

SINGAPORE: PATH TO INDEPENDENCE

Singapore: Path to Independence

V. SURYANARAYAN

Foreword

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KOODAL PUBLISHERS

Madurai - 625 001 □ India

1977

Published by

Koodal Publishers,
121, West Masi Street,
Madurai - 625 001, India.

Printed at

Vaigai Achagam,
Madurai - 625 001

First Published 1977

M

959.57

S:112

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The North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong gave financial support towards the publication of this work. However, the responsibility for the contents of the book - facts, opinion, conclusions, etc., is entirely that of the author and not of the North-Eastern Hill University.

358651

21 AUG 1985

Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

To
MY FATHER

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to commend this book both to research workers and the general reader as a very competent, informative and scholarly piece of writing by my colleague, Dr. V. Suryanarayan, who has been mainly instrumental in building up a good Department of History in our School of Social Sciences. Though not a scholar myself in this field I have visited the fascinating mini-State of Singapore often enough to recognize the merit and the value of the work done by Dr. Suryanarayan.

While we can take a legitimate pride in the great contributions in the fields of religion and general culture made by our country to the development of Asia in the past our present knowledge of the new Asia which has arisen from the still warm ashes of the recent colonial and imperial past dominated by the West is still inadequate. The process initiated by Sardar K. M. Panikkar with his study entitled *Asia and Western Dominance* has to be carried much further not only to dispel ignorance but also to promote greater understanding and co-operation between Asian countries. Asia is a divided continent and the visible common threads of culture are not strong enough as yet to engender a greater degree of political and economic inter-action for their mutual benefit between the countries of the continent.

The root causes for rivalry and competition including factors like ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity,

the migration of labour under colonial rules and the search for capital resources and foreign exchange for development need to be studied in depth.

Unlike the Nehru era we are perhaps rightly concerned more with our internal problems. But it will be a mistake to imagine that isolationism can possibly succeed in the modern world. History is driving mankind towards inter-dependence and an emerging inter-national culture. We cannot escape from the fact that we are part of Asia and involved in the world of today even in matters affecting our domestic affairs.

The importance of Area Studies is gaining ground and several Universities have come to recognize its significance not only for its intrinsic worth but also as a contribution to our policies in relation to our neighbours and our role in the wider world. For this broadening of our outlook we are indebted to scholars like Dr. Suryanarayan who are opening windows for us which enable us to see fresh perspectives and feel the winds of change blowing around us from new directions like Singapore - the city of the Lion - so named by our forbears.

CHANDRAN D. S. DEVANESEN

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General Editor's Foreword

During the past five years *Koodal* has published a number of excellent historical works like *History of Tamilnad* (3 Volumes), *Historiography* and *History of Sri Vaishnavism* under the Koodal Historical Series. We are now very glad to include the present publication, *Singapore: Path to Independence* by Dr. V. Suryanarayan of the Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Madras in the Series.

Dr. V. Suryanarayan has given a lucid account of the post-war political developments in Singapore culminating in its emergence as a separate independent State on August 9, 1965. He examines the tumultuous political developments – the growth of left-wing political parties, the problems of merger, the formation of Malaysia and the separation of Singapore – not from the Western, but from an Indian viewpoint. The book is a valuable addition to the increasing number of books written by Indian scholars on Southeast Asian affairs.

We are thankful to Dr. V. Suryanarayan for having commissioned the Koodal Publishers to publish this valuable book. We are also grateful to Dr. Chandran D. S. Devanesen, Vice-Chancellor, North-Eastern Hill University for the kind Foreword he has written to this book.

*North-Eastern Hill University,
Shillong.*

*N. SUBRAHMANYAN
General Editor*

Preface

Singapore is something of a satellite let loose in the turbulent political sky of Southeast Asia. One cannot imagine the miniscule island of Singapore and the adjoining islets, barely 224.5 square miles in area, having not only a separate identity and existence but also exerting a crucial influence in the politics of Southeast Asia. Until 1963, Lee Kuan Yew and other political leaders of Singapore emphatically maintained that an independent Singapore will not be politically and economically viable and that it will have to seek its independence through merger with the Federation of Malaya. In fact, the first essay in Singapore's independence was in the context of Malaysia. But the Malaysian experiment did not last long; owing to serious differences between the Central Government and the Government of Singapore, Singapore had to secede from the Federation of Malaysia and become an independent Republic on August 9, 1965.

The book is a revised version of the doctoral dissertation submitted to the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi. It is an attempt to analyse Singapore's relations with Malaya from 1957 to 1965. Since the relations between the two territories were influenced by developments in Singapore, special attention has been given to the internal politics of Singapore.

I am indebted to a very large number of people without whose help and assistance, this work would not have been completed. My warmest thanks go to my supervisor Dr. Visal Singh, Professor of Southeast

Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi for his unfailing encouragement and valuable advice. I must record my deep sense of appreciation to Professor M. S. Rajan, former Director of the School and currently Professor for International Organisation, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and authorities of the Indian School of International Studies for providing me with necessary facilities for research and also financial grant for field trip to Malaysia and Singapore.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Chandran D. S. Devanesen, the Vice-Chancellor of North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. Despite his busy schedule, Dr. Chandran D. S. Devanesen found time to read the manuscript and write a Foreword for the book. The North-Eastern Hill University has also given financial assistance for the publication of the book. I must also thank Professor N. Subrahmanian, Department of History, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong for his help in arranging the publication of the book.

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V. SURYANARAYAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

Singapore is something of a satellite let loose in the turbulent political sky of Southeast Asia. One cannot imagine the miniscule island of Singapore and the adjoining islets, barely 224.5 sq. miles in area, having not only a separate identity and existence but exerting a crucial influence on its destiny. In fact, till 1955, Singapore had no popularly elected government. Yet, in little more than a decade, it acquired a political value with an incredible potential, for good and bad, for the mainland of Malaya as also, in varying degrees, for some other countries in the region like Indonesia.

In the political evolution of Singapore, and more especially its relations with the mainland of Malaya, the period from 31 August 1957 to 9 August 1965 represents an important phase. On 31 August 1957 the Federation of Malaya became an independent country within the Commonwealth; Singapore, however, continued to be a British colony. In the Constitutional Conference held in London in March-April 1957, it was agreed that Singapore should become a self-governing State, with its own citizenship, a fully elected legislative assembly and a cabinet form of government. It was also agreed that the British Government should retain responsibility for defence and external relations; as far as internal security was concerned, ultimate responsibility was to be vested in the Internal Security Council. The repeated attempts made by the leaders of Singapore to achieve independence through merger with the Federation of Malaya did not bear fruit till May 1961, when, thanks mainly to the political developments in Singapore, the Federation Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, made the proposal for Malaysia. Despite strong opposition at home and

loud denunciation by Indonesia and the Philippines, Malaysia came into existence on 16 September 1963. However, it did not retain for long its original form. Owing to serious differences between the Alliance Government in Kuala Lumpur and the People's Action Party (P. A. P.) Government in Singapore, Singapore reluctantly seceded from Malaysia and became an independent Republic on 9 August 1965. In the following pages an attempt is made to analyse the relations between Singapore and Malaya leading to the emergence of Singapore as a separate, independent state.

The Republic of Singapore is situated at the southern tip of the Malay peninsula. It consists of the tropical island of Singapore and adjacent islets occupying an area of 224.5 sq. miles. It is linked to the mainland by a causeway, along which run a road and a railway line.

Singapore has "no or very little natural resources in the generally accepted meaning of the term"¹ and depends even for its water supply on the mainland. It owes its importance to its strategic location. It lies on the international sea route from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea and on the air routes connecting Southeast Asia with other parts of the world. It is located at the centre of Southeast Asia, rich in agricultural and mineral resources. With its deep natural harbour, efficient banking and insurance systems, good shipping and storage arrangements, highly developed wholesale and retail trade facilities, Singapore is the largest port in Southeast Asia and the third largest in the world.

Geographically Singapore and Malaya are so closely bound together as to form practically one unit. Economically the Federation relies to a large extent on the shipping, marketing and trading facilities of Singapore; Singapore, in its turn, depends equally on the products and natural resources of Malaya, which in fact forms its hinterland. The following table shows the inter-dependence of Malaya and Singapore in trade (inter-trade).

1 *State of Singapore Development Plan 1961 - 1964* (Ministry of Finance, Singapore, 1961), p. 1.

Dependence of Federation and Singapore on trade
with each other (inter-trade) percentage.²

	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
1 Singapore's share in Federation gross exports	42.0	36.7	35.0	34.0	32.4	29.2	27.6
2 Singapore's share in Federation gross imports	38.0	39.8	39.0	40.0	41.4	39.2	39.8
3 Federation's share in Singapore gross imports	25.6	21.1	19.3	17.1	20.5	20.9	18.3
4 Federation's share in Singapore gross exports	17.4	19.2	20.3	21.0	20.9	24.2	26.8

From the point of view of security also, the interests of the two territories are very closely interlinked. They were part of a common defence system under the British. Singapore was the lynchpin of the British defence strategy in Southeast Asia and provided facilities for its Naval, Air and Armed Forces, East of Suez.

In order to study the relations between Singapore and Malaya it is necessary to understand the population structure of the two territories. The peculiar racial composition of the population has left its unmistakable imprint on the political evolution of both the territories and was the most decisive factor influencing Singapore's relations with Malaya during the period under review. Some of the important features are briefly mentioned here. They will be discussed in greater detail in the relevant chapters.

Singapore is predominantly a Chinese City. It has the highest percentage of Chinese population in the world, outside China,

2 W. M. Corden and H. V. Richter, "Malayan Trade Statistics and the Entrepot Trade" in T. H. Silcock and E. K. Fisk, ed., *The Political Economy of Independent Malaya, A Case-Study in Development* (London, 1963), p. 290.

Taiwan and Hongkong.³ According to the 1957 Census Report, the population of Singapore was 1,445,929, of which 1,090,596 or 75.4 per cent were Chinese; 197,059 or 13.6 per cent were Malays; 124,084 or 8.6 per cent were Indians; and 34,190 or 2.4 per cent were others.⁴

Singapore never had a "native population" in the true sense of the term. The three main races—Chinese, Malay and Indian—which constitute the bulk of Singapore's population are all immigrants. Consequently, though the Constitution recognises the Malays as the indigenous people of the country, they do not enjoy any "special privileges" as their counterparts do in Malaya.

The overwhelming number of the Chinese in Singapore has left a distinct mark on the political development of the island since the second world war. With the gradual introduction of democracy and the growth of political consciousness, the Chinese began to play a leading role in Singapore politics. No Government in Singapore, it

- 3 The following table gives the population statistics of Southeast Asian countries and the percentage ratio of Chinese to the total population for the year 1960 :

	Country	Chinese Population	Total Population	Percentage to Total
1	Burma	350,000	20,662,000	1.6
2	Thailand	2,670,000	26,257,916	10.1
3	North Vietnam	55,000	15,916,955	0.3
4	South Vietnam	800,000	14,214,000	5.6
5	Cambodia	350,000	5,347,000	6.5
6	Laos	35,000	1,805,000	1.9
7	Indonesia	2,690,000	93,506,000	2.7
8	Portuguese Timor	5,000	517,079	0.9
9	The Philippines	181,626	27,087,685	0.6

Source : Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London, 1965), p. 3. Percentage to total population has been calculated by the author.

- 4 S. C. Chua, *Report on the Census of Population 1957* (Cmd. 19 of 1964) (Singapore, 1964) p. 43. Percentage to total population has been calculated by the author.

has been rightly said, "however much dedicated to non-communal principles, can survive if it lets the Chinese case go by default".⁵ Most of the political parties in Singapore, (except the Singapore counterparts of the United Malays' National Organization, the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress, the last two without much following) are non-communal in principle, but depend on the Chinese for their support. As an astute political observer has remarked, it is "impossible to gain control of the machinery of Government in Singapore without making some concession to Chinese political ideology."⁶

The political leaders in Singapore, however, have to consider the situation of Singapore in a predominantly Malay world. Thus the indigenous people of Malaya and Indonesia are indignant about the cultural exclusivism of the Chinese. They also resent the Chinese stranglehold in their economies. Thus while upholding the legitimate interests of the Chinese population, the leaders of Singapore have to guard against the danger of Chinese chauvinism. Summing up the problem, in a speech at the Nanyang University, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew said:

Let us never forget that Singapore is part of Southeast Asia; that we are in the centre of Malaysian peoples; that despite the fact that 80% of our population are Chinese, we cannot escape from our environment..... Our geographical and ethnological positions are realities which we must face. If Nanyang becomes a symbol of Chinese excellence and of the supremacy of Chinese scholarship and learning, then, verily we will aggravate the position of the overseas Chinese in all the other places of Southeast Asia. A resurgent China is already the object, not just of admiration, but also of apprehension amongst the peoples of Southeast Asia. And if Nanyang were to become symbolised as an outpost in Southeast Asia of Chinese dominance, then we will have

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- 5 J. M. Gullick, *Malaysia and Its Neighbours* (London, 1967), p. 21.
- 6 T. E. Silcock, "Singapore in Malaya", *Far Eastern Survey* (New York), vol. 29, March 1960, pp. 33-39.

only ourselves to blame if we find the position deepened and embittered.⁷

In Malaya, unlike Singapore, no single community enjoys an absolute majority. According to the 1957 census, the population of Malaya was 6,278,763. Of this, Malays were 3,126,706 or 49.8 per cent; Chinese 2,332,936 or 37.1 per cent; Indians 695,985 or 11.1 per cent and others 123,136 or 2.0 per cent of the total population respectively.⁸

The racial division in Malaya is complicated by many factors. Since communal differences coincide with religious cleavages, it has made assimilation virtually impossible between the Muslim Malays and non-Muslim Chinese and Indians. As a result each group continues to follow its own religion, language, customs and habits. As Rupert Emerson writes :

Divided from each other in almost every respect, the peoples of Malaya have in common essentially only the fact that they live in the same country. In race, religion, language, culture, economic interests, and the other attributes usually associated with the existence of a nation their outstanding characteristics (*sic*) is not unity but profound diversity.⁹

It has to be pointed out that none of the three races is by itself homogeneous. A large number of Malays were themselves immigrants from Indonesia, but since they belonged to the same racial stock and followed the same religion as the Malays, they easily got assimilated with the latter. Among the Chinese there were cleavages along cultural and regional lines like Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, etc. The Indians also came from different parts of India like Madras, Kerala and Punjab; they speak different languages and follow different religions. These differences within each racial group,

7. *Singapore Government Press Statement*, JK/INFS/6/59 dated 28 October 1959. See also *Straits Times*, 29 October 1959.

8. *1957 Population Census of the Federation of Malaya, Report No.1* (Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, n. d.), p. 1. Percentage to total population has been calculated by the author.

9. Rupert Emerson in his Foreword to Frank H. H. King, *The New Malayan Nation, A Study of Communalism and Nationalism* (New York, N. Y., 1957), p. v.

important as they are, get relegated to the background in the face of greater problems affecting each racial group as a whole.

It has been rightly said that every problem in Malaya, whether political or economic, has always been, and would continue to be dominated by communal considerations.¹⁰ The Malays feel that they are the indigenous people and that, therefore, they have a special claim to be dominant in the political life of the country.¹¹ The British Government and later the Government of independent Federation of Malaya recognized this claim and the Malays have certain rights and privileges guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

The racial differences can again be clearly discerned in the economic life of Malaya. The economic exploitation of the country was mainly the result of non-Malay and British enterprise. The Chinese, being enterprising and hard-working, soon dominated industry, trade, commerce and banking, while the Malays continued to eke out their living through agriculture and fishing. Though there is an intermingling of population, the economically developed areas on the west coast — Johore, Negri-Sembilan, Perak and Selangor — are predominantly inhabited by the non-Malays, while the underdeveloped areas of the north and the east coast — Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu — are Malay strongholds.

Before the second world war, legally speaking, there was no such thing as British Malaya, or for that matter Malaya at all. The states and settlements of the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore, formed three distinct political groups, namely :

(1) The Crown Colony called the Straits Settlements, which included the Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca;

10 R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia* (Boston, Mass. 1967), p. 4.

11 For an analytical study of the problems of communalism, see K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1965).

(2) The Federated Malay States, comprising the States of Negri - Sembilan, Pahang, Perak and Selangor, which had entered into a Federation by a treaty in 1895; and

(3) The five Malay States of Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Trengganu, not included in the Federation, known as the Unfederated Malay States.

The Straits Settlements were administered by the British under the Crown Colony system. There were no Malay Sultans, and since the non-Malays outnumbered the Malays considerably,¹² there was no preferential treatment for the Malays. All those born in the Straits Settlements, whether Malays, Chinese, Indians, Eurasians or others, were British subjects and had equal rights under the law. The British monopolized the important positions in the civil services; but to all junior positions in the civil service, all people, irrespective of race, were equally eligible. In actual practice, however, very few Malays fulfilled the qualifications required, and most of the white collar jobs were filled up by Eurasians, Chinese and Indians. Thus both in number and influence the non-Malays overshadowed the Malays in the Straits Settlements.

In the Malay States, British authority rested upon agreements concluded with the Sultans. Under these treaties, the Sultans retained sovereignty in their States, but were bound to accept British advice on all matters except Malay religion and custom. An important difference between the Malay States and the Straits Settlements was the difference in the legal status of their inhabitants. As pointed out earlier, all those born in the Straits Settlements were British subjects by virtue of their birth in British territory. But in the Malay States - both Federated and Unfederated - the status of a British subject could not be acquired by birth, as those states

12 In 1931, the Chinese constituted 59.6 per cent of the total population of the Straits Settlements, while the Malays were 25.6 per cent and Indians 11.9 per cent. Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (New York, N. Y. 1937., reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p. 22.

were British-protected States and not British territory. The British subjects in those States, therefore included British citizens; those who had been born in the Straits Settlements, but who had since migrated to those States; and immigrants from British territories like India and Ceylon. The Malays (including immigrants from Indonesia) and locally born Chinese were subjects of the Sultans.¹³

The important aim of British colonial policy in the Malay States was the establishment of political stability which would facilitate the rapid economic development of the country through exploitation of Malaya's vast natural resources. As a secondary aspect, the British administrators expressed concern for the welfare of the Malay people and tried to retain, as far as possible, the Malay political structure and social organization. While protecting the economic interests of the non-Malays the British also gave preferential treatment to the Malays as the indigenous people of the country. They continued to maintain the Sultanate system¹⁴ and established "State Councils" through which Malay Sultans and Malay Chiefs were consulted on matters of administration before important decisions were taken. The British Government tried to safeguard the interests of the Malay peasantry by reserving land which could not be alienated to non-Malays. They also tried to associate the Malays with the administration of the country. Though the powers of the Residents and Advisers grew with time and top civil service jobs continued to be the prerogative of the British, British administ-

13 F. G. Carnell, "Malayan Citizenship Legislation", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* (London), vol. 1, pp. 504-18.

14 In his address to the Federal Council in 1927, Sir Hugh Clifford, the High Commissioner, said: "These States were, when the British Government was invited by their Rulers and Chiefs to set their troubled houses in order, Muhammadan Monarchies; such they are today, and such they must continue to be. No mandate has ever been extended to us by Rajas, Chiefs or people to vary the system of Government which has existed in these territories from time immemorial". Cited in William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (London, 1967), p. 11.

rators admitted the Malay aristocrat and the educated Malay to the civil service.

The political developments in the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore after the second world war were influenced to a great extent by the pre-war British colonial policy. The desire to maintain racial harmony and establish a viable political and economic equilibrium between the Malays and the non-Malays led to the development of a unique political system in the Federation of Malaya. These developments were in many ways different from those which took place in the Colony of Singapore and vitally affected the relations between the two territories. To put them in the proper perspective it is necessary to describe briefly the political developments in these territories till 1957.

2. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

In the growth and expansion of the British empire in South-east Asia, Singapore has played a pivotal role. It was the main focal point of British commercial, political and strategic interests in Southeast Asia for nearly one hundred and fifty years.

Singapore and Malaya before the Second World War

The history of Singapore in modern times could be traced to 1819 when Sir Stamford Raffles chose the island as the important trading centre for the British East India Company.¹ Situated in the centre of the Malay archipelago, and endowed with a natural harbour, Singapore commands the shortest route between Europe and China and was the ideal base to protect the British interests in the region.

It was the intention of Raffles to make Singapore a free port and its rapid growth and development more than fulfilled his hopes. In 1826 it was combined with the other two British settlements of Penang, acquired in 1786, and Malacca, captured in 1795, and formally handed over to the British by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, and the three settlements together came to be known as the Straits Settlements. The Straits Settlements was governed from India till 1867, when it came under the direct control of the Colonial Office and became a Crown Colony.

¹ For the early history of Malay peninsula, see D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London, 1964) and John F. Cady, *Southeast Asia, Its Historical Development* (New York, N. Y., 1965).

Despite the scepticism of British officials in India, Singapore soon became extraordinarily prosperous as a free port, as the main outlet of Malayan trade and as the chief trading centre of the major part of Southeast Asia. The facilities for trade and commerce and the island's growing prosperity soon attracted immigrants from the neighbouring Malay archipelago, India and China.

Singapore in 1819 was sparsely populated. It was a small fishing village of 150 people, thirty of whom were Chinese and the rest Malays.² By 1824 the population of Singapore had risen to 10,683 with the Chinese numbering 3,317 and rapidly catching up with the Malays, who were estimated at 6,431. Raffles himself was of the view that the Chinese were beyond doubt the most important among the immigrant peoples. "From the number of Chinese already settled, and the peculiar attractions of the place for that industrious race" Raffles pointed out, "it may be presumed that they will always form by far the largest part of the community."³ In 1931, according to the last census before the second world war, the population of Singapore was estimated to be 557,745 with the Chinese numbering 418,640 the Malays 65,014 and the Indians 50,811 respectively. The rapid growth of population in Singapore before the second world war was mainly due to immigration. The Malay population was very small and contributed very little to its growth and development. Among the immigrant communities, as pointed out earlier, the Chinese far outnumbered the Malays and Indians and naturally played the most prominent role in its social and economic life.⁴

2 Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London, 1965), p. 248.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 249.

4 For an analytical study of the growth of Singapore population and its social and economic consequences, see Saw Swee Hock, "The Population of Singapore and Its Social and Economic Implications" (Thesis, M. A., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1960).

SINGAPORE - DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RACIAL GROUPS ⁵

Year	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Other Races	% Chinese	% Malays	% Indians	% Others	% Total	Population
1824	3,317	6,431	756	179	31.0	60.2	7.1	1.7	100.0	10,683
1830	6,555	7,640	1,913	526	39.4	45.9	11.5	3.2	100.0	16,634
1836	13,749	12,538	2,932	765	45.9	41.7	9.9	2.6	100.0	29,984
1840	17,704	13,200	3,375	1,110	50.0	37.3	9.5	3.1	100.0	35,389
1849	27,988	17,039	6,284	1,580	52.9	32.2	11.9	3.0	100.0	52,891
1860	50,043	16,202	12,973	2,516	61.2	19.8	15.9	3.1	100.0	81,734
1871	54,572	26,141	10,313	3,790	56.8	27.1	11.9	4.0	100.0	94,816
1881	86,766	33,012	12,086	5,858	63.0	24.0	8.8	4.3	100.0	137,722
1891	121,908	35,956	16,009	7,727	67.1	19.7	8.8	4.3	100.0	181,602
1901	164,041	35,986	17,047	9,768	72.1	15.8	7.8	4.3	100.0	226,842
1911	219,577	41,806	27,755	14,183	72.4	13.8	9.2	4.7	100.0	303,321
1921	315,151	53,595	32,314	17,298	75.3	12.8	7.7	4.2	100.0	418,358
1931	418,640	65,014	50,811	23,280	75.1	11.7	9.1	4.2	100.0	557,745
1947	729,473	113,803	68,967	25,901	77.8	12.1	7.4	2.8	100.0	938,144
1957	1,090,595	197,060	124,084	34,190	75.4	13.6	8.6	2.4	100.0	1,445,929

⁵ Saw Swee Hock, "The Changing Population Structure in Singapore, 1824-1962" *Malayan Economic Review* (Singapore), vol. 9, pp. 90-101.

The population figures given in the previous page bring out the rapid rise in Singapore's population and the overwhelming number of the Chinese in its demographic structure.

Singapore was the base through which the British government extended its economic and political interests into the Malayan peninsula.⁶ The opening of the tin mines in the States of Perak and Selangor led to considerable immigration of Chinese labourers into these States. The Malay Sultans, who were at loggerheads with one another, were unable to maintain law and order among the different warring factions of the Chinese. The political confusion and physical insecurity has been rightly described by Victor Purcell as "a state of decay bordering on anarchy".⁷ In 1874, owing largely to the pressure of the Chinese and the British merchants in the Straits Settlements, the British intervened in the State of Perak. A treaty was signed with the Sultan which guaranteed British protection to the Sultan and provided for the appointment of a British Resident whose "advice" must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching "Malay Religion and Custom".⁸ This treaty marks the beginning of the extension of British influence in the affairs of the Malayan peninsula.

Following the treaty with Perak, the British entered into similar agreements with Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan. These four States of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan were brought together in 1895 in a federation known as the Federated Malay States (F. M. S.). Under this new set-up, the Malay rulers agreed to accept a British Resident-General and to follow his advice on all matters except Malay religion and custom.

6 For an analysis of British colonial policy during this period, see C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-77* (Singapore, 1960) and C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control* (London 1961).

7 Victor Purcell, *Malaya: Communist or Free?* (London, 1954), p. 3.

8 Cowan, n. 6, p. 188.

The Resident in each state was made responsible to the Resident-General. A Federal Council started functioning in 1909. The Council consisted, to begin with, of the High Commissioner as President; the four Rulers; the Resident-General of the F. M. S.; the four Residents; and four "unofficial" members nominated by the High Commissioner.

While Britain was making its political influence felt in the F. M. S. through the Resident system, rapid changes were taking place in other states also. In 1909 Britain entered into an agreement with Siam by which the States of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu were transferred to the British. By the Treaty of 1914, Johore, which had for a long time been under British influence, also came under British control. These States were not included in the Federation and hence came to be known as the Unfederated Malay States. Separate agreements between each of these States and the British Government provided for the appointment of British Advisers (in Johore he was called the General Adviser) to assist in the administration of the State. Thus by 1914 the whole of Malaya came under British control.

The threefold division of the Malayan peninsula into the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States continued (except during Japanese occupation) till the end of the second world war. At the top of the administrative structure was the Governor of the Straits Settlements, who was also the High Commissioner for the Malay States. He was directly responsible to the Colonial Office in London. Under him was the Federal Secretary,⁹ who was responsible for the Federated Malay States. The Federal Secretary was also the link between the Advisers in the Unfederated Malay States and the High Commissioner in Singapore.

9 The post of Resident-General was abolished in 1911 and a Chief Secretary was appointed in his place. The Chief Secretary's post was replaced by that of the Federal Secretary in 1935.

As a result of British rule, Malaya underwent an economic and social transformation.¹⁰ This transformation was mainly due to the development of rubber plantations and tin industries. Since the Malays did not provide the requisite capital and labour for economic development, there was an influx of foreign capital and Chinese and Indian immigrants, who constituted the labour force. The economic development was accelerated by the excellent network of transport and communications, developed by the British Government. The trading economy of Singapore developed with the spurt in the colonial economy of Malaya. The two, as Iain Buchanan puts it, "were inextricably interwoven, with Singapore acting as the 'headlink' city for the 'fertile and productive' Malayan hinterland – long remaining the main outlet for its primary exports, and the main entrance for its imports of manufactured goods, capital, enterprise, and labour".¹¹

Another important consequence of the British rule in Malaya was the evolution of a plural society. According to Furnivall, a "plural society" comprises two or more communal groups "living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit".¹²

Malaya, at the beginning of the 19th century, was thinly populated. In 1800, the Malays constituted about 90 per cent of the total population.¹³ But the demographic pattern changed rapidly as a result of Chinese and Indian immigration. In 1911, when the first census was taken, the Malays constituted only 51 per cent of

10 For analytical studies on British rule till the end of the second world war, see R. Emerson, *Malaysia, A study in Direct & Indirect Rule* (New York, N. Y., 1937, reprinted in Kuala Lumpur, 1965; Lennox A. Mills, *British Rule in Eastern Asia* (London, 1942) and Virginia Thompson, *Postmortem on Malaya* (New York, N. Y., 1943).

11 Iain Buchanan, *Singapore in Southeast Asia* (London, 1972), p. 33.

12 J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Theory and Practice* (London, 1948), p. 304.

13 J. M. Gullick, *Malaya* (London, 1963), p. 59.

the total population.¹⁴ The following table gives the population of Malaya (except Singapore) and racial breakdown from 1921.¹⁵

Year	Total	Malaysians*	Chinese	Indians & Pakistanis	Others
1921	2,906,691	1,568,588	855,863	419,172	43,068
1931	3,787,758	1,863,872	1,284,888	570,987	68,011
1947	4,908,086	2,427,834	1,884,534	530,638	65,080
1957	6,278,763	3,126,706	2,332,936	695,985	123,136

* Malaysians include immigrants from Indonesia.

By 1957, when the Federation of Malaya became an independent country, the Malays had lost their numerical majority. They were just 49.8 per cent, the Chinese 37.1 per cent, Indians and Pakistanis 11.1 per cent and others 2.0 per cent respectively of the total population.

The early Chinese and Indian immigrants were attracted to Malaya and Singapore by economic opportunities. Their main interest was to make money and return to their motherland. Since they considered Malaya and Singapore to be temporary places of work, they did not bring their womenfolk with them. But most of the Chinese were not able to fulfil their ambitions and they gradually started to settle down in Malaya and Singapore. The Sino-Japanese war and the second world war made going to China very difficult and this compelled many people to make Malaya and Singapore their home. They started to bring their families from China or got married in Malaya itself.

The existence of the plural society prevented the growth of nationalism in Malaya and Singapore before the second world war. There was no sense of unity among the Malays. Most of them

14 Ibid.

15 Sources: M. V. Del Tufo, *Malaya, 1947 Census* (London, 1949); and "Government of Malaya, 1957 *Population Census of the Federation of Malaya, Report No. 1*" (Kuala Lumpur, n. d.).

still owed their loyalty to the Sultans. The Chinese and Indians were more concerned about the political developments in their own countries than in Malaya. But beneath this tranquil political atmosphere, changes were slowly taking place in each of these racial groups. This had far reaching consequence in the political life of the country during and after the second world war.

The political changes in China had repercussions among the Chinese in the Malay peninsula, including Singapore.¹⁶ The Kuomintang, which came to power in China after the Revolution in 1911, claimed that all overseas Chinese were citizens of China, irrespective of their place of birth. The Chinese in Malaya and Singapore assisted the Kuomintang by generous financial contributions. The first branch of the Kuomintang was established in the Straits Settlements in 1912. (The Party was banned by the British Government in 1930, but the ban was lifted shortly afterwards.) With the growth of Chinese influence, there was greater educational activity among the Chinese community in Malaya and Singapore. Chinese schools increased in number and teachers trained in mainland China created a new political consciousness among the Chinese. When there was a split in the Kuomintang in 1927, the Communist Party broke away and started to work among trade unions and students for support. It has to be pointed out that this political consciousness among the Chinese had nothing to do with the demand for self-government in Malaya; it was the direct offshoot of the political developments in mainland China itself.

Political consciousness among the Indians was comparatively little.¹⁷ Most of the Indians were plantation workers and had no interest in politics. But with the growth of nationalist movement

16 For studies on the role of Chinese in Malaya refer Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (London, 1948); Victor Purcell, n.2., and C. P. Fitzgerald, *The Third China* (London, 1965).

17 For a good study on the role of the Indian community in the political life of Malaya refer Usha Mahajani, *The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya* (Bombay, 1960).

in India, the educated Indians started to take some interest in the political developments in their motherland. This received a further impetus following Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Malaya in 1938.

We can also trace the origins of Malay nationalism¹⁸ to this period. According to a distinguished writer on this subject,¹⁹ in the first half of the twentieth century, three groups emerged within Malay society who refused to accept the British colonial system in its entirety and began to advocate social and political changes. The first of these was led by the Arabic educated religious reformers who frequently visited the Middle East, particularly Egypt and Turkey, and became aware of the political developments there. The second group was led by the Malay educated intelligentsia who advocated the termination of British colonial rule and the eventual union of Malaya and Indonesia in a greater *Malaysia Raya*. The third group was led by the English educated aristocracy, which was mainly drawn from the Malay traditional elite. They became conscious of the growing role of the non-Malays in the economic life of the country and the abject dependence of the Malays on the British for protection and support. It was this awareness of their position *vis-a-vis* the non-Malays which provided the main stimulus for Malay nationalism. However, it must again be pointed out that all these political trends were discernible only among a handful of Malays; the large mass of them continued to be politically inactive. British rule continued in Malaya and Singapore almost without any opposition.²⁰

18 For analytical Studies on Malay nationalism before second world war refer Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941", *Journal of South East Asian History* (Singapore), Vol. 1 pp. 1-28 and William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (London, 1967).

19 Roff, *Ibid.*, pp. 254-56.

20 For an interesting study of nationalism in Malaya, refer T. H. Silcock and Ungku Abdul Aziz, "Nationalism in Malaya" in William L. Holland, ed., *Asian Nationalism and the West* (New York, N. Y., 1953), pp. 269 - 345.

Japanese Occupation

The Japanese occupation of Malaya (February 1942–September 1945) brought about momentous changes in the Malayan political scene.²¹ On the eve of the Japanese occupation, Britain was in a precarious military situation. It was attempting to recover from the losses in France; was heavily committed in North Africa and was also sending military supplies to the Soviet Union. The British defence strategy was based on the assumption that the defence of Malaya was mainly the burden of British navy based in Singapore.²² Land and air defences were consequently very weak. The Japanese, after conquering Indo-China and Siam, attacked the northern side of Malaya on 7 December 1941 (on the same day the Japanese Airforce bombed Pearl Harbour). With superior military and air power, the Japanese quickly advanced southwards. The defending units, British, Malay, Indian and Australian retreated to Singapore. Its vital source of water supply having fallen into Japanese hands, Singapore surrendered on 15 February 1942.

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- 21 For authoritative accounts of the Japanese invasion of Malaya refer A. E. Percival, *The War in Malaya* (London, 1949); Russel Grenfell, *Mainfleet to Singapore* (London, 1952); Sir George Maxwell, comp. *The Civil Defence of Malaya* (London, 1944); and Willard H. Elsbee, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements* (New York, N. Y. 1953).
- 22 The Singapore Base constructed in 1921 had always been the centre of political controversy in the United Kingdom. Since it became more a political issue than a defense matter, military strategy unfortunately continued to be neglected. The strange fact was that even British Prime Minister Churchill came to know that no proper land defenses had been built till the middle of January 1942. For an account of British military strategy before the second world war refer C. Northcote Parkinson, *Britain in the Far East, The Singapore Naval Base* (Singapore, 1955) and C. Northcote Parkinson, "The Pre-1942 Singapore Naval Base", *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* (Annapolis, Maryland) vol. 82, September 1956, pp. 939–53.

The Japanese administration, during the occupation period, was geared to the immediate situation, military as well as political. To placate the Thais, the Japanese returned Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu to Siam. They lumped Sumatra with Malaya and brought it under a common administration. All these experiments, however, miserably failed and were reversed in 1944.

It was in the field of racial relations that the Japanese occupation had its most profound impact. The Japanese exploited the racial division in Malaya to their advantage and pursued different policies towards different communities.²³ The Chinese were singled out for ruthless treatment and persecution, because China was Japan's enemy and the Chinese in Malaya were also sending money to the defense of China. The Indians were encouraged in their national aspirations and the Azad Hind or Free India Government was organized in Singapore in 1943. The Malays, who collaborated with the Japanese, were given preferential treatment in administration. The Japanese also encouraged Malay nationalist movements which they exploited to their advantage. Among the important Malay nationalist movements, active during the period, was Kesatuan Melayu Muda (K. M. M.) or the Union of Malay Youths which advocated the union of Malaya and Indonesia. But the war dislocated completely the economic life of the country. Most of the Malays and Indians also suffered economic hardships. Many Indians were conscripted as labourers and sent to the Siamese border for the construction of railways.

Resistance to Japanese rule came mainly from the Chinese population. The most organized among these groups was the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A.) led by the

23 An important factor which helped the Japanese was the prevailing sense of physical insecurity due to war. In a plural society like Malaya it causes people to believe that they can be safe only with people of their own race and community. Ian Morrison, "Aspects of the Racial Problem in Malaya", *Pacific Affairs* (New York, N. Y.), vol. 22, pp. 239-53.

Malayan Communist Party (M.C.P.). The M.C.P. was dominantly Chinese in membership; tough and dedicated, the Communists kept the resistance movement alive throughout Japanese occupation. As a part of the overall military strategy the British and the M.P.A.J.A. came to a working arrangement against the common enemy. Some of the Communists were given training in guerilla warfare and were supplied with arms on the condition that they should be returned after the war.

The racial antipathy encouraged by the Japanese during the occupation period expressed itself in the days immediately following the war. There was increasing inter-communal tension which led to Sino-Malay clashes in different parts of the country. But, fortunately, the tension subsided and order was restored by the British Military Administration.

Malayan Union Proposals and the Separation of Singapore

The Colonial Office decided to bring about radical changes in the political and administrative structure of the Malay States after the second world war. Its main aim was to bring about a closer association between the Malays and the non-Malays who regarded Malaya as their homeland and establish an effective and centralised government for the whole country. As the White Paper presented by the Colonial Office explained:

A Stage has now been reached when the system of government should be simplified and reformed. International relations as well as the security and other interests of the British Commonwealth require that Malaya should be able to exercise an influence as a united and enlightened country appropriate to her economic and strategic importance.²⁴

24 *Malayan Union and Singapore, Statement of Policy on Future Constitution*, Cmd. 6724 (H. M. S. O., London, 1946).

The general features of the new policy was announced in October 1945,²⁵ and the details were published in March 1946.²⁶ Under the new policy, it was proposed to unite the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States with the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca in a Malayan Union. Singapore was to be separated and treated as a Crown Colony under a British Governor. Regarding Singapore, the White Paper said :

In considering the need for a closer political integration in Malaya, His Majesty's Government consider that, at least for the time being, Singapore requires separate treatment. It is a centre of entrepot trade on a very large scale and has economic and social interests distinct from those of the mainland.

The British Government, however, recognized the close ties between Singapore and the mainland and stated further:

...it is no part of the policy of His Majesty's Government to preclude or prejudice in any way the fusion of Singapore and the Malayan Union at a later date should it be considered that such a course were desirable.²⁷

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- 25 Speaking in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Colonies said, "His Majesty's Government have given careful consideration to the future of Malaya and the need to promote the sense of unity and common citizenship which will develop the country's strength and capacity in due course for self-government within the British Commonwealth. Our policy will work for a constitutional union of Malaya and for the institution of a Malayan citizenship which will give equal citizenship rights to those who can claim Malaya to be their homeland". U. K., *House of commons*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 414, October 10, 1945, col. 255.
- 26 *Malayan Union and Singapore, Summary of Proposed Constitutional Arrangements*, Cmd. 6749 (H.M. S.O., London, 1946).
- 27 The White Paper added, "There will be a special need to develop harmonious and mutually profitable relations between the Malayan Union and Singapore on matters of trade. Subjects of pan-Malayan importance which require full identity of policy throughout Malaya, such as Higher Education, Immigration,

Demographic, political and strategic considerations seem to have guided the British Government in its decision to separate Singapore from the Malayan Union. The Colonial Office was aware that the separation of Singapore, with its large Chinese population, would be welcomed by the Malay leaders; for, in the proposed Malayan Union, the Chinese would constitute only 38 per cent of the total population. The inclusion of Singapore in a united Malaya, on the other hand, would have given the Chinese "numerical predominance in addition to their economic superiority".²⁸ The Malay leaders would not have agreed to any constitutional change which would give the Chinese numerical majority in Malaya. The exclusion of Singapore, the Colonial Office believed, would enable them to implement the Malayan Union proposals.

The British strategic thinking immediately after the war also played an important role in the decision to separate Singapore from Malaya in 1946.²⁹ Since Indian independence was imminent the British government was very keen to develop alternative means to safeguard their strategic and defence interests in Southeast Asia. It was this consideration which made the British government to retain and expand bases in Trincomalee and Singapore. Trincomalee was retained under a treaty with Ceylon.³⁰ As far as Singapore was concerned, the British government was certain that the Malays would welcome the exclusion of Singapore. The British also

Currency, Income Tax, Civil Aviation, Posts and Telegraphs, Shipping and other matters, will be matters of common arrangement between the Union and the Colony. The currency will continue to be managed under pan-Malayan agreement." n. 24.

- 28 T. H. Silcock, *Towards a Malayan Nation* (Singapore, 1961) p. 99.
- 29 James de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union* (Monograph Series No. 10, Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1967) pp. 25-26.
- 30 D. P. Singhal, "Imperial Defence, Communist Challenge and the Grand Design", *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), vol. 18, pp. 134-53.

expected that the inhabitants of Singapore, with little or no emotional local attachments, would not clamour for independence.³²

The separation of Singapore served the interests of Britain and Malaya so long as two conditions were fulfilled: first, the Federation Government should not exercise its sovereignty to undermine the economy of Singapore. Secondly, the political developments in Singapore should not threaten the security of the Federation.³³ As long as these two territories were under complete British control, the British Government, as the paramount power, could easily maintain this balance. But the political situation radically changed with the independence of the Federation of Malaya on 31 August 1957 and the growth of anti-colonial feelings in Singapore. As a consequence, as will be seen later in this chapter, new constitutional arrangements had to be worked out to safeguard the interests of all parties concerned.

The Malayan Union proposals represented a complete departure from the British pre-war colonial policy based on the twin pillars of the recognition of the Sultans as symbols of sovereignty and the Malays as the privileged indigenous community of Malaya.³³ The new constitutional proposals envisaged the creation of a unitary state to which the Sultans were to cede their sovereignty. A Malayan Union citizenship, with liberal provisions, was introduced. The Malays, Chinese, Indians and others were made equally eligible to it (so long as they were born in the

31 *Ibid.*

32 T. H. Silcock, "Communal and Party Structure" in T. H. Silcock and E. K. Fisk (eds), *The Political Economy of Independent Malaya, A Case Study in Development* (London, 1963), p. 22.

33 For the political background to Malayan Union proposals refer, Victor Purcell, "A Malayan Union: The Proposed New Constitution", *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 19, pp 20-40; D.R. Rees-Williams, "The Constitutional Position in Malaya" *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 20, pp. 174-8; and James de V Allen, n. 29.

Malayan Union or Singapore or fulfilled certain residential qualifications).

Sir Harold Macmichael was sent by the British Government as the special representative to obtain the assent of the Sultans. He was successful in his mission,³⁴ but the highhanded methods adopted by him to get the signatures of the Sultans (who did not realize the full implications of the Malayan Union proposals) were severely criticized both in Malaya and in England.

The Rise of Malay Nationalism

The publication of the Malayan Union proposals evoked strong and instantaneous protest from the Malay community.³⁵ The Malays characterised them as a negation of their claim that Malaya was primarily a Malay country where they, the Malay people, had special rights and privileges. The new proposals not only deprived the Sultans of their powers, but also enabled the vast majority of the non-Malays, still having close emotional and political links with China and India, to acquire citizenship and have a vital say in the political life of the country. The Malay position was further strengthened when many former British civil servants like Swettenham, Winstedt, Clementi, etc. supported the Malay viewpoint in England.³⁶

34 Sir Harold Macmichael, *Report of a Mission to Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1946).

35 Gerald Hawkins, "Reactions to the Malayan Union", *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 19, pp. 279 - 85.

36 Richard Winstedt condemned the constitutional proposals as a "Malayan disunion", a "hated and tyrannical union which humiliated the Malays to the dust". Cited in Usha Mahajani n. 17, p. 227. In a letter to *The Times* (London) on 16 April 1946, some former civil servants in Malaya expressed their "profound concern" about the manner in which the Malayan Union proposals were being implemented. They also deprecated the "mutilation" of the Malayan Union by the "exclusion of its greatest port and town, Singapore". *The Times* (London) 16 April 1946.

The Malay opposition to the proposed constitutional arrangements soon gathered momentum and crystallized into an organization, the United Malay's National Organization (U. M. N. O.). Founded by Dato Onn bin Jaafar³⁷ in Johore in May 1946, the U. M. N. O. was the expression of Malay nationalism and was primarily intended to safeguard Malay rights and privileges. The U. M. N. O. was also able to get the support of the Sultans who boycotted the installation ceremony of the first Governor of Malayan Union, Sir Edward Gent.

The Malay opposition had its desired effect. The British Government, eager to retain the friendship of the Malays, abandoned the Malayan Union proposals and announced new constitutional proposals.³⁸ While the two fundamental principles of British policy in Malaya – viz. (1) the need for a strong central government and (2) the conferment of citizenship on non-Malays by which they could develop loyalty to Malaya – were accepted, the provisions were considerably modified to accommodate Malay fears and susceptibilities. The Federation of Malaya came into being on 1 February 1948. There were no changes as far as the territorial limits were concerned. Singapore still remained a Crown Colony.

The most important feature of the new Federation Agreement³⁹ was its citizenship provisions. While the Malays, as the subjects of the Sultans, became "automatically" the citizens of the new Federation, most of the non-Malays could become citizens only through "application", the qualifications for which were very stringent and difficult to fulfil.⁴⁰ In 1950, two years after the

37 For a good study of Dato Onn during this period refer Ishak bin Tadin "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1961" *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 1, pp 56-88.

38 Federation of Malaya, *Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals*, Cmd. 7171 (London, 1947).

39 *Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948* (Kuala Lumpur, 1948, Reprinted 1956).

40 Ibid.

Federation came into being, the total population of the Federation of Malaya was estimated to be 5,226,549 of which 2,579,914 were Malays, 2,011,072 were Chinese and 564,454 were Indians and Pakistanis. In the same year, the total number of Federation citizens was estimated to be 3,275,000 of which 2,500,000 were Malays; 500,000 were Chinese and 230,000 were Indians and Pakistanis.⁴¹

The politically conscious sections of the non-Malays were not happy with the constitutional changes after the war. Many non-Malay organizations opposed them, the most important being the Malayan Democratic Union (M. D. U.), the Malayan Indian Congress (M. I. C.), the Straits Chinese British Association and the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions. In December 1946, these diverse groups joined together under one central organisation, the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (A. M. C. J. A.). The A. M. C. J. A. was later joined by the P. U. T. E. R. A. (Pusat Tenaga Ra'ayat), which was formed in February 1947, when the Malay Nationalist Party (M. N. P.) and the Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (A. P. I.) came together to oppose the Malayan Union proposals. The A.M.C.J.A.—P. U. T. E. R. A. jointly published their own constitutional proposals.⁴² They called for the establishment of a united Malaya (inclusive of Singapore), equal political rights for all who regarded Malaya as their real home and object of their loyalty and a fully elected legislature for the whole of Malaya. But their opposition never reached the proportions of Malay opposition to the Malayan Union proposals. It was also heavily communist infiltrated and many of the members were arrested when the Emergency started. The non-Malay opposition to the Federation of Malaya lost its strength and gradually petered out.

The constitutional changes, that took place in Malaya in the first two years after the second world war, had far reaching reper-

41 *Federation of Malaya Annual Report*, 1950, pp. 16, 24.

42 *The People's Constitutional Proposals for Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1947).

cussions. The period witnessed the unprecedented political awakening of the Malay community. The modification of the Malayan Union proposals and the establishment of the Federation of Malaya were a clear victory for the U.M.N.O. and gave a new impetus to Malay unity and nationalism. From its establishment in 1946, the U.M.N.O. has continued to be the most representative organisation of the Malay community. Led by the educated aristocratic intelligentsia, the U.M.N.O. was able to get the support of all sections of the Malay community, ranging from the members of the royal families to the rural peasantry. The period also brought to light one of the basic characteristics of Malay political behaviour, which is, that all sections of the Malay community forget their differences and unite under one leadership when their pre-eminent position in the political life of the country is threatened by the non-Malays.

The Political Developments In Singapore 1946-54

The political developments in Singapore after the second world war took a different course from that of the Federation of Malaya. Singapore had fewer constitutional problems to cope with. There were no Malay Sultanates to be accommodated into the constitutional structure. Further, being a city of immigrants, with the vast majority of them of Chinese origin, it did not have to face the problems of a plural society of the same magnitude.

In any discussion of the post-war political developments in Singapore, it is necessary to distinguish between the political behaviour of the English-educated group and the vast majority of the Chinese-speaking peoples. The former, whether Chinese, Indian or Eurasian, had their education through English-medium schools and universities and became lawyers, government officials, teachers etc. Many of them were willing to co-operate with the British administration and, therefore, played a subservient role in the political life of Singapore immediately after the war. But the vast majority of the Chinese-speaking people, ranging from the rich businessman to the poor labourer, constituted a different milieu altogether.

Culturally, they remained distinct and separate from the English-educated group. The policies of the colonial government further widened the divisions between the English-educated and Chinese-educated sections. As knowledge of English was essential for government jobs the Chinese-educated naturally felt a sense of indignation and resentment against the government. The British ideals of liberal democracy and laissez faire capitalism had no meaning to the teeming population of Chinatown where the examples of Mao Tze Tung and China were portrayed as ideals. As Iain Buchanan puts it:

It was not simply cultural pride which drove the inhabitants of squalid shop-house and squatter slums towards communist ideals; English history and Victorian school songs were irrelevant to Chinatown poverty; the example of a resurgent China and Mao Tze Tung were not. There was a vast difference between the world of Raffles institution and the small Mandarin school—it was a difference of language and culture, yes, but it was also a difference of social, economic and political realities far more elemental than language. And it was a difference that few English-educated Chinese, and even fewer colonial administrators, were able to comprehend.⁴³

The outstanding characteristic of the Chinese-educated population of Singapore immediately after the war was naturally one of apathy towards the British administration. The political scene, therefore, was dominated by English-educated conservative politicians.

The first step in the constitutional development of Singapore was taken in 1946 when an Executive Council came into existence to assist the British Governor. The Executive Council consisted of seven official and four "unofficial" members nominated by the Governor. The Legislative Council consisted of the Governor as the Chairman, nine official and thirteen "unofficial" members. Nine of the "unofficial" members were to be elected, three by the Chambers of Commerce (British,

43 Buchanan, n. 11, pp 277 - 78.

Chinese and Indian) and the remaining six by popular elections from two two-member constituencies in the Municipal area and two one-member constituencies in the Rural area. There was no communal electorate because the whole aim of the new constitutional proposals 'was to build up a sense of common political responsibility among the citizens of Singapore'.⁴⁴ Any citizen of the United Kingdom or the British Colonies was eligible to vote, provided he was at least twenty-one years of age and had lived for at least a year in Singapore. There was to be no distinction on the grounds of sex, literacy or property. Registration was voluntary.

The most organised political group in Singapore immediately after the war was the Malayan Democratic Union (M. D. U.). The Party was formed in December 1945 by John Eber and Gerald D' Cruz, then a member of the Malayan Communist Party. The Party, as stated earlier, severely opposed the separation of Singapore from the Malayan Union. It advocated democratic self-government in Malaya, including Singapore, and envisaged a unified Malayan nationality inclusive of all those who had made Malaya their permanent home.⁴⁵ As a form of protest against the constitutional arrangements, the party decided to boycott the registration of voters and elections. When the Government of Singapore assumed Emergency powers to combat Communist violence, the party, as a protest, dissolved itself in June 1948.⁴⁶ Most of its radical supporters became either politically inactive or were arrested by the government. The political field, therefore, was left free to the Progressive Party and the Labour Party.

The Progressive Party was established by C. C. Tan in January 1948. It was a conservative party and stood for the constitutional advancement of Singapore and improvements in the social services

44 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1959.* p. 32.

45 Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* (New York, N. Y., 1950), pp. 145-46.

46 Saul Rose, *Socialism in Southern Asia* (London, 1959) p. 207.

of the city⁴⁷ The membership of the Party was open to all communities and its office bearers came from the English-educated and professional classes. Though the Party played a prominent role in the Legislative Council of Singapore from 1948 to 1955, it had no roots among the vast Chinese population of Singapore.

The Labour Party in Singapore was founded by M. A. Majid and Francis Thomas in November 1948. It was modelled after the Labour Party in Britain and drew its support from the trade unions.⁴⁸ The leadership of the Party was predominantly Indian. From its very inception, there were frequent squabbles within the Party.

The first election to the Singapore Legislative Council took place in March 1948. Out of 22,395 electors, 13,458 voted. Of the six members elected, three were members of the Progressive Party.⁴⁹ In 1950, it was decided to increase the number of seats to be filled by popular election from six to nine⁵⁰ In the second general election which was held in March, 1951, 52 percent out of a total electorate of 48,000 voted. Out of the nine popularly elected members, six were members of the Progressive Party and two from the Labour Party,⁵¹ which also won another seat in a by-election caused by the resignation of an Independent member.⁵²

The above election figures reveal that politics in Singapore was not mass-based. Most of the Chinese did not take any interest in the election at all. It was confined to a narrow minority of English educated people, mostly Indians.⁵³

47 Thompson and Adloff, n.45 p. 153.

48 Rose, n. 46, pp. 207-09.

49 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1959*, p. 33.

50 *Colony of Singapore Annual Report 1950*, p. 6.

51 *Ibid.*, 1951, p. 6.

52 *Ibid.* 1959, p. 34.

53 It is interesting to note that out of the 22 candidates who contested the 9 seats in the 1951 elections, 15 were Indians and one was Ceylonese. n.51. p. 6.

The first important step in the transformation from colonial rule to self-government in Singapore was taken with the appointment of a Constitutional Commission in July 1953 under George Rendel. The Commission was asked to undertake a review of the Constitution of Singapore and to make recommendations for necessary changes. The Report was published in February 1954⁵⁴ and the recommendations came into force in February 1955.

The Commission rejected the demand for complete independence for Singapore and recommended a transition period in which "autonomous institutions and political experience can be developed". As regards the electorate, the Commission was of the opinion that the "system of voluntary registration has proved a failure" and, therefore, it should be substituted by "automatic registration" of voters⁵⁵.

The recommendations of the Commission laid the foundation for limited self-government in Singapore. The Legislative Assembly was to consist of thirty-two members – twenty-five elected, four nominated "unofficial" and three official members. The leader of the majority party in the Assembly would lead a Council of Ministers of six members of the Assembly including himself.⁵⁶ They

54 *Report of the Constitutional Commission* (Singapore, 1954).

55 The Commission rejected the demand put forward by sections of Singapore population that voting rights should not be limited to British subjects alone but should be extended to all people including aliens who have resided for long in the Colony. The Commission was of the view that voting rights should not be given to those persons "who possess an alien national status and do not acknowledge exclusive allegiance to the Sovereign of the British Commonwealth, of which Singapore forms a part". *Ibid.*, pp. 7 - 8.

56 The Council of Ministers in the words of the Commission "would become the chief policy making body. It would be responsible not only for determination of policy in all matters other than those relating to external affairs, internal security and defence but also for deciding what legislation to introduce into the Assembly, for all major executive decisions, and in fact for all the duties normally performed by the Cabinet in a fully self-governing State". *Ibid.*, p. 19.

would be in charge of all departments except the Reserved Subjects viz. Defences, Internal Security, Finance and Foreign Affairs. The Reserved Subjects would be in the charge of three British officials – the Financial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Chief Secretary. They would be members of the Council of Ministers, but would be responsible to the Governor constitutionally.

Besides the Reserved Subjects, the Governor was also vested with overriding powers "designed to meet exceptional circumstances."⁵⁷ He could withhold assent to bills passed by the Assembly, and he was given the right to legislate by decree. If the Legislative Assembly failed to pass a Bill, the Governor could enact it if he considered it essential. But before doing so, he should consult the Council of Ministers.

The constitutional reforms of 1954 introduced in Singapore a dyarchy – a popularly elected government which had to share the burden of running the government with a British Governor and his colonial apparatus. Its success depended on the spirit of co-operation and compromise between the colonial officials and elected Council of Ministers.

The Communist Emergency

The political and constitutional developments in Malaya and Singapore were considerably affected by the Communist Emergency which started in 1948.⁵⁸ The Malayan Communist Party (M. C. P.) emerged as a strong, well-knit and disciplined political force in Malaya after the second world war. But, in 1948, the M. C. P. gave up constitutional methods and started an armed revolt. From their hide-outs in Malaya's notorious jungles the Communist

57 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

58 For good accounts of the Communist Emergency, see J. H. Brimmell, *Communism in Southeast Asia* (London, 1957); Hanrahan Z. Gene., *Communist Struggle in Malaya* (New York, N. Y. 1954); Lucian Pye, *Guerilla Communism in Malaya* (Princeton, N. J., 1956); Edgar O' Ballance, *Malaya: The Communist Insurgent War, 1948-60* (London, 1966) and Richard Clutterbeck, *The Long Long War, The Emergency in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London, 1967).

guerillas attacked plantations, mines, civilian population and security forces with the aim of disrupting social and economic life and ultimately gaining political control. In response to this growing violence and terror, the Government declared a State of Emergency. Large-scale military operations against the guerillas were undertaken. Later on, they were combined with social and political measures like the rehabilitation of "Chinese Squatters" into "New Villages" encouragement of inter-racial harmony and introduction of democratic reforms. In 1954, the M. C. P. recognized that it was not getting popular support in Malaya, and, therefore, attempted, simultaneously with terrorist activities, to infiltrate into political parties and trade unions.

In step with the Federation Government, the Government of Singapore also declared a State of Emergency, banned the Communist Party and made periodic arrests of the left-wing trade union leaders. But in Singapore, the activities of the M.C.P. took a different course. Owing to the peculiar physical characteristics of the island, guerilla warfare was impossible in Singapore. As a result, Communist violence was not so intense as in the Federation.

The number of active underground Communist workers in Singapore was not very large; but their influence in Singapore politics was out of all proportion to their numbers. They skilfully exploited the resurgent nationalist feelings of the Chinese community and provided the leadership to the large number of Chinese Middle School students who were hitherto unorganized. They were also able to infiltrate and capture the leadership and spread their influence among the workers by militant strikes and anti-colonial slogans. In 1954, when the P.A.P. was formed with the objective of rallying all anti-colonial forces, the pro-Communist forces joined the Party in large numbers.

One of the important reasons for the failure of the Communist struggle in Malaya was the peculiar racial composition of the M. C. P. The overwhelming majority of the members of the M. C. P.

had always been Chinese. The very fact that the M. C. P. was predominantly a Chinese party, depending for its membership and support on the Chinese population made it unwelcome to most of the Malay and Indian population. The Malays were further antagonised because during the early years of the Emergency, the majority of the Chinese population preferred to sit on the fence and did not extend their co-operation to the Government in its fight against the Communists. As James Puthuchery has written, "Communism to Malays is something Chinese, Chinese in origine (as far as Malaya is concerned), Chinese in inspiration and Chinese in following".⁵⁹

The struggle against the Communists also brought to the fore the imperatives of inter-racial co-operation. The British administration and responsible leaders among the Chinese realized that the political ambivalence of the Chinese population was detrimental to the national interests of Malaya in general and the Chinese community in particular. They wanted to start a political organization among the Chinese, parallel to the U. M. N. O., which would rally the support of the Chinese population and act as a rival to the M. C. P. for Chinese support.⁶⁰ Such an organization would also co-operate with the Malays and foster the idea of national unity through inter-racial co-operation. In 1948, the Communities Liaison Committee (C. L. C.) was established, and, in 1949, the Malayan Chinese Association (M. C. A.) came into existence.

The M. C. A. was established in February 1949 under the presidency of Sir Tan Cheng Lock.⁶¹ Its leadership came from

59 James Puthuchery's "Statement of Political Belief," Appendix II in Lee Kuan Yew, *The Battle for Merger* (Singapore, n. d.) p. 199.

60 Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner for Malaya, said that he wanted the M. C. A. "to be stronger than the M. C. P." and to provide the Chinese with an alternative standard to Communism. T. H. Tan, "Political From the Start, Welfare a Mere Part of Association's Work", *Malayan Mirror* (Kuala Lumpur), vol. 1, 14 June 1953.

61 The objects of the M. C. A. were :

the wealthy Chinese who were conservative in their political outlook. It opened its branches throughout the country and before long was able to get the support of considerable sections of the Chinese population. From its inception, the Party had two important functions to perform: first, to defend and promote the interests of the Chinese community in Malaya and second, as the representative organization of the Chinese, to co-operate with the U. M. N. O. in the building up of a Malayan nation. As Tan Cheng Lock said, "It is a matter of supreme significance and indisputable necessity that a basic purpose of this organization must be the attainment of inter-communal understanding and friendship, particularly between the Malays and the Chinese". He also asked the M. C. A. members to unite "not only among themselves, but also with the Malays and other communities, to make this land one country and one nation".⁶²

The Communist Emergency also accelerated the political developments in Malaya towards independence. The nationalist leaders in Malaya were aware that, so long as British rule continued, the Communists could carry on their violent activities in the name of anti-colonial struggle against the British. But if Malaya had a representative government and became independent, the M. C. P. would lose its claim to be the vanguard of the nationalist movement and it would have to come inevitably into conflict with the forces of nationalism in Malaya.

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- a) to promote and maintain inter-racial goodwill and harmony in Malaya;
 - b) to foster and safeguard the social, political, cultural and economic welfare of Malayan Chinese by legitimate constitutional means;
 - c) to promote and assist in the maintenance of peace and good order for the attainment of peaceful and orderly progress in Malaya;
 - d) generally to do all acts and things as may be incidental to or connected with or conducive to the attainment of any of the above mentioned objects. *Ibid.*

62 *Straits Times*, 28 February 1949.

But the most important prerequisite for independence was the development of a common national identity and unity among the various races. As early as 1952, the British Colonial Secretary had stated that Malaya was unfit to receive any major political concessions and independence would not be forthcoming until unity among the various races had been attained.⁶³ The leaders of the three communities, therefore, realized that the general mass of the people should be encouraged to think as Malaysians and they should co-operate with one another in a national movement. They recognised the need for communal co-operation and the grave dangers which would result if the divisive tendencies were allowed to have a free rein. The Malay and non-Malay political leaders were realistic enough to grasp the fact that, in the peculiar circumstances of Malaya, where the three major communities were in different stages of social, economic and political development, communal co-operation could be accomplished only through accommodation and compromise among the three communities. The Alliance - an inter-communal organisation - consisting of the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. came into existence in 1954. It was completely united in its demand for independence and it was largely through its efforts that the Federation of Malaya became independent in 1957.⁶⁴

Singapore Politics and the 1955 Election

The political situation in Singapore in the early 1950's did not hold much hope for nationalist left wing forces. The British were administering the Colony with an iron hand and were deter-

- 63 In the course of a tour in the Federation of Malaya in 1952 the Colonial Secretary Mr. Lyttelton said, "I cannot promise you speedy success; I can and do promise you speedy action. An ideal for which all communities in Malaya must strive is a united Malaysian nation. When this has been achieved that nation will carry responsibilities and enjoy the advantages of self-government" *A Bi-Monthly Survey of Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs* (London), 6 February 1952, p. 8.
- 64 Margaret F. Clark, *The Malayan Alliance and its Accommodation of Communal Pressures, 1952-1962* (Thesis, M.A., University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1964), pp. 37-60.

mined to put down all opposition. The M. C. P. had already been declared illegal; most of its important leaders were either arrested or had gone underground. The nationalist, non-communist leaders, who had played an active part in trade unions and political parties like the A. M. C. J. A., P. U. T. E. R. A., M. D. U. and the M. N. P. had faded out of the Singapore political scene either through government restraints or internal squabbles. The only political organisation which was active was the conservative pro-British Progressive Party.

This artificial situation could not naturally last for a long time. Underneath the apparent tranquility political forces were already simmering which radically altered the Singapore political scene in the next few years. It goes to the credit of Lee Kuan Yew's vision and sagacity that he was able to perceive these political undercurrents and channelise them. Even in his student days in London Lee Kuan Yew was very vocal in the deliberations of the Malayan Forum. In London, he established contacts with many people who were to play a leading role in the politics of Singapore and Malaya. He came in close association with Dr. Goh Keng Swee, a brilliant economist from Malacca and Dr. Toh Chin Chye, a science student from Perak. The three shared many ideas and ideals and forged an abiding friendship. On his return to Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew came in touch with two other figures, S. Rajaratnam, a journalist of Ceylonese origin working with the *Straits Times*, and K.M. Byrne, a Singapore born Eurasian holding a high administrative position in the colonial government. Having decided to enter into active politics, Lee Kuan Yew made himself readily available as a legal adviser to trade unions. In 1952 the Postal Workers' Union went on strike and Lee Kuan Yew argued their case with verve and vigour. He also became friendly with some of the leading lights of the University Socialist Club like Sandra Woodhull and James Puthucheary. When the authorities framed punitive charges against *Fajar*, the mouthpiece of the Socialist Club, Lee Kuan Yew appeared as the defence counsel. He also persuaded D. N. Pritt, Q. C., who had earlier

defended Dr. Cheddi Jagan and the communist revolutionaries in Telangana, to come to the aid of the aggrieved students. After prolonged legal arguments, which attracted considerable public attention, Lee Kuan Yew and Pritt got the students acquitted.

The two years, 1953 and 1954, witnessed momentous changes in the Singapore political scene. There were talks of constitutional reforms and elections which gave a spurt to political parties, in general and left wing politics in particular. Left wing trade union leaders began to form unions among hitherto unorganised sections of Singapore workers.⁶⁵ The establishment of Singapore Factory and Shop Workers' Union in April 1954 was a veritable turning point in the history of Singapore workers. Its guiding spirit was Lim Chin Siong. A product of the Chinese Middle School and a staunch anti-colonialist, Lim Chin Siong was a gifted orator in Chinese and became the acknowledged leader of the Chinese-educated in Singapore. Under his dynamic leadership the Factory and Shop Workers' Union rapidly spread its influence among the workers. Allied with Lim Chin Siong were other left-wing leaders like Devan Nair, Fong Swee Suan, Jamit Singh and Woodhull who organised new unions among other sections of labour like naval base workers, transport workers and harbour board workers.

The students of the Chinese Middle Schools were also seething with discontent during the same period.⁶⁶ In May 1954, the Singapore Government promulgated the National Service Ordinance under which the students were required to register for national service on pain of six months in Jail or a fine of \$ 2,000 or both. This was a godsend opportunity for the revolutionary leaders in the Chinese schools. The students felt that they were being called upon to defend a political system, from which they were debarred

65 For good accounts of trade unions and their political importance in Malaya and Singapore during this period, see Norman Parmer, "Trade unions and Politics in Malaya", *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 24, March 1955, pp. 33-39; and Alex Josey, *Trade Unionism in Malaya* (Singapore, 1958).

66 Stanley Spector, "Students and Politics in Singapore", *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 25, May 1956, pp. 65-73.

because of their Chinese education. They demonstrated and rioted in the city. The government decided to close down the schools to avoid further incidents. The students took the law into their own hands, barricaded themselves behind "wooden curtain" in the schools, carried on a community life and conducted classes themselves. In the ensuing months, the students continued their political activities and demonstrated against the government on all conceivable occasions.

The P. A. P., which was formed on 21 November 1954, received the active support of the Chinese students and organised labour. The Party was established largely through the initiative of Lee Kuan Yew, who, as stated earlier, had already made a mark in Singapore's political life as a successful lawyer and legal adviser to the trade unions. He had occupied the key position of the Secretary General of the Party ever since and became the Chief Minister of Singapore when the Party came to power. Lee Kuan Yew was assisted in the founding of the Party by Dr. Toh Chin Chye, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam and other close colleagues. The Party, at the outset, spurned the offer made by the leaders of the Labour Party and the Socialist Party, who wanted to form a United Front against the pro-British Progressive Party.⁶⁷

The main preoccupation of the Party during the early years was to rally all anti-colonial forces with the immediate objective of ending colonialism and establishing a free and democratic Malaya including Singapore.⁶⁸ Since, in the anti-colonial

67 S. Rajaratnam, "PAP's First 10 Years", *Our First Ten Years, P. A. P. 10th Anniversary Souvenir* (Singapore, 1964), pp. 204-16.

68 The important objects of the Party as set out in the Party Constitution were:

a) 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;

phase, it was neither necessary nor desirable to emphasize the differences between allies in the common struggle, the P. A. P. had, within its fold, different types of political views, ranging from English-educated Fabian intellectuals and doctrinaire socialists to militant trade union workers and Communist supporters.

The merger of Singapore and the Federation in an independent Malaya had been the primary objective of the Party since its very inception. The major assumption of the Party in 1954 was that the independence movements in the Federation and Singapore were parts of the same anti-colonial struggle and, once the British rule came to an end, it would naturally lead to the emergence of a united Malaya including Singapore. In November 1954, the Party manifesto 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 the constitutional division. We are as actively interested in the problems of our fellow Malaysians in the Federation as we are in those of Singapore. When Malaysians in the Federation who agree with our aim: join us we shall work throughout Malaya.⁶⁹

b) To create a democratic unitary government of Malaya based on universal adult suffrage of all those who are born in Malaya or who adopt Malayan nationality;

c) To abolish the unjust inequalities of wealth and opportunity inherent in the present system; to establish an economic order which will give to all citizens the right to work and full economic returns for their labour and skill; to ensure a decent living and social security to all those who through sickness, infirmity or old age can no longer work;

d) To infuse into the people of Malaya, a spirit of national unity, self-respect and self-reliance, and to inspire them with a sense of endeavour in the creation of a prosperous, stable and just society. *Constitution and Rules of the P. A. P.* (Singapore, 1958).

69. "Manifesto of the People's Action Party" reproduced in *Our First Ten Years, P.A.P. 10th Anniversary Souvenir*, n. 67, pp. 283-87.

The presence of the Federation leaders Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tan Cheng Lock at the inaugural session of the P.A.P. further strengthened this assumption. The P.A.P. leaders proclaimed that it signified the essential unity of Singapore and Malaya, smarting under the same colonial overlord.⁷⁰ But this assumption, later developments proved, was not warranted by the racial and political realities in the Federation and Singapore. The constitutional developments of the two territories progressed along different lines. While the Federation became independent in 1957, Singapore continued to be a Colony. This added a new dimension to the problems of merger of Singapore into the Federation of Malaya.

The first election under the Rendel Constitution was held on 2 April, 1955. Under the system of automatic registration, the electorate had increased from 75,000 to 300,299. Most of the voters were Chinese and they had their voting rights for the first time. 160,395 voters cast their votes, three times more than in the preceding elections.⁷¹

The election was keenly contested by five major political parties – the Progressive Party, the Democrats, the U. M. N. O.-M. C. A.-Malay Union Alliance, the Labour Front and the People's Action Party – besides a number of Independents.⁷² The first three political parties were conservative and the last two were radical in their political outlook.

The oldest Party was the Progressive Party which had dominated the Singapore Legislative Council so far. The Party expected to come to power and fielded a large number of candidates. It issued a manifesto which advocated the retention of Emergency Regulations, full internal self-government by 1963, free primary education, Malayanisation of the civil service and no increase in

70 Rajaratnam, n. 67, pp.204-16.

71 *Colony of Singapore Annual Report*, 1955, pp. 2-3.

72 For a good account of 1955 election in Singapore, refer Francis G. Carnell, "Political Ferment in Singapore", *Far Eastern Survey*, vol. 24, July 1955, pp. 97-102.

income tax.⁷³ Because of its close association with the British administration, the Party was the focus of attack of all other political parties. The critics labelled it as an "official" party and its leaders were characterised as "imitation Englishmen who had alienated the respect of Asians".⁷⁴

The "Democrats" was formed in February 1954. The main aim of the Party was the introduction of multilingualism in the Legislative Assembly. It drew its support from the wealthy Chinese businessmen and Chinese Chamber of Commerce (therefore it was popularly known as the 'Millionaires' Party') and appealed to the communal sentiments of the Chinese. Its main aim was to defeat the Progressive Party and it succeeded in this attempt by splitting the right-wing votes.

The U. M. N. O. - M. C. A. - Malay Union Alliance was another right-wing-Party. Both the U. M. N. O. and M. C. A. were fairly strong in the Federation; but, in Singapore, only the U. M. N. O. had some following. Its manifesto called for a fully-elected legislature, multilingualism and amendment of Emergency Regulations and Trade Union Ordinance.

The Labour Front which emerged victorious in the election was formed in 1954 as an election alliance between the Singapore Labour Party and the Singapore Socialist Party. It was more "a collection of like minded individuals"⁷⁵ than a Party with fixed political objectives. It lacked a good organisation and its success at the polls came as a surprise to its own rank and file. The leader of the Party was David Marshall, a successful criminal lawyer. The Party advocated : a) immediate self-government, unity with the Federation and eventual independence within the Commonwealth; b) creation of a Singapore citizenship and introduction of multilingualism in the Assembly; c) repeal of Emergency Regula-

73 For election manifestoes of various parties refer *Straits Times*, 2 April 1955.

74 See Carnell, n. 72.

75 *Ibid.*

tions and amendment of the Trade Union Ordinance; and d) the creation of a welfare state financed by taxation.

To the extreme left was the P.A.P. The Party was undecided in the beginning whether to contest the elections or not because of the serious limitations of the Rendel Constitution. The left-wing elements in the Party advocated the boycott of the elections as an act of protest, but the special Party Conference in 1955 decided in favour of contesting the elections and using constitutional methods to expose the shortcomings of the Rendel constitution.⁷⁶ The Party fielded four candidates in predominantly labour areas - Lee Kuan Yew from Tanjong Pagar, Goh Chew Chua from Ponggol Tampines, Devan Nair from Farrer Park and Lin Chin Siong from Bukit Timah. It pledged itself to (a) immediate independence and union with the Federation, (b) repeal of the Emergency Regulations and National Service Ordinance and amendment of the Trade Union Ordinance to allow trade unions to set up political funds, (c) no vote for those who enjoyed expatriate privileges, (d) provision of a workers' charter with legislation guaranteeing their rights, (e) complete Malayanisation of the civil service in four years, and (f) free compulsory education for all children under 19 years of age. The Party received the whole hearted support of left-wing trade unions and Chinese Middle School students. Students of the Chinese Middle Schools were the most active among the volunteers and did house to house canvassing. The P.A.P. campaign, as was to be expected, was characterized by strident anti-colonial speeches and outright condemnation of right-wing parties.

The results of the 1955 elections are given below:⁷⁷

76 'The Open Conspiracy', *P.A.P. 6th Anniversary Celebration Souvenir* (Singapore, 1960), pp 11-30.

77 For details of election results refer *Singapore Government Gazette*, vol. 10, No. 461, 6 April 1955.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>Percentage of total votes polled</i>
1. Labour Front	42,300	10	27.0
2. Progressive Party	38,695	4	24.7
3. Democrats	32,115	2	20.5
4. People's Action Party	13,634	3	8.5
5. U.M.N.O.-M.C.A.- M.U Alliance	13,157	3	8.0
6. Labour Party	1,325	-	0.8
7. Independents	15,098	3	9.7

Though the Labour Front polled only 27 per cent of the total votes, it was able to win ten seats. Its unexpected victory was due to the splitting of right-wing votes between the Progressive Party and the Democrats. Though the two parties together polled more than 45 per cent votes, they were able to get only six seats because of multi-cornered contests. Three of the four candidates put up by the P. A. P. also won their seats.

David Marshall, the leader of the Labour Front, was invited to form the government. It was to the right-wing U M. N. O. - M. C. A. - M. U. Alliance that Marshall turned for co-operation for forming a coalition government. With the support of the additional Labour Front members nominated by the Governor and the three Officials, Marshall was able to get the support of eighteen members in the Legislative Assembly of thirty-two.

The coming into power of the first popularly elected government significantly altered the course of events in the Singapore political scene and its relations with the Federation of Malaya. In order to understand its full implications, it is necessary to trace the political developments in the Federation of Malaya.

Federation of Malaya Achieves Independence

The Colonial Office had stated that the ultimate aim of the British Government was the establishment of self-government

in Malaya.⁷⁸ The British Government, as a major step in that direction, made efforts to foster communal harmony. With the active encouragement of Malcolm Macdonald, Dato Onn, the President of the U. M. N. O., formed the Communities Liaison Committee (C. L. C.) in 1948, which included representatives of various racial groups. The C. L. C. suggested that communal harmony could be fostered by a more balanced economic and political development among the Malays and the non-Malays. The recommendations of the C. L. C., therefore, included measures to improve the economic position of the Malays and the granting of political concessions to the non-Malays. The Committee also suggested that all Government schools should teach English and Malay and that elections should be introduced as early as possible.

Following the suggestions of the C. L. C., the Government took various steps. The Rural and Industrial Development Authority (R. I. D. A.) was established in 1950 to improve the economic position of the Malays. Citizenship provisions regarding birth and residence were liberalized in 1952 which enabled large number of non-Malays to acquire citizenship.⁷⁹ The non-Malays were also admitted into the Malayan Civil Service since 1953 in the ratio of one non-Malay to every four Malays. In 1951, the British introduced the "Member" system by which "unofficial" members were associated with the administration of the country. Though the Emergency affected the pace of constitutional progress, the British also introduced elections to local bodies like Municipal Councils and Village Councils from 1951.

78 In its directive to Sir Gerald Templer, the High Commissioner in Malaya, the British Government stated, "The policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is that Malaya should in due course become a fully self-governing nation. His Majesty's Government confidently hope that that nation will be within the British Commonwealth". *A Bi-Monthly Survey of Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs*, 26 March 1952, p. 4.

79 F.G. Carnell, "Malayan Citizenship Legislation", *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* Vol. 1, pp 504-518.

The introduction of elections brought about considerable changes in the development of the U M N. O. and the M. C. A. Both these were communal pressure groups intended to bring about changes in government policies in their favour. But with the introduction of elections, they had opportunities to share political power. It was the desire to win the elections that brought the U M. N. O. and the M. C. A. together and brought home to the leadership of the two parties the benefits of inter-communal co-operation.

The Alliance had its beginning in the electoral alliance between the U. M. N. O. and the M. C. A. on the eve of the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections in 1952. Both the Parties were keen on defeating the candidates of the new political party, the Independence of Malaya Party (I. M. P.). The I. M. P. was started by Dato Onn⁸⁰ as a political movement organised on a non-communal basis. The local leaders of the U M N. O. and the M. C. A. were pragmatic enough to grasp the fact that, under the prevailing social and political set up, voting would follow communal lines. They came to an agreement by which the U. M. N. O. candidates were put up in predominantly Malay areas and the M. C. A. candidates in non-Malay areas. The results of the elections more than justified their expectations and the Alliance captured nine seats as against two of the I.M.P. The success in Kuala Lumpur elections was followed by similar victories in Johore Bahru, Muar, Malacca and other places.

The spectacular success in the elections convinced both Tunku Abdul Rahaman (who became the President of the U. M. N. O. after Dato Onn's resignation) and Tan Cheng Lock that the Alliance should be put on a more sound and stable footing. Following discussions between the leaders of both parties, a

80 Dato Onn was the founder chairman of the U M. N. O. and the C. L. C. He wanted the U M. N. O. to broaden its base and admit persons belonging to all races as members. The U. M. N. O. members were more keen to consolidate and strengthen the U. M. N. O. as the guardian of Malay rights and therefore refused to comply with Dato Onn. Tadin, n. 37.

National Convention was held in August 1953. An important landmark in the growth of the Alliance was the appointment of a National Executive Council in September 1954 which was the supreme decision-making authority in the Alliance. The U. M. N. O.-M. C. A. Alliance was further strengthened when the Malayan Indian Congress (M. I. C.) joined it in September 1954.⁸¹ The Alliance thus became the representative organization of all the three major communities in Malaya.

The evolution of the Alliance as an inter-communal organization was a clear indication of the changes that had taken place in the political attitudes of the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. While recognising the necessity to unite the members of their own community, they realised the blunt truth that, given its peculiar demographic structure, no community was sufficiently strong to impose its will on others and that compromises had to be necessarily made for the preservation of inter-racial harmony and national progress. It was this recognition of the need for communal co-operation and the fear of the possible consequences in the event of this co-operation breaking down that kept the three Alliance partners together.⁸²

The Alliance was an inter-communal organization and not a non-communal organization. It depended on the three communal parties - the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. - for its strength and survival.⁸³ While at the Alliance level the leader-

81 The Malayan Indian Congress was established in August 1946 to promote the interests of the Indian community in Malaya. In the early years the M. I. C. was opposed to communal politics. It was a member of the A. M. C. J. A. and was forthright in its criticism of the post-war constitutional arrangements in Malaya. Many members of the M. I. C. also supported the I. M. P. The decision to join the Alliance was opposed by many members within the Party. Clark, n. 64, pp. 32-35.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

83 Direct membership to the Alliance was introduced in 1965 by which a person can become a member of the Alliance without being a member of the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. or the M. I. C.

ship emphasized the necessity for inter-racial co-operation and harmony, the strength of the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. primarily depended on how far it was able to safeguard the interests of its own community. It goes to the credit of the Alliance leadership that it did succeed for some years in reconciling communal demands with broader national interests by a "formula of give and take". This process had not been easy or smooth. The leadership of the three parties had to face serious charges of neglect of their own communities - from its own members as well as from other communal parties.

The political strategy of the Alliance was to agitate for early State and Federal elections as a first step towards complete independence. After initial vacillation the British Government appointed a Committee in 1953 to report on introducing elections to the Federal Legislative Council. The majority opinion of the Report⁸⁴ recommended a Legislative Council of 92 members, of which 44 members were to be elected. But this met with stiff opposition from the Alliance which demanded that the majority of the members must be directly elected. In April 1954, General Templer, with the consent of the Sultans, announced that there would be 52 elected members in a Federal Council of 98 and that elections would be held in 1955.⁸⁵

The announcement of General Templer was a clear departure from the orthodox British colonial policy. In the British colonial history, no colony had so far progressed directly from a fully nominated Council to a Legislative Council with majority of its members being elected. A transitional stage of political apprenticeship (like the one which came into existence in Singapore in

84 *Report of the Committee Appointed to Examine the Question of Elections to the Federal Legislative Council* (Kuala Lumpur, 1954).

85 For a good account of post-war political developments in Malaya, refer Vishal Singh, "Recent Political Developments in Malaya", *Foreign Affairs Reports* (New Delhi), vol. 5, January 1956, pp. 1-15.

1948) where the Legislative Council had a majority of nominated members and a minority of elected members, was considered to be an essential stage in a colony's advance towards self-government. The announcement did not fully satisfy the Alliance because of the smallness of majority. But it still represented a clear victory for Malay — non-Malay co-operation as represented by the Alliance and the sustained pressure that it was able to exert on the Colonial Office.

The first general election in Malaya was held on 27 July 1955. The most important characteristic of the election was the uneven composition of the electorate. The total number of voters was estimated to be 1,280,000 of which 84.2 per cent were Malays, 11.2 per cent Chinese and the remaining 4.6 per cent mainly Indians and Pakistanis. This was mainly due to two main reasons: 1) the Malays constituted the overwhelming majority of Federal citizens in 1955, and 2) many of the Chinese and Indian citizens were less than 21 years of age, and consequently had no voting rights.⁸⁶ As far as the constituencies were concerned, the Malays constituted the majority in all but two of the fifty-two constituencies.

The Alliance fought the election on the issue of "Merdeka" (independence) and the Alliance manifesto stated: "The Alliance resolves to achieve early independence for Malaya by constitutional means. Independence will be achieved if the electorate gives its mandate to the Alliance by returning Alliance candidates to all the 52 seats in the coming Federal Legislative Council."⁸⁷ Besides mobilizing public support, the slogan of independence

86 For good accounts of the 1955 elections in Malaya refer: Francis G. Carnell, "The Malayan Elections", *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 28, pp 315-30; and K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and Political Process in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), pp. 186-200.

87 The manifesto also called for the Malayanization of public services, an attempt to end the Emergency by meeting the communist leaders, revision of Emergency Regulations, a national education policy acceptable to all communities, economic development and expansion of social services. *Menuju Kerah Kemerdekaan* ("The road to independence"), *Alliance Platform for the Federal Elections* (Kuala Lumpur n.d.).

also acted as an effective cementing bond among the three partners of the Alliance. The leaders of the Alliance highlighted those issues on which there was complete agreement while controversial issues were relegated to the background.

The selection of candidates for the election was a clear evidence of the growing co-operation among the leaders of the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A. and the M.I.C. The extremist elements in the U.M.N.O. advocated that, since the Malays constituted the majority in fifty constituencies, a corresponding proportion of Alliance candidates should come from the U.M.N.O. But Tunku Abdul Rahman successfully resisted these pressures and insisted that the allocation should be made on a more rational basis. He was aware of the fact that, in order to strengthen and consolidate inter-communal co-operation, significant concessions had to be made to the Chinese and the Indians. In the course of the election campaign, he repeatedly emphasized that independence could be won only if the three races worked together. The Alliance team of fifty-two consisted of thirty-five Malays, fifteen Chinese and two Indians. In the evolution of the Malayan nation and the consolidation of the Alliance itself, the Tunku's statesmanlike decision marks a watershed.

The election resulted in the unprecedented victory of fifty-one of the fifty-two Alliance candidates and the virtual annihilation of all opposition parties.⁸⁸ The only seat lost by the Alliance went to

88 Opposing the Alliance in the election were the Party Negara (P. N.), Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (P. M. I. P.) and the Labour Party (L. P.). The P. N. was founded by Dato Onn after his disillusionment with the I. M. P. His political career had now turned a full circle and he reverted back to his pro-Malay and anti-Chinese positions. The Party fielded 30 candidates, of which 29 were Malays. The P. M. I. P., the extreme Malay communal organization, put up 11 candidates (naturally all of them were Malays). The L. P. characterized the election as a "farce" and stated that it had put up four candidates as a gesture against the "reactionary aims" of other parties. Also in the field were eighteen independents and candidates of three insignificant political parties - Perak Malay League (3), Perak Progressive Party (2) and National Association of Perak (9). Carnell, n. 86.

the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (P. M. I. P) candidate who won the seat by a margin of 450 votes. The Alliance polled 79.6 per cent of the total votes and most of its candidates won by wide margins. The results of the 1955 elections are given below:⁸⁹

Party	Votes polled	Seats won	Percentage of total votes
1. Alliance	818,013	51	79.6
2. Party Negara	78,909	...	7.6
3. Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	40,667	1	3.9
4. National Association of Perak	20,996	...	2.0
5. Perak Malay League	5,433	...	0.5
6. Labour Party	4,786	...	0.4
7. Perak Progressive Party	1,081	...	0.1
8. Independents	31,642	...	3.0

The outright victory of the Alliance was due to its firm stand on Independence. Tunku Abdul Rahman recognized it as such and described the overwhelming success as "demonstrating people's enthusiasm for independence, so that the first real approach towards independence must be made quickly. The British Government cannot ignore the fact that our tremendous success resulted from the issue of independence and nothing else - absolutely nothing else".⁹⁰

A comparison with the constitutional progress made by Singapore reveals the fact that the Colony of Singapore had made more progress than the Federation. There was lesser proportion of nominated members in Singapore. But in actual practice, Tunku Abdul Rahman, as will be pointed out later, wielded more influence and power than David Marshall ever did.

The new Alliance Government, true to its election manifesto, was keen to put an end to the Communist Emergency.

⁸⁹ For details of election results see T. E. Smith, *Report on the First Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1955) Appendix F, pp. 68-76.

⁹⁰ *Straits Budget*, 4 August 1955.

In December 1955, following the overtures made by the M.C.P., Tunku Abdul Rahman and David Marshall met Chin Peng at Baling. The Communist leader insisted that the M. C. P. should be legally recognized and its members allowed to carry on normal political activities without restraint. Both the Tunku and Marshall were not willing to concede the demand. The M. C. P. leader refused to surrender arms and the talks ended in failure.⁹¹ The military operations against the guerillas were resumed. The Communist violence gradually waned after independence and the Emergency was lifted in July 1960.

Having won the election on the slogan of "Merdeka", Tunku Abdul Rahman immediately insisted on self government as a prelude to independence. At the inaugural session of the Legislative Council, he demanded that the control of Internal Security and Defence, Revenue and Expenditure should be transferred to the elected representatives of the people. Aware of the cross-currents of Communism and nationalism in Asia, Tunku declared that the only alternative to Communism was nationalism. "There can be no alternative. Her Majesty's Government and Their Highnesses the Rulers must be prepared either to foster the growth of genuine nationalism or hand over this country to the Malayan Communist Party."⁹²

Following the preliminary talks that Lennox Boyd, the Secretary of State for Colonies, had with the Sultans and the Alliance Cabinet in August 1955, a Constitutional Conference was held in London in January-February 1956. The Conference was a great success. Agreement was reached on full self-government and independence within the British Commonwealth.⁹³ It was agreed to grant independence to Malaya by August 1957 if possible. As an immediate transitional step, the Alliance Ministers were given powers of Internal Security and Defence and Finance. The

91 Clutterbeck, n. 58, pp. 136-37.

92 *Straits Budget*, 8 September 1955.

93 *Report by the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Conference held in London in January and February, 1956*, Cmd. 9714 (H. M. S. O., London 1956).

Conference also decided to appoint a Constitutional Commission which would make recommendations for framing a new constitution for the independent country.

The quick transition to independence, unparalleled in the history of Southeast Asia, was due to the conservative character of the Alliance Government and its friendly relations with Great Britain. The British Colonial Office was sure that its strategic and economic interests would never be endangered even after the Independence of Malaya. The Alliance leadership, because of the long struggle against the M. C. P., was uncompromisingly anti-Communist. It had no desire to pursue a policy of non-alignment and decided to enter into a Defence and Mutual Assistance Treaty with Great Britain⁹⁴.

The vast economic interests of Britain (as represented by the British investments in rubber and tin industries) were also assured by the financial and economic policies of the Alliance Government. The Alliance election manifesto had clearly stated that it was its policy to attract foreign investments into Malaya.⁹⁵ Recognizing the dependence of Malayan economy on foreign capital and international trade, the Alliance Government decided to

94 The Constitutional Conference noted the fact that, "The Federal Government :

- a) will afford to Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom the right to maintain in the Federation the forces necessary for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and international obligations; and
- b) will continue to afford to Her Majesty's Government facilities needed in the Federation for the maintenance and support of these forces, which would include the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom :

- c) will undertake to assist the Federation Government in the external defence of its territory ; and
- d) will consult the Federation Government in regard to the exercise of their rights under the Treaty".

Ibid., Appendix D., p. 21.

95 Alliance Manifesto, n. 87.

remain in the Sterling Bloc and continue to encourage the flow of foreign capital for the economic development of the country.⁹⁶

Following the Constitutional Conference in 1956, a Constitutional Commission was appointed under Lord Reid, an English Judge, to draw up a draft constitution. The Report of the Commission was published in 1957.⁹⁷ Modifications were made (mainly due to the pressure exerted by the U. M. N. O. wing in the Alliance) after consultations with the British Government, the Sultans and the Alliance Cabinet. The Federation of Malaya became independent and the new Constitution came into being on 31 August 1957.

The new Constitution introduced a Federal structure based on parliamentary form of government. But, of greater significance in the political evolution of Malaya and its relations with Singapore, were the underlying assumptions of the Constitution and the special features that the Constitution embodied. Though not explicitly stated in the Constitution, it was assumed that political power would largely remain in the hands of the Malays, and economic power in the hands of the non-Malays. It was believed that with the passage of time this division would give way and a new political and economic equilibrium would naturally develop; the Chinese and the Indians would participate more actively in the

96 In his address to the Federal Legislative Council, the High Commissioner stated clearly the policy of the Alliance Government towards foreign capital. "...it is no less than my duty at the present time of change and evolution in our political and constitutional affairs to make it clear that the Federation Government willingly recognises the contribution which overseas capital and enterprise have so made.. to the economic and social well-being of the country as a whole. It is also the view of the Federation Government - and I would remind you that I speak to-day on behalf of the Government as now constituted - that such capital and enterprise have no less an important role to play in a new and independent Malaya of the future" n. 93., Appendix F., p. 213.

97 *Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission* (Kuala Lumpur, 1957).

political life of the country; and that the Malays would enter trade, business and commerce and play a greater role in the economic life of Malaya. By conventional democratic standards the new Constitution of Malaya was not an ideal constitution; it did not also satisfy the extremists both among the Malays and the non-Malays. But, to a large extent, it reflected the economic and political realities of the country. As has been rightly said, the new Constitution and the subsequent policies of the Government may be viewed as a "compromise designed to achieve a rough balance between Malay political power and the economic power of the Chinese."⁹⁸

The pre-eminent position of the Malays in the political life of Malaya was guaranteed by the Constitution itself. The retention of the Malay Sultanate, the acceptance of Islam as state religion,⁹⁹ the constitutional provisions safeguarding the special position of the Malays,¹⁰⁰ provision that Malay will be the National Language and Official Language after 1967¹⁰¹ - all bear testimony to the domination of Malays in the political life of Malaya.

The political position of the non-Malays also improved considerably after independence. The relaxation of citizenship provisions paved the way for the vast majority of the non-Malays,

98 R. S. Milne, "Politics and Government" in Wang Gungwu, ed., *Malaysia* (London 1964), p. 329.

99 Though Islam is the state religion, it must, however, be pointed out that the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya guaranteed complete religious freedom to members of other religious faiths. L. A. Sheridan, *The Federation of Malaya Constitution* (Singapore 1961), p. 4.

100 The special rights for the Malays are contained in Articles 153 and 89 of the Constitution. Article 153 deals with reservation of quotas in respect of public service, appointments, licences and educational benefits. Article 89 is concerned with land reservations for Malays. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42, 96-97.

101 Article 152 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of Malay as the national language and use of English as official language for a period of ten years after Merdeka day and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

interested in making Malaya their permanent home to become citizens of the country.¹⁰² It was also assumed, though not specifically stated in the Constitution, that the Chinese would be allowed to carry on their economic activities and play an active role in the economic development of the country without any obstacle from the Government.

Politics in Singapore 1955-57

The political situation in Singapore radically changed with the assumption of power of the first popularly-elected Government under David Marshall. The ambitious policies of the new Government were enunciated by the Governor in his address to the first session of the Legislative Assembly. They gave prominence to the "early attainment of complete self-Government and union with the Federation of Malaya", relaxation of Emergency Regulations and their replacement by legislation; fostering of Singapore's entrepot trade, introduction of trade union legislation and the expansion of social services.¹⁰³ But the new Government, working under serious constitutional limitations, had to face challenges both from the opposition parties and the Colonial Office immediately after assuming power.

The first organized challenge to the Government came from the trade unions led by Lim Chin Siong and other left-wing leaders of the P. A. P. The occasion was the trade union dispute in the Hock Lee Bus Company. It also synchronized with the first anniversary

102 The Constitution provided that any person born in the country after independence would become the citizen of the country by birth. Any person, whose father was a citizen of Malaya at the time of his birth was also eligible to become a citizen by fulfilling certain qualifications. The Constitution also relaxed the qualifications for acquiring citizenship by other means. For example, the provision that the applicant should have a knowledge of Malay language was waived for a year from the day of independence *Ibid.*, pp. 22-38.

103 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 1, 22 April 1955, cols. 4-12.

of the students' struggle against the National Service Regulations of 1954. The left-wing leaders used the opportunity to exploit to the maximum the resentment of the workers and the students against the British Government. On 12 May 1955, the strikers went beyond peaceful picketing and resorted to violence. They were encouraged and assisted by students of the Chinese Middle Schools. The situation went out of control; there were riots in the city. The Government was compelled to arrest many people and close down two of the largest Chinese Schools for a week to avoid further incidents. The violent incidents were an eye-opener to David Marshall and his Cabinet. They were compelled to introduce the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance (P. P. S. O.) even though they came to power on the solemn assurance that if elected they would do away with many of the obnoxious provisions in the Emergency Regulations.

The inadequate nature of the Rendel Constitution to meet the political aspirations of the Singapore Government was brought to the forefront before long. The Rendel Constitution provided that the Governor had to consult the Chief Minister, but it did not stipulate that the Governor should act in accordance with the wishes of the Chief Minister. A constitutional crisis developed when the Governor did not grant the request made by the Chief Minister for the appointment of four Assistant Ministers. The Legislative Assembly, in a special session, passed a resolution stating that the most liberal interpretation legally permissible should be given to the Constitution.¹⁰⁴ After a threat of resignation by the Chief Minister and consequent consultations with Lennox Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a settlement was finally reached. It was agreed that the Governor should be relieved of certain discretionary powers under the Constitution, in the exercise of which he was not required to accept the advice of the Chief Minister. The Colonial Office also indicated its willingness to receive a Constitutional delegation from Singapore in the light

104 *Ibid.*, 22 July 1955, col. 404.

of one year's experience with the Rendel Constitution and discuss further constitutional advance for the Colony.

It was the desire of David Marshall, which was shared by all other political parties in Singapore, that the constitutional future of both Singapore and the Federation of Malaya should be decided simultaneously and that Singapore, should be merged with the Federation on the attainment of independence. But Tunku Abdul Rahman and other nationalist leaders in the Federation were opposed to this idea. They were aware that Britain, because of its Commonwealth and strategic interests, would not grant independence to Singapore. As Tunku Abdul Rahman stated, "Singapore is a strategic island of defence for Britain and independence for the Federation will be delayed if we seek to co-ordinate ourselves with the plans of the Colony's Labour Front Government."¹⁰⁵ The leaders of the various political parties in the Federation were also opposed to the idea of the union of Singapore with the Federation. The 1955 election manifesto of the Alliance had nothing to say on the subject and no Alliance candidate mentioned it during the election campaign. The Party Negara similarly maintained a silence broken only by Dato Onn's statement that he did not favour early union.¹⁰⁶

Following the preliminary discussions that David Marshall and his colleagues had in London in December 1955, it was decided to send an All-Party Delegation to London for constitutional talks. In April 1956, the Singapore Legislative Assembly, on a motion moved by the Chief Minister, instructed the Delegation :

To seek forthwith for Singapore the status of an independent territory within the Commonwealth, and to offer an Agreement between the United Kingdom Government and the Singapore Government whereby the Govern-

105 Tunku Abdul Rahman added, "As far as I am concerned, my aim is to fulfil my mandate pertaining to independence for the Federation. I have to think of Federal independence first and this union with Singapore might mean a considerable delay". *Straits Budget*, 11 August 1955.

106 Reported in *Ibid.*, 5th January 1956.

ment of United Kingdom would in respect of Singapore exercise control over external defence and give guidance in foreign relations other than trade and commerce.¹⁰⁷

The constitutional talks opened in London on 23 April 1956 and continued till 15 May 1956.¹⁰⁸ There was a wide area of agreement on many details. Thus it was stipulated that the Colony would become the State of Singapore; elected membership in the Assembly would be doubled and the official and nominated elements would be eliminated; the Prime Minister would preside over the Council of Ministers which would consist of elected Assemblymen. The creation of a separate Singapore citizenship and Malayanisation of the civil service were also agreed upon. But it was apparent from the beginning that the British Government wanted to retain the ultimate power regarding internal security. The Secretary of State for the Colonies made the British position quite clear in his preliminary speech to the Constitutional delegation. After pointing out the importance of Singapore as a "bastion in the Defence system of the free world" and the threat of "communist subversion" that it faced, Lennox Boyd said:

external defence and internal security are in Singapore inevitably intertwined. This responsibility for external defence cannot be dissociated from internal security or called on only when affairs have got largely or completely out of hand ... the British Government will not allow the people of Singapore to fall under the domination of communist rule. We do not intend that Singapore should become an outpost of communist China and, in fact, a colony of Peking.¹⁰⁹

The negotiations broke down on the crucial issue of the powers that Britain should have on matters of internal security.

- 107 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 1, 4 April 1956, col. 1793.
- 108 For the Government of Singapore's view refer *Report on the Singapore All-Party Mission to London, April/May 1956*, Cmd. 31 of 1956 (Singapore, 1956); for the view of the Government of the United Kingdom refer *Singapore Constitutional Conference*, Cmd. 9777 (H.M.S.O., London, 1956).
- 109 *Ibid.*, Annexure A., p. 18.

It was agreed that there should be a Defence and Security Council presided over by the High Commissioner and two representatives of the U. K. Government, and two representatives of the Singapore Government. The Council would discuss those aspects of external affairs and defence which would be of interest to both sides, receive regular reports on the state of internal security, consider what actions were necessary and make recommendations to the two parties. The British Government insisted that it should be vested with powers, less drastic than the ultimate power for suspending the Constitution, which it could use in emergency. The Singapore delegation was of the view that Britain should have no such powers (except the ultimate power to suspend the Constitution), but later, it modified its stand and agreed to accept the British proposals if these powers were used on the recommendations of the Defence and Security Council, which should have a Malayan Chairman and where Britain should have a minority of votes. But the British were unwilling to accept these suggestions and the constitutional talks failed. By this time differences within the Singapore delegation had come out into the open. The attempts made by David Marshall to reopen negotiations on his own initiative was turned down by the Colonial Office because his views did not have the support of all members of the Singapore delegation.¹¹⁰

It is worth considering at this moment why the constitutional talks between Britain and the Federation succeeded while those between Britain and Singapore failed. In the Federation of Malaya, Britain was faced with the Alliance which had emerged as a democratic alternative to the Malayan Communist Party. It had swept the polls on the issue of independence, its Cabinet was united as a team and the constitutional delegation was unanimous on all issues regarding independence. Further, since it was anti-Communist and conservative in its economic policies, the British Government was sure that the policies of independent Malaya would not directly conflict with the economic and defence interests of Britain.

110 U. K., House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 552, 18 May 1956, cols. 2371-74.

In Singapore, on the other hand, the situation was entirely different. The British Government was aware of the unstable foundations on which the Marshall Government was based. Not only it came to power on a precarious minority of votes, but when confronted with a serious challenge to law and order, the Government vacillated. In other words, Britain did not consider the Marshall Government as an alternative which would safeguard the British interests and prevent Singapore from falling into Communist hands. The Colonial Office, therefore, was keen to retain the reality of power with itself while giving a modicum of self-government to Singapore. The British view regarding the Singapore situation was very well illustrated by *The Economist* :

.. Mr. Lennox Boyd is being asked to give unrestrained power to a government which commands no majority on any issue other than that of independence. Mr. Marshall's ministers are weak, his supporters divided, his opponents vocal and his health uncertain... For a man demanding so much so soon, Mr. Marshall's position is weak... neither is his record in office likely to impress either the Secretary of State or the parliamentary delegation which has been visiting the Colony... He can point to little that has been planned and to practically nothing that has been achieved.¹¹¹

Following the failure of the constitutional talks, David Marshall resigned and was succeeded by Lim Yew Hock as Chief Minister. Lim Yew Hock was convinced that the Colonial Office would not make any further constitutional concession unless the internal situation in Singapore greatly improved. He was, therefore, determined to put down lawlessness with a severe hand by taking strong action against left-wing trade union leaders and student agitators. In that process, however, Lim Yew Hock alienated the goodwill and sympathy of the majority of the Chinese population. The Chief Minister said that his aim was to plan well in order to negotiate from a position of strength. He declared that the government would "do everything in its power to bring about a

111 "No Mandate for Merdeka", *The Economist* (London), 21 April 1956, pp. 275-6.

state of affairs that will not only be conducive to success, but also in the best interest of the people of Singapore".¹¹²

During all these months the left-wing anti-colonial forces were steadily increasing their influence among the large mass of Singapore people. They were joined by new organizations with identical aims - the Singapore Women's Federation, the Farmer's Association, the Unemployed Association, the Wooden House-Dweller's Association, the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Anti-Yellow Culture Council etc. After the failure of the constitutional talks, they successfully exploited the resultant anti-colonial feelings and mounted an offensive against the government through a series of demonstrations and strikes.

Having decided to take action "to counter the growing menace of the Communist-Front organisations", the Government arrested six left-wing leaders on 18 September 1956 with a view to banishing them from Singapore. On 24 September 1956, the Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Association, which contrary to its constitution, had participated in political activities, was branded a Communist-Front organisation and was dissolved.¹¹³ The Government action was severely resisted by Chinese students and the trade unions. The students launched stay-in strikes in the Chinese schools. The police action to clear the schools was resisted by the students, who were encouraged and assisted by the workers. Violence broke out, which culminated in serious riots in the city and the Government had to impose curfew from 26 October to 2 November 1956. On 27 October 1956, the Special Branch arrested several trade union leaders including Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Devan Nair, James Purthuchearry and Woodhull. They constituted the hard core of militant trade union leadership in Singapore and belonged to the extremist section of the P. A. P. The Chief Minister related the Government action with the constitutional development of Singapore and declared :

112 *Colony of Singapore Annual Report 1956*, p. 6.

113 *Singapore Chinese Middle School Students' Union*, Cmd. 53 of 1956 (Singapore, 1956).

The fight against colonialism cannot be separated from the fight against subversion. In fact, to win the one we must also win the other. The stronger we are internally, the stronger will be our case in the next constitutional talks.¹¹⁴

In early 1957, the Factory and Shop Workers' Union was dissolved because it could not satisfactorily explain its activities before and during the riots. The Union leadership also could not explain the alleged mismanagement of the Union funds.¹¹⁵ In August 1957, the Government took further action against left-wing leaders in the P. A. P. following their attempt to capture the leadership of the Party. They included five members of the newly-elected Central Executive Committee of the P. A. P., eleven officials of the P. A. P. branches and fifteen trade union leaders. In a White Paper published after the arrests, the Government described the activities of the Communist Party in Singapore and how it had tried to penetrate other political parties, trade unions and cultural organizations.¹¹⁶

The period witnessed the growth of close understanding and friendly co-operation between Lim Yew Hock and Tunku Abdul Rahman. During the riots in October 1956 the Federation police was requisitioned to the assistance of Singapore police force. Though the Federation Government still continued to oppose merger, it kept up its interests in the political developments in the Colony. The high watermark in Singapore-Malaya relations was reached when the Federation Government agreed to become a member of the Internal Security Council. It broke the constitutional deadlock and paved the way for Singapore to become a self-governing state.

The Second Constitutional Conference was held in London in March-April 1957, and it successfully reached an agreement on

114 *Colony of Singapore Annual Report 1956*, p. 13.

115 Josey, n. 65, pp. 11-13.

116 *The Communist Threat in Singapore*, Cmd. 33 of 1957 (Singapore, 1957).

11 April 1957. Under the new Agreement¹¹⁷ Singapore was to become a self-governing state. The Queen would be represented by a Malayan with the title of Yang-di-pertuan Negara. The U. K. Government would be represented by a Commissioner in Singapore. A Singapore citizenship was to be created. There would be a completely elected Legislative Assembly of fifty-one members and a Cabinet form of government.

The most important part of the Constitutional Agreement, from the point of view of Singapore-Malaya relations, was the provision for the creation of an Internal Security Council. It was to consist of seven members; the Prime Minister and two other Ministers of Singapore; the U. K. Commissioner and two other U. K. members and one Minister from the Federation of Malaya to be nominated by the Federation Government. The U. K. Commissioner was to be the Chairman of the Internal Security Council. The objects and functions of the Council were:

1. to consult on all questions of policy relating to the maintenance of public safety and public order;
2. to maintain the efficiency of all organs of the Singapore Government concerned with internal security; and
3. to ensure equal access by both Governments to the services of these organs and to all information at their disposal.¹¹⁸

The functions and composition of the Internal Security Council, in which the Federation Government had the decisive vote, clearly suited the interests of Singapore and British governments. The Government of Singapore was convinced that Britain, because of its strategic and Commonwealth interests, would not hand over full powers of internal security to an elected government. In the Internal Security Council, the British Government would be in a minority and it could be out-voted with the co-operation of the Federation representative. The new constitutional arrangement

117 *Report of the Singapore Constitutional Conference held in London in March and April 1957*, Misc 2 of 1957 (Singapore, 1957).

118 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

also secured the commitment of the Federation leaders in the political destiny of Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew rightly described the agreement as "a right step towards merger". He added: "If Singapore and the Federation agreed ... then the British Government is out-voted every time in the Internal Security Council...".¹¹⁹ He also stated "If we are anybody's stooge, we will be the stooge of the Federation Government; and if we are honest about joining the Federation as a member - 11 States plus us, twelve - then the Federation must have the last word over Singapore".¹²⁰

The Constitutional Agreement also suited the interests of the United Kingdom. Not only did it guarantee its paramount military and strategic interests in the area, it also retained the ultimate right to suspend the Constitution in case of emergency. The Colonial Office was aware that, if it stood as a stumbling block in the constitutional progress of Singapore, it would only strengthen the forces of subversion. In the Internal Security Council, even though the U K. government was in a minority, the Colonial Office was assured of the fact that in matters concerning subversive activities, it could always rely on the support of the anti-Communist Federation Government.

The British Government made it clear that the proposed constitutional arrangement was dependent upon a provision being made to ensure that persons "known to have been engaged in subversive activity should not be eligible for election to the first Legislative Assembly of the new State of Singapore". In the opinion of the British Government, "some temporary restriction of this kind was essential to safeguard the orderly development of democratic government in Singapore against the danger of Communist subversion".¹²¹ It is probable that the members of the Singapore delegation were not unhappy with this provision, but they did not

119 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 3, 27 April 1957, col 1755.

120 *Ibid.*, col. 1746.

121 *Report of the Singapore Constitutional Conference*, n. 117, p. 8.

want to take the risk of supporting it in the open, because they would be discredited as pro-colonial by the people of Singapore.¹²² The Singapore delegation, therefore, "took note with regret" the intention of the British Government.¹²³

It was also agreed upon by both the Governments that the new constitutional arrangement would come into being after an election to the Singapore Legislative Assembly in which the newly-registered citizens would take part.

It was the declared objective of all political parties in Singapore that Singapore should merge with the Federation of Malaya. Reference has already been made to the futile attempts made by Singapore leaders to have the constitutional future of the two territories decided simultaneously. Tunku Abdul Rahman and other leaders in the Federation remained firmly opposed to the idea of merger.¹²⁴ The Federation of Malaya was a multiracial state and its political system was dependent on the balance of power between the Malays and the non-Malays. If Singapore was merged, it would upset the racial balance in the Federation by creating a situation in which the Chinese would outnumber the Malays.¹²⁵

122 Gullick, n. 13, p. 129. Similar views are also expressed by Saul Rose, *Britain and South-East Asia* (London, 1962), p. 141.

123 *Report of the Singapore Constitutional Conference*, n. 117, p. 8.

124 *Straits Budget*, 20 January 1955, 27 January 1955, 4 August 1955, 11 August 1955, 26 January 1956, 29 March 1956, 28 June 1956, 13 December 1956, 17 January 1957 and 24 January 1957.

125 The following table gives the population of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya in 1957 and the racial composition if the two territories were merged together:

	Total	Chinese	%	Malay- sians	%	Indians & Pakis- tanis	%	Others	%
Singapore	1,445,929	1,090,596	75.4	197,069	13.6	124,084	8.6	34,190	2.4
Federa- tion of Malaya	6,278,763	2,332,936	37.1	3,126,706	49.8	695,985	11.5	123,136	2.0
Total	7,724,692	3,423,532	44.3	3,323,775	43.0	820,069	10.6	157,326	2.0

Equally important from the point of view of the leaders of the Federation, was the fact that a large section of the Chinese population in Singapore looked for inspiration to Communist China. The inclusion of Singapore with many people who, in the words of Tunku Abdul Rahman, "have no interest either in Singapore or Malaya" would strengthen the forces of Chinese chauvinism and pose a new danger to the Federation.¹²⁶ Early in 1957, Tunku Abdul Rahman said that he did not think there was "any possibility of a merger between the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore."¹²⁷ The growth of left-wing student and trade union movement in Singapore and the role of the subversive forces in fomenting the Singapore riots further strengthened the view of the Federation leaders that there was no sense in adding to their own troubles. Owing to the Emergency, they were already conscious of the harm that could be done by a handful of organized Communists. "With due respect to the Colony" Tunku Abdul Rahman said, "making her a unit of the Federation would create a very big problem for me".¹²⁸ The outbreak of communal riots in Penang in January 1957, in which many people were killed and injured, highlighted to the Alliance leaders the explosive possibilities of inter-racial strife which would definitely be accentuated if Singapore were included in the Federation.

Even though the Federation Government continued to oppose all suggestions of merger it was deeply concerned with the political developments in Singapore. As the political stability of Singapore was vital to security and peace in the Federation, the

126 *Straits Budget*, 26 January 1956. In January 1956 Tunku Abdul Rahman after rejecting the idea of union "on terms of equality" said that Singapore can come in "as a unit of the Federation" so that the Federation Government "could have control in the affairs of Singapore". This was probably intended to discourage Singapore politicians and to stop them from pursuing the idea of merger. *Ibid.*

127 *Ibid.*, 17 January 1957.

128 *Ibid.*, 24 January 1957.

Federation Government was willing to co-operate in all spheres, short of merger. As Tunku Abdul Rahman said :

The Federation will go all out to help Singapore in any way we can ... We are in such proximity that anything that happens in Singapore can happen to the Federation. For that reason we give them our co-operation should they need it.¹²⁹

The decision of the Federation Government to become a member of the Internal Security Council marks a clear landmark in the Singapore-Malaya relations after the second world war. It was a clear evidence of the fact that the independent Federation of Malaya would play a vital role in the political evolution of Singapore. The proposed constitutional set-up was an ideal arrangement from the point of view of the security interests of the Federation. So long as the constitutional arrangement continued, the Federation Government, because of its membership in the Internal Security Council, would have access to all information affecting the internal security of Singapore and have also the decisive vote in any decision pertaining to internal security. But what the Federation leaders did not foresee in 1957 was that they would inevitably become much more involved in the political destiny of Singapore in the years to come.

3. FERMENT IN SINGAPORE

POLITICS - 1957-1961

The political evolution of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore followed different courses after the second world war. On 31 August 1957, Malaya became an independent country within the British Commonwealth. Singapore, on the other hand, was to become the State of Singapore in 1959 with a considerable degree of self-government but remaining basically a British colony.

As pointed out in the last chapter, it was the objective of all political parties in Singapore that it should achieve independence only through merger with the Federation.¹ In 1957 it was obvious that while the Federation Government was eager to maintain and develop friendly relations,² there was no immediate prospect of a

- 1 In a congratulatory message to the Federal Legislative Council on the occasion of the Federation of Malaya's independence, the members of the Singapore Legislative Assembly proclaimed: "...it is the prime interest of both peoples to merge into a single political unit within which as one people with one outlook and purpose all may share the joy and fruits of that happy state of Merdeka. We of Singapore look forward to that day when our strength will be added to your strength and our separation will be ended and we can proudly go forward together to make our joint contribution in human welfare, economic prosperity and political strength to the great and distinctive service of Asia to the modern world". Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol 4, 21 August 1957, col. 2493.
- 2 In his address to the first meeting of the Legislative Council after Federation of Malaya became independent, the Yang di Pertuan Agong said, "My Government will enter into

union of the two territories and Singapore would have to continue as a self-governing state till such time as the attitude of the Federation leaders changed.

On 27 May 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Federation Prime Minister, proposed a political union of the Federation of Malaya, Colony of Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. The Tunku was convinced that if the political developments in Singapore remained unchecked they would pose a threat to the stability and security of the Federation.

In this chapter an attempt would be made to trace the momentous political developments in Singapore and how they radically changed the island's relations with the Federation.

The new Constitution, whose general features were laid down in the 1957 Constitutional Conference, was confirmed in detailed talks held by the All Party Delegation with the British Government in May 1958. The British Government insisted on and unilaterally imposed the provision that those detained under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance (P. P. S. O.) would not be allowed to stand for election to the first Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution.³ The enabling Bill to give legal

those discussions with sympathy towards the special problems of Singapore and with understanding of the difficulties which face the Government. The policies adopted by the Alliance Government during the last two years have proved to be satisfactory and it is not proposed to make changes for changes sake alone." Federation on Malaya, *Legislative Council Debates*, 3 September 1957, col. 3241.

- 3 Speaking in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox Boyd, explained that the ban would cover the whole term of the first Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution. "At the recent talks, the Singapore delegation repeated its objection and I maintained my opinion that this temporary restriction is essential to safeguard the orderly development of democratic government in Singapore against the danger of Communist subversion." He further said that while the Constitution "was negotiated" the particular

sanction to the new Constitution was introduced in the House of Commons on 17 June 1958 and received Royal assent on 1 August 1958.

The formal agreement of the Government of the Federation of Malaya to participate in the Internal Security Council was included in an Exchange of Letters between the Government of U.K. and the Government of the Federation of Malaya.⁴ The Federation Government agreed to appoint a Minister to be the member of the Internal Security Council and an alternate member when the Minister was unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that the Federation Government would have "access to all information" relating to the Internal Security of Singapore. The Federation Government agreed to give "reasonable period of notice" to the Singapore Government and the U.K. Government, should it intend to withdraw its representative from the Internal Security Council. The Exchange of Letters also noted the fact that the understanding between the two Governments "has the Concurrence of the members of the Singapore All-Party Delegation" to the Constitutional Conference.⁵

The political developments in Singapore immediately after 1957 were mainly concerned with the implementation of constitutional proposals and the introduction of self-government. Many of these provisions were different from the policies pursued by the Federation Government. This was clearly noticeable on such vital issues as citizenship, Malay rights, language and education. Since it had an important bearing on the relations of Singapore

provision "was not negotiated, but was imposed by myself on behalf of the British Government". U. K. *House of Commons*, vol. 589, 17 June 1958, cols. 878-9.

4 *Exchange of Letters between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the Federation of Malaya about the Representation of the Government of the Federation of Malaya on the Internal Security Council to be Established under Part VII of the Singapore (Constitution) Order-in-Council 1958*, Cmd. 620, (London 1958).

5 *Ibid*

with the Federation of Malaya their salient features are discussed below.

The introduction of Singapore citizenship was the most important step taken by the Singapore Government during this period. It enabled the vast majority of the immigrant population of the city to become citizens of Singapore. Under the provisions of the Citizenship Ordinance 1957⁶, citizenship was conferred automatically on any person born in Singapore. Citizenship by registration was open to two groups. First, citizens of the U. K. and the Colonies, those born in the Federation of Malaya or the Borneo territories, and the citizens of Commonwealth countries with which there was reciprocal recognition of citizenship, were eligible, if of good character, for citizenship after two years of residence and on taking an oath of allegiance to the new Constitution. Secondly, all others, if of good character, were eligible for citizenship after eight years of residence, on taking an oath of loyalty and on renouncing all other loyalties. There was no language qualification for the acquisition of citizenship.

The qualifications described above were very liberal and naturally differed from the citizenship provisions of the Federation of Malaya which, as pointed out in the last chapter, were weighted in favour of the Malays and were disadvantageous to the non-Malays. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Lee Kuan Yew pointed out the difficulties that would crop up if the Federation Government revised its stand on merger:

If we are honest about merger and the building of one nation, when we draw up our citizenship laws, we must see where it is going to dovetail into the Federation citizenship laws because the moment the principle of merger is accepted we have to discuss the conditions for it. One of the first conditions that would have to be settled is : who are the citizens of the Federation of Malaya? If we draw up a list of rules making all and sundry citizens of Singapore in a way which the Federation Government will later find

6 *Singapore Citizenship Ordinance 1957 (No. 35 of 1957).*

obnoxious and unacceptable, we will be placing ourselves in the most difficult position of having to scrap all those who have acquired Singapore citizenship and make them apply anew for Federation citizenship.⁷

These citizenship provisions were amended by the P. A. P. Government in 1960. The amendment eliminated the favourable position of the citizens of the U. K. and the Colonies in acquiring Singapore citizenship and in retaining their former citizenship. It was also provided that the period of qualifying residence should be the same for all and they should renounce all other allegiances.⁸

Unlike the Federation of Malaya where the rights and privileges of the Malays were entrenched in the Constitution, in Singapore, the principle of racial equality continued to be strictly adhered to. It is interesting to note that on the eve of the Constitutional talks in 1957 the Singapore U. M. N. O. demanded that Malays should be accorded special rights and privileges in Singapore also.⁹ The All Party Conference rejected this demand and reiterated the principle of racial equality. But in order to assuage the fears of the minorities, especially the Malays, it was agreed that the Constitutional Agreement should specifically state that it will be the duty of the Singapore Government to protect the political, economic, social and cultural interests of the Malays and other minorities domiciled in Singapore.¹⁰ The demand of the

7 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 4, 11 September 1957, col. 2575.

8 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1960*, p. 4.

9 Among the important demands of the U. M. N. O. were: The Governor-General should be a Malay; Malay should be the Official Language within ten years; Islam should be the Official Religion of Singapore; five-eighths of all Government posts should be reserved to Malays; only those born in the Federation, Singapore and the Borneo territories should be eligible for citizenship and finally fluency in Malay should be a requirement for citizenship. *Colony of Singapore Annual Report 1957*, p. 2.

10 The Report of the Constitutional Conference stated:

13 (b) Malay and minority interests

Singapore Indian Congress that constitutional provisions should be made for the representation of minorities in the Legislative Assembly was also rejected.¹¹

Though it was the declared objective of both the Singapore and the Federation Governments to foster and promote Malayan consciousness, the approaches of the two Governments differed widely. In Singapore even though Malay was recognized as the National Language in 1959, equal treatment was given to all the four languages – English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. From 1959, multilingual facilities were introduced in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. In the Federation, on the other hand, Malayan consciousness and nationalism were sought to be built around the Malay Language. The Constitution of Malaya provided that Malay would be the National Language and the sole Official Language after 1967 unless otherwise provided for by the Parlia-

The following provisions for the protection of Malay and minority interests in Singapore should be included in the Constitution :-

(i) In the preamble :

It shall be the responsibility of the Government of Singapore constantly to care for the interests of racial and religious minorities in Singapore. In particular, it shall be the deliberate and conscious policy of the Government of Singapore at all times to recognize the special position of the Malays, who are the indigenous people of the island and are in most need of assistance, and accordingly, it shall be the responsibility of the Government of Singapore to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote their political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests and the Malay language

(ii) In the interpretation clause :

In the interpretation of this Constitution, full regard shall be had to the above paragraph of the preamble (which relates to the special position of Malays and the interests of other minorities). Government of Singapore, *Report of the Singapore Constitutional Conference held in London in March and April 1957*, Mis. 2 of 1957 (Singapore, 1957), pp. 2-3.

11 *Colony of Singapore Annual Report 1958*, p. 3.

ment. In the Legislative Assembly there was no multilingualism and only Malay and English could be used. Having given Malay an exalted status the Federation Government naturally gave greater encouragement to the popularization of the Malay language than what was done in Singapore.

The educational systems of the two states also followed dissimilar lines.¹² The Singapore Government evolved a common syllabus for all schools and gave equal treatment and encouragement to all the four language streams – English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. The Government provided equal opportunities for the products of all schools in government service. A candidate could also take public examinations in any of the four languages.

The establishment of the Nanyang University in Singapore in 1956, the only University in Southeast Asia where the Chinese language was used as the medium of instruction in higher education, was a historic landmark in the development of Chinese language and education. Financed during the early years entirely by private Chinese funds the University suffered many drawbacks like unqualified staff and student indiscipline which led inevitably to poor academic standards.¹³ The University thus perpetuated at a higher level the defects and drawbacks of the Chinese Middle Schools from which it drew its students. During the early years, both the Federation and the Singapore Governments refused to recognise the degrees conferred by the Nanyang University as qualifications for entering the Civil Service. However, after the P.A.P. assumed power it has made vigorous efforts to improve the academic standards and root out student indiscipline. The University gets

12 For good accounts of the problems of education, see R.H.K. Wong, "Education and Problems of Nationhood", in Wang Gungwu, ed., *Malaysia* (London, 1964), pp. 199-209 and J.M. Gullick, *Malaya* (London, 1963) pp. 202-13.

13 For an account of the Nanyang University and the problems of Chinese education, see Von Der Kroef, "Nanyang University and the Dilemmas of Overseas Chinese Education", *China Quarterly* (London,) no. 20, October-December 1964, pp. 96-127.

Government assistance, its curriculum has been standardized and its graduates are permitted to enter the Singapore Government service.

The Federation Government followed a different pattern altogether. While the Government provided assistance to primary schools in all the four languages, from the secondary stage only those schools where the major part of the instruction was in Malay or English were given assistance. Malay language was made a compulsory subject in all schools in Malaya. Public examinations were held only in English and Malay. Even though a large number of students in Nanyang University hailed from the Federation of Malaya the Government did not recognise the degrees conferred by the Nanyang University.

The Growth and Development of the P. A. P.

The political scene in Singapore from 1957 was marked by two important features: the growing unpopularity and political decline of the Labour Front Government and the increasing confidence and rapid growth of the People's Action Party (P. A. P.). The Labour Front (L. F.) which came to power in 1955 did not come to grips with, nor offer any solution to, the major problems affecting Singapore—increasing unemployment, lack of housing accommodation and extremely unsatisfactory conditions of social services. But its most important failure was its inability to understand the interplay of nationalism and communism among the Chinese-educated in Singapore. The strong measures adopted by Lim Yew Hock against subversive elements in the trade unions and Chinese schools were considered by the Chinese-educated as an attack on Chinese culture. Further the L. F. was a divided house and its history was characterized by frequent resignations and squabbles within the Party. The resignation of David Marshall, followed by that of Francis Thomas, from the Government considerably dissipated its strength. There were also serious charges of corruption against some Cabinet Ministers. The Party, due to these reasons, never gained the goodwill and support of the majority of Singapore population.

The political destiny of Singapore and its relations with the Federation of Malaya were to a large extent determined by the activities of the P. A. P. The history of the Party from its very inception has been characterised by a bitter intra-party struggle between its moderate and leftist factions.¹⁴ The proposal for Malaysia in May 1961 finally brought the conflict into the open, led to the break-up of the Party and the emergence of the Barisan Sosialis.

The moderate wing of the Party has been led by Lee Kuan Yew and other English-educated leaders. Except for a brief interval in 1957 they have always held the key positions in the Party hierarchy and had control over the Central Executive Committee, the chief policy making organ of the Party. In the Legislative Assembly also, where the P. A. P. provided the most effective opposition to the Government, it was Lee Kuan Yew who was the leader and spokesman for the Party.¹⁵ The other important leaders of the moderate group included Dr. Toh Chin Chye, S. Rajaratnam, K. M. Byrne and Dr. Goh Keng Swee.¹⁶

The leadership of the leftist faction came from the militant trade unions. The most popular leader of this group was Lim Chin Siong. Closely associated with him were other left-wing leaders like Devan Nair, Fong Swee Suan, Jamith Singh, James Puthu-

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- 14 For an analytical account of the factional struggle within the P. A. P., see C. Paul Bradley, "Leftist Fissures in Singapore Politics", *The Western Political Quarterly* (Salt Lake City, Utah), vol. 18, pp. 292-308.
- 15 Lim Chin Siong was also a member of the Singapore Legislative Assembly from 1955 to 1959. But he was not sufficiently proficient in English to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly. Moreover, he was detained in 1956, and was absent for the major part of the tenure of the Assembly.
- 16 Both K. M. Byrne and Goh Keng Swee were civil servants. They resigned from Government service on the eve of the 1959 elections to contest as P. A. P. candidates. Both of them, however, had been members of the P. A. P. from 1954. "Two More Fighters For The Party". *Petir* (Singapore) vol. I, July 1958.

cheary and S. Woodhull.¹⁷ They were extremely popular among the workers and students, from whom the P. A. P. derived its chief support. When the Party was formed both Devan Nair and Lim Chin Siong did not stand for elections to the Central Executive Committee, after declaring their intention to concentrate on trade union activities.¹⁸ But in 1956, both of them were elected to the Central Executive Committee, with Lim Chin Siong polling the highest number of votes.¹⁹ Lim Chin Siong was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General of the Party.²⁰

Successive governments in Singapore have alleged that Lim Chin Siong was the open front leader of the Malayan Communist Party and the leftist faction was following the well known "United Front" line.²¹ In a broadcast over Radio Singapore in 1961 Lee Kuan Yew described his erstwhile colleague as follows :

Lim was the most important Open Front leader the M.C.P. had built up. By 1955 he knew that I knew this. He is

17 It must be pointed out that the factional groupings within the P. A. P. has not always remained fixed. There had been shifts in alignments, the most notable among them being Devan Nair. Devan Nair, a close associate of Lim Chin Siong, during the early years of the Party, broke away from the leftists before 1959 and joined the ranks of the moderates.

18 Saul Rose, *Socialism in Southern Asia* (London, 1959) p. 230.

19 The popularity of the leftist leaders among Party members was evident in the results of the elections to the Party's Central Executive Committee in July 1956. Among the five, who received the largest number of votes, three belonged to the leftist group.

1. Lim Chin Siong (Lef.)	— 1,537
2. Lee Kuan Yew (Mod.)	— 1,488
3. Dr. Toh Chin Chye (Mod.)	— 1,409
4. Devan Nair (Lef.)	— 1,319
5. T T. Rajah (Lef.)	— 1,006

Straits Budget, 12 July 1956.

20 Rose, n. 18, p. 233.

21 Lee Kuan Yew, *Battle for Merger* (Singapore, n.d.) pp. 2,8; Government of Singapore, *The Communist Threat To Singapore*, Legislative Assembly Sessional Paper. Cmd. 33 of 1957 (Singapore, 1957).

a friendly and quiet person. He is prepared to devote his whole life to working for the creation of a Communist Malaya. But once you resist and fight the Communist cause, then you can expect all that personal friendship to mean nothing in the ruthless and relentless struggle for supremacy.²²

Lim Chin Siong, on his part, has frequently denied his connection with the M. C. P. In October 1955, Lim declared:

I am not a Communist or a Communist sympathiser. But I am also not an anti-Communist I stand uncompromisingly for independence from any foreign control by means of peaceful and constitutional methods. Surely this does not make me a Communist or Communist sympathiser.²³

In a letter to the Editor in the *Straits Times*, in July 1961, Lim Chin Siong again wrote, "Let me make it clear, once and for all, that I am not a Communist or a Communist-front man or for that matter anybody's front-man."²⁴

After the M.C.P. was banned, it was but natural for the Communists and pro-Communists to infiltrate into trade unions, cultural organizations and political parties to carry out their activities. As the most radical party in the political spectrum of Singapore the P. A. P. attracted not only many of them, but also many left-wing intellectuals into its fold. The dilemma which faced a left-wing intellectual under a colonial set-up like that of Malaya and Singapore is very well illustrated by James Puthuchearry in a letter to Lee Kuan Yew while in prison:

Though I had rejected some of what were considered basic tenets, and was critical of Communist regimentation, I was unable to reject their Weltanschauung. One is always drawn by the desire to fight colonialism and the urge to join up with those who are fighting hardest is

22 Ibid, p. 27.

23 *Straits Budget*, 6 October, 1955.

24 *Straits Times*, 31 July, 1961.

irresistible... The choice between co-operating with the Communists or not, is not a simple choice between good and evil, or in neutral terms between black and white... But as I was not completely a social democrat when I was outside, the problem of choice never presented itself with any force. The best way to describe my political position of that time would be probably to say that I was more a social democrat than a Communist or was it the other way round?²⁵

In the absence of independent evidence, it is difficult to state with certainty, whether Lim Chin Siong and his leftist colleagues were working at the behest of the M. C. P. or not. The emergence of China as a powerful country, after centuries of foreign domination, constituted an attraction for those whose education and outlook were predominantly Chinese. The speeches and activities of the leftist leaders were specifically designed to arouse and exploit the anti-colonial and nationalist feelings of the Chinese-educated people. It is reasonable to surmise that the leftist faction was a conglomeration of Communists, fellow travellers, Chinese nationalists, militant trade union leaders and left-wing intellectuals.

If the two factions were able to work together and their differences remained concealed from the public it was because of the fact that each of them believed that it was making use of the other.²⁶ Without the support of Lim Chin Siong and other popular leftist leaders the P. A. P. could never have become a mass party in Singapore. Likewise if the Party was not led by moderate leaders like Lee Kuan Yew and Toh Chin Chye it would have been proscribed by the British government. The cementing factor between the two factions was their common desire to put an end to British rule in Malaya.

The differences between the moderate and the leftist factions were revealed in the days immediately after David Marshall assumed power as Chief Minister of Singapore. While the moderate leaders emphasised constitutional means for the attainment of Party

25 James Puthuchery's "Statement of Political Belief" Appendix 11, in Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, pp. 196-203.

objectives, the leftists laid equal emphasis on extra-parliamentary methods like strikes and agitations. As pointed out earlier, the strike in the Hock Lee Bus Company was cleverly exploited by the leftist leaders. Students joined the fray and there were violent riots in the city. With an eye to consolidate their hold on the Singapore public the leftists kept up their propaganda against the British Government. Evidences which have come to light during recent years suggest that the moderates adopted a different strategy altogether. In order to retain public support they stood by their extremist colleagues and criticised the British government. But in fact they wanted the Marshall government to take stringent action against the leftists. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly in 1962, Dr. Goh Keng Swee, who was a colonial official during this period, declared:

I think I have established the point that Mr. Marshall when he was Chief Minister was fully aware that it was the Communists who were manipulating the Trade Unions and Middle School students.....The Hock Lee riots that took place in May 1955 was a classic example of a Communist united front between the workers and students.²⁷

In his scholarly work on the P. A. P., Thomas Bellows cites a memorandum which was submitted by Dr. Goh Keng Swee. In this memorandum Dr. Goh characterised David Marshall's action during this period "as feeble and lamentable in the extreme". According to Dr. Goh, the Special Branch had recommended three hundred detentions, whereas Marshall "refused to accept this professional advice" and detained only seven.²⁸

Uneasy and bitter about the moderate intentions, the leftists began to make attempts to dislodge the moderates from positions of

26 Thomas J. Bellows, "The Singapore Party System" *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 8, pp. 122-38.

27 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol 18, 3 July 1962.

28 T. J. S. George, *Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore* (London, 1973), p. 41.

power and gain control of the Party. After the Party conference in 1956 they clamoured for more powers to Party branches and greater intra-party democracy. James Puthuchery, the brilliant ideologue of the leftists, was their chief spokesman in the sub-committee appointed by the Party to redraft the constitution. Puthuchery suggested a radical change in the method of election to the Central Executive Council. Instead of direct election he proposed that the Party branches should nominate members to the Central Executive Council. As most of the Party branches were controlled by the leftists this would enable them to send more of their representatives to the higher echelons of the Party. The moderates naturally opposed the suggested change. But unfortunately for the leftists, most of their important leaders were arrested by the Lim Yew Hock government. Consequently they could not bring about any changes in the Party constitution.

The differences between the moderates and the leftists were once again evident during the Second Constitutional Conference in London. As pointed out in the last chapter, Lee Kuan Yew, as the P. A. P. representative in the All Party Delegation, approved the constitutional agreement and characterised it as a right step in the objective of the Party, viz. independence through merger with the Federation. But the leftist leaders were bitter about some of the important provisions of the Agreement. The composition of the Internal Security Council in which the anti-communist Federation government had the decisive vote and the provision that those persons detained under the P. P. S. O. should not be eligible to participate in the elections were definitely detrimental to their interests. This naturally meant that none of the important leaders of the leftist faction could contest the elections to the Legislative Assembly. The leftists believed, with some justification, that the provision was deliberately made with the connivance of Lee Kuan Yew. Two years later, in fact, the Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock "let the cat out of the bag" and declared in the Legislative Assembly that Lee Kuan Yew was one of the brains behind this anti-Communist measure:

The truth shall now be told. If one side can play dirty and begin to be dirty. I shall play the same game and do it too and let the country and the world and God decide. The subversive clause was put in as a result of the Hon. Member (Lee Kuan Yew) and I seeing the Secretary of State for Colonies.²⁹

Unhappy with the outcome of the Constitutional Conference the supporters of the leftists started a campaign among the Party members to repudiate the mandate given to Lee Kuan Yew in the Constitutional Conference.³⁰

When the report of the Constitutional Conference was debated in the Legislative Assembly, it was bitterly criticised by David Marshall. The moderate leaders have alleged that the leftist faction, dissatisfied with the Constitutional Agreement, had encouraged David Marshall to champion their cause and attack the Constitutional Agreement.³¹ Marshall characterized the Agreement as a "fraudulent legal device" designed to retain "Singapore as a colony." It gave Singapore only a few "trappings of power." He doubted popular support for it and called for an immediate general election on the issue.³² In order to vindicate the stand of the P. A. P. and to prove that the Agreement had popular support Lee Kuan Yew resigned his seat from the Legislative Assembly and challenged David Marshall to contest the by-election from the Tanjong Pagar constituency.³³ Marshall, however, did not accept the challenge of Lee Kuan Yew. He resigned his seat from the Legislative Assembly and "retired" from politics.

29 Lee Kuan Yew immediately interrupted the proceedings of the House and the Speaker declared that the whole matter was irrelevant to the discussion at hand. Quoted in George, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

30 "Open Conspiracy", *P. A. P. 6th Anniversary Celebration Souvenir* (Singapore, 1960), pp. 11-30.

31 *Ibid.*

32 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 3, 26 April 1957, cols. 1673-1712, and 27 April 1957, cols. 1715-38.

33 *Ibid.*, cols. 1765-68.

Lee Kuan Yew contested the Tanjong Pagar by-election on the issue of the Party's stand in the constitutional talks and its objective of Independent Democratic Malaya by constitutional means. He won the seat by a majority of 3,392 votes over his Liberal Socialist³⁴ and Independent rivals³⁵. The Cairnhill seat which had fallen vacant by David Marshall's resignation, was won by the Liberal Socialist candidate³⁶ by a majority of 1,061 votes over his next rival, an independent candidate.³⁷

The intra-Party struggle in the P. A. P. came out into the open at the 4th Annual Conference in August 1957, where its policies were redefined and a new Central Executive Committee was elected. The leftists made a determined attempt to capture the majority in the Central Executive Committee. Their plan seemed to have been to accept the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew and Toh Chin Chye, convinced that with a majority in the Central Executive Committee they would be able to compel the Party leadership to take a more radical line. The Conference, by an overwhelming majority, accepted the resolution moved by Lee Kuan Yew to add "non-Communist" to the Party's long term objective of creating an

34 The Liberal Socialist Party was formed in January 1956 when the Progressive Party and the Democrats formally merged together. The manifesto of the Party stated that it subscribed to the principles of Liberal Socialism and stood for the attainment of independence in the shortest possible time. *Asian Recorder* (New Delhi), 14-20 January 1956, pp. 630-1.

35 Lee Kuan Yew (P. A. P.)	—	4,707
Chong Wee Ling (Lib. Soc.)	—	1,315
C. H. Koh (Ind.)	—	887

Straits Times, 30 June 1957.

36 Soh Ghee Soon (Lib. Soc.)	—	2,342
Goh Kong Beng (Ind.)	—	1,281
Keng Ban Ee (L. F.)	—	1,118
Tengku Muda bin Mahmud (S. M. U.)	—	983
M. A. Majid (Ind.)	—	91

Ibid

37 The result of the Cairnhill election revealed the extent to which the Labour Front had alienated from the people. Its candidate polled only 1,118 votes and was third on the list.

"Independent Democratic Socialist Malaya".³⁸ Lee Kuan Yew appealed to the delegates to re-elect en bloc to the Central Executive Committee, the eight outgoing officials, who were closely associated with the Party's policy making.³⁹ But out of the eight, only five were elected. Among those defeated were Ong Eng Guan, the Treasurer of the Party, Inche Haron bin Kassim, the Vice-Chairman of the Party and Inche Ismail Rahim, another important leader.⁴⁰

The result of the election was a clear defeat for Lee Kuan Yew and other moderate leaders. They, therefore, refused to accept office. The moderate leaders felt that if they had accepted office, they would have lent cover to the pro-Communists and the Party would not have got the necessary backing to carry out its non-Communist programme.⁴¹ This was not expected by the leftists and they were compelled to take over the leadership of the Party. T. T. Rajah became the Secretary General and Tan Chong Kin became the Chairman.

The leftists did not control the Party for long. The Singapore Government once again came to the rescue of the moderate leaders. At the end of August 1957 the Government arrested many left-wing leaders under the P. P. S. O. It included all the office bearers of the newly elected Central Executive Committee (except T. T. Rajah, the Secretary General) eleven officials of the P. A. P. branches, fifteen trade union leaders and four left-wing journalists. The White Paper published by the Government immediately after the arrests stated that the M. C. P. had tried to infiltrate into political and cultural organisations in Singapore, especially the P. A. P.⁴² In the Legislative Assembly Lee Kuan Yew moved a resolution "deploring the inaccuracies contained in the White Paper".

38 *Straits Budget*, 8 August, 1957

39 *Ibid*

40 The moderates have alleged that the leftists got hold of admission cards and packed the Conference with "pro-Communist non-members" to get their candidates elected, n. 30.

41 *Ibid*.

42 *The Communist Threat to Singapore*, n. 21.

He charged that the Government made the arrests to prevent a take-over of Trade Union Congress by the leftists. He agreed that there was a "dissident faction" in the P. A. P., but claimed that they were successfully fighting it. He further said that they could not pretend that their Party "was impervious to communist penetration", but pointed out that the same held true to the L. F. also.

It is interesting to note that the Resolution moved by Lee Kuan Yew did not demand the release of the arrested leaders. Nor did Lee Kuan Yew make a categorical declaration whether the arrested leaders were Communists or not. In the course of his speech, Lee Kuan Yew said:

The Chief Minister exploited the temporary difficulties of the P. A. P. We of the P. A. P. have no Special Branch. Whether a person is a Communist or Communist agent, only he knows and God knows. Between his conscience and God, of course lies the Special Branch and it is upto them to show that these men whom they have arrested are Communists or Communist agents.⁴³

Whatever may be the motives of the arrests, the ultimate beneficiaries were Lee Kuan Yew and his moderate colleagues. Immediately after assuming leadership of the Party they took steps to make sure that the leftists did not capture the Party again. The Party Constitution was amended and two types of memberships were created, namely the Ordinary Members and Cadre Members.⁴⁴ Only Cadre Members were eligible to vote in the election to the Central Executive Committee and occupy important positions in the Party and stand for election as Party candidates. By this important amendment the moderate leaders entrenched themselves in the Party hierarchy and ensured permanent majority for themselves both among the Cadre Members and in the Central Executive Committee. Answering criticisms that the whole procedure was a negation of

43 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 4, 12 September 1957, cols. 2597-606 and 2628-36.

44 For the procedure adopted by the Party, see "On the Question of the Selection of the Cadres", *Petir*, Vol. 3, 14 July 1960. See also *Straits Budget*, 3 December 1958.

intra-party democracy Lee Kuan Yew said that this was intended to thwart Communist attempts to capture the Party. He compared the system with the institution of Papacy. "It can be compared if you like to the Pope and the Pontiffs. The Cardinals appoint the Pope; the Pope appoints the Cardinals".⁴⁵

The moderate leaders also began to restate the non-Communist principles of the Party in clear and unambiguous terms. In a clear warning to the pro-Communist elements the Party Executive said :

Let those who talk glibly about armed revolution consider carefully the consequences of armed revolution, both to themselves and to their compatriots. If they are still convinced that the only way is armed revolution, let them leave our Party, go across the Johore Causeway, and take up arms in the Malayan Jungle.⁴⁶

P. A. P. Analysis of the Problems of Merger

In another important policy statement the Party Executive elaborated its stand on merger.⁴⁷ It pointed out that a new political situation had emerged after the Independence of Malaya. In this new phase after Merdeka, it was necessary to take stock of the situation and clarify the aims and objectives of the Party. In the opinion of the Party leaders the British Government opposed merger "because they envisaged a day when they would have to give up the Federation and have Singapore as an island fortress to which they could withdraw and which they maintain as an outpost of their empire".⁴⁸ But the British Government could be compelled to revise its stand if the leaders of the Federation and Singapore wanted a merger of the two territories.

45 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 14, 20/21 July 1961, col. 1845.

46 "An Independent, Democratic, Non-Communist Socialist Malaya", *Petir*, Vol. 1, October 1957.

47 "The New Phase after Merdeka - Our Tasks and Policy", *Petir* (4th Anniversary Number, 1958), pp. 2-11.

48 *Ibid.*

Analysing the reasons why the Alliance Government opposed merger, the Party statement pointed out :

The present Alliance Government is anti-merger for different reasons. The Alliance leaders have put out different reasons at different times but we can summarise them into two : First, Singapore has about one million Chinese (about 70 per cent of Singapore population or 18 per cent of the Federation population). The inclusion of this one million into the Federation will upset the racial balance of power in the Federation. Second, Singapore has too many "leftists" who are supported by the one million Chinese. The Alliance leaders are not very clear in their distinction between Communists and Socialists. They believe all "leftists" may be Communists of varying degrees.⁴⁹

The statement further added that the Alliance leaders represented the bulk of the people in the Federation and their attitude was a reflection of the genuine fears of the Malays :

It is therefore our duty to clarify the position of the people of Singapore, principally the Chinese. We must allay these 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.⁵⁰

The Party leadership proclaimed that the obstacles in the way of merger could be overcome by adopting a new and bold approach to the problem of nation building in Malaya. One of the important steps in this direction was to accept Malay as the national language and show to the Malays that the Chinese are prepared to accept Malayan culture :

It must be demonstrated to three million Malays in the Federation that the one million Chinese in Singapore are ready, willing and able to be absorbed as one Malayan people, all able to speak Malay, and willing to work together for the economic betterment and upliftment of the Malays as equals of the other races.⁵¹

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

Of equal importance in the struggle for merger and the creation of national unity was to bring home to the Federation leaders the crucial differences between Democratic Socialism and Communism. The Party statement pointed out that the history of Malaya after the second world war had proved that its problems could not be solved by Communist methods of class warfare :

Malaya's problem is unique in the world..... It is only among the Chinese of recent immigrant origin that Communism has found its disciples..... The more communists are Chinese, the more the Malays will be against Communism, fearing not only Communism but also Chinese domination. This is a dilemma which the Communist cannot resolve in Malaya.⁵²

The task of creating a socialist society in Malaya without inter-racial strife could be accomplished by Democratic Socialists through peaceful persuasion and democratic means. There was no inherent contradiction between the Malays who are devout Muslims and the goals of Democratic Socialists. "Malays are not anti-socialist..... The majority of them are poor peasants and they desire a more just society. Islam is not anti-socialist because Socialism does not, like Communism, take on the role of a rival religion".⁵³

The changes in the policies and programmes of the P. A. P. must also be seen in the context of Lee Kuan Yew's desire to establish amicable relations with the British Government. Despite the internal divisions, the P. A. P. was the best organised party in Singapore and had good chances of winning the next elections and forming the government. It was in British interests to have a

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid. Tunku Abdul Rahman concurred with the analysis and said that he wished to give full credit to the P. A. P. for what they had said about merger with the Federation. "The reasons given by the P. A. P. are in fact the real fears of the Federation Government." He added that it was up to the P. A. P. to allay these fears and work things out "I think the P. A. P. will have a big job to do to persuade the Chinese-educated students to accept Malay as the national language". *Straits Budget*, 3 December 1958.

government which was not controlled by the Communists or pro-Communists and which would at the same time give political stability to Singapore. It was, therefore, but natural that the British authorities should look with increasing favour on Lee Kuan Yew. Dr. Goh Keng Swee and K. M. Byrne, the two leading lights of the moderate group, were in government service during this time and they must have acted as a channel of communication between the P. A. P. and British authorities. Special mention must also be made in this connection to the growing friendship between Lee Kuan Yew and William Goode, who became the Governor of Singapore in 1957. Before being elevated to the Governor's post, Goode was the Chief Secretary and was in charge of the Special Branch. Some idea of the close links between the two could be gathered from Lee Kuan Yew's own admission that he was allowed to go through the Special Branch files :

I used to see them (detainees) there (prison), arguing their appeals, reading their captured documents and the Special Branch precis of the cases against them. I had the singular advantage of not only knowing them well by having worked at close quarters with them in a united front against the British, but I also saw the official version in reports on them.⁵⁴

If the P. A. P. were to succeed in its twin tasks of befriending the Colonial Office and allaying the fears of the Federation Government, it was essential that the Party should also revise its stand on the crucial question of security powers of the Singapore Government. During the early years, the Party had vehemently opposed all emergency powers as arbitrary and undemocratic which were intended to perpetuate colonial rule. An important shift from this uncompromising stand took place during the Second Constitutional Conference in March-April 1957 when Lee Kuan Yew, as stated earlier, supported the composition of the Internal Security Council. In October 1958, Lee Kuan Yew, went a step further and declared that there will be no abolition of emergency laws in Singapore if the Party were to form the government after the elections in 1959.

54 Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, pp. 18-19.

Clarifying the Party stand in the Legislative Assembly Lee Kuan Yew declared:

We will take no steps which undermine the interests of the Federation..... As long as they are necessary for the maintenance of the security of the Federation, so long will they be necessary for Singapore. There will be no abolition of the Emergency laws in Singapore until they have been abolished in the Federation. Those who want the Emergency laws abolished in Singapore should try to help to establish conditions of peace and security in the Federation so that they may no longer be required there.⁵⁵

P. A. P. in the City Council

The election to the City Council in December 1957 provided an opportunity for all political parties to test popular support and make necessary preparations for the general elections in 1959. Making an outright bid for power was the Liberal Socialist Party. After its victory in the Cairnhill by-election, where it wrested the seat from the Labour Front, the leaders of the Party felt that they could easily get a majority in the City Council. They, therefore, fielded candidates for all the thirty-two seats.

The major aim of the P. A. P. in the City Council elections was to defeat the Liberal Socialist Party (L. S.).⁵⁶ The leaders of the Party realized that if there were multi-concerned contests, it would split the left-wing votes and enable the Liberal Socialists to win many seats. They, therefore, came to a working arrangement on the allocation of seats with the L. F. and the U. M. N. O., under which

55 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 7, 8 October 1958, cols. 804-5.

56 Addressing an election rally, Lee Kuan Yew said: "We must not forget that our main opponent is the reactionary right, representing the colonial interests - in these elections represented by the Liberal-Socialists. They must be annihilated because they will, if they come to power, deal unmercifully with the left-wing parties and unionists, for they represent the vested interests. They have nothing in common with the workers." *Straits Budget*, 4 December 1957.

the L. F. fielded 16 candidates, the P. A. P. 14 and the U. M. N. O. 3.⁵⁷ The P. A. P. candidates contested constituencies in the predominantly working class areas of Singapore.

Interest in the election was heightened by the participation of five candidates of the Worker's Party. (W. P.) The W. P. was formed by David Marshall, who contrary to his earlier pronouncements, re-entered Singapore politics and started to advocate complete independence for Singapore "with or without a merger with the Federation".⁵⁸ Many of the left-wing elements in the P. A. P., dissatisfied with the moderate leadership of the Party, extended their support to David Marshall and the W. P.⁵⁹

The results of the election which was held on 21 December 1957 are given below :⁶⁰

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled	Percentage to Total Votes
1 Liberal Socialists	32	7	53,593	32.4
2 People's Action Party	14	13	49,100	29.0
3 Labour Front	16	4	26,395	16.0
4 Worker's Party	5	4	13,010	} 22.6
5 United Malays' National Organisation	3	2	7,833	
6 Independents	11	2	12,181	

- 57 The one constituency where agreement could not be reached was Tanglin. It was contested by both the U. M. N. O. and the L. F. The P. A. P., consistent with its pro-U. M. N. O. stand, a direct offshoot of its desire to be friendly with the leaders of the Federation, asked its supporters to vote for the U. M. N. O. candidate. *Ibid.*, 25 December 1957.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 20 November 1957.
- 59 See the Statement issued by Chang Yuen Tong, Appendix 12, in Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, p. 206-7.
- 60 For the details of the City Council election results, see *Sunday Times*, 22 December 1957.

The election strategy of the P. A. P. paid high dividends and it was able to win 13 of the 14 seats which it contested. The victory, so soon after the bitter intra-Party struggle in August 1957, strengthened the position of the moderate leaders. Even though the L. S. polled 32.4 per cent of the total votes, it won only seven seats. The performance by L. F. was far below expectations, for it polled 16.0 per cent of the votes and won only 4 seats. The W. P. was able to win four of the five seats that it contested.

Though the P. A. P. had no absolute majority in the City Council, it was able to capitalise on intra-Party squabbles among non-P. A. P. Councillors and got its candidates elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor. In the first meeting of the Council, Ong Eng Guan was elected as Mayor and Ong Pang Boon as Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor Ong Eng Guan belonged to the moderate faction of the P. A. P. An accountant by profession, who had his education in Australia, Ong Eng Guan belonged to the Chinese stream of Singapore population. A gifted speaker, endowed with a charming personality and endearing manners, Ong Eng Guan was perfectly at home with the multitudes in the China Town. He did not have any firm political views and, therefore, was acceptable to Lee Kuan Yew and became the Treasurer of the Party. The Moderate faction exploited the growing popularity of Ong Eng Guan and tried to project him as a rival to Lim Chin Siong.

The P. A. P. used the City Council as a stepping stone for winning the general elections. Ong Eng Guan became a legendary Mayor and stole newspaper headlines everyday. The Mayor and his colleagues used every opportunity to whip up public enthusiasm by anti-colonial antics and slogans.⁶¹ The Mayor created history by getting himself arrested on the inauguration day by firing crackers in front of the Council Hall. He discarded Mace, the Union Jack and the Queen's Portrait as relics of imperialism. There were

61 For a good account of the P. A. P. in the City Council, see Willard A. Hanna, *Sequel to Colonialism* (New York, N. Y., 1956), pp. 73-86.

frequent clashes between the City Council and the Labour Front government. In March 1959, the Minister for Local Government and Housing, appointed a Commission to enquire into the affairs of the City Council. On the eve of the elections, the Mayor and his colleagues resigned their seats. The P. A. P. in its election manifesto promised to absorb the functions of the City Council into the Government.

With the elections approaching new political alignments began to take place in Singapore. In July 1958 Lim Yew Hock announced his intention to form a "United Socialist Front" of all parties and individuals to fight "Left-wing extremism" in Singapore.⁶² The proposal received favourable response from the L. S. The P. A. P. turned it down and decided to retain its separate identity.

The popular appeal and increasing strength of the P. A. P. was revealed in the Kallang by-election to the City Council. The seat fell vacant when Chang Yuen Tong, the Vice-Chairman of the W. P., resigned his seat in the City Council. The left-wing elements, which supported the W. P. after defecting from the P. A. P., were soon disillusioned with David Marshall.⁶³ Chang Yuen Tong's resignation was a clear indication that they had decided to withdraw their support to the W. P.⁶⁴

The Kallang by-election was one of the most intensely contested as it was considered by all political parties to be a forerunner to the general elections in 1959. The P. A. P. candidate was Buang bin Omar Junid, an ex detainee, who resigned from the U. M. N. O. and joined the P. A. P. The Party wanted to test whether it could get a Malay candidate elected from a predom-

62 *Straits Budget*, 9 July 1958.

63 See the Statement issued by Chang Yuen Tong, n. 59.

64 Lee Kuan Yew has stated that Chang Yuen Tong resigned his seat on the orders of the M. C. P. after the Communists had decided to withdraw their support to David Marshall Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, p. 27.

antly Chinese constituency⁶⁵. The P. A. P. claimed endorsement of its record in the City Council,⁶⁶ and the whole Party machinery headed by Lee Kuan Yew and Ong Eng Guan was employed in the campaign. The L. S., following Lim Yew Hock's proposal for a "United Socialist Front", supported the L. F. candidate. Even though the W. P. and an Independent also contested the seat, it was in fact a tussle between the P. A. P. and L. F.-L. S. coalition. The P. A. P. candidate received 51 per cent of the votes and won the seat by a majority of 713 votes. Both the independent and W. P. candidates lost their deposits.⁶⁷

In November 1958 Lim Yew Hock announced the formation of the Singapore People's Alliance (S. P. A.).⁶⁸ The S. P. A. drew its support from the L. F., the L. S. and the W. P. But its immediate effect was to create a split in all those three parties. Those who were opposed to the formation of the S. P. A. decided to retain the separate identity of the L. F., the L. S. and the S. P. Their disunity was further revealed when they failed to unite against the P. A. P. during the Mayoral election in December 1958; even though the P. A. P. had only 14 members in the City Council of 32 Ong Eng Guan was re-elected as Mayor.⁶⁹

The General Elections, 1959

By the beginning of 1959, it was clear that the P. A. P. was heading for a victory in the general elections. The P. A. P., according to Lee Kuan Yew, was undecided in the beginning whether

65 S. Rajaratnam, "P. A. P.'s First 10 Years", *Our First Ten Years* (P. A. P. 10th Anniversary Souvenir, Singapore, 1964) pp. 204-16. See also "Prestige Fight in Kallang", *Pettir*, vol. 1, July 1958.

66 "P. A. P. Manifesto", *Ibid.*

67	Buang bin Omar Junid (P. A. P.)	—	4,279
	Lim Ser Puan (L. F.)	—	3,566
	Loh Ka Fat (W. P.)	—	304
	G M. K. Sabai (Ind.)	—	74

See the *Straits Budget*, 30 July 1958.

68 *Ibid.*, 19 November 1958.

69 *Ibid.*, 31 December 1958.

it should contest all the seats and form the next government.⁷⁰ He maintained that Lim Chin Siong and other detainees encouraged the Party to contest all the seats. According to Lee Kuan Yew the Party was finally convinced that it should prevent the S. P. A. from forming the Government—a “bunch of rogues” who would “ruin the country” and also “fix the P. A. P.”⁷¹

Having decided to win an all out victory in the elections, the P. A. P. set its well organised election machinery in full action. In the course of the election campaign, the Party made the sensational disclosure that Chew Swee Kee, the Minister for Education, had received \$ 500,000 from American sources for fighting the election.⁷² Following an acrimonious public debate, Chew Swee Kee resigned his seat in the Cabinet and Lim Yew Hock appointed an Inquiry Commission to go into the whole affair.⁷³ The Government suffered a further setback when Francis Thomas, who earlier had resigned from the Cabinet, left the Treasury Benches and joined the ranks of the opposition.⁷⁴ On 19 March 1959, Lee Kuan Yew moved a motion calling for the immediate resignation of the Government and the holding of general elections “in view of the public disgust and loss of public confidence”⁷⁵. The motion, as expected, was rejected by the Legislative Assembly, but it had the effect of rousing unprecedented public enthusiasm against the Government.

The P. A. P. deliberately adopted a leftist platform in order to get the solid support of the trade unions, Chinese Middle School students and possibly the Malayan Communist Party. An impor-

70 Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, p. 22.

71 Ibid., p. 23.

72 *Straits Budget*, 18 February 1959 and 25 February 1959.

73 Government of Singapore, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the \$ 500,000 Bank Account of Mr. Chew Swee Kee and Income Tax Department Leakage in connection therewith* (Singapore, 1959).

74 When the S. P. A. was formed, Francis Thomas did not join it; he continued to be the Chairman of the Labour Front.

75 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 9, 19 March 1959, Cols. 2291-9.

tant issue, in this connection, was the question of release of Lim Chin Siong and other detainees. Lee Kuan Yew was aware that his credibility with the Singapore public would be seriously damaged unless the Party demanded the release of their erstwhile colleagues in the Party. The P. A. P. subsequently explained the dilemma which faced the Party leadership on this score. In a memorandum to the Internal Security Council in August 1959, the Singapore Government stated:

As early as October 1956, the P. A. P. saw clearly that it would be necessary, if and when it won the elections, to release those detainees who were closely associated with the Party. This is a question highly charged with emotion. Whether these men were Communists or not is irrelevant when it comes to justifying the position of the P. A. P. Government in the eyes of the people, and the smear to which the P. A. P. Government would be opened, if these men remained in jail and the P. A. P. in power, is one which cannot be lightly dismissed. For the charge would be, not that these men were Communists, but these men were known P. A. P. supporters who have been betrayed and abandoned by the Party.⁷⁶

After weighing the pros and cons mentioned above, the leadership decided to take the calculated risk. Toh Chin Chye, the Party Chairman, declared that the Party would not assume power unless the detainees who were "intimately connected" with the Party were released.⁷⁷

Throughout the election campaign the P. A. P. leaders emphasised their basic objective of merger with the Federation. As an immediate task, the Party stated that it would strive to obtain a Common Market by which Singapore goods would be able to enter the Federation without payment of any import duty. In return for the Common Market, Singapore would offer the Federation Government joint control over Singapore port.⁷⁸ The Party manifesto

76 Quoted by Dr. Toh Chye Chye in the Legislative Assembly Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 14, 20/21 July 1961, cols. 1681-2.

77 *Straits Budget*, 27 May 1959.

78 "Our Economic Policy", *Petir*, Special Issue, April 1959.

stated that it would lay special stress on developing Malayan consciousness by unifying the system of education and making Malay the national language; bring about comprehensive labour legislation and social welfare schemes; improve housing facilities; speed up economic progress by encouragement of industry and development of Singapore's entrepot trade.⁷⁹

The S. P. A. contested 39 seats. It also stood for merger with the Federation. Its election manifesto included encouragement of Singapore's entrepot trade, full employment, development of trade unions, additional free medical services, social insurance schemes, increased food production and an improved administration.⁸⁰ The manifestoes of other parties were also on similar lines.

On 30 May 1959, 527,919 out of an electorate of 587,797 went to the polls.⁸¹ Voting was compulsory as a result of legislation passed to that effect. The number of votes cast was three and a half times more than that of the 1955 elections. Most of them belonged to the Chinese-educated group and were voting for the first time. The results of the 1959 election are given below.⁸²

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Votes Polled	Percentage of Total Votes
1 People's Action Party	51	43	281,891	53.4
2 Singapore People's Alliance	39	4	107,755	20.4
3 United Malays' National Organisation/Malayan Chinese Association	13	3	33,041	6.3

79 See *Petir*, March, April and May 1959.

80 For a good account of the Singapore general election, see "Singapore General Elections", *Current Notes on International Affairs* (Canberra), vol. 30, July 1959, pp. 377-82.

81 *Singapore Government Press Statement*, HC/INFS JN/4/59, 2 June 1959.

82 For details of the election results, see *Singapore Government Gazette*, vol. 14 No. 51, June 2, 1959.

4	Independents	34	1	37,411	7.1
5	Liberal Socialists	32	-	42,805	8.1
6	Worker's Party	2	-	4,127	
7	Labour Front	3	-	3,414	
8	Citizens Party	5	-	3,210	
9	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	3	-	1,011	
10	Singapore Malay Union	3	-	749	3.5
11	Party Rakyat	4	-	2,006	
12	Katong United Residents Association	2	-	1,759	
13	Malayan Indian Congress	2	-	2,092	

The election resulted in the overwhelming victory of the P. A. P. Though it polled only 53.4% of the votes cast, it was able to win 43 of the 51 seats, as the opposition votes were divided. Topping the list of successful candidates was Ong Eng Guan, who polled 77% of the votes and secured an impressive lead of 7,642 votes over his nearest rival. In contrast Lee Kuan Yew had a majority of only 4,512 votes. Among other important leaders, Ong Pang Boon secured a lead of 6,266; Dr. Goh Keng Swee 5,929; K. M. Byrne 4,633 and Raja Ratnam 4,577. To the dismay of Lee Kuan Yew, Ong Eng Guan's hold over the Party was also revealed in the meeting of the Central Executive Committee, which met immediately after the announcement of the results, to designate the Chief Minister. Ong Eng Guan received 50% of the votes from the Committee members. Lee Kuan Yew was rescued by the Party Chairman, Dr. Toh Chin Chye. It was reported that Dr. Toh Chin Chye voted twice, first as a member of the Committee and second, in order to resolve the tie, he exercised the casting vote as the Chairman of the Party.⁸³

P. A. P. in Power

The first major step taken by the new Government was to fulfil the promise regarding the release of the detainees. With British

83 George, n. 28, p. 50.

approval⁸⁴, the eight detainees – Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Devan Nair, S. Woodhull, James Puthuchery, Chan Chiaw Thor, Chen Chong Kin and Chen Say Jame – were released on 4 June 1959. As stated earlier, through-out their detention Lee Kuan Yew used to visit them and hold discussions. On one occasion, Lim Chin Siong volunteered to leave Singapore and go to Indonesia if it would allay the fears of the P. A. P. leaders, but Lee Kuan Yew replied that the M. C. P. would appoint another open-front leader to replace him.⁸⁵

The Moderate leaders were determined not to give the ex-detainees any important position either in the Party or in the Government. In order to strengthen their position within the Party, they convened the meeting of the Party Cadres immediately after the election. The Party Constitution was again amended and it was provided that the meeting of the Party Cadres need take place only once in two years instead of once a year. A new Central Executive Committee was elected which included all the important members of the Moderate group. Thus by the time the detainees were released the Moderate section had further entrenched itself within the Party.

In a detailed statement issued immediately after their release (which in fact was prepared three months earlier) the detainees expressed their "unqualified endorsement" of the Party's objective – "the creation of an independent, democratic, non-Communist and socialist Malaya."⁸⁶ With regard to the immediate tasks, particularly in the new phase after Federation of Malaya's independence, they agreed with the stand taken by the Party in the document – "The

84 The British Government in a statement on the eve of the release said, "After consultations with Her Majesty's Government in Britain, and in order to achieve a swift and smooth introduction of the new Constitution, the Governor, with the advice of the remaining ex-officio members of the council, decided to release the detainees concerned". *Straits Budget*, 10 June 1959.

85 Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, p. 32.

86 *The Ends and Means of Socialism*, Appendix 9, Ibid, pp 184-89.

New Phase after Merdeka— Our Tasks and Policy.”⁸⁷ In a press conference after their release they also expressed their full confidence in the new Central Executive Committee of the Party.⁸⁸

In spite of the formidable majority that the P. A. P. had in the Legislative Assembly the new Government was weighed down by economic and political realities far beyond its control.⁸⁹ Between 1947 and 1957 the population of Singapore was increasing at the rate of 4.3 per cent per annum, the highest in the world.⁹⁰ This increase was further aggravated by the fact that 42.8 per cent of the Singapore population was below 15 years of age.⁹¹ This meant that the employment opportunities had to be increased rapidly in order to absorb the new entrants into the labour market.⁹² The traditional role of Singapore as the chief entrepot centre of South-east Asia was also threatened by international trends during the period. With growing economic nationalism, there was a general desire in all countries to develop their own manufacturing industries (and thus reduce imports) and trade directly with other countries.⁹³ In the Federation of Malaya attempts were being made to develop Port Swettenham as a major port thus reducing the Federation's dependence on Singapore. There were also proposals to erect a customs barrier in order to promote her own industries. The Singapore Government was of the view that while with improved

87 Ibid.

88 *Straits Budget*, 10 June 1959.

89 For a good account of the political situation in Singapore during this period see Charles Gamba, "Singapore—City and State", *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* (Brisbane), Vol. 5, pp. 180-90.

90 *State of Singapore Development Plan, 1961-64* (Singapore, 1961), p. 1.

91 Ibid. p. 2.

92 Ronald Ma "Singapore—The Economic Challenge of a Growing Population", *Australian Outlook* (Melbourne), Vol. 16, pp. 47-62. See also "Singapore—Economic Situation", *Current Notes on International Affairs*, Vol. 31, June 1963, pp. 308-11.

93 Exports from Singapore to Indonesia decreased drastically from \$ 352.3 million in 1958 to \$ 131.8 million in 1959, see n. 90, p. 13.

facilities the entrepot function of Singapore could be retained, any large scale increase in trade was ruled out because of the international situation. It was, therefore, necessary to promote industrial development in order to increase employment opportunities. But the requisite capital and know-how for industrialization would not be forthcoming unless there was political stability in Singapore and the guarantee of a wider market which Singapore by itself could not provide⁹⁴. The P. A. P. Government was of the view that while making efforts to encourage local and foreign investment, the challenges facing Singapore could only be successfully met by economic co-operation through a Common Market and political merger with the Federation of Malaya. It would safeguard the entrepot functions of Singapore port; it would prevent the establishment of competing industries and would guarantee a larger market for the manufactured goods of the new industries.

The first year of the P. A. P. administration was hardly one of achievement and there were shortcomings according to the spokesmen of the Government itself. In his address to the Singapore Legislative Assembly on 20 July 1960 the Yang di Pertuan Negara said:

The Government does not wish to give the impression that there have not been mistakes and shortcomings during the past year. It is aware that some of its measures should have been more carefully planned and expertly executed. In some instances, it moved too fast and without preparing public opinion adequately for the changes. Some of the legislation resulted in inconveniences or misunderstandings which could have been avoided by a little more fore-

94 Many business houses in Singapore viewed with dismay the possibility of the P. A. P. coming to power after the 1959 elections. Some of them transferred their registration and headquarters to the Federation of Malaya. G. G. Boland, "Fears for Investment in Singapore", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 April 1959, p. 495. and G. G. Boland, "Singapore Firm, Shifting to Malaya", *Ibid.*, 7 May 1959, p. 636.

sight, a little more consultation, discussion and a little more explanation.⁹⁵

The new Government made determined efforts to establish close and friendly relations with the Federation of Malaya. In its first major policy statement, the Singapore Government declared, "The future of Singapore lies ultimately in re-uniting with the Federation of Malaya as a state in an independent country. It is the Government's intention during its term of office to create and bring about conditions favourable to an early re-unification with the Federation."⁹⁶ In order to make the predominantly Chinese populated Singapore acceptable to the Federation of Malaya, the Government not only accepted Malay as the national language but also made determined efforts to foster Malayan culture, outlook and identity among the Singapore population. A Ministry of Culture was established "to develop Malayan culture" in the shortest possible time through "conscious, deliberate and organized effort".⁹⁷ The Ministry started a vigorous propaganda through various means at its disposal - press, radio, public entertainments and later on television. In order to befriend the Federation Government further, the Singapore Government appointed a Malay Journalist Inche Yusuf bin Ishak as the Yang di Pertuan Negara, when William Goode relinquished his post as the last Governor of Singapore.

The Singapore Government's policy regarding Internal security reflected the deep concern of the P. A. P. leaders to co-operate with the Federation and British Governments in the Internal Security Council. In October 1959 the Government took over wide

95 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 13, 20 July 1960, col. 5. See also Lee Kuan Yew, "New Year Message", *Petir*, vol. 3, 4 January 1960.

96 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 11, 1 July 1959, col. 14.

97 S. Rajaratnam, *Malayan Culture in the Making* (Government of Singapore, Ministry of Culture, n. d.) p. 5 see also S. Rajaratnam, "Culture, Fact and Fiction", *Bakti* (Singapore), vol. 1, July 1960, pp. 8-14.

powers for arrest and detention by extending the term of the Preservation of Public Security Act for another five years. Explaining the guidelines of the Government's policy regarding internal security, Dr. Toh Chin Chye said that the Singapore Government "shall not act as a buffer to protect pro-Communist Party forces" against the Federation Government. While the Government would defend the rights of "left-wing non-Communist" parties to carry on political activities it would "prevent the security of the democratic state from being undermined by the Communists". The Government, Dr. Toh Chin Chye added, would be "less inhibited in taking our own steps to ensure that there is no recurrence of pro-Communist party activities."⁹⁸ The P. A. P. leaders also did not insist on the release of all those (many of them allegedly pro-Communist) who were detained in 1956 and 1957. This would have been severely opposed by the Federation Government in the Internal Security Council and would have led to a constitutional crisis straining the relations between the two territories.

Throughout 1959 and 1960 the Federation Government continued to reject the idea of merger as a practical proposition.⁹⁹ In spite of the P. A. P. Government's efforts to foster Malayan consciousness, to the Federation leaders, Singapore still presented the image of a Chinese city with many people owing doubtful loyalty to Malaya. The views of Tunku Abdul Rahman on merger during this period had been very well summarized by his biographer:

Singapore is an affliction to him because of its insecurity and its large Chinese population, who are intimidated by Communists and influenced by the tremendous waves of Communist propaganda directed to them from Red China. Abdul Rahman was determined that while he was Prime Minister he would not agree to political union between Singapore and the Federation so long as the Communist hazards existed and so long as large sections of the one

98 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 11, 14 October 1959, cols 663-4.

99 *Straits Times*, 11 November 1959, 17 November 1959 and 1 June 1960.

million Chinese on the island looked towards Red China as a source of inspiration.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile the differences between the leftists and the moderates, which were muted in the flush of the Party's victory in the 1959 elections, were slowly assuming a more definite shape. Lee Kuan Yew had stated that he still entertained serious reservations regarding the sincerity of Lim Chin Siong. He informed the Party's Central Executive Committee, in the presence of the detainees, that while he was prepared to accept the good faith of others, he could not vouch for Lim Chin Siong's sincerity and wanted him to prove it.¹⁰¹ His reservations were explained in a memorandum submitted by the Singapore Government to the Internal Security Council:

Of the eight men released, the most important from the security point of view is Mr. Lim Chin Siong for he was the person built up as the open front leader by the M. C. P. ... Of the eight, the P. A. P. government has reasons to believe that five, not including Lim Chin Siong, genuinely and sincerely subscribe to the P. A. P. democratic socialist ideology.¹⁰²

The P. A. P. leaders were determined not to give the leftists any important position either in the Party or in the Government.

100 Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier* (London, 1959), p. 214. Even the P. A. P. leaders were aware that there was no immediate prospect of merger. In January 1960, Toh Chin Chye wrote in the Party organ: "Hopes of merger with the Federation still remain, but it will be foolish for us to believe that such a merger will take place within the next five years... In fact the Federation is moving further away from Singapore. The only pan-Malayan links left are posts, telecommunications and railways". Toh Chin Chye, "The Crossroads", *Petir*, vol. 3, 4 January 1960.

101 Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, pp. 30, 41.

102 Quoted by Lee Kuan Yew in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 14, 20/21 July 1961, col. 1844.

None of them were made Cadre members of the Party nor were they given citizenship papers.¹⁰³ However, in order to keep the image of unity before the public, the ex-detainees were appointed as Political Secretaries to various ministries. Lim Chin Siong, who had no special knowledge of economics or finance, was appointed as Political Secretary to Dr. Goh Keng Swee, the Minister of Finance; Fong Swee Suan in the Ministry of Labour and Woodhull in the Ministry of Health. These posts were mere showpieces and were intended not only to act as a restraint but also to keep a close watch on their political activities.¹⁰⁴ Alan Blades, an important British official in the Singapore Government, neatly summed up Lee Kuan Yew's strategy :

His (Lee's) attitude was "put them somewhere where they will have to show which way they want to bounce; if our way well and good; if not, we shall know where we stand and can deal with them accordingly".¹⁰⁵

Despite the attempts made by Lee Kuan Yew to isolate Lim Chin Siong the latter was still immensely popular among the Singapore population. Except for Devan Nair, who switched sides and became a loyal supporter of Lee Kuan Yew¹⁰⁶ all the other ex-detainees gave their unstinted support and co-operation to Lim Chin Siong. The ranks of the leftists were also swelled by the addition of new adherents like S. T. Bani and Dominic Puthuchery.

103 Lee Kuan Yew, n, 21, p. 25.

104 Explaining the functions of Political Secretary, the Prime Minister said, "The Personal Secretary (Political) has no administrative duties. He has no direct access to the civil service. He is a personal appointment of the Minister, and his role is really that of the Minister's closest confidant on the political implications of the moves, plans and policies of the various Ministers". Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 11, 2 September 1949, Col. 536-7.

105 Clutterbeck, *Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya, 1945-1963* (London, 1973), p. 293.

106 According to Lee Kuan Yew, after spending a great part of his life with the Malayan Communist Party, Devan Nair came to the conclusion that its leadership "was inadequate to meet

Both Bani and Dominic Puthuchery were very active in the trade union movement.

The realities of power and exigencies of day to day administration compelled the P. A. P. leaders to modify many of their pet political theories. Influenced by the ideas of Finance Minister Dr. Goh Keng Swee, they realized that the principles of doctrinaire socialism had no validity in an entrepot economy like that of Singapore, thriving itself on foreign capital and free enterprise. Speaking in the May Day rally in 1960 Lee Kuan Yew declared that because of Singapore's entrepot, economy the socialist government was "for the time being in the curious position of having to encourage investors" despite the classical theory that employers with capital exploited workers who had none. He described Singapore's position as a "freak situation" and pointed out that investors would not build factories to provide employment for the people unless they could get a profitable return for their investment.¹⁰⁷ The government began to soft-pedal many of its anti-colonial postures, exercise tight control over trade unions and advise restraint on wage increases as a practical necessity. The leftist leaders naturally found these new postures of the government to be unpalatable.

The leftists were equally bitter about the Government's policy on internal security which, for all practical purposes, was a continuation of the policy of the previous Labour Front Government. In October 1959, as stated earlier, the government equipped itself with wide powers of arrest and detention by extending the term of the Preservation of Public Security Act by another five years. To the disappointment and anguish of the leftists, the

the needs of revolution in Malaya". Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, p 15. After the split in the Party in 1961 Devan Nair became one of the ideologues of the Party and the leader of the pro-government National Trade Union Congress.

107 *Straits Times*, 2 May 1960.

government also did not make any efforts to secure the release of all those who were detained in 1956 and 1957 nor confer citizenship on those who were released in 1959.

The differences between the leftists and the government further widened as a result of the government's new policy towards the trade union movement. The P. A. P. government, immediately after assuming power, declared its intention to bring about comprehensive legislation which would eliminate splinter and yellow unions and pave the way for a unified trade union movement under a Central Trade Union Congress.¹⁰⁸ The Government's declaration to strengthen the trade union movement paved the way for the inauguration of the Singapore Trade Union Congress (T. U. C.) in April 1960. In anticipation of comprehensive trade union legislation the T. U. C. adopted a new constitution, elected office bearers and appointed nine secretaries. Though the President Inche Mahmud bin Awang and Secretary-General G. Kandaswamy belonged to the moderate group, most of the important functionaries of the T. U. C. were from the leftist camp. Prominent among them were Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, S. Woodhull, Dominic Puthuchery, S. T. Bani and Jamith Singh (they came to be popularly known as the "Trade Union Six"). It was quite clear that, if a united trade union organization came into existence, it would definitely come under the control of Lim Chin Siong and his supporters. Eager to restrict the leftist influence, the government made a *volte face* and did not proceed with the Trade Union Bill though it was introduced and debated in the Legislative Assembly. K. M. Byrne, the Minister for Labour, admitted in the Legislative Assembly two years later that the government allowed the bill to lapse because "the Government was advised of the great security risks that it would take if this Bill was assented to. *It would have placed the whole of the trade union movement under the control of known undemocratic forces*".¹⁰⁹ In October 1960, Fong Swee Suan, the Political

108 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 11, 1 July 1959, col. 8-9.

109 Emphasis added. Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 17, 21 March 1962, col. 585.

Secretary to the Minister for Labour, openly criticized the government's labour policy in a meeting of the Bookshops, Publications and Printing Worker's Union. Following a Cabinet decision, Fong Swee Suan was transferred from the Labour Ministry to the Deputy Prime Minister's office.¹¹⁰ The transfer was a definite setback to the prestige of the leftists, but it in no way affected their hold on the workers and trade unions.

The Ong Eng Guan Affair

The first open challenge to the Party and the Government did not, however, come from the leftists but from Ong Eng Guan. Ong Eng Guan was smarting under a sense of humiliation of being cheated out of the Prime Ministership by the machinations of Lee Kuan Yew group. His narrow defeat was also an eye opener to Lee Kuan Yew who saw in Ong Eng Guan a potential threat to his dominant position. Lee Kuan Yew was determined to eliminate Ong Eng Guan politically and was waiting for an opportunity to strike.

When the P. A. P. formed the Government, Ong Eng Guan was appointed as Minister for National Development. Realizing that his days were numbered, Ong Eng Guan neglected his official duties and began to build up support for himself in the lower levels of the Party. Ong Eng Guan soon fell out of favour with the leadership of the Party and the Government. In early 1960, the Prime Minister removed the City Council, Rural Board, Harbour Board and Overseas Establishments from his control and left him only with Housing, where, too his powers were limited. Ong Eng Guan started to criticise the policies of the Party and the Government and the matter came to a climax when he moved 16 Resolutions in a special meeting of the Party on 19 June and 20 June 1960. The Resolutions called for the return of the Party to the 1954 revolutionary "Party Manifesto"; reaffirm its "firm stand in the anti-colonial struggle"; re-open constitutional talks with the United

¹¹⁰ See the exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and Fong Swee Suan. *Straits Times*, 28 October 1960.

Kingdom as the existing Constitution "cannot meet the demands of the people"; hold talks with the Federation leaders "on matters relating to the re-unification of the two territories"; release all detainees arrested under the P. P. S. O. before June 1959; take immediate steps to "Malayanise" all expatriate administrative posts and intensify the campaign against "Yellow culture.". Above all the Resolutions criticized the way in which decisions were taken within the Party. It called for the reorganisation of the Cadre system, introduction of intra-Party democracy and greater participation of members in the determination of policy.¹¹¹ The Resolutions were a clear indictment of the Party and the Government and an open challenge to its leadership.

The Hong Lim resolutions followed the same line of criticism as of the leftist leaders against the Party and the Government. And if Ong Eng Guan had joined hands with Lim Chin Siong, Lee Kuan Yew would have been ousted and the history of Singapore would have been different. Ong Eng Guan did not seek leftist support because he knew that the left-wing leaders always viewed him as a political opportunist. In the intra-party struggle in August 1957 Ong Eng Guan was their special target and was defeated in the election to the Party's Central Executive Committee. The leftist leaders were not interested in a showdown with the Party leadership on the Ong Eng Guan affair. They made their stand clear in a statement issued by Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan and S. Woodhull in August 1960:

If anyone imagines or hopes that we will lend our support to Mr. Ong Eng Guan in order to undermine or challenge the authority of the P. A. P. he is in for serious disappointment... We wish to make it plain that we will have no truck with Mr. Ong and his adventurist techniques. His blatant attempts to utilise emotional issues to drag down the leadership of the P. A. P. must be condemned.¹¹²

111 For the 16 Resolutions and the reply of the P. A. P. Central Executive Committee, see "Statement by the Central Executive Committee in reply to the 16 Resolutions raised by Mr. Ong Eng Guan". *Petir*, vol. 3, 14 July 1960.

112 *Straits Times*, 19 August 1960.

The moderate leaders were equally keen to maintain the broadest possible unity against the political opportunism of Ong Eng Guan. They convened a two day Special Conference which was attended not only by members of the Central Executive Committee, but also by P. A. P. Assembly men, executives from 51 Branches and Branch Organising Secretaries. Ong Eng Guan and two other members of the Legislative Assembly who supported him were charged with attempts "to disrupt party unity" and its "collective leadership" and were expelled from the Party.¹¹³

Expelled from the Party Ong Eng Guan took the fight to the Legislative Assembly. From the opposition benches he charged that the Government had gone back on its earlier pronouncements and had betrayed the anti-colonial forces with whose support it came to power.¹¹⁴ He also levelled charges of nepotism against Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and the Minister for Labour K. M. Byrne.¹¹⁵ In December 1960 the Deputy Prime Minister moved a Resolution condemning Ong Eng Guan and to suspend him until he apologised or withdrew his allegations.¹¹⁶ Ong Eng Guan agreed to substantiate and justify his allegations and asked for an adjournment so that he could collect more facts and prepare his case.¹¹⁷ But before the Assembly reconvened, Ong Eng Guan submitted his resignation, thus necessitating the first by-election to the Legislative Assembly.

113 The motion to expel Ong Eng Guan was proposed by K. C. Lee and was seconded by S. T. Bani. Bani was a close associate of Lim Chin Siong and later became an important leader of the Barisan Sosialis. In the course of his speech Bani attacked Ong Eng Guan and his "stooges" for creating discontent and "blocking the progress of the Party". He asked all loyal Party members to rally round the collective leadership of the Central Executive Committee. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1960.

114 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates.*, Vol. 13, 3 August 1960, Cols. 102-14, and 4 August 1960, Cols. 124-50.

115 *Ibid.*, 10 December 1960, Vol. 14, Col. 354, and 12 December 1960, Cols. 407-8.

116 *Ibid.*, 14 December 1960, Cols. 667-8.

117 *Ibid.*, 23 December 1960, Cols. 811-29.

The Government appointed a Judicial Commission to inquire into the allegations in order to exonerate the Ministers and discredit Ong Eng Guan. Lee Kuan Yew appeared in person before the Inquiry Commission. With intimate knowledge of Ong Eng Guan's personal life Lee Kuan Yew effectively discredited him before the Commission. The Commission found that Ong Eng Guan "is a person not to be believed" and that his allegations were "untrue, groundless and reckless". To quote the Commission's words:

All the three allegations made by Mr. Ong Eng Guan in the Legislative Assembly against the Prime Minister and the Minister for Labour and Law and all the allegations which he made against the Prime Minister in the course of giving his evidence in this Commission are untrue, groundless and reckless. Mr. Ong Eng Guan is a person not to be believed.¹¹⁸

By the beginning of 1961 momentous changes had taken place in Singapore's political scene. Having forced a by-election in Hong Lim, Ong Eng Guan, as stated earlier, attacked the Government for compromising with the British colonialists and advocated immediate reopening of the constitutional talks with the British Government. Lim Chin Siong and his colleagues, while dissociating themselves from Ong Eng Guan, called for "left-wing unity" in the anti-colonial struggle.¹¹⁹ Through the trade unions they began to exert pressure on the Party and the Government to intensify the anti-colonial struggle and remove all vestiges of colonialism. It was clearly evident by early 1961 that the leftist leaders would ask for the abolition of the Internal Security Council as the minimum demand in the constitutional talks.¹²⁰

118 Government of Singapore, *Report of the Inquiry Commission into Certain Allegations Made by Mr. Ong Eng Guan in the Legislative Assembly on the 10th and 12th December 1960*, Cmd. 7 of 1961 (Singapore, 1961), para 15.

119 See the statement issued by the three Political Secretaries, *Straits Times*, 24 January 1961.

120 In March 1961, Tan Teck Hua, an important leader of the Singapore General Employees Union, said that Singapore was still politically and economically a semi-colonial society. The colonial forces were still blocking the democratic rights of the

By the end of 1960 the moderate leaders in the P. A. P. felt it necessary to clarify their stand on independence of Singapore and merger with Malaya. In a statement issued on the sixth anniversary, the P. A. P. stated that its objective had always been independence for Singapore through merger with the Federation and not independence for Singapore by itself.¹²¹ An independent Singapore, the Party declared "was a retreat from the idea of Malayan Nation". Not only was it not viable "politically, militarily or economically", but it would, even if it were established "for an interim period", give a great fillip to the forces of Chinese chauvinism:

For once independence is achieved in this island city, 75 per cent of whose population is Chinese, the logical consequence would be that Chinese chauvinist sentiments which are at present being muted and slowly dissolved because of the objective of independence through merger, will openly and aggressively come to the fore. An independent Singapore will not result in merger, for Singapore will become an increasingly Chinese City with Chinese from the Federation, and perhaps from Indonesia as well seeking refuge in Singapore.¹²²

After pointing out that the demand for an independent Singapore was not realistic the statement added that merger of Singapore and Malaya was historically inevitable. It was inevitable because the "Federation cannot afford to have a hostile

people through the Internal Security Council and in collaboration with the reactionaries. The immediate task facing the people was, therefore, to continue the anti-colonial struggle in order to achieve their democratic rights. Addressing the same gathering, Lim Chin Siong asked the people to have a clear understanding of the political situation. He declared that the people did not have full power so long as there was Internal Security Council, and that the immediate task was, therefore, to eliminate the forces of colonialism in the country. *Straits Times*, 24 March 1961.

121 "The Fixed Political Objectives of our Party; A Policy Statement by the Central Executive Committee of the People's Action Party", *Petir*, vol. 3, 26 January 1961, pp. 2, 3, 4, 8.

122 *Ibid.*

Singapore".¹²³ So long as the British Government had ultimate authority in Singapore it would prevent any hostile or Communist forces from coming into power; hence the security interests of the Federation were safe and it could continue to reject all proposals for merger. But by its very nature this constitutional arrangement could not last for ever and it would have to give way to a more realistic arrangement under which the "Singapore and Federation positions will have to be contained by one authority, or the Federation will run the risk of having Singapore fall into hostile hands and later have to face more dangerous military and political consequences."¹²⁴

The policy statement in conclusion gave a broader orientation to the question of merger:

Merger between Singapore and the Federation is our immediate task to be accomplished. *But this association should not rule out a broader political association between the Federation, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo provided all the countries concerned decided that that is what they want.* There are many links between these countries today. We all shared the same British colonial system. We still all share one currency. Our peoples are akin. It is in everyone's interest in these territories that the Federation, Singapore and Borneo should seek strength politically and economically by closer association with each other.¹²⁵

123 "So far we have emphasised the importance of 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. Militarily and politically Singapore and the Federation are one unit. Colonialism has made a technically international frontier on the Straits of Johore and created two states. But no soldier can devise a front to make Singapore and the Federation two instead of one military situation. He who conquers Malaya conquers Singapore. The Japanese proved it. And conversely he who holds Singapore absorbs Malaya. Stamford Raffles proved it." *Ibid.*

124 *Ibid.*

125 *Ibid.*, Emphasis added. As early as January 1960 the P. A. P. had stated that in order to break its isolation it was essential

Hong Lim Election

Public attention in Singapore was focussed on the by-election in Hong Lim. The P. A. P. treated it as a vote of confidence,¹²⁶ and nominated Jek Yuen Thong, a Chinese-educated ex-detainee, who was Political Secretary to the Prime Minister, as its candidate. Throughout the election campaign the P. A. P. leaders reiterated the Party's objective of merger with the Federation. In one of his speeches, Lee Kuan Yew said, almost prophetically, in retrospect :

Let us not make any mistake about it. We are not playing to a Singapore audience, but we have to play to a pan-Malayan audience. What was done and said in Singapore would be carried across to the Federation by the radio, rediffusion and newspapers.¹²⁷

Despite the adverse comments of the Chua Commission and the virulent propaganda against him by the P. A. P. leaders Ong Eng Guan still retained his immense popularity among the voters in Hong Lim. He exploited to the full the disillusionment of the Chinese-educated over the performance of the Singapore Govern-

for Singapore to strengthen its economic and political relations not only with the Federation but also with the Borneo territories. In an article in *Petir*, Toh Chin Chye wrote: "If Singapore cannot survive as an isolated state what then can be the possibilities? Among the countries in South East Asia with which we have traditional political relations are the Federation, Sarawak, Brunei and British Borneo. It is a natural and logical step that Singapore should strengthen her ties with these countries not only economically but also politically. In the absence of a merger with the Federation this is the only possible solution to the danger of Singapore being isolated." Toh Chin Chye, "The Cross-roads", *Petir*, Vol. 3, 4 January 1960. In the course of a visit to Sarawak in September 1960, Lee Kuan Yew again spoke about the common bonds of these territories and the common problems that they faced. He also advocated closer co-operation among them. *Straits Times*, 21 September 1960.

126 "The Stakes in Hong Lim", *Petir*, Vol. 3, 30 March 1961, and "Vote for Truth and Right", *Petir*, Vol. 3, 27 April 1961.

127 *Straits Times*, 31 March 1961.

ment. He accused the P. A. P. Government of twenty-two months of compromise and called for immediate constitutional talks.¹²⁸

The leftist leaders later clarified that they were not allowed to actively participate in the campaign¹²⁹. Even then, they extended their support to the Party candidate. In a bitter attack on Ong Eng Guan, Lim Chin Siong said that his victory would unleash evil forces in Singapore¹³⁰. In a statement issued by 1000 unionists supporting the P. A. P. candidate, the leftist leaders called for strengthening the "unity of all anti-colonial forces" on the basis of "seeking concord while containing differences" in order to continue the fight against imperialism.¹³¹

The election resulted in a resounding victory for Ong Eng Guan who won the seat with a majority of 4,927 votes.¹³² It was a clear pointer that the P. A. P. was losing its support rapidly and was no longer as invincible as it was considered to be in 1959.

The defeat of the P. A. P. candidate had far reaching repercussions in the internal politics of Singapore and in its relations with the Federation of Malaya. It raised the question of whether the P. A. P. continued to have a mandate to rule Singapore. Immediately after the declaration of results Lee Kuan Yew stated that the by-election was a "setback" to the P. A. P. and that it was imperative that it should re-establish its "position of confidence".¹³³ The opportunity was provided by the demise of Enche Baharudin bin Mohd. Ariff, the P. A. P. representative for Anson. A meeting of the Central Executive Committee and Party

128 *State of Singapore Annual Report*, 1961, p. 3.

129 See Lim Chin Siong's letter to the Editor, *Straits Times*, 31 July, 1961.

130 *Ibid.*, 26 March, 1961.

131 *Ibid.*, 24 March, 1961.

132 Ong Eng Guan (Ind.) — 7,747 Votes.

Jek Yuen Thong (P. A. P.) — 2,820 Votes.

See *Sunday Times*, 30 April, 1961.

133 *Sunday Times*, 30 April, 1961.

Executives of the 51 branches convened to review the political situation decided "to re-examine the position of the Party and the Government" after the Anson by-election. It passed a vote of confidence in the Party leadership and called on them to put up a "concerted and determined effort" to vindicate the Party in the Anson by-election.¹³⁴

In his first major speech after the defeat in Hong Lim, Lee Kuan Yew openly criticised the political line pursued by the leftist leaders. He declared that the political situation had undergone a definite change and the "moment of decision" had come for all people to decide "whether they stand for or against the P. A. P." To those who advocated "concord while maintaining differences" Lee Kuan Yew said that the P. A. P. had made its stand clear and they could seek concord with the P. A. P., but only on the P. A. P. stand. Lee Kuan Yew further added, "Over the coming weeks, it is not unlikely that events will unravel themselves with greater lucidity in order that everybody should know where everybody stands."¹³⁵

Lee Kuan Yew and the British leaders, during all these days, were trying to "sell the idea" of Malaysia to the Federation Prime Minister. The matter assumed greater urgency after the Hong Lim debacle. According to Lee Kuan Yew, after the defeat in Hong Lim, the P. A. P. gave serious consideration to the idea of resignation from the Assembly¹³⁶. The threat of resignation must have been intended to force the Federation leaders to take a more favourable stand on the question of merger. Hong Lim was a pointer that unless the Tunku accepted Singapore in some sort of merger, the P. A. P. would be replaced by political forces unfriendly to the Federation and dedicated to the abolition of Internal Security Council. And if Singapore attained independence in isolation from Malaya, Lee Kuan Yew argued, leftist forces would come to power in Singapore and the island would become the centre of

134 Ibid., 13 May 1961.

135 Ibid., 2 May 1961.

136 Lee Kuan Yew, n. 21, pp. 40-41.

Chinese chauvinism or communism or both. Neither Malaya nor Britain would be able to meet this security threat. Two years later, Lee Kuan Yew explained how he was able to win over the Tunku to the idea of merger :

Slowly the unpleasant and brutal facts were placed before the Federation Government. What had been publicly known was that Malaya was vital to Singapore, but what we did not emphasise, lest we offend our friends across the Causeway, was that Singapore was vital to their survival. Quietly over the golfcourse, sometimes even across the poker table, and sometimes over a meal, a friendly discussion always came. It had one theme song : merger is inevitable, either by consent or by force of one territory over the other . . . Being what we are, having regard to the susceptibilities of our friends in the Federation, the line was put over softly, gently and politely. Finally a note was struck in the hearts of the Federation Ministers.¹³⁷

The first indication that the Federation Prime Minister was contemplating some positive steps became evident in the first week of May. Addressing an U. M. N. O. rally in Malacca on 6th May 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman said :

There was a section of the Chinese in Singapore who did not want a good government which worked for the good of the people. What they want is a Communist government or a Communist oriented government. The way the Singapore government is carried on today is not good enough for those elements. The form of government which is now being practised in the Federation and Singapore, which is a very good example and has been rightly praised is not to the liking of some of these Chinese.¹³⁸

The Proposal for Malaysia

On 27 May 1961, in a meeting of the Foreign Correspondents Association in Singapore, Tunku Abdul Rahman made his historic proposal of Malaysia. His theme was national unity. "For us in

137 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol, 21, 30 July 1963, Col. 301.

138 *Sunday Times*, 7 May 1961.

Malaya, and I include Singapore in my remarks", Tunku Abdul Rahman said, "loyalty to the Malayan ideal and way of life is fundamental. There can be no halfway house in loyalty..... people who think that they are ensuring their future by trying to be friendly with the Communists on the one hand and with the Governments of the Federation and Singapore on the other are sure to end up losing one way or the other".¹³⁹ He concluded his speech by saying :

Malaya today as a nation realises that she cannot stand alone and in isolation. Outside of international politics the national politics must be broadbased. Sooner or later she should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak. 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 together in political and economic co-operation.¹⁴⁰

The proposal for Malaysia was intended mainly to solve the problem of Singapore. "The division of the two territories", Tunku Abdul Rahman said in the Federation of Malaya Legislative Assembly "might be all right at a moment when Singapore was still under the control of Great Britain, as the security of the island was in the hands of the U. K. Government, in other words in safe hands. But a time would come when Singapore would ask for and be given independence, and that time is not far off, for new talks on the Constitution are to be held in 1963".¹⁴¹ It must have been clear to Tunku Abdul Rahman that if Singapore attained independence in isolation from Malaya the extremist forces would come to power and Singapore would become the bastion of Chinese nationalism or Communism or both. "We must prevent a situation" Tunku Abdul Rahman added, "in which an independent Singapore would go one way and the Federation another. The way

139 Ibid., 28 May 1961.

140 Ibid.

141 For the full text of Tunku Abdul Rahman's speech, see "Growing Reality of Malaysia" in *Malaysia* (Published by the Government of Malaya, Ministry of Information, Kuala Lumpur), January 1962, pp. 25-36.

Singapore would go then would be towards another camp which is hostile to the Federation, and this would be quite unacceptable to us".¹⁴² Merger through Malaysia, on the other hand, would enable the Central Government to control and contain the subversive elements in Singapore. Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman said "would prevent those who are Communist-minded from being able to align independent Singapore with the Communist bloc".¹⁴³

Tunku Abdul Rahman was more forthright about the objective of Malaysia in a speech to the U. M. N. O. Information Officers in September 1962 :

The Constitution for Singapore comes to an end in 1963; and with it two issues will be faced; firstly whether Singapore should become independent; secondly should it merge with the Federation. It is impossible to grant independence to Singapore because of the danger of it going Communist and if it goes Communist it would, with the help of Communist powers, try to overrun the whole of Malaya. We can fight them with the help of our British and American friends, but the inevitable result will be catastrophic, with suffering, misery and distress ... Therefore to prevent this most unhappy and disastrous state of affairs occurring the only course open to us would be to accept Singapore as a member of the Federation of Malaysia.¹⁴⁴

The inclusion of the Borneo territories was an essential part of Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaysia proposal. The one arrangement to which the Federation leaders were strongly opposed was the merger of only Singapore with the Federation of Malaya.¹⁴⁵ In such an arrangement the Chinese would outnumber the Malays

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

144 *Straits Times*, 25 September 1962.

145 Speaking to the Press in London in November 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman said that he would not agree to a merger with Singapore unless the Borneo territories also came into the Federation of Malaysia. He considered them one issue and would insist on this in his talks with the British Government. Ibid. 18 November 1961.

and pose a challenge to the Malay political supremacy on which the political process in the Federation of Malaya was based. But if the Borneo territories were included, a more favourable balance between the Chinese and the non-Chinese population could be accomplished¹⁴⁶. The indigenous peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak – Dusuns, Dayaks, Bajaus etc. – are not Malays either by race or religion, but the leaders of the Federation believed that they could be persuaded to cooperate with the Malays and support Malaysia.

The table (page 124) gives the population figures and racial breakdown of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak. Since Brunei did not join Malaysia its population is not included in the table.

The proposal for Malaysia held out the prospect of early independence for the Borneo territories.¹⁴⁷ The political and constitutional advancement of these territories was far behind that of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore. There was no popular demand for independence in 1961 in any of these territories. The Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak had suggested in 1958 the possibility of a Federation of the three Borneo territories.¹⁴⁸ It was followed by a series of inter-territorial conferences. But the suggestion did not receive any favourable response from the Sultan

146 Speaking in the Singapore Legislative Assembly, Lee Kuan Yew said: "It took a lot of persuasion and argument to bring the Tunku around to merger. And he wanted merger only with Malaysia. Sir, I do not blame him. Being what he is – anxious to preserve what he thinks are the valuable traits in the Federation, a stable rural population that provides security and ensures the continuance of the Alliance Party in power – he was reluctant to embark on a project the result of which he could not foresee. Without the Borneo territories, the Chinese would outnumber the Malays and, with it, the logical consequences of its effects on the balance of power". Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 21, 30 July 1963, Col. 302.

147 For a good account of the political development of the Borneo Territories, see J. P. Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia, 1961-1963* (Singapore, 1967).

148 T. E. Smith, "Proposals for Malaysia", *The World Today* Vol. 18, May 1962, pp. 192-200.

MALAYSIA — POPULATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS — END — 1961.¹⁴⁹

(In Thousands)

	Federation of Malaya Percentage		Singapore Percentage		Sarawak Percentage		North Borneo Percentage		Malaysia Total	Percent- age
1 Chinese	2,670	36.9	1,279	75.2	243	31.1	110	23.3	4,302	42.2
2 Malays	3,616	50.1	238	14.0	137	17.5	—	—	3,991	39.2
3 Indians & Pakistanis	813	11.2	142	8.3	—	—	—	—	955	9.4
4 Sea Dayak	—	—	—	—	246	31.5	—	—	716	7.0
5 Land Dayak	—	—	—	—	61	7.8	—	—		
6 Melanau	—	—	—	—	46	5.9	—	—		
7 Dusun	—	—	—	—	—	—	152	31.8		
8 Bajau	—	—	—	—	—	—	63	13.1		
9 Murut	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	4.8		
10 Other indigenous (not elsewhere specified)	4	—	—	—	39	5.1	83	17.5		
11 Non-indigenous (not elsewhere specified)	129	1.8	41	2.5	8	1.1	45	9.5	223	2.2
Total (All races)	7,232	100.0	1,700	100.0	780	100.0	475	100.0	10,187	100.0
Percentage Distribution	70.9		16.7		7.7		4.7		100.0	

149 *Report on the Economic Aspects of Malaysia*, Misc. 3 of 1963 (Singapore, 1963), Table III.

of Brunei nor any popular support in North Borneo or Sarawak. But if the British domination continued indefinitely there was always the possibility of Communist subversion, especially in Sarawak. An important aspect of Malaysia, according to Tunku Abdul Rahman was that, "it will enable the Borneo territories to transform their present colonial status to self-government for themselves and absolute independence in Malaysia simultaneously and balk the Communist attempt to capture these territories".¹⁵⁰

The five territories, though varying in size and population, had a broad community of interests. All of them shared the common British colonial heritage and, therefore, had similar political and administrative traditions. They had a common currency. Both English and Malay languages were widely used and understood in all these territories.

The idea of a political association of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories was neither new nor original. In 1887, Lord Brassey, a Director of North Borneo Company, had proposed a scheme by which "the British Government should amalgamate its Protectorates in Borneo and Malaya with the Straits Settlements into one large Colony".¹⁵¹ After the second world war the consolidation of all the British territories in Southeast Asia into a "dominion of South-East Asia" was discussed, but was considered impractical.¹⁵² Malcolm Macdonald, the British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, had been an enthusiastic advocate of this scheme. In 1949 he told Mohammed Hatta, the Indonesian nationalist leader, that it was the intention of the British to unite all the British territories in Southeast Asia into one independent unit and not to grant independence to them separately.¹⁵³ On the eve of the constitutional talks in London in 1956 Tunku Abdul Rahman seems to have given some thought to the

150 See n. 141.

151 Steven Runciman, *The White Rajahs* (London, 1960), p. 195.

152 Harry Miller, *The Story of Malaysia* (London, 1965), p. 220.

153 Mohamad Hatta, "One Indonesian view of the Malaysia Issue," *Asian Survey*, (Berkeley), Vol. 5, March 1965, pp. 139-43.

idea of a Malaysian federation, which would include Singapore and the Borneo territories.¹⁵⁴ but gave up the idea when he was convinced of the strong arguments against the inclusion of Singapore.

It is quite certain, that Tunku Abdul Rahman had discussions with British officials and Singapore Ministers before he made the proposal for Malaysia. The Federation Chief Minister has stated that the idea of Malaysia did not come to him "by chance" and that it had been forming in his mind for "a considerable time".¹⁵⁵ In January 1961, Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, visited Kuala Lumpur and had discussions with the leaders of the Federation and Singapore, and also with the High Commissioners of various Commonwealth countries.¹⁵⁶ In February 1961, Lord Mountbatten, the Chief of the British Defence Staff, visited Singapore and the Federation of Malaya and had discussions with leaders of both the Federation and Singapore.¹⁵⁷ What transpired in these meetings would continue to be "confidential information" for a long time, but it would not be too far-fetched to assume that the constitutional future of Singapore must also have been in the agenda. The British officials and Singapore leaders had valid reasons for supporting the creation of an enlarged Federation. They must have taken the opportunity to persuade Tunku Abdul Rahman to the idea of Malaysia.

154 *Times of India*, 2 January 1956.

155 Tunku Abdul Rahman added that whenever the question of merger was raised in public he always "ignored" the question or gave a "negative" answer. see n. 141. Even in the first week of May 1961, Tunku Abdul Rahman stated that since many people in Singapore did not owe undivided allegiance to Malaya, the Federation Government was opposed to merger. *Straits Times*, 5 May 1961.

156 Those who participated in the discussions included Duncan Sandys, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak, Dato Ismail, Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee and R. G. K. Thompson (Federation Secretary for Defence). *Ibid.*, 13 January 1961.

157 *Ibid.*, 14 February 1961.

The Malaysia proposal, from the point of view of Great Britain, was an ideal arrangement. It would enable Britain to complete successfully the process of decolonization in Southeast Asia without endangering her vital security interests in the region.¹⁵⁸ Both Lord Selkirk, the Commissioner General of Southeast Asia and Harold Macmillan, the British Prime Minister, welcomed the proposal for the creation of Malaysia within a month after it was formally made.¹⁵⁹

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- 158 Speaking in the House of Commons in July 1963, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Nigel Fisher, said that Malaysia would be an "area of real stability in a not very stable part of the world". He added that this "stability will be further increased by the extension to the whole of Malaysia of the existing Anglo-Malayan defence agreement. From our point of view—one might as well be frank about these things—this ensures to us the use of the Singapore base, which is very important, and from the Malaysia point of view it ensures our assistance to them in the external defence of the new Federation if that should ever become necessary" U. K., *House of Commons*, vol. 681, 19 July 1963, col. 926.
- 159 *Straits Times*, 24 June 1961, and U. K., *House of Commons*, vol. 642, 20 June 1961, cols. 1171-2.

4. THE MAKING OF MALAYSIA

The years 1961-63 marked the period of the making of Malaysia. It was a significant phase in the political life of Singapore and its relations with the Federation. The proposal for the new Federation led to the final break-up of the P. A. P. and brought about a distinct polarisation of political forces in the island. The negotiations between the Singapore and Federation Governments, while revealing the determination of the two Governments to push through the Malaysia scheme, also brought into sharp relief the differences in the political evolution of the two territories.

Reactions to Malaysia Proposal

The Singapore Prime Minister, as expected, favourably responded to the proposal for Malaysia. Speaking on Singapore National Day, Lee Kuan Yew said that, if merger and independence would come sooner and more easily "through the Borneo sister territories coming in together with us into political integration with the Federation, then we support it, for it would also mean that we would have a larger and more powerful economic base for our new nation."¹ Although Lim Chin Siong and his other colleagues subscribed to the principle of merger,² they never

1 *Sunday Times*, 4 June 1961.

2 In a statement to the press on the issue of merger Lim Chin Siong said: "I am not and I shall not be against the unification of the country (Singapore plus the Federation). I realise that the aspiration of our people is to see a merger taking

expected the Malay dominated conservative Federation Government to come forward with a proposal to include Singapore in a larger Federation.³ It was apparent from the beginning that, in any form of merger, the Federation Government would insist, and Singapore Government would agree, that the powers of internal security should rest with the Central Government. Given the stringent measures that the anti-communist Federation Government had taken against the Communists and Left-wing organizations, the Leftist leaders realized that merger would amount to their political annihilation. They decided, therefore, to bring pressure on the Party and the Government to adopt such measures so that Tunku Abdul Rahman may have second thoughts on merger. When these tactics failed, they attempted to capture Party branches and cause a sizeable defection among the members of the Legislative Assembly with the aim of replacing the Lee Kuan Yew government by one which would be more amenable to their interests. The by-election in Anson provided an opportunity for this manoeuvre.

On 2 June 1961, the "Trade Union Six" led by Lim Chin Siong offered their conditional support to the P. A. P. in the by-election on the basis of a new constitution which would give Singapore "genuinely full internal self-government". They demanded that, in the constitutional talks in 1963, "all sections of present Constitution which run counter to the rights of full self-government must be revoked forthwith. A popularly elected government must exercise all the rights over matters of internal security. *The Internal Security Council must be abolished.*"⁴ It is interesting to note that

place between Federation and Singapore. It has long been my dedication that I should do everything in my power to realise the aspiration of the people of Malaya." *Straits Times*, 19 July 1961.

- 3 In a letter to the Editor in the *Straits Times* Lim Chin Siong stated, "Merger, we have hitherto come to understand was a thing of the distant future." *Ibid*, 24 June 1961.
- 4 Emphasis added. *Press statement issued by Lim Chin Siong, S. Woodhull, Dominic Puthucheary, Jamith Singh, Fong Swee Suan and S. T. Bani*, 2 June 1961.

the Leftist leaders, while demanding the abolition of the Internal Security Council, were completely silent on the issue of merger. Their demand was echoed by forty-two trade unions with considerable support among Singapore workers.⁵

The P. A. P. stand on the constitutional future was made clear by Dr. Toh Chin Chye, Party Chairman and Deputy Prime Minister who, inaugurating the election campaign in Anson, declared that the P. A. P. would demand "complete independence through merger with the Federation or merger with a larger Federation", which would abolish the Internal Security Council in another way.⁶ Speaking in the same rally Lee Kuan Yew welcomed the Malaysia proposal and said that, in any form of merger, Singapore must have freedom to decide its labour and education policies.⁷ On 12 June 1961, the "Trade Union Six" issued another statement. They called on the Government to take "immediate anti-colonial steps" and achieve a "monolithic unity of all anti-colonial forces" in the State. They asked the Government to (1) release all political detainees; (2) assist a speedy unification of the trade union movement; (3) grant the right of citizenship and franchise to all those loyal to the anti-colonial struggle and (4) allow freedom of press, speech, assembly and organization for the purpose of advancing the anti-colonial struggle.⁸ The four demands, though clearly stated in public for the first time, were not new. But if they were accepted by the Government, it would have brought the Government of Singapore in direct conflict with the Federation Government in the Internal Security Council and would have led to a constitutional deadlock.

Anson Election

The attention of the Singapore public was focussed on the crucial by-election in Anson. After the humiliating defeat in Hong

5 *Straits Times*, 10 June 1961.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Press Statement issued by the "Trade Union Six"*, 12 June 1961.

Lim, the P. A. P. considered the by-election as a "test" of whether the Government has lost the "moral authority" to govern Singapore.⁹ The Party newspaper added :

Our primary aim in Anson is not winning one seat, but satisfying ourselves that, by and large, we have the people's approval for what we have done in the past and what we intend to do in the future What is being put to test in Anson is whether the people will support the Government which has honestly tried to improve their lot within the limitations of a democratic structure and the constraints of an entrepot economy.¹⁰

The Party nominated Enche Mahmud bin Awang, the President of the Trade Union Congress, as its candidate. Throughout the election campaign, Lee Kuan Yew and other leaders of the Government reiterated their support to Malaysia and considered the proposal as a vindication of the Party's stand on independence through merger with the Federation.¹¹ David Marshall, the former Chief Minister, standing as the candidate of the Worker's Party, campaigned for "full independence" for Singapore, the removal of the U. K. Base, the release of the detainees and the abolition of the Internal Security Council.¹² The Alliance, the newly-formed political party of Lim Yew Hock, supported merger but did not believe it possible in the "foreseeable future". The Party advocated the termination of Colonial rule, the establishment of a Confederation with Defence and External Affairs transferred to the Federation and the future of the U. K. Base guaranteed by the extension of Anglo-Malayan Defence Treaty.¹³ The Singapore Congress advocated that the Government should pursue a "realistic policy" of continuing the constitutional arrangement beyond 1963 till

9 "Democracy on Trial", *Petir*, vol. 4, 13 July 1961.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Straits Times*, 11 July 1961. See also "The Stand of the National Left", *Petir*, vol. 4, 17 June 1961.

12 *Straits Times*, 8 June, 30 June 1961. See also *Guardian* (Manchester), 30 June 1961.

13 *State of Singapore Annual Report* 1961, p. 6. See also *Straits Times*, 12 June 1961.

the danger of a "Communist-inspired left-wing victory can be ruled out".¹⁴ The Liberal Socialist Party stood for independence first and then merger with the Federation.¹⁵

As the election campaign progressed, the differences between the Leftists and the Moderates in the P. A. P. widened and spread to the Party branches and members of the Legislative Assembly. Answering criticisms that they were avoiding any mention of merger in their statements, Lim Chin Siong said that he was not against the principle of merger, but the basic question was on what terms would merger be effected :

The Right-wing Government in the Federation and a Left-wing Government in Singapore apply certain conflicting policies... Merger is a matter that must be worked out to a great degree of clarity. It is not a thing to be accepted without firmly defined purposes. Great sacrifices have been made by the people to achieve their present position in Singapore and merger *must never turn out to be a sell-out of any sort.*¹⁶

In another statement the "Trade Union Six" said that the issue of merger was being raised in vague and general terms in order to distract the people from the realities facing them. They called on the Government to state publicly the envisaged form and substance of merger with the Federation and a merger in the context of the "mighty Malaysia" proposal.¹⁷ The demands of the Leftist leaders were taken up by Dr. Lee Siew Choh and seven other members of the Legislative Assembly. In a letter to the

14 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1961*, p. 6.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Straits Times*, 24 June 1961. The General Employees Union, with which Lim Chin Siong and Fong Swee Suan were closely associated, in a statement declared that the sudden change in the attitude of the Federation Government, which was hitherto cold to the issue of merger, was "strange". It also expressed concern at the enthusiasm and activities of the British. *Straits Times*, 8 July 1961.

17 *Ibid.*, 10 July 1961.

Chairman of the Party they asked for a convention of the Central Executive Committee, Party Organizing Secretaries and the Executives of the fifty-one branches to "discuss and examine the current role of the P. A. P. and the present political situation, more particularly: (1) the question of merger or super merger (2) the situation arising out of the press statements of six T U. C. leaders and (3) Intra-Party Democracy in P. A. P."¹⁸ On 11 July 1961 in an all-Party forum, especially convened to discuss the "Basis of Merger" in the University of Singapore, an open collision took place between Devan Nair who represented the P. A. P. and Woodhull who represented the "Trade Union Six". Devan Nair declared that the P. A. P. would not remain a "punching bag" and was prepared for a "parting of the ways" with those who disagreed with its fundamental principles.¹⁹ Two days later, the eight members of the Legislative Assembly released to the public their letter to the Party Chairman, demanded the Party's disavowal of Devan Nair and expressed their solid support to Lim Chin Siong and his associates.²⁰

The P. A. P. thus faced a serious crisis on the eve of the Anson by-election. The successive statements of Lim Chin Siong and his associates, supported at the last moment by eight members of the Legislative Assembly, had the effect of confusing the electorate. Although voting was compulsory in Singapore, 14 per cent of the electorate abstained and David Marshall won the seat, polling 546 votes more than the P. A. P. candidate.²¹ The P. A. P. in a statement declared that its candidate was defeated-

18 In their letter to the Party Chairman the signatories mentioned that similar conventions have been held to discuss the Ong Eng Guan incident and again the causes of P. A. P. defeat in Hong Lim and the Government resignation issue. The letter was released to the public subsequently. *Press statement issued by Dr. Lee Siew Choh and Others*, 13 July, 1961.

19 *Straits Times*, 12 July 1961.

20 *Press Statement*, n. 18.

21 David Marshall (Worker's Party) — 3,598
Inche Mahmud bin Awang (P. A. P.) — 3,052

as a result of the treachery by three political secretaries and eight Assembly men acting in concert with them. At a critical time when we were fighting our political opponents, they deliberately set out to divide the party and confuse the voters in an attempt to render our candidate a crushing defeat. It was this treachery which allowed Marshall to win on a minority vote.²²

Break-up of the P. A. P.

The fortunes of the P. A. P. were at its lowest ebb in the days immediately following the Anson by-election. Lim Chin Siong and his colleagues seem to have believed that they would be able to cause a serious defection among the members of the Legislative Assembly and form a Government which would be more left-oriented than the Lee Kuan Yew Government. It was perhaps in furtherance of this design that Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Woodhull and James Puthuchearry met Lord Selkirk, the British Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, on 18 July 1961. It is reasonable to assume that the purpose of this visit was to seek the assurance of the British Government that, if they were able to get majority support in the Legislative Assembly, the British would allow them to form the Government and would not suspend the Constitution.²³ Lee Kuan Yew realised that time was running out

Dr. Chee (Alliance)	— 1,482
Inche Ismail (Liberal Socialists)	— 104
Inche Ibrahim (Singapore Congress)	— 69

Sunday Times, 16 July 1961.

22 Ibid.

23 Lee Kuan Yew has alleged that the incident was part of the British plot by which the Communists would be forced to come out into the open and face a direct conflict with the Government. Lee Kuan Yew added that "For two years, the British Government has tried to manipulate the P. A. P. into a position where we will become the successor to what was called the Lim Yew Hock Government, where the Communist Party will be attacked not by British imperialism, which is the supreme power in Singapore, but by us, the locally elected Government with limited powers. To achieve this end, every blandishment and argument have been put forward, and every

against the Government and that he would have to act immediately to thwart the leftist attempts to capture the Party and the Government. After securing the solid support of the Central Executive Committee,²⁴ the Government convened a special meeting of the Legislative Asssmbly on 20 July 1961 and sought a vote of confidence. Introducing the Motion of Confidence, Lee Kuan Yew declared :

...after losing Anson by a narrow majority, and because of this attempt by the Trade Union Six and eight Assemblymen to capture the Government and the Party, we are resolved not to abdicate our position in order that the Party and the Government does not pass into the hands of people who intend to use it for purposes for which the people did not vote the P. A. P. in. The present leadership

device and seductive manoeuvre practisd". Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 14, 20/21 July 1961, col. 1666.

Giving their version of the "Eden Hall Party", Woodhull has pointed out that the meeting was arranged at James Puthuchear's initiative. According to Woodhull, Dr. Goh Keng Swee told James Puthuchear immediately after the Anson election that if the Leftists believed that the British would sit back and see the Left destroy the P. A. P. then we must be wishful thinkers British intervention, according to Dr. Goh, was imminent. Since Dr. Goh is a member of the Internal Security Council, we had to take him seriously.... It was their smug assumption that the British would not tolerate a Government of any Leftwing force other than the P. A. P. leadership. It was, therefore, our responsibility to find out for ourselves the attitude of the U. K. Commission . We reiterated and reaffirmed to Lord Selkirk all that we had stated in public. We went to clarify, not consult....." *Straits Times*, 13 August 1961. The British authorities, as was to be expected, observed complete silence on the incident.

24 See the exchange of letters between Lee Kuan Yew and Dr. Toh Chin Chye, *Straits Times*, 19 July 1961. It is interesting to note that the Party leadership did not convene a meeting of the Central Executive Committee, Party Organizing Secretaries and the Executives of the fiftyone branches as it did on earlier occasions when the Party was faced with serious crises. Obviously, the Party leadership was not certain of the support that it would be able to muster in such a convention.

of the Party was responsible for winning the last elections and getting the mandate of the people, and it is our duty not to give Mr. Lim Chin Siong and his friends any opportunity to take over this Government in order to run it as a Communist front Government.²⁵

Dr. Lee Siew Choh and others, still occupying the Treasury Benches, argued that the issues at stake were intra-Party ones and the Government should seek a vote of confidence, not from the Legislative Assembly, but from the Party members.²⁶ When the votes were taken at the end of the debate, twenty seven members voted for the proposition, but thirteen from the Treasury Benches abstained.²⁷ The next day Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan and S. Woodhull, the three Political Secretaries and Dr. Lee Siew Choh, the Parliamentary Secretary, were dismissed from the P. A. P.²⁸

The days which followed saw the virtual break-up of the P. A. P. The Leftists clearly demonstrated their popular strength. As much as 70 per cent of the rank and file joined the Lim Chin Siong group. Thirty-seven of the fifty-one Party branches also came under leftist control.²⁹ The powerful trade union movement was also torn apart. The Trade Union Congress (whose Constitution was never registered) was dissolved³⁰ and two new trade union organisations emerged: (1) The National Trade Union Congress (N. T. U. C.) under C. V. Devan Nair which supported the Government and (2) the Singapore Association of Trade Unions (S.A.T.U.) under guidance and control of Lim Chin Siong group. In August, the dissidents formed a new political party, the Barisan Sosialis

25 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 14, 20/21 July 1961, col. 1665.

26 *Ibid.*, col. 1696.

27 The division in the House was as follows: Ayes 27; Noes 8, Abstention 16; Absent Nil. *Ibid.*, col. 1852.

28 *Straits Times*, 22 July 1961.

29 Michael Leifer, "Politics in Singapore: The First Term of the People's Action Party 1959-1963", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 102-19.

30 *Straits Times*, 26 July 1961.

(Socialist Front) with Dr. Lee Siew Choh as Chairman and Lim Chin Siong as Secretary-General. The Government was left with a majority of one vote in the Legislative Assembly.

Terms of Merger

Negotiations between the leaders of Singapore and Federation Governments were soon begun to work out the details of merger. It was apparent from the beginning that Singapore, because of its political evolution, would have to join Malaysia on terms which would be different from that of other states in the Federation.³¹ After a series of meetings between the Ministers of the two territories in August and September 1961 it was announced that an agreement had been reached "in principle" on merger. The Central Government would control External Affairs, Defence and Internal Security while the Government of Singapore would retain autonomy in Labour and Education.³² A Working Party was set up to work out the details of merger. The details, barring the financial arrangements, were made public by the Government of Singapore in the form of a White Paper in November 1961.³³

31 Speaking in the Federation of Malaya Legislative Assembly Tunku Abdul Rahman said, "..... because of the special position of Singapore as a city State, to my mind, it would be best if Singapore came in on a partnership basis with local autonomy with powers to determine nearly all matters except defence, external affairs and security. These must be under the control of the Central Government as they are in all countries with Federal Constitutions. What I have in mind is to call such an association or federation of states the Federation of Malaysia i. e. all the Federation of Malaya States, the Borneo Territories and Singapore, in which the States of the Borneo territories and the states of the Federation of Malaya join together as a Federation of Malaysia and Singapore is joined in partnership on a footing something like that which exists between the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland". "Growing Reality of Malaysia" (Text of Tunku Abdul Rahman's speech in the House of Representatives on 16 October 1961). *Malaysia* (Ministry of Information, Kuala Lumpur), No. 1, January 1962. pp. 25-34.

32 *Straits Times*, 25 August, 17 September and 1 November 1961.

33 *Memorandum Setting out Heads of Agreement For a Merger Between The Federation of Malaya and Singapore*, Cmd. 33

According to the White Paper on merger:

Singapore will be a state within the Federation, but on special conditions and with a larger measure of local autonomy than the other states forming the Federation. Defence, External Affairs and Security will be the responsibility of the Federation Government; Education and Labour that of the Singapore Government.³⁴

The emergence of a strong Malaysia implied that the Central Government should have control of Internal Security and, both Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew, agreed that it should be the sole responsibility of the Central Government. On the other hand, it would have led to considerable difficulties if Singapore was to conform to the Federation pattern in the field of Education and Labour. As noted in the last chapter, the Government of Singapore, unlike the Federation of Malaya, gave equal treatment to all the four language streams; it also recognized the degrees conferred by the Nanyang University. Similarly, due to the growth of "leftist" trade Unions, the workers in Singapore had made more gains. This was reflected in the labour legislation which was more progressive than in the Federation of Malaya. The Singapore Government was aware that any concession to the Federation on these two vital issues would be a political disaster and, as noted earlier, Lee Kuan Yew had stated as early as June 1961 that, in any form of merger, Singapore should retain autonomy in Labour and Education.

The issues relating to Singapore citizenship and representation in Parliament were complex and led to considerable political acrimony and agitation in Singapore. The difficulties were due to the fact that the legal provisions for the acquisition of Singapore citizenship, as noted in the last chapter, were more favourable to non-Malays than in the Federation of Malaya. Under the Malaysia scheme, if the rules of the Federation were applied as the yardstick for the acquisition of Malaysian citizenship, a large number of Singapore citizens would lose their citizenship. The Singapore

of 1961 (Singapore, n. d.). This has been included as appendix I in the book.

34 Ibid.

Government pointed out that, out of 6,24,000 Singapore citizens, only 2,84,000 who were born in Singapore would have automatically qualified for citizenship. The remaining 3,40,000 (who were not born in Singapore) would have to apply for citizenship under the citizenship laws of the Federation (which require a longer period of residential qualification, and a knowledge of the Malay language). The Singapore Government estimated that, under these provisions, over two-thirds i. e. more than 2,30,000 would lose their citizenship. On the other hand, according to the Federation Government, the demand of the Barisan Socialis that all Singapore citizens should automatically become citizens of Malaysia was "too absurd to merit serious consideration".³⁵ The Barisan claim, if accepted, would have meant in actual practice, that the citizenship provisions would be less stringent for the people of Singapore than for those in the Federation itself. Further, in such a situation, the number of non-Malay citizens would considerably increase, would upset the delicate racial balance and pose a challenge to the political supremacy of the Malays.

The way out, according to the White Paper proposals, was for Singapore citizens to retain their Singapore citizenship and become nationals of the larger Federation :

All Singapore citizens will keep their citizenship and automatically become nationals of the larger Federation. Citizens of the present Federation will similarly become nationals of the larger Federation. 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 subject to the equal duties and responsibilities under the Constitution of the larger Federation. Singapore citizens will continue to enjoy their State rights and privileges within Singapore.³⁶

The White Paper laid down that "Singapore citizens will vote in Singapore for their representatives to the new Federation

35 *Exchange of letters between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore, Legislative Assembly Debates, vol. 15, 24 November 1961, cols. 690-2*

36 n. 33.

Parliament and the citizens of the present Federation of Malaya will vote in the present Federation for their representatives to the same new Federation Parliament'.³⁷

Changes were made in the White Paper proposals regarding citizenship in August 1962 mainly to overcome the criticisms of the opposition parties. It was decided that, instead of Malaysian nationality, a common citizenship for Malaysia should be created. All Singapore citizens were to become Malaysian citizens by operation of law, but to distinguish them from other Malaysian citizens, the term "citizens, who are Singapore citizens" was used in the Malaysia Agreement to describe them. All other Malaysian citizens were known as "citizens who are not Singapore citizens". This dichotomy carried with it, as noted earlier, certain disabilities. A Singapore citizen could stand for election and vote only in Singapore; and a Malaysian citizen who was not a Singapore citizen could stand for election and vote only in Malaya.³⁸

Equally controversial were the issues involving the representation of Singapore in the Federal Parliament. The White Paper provided that "on a fair balance of interests" Singapore would be entitled to send fifteen representatives to the House of Representatives and two to the Senate.³⁹ It was considerably lower than what Singapore would have been entitled to under proportional representation and was a compromise between the nineteen initially demanded by the Singapore Government and the twelve proposed by the Federation Government.⁴⁰ The White Paper pointed out that three vital considerations were taken into account in determining Singapore's representation in the Federal Parliament: (1) 6,24,000 Singapore citizens should not lose their citizenship rights; (2) Singapore should have local autonomy in education and labour

37 Ibid.

38 *Malaysia Agreement concluded between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore*. Cmd 22 of 1963 (Singapore, n. d.). pp. 19-27.

39 n. 33.

40 n. 35.

and a larger measure of state powers compared to other states in the Federation; (3) in order to give effect to local autonomy in education, labour and other state responsibilities, Singapore would retain a very large proportion of state revenue.⁴¹

An analysis of the White Paper proposals makes it clear that the important principle guiding the Federation leaders was to restrict the political role of Singapore in Malaysia. This point became increasingly clear when the constitutional provision regarding Sarawak and North Borneo were published. While Singapore, with 16.7 per cent of the total population was given only fifteen seats, Sarawak, with 7.7 per cent of the total population was allotted twenty-four seats and North Borneo with 4.7 per cent of the total population was given sixteen seats. As Prof. Milne has pointed out the low representation, taken together with the citizenship provisions, had the effect of insulating the politics in Malaya, to a certain extent, from the impact of Chinese votes in Singapore.⁴²

Malaysia and Political Parties in Malaya

The attitude of various political parties began to crystalize once the details of merger were made known. The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (P. M. I. P.) opposed the idea of Malaysia because it believed that it would adversely affect the interests of the Malays. The Party suggested a wider Confederation which should include both Indonesia and the Philippines.⁴³ The People's Progressive

41 n. 33. It was pointed out that this arrangement had precedents in constitutional practice. Northern Ireland, though a part of the United Kingdom, retains considerable autonomy. On the basis of electoral strength it would have been entitled to 16 seats, but it was allotted only 12 seats because it retained a large measure of autonomy. n. 35.

42 R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia* (Boston, Mass. 1967), p. 71. For similar views see also Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, "Malaysia, South-East Asia and World Politics" in Wang Gungwu, ed., *Malaysia* (London, 1964), p. 367.

43 *Straits Times.*, 18 October 1961, 6 January and 3 May 1962.

Party (P. P. P.), while supporting the idea of merger, strongly condemned the motives of the Federation and Singapore governments. The Party was of the view that the P. A. P. Government had "forfeited its right to negotiate the details of merger" and called for an immediate general election in Singapore.⁴⁴ The Party spokesman, speaking in the Legislative Assembly, called for a "full and complete merger" of Singapore as 'an equal partner in the Federation'.⁴⁵ The Socialist Front accepted the principle of merger but suggested that the Borneo territories should be given self-government first and they should "out of their own free will" join Malaysia.⁴⁶ The Party spokesman also pointed out in January 1962 that Singapore should join Malaya in "full merger", with equal rights in the matter of citizenship and representation in Parliament or it should be allowed to continue its own separate constitutional advancement.⁴⁷

Though the Alliance endorsed the proposal for Malaysia and extended its full support to Tunku Abdul Rahman, there were few important leaders within the U. M. N. O. who had misgivings and reservations regarding the Malaysia scheme. They believed that the addition of Singapore and the Borneo territories would upset the political balance in Malaya and would pose a challenge to Malay political supremacy.⁴⁸ But when it was clear that Tunku Abdul Rahman was determined to have Malaysia to offset the "Communist threat from Singapore"⁴⁹ all members of the U. M. N. O. veered round to the Government view. It was a clear indica-

44 Ibid. 18 July 1961.

45 Federation of Malaya, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 3, 16 October 1961, col 1656.

46 Ibid. col. 1617.

47 *Straits Times*, 29 January 1962.

48 Interviews with Syed Ja'afar Albar, former Secretary-General of the U. M. N. O. on 26 July, 1967 and Syed Nasir bin Ismail, Director, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka on 26 July, 1967.

49 Tunku Abdul Rahman's speech in the U. M. N. O. General Assembly. *Straits Times*, 5 November 1961.

tion of the support, respect and affection that Tunku had within the U. M. N. O.⁵⁰

Malaysia and Political Parties in Singapore

In Singapore, opposition to Malaysia was spearheaded by the Barisan Sosialis. The P. A. P. leaders were convinced that the issue of Malaysia was the most opportune one to part company with the extremist section of the Party.⁵¹ Opposition to Malaysia would isolate Lim Chin Siong and his Leftist colleagues from the nationalist movement and would alienate them from the Singapore public, because merger had always been the objective of all political parties in Singapore.

In a series of broadcasts over Radio Singapore in October and November 1961, Lee Kuan Yew described the Barisan Sosialis as a Communist Front organization and remarked that its opposition to Malaysia was to further the aims and objectives of the Malayan Communist Party (M. C. P.).⁵² It was undoubtedly true that the interests of the M. C. P. would be adversely affected if the proposal for Malaysia, as it had been formulated, was carried through. The Communist Party, therefore, must have decided to throw its weight behind the Barisan Sosialis. At the same time, as an alternative to the left of the P. A. P., the Barisan Sosialis was also able to get the support of those political forces who were disillusioned with the P. A. P. leadership and the policies and programmes of the Singapore Government. It is quite clear that when the thirteen members of the Singapore Legislative Assembly,

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- 50 It may further be pointed out that the U. M. N. O. General Assembly discussed the issue of Malaysia (in November 1961) only after the Parliament had debated and passed the motion on Malaysia on 18 October 1961. It clearly revealed the complete trust that the Party members had in the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman.
- 51 Dr. Goh Keng Swee's speech in the Singapore Legislative Assembly, Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 16, 25 January 1962, col. 737.
- 52 Lee Kuan Yew, *Battle for Merger* (Singapore, n. d.)

who joined the Barisan Sosialis, were selected as Party candidates in the 1959 election, the Party leadership must have taken care to see that they were non-Communists. Some of them were genuinely concerned with the denial of intra-party democracy and the manner in which decisions regarding the Party and the Government were taken; some were trade unionists who were critical of the Government's labour policy, especially its failure to unify the trade union movement; others, who defected were sheer opportunists, who, after the defeat of the P. A. P. in Hong Lim and Anson, believed that the P. A. P. was a sinking ship and their interests would be best served by joining the Barisan Sosialis. It is reasonable to conclude, in the absence of independent evidence, that the Barisan Sosialis was a conglomeration of Communists, pro-Communists, militant trade unionists, left-wing liberals and opportunists.

Towards the end of August 1961, the Preparatory Committee of the Barisan Sosialis issued a statement explaining its stand on the constitutional future of Singapore.⁵³ It characterized the merger proposals as a "phoney merger" and as a "sell out". The statement added:

The interests of the people of Singapore are not advanced one jot by it...If the present proposals are accepted, the Federation Government will be acting to police British interests in Singapore and not for Malayan unity. The struggle of the people of Singapore to end exploitation will then run up against the Federation Government behind whom British interest will hide..... By the P. A. P. proposals, the people of Singapore will only be reduced to the status of second rate citizens. They will be controlled by the Federation Government but will not have the appropriate proportional influence in the Federal Parliament.⁵⁴

According to the Barisan Sosialis, the way ahead for real unification between Singapore and Malaya was in one of the following directions, namely :

53 *Stand of the Barisan Sosialis on Our Constitutional Future* see also *Declaration of Meeting of Conveners of the Barisan Sosialis*, 3 September 1961.

54 *Ibid.*

(a) An immediate, full and complete merger with Singapore joining the Federation as a constituent state like Penang and Malacca.

(b) As an autonomous unit within a confederation with the Borneo territories coming in when possible.⁵⁵

Explaining the first proposal, the statement added that the Barisan Sosialis would exert its influence to win the people of Singapore to "accept full and complete merger forthwith, that is, with Singapore as the 12th State of the Federation and with Singapore citizens automatically becoming Malayan citizens with proportional representation in the Federal Parliament .."⁵⁶ But in doing so, the Barisan Sosialis overlooked one important fact. If Singapore were to merge with the Federation like Penang and Malacca, the citizenship laws applicable to these states would have to apply to Singapore also, in which case, a large number of Singapore citizens would lose their citizenship. The P.A.P. exploited this anomaly to the maximum advantage. In a Radio Forum on Merger on 21 September 1961 (in which Dr. Goh Keng Swee (P. A. P), Dr. Lee Siew Choh (Barisan Sosialis), Ong Eng Guan (U. P. P) and A. P. Rajah (S. A.) participated) Dr. Goh Keng Swee pointed out, to the surprise of Dr. Lee Siew Choh, the inconsistencies of the Barisan demand.⁵⁷ The Barisan Sosialis henceforward dropped the demand of merger like Penang and Malacca.⁵⁸ On the

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 *Radio Singapore Press Statement* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore), 20 September 1961.

58 The leaders of the Barisan Sosialis made unconvincing attempts to explain their stand by pointing out the historical similarities between Singapore, Penang and Malacca. In the Legislative Assembly S T Bani said, "...when we referred to Singapore merging completely with the Federation, like Penang and Malacca, we were merely referring to the fact that Singapore, Penang and Malacca were originally the three Straits Settlements under direct colonial rule without any Malay Sultanate. our point was that if Penang and Malacca, which were both colonial territories like Singapore, could be merged completely

other hand, they demanded that the Constitution of Malaya should be amended to permit all Singapore citizens to become Malaysian citizens on merger. Speaking in the Singapore Legislative Assembly, Dr. Lee Siew Choh said :

Our stand is that every Singapore citizen should automatically become a Federal citizen on merger. That is, on merger, all 6,24,000 Singapore citizens, irrespective of whether they were born in Singapore, India, China, or Timbuctoo will automatically become 6,24,000 Federal citizens ... On this, there can be no compromise, no retreat....⁵⁹

Such a demand was completely unrealistic and was naturally not acceptable to the Federation.⁶⁰ Tunku Abdul Rahman made the Federation view very clear when he reiterated that the Federal Parliament would not, though it could, grant automatic Federation citizenship to Singapore citizens on merger.⁶¹

Explaining the second alternative, the Barisan Sosialis statement added :

We are prepared to accept, as a stage to eventual merger, a constitutional arrangement for a confederation within which *Singapore will be an autonomous unit, with full autonomy in internal matters, including internal security, and conceding by treaty the fields of external affairs and defence to the Federation Government.....This Confe-*

with the Federation as constituent states, then Singapore could also be merged as a constituent state." Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 15, 30 November 1961, cols. 989-90. See also "The Big Bluff of Penang Type Merger", *The Plebian* (Singapore), vol. 1, 18 April 1962

59 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 15, 20 November 1961, cols 327-8.

60 In demanding that all Singapore citizens should become Malaysian citizens Dr. Lee pointed out that under Article 22 of the Federation of Malaya Constitution Parliament was empowered to determine what persons are to be citizens and the date or dates on which such persons are to be citizens. *Ibid.*, col. 320.

61 *Straits Times*, 17 November 1961.

deration could be extended to other territories who wish to join.⁶²

This suggestion was equally unacceptable to the Federation Government. The primary objective of the Federation in having Malaysia, as pointed out in the last chapter, was to control the internal security of Singapore. While the leaders of the Federation were willing to grant autonomy in labour and education and negotiate with Singapore on matters like finance, they were completely adamant on internal security and citizenship rights. There was considerable truth in the allegation of Lee Kuan Yew that the Barisan Sosialis, by putting forward demands which were completely unacceptable to the Federation Government, was hoping to create a situation in which merger with the Federation of Malaya would become practically impossible.⁶³

When the White Paper proposals on merger were debated in the Singapore Legislative Assembly in November – December, 1961 opinions of various political parties were forcefully expressed. Lee Kuan Yew pointed out 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”.⁶⁴ The Barisan Sosialis characterized the merger proposals as a “sell out”. Dr. Lee Siew Choh, in the course of a seven-and-a-half-hour speech, termed the White Paper on merger “as an unholy scheme whereby the people of Singapore became politically castrated by being segregated with separate citizenship and without proportional representation in the Federal Parliament”.⁶⁵ He called for a “genuine merger” under which all Singapore citizens would automatically become Malaysian citizens and Singapore would be entitled for proportional representation in the Federal Parliament.⁶⁶ The Barisan stand on citizenship and

62 Emphasis added, n. 53.

63 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 15, 6 December 1961, cols. 1388–9.

64 *Ibid.*, col. 1384.

65 *Ibid.*, 20 November 1961, col. 314.

66 *Ibid.*, 21, November 1961, col. 328.

proportional representation was supported by the United People's Party (U. P. P.) and the Worker's Party.⁶⁷ The Singapore Alliance and the Singapore U. M. N. O. supported the Government motion and considered the merger proposal as the best possible under the circumstances.⁶⁸ The Barisan amendment calling for a "genuine merger of Singapore with the Federation of Malaya, with Singapore entering the Federation as the twelfth state and with all "its citizens automatically becoming Federal citizens on Merger Day" was defeated⁶⁹ and the Government motion was carried by 33 votes to nil.⁷⁰

The Singapore Referendum

By the end of 1961, political division in Singapore had taken a definite shape. Having failed in its attempt to capture power through the Legislative Assembly, the Barisan Sosialis asked the Government to resign and hold a general election in Singapore.⁷¹ Lee Kuan Yew did not want to take any chances after the debacles

67 For the views of the U. P. P. on merger refer Ong Eng Guan's speech, *ibid.*, 27 November 1961, cols 731-44. For the view, of Worker's Party refer David Marshall's speech, *ibid.*, 23 November 1961, cols 549-93.

68 For the views of the Singapore Alliance refer Lim Yew Hock's speech, *ibid.*, 21 November 1961, cols 429-32 and 438-72. For the views of the Singapore U. M. N. O. see Dato Abdul Hamid, *ibid.*, 22 November 1961, cols 491-8.

69 *Ibid.*, 6 December 1961, col. 1463-4.

70 *Ibid.*, col. 1524. Before the vote was taken the members belonging to the Barisan Sosialis, the Worker's Party and the United People's Party walked out. The Government motion moved by the Minister for Labour read: "That, whereas it has always been the avowed objective of all nationalists of Malaya to achieve the reunification of Singapore with the Federation of Malaya and to remove the artificial division created by the British by their policy of "divide and rule" this House affirms and declares that the first objective of all true patriots of Malaya is to achieve the reunification of these two territories in a merger of Singapore with the Federation of Malaya." *Ibid.*, 20 November 1961, cols 281-2.

71 *Straits Times*, 18 and 22 September 1961.

in Hong Lim and Anson. He was determined to continue in office and pursue the policy of merger through Malaysia. However, the Government declared that it would hold a referendum in Singapore to enable the people of the state to decide on merger with the Federation.⁷²

The most important feature of the Government's Referendum proposal was that the alternatives to be placed before Singapore voters were not between acceptance or rejection of merger proposals, but rather a choice between various forms of merger.⁷³ The Government claimed that since all political parties subscribed to the principle of merger,⁷⁴ the issue to be placed before the voters should be a choice between the terms negotiated by the Government and other "possible practical alternatives in the mode and manner of merger" put forward by the opposition parties.⁷⁵ The P. A. P.'s interpretation of the Barisan Sosialis position was that it sought merger on the same conditions as Penang and Malacca⁷⁶ and, therefore, was willing to accept the limitations of the Federation Constitution regarding citizenship. The Barisan Sosialis tried to get another alternative which, in its view, reflected its true position

72 Ibid., 22 September 1961.

73 The amendment jointly moved by Dr. Lee Siew Choh, David Marshall and Ong Eng Guan that, "Not more than one question shall be submitted to the electors in any one referendum and the electors shall only be required to answer such questions in the simple affirmative or negative" was defeated in the Legislative Assembly. Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 18, 29 June 1962, col. 361.

74 Dr. Toh Chin Chye's speech, *ibid.*, 27 June 1962, cols 130-1.

75 Emphasis added. Lee Kuan Yew pointed out in the Legislative Assembly that the Government was not constitutionally obliged to refer the merger proposals to the people "...We are not obliged to and need not refer the matter to the people. Indeed, there was no constitutional provisions for such a reference back to the people; hence this Bill has become necessary. However, the Government having considered the whole situation, decided that it was in the long term interests of the people to give them an opportunity to express the choice of the possible practical alternatives in the mode and manner of merger..." *Ibid.*, 3 July 1962, col. 684.

76 Refer Lee Kuan Yew's speech, *ibid.*, vol. 19, 9 July 1962, col. 29.

viz., "genuine merger of Singapore with the Federation of Malaya, with Singapore entering the Federation as the twelfth state and with all its Citizens automatically becoming Federal Citizens on Merger Day", but it was again negated.⁷⁷ Dr. Goh Keng Swee pointed out that since the demands put forward by the Barisan Sosialis i. e. complete merger, on terms superior to those enjoyed by any state in the Federation, was neither practical nor acceptable to the Federation Government, it must be ruled out for two reasons :

First, on the simple ground that it is not possible. Second, more to the point, because the Barisan Sosialis knows that it is not possible and, therefore, dishonestly asks for it in an effort to prevent merger. There is, therefore, no breach in the principle of the freedom of choice if the Barisan's claim for super merger is not offered to the electorate.⁷⁸

Since voting was compulsory in Singapore, the only way by which the Barisan Sosialis could express its disapproval was to ask the voters to cast blank ballots in the Referendum. But the Government once again outmanoeuvred the Barisan Sosialis. It argued that since those who cast blank ballots could be regarded as people who have not made up their minds, those votes should be allocated according to the decisions of the Legislative Assembly. Article 29 (1) of the Referendum Ordinance, accordingly, provided that "Any person whose ballot paper is unmarked or is uncertain shall be deemed to be a person who accepts or is willing to accept the decision of the Legislative Assembly on the matter referred for the Referendum".⁷⁹

Early in July 1962, the P. A. P. lost its majority in the Legislative Assembly when Madame Hoe Puay Choo announced her resignation from the P. A. P. and joined the ranks of the opposition. She stated that she was not consulted on matters of policy and that she was opposed to Clause 29 of the Referendum Ordinance.⁸⁰

77 Ibid., 11 July 1962 col. 390.

78 Ibid., vol. 18, 3 July 1962 col. 598.

79 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1962*, p. 9

80 *Straits Times*, 4 and 5 July 1962 See also Singapore. *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 18, 4 July 1962, col. 688. On 11 August

The P. A. P.'s strength was reduced to 25 in a House of 51. However, this did not substantially affect the fate of the Ministry. With no further defection and with the support of the Singapore Alliance and the U. M. N. O., the Government had no difficulty in passing the Referendum Bill. On 13 July 1962, the Government also survived a no confidence motion in the Legislative Assembly moved by the Barisan Sosialis. Lee Kuan Yew expressed the determination of the Government to continue in office and see merger and Malaysia through :

It is the business of the Government to govern and to see the country's destiny in a Federation of Malaysia secured.... 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. There will be merger, there will be Malaysia on or before June, 1963.⁸¹

In August 1962, further changes in the balance of forces in the Legislative Assembly took place, when S. V. Lingam, the Treasurer of the U. P. P., resigned from his party and joined the P. A. P.⁸² This gave the Government again 26 votes and reduced the strength of the U. P. P to 2. The death, however, of the Labour Minister Enche Ahmad Ibrahim equalized the strength of the government and the opposition in the Legislative Assembly.⁸³

It must be pointed out that though the Federation leaders were opposed to the holding of a referendum in Singapore⁸⁴ and at

1962 Madame Hoe joined the Barisan Sosialis increasing its strength to 14.

81 *Straits Times*, 4 July 1962.

82 Explaining the reasons for his resignation Lingam said there were growing contradictions between his own belief and the way Ong Eng Guan controlled the Party. Further, he was convinced that the P. A. P. stand on merger and Malaysia was the correct one and was the only way to save the political future of Singapore. *Straits Times*, 5 August 1962.

83 *Malayan Times*, 22 August 1962.

84 On 26 May 1962 Tunku Abdul Rahman said, "We cannot understand why a Government, elected by the people and

no time expressed their willingness to consider merger on terms other than those published in the White Paper of November 1961,⁸⁵ the Federation Prime Minister extended his support to the Singapore Government by openly criticising the activities of the Barisan Sosialis. Addressing an U. M. N. O. meeting in Singapore in April 1962 Tunku Abdul Rahman, obviously referring to the Barisan Sosialis, said, "If the extremists and the opposition parties want to create trouble and cause bloodshed after merger, then it is better we do not have merger".⁸⁶ Three weeks later, Tunku lashed out at the Barisan Sosialis, whose ideology, he said, "was akin to that of Mao Tse-tung's Communist China". The Barisan Sosialis was against the Singapore government because "it was bent on creating a little China of its own in the island, to live smugly in the midst of chaos".⁸⁷ He repeatedly indicated that the Federation Government might have to close down the Johore Causeway if the people of Singapore were not interested in joining Malaysia.⁸⁸

In its final form, the Government offered three alternatives to the voters in the Referendum. The third alternative was proposed by Lim Yew Hock and was accepted by the Government. It offered merger on terms no less favourable than those obtained by the Borneo territories. At that time, it was not clear what these terms would be. The three alternatives were :

holding a specific mandate on merger, should hold a referendum at all. If we are governing Singapore, we would never hold such a referendum". *Ibid.*, 27 May 1962.

- 85 In fact, in his letter to the Singapore Prime Minister dated 13 November 1961, the Federation Prime Minister had written, "I would like to emphasise that it cannot be assumed that the analogy of Penang or Malacca is necessarily relevant to the status of Singapore in a merger with the Federation". n. 35.
- 86 *Straits Times*, 26 March 1962.
- 87 *Malayan Times*, 16 April 1962.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 26 March 1962. See also *Straits Times*, 2 April 1962. and *Malayan Times*, 16 April 1962.

(a) The Constitutional arrangements set out in Paper Command 33 of 1961 giving Singapore autonomy in education and labour; or

(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 Malaysia on terms no less favourable than the terms for the Borneo Territories.⁸⁹

Since the Barisan Sosialis considered all the three alternatives to be unacceptable it asked the voters to cast blank ballots as a protest against the "sham Referendum".⁹⁰

In July 1962 the Barisan Sosialis and four other opposition parties - the Worker's Party, the Liberal Socialist Party, the Partai Rakyat and the United Democratic Party - formed a Council of Joint Action (C. J. A.) and decided to take the issue of referendum before the U. N. Committee on Colonialism. In its memorandum to the United Nations, the C. J. A. pointed out that the proposed transfer of sovereignty over the Colony of Singapore by the United Kingdom to the Federation of Malaya "will take place in a manner 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 United Nations General Assembly of 14th December 1960". It also stated that Malaysia was designed by the Government of United Kingdom "to maintain military and economic control over Singapore which it considers essential for its interests and the interests of its Allies". It criticized the merger proposals under which Singapore would not be fully integrated with Malaya but "would be more or less kept under Federation of Malaya trusteeship". The memorandum attacked the Referendum along familiar lines and urged the United Nations to send an observer to Singapore "on a basis of urgency in order to ascertain

89 Singapore. *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 19, 11 July 1962, col. 392.

90 "Cast Blank Votes", *The Plebian*, vol. 1, 18 July 1962.

the true position and to advise the nations of the world... of the perfidy which is sought to be perpetrated upon the subject people of Singapore through a dishonest Referendum".⁹¹

The U. N. Committee on Colonialism decided not to take cognizance of the Petition. However, it later agreed to hear any representation but not on the substance of the motion. The C.J.A. was represented by Dr. Lee Siew Choh, Woodhull, Wee Soon Bee and Lim Hock Siew. Later on, David Marshall also joined the delegation. The Government case was presented by Lee Kuan Yew and Goh Keng Swee. The petitioners requested that the right of democratic dissent be given to the electorate in Singapore. They wanted an honest and democratic referendum. They would then abide by the verdict of the majority.⁹² To a pointed question from the Soviet delegate whether they would advocate a separate and independent state if it were not possible to have merger of Singapore on equal terms with the Federation of Malaya, Woodhull did not give a categorical answer. He explained that they had not in their claims pressed for independence as much as for a genuine merger, because they did not wish to compromise the prospects for a genuine merger. Nevertheless, it was evident that the prospects were limited and he had the feeling that the population of Singapore would prefer independence.⁹³ Both Lee Kuan Yew and Goh Keng Swee presented a lucid and masterly analysis of the Government stand. They explained the inconsistencies in the opposition arguments and pointed out how their demands were unreasonable and impractical. In their eagerness to oppose Malaysia, the opposition parties wished "Singapore to continue as a colony so that they could form part of an anti-colonial movement". "It was paradoxical", Lee Kuan Yew concluded, "that the Committee should have before it a petition from an opposition group which, for purely internal political purposes, wanted colonialism to remain, while the duly elected and constitutional Government of Singapore

91 A/AC. 109/Pet 16, dated 12 July 1962.

92 A/A6. 109/SR 86, dated 12 September 1962.

93 A/AC. 109/SR 91, dated 21 September 1962.

wanted immediate independence through a merger".⁹⁴ The U. N. Committee did not take any action. Its final result was to enhance the reputation of Lee Kuan Yew both in Singapore and abroad.

An important factor, which greatly assisted the P. A. P. in the Referendum, was the amendment to the White Paper which Lee Kuan Yew announced on his return to Singapore, after discussion with the Federation and British representatives in London. The amendment was to the effect that there would be a common citizenship to which all citizens of Singapore would be automatically entitled as would be the citizens of the Federation and the Borneo territories.⁹⁵ The change in fact was only one of semantics and did not give any additional rights to the Singapore citizens. The Barisan Sosialis characterised the amendments as "yet another bluff".⁹⁶ Lim Chin Siong called on the people to cast blank votes, "though we are fully aware that blank votes are to be counted as Government votes".⁹⁷

Throughout the campaign, the Singapore Government made effective use of the propaganda machinery at its disposal—radio, songs, posters, illuminated signs in the streets, pamphlets through the Ministry of Culture etc. Answering criticism in the Legislative Assembly that the Government had misused the media of mass communication for political purposes, Rajaratnam, the Minister for Culture, said, "We are quite proud that we have used the radio and television for the purposes for which the people of Singapore elected us and we will continue to use it until such time as the cause of democracy has been safeguarded and strengthened".⁹⁸

After an intense campaign by various political parties, the Referendum was held on 1 September 1962. Of the 6,24,000

94 A/AC. 109/SR 87, dated 17 September 1962.

95 *Straits Times*, 15 August 1962.

96 "Yet another Bluff", *The Plebian*, vol. 1, August 1962.

97 *Straits Times*, 20 August 1962.

98 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 20, 14 June 1963, col. 1216. In April 1963 Rajaratnam had stated "In the battle of ideas, mass media like radio, television are vital, and the Government intends to use them as effectively as possible to safeguard the democratic system as well as the security of Malaysia". *Ibid.*, 9/10 April 1963, col 338.

voters, 5,61,559 or 90 per cent voted. Of those voting 3,97,626 or 71 per cent voted for Alternative A; 9,422 or 1.7 per cent for Alternative B and 7,911 or 1.4 per cent for Alternative C. 144,077 or 25 per cent cast blank votes.⁹⁹

It must be pointed out that the referendum was more in the nature of a political gimmick than a genuine democratic exercise intended to ascertain the wishes of the Singapore population. The undemocratic character of the referendum has been commented upon even by pro-P. A. P. observers. According to Michael Leifer, the referendum "was less a real political victory than an exercise in political gamesmanship on the part of the P. A. P."¹⁰⁰ Robert Trumbull, the correspondent of the *New York Times*, remarked:

Three fourth of those who did vote endorsed the merger, but the comfort from this satisfactory outcome was lessened by the fact that the wording of the ballot left no real choice.. Lee Kuan Yew, the clever young Chinese barrister who was Singapore's Prime Minister, borrowed a leaf from the communist book in staging this travesty on democratic process.¹⁰¹

The P. A. P. fully exploited the referendum results to its advantage. Commenting on the referendum results Lee Kuan Yew declared:

Not to have held the referendum would have been a tragic 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.¹⁰²

99 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1962*, p. 24.

100 Michael Leifer, "Politics in Singapore, The First Term of the Singapore People's Action Party, 1959-1963" *Journal of the Commonwealth Political Studies*, Vol. 2, pp. 102-19.

101 Robert Trumbull, *The Scrutable East* (New York, N. Y., 1964), p. 91.

102 *Straits Times*, 3 September 1962.

In a subsequent radio broadcast Lee Kuan Yew warned those who opposed Malaysia that the government would pursue a tougher line in future. He added, that "if the tough men in their midst take to direct action, they face direct consequences".¹⁰³ The Barisan Sosialis rejected the result of the "sham Referendum" and stated that it did not "reflect the will of the people".¹⁰⁴ Addressing a Barisan Sosialis gathering, Lim Chin Siong said that the Referendum did not affect the "political strength" of various parties in Singapore. "Politically speaking, the outcome of the Referendum only marked the end of one phase of our long-term struggle and not the end of the struggle."¹⁰⁵

The Referendum was also of great advantage to the P. A. P. in another sense. In spite of the obvious disadvantages, the opposition spearheaded by the Barisan Sosialis was able to get the support of 25 per cent of the voters. It was clear that the 25 per cent represented the "minimum support" that the Barisan Sosialis could muster in any future election.¹⁰⁶ Further, though the Government did not publish the voting figures in different polling booths, it had access to this vital information.¹⁰⁷ The P. A. P., therefore, was able to find out its relative strength in different areas (the proportion of blank votes was more in rural areas) and plan its election strategy accordingly.

The Referendum marked the end of an important phase in the political life of Singapore and the making of Malaysia. In the days following the Referendum the P. A. P. began a vigorous

103 Ibid., 5 September 1962. For the full text refer Lee Kuan Yew, "The Battle for Merger Has Been Won", *Petir*, January 1963. For the P. A. P. reaction see also S. Rajaratnam, "Verdict of the People", *ibid.*

104 *Straits Times* 3 September 1962.

105 Ibid., 14 September 1962. See also Lim Chin Siong, "Significance of the Referendum". *The Plebian*, vol. 1, 29 September 1962.

106 Milne, n. 42, P. 200.

107 Ibid.

drive to consolidate its gains while the Barisan Sosialis concentrated its attention to redeem its prestige with an eye on the general election. But the Barisan Sosialis suffered a severe setback when most of its popular leaders were detained in February 1963 for alleged subversive activities against Malaysia.

The Barisan Sosialis and the Brunei Revolt

The Barisan Sosialis had always maintained that the people of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei should be given the right of self-determination before any merger of these territories was contemplated. In Lim Chin Siong's words:

As regards the Borneo territories we have time and again said that it is the people in these territories concerned who should decide their own future. But neither the British nor the Malayan Government has bothered to accord to the people of Borneo the right of self-determination. Instead we have a hoax - a Commission to ascertain the wishes of the people there... Our position will be - accord to the people of Borneo the right to decide their own future. They may choose a strong central government, a loose confederation or any intervening arrangement. Or they may even choose to go it alone. This is something they and they alone must decide....¹⁰⁸

The Barisan stand was supported by other opposition parties like the Socialist Front in the Federation, the Sarawak United People's Party (S. U. P. P.) in Sarawak and the Party Rakyat in Brunei.

The Barisan Sosialis, consistent with its earlier stand, expressed strong support to the Brunei revolt and characterized it as "a popular nationalist movement for national independence and freedom from British colonial domination".¹⁰⁹ In a mass rally held on 23 December 1962, the Party condemned the British Government for using Singapore as a springboard to wage a colonial war of repression against the people of Kalimantan Utara.

108 Letter to the Editor, *Straits Times* 23 October 1962.

109 *Malayan Times* 10 December 1962.

It also condemned the Federation Government for supporting the British colonialists in their action. Addressing the rally, Lim Chin Siong denied that the Brunei revolt was Communist-inspired and praised the stand taken by the Indonesian Government. "We are confident that with the support of all newly-emergent nations in the world, the people of Kalimantan Utara will soon achieve their national aim."¹¹⁰ In his new year message, Lim Chin Siong made a renewed attack on Malaysia :

The Malaysia Federation has to be imposed by force and deceit. The subservience of the Federation Government to the imperialist is reflected in the Malaysia Plan. This is an imperialist plan to prevent the democratic development of Singapore and the Borneo territories, to circumscribe the independence of the Federation itself, to provide a base to undermine Indonesia and to be a strategic base in the cold war.¹¹¹

In view of their public support to the Brunei revolt, it was widely considered possible in Singapore that the Internal Security Council would take strong action against the Barisan Sosialis and other Opposition Parties. The arrests made on 2 February 1963, therefore, did not come as a complete surprise. Those arrested included most of the popular leaders of the Barisan Sosialis - Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Woodhull, James Puthuchery, Dominic Puthuchery, Poh Soo Kai, Lim Hock Siew and Lim Shee Ping. In a statement issued immediately after the arrests, the Internal Security Council stated that the Communists and their supporters, working through the Barisan Sosialis and associated front organisations, were jeopardizing national security by their subversive activities and alignment with alien causes:

Their open support for armed revolt in Brunei and their close connection with leaders of the revolt show that they are ready, when the opportunity occurs, to depart from constitutional methods and to jeopardise national

110 Ibid., 24 December 1962.

111 Ibid., 1 January 1963.

defence and Singapore's security by joining with groups resorting to violence and bloodshed as in the Borneo territories.¹¹²

Speaking in the Singapore Legislative Assembly, Lee Kuan Yew said that there had been frequent meetings and consultations between Azahari, the Brunei rebel leader and Lim Chin Siong, the last of which took place four days before the revolt in Brunei broke out. Lee Kuan Yew stated that, according to captured rebel leaders in Brunei, Azahari had informed them that there would be an uprising in Singapore which would be simultaneous with the revolt in Brunei. It was proposed to stage violent demonstrations and protests in Singapore so that British troops would be hampered in taking action against the Brunei rebels. Lee Kuan Yew also declared that Lim Chin Siong was also considering an offer of weapons either in Singapore or in Borneo through his links in Sarawak United People's Party.¹¹³

It is extremely difficult, in the absence of independent evidence, to comment on the veracity of the statement made by the Internal Security Council, supplemented by Lee Kuan Yew's disclosures in the Singapore Legislative Assembly. Detention under the P. P. S. O. is not justiciable and the charges need not be proved in a court of law. It may also be argued that there was always the possibility of the three Governments - Federation, United Kingdom and Singapore-using the crisis created by the Brunei revolt to take action against left-wing opposition in Singapore. The arrests however, struck a death blow to the Barisan Sosialis.

Financial and Economic Terms of Merger

Detailed negotiations between Singapore and the Federation Governments regarding financial and related economic matters were begun only after important political issues regarding Malaysia

112 Ibid., 3 February 1963.

113 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 20, 9/10 April 1963, cols 375-94.

were resolved. There was hard bargaining on both sides which led to deadlocks and acrimonious exchanges between the leaders of the two territories.¹¹⁴ An important consideration for Singapore, besides securing favourable terms, was to get an agreement on a common market with the Federation while safeguarding its entrepot trade. The Singapore Government was helped in this part of the negotiations when the Economic Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development appointed in October 1962 to report on closer economic co-operation among the component units of Malaysia, recommended the establishment of a Common Market as an essential pre-condition for industrialization.¹¹⁵

After prolonged negotiations, agreement was finally reached in London on 9 July 1963. In brief, their main features were the following:¹¹⁶ Executive authority in respect of the collection of customs duties and excise and income-tax in Singapore was delegated to the Singapore Government. All revenues in Singapore was to be paid into a separate fund of the Central Bank and the fund was to be divided between the two Governments in the proportion of 60 per cent to the Singapore Government and 40 per cent to the Federal Government. This allocation was subject to review at the end of a year and subsequently every two years. Singapore also agreed to provide a loan of \$ 150 million to the Borneo territories for a period of 15 years, \$ 50 million at current rates of interest in the Federation and \$ 100 million free of interest for the first five years, and, if so recommended in the financial review, for a further period of five years. It was provided that, in any project financed by this loan, no labourers would be

114 In June 1963 Tunku Abdul Rahman said that the Federation Government would not accommodate Singapore any further and spoke of forming Malaysia without Singapore. *Straits Times*, 21 June 1963.

115 *Report on the Economic Aspects of Malaysia*, Misc. 3 of 1963 (Singapore, 1963), pp. 40-60.

116. n. 38. Agreement between the Governments of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore on Common Market and Financial Arrangements, Annex J, pp. 226-31.

employed from outside Malaysia and 50 per cent of the labour would be recruited from Singapore. The Agreement also contained provisions for the progressive establishment of a Common Market in Malaysia.

Strains in the Relations between Singapore and the Federation

Even though both the Singapore and Federation Governments were equally keen to bring about Malaysia, differences between the approaches of the two Governments were clearly visible during this period. It first came out into the open when Lee Kuan Yew visited the Soviet Union in September 1962 after the Constitutional talks in London. The visit came as a complete "surprise" for Tunku Abdul Rahman as Lee Kuan Yew had not consulted him earlier. Tunku Abdul Rahman said that the trip nullified all that Lee Kuan Yew had said about Communism.¹¹⁷ On his return from the Soviet Union, Lee Kuan Yew assured the Federation Prime Minister that he had not been "contaminated" by Communism. Lee added that "it was an advantage to get to Russia, to know the Russians and where they get off here." He further said that his views on Communism were similar to those of Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia and Gamal Abdal Nasser of Egypt.¹¹⁸

Of greater importance was the rivalry which took place between the Malayan Chinese Association (M. C. A.) and the P. A. P. as a result of the M. C. A.'s attempts to extend its political influence in Singapore. In the months immediately preceding the formation of Malaysia, the M. C. A. leaders began a concerted effort to revitalize their activities in Singapore. They believed that, with the formation of Malaysia and as a partner in the ruling Alliance Government at the Centre, they would be able to rally the support of conservative Chinese forces in Singapore.¹¹⁹ With the aim of reorganizing its activities, the Party sent two of its

117 *Straits Times*, 21 September 1962.

118 *Ibid.*, 29 September 1962.

119 See Tan Siew Sin's speech, *ibid.*, 23 May 1963.

leading Senators T. H. Tan and Khaw Kai Boh to Singapore. In Singapore, the two Senators met many Chinese businessmen and solicited their support. Their activities were severely criticized by Lee Kuan Yew who branded them as "merchant adventurers" and warned them "against creating mischief" in Singapore.¹²⁰ The M. C. A. - P. A. P. controversy was further complicated by the fact that Tan Siew Sin, the Chairman of the M.C.A., was also the Finance Minister of the Federation of Malaya and it took place at a time when the discussion about financial arrangements between Singapore and the Federal Government had reached a critical stage. Lee Kuan Yew fully exploited this combination of factors and said that the decision of the M. C. A. to extend its activities in Singapore was the "root cause" which stood in the way of a financial settlement with the Federation Government.¹²¹ Senator Tan declared that he would move a motion in the Federal Senate against the merger of Singapore in Malaysia if Lee Kuan Yew continued to obstruct the financial talks.¹²²

Sharp differences between the Singapore and the Federation leaders arose during the Manila talks in August 1963, where the concept of Mophilindo was proclaimed and it was decided to postpone the Malaysia Day pending U. N. survey of opinion in the Borneo territories.¹²³ Lee Kuan Yew spoke out against the Manila proposals and cautioned against the machinations of President Sukarno. "This is the time for Malaysia to stand up and fight for its position. We cannot give in to an international blackmailer (Sukarno)".¹²⁴ He took the bold step of declaring that, as far as Singapore was concerned, 31 August 1963 was still the Malaysia Day.¹²⁵ Lee Kuan Yew was forthright in his criticism of the Maphi-

120 Ibid., 27 May 1963.

121 Ibid., 18 and 22 May 1963.

122 Ibid., 20 May 1963.

123 K. Krishnamoorthy, "Late before Starting", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 August 1963, pp. 581-3.

124 *Guardian* (London), 9 August 1963.

125 *Straits Times*, 9 August 1963.

lindo. While he had no objection to closer economic and cultural co-operation among the three countries – Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia – he considered the political facets of Maphilindo as a “racialist conspiracy” designed against the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.¹²⁶

Lee Kuan Yew proclaimed “*de facto* independence” of Singapore on 31 August 1963 and successfully persuaded Sabah and Sarawak to proclaim internal self-government on the same day.¹²⁷ The Independence proclamation stated, *inter alia*, that the “Yang Di Pertuan Negara would hold the Federal powers of Defence and External Affairs in trust until the merger was accomplished”.¹²⁸ The Federation Government was taken aback by the Independence proclamation. An emergency Cabinet meeting was convened which considered the proclamation to be neither legal nor constitutional and decided to make a strong representation to the British Government which still had jurisdiction in Singapore.¹²⁹ Lee Kuan Yew embarrassed the Federation Government still further when he said that Singapore had to fight for independence unlike the Federation of Malaya. One of the sad things about Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew said, was the “naive approach” of some people to whom power was handed over “on a silver platter with red ribbons by British Royalty in uniform....”¹³⁰ Lee Kuan Yew also warned Duncan Sandys, the then British Commonwealth Relations Secretary, to immediately “sort out” pending matters with regard to the Malaysia Agreement or “face the consequences of our proclamation of 31 August when we assumed *de facto* powers over Defence and External Affairs. If certain matters are not sorted out by 12 September, Mr. Sandys will find himself involved in a very unpleasant anti-colonial and neo-colonial issue.”¹³¹ Lee Kuan Yew’s anti-Federation and anti-British statements at this time

126 Ibid.

127 *State of Singapore Annual Report 1963*, p. 21.

128 *Sunday Times*, 1 September 1963.

129 *Straits Times*, 3 September 1963.

130 Ibid., 4 September 1963.

131 Ibid.

were probably due to his desire to project, on the eve of impending elections in Singapore, the image of a "strong man" who could stand up both against the British and Federation Governments. Its immediate effect, however, was to raise a fury of opposition from the Malayan leaders, including Tunku Abdul Rahman. Addressing an U. M. N. O. rally in Malacca, Tunku Abdul Rahman said :

I hope Mr. Lee will not be too hasty in making statements but would watch his words in future. He should not make statements which hurt the feelings of the people of Malaya... I fear that good relations will be severed if Mr. Lee continues to make hasty statements without taking into consideration their consequences.¹³²

Syed Ja'afar Albar, the Chief Publicity Officer of the U. M. N. O., said :

If this is to be the attitude of our new friends who join the Malaysia family, I feel the Government should reconsider its decision to form Malaysia. Malaysia has become a bane to our neighbours. Now our new friends have attacked and stabbed it before it has been formed. I am afraid that we will face more difficulties and problems from our new friends than our enemies.¹³³

The *Utusan Melayu* called upon the U. M. N. O. leaders to make a "review" of the decision to form Malaysia :

A prosperous and happy Federation of Malaya should not be sacrificed at the altar of Malaysia. A wrong step will deprive us of what we have treasured and there is no harm in taking a step backward for our own safety than taking two steps forward which lead to destruction.¹³⁴

Singapore General Election 1963

The general election which took place in Singapore in September 1963, four days after the formation of Malaysia, resulted

132 Ibid., 4 September 1963.

133 Ibid., 6 September 1963.

134 *Daily Press Summary* (compiled by the Ministry of Information, Kuala Lumpur), No. 202/63, 5 September 1963.

in the victory of the P. A. P. It was the last attempt made by the Barisan Sosialis to challenge the political supremacy of the P. A. P. through constitutional means. Since the breakaway of the leftists in July 1961, the main aim of Lee Kuan Yew was to retain as much left-wing support as possible while trying to attract the large number of voters who supported the right-wing parties in the 1959 election (The S. P. A., the Liberal Socialists, the U. M. N. O., the M. C. A., other splinter parties and independents together polled 47 per cent of the total votes in the 1959 election). With this objective, Lee Kuan Yew undertook an extensive tour of all constituencies in late 1962 and throughout 1963, where he spoke to the people in Chinese, Malay and English languages. The P. A. P. was greatly assisted in its campaign by the positive achievements of the Government. It not only provided an honest, efficient and incorruptible administration, its achievements in the field of housing, education, community centres, health and public services were also considerable.¹³⁵

The original intention of the Government was to hold the election to the fifteen seats of the Federal Parliament first and subsequently to hold the general election to the Singapore Legislative Assembly. The P. A. P.'s calculation was based on the fact that the election to the Federal Parliament would reveal the relative strength of various political parties and it could adjust its election strategy to the State Assembly accordingly. Even if the Barisan Sosialis won a majority of seats to the Federal Parliament, it would not in any way, affect the future of Malaysia; on the other hand, it would enable the P. A. P. to bring together all pro-Malaysia parties against the Barisan Sosialis in the election to the Singapore Assembly.¹³⁶ However, when the Bill providing for the election to

135 *Democratic Socialism in Action* (June 1959 - April 1963) (Singapore, 1963).

136 In the Legislative Assembly Rajaratnam explained the Party's strategy. "As far as the P. A. P. is concerned, these elections to the 15 seats are part of our strategy to deal yet another blow to the Communists....They can win all the 15 seats to the Central Parliament. They know they are not capturing any power because in an Assembly of well over 100 seats, 15 seats do not give them effective political power to carry out their anti-Malaysia, anti-merger, pro-confrontationist policy....If in the

the Federal Parliament was introduced in Singapore Legislative Assembly, it could not muster enough support. The entire opposition voted against it and defeated the proposal.¹³⁷

The 1963 election to the Singapore Legislative Assembly, unlike the earlier elections in 1955 and 1959, was very hastily arranged. The Legislative Assembly was dissolved on 3 September 1963. The decision to hold an election was announced on 4 September; the last day for nomination was 12 September and the polling took place on 21 September 1963. There was only an interval of nine days between the filing of nomination papers and the day of polling, the minimum required under the Singapore electoral system. These nine days, nominally available for campaigning, was also marked by Malaysia festivities. The opposition parties found it very difficult in securing proper places and permits to hold meetings. It was also extremely difficult for them to get election literature printed, as all the printing presses in Singapore were booked with government orders. The opposition parties were unanimous in denouncing the election programme as "bulldozer tactics" and a "blatant" conspiracy against the opposition.¹³⁸ The Barisan Sosialis alleged that the P. A. P. had all its posters and other propaganda material printed in Hongkong three months before the election.¹³⁹

With four major political parties in the field – the P. A. P., the Barisan Sosialis, the Singapore Alliance (S. A.) and the U. P. P. – the outcome of the election till the last moment was uncertain. No political commentator could vouchsafe that the P. A. P. would be returned with a safe majority. The P. A. P. contested all the

event of their winning the majority of 15 seats, they know the consequences that would only result in mobilising of all nationalist pro-merger forces against them in preparation for the 51 seats". Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 21, 25 July 1960, cols 140-1.

137 *Ibid.*, Col. 175

138 *Malayan Times*, 13 September 1963.

139 *Ibid.*, 5 September 1963.

51 seats, the Barisan Sosialis 49 (three from Party Rakyat), the U. P. P. 46 and the S. A. 42. There were also three candidates from the Worker's Party, two from the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (P. M. I. P.), one from the United Democratic Party (U.D.P.) and 16 independents.

The P. A. P. had obvious advantages in the election compared to other opposition parties. It derived maximum advantage from the fact that it was under its leadership that merger through Malaysia was accomplished. The Barisan Sosialis, on the other hand, was faced with a dilemma, which it found very difficult to resolve. To demand the dissolution of Malaysia would have resulted in further reprisals against the Party. The Party could not satisfactorily explain what would be its attitude towards Malaysia if it was voted to power. The P. A. P. leaders exploited this situation to the maximum advantage. With most of the popular leaders of the Barisan Sosialis under detention, the effectiveness of the Barisan campaign was also considerably diminished. The prospects of the Barisan Sosialis was also affected by the U. P. P. Though the Party had absolutely no chances of coming to power, it still had some support among the Chinese-educated. Ong Eng Guan refused to have any electoral understanding with the Barisan Sosialis. During the election the rumour was rife in Singapore that Ong Eng Guan had gone to Japan and received money from the Americans to split the left wing votes and prevent a Barisan victory.¹⁴⁰ On 9 September 1963, the Singapore Government took steps to freeze the bank account to the value of \$ 4,20,000 of three Barisan-controlled trade unions: the Singapore General Employee's Union, the Singapore Business House Employee's Union and the Bus Workers' Union. The Government statement declared that it wanted to prevent the money being channelled for election purposes by the Barisan Sosialis.¹⁴¹ The P. A. P. also made effective use of the mass media at its disposal—radio, television etc to put forward its point of view. The P. A. P. leaders repeatedly warned that, if the Barisan Sosialis won, not

140 Pang Cheng Lian, *Singapore's People's Action Party* (Singapore, 1971), p. 17.

141 *Straits Times* 10 and 11 September 1963.

only would it lead to a bleak future, but, what was worse, the Central Government would not allow the Party to form the Government in Singapore¹⁴². The main danger facing the P.A.P., according to the party manifesto, was the possibility that the S.A. would split the pro-Malaysia votes and it would lead to the victory of the Barisan Sosialis, but, in fact, it was the support of the right-wing votes which enabled the P.A.P. to win the elections.¹⁴³

The election which was held on 21 September 1963, the final day of Malaysia celebrations, led to the victory of the P.A.P. which won 37 seats, polling 47 per cent votes. The Barisan Sosialis secured 13 seats with 34 per cent votes, while the U.P.P. won one seat with 8 per cent votes. The S.A. polled only 8 per cent votes and none of its candidates were returned to the Legislative Assembly.

The details of the election results are given below :¹⁴⁴

Name of the Party	Seats contested	Seats won	Votes polled	Percentage of total votes.
1 People's Action Party	51	37	2,74,924	47
2 Barisan Sosialis and Party Rakyat	49	13	2,01,560	34
3 Singapore Alliance	42	—	49,038	8
4 United People's Party	46	1	48,849	8
5 Worker's Party	3	—	286	4
6 Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	2	—	1,545	
7 United Democratic Party	1	—	760	
8 Independents	16	—	6,788	

142 Ibid., 21 September 1963.

143 "They hope to win by splitting the 72% of the non-Communist votes cast in the recent Referendum. If this 72% should be fragmented between the P.A.P., the Alliance and others, the Communists hope that the Barisan Sosialis might just slip in." Quoted in *State of Singapore Annual Report 1963*, (Singapore, 1963), p. 26.

144 For the details of the results refer *State of Singapore Government Gazette Extraordinary*, vol. 5, no 104, 24 September 1963.

An analysis of the election figures reveal the fact that the most important reason for the victory of the P. A. P. was the considerable support that it received from those sections of the Singapore population which had voted for the right-wing parties in the 1959 election. It is reasonable to assume that the votes polled by the Barisan Sosialis and the U. P. P., the two break-away parties from the P. A. P., must have gone to the P. A. P. in the 1959 election. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that the 14 seats, won by these two parties together, were captured by the P. A. P. in 1959. Similarly, all the seats lost by the P. A. P. to the U. M. N. O. and the S. P. A. candidates in the 1959 election were won by it in 1963. It can, therefore, be concluded that the considerable loss of support to the Barisan Sosialis and the U. P. P. was made up by the P. A. P. by attracting the right-wing votes in its favour. (The right-wing votes fell sharply from 47 per cent in 1959 to 8 per cent in 1963.)¹⁴⁵ Similarly, if the left-wing votes were not split between the Barisan Sosialis and the U. P. P. the Barisan Sosialis would have won another seven seats more. It might also have adversely affected the electoral fortunes of four of the Cabinet Ministers - S. Rajaratnam, Yong Nyuk Lin, Toh Chin Chye and Ong Pang Boon.¹⁴⁶

The new Government immediately afterwards took a number of security measures, which further strengthened its internal position in Singapore. The citizenship of Tan Lark Sye, the wealthy Chinese rubber merchant and financier of the Nanyang University, was cancelled.¹⁴⁷ The Government also undertook de-registration proceedings against many Barisan-controlled trade unions. The general strike called by the S. A. T. U. did not receive a favourable response from the Singapore workers and it petered out

145 Milne, n. 42, pp. 201-2.

146 For a good account of the Singapore general election, see F. L. Starnes, "The Singapore Elections of 1963" in K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964* (Singapore, 1967), pp. 312-58.

147 *Straits Times*, 23 September 1963.

within two days¹⁴⁸ The Central Government, which assumed control of Internal Security after the formation of Malaysia, arrested important left-wing leaders including S. T. Bani, Lee Tee Tang and Miss Low Miaw Geng.¹⁴⁹

The P. A. P. victory in the general election marked the end of an important epoch in Singapore politics. Its victory represented the acceptance of Malaysia by a majority of Singapore population. It was also the first time that a governing party was given a second mandate by the electorate of Singapore. Strengthened in its home base, the P. A. P. began its efforts to extend its political influence to the Malayan mainland.

148 Ibid., 8, 9 and 10 October 1963.

149 Ibid., 9 October 1963.

5. SINGAPORE IN MALAYSIA

The twenty-three months from the formation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963 to its partial dissolution on 9 August 1965 when the secession of Singapore took place were critical in the history of Malaysia. When Malaysia was formed the greatest danger to the new born State was posed by the policy of confrontation pursued by the Indonesian Government. But within two years internal divisions between the Alliance Government in Kuala Lumpur and the People's Action Party (P. A. P.) Government in Singapore proved to be the greatest disruptive force. Looking in retrospect, the claim made by Tunku Abdul Rahman (and shared by many of Malaysia's allies) that the "achievement of union in September 1963 was an outstanding testimony to the will and wish of the peoples of the new nation to stand united, to achieve progress and prosperity and to resist together the Communist bid for power"¹ appears to have been rather premature. The new state which came into existence as a result of close co-operation between Singapore and the Federation of Malaya foundered on mutual distrust between the leaders of the two territories.

As pointed out in the last chapter, the important principle guiding the leaders of the Federation of Malaya in the drafting of the Malaysia agreement was their desire to reduce the political role of Singapore in the new Federation. Thus Singapore was given

1 Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Malaysia: Key Area in Southeast Asia", *Foreign Affairs*, (New York, N. Y.) Vol. 43, pp. 659-70.

only 15 seats in the Federal Parliament, while Sarawak was allotted 24 seats and Sabah was given 16 seats.² Further, under the citizenship provisions of the Malaysia Agreement, Singapore citizens could vote and contest the elections only in Singapore, while the Federal citizens could vote and contest the elections only in the mainland of Malaya.³ The P. A. P. leaders accepted these restrictions because Singapore, unlike other states of the former Federation of Malaya, was given a greater measure of autonomy and a larger share of revenues.

The Malaysia agreement unfortunately left many vital political issues unresolved. The most important question which was left ambiguous was: what exactly is the role of Singapore political parties in the new political set-up? The P. A. P. leaders believed that the Malaysia agreement, with all its limitations, provided them with an opportunity to extend their political influence to the mainland. The Alliance leaders, on the other hand, assumed that the Singapore leaders would confine their political activities to Singapore and will not make an entry into the Malayan political scene. The ambiguity soon led to sharp differences of opinion between the Central and the Singapore Governments. As Lee Kuan Yew said in the Singapore Legislative Assembly on 14 December 1965, four months after the separation of Singapore from Malaysia:

while we laid emphasis on the constitutional framework and good faith, intending to bring the territories and peoples closer together as they operated together within one national unit,... we found that there were certain inarticulate major premises upon which others had based their calculations, and the Constitution which was written and the inarticulate major premises of race, language and religion which were unwritten became irreconcilable.⁴

2 *Malaysia Agreement Concluded between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore*, Cmd. 22 of 1963 (Singapore, 1963), p. 13.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-27.

4 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 24, 14 December 1965, col. 93.

To appreciate the views of the Alliance, it is necessary to keep in mind the political process in the Federation of Malaya.⁵ The granting of independence in 1957 did not lead to any revolutionary break with the past. The Federation of Malaya maintained the pyramid of the Paramount Ruler and the Sultans, making them symbols and guardians of the State religion, Islam. With the Malays and the non-Malays divided roughly in equal numbers the economic predominance of the Chinese was offset by the political supremacy of the Malays. Under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the supremacy of the Malays in the political life of Malaya continued without much opposition. Both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister were Malays and important portfolios like Foreign Affairs, Defence, Home, Education etc. were assigned to the Malay members in the Cabinet.

Though the situation was vastly different in 1963, Tunku Abdul Rahman and other leaders of the Alliance Government believed that Malay supremacy could also be maintained in the political life of Malaysia. With the inclusion of the Borneo territories and the support of the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak—Dusuns, Muruts, Dayaks, Bajaus, etc. — a more favourable balance between the Chinese and the non-Chinese population could be attained. Further, through the constitutional limitation, referred to earlier, in the Malaysia Agreement, politics in Malaya, to a certain extent, could also be insulated from the politics in Singapore. What was more important, however from the point of view of the relations between the Singapore Government and the Central Government was the assumption that the P. A. P. would confine its political activities to Singapore and would be content to make Singapore, what Tunku Abdul Rahman called, the "New York of Malaysia".⁶ The Malaysian Prime Minister had spoken of an agreement to that effect between the Alliance and the P. A. P. In September 1964, four months after the elections in the mainland, Tunku Abdul Rahman said :

⁵ This aspect has been dealt in Chapter II.

⁶ Tunku Abdul Rahman, n. 1, p. 663. See also *Straits Times*, 10 December 1964.

When Singapore came into this new nation of Malaysia, we had agreed under the constitution that she should have representation in our Parliament and fit into the pattern by having her own administrative machinery and her own elections. The first sign of Singapore's attempt to have a hand in the affairs of Malaysia was in the last elections when the P. A. P. contested some of the constituencies. This was quite contrary to what we agreed.⁷

The P. A. P. leaders denied the existence of such an agreement. In fact, since the inception of the Party, it had been its objective to extend its political influence into the mainland.⁸ The P. A. P.'s attempts in this direction, barely six months after the formation of Malaysia, unfortunately stirred up the dormant racial fears and prejudices of the Malays and was the most important reason for the failure of the multi-racial experiment.

Mention has already been made in the last chapter about the differences between the Singapore Government and the Federation Government in the days preceding the formation of Malaysia. The Singapore general election, which was held immediately after the new Federation came into existence, did not in any way improve the relations between the Central and State Governments. The main contest in the election, as stated in the last chapter, was between the pro-Malaysia People's Action Party and the anti-Malaysia Barisan Sosialis. The Singapore Alliance also contested the elections presenting itself as a conservative alternative before the electorate. The Party was formed by the former Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock and consisted of Singapore People's Alliance, the Malayan Chinese Association and the United Malays' National Organization. It expected to get the solid support of the conservative Chinese besides the large number of Malay votes which traditionally had gone to the U. M. N. O. But the calculations of the Singapore Alliance did not materialise; the P. A. P. was able to score a decisive victory.

Among the thirty seven seats gained by the P. A. P. were three in the predominantly Malay constituencies, which had since

7 Ibid., 21 September 1964.

8 Refer to p. 42 of Chapter II.

1955 returned candidates fielded by the U. M. N. O. The Alliance polled only 8 per cent of the total votes; all its candidates were defeated, thirty one of them losing their deposits, including Chairman Yap Peng Geck and Secretary-General Lee Kim Chuan.

The defeat of the U. M. N. O. candidates came as a complete surprise to the U. M. N. O. leaders both in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. It was very difficult for them to reconcile to the fact that a large number of Malays had switched their loyalty from the U. M. N. O. to the P. A. P. and that the only Malay representation in the Singapore Assembly was through the P. A. P. Commenting on the election results, Tunku Abdul Rahman said that he was shocked by the defeat of the U. M. N. O. candidates. "As far as I know", Tunku Abdul Rahman said, "the Malays in Singapore have always supported U. M. N. O. and the change in their attitude has come to me as a surprise I think there must be a few traitors among the members who have brought about this change in the hearts of the Malayan people there". He added that the elections in Singapore were "hurriedly arranged" and that the Alliance had no time to make adequate preparation.⁹ Addressing an U. M. N. O. rally in Singapore immediately after the election, Tunku Abdul Rahman called on the Malays to be united. Speaking of the P. A. P. victory, he said that the Singapore Government had successfully exploited the fear of Communism among people and got their support.¹⁰ The immediate result of the election was the decision of the U. M. N. O. to revitalize its activities in Singapore.

The Singapore Government was keenly aware of the difficulties that would result if the differences with the Central Government were allowed to drift. Lee Kuan Yew said that the immediate task of his Government was to re-establish good relations and confidence with the Central Government. He reiterated that the Singapore Government would honour the Malaysia Agreement on a "fair and equal" basis.¹¹ He also assured the leaders of the

9 *Straits Times*, 23 September 1963.

10 *Malayan Times*, 28 September 1963.

11 *Times (London)*, 30 September 1963.

Federation Government that his Party was not out to capture power in the Centre. Lee said: "We understand that for the next two decades the Prime Minister of Malaysia must be a Malay. But we want to help the Central Government to understand what they do not at present understand – the problems of urban Chinese." It was a problem that could be resolved if there was an "intelligent appraisal" and since Singapore was the hub of the Chinese in Malaysia his Government was best equipped to make that appraisal.¹²

An important step in the direction of re-establishing good relations with the Central Government was taken by Lee Kuan Yew in the selection of Singapore's representatives to the Senate. For the House of Representatives the P. A. P. chose twelve Assembly men and allowed the Barisan Sosialis to choose three. But for the two seats in the Senate, the P. A. P. after choosing Ko Teck Kin, the President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, requested the Tunku to nominate another Senator. Tunku Abdul Rahman accepted the proposal and selected Inche Ahmed bin Taff, a leader of the Singapore branch of the U. M. N. O. Speaking about the role of the P. A. P. in the Federal Legislature, Lee Kuan Yew said that they would act

as cross benchers... friend, loyal opposition and critic... We support the Central Government on national issues – for the integrity and well being of Malaysia. I do not think our role is to play the destructive tactics of the Socialist Front or the Barisan Sosialis. They are the disloyal opposition. We are the loyal opposition whose aim is to improve the working of the democratic system.¹³

An important factor which united the leaders of Singapore and Federal Governments during the period immediately after the formation of Malaysia was Indonesia's policy of confrontation. It enabled the leaders of the two Governments to patch up their differences, present a united front against the external danger and

12 Ibid.

13 *Straits Times*, 31 October 1963.

deal with opposition parties with an iron hand. Tunku Abdul Rahman himself admitted this when he said in the Malaysian Parliament: "Confrontation has been a blessing in disguise, for it has united the people in this country. I am proud of the spirit of the people here."¹⁴ Similar views were also expressed by S. Rajaratnam, the Minister for Culture in Singapore :

In the nature of things Indonesian aggression cannot succeed in crushing Malaysia.....On the contrary, it has, in the early stages, helped to rally the diverse peoples of Malaysia together. True it is common fear of Indonesia which hold us together now and which rallied support for the concept of Malaysia.¹⁵

In the face of stiffening Indonesian Confrontation, Lee Kuan Yew believed that there would be a new alignment of political forces in Malaysia. He maintained that with the formation of Malaysia it was but natural for the pro-Malaysia parties to co-operate and work together as against those parties which were opposed to Malaysia.¹⁶ But the Federation leaders considered any new alignment of political forces to be undesirable and impra-

14 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 5, 11 December 1963, col. 1967.

15 S. Rajaratnam, "Solution to the Communal Problem" *Petir*, March 1965, pp. 5, 7.

16 Reviewing the events of this period in March 1965, Lee Kuan Yew said, "After Malaysia's formation it would have been natural that for the next phase of Malaysia's development the Alliance in Malaya, the People's Action Party in Singapore, the group of parties known as Sabah Alliance in Sabah and another group of parties known as the Sarawak Alliance in Sarawak could have been gathered on the same side for the defence and advance of Malaysia. Ranged against them would be those who fought against its formation, the Socialist Front and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party in Malaya, Barisan Sosialis in Singapore, the Sarawak United People's Party in Sarawak.....This alignment would have given Malaysia a period of internal stability and allowed it to consolidate....." *Towards a Malaysian Malaysia* (speeches delivered by Lee Kuan Yew in February/March 1965) (Ministry of Culture, Singapore), p. 23.

eticable. As early as August 1962 Tunku Abdul Rahman had stated that while he would include members from Sabah and Sarawak in the Federal Cabinet, there would be no representatives from Singapore¹⁷.

P. A. P. and the M. C. A.

Having failed in their endeavour to evolve an alliance of pro-Malaysia parties, the P. A. P. leaders were undecided for some time regarding their next course of action as to how to extend their political influence into the mainland. There were only two days open to them. The first was to make an entry into Malaysia as an opposition party with its own socio-economic programme and the second, try to become a partner in the Alliance as the spokesman of the Chinese population. The first line was beset with great difficulties, for any direct opposition that they might present to the Central Government, particularly during the period of Confrontation, would weaken Malaysia and would be branded anti-national. Such a step would definitely embitter the relations between the leaders of the two territories and would gravely imperil the cause of Malaysia. It would further be interpreted by the vast Malay population as an attempt by a non-Malay political party from Singapore to capture power in Malaysia. Therefore, it was the latter course that the P. A. P. leadership preferred – win the support of the Chinese in Malaya and replace the M. C. A. in the Alliance. The P. A. P.'s calculations were further strengthened by the fact that many of the urban Chinese were disillusioned with the M. C. A. and its policies. Since 1959, the Socialist Front was making serious inroads into urban areas and had succeeded in getting the support of the younger generation among the Chinese.¹⁸

The P. A. P. leadership, therefore, started to criticize the M. C. A. and its Chairman Tan Siew Sin, while supporting the

17 *Straits Times*, 10 August 1962.

18 For a good account of the Malayan Chinese Association, see Margaret Roff, "The Malayan Chinese Association, 1948-65", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* (Singapore), vol. 6, pp. 40-53.

U. M. N. O. leadership and the general policies of the Alliance Government. In September 1963 Lee Kuan Yew stated that the P. A. P. had no intention to take part in the Federal election due to be held in 1964. The statement was made in the course of a bitter attack on the M. C. A. leaders for what he called their attempts to "sour up" his relations with Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Abdul Razak. "We want to show the M. C. A.," Lee Kuan Yew declared, "that even if the P. A. P. keeps out of the elections in the mainland the M. C. A. will lose. We want U. M. N. O. to win the elections for there is no alternative Government as tolerant and stable as the one led by U. M. N. O." He further said that the M. C. A. had suffered "defeat after defeat" in elections in the large towns of the Federation. Lee Kuan Yew visualized the time when the P. A. P. would replace the M. C. A. in the Alliance. "It is my belief that the Tunku and Tun Razak will work with us - not today or next month, but in years to come. We calculate in terms of decades, not in terms of elections."¹⁹

Speaking in the Singapore Legislative Assembly Lee Kuan Yew said that the 1964 election in the mainland would be of crucial importance regarding the P. A. P.'s future role in Malaya :

Much will depend on what happens in the elections in Malaya next year. Everybody concedes that the U. M. N. O. side of the Alliance can and will win a clear majority. But everybody is waiting to see what happens to the vote in the urban areas and in all the main towns of Malaya, for arising out of that vote, some vital decisions will have to be made both by U. M. N. O. leaders and by us in Singapore. It is fairly obvious that if it were possible for the M. C. A. to hold the towns in Malaya, then the present structure of the Central Government and the policies it pursues can go on unchanged. But if the towns decisively reject all M. C. A. candidates then there must be a re-appraisal by U. M. N. O. leaders. They will then have to decide whether they come to terms with the leadership that

19 *Straits Times*, 10 September 1963. On 29 September 1963 Lee Kuan Yew repeated that the P. A. P. was not interested in the 1964 Federal election in Malaya. *Malayan Times*, 30 September 1963.

can command the loyalty of the sophisticated urban population or govern without the partnership of the leadership of the towns.²⁰

The implication was obvious. If the M. C. A. gets defeated in the urban areas, the political character of the Alliance would have to necessarily change. In the interests of Malaysia it would be necessary to replace the U. M. N. O. - M. C. A. - M. I. C. axis by a more rational arrangement which would reflect the needs of the country, viz., an alliance between the U. M. N. O. and the P. A. P. In the Malaysian Parliament, in his maiden speech, Lee Kuan Yew said that the political arrangement in Malaysia based on an Alliance between the Party representing the "have-nots" in the rural areas (U. M. N. O.) and the Party of the "haves" in the urban areas (M. C. A.) was not good for the well-being of Malaysia and desired its modification :

I do not know how long this curious partnership between a Party of the "have-nots" in the rural areas with a Party of the "haves" in the urban areas will go on for the benefit of the "haves" - not for the benefit of the people because I believe that ultimately a Party of the "have-nots" in the rural areas will find its kindred soul in the Party of the "have-nots" in the urban areas.²¹

The reaction of the U. M. N. O. leadership to the overtures made by the P. A. P. was very cold. They did not want to disturb the harmonious relations with the M. C. A. which had continued since 1952, and replace it with a Party whose political and economic goals were yet undefined. Towards the end of September 1963, Tunku Abdul Rahman issued a public statement in which he declared that he had found the leadership of the M. C. A. to be "sound, honest, straightforward and absolutely trustworthy" and

20 Singapore, *Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 22, 9 December 1963, cols 141-2.

21 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 5, 21 December 1963, col. 2953.

added that he resented any statement "likely to cause rift in the Alliance."²²

P. A. P. and the 1964 Elections in Malaya

The decision to contest the Federal elections²³ was announced by the P. A. P. Chairman Dr. Toh Chin Chye on 1 March 1964. Inaugurating a Tamil newspaper in Singapore Dr. Toh said the the P. A. P. which had played an important role in the formation of Malaysia, must consider itself as a national party and, therefore, should contest the elections. He said that it was not the intention of the P. A. P. to fight the Central Government and Malay leadership:

It is our purpose to co-operate with U. M. N. O. and the Central Government of Malaysia to help Malaysia succeed. We will, therefore, play a token part. If we are content only to remain a political party in Singapore, our task to build a happy and prosperous Malaysia will be restricted.²⁴

Lee Kuan Yew was on a tour of Africa when the announcement was made. Immediately after his return he supported the statement made by the P. A. P. Chairman and added :

Our enlightened self-interest demands that we should do nothing to hinder or embarrass the present Malay leadership. But whilst the present Malay leadership of Tunku and Tun Razak in U. M. N. O. is vital to the survival and success of Malaysia, the Chinese leadership in the Alliance as represented by the M. C. A. is not irreplaceable. It is true that some people in U. M. N. O. may prefer Chinese partners who are politically malleable. But is this really in the best interests of Malaysia?²⁵

22 *Malayan Times*, 30 September 1963.

23 For a good account of the Malayan Parliamentary election, see K. J. Ratnam and R S Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964* (Singapore, 1967).

24 *Straits Times*, 2 March 1964.

25 *The Winds of Change* (Collection of Lee Kuan Yew's speeches delivered in March 1964) (Singapore, 1964), p. 9.

In the light of earlier statements, the P. A. P.'s decision to contest the Federal elections came as a surprise. There had been no clear-cut pronouncement by the P. A. P. leaders as to why they reversed their decision. Nevertheless, in the light of the P. A. P. manifesto and Lee Kuan Yew's speeches during the election campaign, it can be assumed that the Party was mainly guided by two considerations: (1) the P. A. P. leaders believed that in the absence of a rational alternative to the M. C. A. the urban electorate in Malaya may vote for the anti-Malaysia and pro-Communist Socialist Front. (2) That if in the 1964 elections the P. A. P. candidates were returned from the urban areas it would effectively prove to Tunku Abdul Rahman that the P. A. P. was in a better position to represent the needs of the urban areas than the M. C. A. Since the State and Federal elections were to be held together, the P. A. P. would not have another opportunity till the 1969 elections to test its popular support in Malaya. In the course of the election campaign Lee Kuan Yew said (referring to Tunku's attitude towards the P. A. P.) that the fate of the country did not depend on individual likes and dislikes, but on national policy. "If the M. C. A. cannot hold the urban population", Lee Kuan Yew said, "the choice before U. M. N. O. is to govern without the support of the towns or come to terms with groups which can command the loyalty of urban areas".²⁶ Rajaratnam, the Minister for Culture, who directed the Party's election campaign, was more explicit. According to him the P. A. P. hoped to prove in the Malayan general elections that it could help the Central Government "without having the M. C. A. as a millstone round our necks".²⁷

The election strategy of the P. A. P. consisted in opposing the M. C. A. and the Socialist Front in the urban areas, while supporting the U. M. N. O. candidates elsewhere. Consequently, the P. A. P. withdrew the nomination of two candidates in Johore

26 *Straits Times*, 25 March 1964.

27 *Ibid.*, 17 March 1964.

Barat and Johore Timor when it found out that the Alliance had put up the U. M. N. O. instead of the M. C. A. candidates. Announcing the decision, Rajaratnam said :

The two P. A. P. candidates for Johore Bahru Parliamentary and State elections are withdrawing from the contest as they are facing U. M. N. O. candidates in these two constituencies. The instructions to the two candidates were to proceed if M. C. A. candidates appear but to withdraw if U. M. N. O. candidates were put up.....The P. A. P. calls upon all voters in Johore Bahru to vote for the U. M. N. O. against Socialist Front candidates.²⁸

The election manifesto of the P. A. P. proclaimed that in participating for the first time in the Malayan elections the Party had two objectives. The long term the task of the Party was "to assist in the building of a united democratic and socialist Malaysia based on the principles of social justice and non-communalism". The short term, and immediate, objective of the Party was to ensure that the—

Socialist Front does not benefit from the substantial protest votes against the M. C. A. An increase of votes for the Socialist Front would certainly be interpreted in Indonesia as support for Indonesia's "crush Malaysia" policy.....We must realise quickly that the Socialist Front, despite its facade of some respectable front men, is the advance guard of the Indonesian Communist Party just as the P. M. I. P. is the beachhead in rural areas. In the urban areas, because of the ineffectiveness of the M. C. A., the P. A. P. has to help in the battle against the anti-Malaysia Socialist Front.²⁹

Speaking in an election rally in Penang, Lee Kuan Yew said that the best election result to preserve Malaysia against external threat was one in which all the U. M. N. O. candidates were returned in the rural areas and the pro-Malaysia parties in the urban areas :

The best result internally for our progress and for bringing about the winds of change in economic and social policies

28 Ibid., 22 March 1964.

29 *Election Manifesto of the P. A. P.*

is to have the U. M. N. O. leadership returned, but the M. C. A. discarded. A vote for the M. C. A. is a vote for continued inactivity, complacency and decadence. To bring about this change, there must be a jolt in the leadership of the Government. That jolt can come about by voting for the P. A. P. and other opposition parties who, like the P. A. P., are pro-Malaysia and also for social and economic change within the country.³⁰

The P. A. P. decision to contest the elections and bring about a split in the Alliance was severely opposed by the Alliance leadership. The U. M. N. O. leaders whole-heartedly supported the M. C. A. and considered any attack on the M. C. A. as an attack on themselves. Speaking of the Alliance, Tunku Abdul Rahman said that the Alliance partners "would swim or sink together. Even if there are only five M. C. A. members left or five M. I. C., we will always stand together united in common purpose." He praised the M. C. A. for "remaining steadfast" to the principles of honesty and sincerity—"always loyal to the Alliance Party as a partner". Unlike other parties, Tunku added, the U. M. N. O. "would never throw our partners overboard. If we sink, we sink together—and then I say the whole country will sink with us".³¹ The Alliance in a statement, accused the P. A. P. of trying to break its unity by attacking one partner of the Alliance and praising the other. The statement added that the P. A. P.'s move in calling on the urban voters, who were mostly Chinese, was a clear indication that its participation in the election was to kill the M. C. A. and later force the U. M. N. O. to work with it. "If the P. A. P. succeeds in destroying the M. C. A. it will no doubt later turn on U. M. N. O. itself".³² Speaking of the P. A. P. Tunku Abdul Rahman said:

The P. A. P. wants to teach us what is good for us, and what is bad. What the P. A. P. really wants is to displace the M. C. A. They say they want to join U. M. N. O., but we do not want them. U. M. N. O. would stand solidly by

30 *Straits Times*, 20 April 1964.

31 *Ibid.*, 29 March 1964.

32 *Ibid.*, 21 March 1964.

M. C. A. with which if had worked so harmoniously to bring about peace, prosperity and unity among the people.³³

The details of the election results are given below :

Results of the Parliamentary Elections in Malaya, 1964

Name of the Party	Number of Votes polled	Percentage of Total	Seats contested	Seats won
1 Alliance	1,204,340	58.5	104	89
2 Socialist Front	330,898	16.1	63	2
3 People's Progressive Party	69,898	3.4	9	2
4 United Democratic Party	88,223	4.3	27	1
5 People's Action Party	42,130	2.0	11(9)*	1
6 Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	301,187	14.6	50	9
7 Party Negara	7,319	0.4	4	-
8 Independents	13,509	0.7	8	-

*Two candidates were subsequently withdrawn from the contest.

Source: K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, n. 23, p. 361.

The performance of the P. A. P. in the elections of 1964 was far below general expectations. In the parliamentary elections only one of its candidates, C. V. Devan Nair, was successful. He won the Bungsar seat, wresting it from the Socialist Front candidate, V. David, by a very narrow margin of 808 votes. The Party polled only 2.0 per cent of the total votes and was defeated by the M. C. A. in six constituencies, in one by the Socialist Front and in another by the United Democratic Party. In the State elections the P. A. P. fared no better. It contested 15 seats, secured only 0.9 per cent of the total votes, without winning a single seat.³⁴

33 Ibid., 15 March 1964.

34 R. K. Vasil, "The 1964 General Election in Malaya", *International Studies* (Bombay), vol. 7, pp. 20-65.

RESULTS OF THE SEATS CONTESTED BY THE PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY

	Alliance (Malayan Chinese Association)	People's Action Party	Socialist Front	United Demo- cratic Party	People's Progressive Party	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
1 Kluang Utara	9,138	1,276	6,674	—	—	—
2 Bandar Malacca	13,789	3,461	10,658	—	—	—
3 Seremban Timor	9,604	5,410	5,124	1,670	—	—
4 Batu	9,734	2,459	10,122	—	—	—
5 Bukit Bintang	9,107	6,667	5,000	—	—	650
6 Bungsar	9,761	13,494	12,686	—	2,219	—
7 Damansara	9,148	3,191	8,602	—	—	—
8 Setapak	12,292	4,214	7,888	—	—	—
9 Tanjung	6,271	778	8,516	12,928	—	—

Source : Michael Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia : The Politics of Federation", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 6, p. 62

In analysing the results of the 1964 elections, and the poor performance of the P. A. P., it is necessary to bear in mind that the main issue before the electorate was the Indonesian Confrontation. In this crucial issue the P. A. P. had nothing new to offer except strong support to the Central Government. The P. A. P. strategy of supporting the national leadership of the U. M. N. O. while opposing the M. C. A. had its own limitations. In such a situation the P. A. P. could not present a clear picture of its own socio-economic programme, so much so, as a noted authority has pointed out, the P. A. P. did not seem to have an election platform which differentiated itself clearly from the Alliance platform.³⁵ Of greater importance was the grave miscalculation of the P. A. P. leadership regarding the political behaviour of the urban electorate—mainly Chinese. After its convincing victory in Singapore the P. A. P. leaders believed that the Party would have a similar appeal to the electorate in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Malacca, Seremban and Johore.³⁶ They completely miscalculated the strength of the M. C. A. and the staunch support that it could get from its Malay partner in the Alliance. As the results proved, the M. C. A. in spite of the opposition of the Socialist Front and the loud denunciation of the P. A. P. leaders, improved its position from that of 1959. In 1959, the M. C. A. contested 31 seats but won only 19 of them, securing 15.1 per cent of the total votes polled. In 1974 it contested 33 seats, won 27 of them and polled 18.6 per cent of the total votes.³⁷ Besides the solid support of the Malay voters the M. C. A. was able to rally the Chinese voters because of the political situation arising out of the Indonesian Confrontation and the poor

35 Wang Gungwu, "The Way Ahead", *The Straits Times Annual, 1966* (Singapore, 1966), pp. 26-31.

36 Addressing an election rally in Kuala Lumpur Lee Kuan Yew said, "I do not believe people in Kuala Lumpur are less hard-working, less skilful, have less imagination and drive, than people in Singapore. Nor is there any difference between Penang, Seremban, Malacca or Johore and Singapore." *The Winds of Change*, n. 25. p. 210.

37 Vasil, n. 34.

treatment meted out to the Chinese in Indonesia. The Socialist Front which was the main rival to the M. C. A. in 1959 elections lost heavily because of its anti-Malaysia stand. In 1959, it fielded 38 candidates, polled 12.8 per cent votes and won 8 seats; whereas in 1964, it fielded as many as 63 candidates, polled 16.0 per cent votes but won in only 2 constituencies.³⁸ It is difficult to find out to what extent the P. A. P. derived its support from potential Socialist Front voters or potential M. C. A. voters, but if one accepts the argument of the P. A. P. leaders that if it did not field its candidates the protest votes against the M. C. A. would have gone to the Socialist Front, the M. C. A. was able to win four seats - Bandar Malacca, Seremban Timor, Bukit Bintang and Damansara - due to the intervention of the P. A. P.³⁹

In the Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations during the period under review, the P. A. P.'s direct entry into the Malayan political scene marks a clear turning point. It set in motion a series of events which finally culminated in the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. As noted earlier Tunku Abdul Rahman considered it as the violation of an "unwritten agreement" between Singapore and the Central Government. Henceforward the Singapore Prime Minister and the P. A. P. were viewed with suspicion not only by the M. C. A. but also by the U. M. N. O., the senior partner in the Alliance. In the midst of the election campaign, Tun Abdul Razak, speaking in a television interview said, "The P. A. P. is, of course, a new party and we in the Federation do not know what the P. A. P. is actually and *I am speaking particularly for the Malays. We doubt the sincerity of the P. A. P. towards the Malays*, and I feel the approach the P. A. P. is making will not bring unity in this country."⁴⁰ The P. A. P. leaders themselves were aware that the

38 Ibid.

39 K. Turner, "Some Comments on the 1964 Malaysian Election" *Australian Outlook* (Canberra), Vol. 19, pp. 62-72.

40 Emphasis added. Press Statement issued by Deputy Prime Minister's office. Pen /64/96 (D. P. M.), 9 April 1964.

Malays would view their political activities in the Federation with suspicion. The party statement issued on its tenth anniversary in November 1964 stated :

It was unfortunate that the participation of the P. A. P. in the peninsula elections was to exacerbate the fears of the Malay leadership which had barely recovered from the loss of the three Malay constituencies in the Singapore elections only six months ago..... The fears and anxieties of the Malay rural base, which would be aroused by large urban crowds mainly of Chinese and Indians rallying to our party banner, was underestimated.⁴¹

But the subsequent activities of the P. A. P. far from allaying the fears of the Malays, only strengthened their suspicions and created ill-feeling, which both the Alliance and the P. A. P. could ill afford.

The Singapore Riots

The communal riots which took place in Singapore in July and September 1964, were the direct outcome of the Malay fear that the increasing influence of the P. A. P. Government in Singapore was a threat to the pre-eminent position enjoyed by the Malays in Malaysia. The Malays formed only 14.0 percent of the total population of Singapore, and they did not enjoy any special privileges under the Constitution as in Malaya. As described in an earlier chapter, when the P. A. P. Government was trying to have a merger with Malaya it made some important gestures to give Singapore a Malayan identity. Malay was accepted as the national language, attempts were made to foster Malayan culture and a Malay Journalist was appointed as Yang-di Pertuan Negara (Head of State) But the Malays still continued to be the weakest section in the professional, economic and educational fields in Singapore.

The Malaysia Agreement specifically stipulated that the special privileges enjoyed by the Malays in the Federation of

41 "The First Ten Years. Time for Reflection and Reassessment" (Statement of objectives and policy by the Central Executive Committee of the P. A. P. on its Tenth Anniversary), *Our First Ten years, P. A. P. 10th Anniversary Souvenir* (Singapore, 1964), pp. 109-14.

Malaya would not extend to Singapore.⁴² The Singapore Constitution recognized the "special position of the Malays", but it did not give them the special rights like the reservation of jobs in civil service and preferential treatment in the granting of permits and licences.⁴³ Many of the Malays naturally thought that after the formation of Malaysia, with a Malay-dominated Central Government, they would be in a better position in Singapore than before, but their hopes were belied.⁴⁴

The Singapore U. M. N. O., as noted earlier, after its defeat in the Singapore election of 1963, carried on its activities with increased vigour exploiting the Malay grievances. The Party newspaper *Utusan Melayu* started a vigorous campaign in favour of Malay privileges and charged that the P. A. P. Government was adopting a step-motherly treatment towards the Malays. It referred to reports that Malays in Singapore were being tactfully suppressed by the P. A. P. and that Malay education in the State was not properly encouraged. The paper warned that this would have its reaction in the mainland.⁴⁵ The Assistant Secretary General of

42 Malaysia Agreement, n. 2, p. 46.

43 Article 89 of the Singapore Constitution stated :

- 1 It shall be the responsibility of the Government constantly to care for the interests of the racial and religious minorities in the State.
- 2 The Government shall exercise its functions in such manner as to recognise the special position of the Malays, who are the indigenous people of the State, and, accordingly it shall be the responsibility of the Government to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote their political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests and the Malay Language.

Ibid., pp. 160-1.

44 Dr. Toh Chin Chye admitted this fact and stated, "The merger of Singapore with Malaysia has possibly led a section of Malays in Singapore to anticipate that special rights for Malays as practised in Malaya will apply equally to them." Dr. Toh Chin Chye, "New Tasks for the P. A. P.", n. 41, pp. 125-7.

45 *Daily Press Summary*, No. 124/64, 5 June 1964.

the U. M. N. O., Ali Haji Ahmad, on his return from Singapore said (as reported in *Utusan Melayu*) that the P. A. P. Government was launching a psychological warfare to cripple the activities of Malays and, particularly, the Singapore U. M. N. O.⁴⁶

The immediate cause of the Singapore riots was the evacuation of two hundred Malay families from the site of the Jurong Industrial Estate. The Singapore Government had made arrangements for their rehabilitation in other parts of the city. At this juncture the Singapore U. M. N. O. entered the fray. The Party feared that this was a deliberate attempt for the redistribution of Malay voters within larger Chinese and Indian electorates. The Malays were told that the Singapore Government was trying to destroy their traditional *Kampongs* and force them to pay more rent.⁴⁷

The Singapore Government took note of the Malay grievances and Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew invited various social and cultural organisations of Malays for a Conference on 19 July 1964. He did not, however, invite the leaders of the U. M. N. O. The U. M. N. O. leaders branded the action as an attempt on the part of the Singapore Government to divide the Malays. They organized a Malay Convention on 12 July 1964 to put forward the Malay demands.⁴⁸ The Malay Convention was attended by representatives of the U. M. N. O., the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (P. M. I. P.) and the Peninsular Malay Union (P. M. U). It appointed a twenty three Member Action Committee to speak for the entire Malay community in Singapore in all its future dealings with the Singapore Government. Addressing the Convention, Ali Haji Ahmad said that the P. A. P. was trying to set up an "Israeli State" in Singapore to suppress the Malays. He pointed out that just as in Israel,

46 Ibid., No. 139/64, 23 June 1964

47 "New Confrontation", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 August 1964, pp. 225-6.

48 On the same day that the Malay Convention was held communal clashes on a minor scale took place in Bukit Mertajam in Province Wellesley in the mainland. Stray incidents continued to take place in the next few days.

where the Muslims were oppressed by Israelis, the P. A. P. was adopting the same tactics against Malays.⁴⁹ Speaking in a public rally after the Convention, Syed Ja'afar Albar, in an inflammatory speech, asked the Malays to get united. "If we are united no force can crush us. Not even a thousand Lee Kuan Yews...".⁵⁰

The meeting convened by the Singapore Government on 19 July 1964, ended in failure. Lee Kuan Yew assured the Malay delegates that the Government would give all facilities to train and equip the Malays to compete with the non-Malays in finding jobs; but he made it clear that there would be no quota system in job allocation, the issue of licences or in the reservation of land.⁵¹ The leader of the Action Committee, Senator Ahmad Haji Taff, said that it was an insult to the Malays. He reiterated the U. M. N. O. stand that the P. A. P. Government was trying to divide the Malays by calling the meeting.⁵² In this explosive atmosphere it was not difficult to provide a spark for the communal riots.

The mischief-makers and anti-social elements exploited the procession taken out in honour of the Prophet's birthday. The riots were well-organized and, once started, spread far and wide. After an uneasy peace for about six weeks, riots recurred again in the first week of September 1964.

The Singapore riots revealed the dangerous potentials of communal strife and the slender basis on which the whole concept of Malaysia was based. Speaking after the riots, the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak said, "The situation is very dangerous. If the people go on stirring up communal trouble there is no need for Soekarno to send guerillas. We will crush ourselves".⁵³ Immediately after his return to Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman said (during the time of the

49 *Daily Press Summary*, No. 156/64, 13 July 1964.

50 *Straits Times*, 13 July 1964.

51 *Ibid.*, 20 July 1964.

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Ibid.*, 9 September 1964.

communal riots, Tunku Abdul Rahman was in the United States), "Our country's very existence and progress depends on the co-operation of all peoples. The scare is still there and at a time when Malaysia was threatened by Indonesia, the nation must be united".⁵⁴

When the second series of communal riots took place in September 1964, Lee Kuan Yew was on a European tour. He delivered many speeches regarding the problems confronted by Malaysia. Speaking to the Malaysian students in London on 10 September 1964, Lee Kuan Yew analyzed the causes of Singapore riots and pointed out that they were the direct consequence of the U. M. N. O.'s defeat in the Singapore election and the differences in the attitudes [of Federation and Singapore governments to the communal issue. After analysing the racial composition of Malaysia and the inherent dangers of communal politics, Lee Kuan Yew sounded an ominous warning that the success of Malaysia was not inevitable. But since all other alternatives were extremely unpleasant, political adjustments must be made to ensure that Malaysia succeeded. "Malaysia survives or fails" Lee Kuan Yew said "depending upon whether we set out to create a Malaysian nation or a Malay nation."⁵⁵

In Malaysia, the Alliance politicians viewed the speeches of Lee Kuan Yew as an attempt to influence liberal opinion in England by presenting himself as the champion of the overseas Chinese and of multi-racialism in Malaysia. Their suspicion was strengthened by tendentious press reports in British newspapers, which were highly critical of Tunku Abdul Rahman and the Central Government. They felt that these had been inspired by Lee Kuan Yew as a means of influencing the British Government which could exert pressure on Tunku Abdul Rahman to include the P. A. P. in the

54 *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 15 August 1964.

55 *Some Problems in Malaysia* (Ministry of Culture; Singapore), pp. 12-18.

Federal Cabinet.⁵⁶ The influential British newspaper, *Daily Telegraph*, pointed out that the "most serious threat" to Malaysia was not the Indonesian Confrontation but "mounting racial distrust" between the Malays and the Chinese. This could be remedied only by "urgent and far-reaching" government measures to reassure the Chinese section of the population. But unfortunately Tunku Abdul Rahman seemed to take the "same complacent attitude about the pace of Chinese advancement to parity as Sir Roy Welensky once took about African advancement in the Central African Federation". The newspaper asked the British Government to bring the "strongest possible pressure" on Tunku Abdul Rahman to give the Chinese a "fair deal". "Britain should make it absolutely clear that a condition of her willingness to succour Malaysia is the Malaysian Government's own willingness to build a non-racial united community really worth saving."⁵⁷

Lee Kuan Yew subsequently stated (in July 1966) that the British Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas Home had suggested to Tunku Abdul Rahman in London that the "best way to consolidate Malaysia after communal riots in Singapore" was to have a coalition between the P. A. P. and the Alliance.⁵⁸ The statement was issued as a reply to an article written by Tun Abdul Razak in a souvenir volume brought out on the occasion of the twentieth

56 Michael Leifer, "Singapore in Malaysia: The Politics of Federation", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 6, pp. 54-70.

57 *Sunday Telegraph* (London), 13 September 1964.

58 The Singapore Prime Minister's statement added: "Mr. Lee told the Tengku that he thought that some dramatic gesture must be made to show the world that two of the partners in Malaysia, the Alliance Government in Malaya and the P. A. P. Government in Singapore were both determined that Malaysia should succeed and that divisive communal tendencies would be checked. If a coalition Government could check the drift to an ugly situation he was prepared to take the responsibility of having some P. A. P. Ministers in the Cabinet. But if the Tengku was not prepared for it, then there the matter would have to rest." *Straits Budget* (Kuala Lumpur), 3 August 1966.

anniversary of the U. M. N. O. Writing about the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, Razak stated that after the communal riots in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew "urged the Tunku and I (Sic) to take the P. A. P. into the Alliance Government. It was said that only in this way communal harmony could be ensured. We rejected his request outright". Tun Razak added, that even after the second wave of communal riots in Singapore in September 1964, the P. A. P. resorted to every possible strategy to get into the Cabinet.⁵⁹

Speaking in Singapore shortly after his return from the U. S. A., Tunku Abdul Rahman blamed the politicians in Singapore for creating an atmosphere of ill-will by laying emphasis on racial differences. He said that the entry of the P. A. P. in the Federal elections in 1964 was contrary to the agreement made at the time of Malaysia. "There is an under-current to contest my leadership of the Malaysian people by trying to make out that I am the leader of Malays only... It was repeated from London that the Chinese are not allowed to fight but are used only as ornaments in the military set up This is a libellous and mischievous statement made by persons whose only aim is to create trouble." He appealed to the Singapore leaders to "play down the communal differences" and co-operate with the Central Government against the common enemy - "the Communists from within and Indoneisans from without".⁶⁰

The period immediately following the riots witnessed a temporary halt in the acrimonious exchanges between the U. M. N. O. and the P. A. P. leaders. The Singapore leaders met Tunku Abdul Rahman and agreed on what came to be generally known as a "truce". It was stated by Dr. Toh Chin Chye that both the Alliance and the P. A. P. leaders had agreed that they would not raise any sensitive communal issues in the public and that party differences would be relegated to the background for the next two

59 Ibid.

60 *Straits Times*, 21 September 1964.

years.⁶¹ The Central Government appointed a Commission to "enquire into and report on the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the disturbances which began on 21 July and 2 September 1964."⁶²

The provisions of the "truce" were so vague that differences of opinion soon arose. Mohammad Khir Johari, the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Co-operation, declared that the Singapore Alliance (S. A.) would get sufficient votes and form the next Government in Singapore.⁶³ This brought an immediate retort from the P. A. P. Chairman, Dr. Toh Chin Chye, that the statement was a clear violation of the 'truce'.⁶⁴ Inche Khir Johari declared that he was not aware of any 'truce' and that the P. A. P. must be prepared to face rivalry from other political parties.⁶⁵ The P. A. P., as a result, decided that the Party should be "reorientated and reorganised so that we can get at Malaya".⁶⁶

Relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur deteriorated once the P. A. P. decided to build up its organisation in the mainland and become a major political force in opposition to the Alliance. Its activities caused considerable alarm among the extremist section of the U. M. N. O., especially Syed Ja'afar Albar, who believed that the position of the Malays would be in great danger in Malaysia unless they united and checked the activities of the P. A. P. The extremists exhorted the Malays to be vigilant and united and accused Lee Kuan Yew of harbouring intentions to gain political power through the support of the non-Malays.⁶⁷ Tunku

61 Ibid., 27 September 1964.

62 Ibid., 10 October 1964.

63 Ibid., 26 October 1964.

64 Ibid., 27 October 1964.

65 Ibid., 28 October 1964.

66 See Dr. Toh Chin Chye's statement, *ibid.*, 1 November 1964.

67 Immediately after the Singapore riots in July 1964 the U. M. N. O. official organ, *Malay Merdeka*, asked the Central

Abdul Rahman's deep concern was evident, when in a speech in the University of Singapore in December 1964, he asked the politicians of Singapore to concentrate their attention in making Singapore "the business centre of Malaysia and not a hot-bed of political quarrels and squabbles". In a clear warning to the politicians in Singapore, he added, that if they chose to make politics their main springboard, it would invite trouble and all Malaysia would suffer. *"If the politicians of various colours and tinges and flashes in Singapore disagree with me, the only solution is break away, but what a calamity that would be for Singapore and for Malaysia."*⁶⁸

The Campaign for Malaysian Malaysia

By the end of February 1965, political divisions between the P. A. P. and the Alliance had become clear. Lee Kuan Yew said that Allianism, i. e., "the policies of conservative Malay traditionalist leaders collaborating with Chinese compradores and capitalists for mutual benefit" would not solve the social, economic and political problems of Malaysia. On the other hand, Lee pointed out, the P. A. P. "preaching multi racialism and Malaysian nationalism offering the democratic socialist way to a more equal and just society, making an appeal to both Malay and non-Malay have-nots" could serve the cause of Malaysia better than an alliance of communal parties with its policy of gradualism and traditionalism.⁶⁹

The P. A. P. leaders coined a new slogan "Malaysian Malaysia" and repeatedly asserted that if Malaysia was to survive

Government to take positive measures and pay serious attention to the plight of the Singapore Malays, so that they will not feel disappointed. The Journal pointed out that in the interest of Singapore and Malaysia as a whole, the leadership of the P. A. P. Government should be replaced. *Daily Press Summary*, No. 155/64, 25 July 1964.

68 Emphasis added, *Straits Times*, 10 December 1964.

69 *Turning Point in Malaysia* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965).

it should become a "Malaysian Malaysia".⁷⁰ Lee Kuan Yew said that the old policies and attitudes, which were so successful in the Federation of Malaya, could not apply in Malaysia because of the racial set-up where no single community enjoyed majority. He pointed out that the extremist leaders in the U. M. N. O. - "ultras" as he called them - instead of changing their attitudes and policies to suit Malaysia wanted "to force Malaysia into the Malayan pattern". He accused them of rousing Malay passions by fiery speeches and inflammatory articles in *Utusan Melayu* and *Malay Merdeka*. If Malaysia was to succeed, he repeatedly asserted, it must be non-communal and there must be political equality of various races. Otherwise, the alternative would be "ultimate disintegration into component parts, and worse, perhaps not even into its component parts. Because, if you have a division on the basis of race, language, religion, the country will be unzipped right down the middle. And it is very difficult to divide town from country."⁷¹

The Ministry of Culture in Singapore effectively assisted the P. A. P. in its political campaign. It brought out a series of publications containing the views of Lee Kuan Yew and other Singapore leaders on the subject. In particular, it translated and distributed the anti-Lee Kuan Yew and anti-P. A. P. statements of Ja'afar Albar and other U. M. N. O. leaders which appeared in the Malay newspapers in Jawi script but not in the English language dress.

Behind the fierce controversy and bitter war of words which ensued it is possible to trace a fundamental difference in the attitudes and approaches of responsible leaders both in the Alliance and the P. A. P. to the problems of communalism and nation building in Malaysia.⁷² Both the Alliance and the P. A. P. subscribed to

70 *Towards a Malaysian Malaysia* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965).

71 *Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia?* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965).

72 Harvey Stockwin, "Malaysian Approaches", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 August 1965, pp. 252-4.

the principle of Malaysian Malaysia.⁷³ The leaders of the Alliance believed that a Malaysian Malaysia could only be accomplished through two different stages: first, the period of inter-racial co-operation and second, the ultimate stage of non-communalism. They pointed out that it would be unrealistic and impractical to ask the people of Malaysia to forget their different racial origins. The best method, therefore, to achieve racial harmony and political stability was for the leaders of the three important races to work together. The Alliance was thus an inter-communal organisation in which the interests of the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians were represented. This political experiment, the Alliance leaders pointed out, not only enabled them to achieve independence from the British, but also ensured racial harmony and goodwill.⁷⁴ The P. A. P. leaders, on the other hand, maintained that the alliance of communal parties, far from leading to the creation of a Malaysian Malaysia, would perpetuate communal differences. Consequently, they argued that immediate steps should be taken to break down communal barriers and ensure the growth of non-communal and multi-racial political parties.⁷⁵

Of equal importance was the differing political styles of the Alliance and the P. A. P. leaders in discussing communal problems.⁷⁶ Both recognized the delicate nature of the racial balance in Malaysia and the dangerous consequences which would follow if racial harmony was threatened. There was a general reluctance on the part of Alliance leaders to discuss communal issues in the open because they considered them to be potentially disruptive. Therefore, decisions on vital issues were taken by the leaders of the U. M.-

73 The Alliance view on the subject was ably presented by the Home Minister, Dr. Ismail, in the Malaysian Parliament. Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 31 May 1965, cols. 704-6.

74 Ibid.

75 *Towards a Malaysian Malaysia*. n. 70.

76 R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia* (Boston, 1967), pp. 215-16.

N. O. the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. behind the scenes on the basis of co-operation and compromise. The P. A. P. leaders followed a diametrically opposite procedure. They believed in free, unfettered and open discussion of communal problems, so that the dangers of communalism might be realized by the common people, and the development of political parties on class lines might be expedited. As Professor Milne has pointed out :

The resulting paradox was that the Alliance was a party with a communal structure, which believed that too frequent open discussions of the problems of communalism is itself "communal"; the P. A. P. was a party with a non-communal structure, which nevertheless believed that communal problems should be subjected to perpetual scrutiny.⁷⁷

Before the formation of Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew and the P. A. P. leaders had repeatedly emphasized the significance of communal considerations in the politics of Malaya and the need to take Malay sensitivities into consideration and the necessity to advance at a pace that did not overwhelm the Malays.⁷⁸ Even in November 1964, on the 10th Anniversary of the P. A. P., the Party Executive declared :

It is probable that democratic socialist policies as represented by the P. A. P. may find acceptance and support in other areas in the peninsula. This will come about more quickly *not by the present P. A. P. leaders taking an aggressive lead and setting the pace of politics, but more by helping to quicken the emergence of like-minded leaders domiciled in the peninsula.* The immediate role of the P. A. P. therefore is to provide a catalyst, through ideas and example for the emergence of like-minded leaders in the peninsula sympathetic to the democratic socialist cause.⁷⁹

77 Ibid, p. 216

78 "The New Phase after Merdeka - Our Tasks and Policy", *Petir*, 4th Anniversary Number, pp. 2-11. Also see "The Fixed Political Objectives of Our Party", *Petir*, 26 January 1961, pp. 2, 3, 4, 8.

79 Emphasis added. "The First Ten Years. Time for Reflection and Re-assessment", n. 41. pp 109-14.

Dr. Toh Chin Chye, the Chairman of the Party, wrote in an article in the same issue:

Although the P. A. P. is a non-communal party, it would be a grave lack of foresight if we do not take into our calculation this reality that among large sections of the people political thought still revolves around the interests of communities... At this stage of political development in our multi-racial society, *an Alliance of communal parties is a contributing factor towards maintaining racial peace and harmony and thus providing political stability in the country...* Solidarity between our different communities is fundamental towards building the Malaysian nation. *The worst that can happen is to allow communal differences to be identified as differences between the territories which signed the Malaysia Agreement or differences between the State Government and the Central Government.*⁸⁰

But once the campaign for Malaysian Malaysia started, the P. A. P. leaders unfortunately did not adhere to this realistic appraisal. This aspect can be illustrated by the following example.

Speaking in May 1965, Lee Kuan Yew declared that none of the three racial groups in Malaysia - the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians - could claim to be more native to Malaysia than the others, because all their ancestors came to Malaysia not more than one thousand years ago. "According to history", Lee Kuan Yew said :

Malays began to migrate to Malaysia in noticeable numbers only about seven hundred years ago. Of the 39% Malays in Malaysia today, about one third of them are comparatively new immigrants (from Indonesia). Therefore, it is wrong and illogical for a particular racial group to think that they are more justified to be called Malaysians and that the others can become Malaysians only through their favour.⁸¹

The U. M. N. O. leaders considered the statement not as a subject matter of academic interest, but as a fundamental challenge

80 Emphasis added. Dr. Toh Chin Chye, "New Tasks for the P. A. P.", n. 44. pp. 125-7.

81 *Asian Almanac* (Singapore), vol. 3, August 1965, p. 1218.

to the political system in Malaya, which recognized the Malays as the indigenous people of the country.⁸² Syed Ja'afar Albar described Lee Kuan Yew's statement "as a slap in the face of the Malays". He felt that it was an insult for anyone to say that the Malays have no extra rights to call Malaysia their own homeland.⁸³ The *Malay Merdeka* called on the Central Government to review Singapore's position in Malaysia. It warned that if the Malays "are hard pressed and their interests are not protected, they will be forced to merge the country with Indonesia".⁸⁴ Tun Abdul Razak described Lee Kuan Yew's statement as "mischievous and dangerous" and said that if the people of Singapore wished to maintain cordial relations with the Central Government "they must find another leader, who is sincere ... Mr. Lee has not only upset the Malays, but also the Rulers and everybody else".⁸⁵

Lee Kuan Yew's visit to Australia and New Zealand created much controversies and ill-feelings in Malaysia. While soliciting support for Malaysia against the Indonesian confrontation, Lee Kuan Yew was extremely critical of the chauvinistic attitude of the Malay "ultras", which would harm the interests of Malaysia in the long run.⁸⁶ Lee Kuan Yew was given wide coverage and favourable publicity by the Australian and New Zealand press. This confounded the Malay leaders who believed that Lee Kuan Yew was presenting his Party's case and was belittling the Central

82 It is interesting to compare the above statement of Lee Kuan Yew with the policy declaration of the P. A. P. in 1958. "Had it been Indonesians instead of Chinese who had come to Malaya to open up and develop the country, this problem would never have come about. For whatever their slight ethnic differences they speak a common language and have a similar culture, and could and would have been merged with the Malays to form one people and one nation." "The New Phase After Merdeka", n. 78.

83 *Straits Times*, 6 May 1965.

84 Reported, *ibid*, 8 May 1965.

85 *Straits Times*, 10 May 1965.

86 *Malaysia - Age of Revolution* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965).

Government. Tun Abdul Razak said in the Malaysian Parliament that Lee Kuan Yew had made attempts "to blacken the image of the Central Government abroad".⁸⁷

Lee Kuan Yew met Tunku Abdul Rahman after his return from Australia and New Zealand to explain his position. After the meeting Lee said that he was happy about the outcome of the talks. He declared that both of them agreed that there "should be consolidation of factors that unify Malaysia".⁸⁸ The fact that the leaders of the Central Government viewed the situation in a different light was clearly evident when Tunku Abdul Rahman spoke in the inaugural convention of the Malaysian Alliance Party. The Tunku said that with the return of the P. A. P. to power, Singapore was considered to be safe from Communists :

.....Little did we realise that the leader of the P A. P. had in his mind a share in the running of Malaysia. This we considered as unacceptable since the Alliance is strong enough to run the country on its own..... We must not be pushed around by a State Government if this Federation is to have a meaning. Singapore came into the Federation with their eyes wide open and they came in (Sic) on their own accord... ⁸⁹

The Malaysian Solidarity Convention held in Singapore in May 1965 was the culmination of the attempts made by the P. A. P. leaders to bring the opposition parties together and form a broad-based united opposition on a pan-Malaysian scale. The Convention was attended by delegates of the P. A. P. from Singapore, the People's Progressive Party (P. P. P.) and the United Democratic Party (U. D. P.) from Malaya and the Sarawak United People's Party (S. U. P. P.) and the Party Machinda from Sarawak. The Convention unanimously adopted the principle of "Malaysian

87 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 3 June 1965, col. 996.

88 *Straits Times*, 6 April 1965.

89 *Tunku's Call for Unity* (Federal Department of Information, Kuala Lumpur)

Malaysia" and issued a lengthy declaration to that effect. Describing the concept of "Malaysian Malaysia", it said: "A Malaysian Malaysia means that the nation and the state is not identified with the supremacy, well-being and interests of any one particular community or race." It noted with regret that the recent statements made by Federation leaders were contrary to the spirit and purpose of Malaysia. "It is the transgression of these basic principles rather than Indonesian Confrontation and pro-Communist subversion which presents a greater threat to Malaysia."⁹⁰

It is essential to bear in mind two important features while discussing the significance of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention. Lee Kuan Yew and the P. A. P. leaders upheld the fundamental principles of the Malaysian Constitution and repeatedly stated that they accepted the Constitutional provisions regarding the Malay rights and the national language; but other partners in the Convention differed from the P. A. P. on these important issues. The P. P. P., for example, was severely opposed to the Malay rights and the language policy of the Central Government. It may also be pointed out that another important partner in the Convention, the S. U. P. P., strongly opposed the formation of Malaysia, and some of its branches were closed down for subversive activities by the Central Government.

Of greater importance was the fact that the Convention itself was largely a racial grouping. The four important participants in the Convention - the P. A. P., the P. P. P., the U. D. P. and the S. U. P. P. - in spite of their multi-racial ideologies, depended mainly on the Chinese population for their support. The campaign for Malaysian Malaysia, by its very nature, received very little support from the Malay population. It might not have been the intention of the organizers, but the Convention added to communal tensions in Malaysia.

The proceedings of the 18th General Assembly of the U. M. N. O. in Kuala Lumpur on 15 May and 16 May 1965 revealed not

90 *Declaration by the Convenors of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention* (Singapore, 1965).

only the extent of the deterioration of Singapore - Kuala Lumpur relations, but also the differences between the moderates and the extremists within the U. M. N. O. In his opening address, Tunku Abdul Rahman appealed to the delegates to "play down" the differences with the Singapore Government.⁹¹ The extremists among the U. M. N. O. delegates were not satisfied with Tunku Abdul Rahman's speech and they moved a resolution urging the Central Government to detain Lee Kuan Yew for his remarks against the Malays. The Home Minister, Dr. Ismail, asked the delegates to "keep calm" when they demanded the detention of Lee Kuan Yew. "This is not the way", Dr. Ismail said "we do things in Malaysia. We must act constitutionally. Mr. Lee has confined his attacks to speeches and we should reply in like manner. To use force in these circumstances is wrong and undemocratic".⁹² The resolution, as a result, was watered down and a new resolution was moved, which asked the Central Government to take "strong action" against Lee Kuan Yew. The Chairman of the U. M. N. O. Youth Organisation, Senu bin Abdul Rahman, said that the main aim of the resolution was "to urge the government to take action, not now, but when the time comes".⁹³ The resolution was passed unanimously.

It was in this atmosphere, full of allegations and counter-allegations, that the Federal Parliament met on 26 May 1965. The Royal Address concluded with a reference to the threats, internal and external: "We are now facing threats to our security from outside, i. e., from Indonesia. In addition, we are also facing threats from within the country. Both these threats are designed to create trouble. If those concerned achieve their objective, it will mean chaos to us and an end to democracy."⁹⁴ Moving the motion of

91 *Asian Almanac*, vol. 3, 1-7 August 1965, pp. 1215-16.

92 *Straits Times*, 16 May 1965.

93 *Ibid.*

94 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 26 May 1965, col. 31.

thanks, the U. M. N. O. back-bencher, Dr. Mahathir, said that the P. A. P. "behind the veneer of non-communalism" was practising "the most rabid form of communalism yet practised" in Malaysia. He added that the P. A. P. was "pro-Chinese, communist orientated, positively anti-Malay" and unless it reversed its policies, it would spell the ruin of the country.⁹⁵ Speaking later in the debate, Lee Kuan Yew asked the Government to be specific about the "threat from within". He considered the Royal reference as being directed at the P. A. P. and read out extracts from the *Utusan Melayu* and the *Malay Merdeka* where it was stated that Lee Kuan Yew was the greatest danger to the country. Lee Kuan Yew reiterated that the P. A. P. subscribed to the fundamental principles of the Malaysian Constitution, but pointed out that the speeches of the Alliance leaders had cast doubts about the intentions of the Central Government.⁹⁶

Lee Kuan Yew's speech raised a storm of protest from the Alliance benches. Syed Ja'afar Albar said that Lee Kuan Yew's name "would go down in history as the person behind the Singapore riots".⁹⁷ Tan Siew Sin, the Finance Minister, characterized the P. A. P. and the Singapore Prime Minister as the "greatest disruptive force in the entire history of Malaya and Malaysia".⁹⁸ Dr. Ismail, the Home Minister, said that the P. A. P. was destroying inter-racial harmony through "subtle, unscrupulous and ruthless" methods. He asked Lee Kuan Yew to spell out "examples or signs

95 Ibid., cols. 71-85.

96 Lee Kuan Yew moved an amendment which expressed "regret" that the Royal Address "did not reassure the nation that Malaysia will continue to progress in accord with its democratic constitution towards a Malaysian Malaysia, but that on the contrary the Address has added to the doubts over the intentions of the present Alliance Government and over the measures it will adopt when faced with the loss of majority support".

Ibid., 27 May 1965, cols. 537-68.

97 *Malayan Times*, 29 May 1965

98 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 1 June 1965, cols. 839-40.

of Malay domination instead of making vague, general and oblique statements".⁹⁹ Winding up the debate, Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, said that the "threat from within" referred not to the P. A. P. but to the Communists. Nevertheless, he added, Lee Kuan Yew was doing "exactly what the enemies of Malaysia have been doing, creating doubts, suspicion and confusion in the minds of the people, undermining the unity, the resolve and determination of our people to face the threat to our security and our survival".¹⁰⁰ Lee Kuan Yew asked for time to answer the charges levelled against him. Initially the Speaker agreed to give time, but later on ruled that it was impossible. Lee Kuan Yew then held a press conference, where he repeated the charges against the extremists and read out extracts from the Malay press to prove his point.¹⁰¹

It was not the advocacy of Malaysian Malaysia but the aggressive pace and uncompromising nature of the P. A. P.'s campaign which finally culminated in the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. The fact that Lee Kuan Yew was willing to carry on the agitation to the extremes and practise political brinkmanship was evident, when, speaking in the Fourth Anniversary of the Delta Community Centre in Singapore he spoke of the possibility of "alternative arrangement", in case unconstitutional methods were used to prevent a Malaysian Malaysia. He could think of three units - Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. Malacca and Penang were also possibilities.¹⁰² Lee Kuan Yew's statement naturally raised

99 Ibid., 31 May 1965 cols 703-18.

100 Ibid., 3 June 1965, cols 991-1011.

101 For details of the press conference refer *The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia* 2 (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965).

102 Lee Kuan Yew said that the present internal and international situation favoured an immediate decision as to whether there was going to be a Malaysian Malaysia. "Another reason why it is necessary to decide now, not later on, is because it is easier for us, if they do not want a Malaysian Malaysia to make alternative arrangements some other way So I say, if they want to do that, do it now If that is what they

a fierce controversy in Malaysia. Both Donald Stephens, Minister for Sabah Affairs, and Tenmmenggong Jugah, Minister for Sarawak Affairs, immediately opposed it and asserted that both Sabah and Sarawak would continue to be in Malaysia.¹⁰³ T. H Tan, the Alliance Whip in the Federal Senate, accused Lee Kuan Yew "of stirring up emotions and causing dissension" by his "anti-Malay and unpatriotic conduct". He urged the Central Government to take constitutional measures to exclude Singapore from Malaysia or to "put Lee Kuan Yew away to sober him up".¹⁰⁴ In a candid statement to the press, on the eve of his departure to London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, Tunku Abdul Rahman sorrowfully recalled how he had spent "hours and days listening to Mr. Lee's proposals and reasons and what not for joining Malaysia" and said that if he had not listened to Lee's persuasive talk on the need for an enlarged Federation, "Malaya would still be a very happy Malaya, no confrontation, nothing." He further added that the Central Government was willing to discuss with Lee Kuan Yew "how best we can settle things."¹⁰⁵

Another significant aspect of the P. A P's campaign consisted of Lee Kuan Yew's statements, both direct and indirect, that if there was no "Malaysian Malaysia", it would gravely affect Malaysia's relations with her allies, namely Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Speaking in Singapore on 21 May 1965, Lee Kuan Yew referred to the military assistance rendered by Britain, Australia and New Zealand and pointedly asked:

Has the Malaysian Navy or the Malayan Navy the capacity to keep these lines open without British, Australian and New Zealand support? Can they support such communalist Malaysia? I have always maintained that if that kind of a Malaysia is supported the end result will be

want, we have got other ideas of looking after ourselves." *Straits Times*, 1 June 1965.

103 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 1 June 1965, col. 946. *Straits Times*, 5 June 1965.

104 *Straits Times*, 8 June 1965.

105 *Ibid.*, 12 June 1965.

a South Vietnam situation as demonstrated in American support to Ngo Dinh Diem.....

Commenting on the U. M. N. O. extremists who demanded his arrest in the U. M. N. O. General Assembly, Lee Kuan Yew said :

We are not without friends some people have said "arrest P. A. P. leaders". Is it so simple? ... For every action beyond the constitution there must be a reaction which must lead inevitably to the ruination of Malaysia. I am quite sure the British, the Australians and the New Zealanders, who can calculate, do know this They calculate, they know. Support that kind of Malaysia at your own peril.¹⁰⁶

The Central Government was naturally concerned with such statements. The Federal Prime Minister stated in August 1965 that there had been "certain inclination" on the part of some countries to look upon Lee Kuan Yew as an "equal partner" in the Government of Malaysia and to encourage him indirectly to assert his authority. Tunku added that this made the situation rather "awkward" for the Central Government.¹⁰⁷

The Honglim Election, July 1965

The P. A. P. victory in the Hong Lim by-election in the China Town of Singapore on 10 July 1965 was another important phase in the rapidly deteriorating relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. The by-election was necessitated when Ong Eng Guan, the sitting member, resigned his seat with a view to embarrass and discredit the P. A. P. Government. He alleged that the Singapore Legislative Assembly served no useful purpose as the P. A. P. Government was "suppressing all effective media whereby opposition parties can carry their message to the people".¹⁰⁸

106 "Futility of Force and Violence", *Malaysian Mirror* (published by the Ministry of Culture, Singapore), 29 May 1965, pp 5-6; see also *Straits Times*, 14 June 1965.

107 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol 11, 9 August 1965, cols. 1462-3

108 *Straits Times*, 17 June 1965.

At first, there was some indication that the Alliance Party Singapore would contest the seat, but the Party finally decided not to field any candidate.¹⁰⁹ The by-election, therefore, turned out to be a straight contest between the P. A. P. candidate, Lee Khoon Choy, and the Barisan Sosialis candidate, Ong Chang Sam.

The P. A. P. ignored in its election propaganda the Barisan slogan of "Ganjang Malaysia"¹¹⁰ and laid emphasis on Singapore's relations with the Central Government. The Party fully exploited the expulsion of the British journalist, Alex Josey, which took place at that time. Alex Josey was expelled by the Malaysian Government in July 1965 for "interfering in the internal politics of the country".¹¹¹ The expulsion provoked a series of criticisms from the British press ranging from *The Times* to *The New Statesman* and naturally also from the P.A.P. leaders. But as Prof. Milne has rightly pointed out, the expulsion was not a clear case of interference with the freedom of the press.¹¹² Besides being the correspondent of *The New Statesman* and *The Bulletin* Alex Josey was very close to Lee Kuan Yew and, as he himself had admitted, carried out regular assignments for the Singapore Government.¹¹³ It must also be pointed out that the record of the P. A. P. leaders themselves with regard to the freedom of the press was not all that bright. As Nihal Singh, the Indian journalist who was in Singapore at that time, remarks the Singapore Government's past record in relation to the freedom of the press "would make any responsible politician in the West blush."¹¹⁴ But the inept handling of the issue by the

109 Ibid., 30 June 1965.

110 For the election manifesto of the Barisan Sosialis, see *Plebian Express* (Singapore), no. 26, July 1965.

111 For the Malaysian Government's view refer *Straits Times* 8, 10 and 17 July 1965. For Alex Josey's view Alex Josey, "My Expulsion from Malaysia", *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 17 July 1965, pp. 14-15 and Alex Josey, "Expelled from Malaysia", *New Statesman* (London.), 16 July 1965, p. 74.

112 Milne, n. 76, pp. 217-18.

113 Ibid

114 S. Nihal Singh, *Malaysia - A Commentary* (New Delhi, 1971), p. 182.

Central Government had the effect of making the P. A. P. emerge as the champion of the press. Toh Chin Chye declared that the expulsion of Alex Josey was the first step directed against the Singapore Government. He accused that the Central Government was implicated in a plot to detain Lee Kuan Yew.¹¹⁵ Tun Abdul Razak immediately denied the charge as "wild and mischievous".¹¹⁶ Though the Barisan Sosialis was able to get the support of Ong Eng Guan, it was decisively defeated in the by-election.¹¹⁷

The Hong Lim elections of 1961 and 1965 are important landmarks in the relations between Singapore and Malaysia. The defeat of the P. A. P. candidate in April 1961, as stated earlier, was one of the important reasons which prompted Tunku Abdul Rahman to propose the formation of Malaysia. From 1963 to 1965, the P.A.P. succeeded in recovering much of the lost ground in Singapore. Its victory in the 1965 election was a clear evidence of its increasing influence.¹¹⁸ Lee Kuan Yew acclaimed the P. A. P. victory as popular support for his concept of Malaysian Malaysia and added :

115 *Straits Times*, 9 July 1965.

116 *Ibid.*, 10 July 1965.

117 *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1965.

118 *Hong Lim Elections to the Singapore Legislative Assembly*

1959 General Election

People's Action Party	8,834	
Labour Front	1,192	
Liberal Socialist Party	856	
Worker's Party	588	
People's Action Party majority		7,642

1961 By-election

Independent	7,747	
People's Action Party	2,820	
Independent majority		4,927

1963 General Election

United People's Party	5,066	
People's Action Party	3,789	
Barisan Sosialis	2,344	
Singapore People's Alliance	191	
United People's Party majority		1,277

The verdict of Hong Lim is clear and decisive. About 60% is in favour of Malaysian Malaysia. And the alternative to a Malaysian Malaysia is not a communal Malaysia, but crush Malaysia. That received 40% of the votes..... *When the Tunku returns from London there are fundamental problems to be resolved..... it is either Malaysian Malaysia or crush Malaysia.*¹¹⁹

The Separation of Singapore

It was in such an explosive atmosphere of heightened communal tensions within the U. M. N. O. and strained relations between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur that Tunku Abdul Rahman left for London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. In London, the Tunku realized the extent of damage done to Malaysia by the publicity campaign of the P. A. P. and articles by foreign correspondents in British press.¹²⁰ He found that Malaysian students and political observers were fed with propaganda that the Malaysian Government was not giving a fair treatment to the non-Malays. The success of the P. A. P. propaganda abroad seems to have influenced Tunku Abdul Rahman's mind in favouring the separation of Singapore.¹²¹

1965 By-election

People's Action Party	6,398	
Barisan Sosialis	4,346	
People's Action Party majority		2,052

Source: Harvey Stockwin, "Hong Lim Result", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 July 1965, pp. 210-11.

119 Emphasis added. *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1965.

120 Writing about the expulsion of Alex Josey, Paul Johnson in his weekly column "London Diary" wrote: "This naturally raises the whole issue of Britain's presence in Malaysia. It is one thing to spend £400 million a year defending Malaysian democracy against Indonesian aggression, quite another to underwrite, at such cost, a state which turns its back on basic constitutional rights and lurches towards racism. Things have not got to this pass. But the trend is ominous." *New Statesman*, 16 July 1963, p. 78.

121 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 9 August 1965, col. 1461.

The "inside story" of the separation of Singapore still remains to be written. The main actors of the drama are reluctant to discuss in detail what transpired "behind the scenes". The decision to separate Singapore was taken by Tunku Abdul Rahman when he was recuperating in a London hospital after the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. In the hospital, as the Tunku later recalled, he weighed in his mind the pros and cons of the separation issue carefully and came to the conclusion that "for the well-being and security of Malaysia and Singapore it was best that the territories should part".¹²² Nevertheless, he wrote to Tun Abdul Razak to meet Lee Kuan Yew and remove the causes of friction. Tun Abdul Razak met the Singapore Prime Minister in spite of bitter criticism from the extremists within the U. M. N. O.¹²³ According to informed journalists, a plan was discussed at this meeting to settle the dispute. According to this plan, Lee Kuan Yew would go the United Nations as Malaysian representative and an Alliance—P. A. P. coalition would be formed at the centre with Dr. Goh Keng Swee and Lim Kim San as Cabinet Ministers representing Singapore. The plan fizzled out because it did not take into account the political ambitions of Lee Kuan Yew. Lee Kuan Yew was willing to go to the United Nations, but only for two years and wanted to re-enter Malaysian politics. The prospect of Lee Kuan Yew fighting the next election scared the Alliance leaders. The plan, therefore, did not take off the ground.¹²⁴ The talks having failed, the Tunku wrote to Tun Razak about his decision and asked

122 A vivid chronological account of the events that led to the separation is given by Felix Abisheganaden in the *Sunday Times*, 15 August 1965.

123 The U. M. N. O. Youth Committee which consisted among others of Ja'afar Albar and Senu bin Abdul Rahman, urged Tun Abdul Razak not to hold any talks with Lee Kuan Yew until he apologised in public for what he had said about the Malays, *Straits Times*, 27 June 1965.

124 For informative accounts of the background to separation, refer Sam Lipski "Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore - The Birth of A Nation", *The Bulletin*, 21 August 1965, pp. 21-23 and T. J. S. George, *Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore* (London, 1973), p. 83.

him to consult his senior colleagues. Tun Abdul Razak, Tan Siew Sin, Dr. Ismail and T. V. Sambanthan concurred with the Tunku's view. In late July, while convalescing in France, the Tunku instructed Tun Razak to go ahead with the necessary constitutional formalities. Throughout this period of "top secret discussions", the cold war between the P. A. P. and the Alliance continued unabated.

Some idea about the Tunku's fears and misgivings about Lee Kuan Yew during this period can also be understood from certain passages in Harold Wilson's memoirs. According to Wilson, Tunku Abdul Rahman was "losing his patience" with Lee Kuan Yew and was getting "more and more incensed". There was even "news of an impending crisis, involving a possible coup against Harry Lee and his colleagues". Wilson adds that he warned Tunku Abdul Rahman that if he was contemplating such an action he would be unwelcome in the next Commonwealth Conference. In April 1966, according to Wilson, Lee Kuan Yew told him that his action in 1965 "had saved my life".¹²⁵

Tunku Abdul Rahman returned to Malaysia after his long stay abroad on 5 August 1965 and met Lee Kuan Yew two days later. All efforts made by Lee Kuan Yew to arrive at an arrangement short of separation - Lee suggested other solutions such as a looser federation¹²⁶ - were rejected by Tunku Abdul Rahman, and the Singapore Prime Minister was left with no choice but to agree to separation.

The fear of widespread communal violence was the main reason which influenced Tunku Abdul Rahman in his decision to separate Singapore from Malaysia. In his speech in the Malaysian Parliament on 9 August 1965 the Tunku described the decision as "most painful and heartbreaking". He said :

Things are getting worse lately. Irresponsible utterances are made by both sides, I am afraid, which reading between

125 Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-1970, A Personal Record* (London, 1971), pp. 130-131.

126 *Straits Times*, 10 August 1965.

the lines, is tantamount to challenges; and if trouble were to break out, the innocent will have to suffer and be sacrificed at the altar of these belligerent, heartless and irresponsible trouble-makers of this country.

Tunku spoke of the alternatives before him :

In the end we find that there are only two courses open to us : 1) is to take repressive measures against the Singapore Government or their leaders for the behaviour of some of their leaders, and 2) is the course of action, which we are taking now, to sever connection with the State Government of Singapore that has ceased to give even a measure of loyalty to the Central Government.

He further said that the first course of action was repulsive to him and would not in any case solve the manifold problems, for they had very deep roots.¹²⁷ The only way out, therefore, according to Tunku Abdul Rahman, was for Singapore to become an independent nation.

The dramatic events preceding the separation of Singapore from Malaysia clearly reveal that Lee Kuan Yew and his P. A. P. colleagues were completely outmanoeuvred by Tunku Abdul Rahman. With all his political skill and tactical calculation, Lee Kuan Yew never seriously considered the possibility that Tunku Abdul Rahman would resort to separation as a means of solving the deteriorating relations between the two territories. He was convinced that the political factors that led to the formation of Malaysia in 1963 were equally valid in 1965 and therefore political adjustments would be made to ensure that Malaysia succeeded. As a political commentator has put it, Lee Kuan Yew mistook his own reluctance to seriously entertain separation as a solution as a proof that this would not happen.¹²⁸

127 Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 11, 9 August 1965 cols. 1459-69.

128 Sam Lipski, "Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore - The Birth of a Nation", *The Bulletin*, 21 August 1965, pp. 21-23.

The Singapore Cabinet was seriously divided on the issue of separation. In a tumultuous Cabinet meeting, Dr. Toh Chin Chye, Rajaratnam and Ong Pang Boon expressed their strong opposition.¹²⁹ They were unwilling to sign the separation agreement till the last moment. But the only alternative to Singapore's separation was to sacrifice Lee Kuan Yew and give the P. A. P. another leader who will be acceptable to the Alliance leadership. Given the choice between Lee Kuan Yew and membership in the Federation, they finally decided to keep Lee Kuan Yew. Thus as Nihal Singh remarks:

Lee's instinct for political survival won the day—over the doubts of leaving the other members (spread over Malaya and Sarawak) of the Solidarity Convention, fathered by the P. A. P., rather in the lurch; over the strong feelings of many P. A. P. Ministers about breaking up a logical and desirable partnership with Malaya.¹³⁰

It has been pointed out by many observers that Tunku Abdul Rahman was under great pressure from the "Malay ultras" and the decision to separate Singapore was its direct consequence.¹³¹ They point out to the confidential letter written by Tunku Abdul Rahman to Dr. Toh Chin Chye, wherein Tunku stated:

If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel tolerance and patience I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.¹³²

It was undoubtedly true that the extremists in the U. M.—N. O. were demanding stern action against the Singapore Govern-

129 *Straits Times*, 10 August 1965.

130 Nihal Singh, n. 114, p. 186.

131 A. R. Catley, "Malaysia: The Lost Battle For Merger", *Australian Outlook*, vol. 21, pp. 44-60. (B) Jean Grossholtz, "An Exploration of Malaysian Meanings", *Asian Survey* (Berkeley), vol. 6, April 1966, pp. 227-40.

132 *Straits Times*, 11 August 1965.

ment and contributed to the worsening of the political situation, but Tunku's reference in the letter, as Professor Milne has pointed out, was to the whole situation of which ultras were only a part, although an important part.¹³³ The fact that the extremist leaders were unhappy with Tunku Abdul Rahman's decision became evident when Syed Ja'afar Albar resigned his post as the Secretary-General of the U. M. N. O. on 11 August 1965. Albar said that he was not in "full agreement" with the Tunku and added that he was opposed to separation because Malaysia "cannot afford to have a close neighbour which is controlled by a party hostile to the Central Government. What I am afraid is that Singapore might become a centre of subversion." He further added that "Malaysia without Singapore has become illogical. How can you have a 1,000 mile long territory and reject Singapore which is at your doorstep?"¹³⁴.

On 9 August 1965 Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared that Singapore "shall be forever a sovereign democratic and independent nation, founded upon the principles of liberty and justice and ever seeking the welfare and happiness of her people in a more just and equal society".¹³⁵ The Separation Agreement signed by the leaders of the two Governments two days earlier, set out the detailed provisions for the relinquishment of Malaysian sovereignty over Singapore. Article V of the Agreement provided that the two Governments would enter into a "treaty on external defence and mutual assistance" which would provide for the creation of a Joint Defence Council. The Singapore Government would afford reasonable and adequate assistance, contributing units of its own armed forces for external defence and Malaysia would continue to maintain and use for external defence the bases in Singapore. The two Governments also agreed "not to enter into any treaty or agreement

133 Milne, n. 76, p. 219.

134 *Straits Times*, 12 August 1965.

135 "Proclamation of Singapore" issued by the Prime Minister's Office on 9 August 1965 included in *Separation, Singapore's Independence on 9th August 1965* (Ministry of Culture, Singapore, 1965), pp. 1-2.

with a foreign country which may be detrimental to the independence and defence of the territory of the other". Article VI of the Agreement provided that the two countries "will co-operate in economic affairs for their mutual benefit and interest" for which joint committees may be set up. Article VII rescinded Annex J and Annex K of the Malaysia Agreement relating to Common Market, Broadcasting and Television. Under Article VIII the Malaysian Government was relieved of all guarantees and other commitments it had accepted on behalf of Singapore.¹³⁶

The emergence of Singapore as an independent nation on 9 August 1965 removed Malaysia's main *raison d'être*. The question was immediately raised: Would Sabah and Sarawak follow the example of Singapore? The political events in Malaysia during the last twelve years have shown that the relations between the Central Government and the Governments of Sabah and Sarawak are none too cordial. If Malaysia is to survive and secessionist tendencies in Sabah and Sarawak are to be checked, it must conclusively prove to the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak that it is in their economic and political interests to remain in Malaysia.

¹³⁶ *An Agreement Relating to the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia*, His Majesty's Government Gazette *Extraordinary*, vol. 9, 9 August 1965. This has been included as appendix 2 in the Book.

6. CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters offered a descriptive and analytical account of the relations between Singapore and Malaya and the factors leading to the emergence of Singapore as an independent state on 9 August, 1965. It now remains to sum up and arrive at certain conclusions

The first factor that must be given predominance is the historical perspective. Separated from the mainland after the Second World War, the Colony of Singapore followed a different political path. In view of the differences in the racial set-up and political balance of forces, it was but natural that the developments in Singapore should differ from the Federation. Being a city of immigrants, with most of them belonging to the Chinese race, it was not necessary to find a balance of communal forces. The politics of Singapore, reflecting the aspirations of its strong working class movement and Chinese-educated youth, witnessed a steady shift towards the left, culminating in the overwhelming victory of the P. A. P. in the general elections of 1959.

In the Federation of Malaya, where communal influences were all pervasive, the political developments took a different course. The political awakening of the Malays following the introduction of the Malayan Union proposals and the unity that they forged under the U. M. N. O. had far-reaching repercussions in the political evolution of Malaya. Not only did it compel the British to withdraw the Malayan Union proposals, but it also

clearly revealed that the Malays would never surrender their pre-eminent position in the political life of Malaya. While, in later years, the Malay leaders co-operated with the M. C. A. and the M. I. C. in the larger interests of Malaya as a whole, the dynamic leadership of Malayan nationalism had always remained in the hands of the Malays. The Alliance, thus, was not an alliance of equal partners, but it was one in which the supremacy of the Malays was clearly established.

The independence of the Federation of Malaya in 1957 did not lead to any revolutionary break with the past. With the Malays and the non-Malays divided roughly in equal numbers, the economic predominance of the Chinese was offset by the political supremacy of the Malays. Under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman the Malay supremacy in the political life of Malaya continued without much opposition. The Constitution of Malaya and the subsequent policies pursued by the Government did not completely satisfy the extremists, both among the Malays and the non-Malays, but, to a large extent, it reflected the economic and political realities of the country.

It was the declared objective of all political parties in Singapore that Singapore should achieve independence only through merger with the Federation of Malaya. But the Federation leaders continued to oppose all suggestions of merger due to two reasons. First, the inclusion of Singapore would upset the racial balance in the Federation and would create a situation in which the Chinese would outnumber the Malays. Second, Singapore had too many "leftists" who dominated the trade unions and student movements and who fomented large scale riots like those which took place in 1955 and 1956. With the bitter memories of Communist Emergency, the Federation leaders did not want to add to their own troubles by including Singapore in the Federation. So long as Singapore continued to be a British Colony, the U. K. Government would safeguard the security interests of the Federation. Further, through its membership in the Internal Security Council,

which came into existence in 1959, the Federation Government had the decisive vote in all decisions pertaining to the internal security of Singapore.

It was the dramatic turn of events in Singapore politics in 1960-1961 which compelled Tunku Abdul Rahman to revise his earlier stand on merger. Behind the broad-based unity, sharp differences were taking place between the moderates and the extremists in the P. A. P. After its humiliating defeat in Hong Lim it was clear to Tunku Abdul Rahman that the P. A. P. would soon be replaced by a government which might be pro-Communist or Chinese chauvinist or a combination of both. Tunku was convinced that, unless he took positive steps, Singapore would come under the control of political forces unfriendly to the Federation and dedicated to the abolition of the Internal Security Council in the Constitutional talks in 1963. It was to prevent the possible security threat from Singapore that the Federation Prime Minister made the proposal for Malaysia on 26 May 1961.

The one arrangement to which the Federation leaders remained opposed was the merger of Singapore alone with the Federation of Malaya. But if the Borneo territories were also included in a wider Federation a more favourable balance between the Chinese and the non-Chinese population could be attained. It would also, at the same time, enable the Borneo territories to achieve independence from British domination.

Though both the Singapore and the Malayan leaders were determined to see through Malaysia, their views on the advantages of Malaysia were not the same. To the Alliance leaders, Malaysia was primarily a means by which the security threat from a leftist Singapore could be contained. The inclusion of the Borneo territories and constitutional restrictions on Singapore would enable them to maintain the political supremacy of the Malays even in Malaysia. To the P. A. P. leaders, on the other hand, Malaysia meant independence for Singapore, a chance to contain and put down left-wing opposition, the possibility of a common market,

and an opportunity to extend their political influence into the mainland.

The Malaysia Agreement contained two important provisions which were to restrict the political role of Singapore in Malaysia. First was the retention of separate Singapore citizenship under which Singapore citizens could contest and vote for elections only in Singapore, while the Federal citizens could vote and contest the elections only in the mainland. Second was the low representation in the Federal Parliament. Singapore, which was the largest state, with 16.7% of the population, was allotted only 15 seats. The Alliance leaders believed that with a meagre 15 seats in a House of 159, the Singapore politicians would not be able to make much impact in the Malaysian politics as a whole.

In spite of the restrictions in the Malaysia Agreement, the P. A. P. leaders considered that Malaysia provided them with an opportunity to extend their political influence into the mainland. The Alliance leaders, on the other hand, believed that the P. A. P. would confine its political activities to Singapore and would be content to make Singapore the "New York of Malaysia". The P. A. P.'s attempts to extend its influence into the mainland, barely six months after Malaysia was formed, set in motion a series of events which finally culminated in the withdrawal of Singapore from Malaysia.

The political strategy of the P. A. P. consisted in creating a split within the Alliance between the U. M. N. O. and the M. C. A. with the ultimate aim of replacing the M. C. A. in the Alliance. The P. A. P. - M. C. A. relations were already at a very low ebb following the unsuccessful attempts made by the M. C. A. to revitalise its activities in Singapore. While supporting the national leadership of the U. M. N. O., the P. A. P. leaders began to criticise the M. C. A. as a corrupt and inefficient organization which could not represent the interests of the sophisticated urban population of Malaya.

The P. A. P.'s participation in the Malayan elections in 1964 marks a distinct watershed in the relations between the two territories. The P. A. P. decision to contest was based on the fact that the M. C. A. was steadily losing in the urban areas to the Socialist Front. They believed that if they could win in the urban areas against the M. C. A. on the one hand and the anti-Malaysia pro-communist Socialist Front on the other, it would effectively prove to the U. M. N. O. leadership that the P. A. P. was in a better position to represent the needs of the urban areas. But, the P. A. P. leaders gravely miscalculated the U. M. N. O.'s loyalty to its Chinese partner and the political behaviour of the urban electorate in Malaya. The U. M. N. O. leaders whole-heartedly supported the M. C. A. and considered any attack on the M. C. A. as an attack on the U. M. N. O. itself. Besides the solid support of Malay voters, the M. C. A. was also able to get the support of the Chinese due to the political situation arising out of the Indonesian Confrontation. In fact, the M. C. A. improved its position from that of 1959. The P. A. P. lost all but one seat which too it won by a very narrow majority.

Far more damaging than the dismal defeat was the effect that it had on the P. A. P.'s relations with the U. M. N. O. The U. M. N. O. leaders considered the P. A. P.'s participation as a gross violation of an unwritten agreement on Malaysia's formation that the P. A. P. would remain within the island's political boundaries. Thenceforward, the Singapore Prime Minister and the P. A. P. were viewed with great suspicion not only by the M. C. A. but also by the U. M. N. O.

Singapore-Kuala-Lumpur relations deteriorated still further as a result of the political developments in Singapore. The extremists within the U. M. N. O. led by Syed Ja'afar Albar had, from the very beginning, their own misgivings about the Malaysia scheme. Following the declaration of "*de facto* independence" by Singapore Government on 31 August 1963, they called upon the U. M. N. O. leaders to make a "review" of the decision to form Malaysia. The defeat of the U. M. N. O. candidates in predomi-

nantly Malay areas of Singapore in the Singapore general election further embittered this section of the U. M. N. O. They viewed the P. A. P. participation in the Malayan elections as the first attempt by a Chinese Party from Singapore to rally the non-Malay voters under its banner. The U. M. N. O. leaders began a concerted effort to revitalise their Party in Singapore. They accused the P. A. P. government of adopting a step-motherly treatment towards the Malays. Communal sentiments were whipped up following the evacuation of some Malay families from the site of the Jurong industrial estate. The anti-social elements exploited the situation and large scale riots flared up in Singapore in July and September 1964. The riots revealed the dangerous potentials of communal strife and the slender basis on which the whole concept of Malaysia was based.

After a short lived "truce", the P. A. P. leaders decided to carry on their political activities with increased vigour in complete opposition to the Alliance. The high watermark of their campaign was the Malaysian Solidarity Convention in May 1965. Though the statement issued by the Convention contained unexceptionable sentiments the Convention itself was a racial grouping. The four participants in the Convention - the P. A. P., the P. P. P., the U. D. P. and the S. U. P. P. - in spite of their multi-racial ideology depended on the Chinese for their support. By the very nature of Malaysian politics, Malaysian Malaysia could not enlist the support of Malay population. The Malay leaders considered the Convention as a cunning device by Lee Kuan Yew to come to power in Malaysia through non-Malay support. The extremists in the U. M. N. O. stepped up a vituperative propaganda against the Singapore leaders, including demands for the arrest of Lee Kuan Yew.

Before the formation of Malaysia, Lee Kuan Yew and the P. A. P. leaders had repeatedly emphasized the need to take Malay sensitivities into consideration and the necessity to advance at a pace that did not overwhelm the Malays. But as the campaign for Malaysian Malaysia took an aggressive turn, Lee Kuan Yew and his

P. A. P. colleagues unfortunately did not adhere to this realistic appraisal. The statements made by Lee Kuan Yew, for example, that Malays alone cannot claim to be the indigenous people of Malaya; that if there was no Malaysian Malaysia it would gravely affect Malaysia's relations with her allies and, above all, his suggestion for alternative arrangements if there was to be no Malaysian Malaysia - all these infuriated and antagonised even those sections of the U. M. N. O. leaders who could, by no stretch of imagination, be labelled as "ultras". By June 1965, it was apparent that the broad community of interests which the P. A. P. and the Alliance shared in the success of Malaysia had completely disappeared.

It is extremely difficult to say whether large-scale communal riots would have occurred if Singapore continued to remain in Malaysia, for the question is primarily one of speculation. But with communal tensions mounting up and both the P. A. P. and the extremist section in the U. M. N. O. preparing for a showdown, there was possibility of communal clashes. But what is more significant is the fact that Tunku Abdul Rahman was convinced that communal riots would break out if the situation was allowed to deteriorate and he was determined to implement his decision. With the P. A. P. out of the picture after the separation of Singapore, communal tensions subsided in Malaysia. The Malaysian Solidarity Convention died a natural death.

The dramatic events preceding the separation of Singapore clearly revealed that both the P. A. P. and the extremist section in the U. M. N. O. were completely out-manoeuvred by Tunku Abdul Rahman. Lee Kuan Yew was convinced that the political factors which led to the formation of Malaysia were equally valid in 1965 and, therefore, political adjustments would have to be made to ensure that Malaysia succeeded. He never seriously considered the possibility that Tunku Abdul Rahman would resort to separation as a means of solving the strained relations between the two territories. The decision was equally unpalatable to the Malay extremists who had hoped to dominate Singapore rather than make it an indepen-

dent state. Ja'afar Albar, who resigned as the Secretary-General of the U. M. N. O., stated that a hostile Singapore would be a greater danger to Malaysia rather than a state within Malaysia could ever be.

Singapore, though an independent sovereign State, is still linked with the Malayan mainland by factors of geography, economics, security interests and human relations. Hopes have been frequently expressed that the two territories would be united once again. But, in the light of what had happened during 1963-65, it is reasonable to conclude that the prospects of a merger in the immediate future are very bleak.

Appendix I

Memorandum setting out Heads of Agreement for a Merger
Between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore

Cmd. 33 of 1961 (Singapore, 1961)

1. Introduction

After the Second World War, civil government in Malaya was restored on 1st April, 1946. Singapore, which was formerly part of the Straits Settlements, was established as a separate Crown Colony by Order in Council of 27th March, 1946.

The advance of Singapore from Colony status to that of a full internal self-governing State and reserving to the government of the United Kingdom responsibility for defence and external affairs was made in progressive stages under the Singapore Colony Order in Council, 1955, the Singapore (Electoral Provisions) Order in Council, 1958, the State of Singapore Act, 1958 and the present Singapore (Constitution) Order in Council 1958 which came into operation on 3rd June, 1959

While this constitutional development was taking place, the desire for eventual reunification of Singapore with the Federation of Malaya, to which it is inextricably bound by common racial, historical, cultural, economic and political ties, became more and more evident as the years passed by and grew in intensity during

the last two years. The artificial separation of the two territories is now to be ended.

2. Agreement in Principle

On 23rd August, 1961, agreement was reached in principle between the Prime Ministers of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore for a merger of the two territories. The official communique was as follows :-

"...The Federation and Singapore leaders had a full and frank exchange of views on the situation in Singapore *vis-a-vis* the Federation, in particular on the question of merger and the various implications arising from this subject.

Among many matters examined was the question of Federation responsibility for defence, external affairs and security. The Singapore Prime Minister laid particular stress on the necessity of Singapore's retaining local autonomy, especially on matters of education and labour.

Both Prime Ministers have agreed in principle on these proposals. They have also agreed that a working party should be set up to go into the overall financial and other implications arising out of arrangements whereby local autonomy is retained by Singapore on agreed matters, and to consider the financial contribution Singapore would be required to make to the National Government."

3. Working Parties

The two governments next appointed the following officials to be members of their respective Working Parties. There have been consultation and exchange of information between the two Working Parties.

The Federation Exploratory Working Party

- i) Dato Abdul Aziz bin Haji Abdul Majid,
Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Department.
- ii) Enche Abdul Jamil bin Abdul Rais,
Secretary to the Treasury.

- iii) Dato Nik Daud bin Haji Nik Mat,
Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Security.
- iv) Enche Abdul Kadir bin Shamsudin,
Acting Secretary for Defence.
- v) Enche Ali bin Hasan,
Senior Federal Counsel
- vi) Enche Muhammad Ghazali bin Shafie,
Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.
- vii) Enche Ismail bin Mohamed Ali,
Deputy Governor, Bank Negara.

The Singapore Working Party

- i) Enche Ahmad bin Mohamed Ibrahim,
State Advocate-General.
- ii) Mr. S. T. Stewart,
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- iii) Mr. Hon Sui Sen,
Chairman, Economic Development Board.

4. The following sections of the memorandum set out the constitutional, executive, legislative, administrative and financial proposals for merger and the extent of local autonomy to be retained by Singapore.

5. The State of Singapore

Singapore will be a State within the Federation but on special conditions and with a larger measure of local autonomy than the other States forming the Federation. Defence, External Affairs and Security will be the responsibility of the Federation Government; Education and Labour that of the Singapore Government. The responsibility for other matters are given in other relevant parts of this memorandum.

While the Federal Government will be responsible for the conduct of external relations, the special position of Singapore in

relation to entrepot trade will be safeguarded. Measures to protect the interest of Singapore trade overseas will include the establishment of a section within any of the Federal missions as may be necessary to deal with trade matters of Singapore. In any trade negotiation or arrangements undertaken or entered into by the Federal Government with another country due consideration will be given to the commercial needs of Singapore.

6. Fundamental Liberties

Fundamental liberties of the people of Singapore will be adequately safeguarded in the provisions of the Federation Constitution.

7. Special Position of the Malays

The special position of the Malays who are Singapore citizens will be safeguarded in the Constitution of the larger Federation. With regard to the Muslim religion it will be provided as in Malacca and Penang that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong will be the head of the Muslim religion in the State and that a Council of Muslim Religion will be established to advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong in matters relating to the Muslim religion.

8. The Head of State

The Yang di-Pertuan Negara will be appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong acting in his discretion after consultation with the Prime Minister of Singapore. The Yang di-Pertuan Negara shall be the head of the executive government of Singapore and shall have power to assent to laws passed by the State Legislative Assembly. The Yang di-Pertuan Negara will also exercise the prerogative of mercy on the advise of a Pardons Board.

9. The Executive

The general direction and control of the Government of Singapore will be as at present by the Cabinet consisting of the

Prime Minister and Ministers appointed on his advice. The offices of Permanent Secretaries and the State Advocate-General will be continued as at present. The responsibility for criminal prosecutions in Singapore will for the time being remain with the State Advocate-General. Final authority in all prosecutions affecting national security will rest with the Public Prosecutor of the new Federation Government.

10. The Legislature

The present Legislative Assembly will continue as a State Assembly but it will have no power to enact laws relating to Defence, External Affairs, Security and those matters which have been agreed to be Federal matters. These matters are included in the agreed modified Federal, Concurrent and State Legislative lists in respect of the State of Singapore attached as annexure to this memorandum.

11. Administrative Responsibilities

Apart from Defence, External Affairs, Security, Education and Labour, departments which were pan-Malayan prior to 31st August, 1957, when the Federation of Malaya became independent, will revert to the former arrangements, with due regard, however, to safeguards for the traditional free port status of Singapore and its entrepot trade. The division of responsibilities in respect of other departments will follow the modified legislative lists above mentioned.

12. The Public Service

In view of the larger measure of local autonomy retained by the Singapore Government, the existing Singapore Civil Service will be retained as a State Civil Service. Facilities will be provided for secondment or voluntary transfer to the Federal Civil Service. The existing provisions relating to the appointment of public officers, will therefore be retained except in the case of police officers, who will automatically come under the jurisdiction of the Federation

Police Force Commission. There is provision in the Federation Constitution for the delegation of powers by the Police Force Commission to an officer or a board of officers of the Police Force and for consultation with persons other than its members. All present police officers will be given the option of serving only in Singapore or also in the new Federation.

13. The Judiciary

As the administration of justice is a Federal responsibility, it is necessary to have a Federal Judicial and Legal Service. In view of the special conditions in Singapore, however, there will be a separate branch of the Federal Judicial and Legal Service in Singapore, with opportunities for secondment or voluntary transfer to the other branches of the service. The present judicature, both Supreme Court and lower Courts will be retained. Provision will be made for the appointment of future judges in Singapore on the lines of the existing provisions relating to the appointment of Federation Judges, with the modification that the Chief Justice of Singapore will be consulted in place of the Chief Justice of the Federation. The existing provisions relating to the appointment, promotion and transfer of legal officers (including District Judges and Magistrates) by a Legal Service Commission will be retained. Provision will be made for a joint court of appeal and for the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to advise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on appeals from Singapore.

14. Citizenship and Nationality

All Singapore citizens will keep their citizenship and automatically become nationals of the larger Federation. Citizens of the present Federation will similarly become nationals of the larger Federation. 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 subject to the equal duties and responsibilities under the Consti-

tution of the larger Federation. Singapore citizens will continue to enjoy their State rights and privileges within Singapore.

Singapore citizens will vote in Singapore for their representatives to the new Federation Parliament and the citizens of the present Federation of Malaya will vote in the present Federation for their representatives to the same new Federation Parliament.

15. Representation in the new Federation Parliament, House Representatives and the senate

The number of Singapore representatives in the new Federation Parliament has been determined having regard to three vital considerations :-

- (a) that the 624,000 Singapore citizens now on the electoral roll should not lose the citizenship rights they now enjoy ;
- b) that Singapore should have local autonomy in education and labour policies and generally a larger measure of reserve state powers compared to the other States in the Federation;
- c) that in order to give effect to the local autonomy in education and labour and other state responsibilities, Singapore shall retain a very large proportion of the present state revenue to discharge these responsibilities.

On a fair balance of interests, Singapore will be entitled to 15 seats in the House of Representatives. As with the other States in the present Federation, Singapore will be entitled to two members in the Senate.

16. Audit

Government audit will be conducted on a Federal basis, with the Auditor General in overall charge of the department and the Director of Audit, Singapore, working under his direction and control.

17. Finance

In view of the larger measure of local autonomy and the consequent large expenditure on Singapore services and develop-

ment, the financial relations between the Federal Government and the States set out in the Federation Constitution will not be applicable in their entirety to Singapore. The Federal Government will retain legislative authority over all taxes of a national character, that is, all taxes other than those specified in Part III of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution, subject to the maintenance of the free port status of Singapore which will not be changed without the concurrence of both the Federal and the Singapore Governments. The present machinery for the collection of taxes in Singapore will be retained.

Control over monetary policy rests with the Federal Government. The Singapore Government will have wider powers of raising domestic loans than that provided for under Article III of the Federation Constitution. The raising of external loans and the terms and conditions thereof will be subject to the approval of the Federal Government.

Pensions liability in respect of retired Singapore officers and prospective liability in respect of officers of the State Services will continue to rest with the Singapore Government.

The proceeds of the national taxes will be used to pay the cost of Government and Public Services in Singapore and the contribution to the Federal Government for Federal services. The details of the apportionment will be worked out by the Joint Working Party.

For budgetary purposes all house-keeping matters will be left to the State Government. In framing the State Budget due consideration will be given to the prevailing financial policy of the Federal Government.

18. Conclusion

No terms and conditions can be liberal and generous to both sides, Singapore and the Federation; nor can they satisfy all parties on both sides of the Causeway. There are diverse local interests to

be looked after. Singapore wishes to safeguard her local legitimate interests in many spheres; the Federation wants to secure her paramount interests in security and in the stability of the new Federation. As part of the democratic process both governments have welcomed and continue to welcome all proposals which are constructive, and will improve the smooth working of the constitutional arrangements of the Federation.

Annexure

Ninth Schedule to Federation of Malaya Constitution LEGISLATIVE LISTS

LIST I—FEDERAL LIST

	<i>Proposed division of responsibilities on merger</i>
1 External Affairs	Federal.
2 Defence	Federal.
3 Internal Security	Federal.
4 Civil and Criminal Law and procedure and the administration of justice	Federal.
5 Federal Citizenship and Naturali- zation: aliens	Federal.
6 Machinery of Government	Federal except for Elec- tion in Singapore which shall be Concurrent.
7 Finance :	
a) Currency	Federal.
b) National Savings and Savings Bonds	Federal.
c) Borrowing on security of Federal Consolidated Fund	Federal.

- d) Loans to and borrowing by States Concurrent.
- e) Public debt of Federation Federal.
- f) Financial and accounting
 procedure Federal.
- g) Audit Federal.
- h) Taxes Federal.
- i) Banking Concurrent.
- j) Bill of Exchange Federal.
- k) Foreign Exchange Federal.
- l) Capital issues Federal.

8 Trade, commerce and industry, including—

- a) Production, supply and distribu-
 tion of goods: price control and
 food control; adulteration of food-
 stuffs and other goods; Concurrent.
- b) Imports into, and exports from,
 the Federation; Concurrent.
- c) Incorporation, regulation and
 winding up of corporations other
 than municipal corporations (but
 including the municipal corpora-
 tion of the federal capital);
 regulation of foreign corpora-
 tions; bounties and production
 in or export from the Federation; Federal.
- d) Insurance, including compulsory
 insurance; Concurrent.
- e) Patents; designs; inventions;
 trade marks and mercantile
 marks; copyrights; Federal.
- f) Establishment of standards of
 weights and measures; Federal.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| g) | Establishment of standards of quality of goods manufactured in or exported from the Federation; | Federal. |
| h) | Auctions and auctioneers; | Concurrent. |
| i) | Industries; regulation of industrial undertakings; | Concurrent. |
| j) | Development of mineral resources : mines, mining, minerals and mineral ores; oils and oilfields; purchase, sale, import and export of minerals and mineral ores; petroleum products; regulation of labour and safety in mines and oilfields; | Federal. |
| k) | Factories; boilers and machinery; dangerous trades; | State. |
| l) | Dangerous and inflammable substances. | State. |
| 9 | Shipping | Concurrent. |
| 10 | Communications and Transport | Federal. |
| | Telephone | Federal. |
| | Broadcasting and Television | Overall policy, Federal. Singapore will be responsible for administration and day to day programme. |
| 11 | Federal Works and Power | Federal except for water, electricity and gas supplies which shall be State. |
| 12 | Surveys, Inquiries and Research | Federal except for Registration of Marriages which shall be State. |

13	Education	State.
14	Medicine and Health	State.
15	Labour and Social Security	State.
16	Welfare of Aborigines	Federal
17	Professional Occupations	Concurrent.
18	Holidays, other than State Holidays	Federal.
19	Unincorporated Societies	Concurrent.
20	Control of agricultural pests	Federal.
21	Newspapers, publications, publishers, printing and printing presses	Concurrent.
22	Censorship	Concurrent.
23	Theatres and Cinemas	Concurrent.
24	Federal housing	Federal.
25	Co-operative Societies	Federal.

LIST II — STATE LIST

No change

LIST III — CONCURRENT LIST

1	Social Welfare	Concurrent.
2	Scholarships	Concurrent.
3	Protection of Wild Animals and Wild Birds	Concurrent.
4	Animal Husbandry	Concurrent.
5	Town and Country Planning	Concurrent.
6	Vagrancy and Itinerant Hawkers	State except for Vagrancy which shall be Concurrent.
7	Public Health	Concurrent.
8	Drainage and Irrigation	Concurrent.
9	Rehabilitation of mining land	Concurrent.

Appendix II

An Agreement Relating to the Separation of Singapore from
Malaysia as an Independent and Sovereign State

An Agreement dated the 7th day of August, 1965, and made
between the Government of Malaysia of the one part and the
Government of Singapore of the other part.

WHEREAS Malaysia was established on the 16th day of
September, 1963, by a federation of the existing states of the
Federation of Malaya and the States of Sabah, Sarawak and
Singapore into one independent and sovereign nation;

AND WHEREAS it has been agreed by the parties hereto
that fresh arrangements should be made for the order and good
government of the territories comprised in Malaysia by the separa-
tion of Singapore from Malaysia upon which Singapore shall
become an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from
and independent of Malaysia and so recognised by the Government
of Malaysia;

NOW therefore it is agreed and declared as follows:

ARTICLE I

This Agreement may be cited as the Independence of Singa-
pore Agreement, 1965

ARTICLE II

Singapore shall cease to be a State of Malaysia on the 9th day of August, 1965 (hereinafter referred to as "Singapore Day") and shall become an independent and sovereign state separate from and independent of Malaysia and recognised as such by the Government of Malaysia; and the Government of Malaysia will proclaim and enact the constitutional instruments annexed to this Agreement in the manner hereinafter appearing.

ARTICLE III

The Government of Malaysia will declare by way of proclamation in the form set out in Annex A to this Agreement that Singapore is an independent and sovereign state separate from and independent of Malaysia and recognised as such by the Government of Malaysia.

ARTICLE IV

The Government of Malaysia will take such steps as may be appropriate and available to them to secure the enactment by the Parliament of Malaysia of an Act in the form set out in Annex B to this Agreement and will ensure that it is made operative as from Singapore Day, providing for the relinquishment of sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Government of Malaysia in respect of Singapore so that the said sovereignty and jurisdiction shall on such relinquishment vest in the Government of Singapore in accordance with this Agreement and the constitutional instruments annexed.

ARTICLE V

The parties hereto will enter into a treaty on external defence and mutual assistance providing that :-

- 1) the parties hereto will establish a joint defence council for purposes of external defence and mutual assistance;
- 2) the Government of Malaysia will afford to the Government of Singapore such assistance as may be considered reasonable and

adequate for external defence, and in consideration thereof, the Government of Singapore will contribute from its own armed forces such units thereof as may be considered reasonable and adequate for such defence;

- 3) the Government of Singapore will afford to the Government of Malaysia the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities used by its military forces within Singapore and will permit the Government of Malaysia to make such use of these bases and facilities as the Government of Malaysia may consider necessary for the purpose of external defence;
- 4) each party will undertake not to enter into any treaty or agreement with a foreign country which may be detrimental to the independence and defence of the territory of the other party.

ARTICLE VI

The parties hereto will on and after Singapore Day co-operate in economic affairs for their mutual benefit and interest and for this purpose may set up such joint committees or councils as may from time to time be agreed upon.

ARTICLE VII

The provisions of Annex J and K of the Agreement relating to Malaysia dated the 9th day of July, 1963 are hereby expressly rescinded as from the date of this Agreement.

ARTICLE VIII

With regard to any agreement entered into between the Government of Singapore and any other country or corporate body which has been guaranteed by the Government of Malaysia, the Government of Singapore hereby undertakes to negotiate with such country or corporate body to enter into a fresh agreement releasing the Government of Malaysia of its liabilities and obligations under the said guarantee, and the Government of Singapore hereby under-

takes to indemnify the Government of Malaysia fully for any liabilities, obligations or damage which it may suffer as a result of the said guarantee.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Agreement.

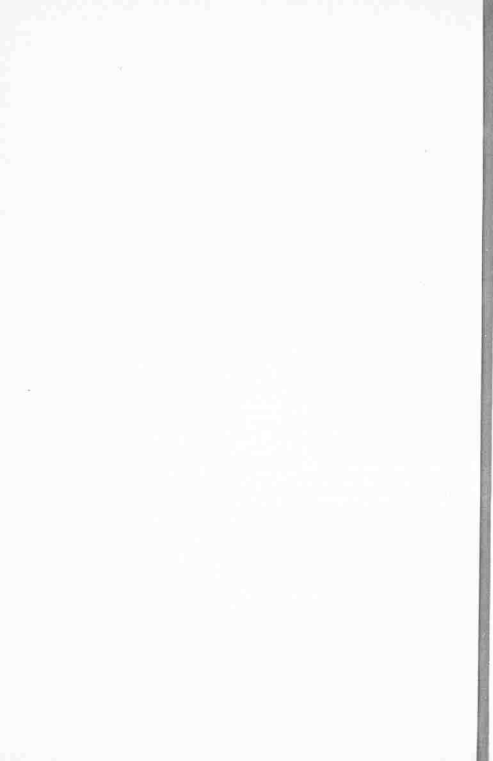
Done this 7th day of August, 1965, in two copies of which one shall be deposited with each of the Parties.

For the Government of Malaysia :

Prime Minister	(Signed)
Deputy Prime Minister	(Signed)
Minister of Home Affairs	(Signed)
Minister of Finance	(Signed)
Minister of Works, Posts & Telecommuni- cations	(Signed)

For the Government of Singapore :

Prime Minister	(Signed)
Deputy Prime Minister	(Signed)
Minister for Finance	(Signed)
Minister for Law	(Signed)
Minister for Culture	(Signed)
Minister for Social Affairs	(Signed)
Minister for Education	(Signed)
Minister for Health	(Signed)
Minister for National Development	(Signed)
Minister for Labour	(Signed)



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