya in the face of a demonstrated export-capability already existing in Singapore. The dispute arose from the decision of the British Board of trade to deal with the Federal Government of Federation of Malaysia and not directly with its old customers in Singapore- Under the new arrangement, the Singapore textile industry lost business. Harvey Stockwin, "Broken Threats in Malaysia", \textit{FEER}, vol.48, No.6, April 15, 1965, pp.118-20.

\textsuperscript{134}The Bank of China operated a large branch in Singapore. Through it, trade relations were carried on with the People's...
In June 1965, when there arose the possibility of a break up between Singapore and Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew indicated the following possibilities that existed for Singapore:

First, absorption, conquest by a third power not necessarily Indonesia. Second, domination of one race over the other... third, more race riots, gradual segregation leading to partition. However, these are cold quiet words not meant to inflame anybody. (138)

It is difficult to say whether or not Lee Kuan Yew wanted partition, but one thing was certain: the PAP had itself set the course of direct conflict and competition with the UMNO and MCA.

135 Republic of China. The Federal Government moved to close the Bank of China branch in Singapore because of possible security problems. Lee Kuan Yew resisted citing the economic Chaos which would probably ensue. The Straits Times (Singapore), 25 June 1965, p.3.


137 Harney Stockwin, n.127, p.312.

It was evident that Tunku Abdul Rahman, greatly concerned about the escalating problems in the relationship and worried about the mounting threats and calls for violence made by ultras on both sides, decided to separate Singapore in order to avoid further bloodshed. 139

Tunku Abdul Rahman returned to Kuala Lumpur from London on 5 August 1965, and immediately began discussions with Lee Kuan Yew and his top aides in the PAP. During these meetings Lee Kuan Yew again proposed a looser Federation. 140 Tan Siew Sin advised Tunku Abdul Rahman to accept nothing less than full integration or complete separation. 141 S. Rajaratnam and Toh Chin Chye, the two PAP leaders were reportedly unwilling to sign the separation agreement; but when they received an undated letter from Tunku Abdul Rahman indicating that he was unable to handle certain ultra elements in the UMNO, they agreed to sign it. Tunku Abdul Rahman wrote:

"I am writing to tell you that I have given the matter of our break with Singapore our utmost consideration and I find that in the interest of our friendship and the security and peace of Malaysia as a whole there is absolutely no other way out."

139 Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), 14 May 1965, p.4.
140 Straits Times (Singapore), 6 August 1965, p.1.
141 _.
If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed the action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience I think the amicable settlement of our difference in this way is the only possible way out. I request you most earnestly to agree. 142

Toh Chin Chye, in his reply to Tunku Abdul Rahman's letter, indicated that the PAP wished to remain in Malaysia, but, since the Tunku did not think he would guarantee racial peace, Singapore was forced with the unpleasant choice of repression or secession and would choose the latter. 143

Quite interestingly after the PAP published the Tunku's letter he angrily denied that he was unable to maintain control of the hawks in the UMNO.

Thus on 9 August 1965, it was announced simultaneously in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur that Singapore would be a sovereign, democratic and independent nation. 144 Thereafter commenced Singapore's struggle to survive and prosper on its own and to build a national identity and national consciousness in a disparate population of immigrants.

143 For paragraph three and four of Toh Chin Chye's letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman's letter, see Ibid, p. 169.
144 Singapore Yearbook 1987 (Singapore, Ministry of Culture), p. 26