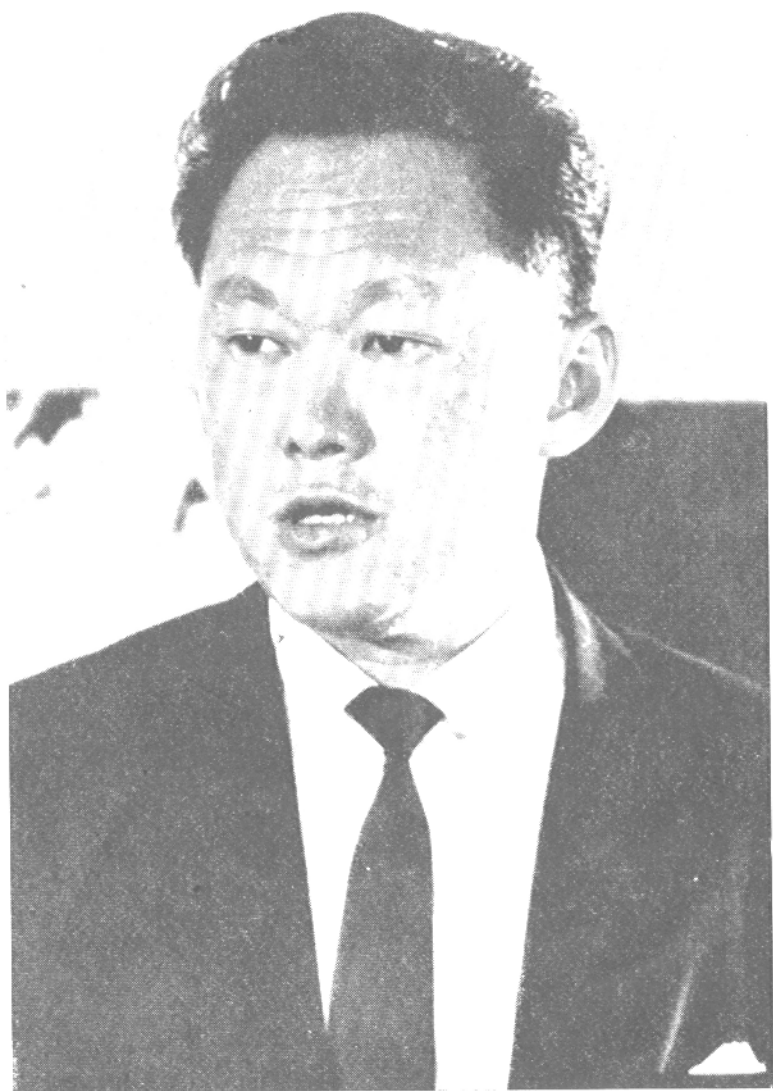


# SEPARATION

SINGAPORE'S INDEPENDENCE ON 9th AUGUST 1965



*Singapore shall be forever a sovereign, democratic and independent nation, founded upon the principles of liberty and justice"*



Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore.

# SEPARATION

Singapore's separation from the  
Federation of Malaysia 9th August, 1965



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# Proclamation of Singapore

WHEREAS it is the inalienable right of a people to be free and independent;

AND WHEREAS Malaysia was established on the 16th day of September, 1963, by a federation of existing states of the Federation of Malaya and the States of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore into one independent and sovereign nation:

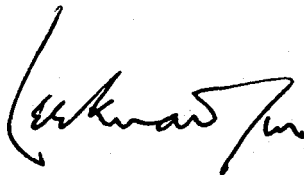
AND WHEREAS by an Agreement made on the seventh day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five between the Government of Malaysia of the one part and the Government of Singapore of the other part it was agreed that Singapore should cease to be a state of Malaysia and should thereupon become an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from and independent of Malaysia;

AND WHEREAS it was also agreed by the parties to the said Agreement that, upon the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, the Government of Malaysia shall relinquish its sovereignty and jurisdiction in respect of Singapore so that the said sovereignty and jurisdiction shall on such relinquishment vest in the Government of Singapore;

AND WHEREAS by a Proclamation dated the ninth day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five the Prime Minister of Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj Ibni Almarhum Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah did proclaim and declare that Singapore shall on the ninth day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five

cease to be a state of Malaysia and shall become an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from and independent of Malaysia and recognised as such by the Government of Malaysia.

Now I LEE KUAN YEW Prime Minister of Singapore, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM AND DECLARE on behalf of the people and the Government of Singapore that as from today the ninth day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Kuan Yew', with a large, sweeping initial 'L' on the left side.

*Prime Minister, Singapore.*

Dated the 9th day of August, 1965.

## Proclamation on Singapore

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe, and may the benediction and peace of God be upon Our Leader Muhammad and upon all His Relations and Friends.

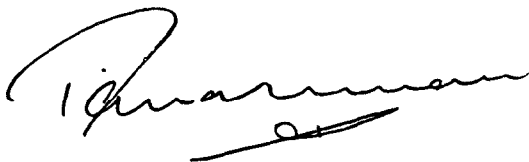
WHEREAS Malaysia was established on the 16th day of September, 1963, by a federation of the existing states of the Federation of Malaya and the States of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore into one independent and sovereign nation;

AND WHEREAS By an Agreement made on the 7th day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five between the Government of Malaysia of the one part and the Government of Singapore of the other part it was agreed that Singapore should cease to be a state of Malaysia and should thereupon become an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from and independent of Malaysia;

AND WHEREAS it was also agreed by the parties to the said Agreement that, upon the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, the Government of Malaysia shall relinquish its sovereignty and jurisdiction in respect of Singapore so that the said sovereignty and jurisdiction shall on such relinquishment vest in the Government of Singapore;

NOW in the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful, I, TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA AL-HAJ IBNI ALMA-RHUM SULTAN ABDUL HAMID HALIM SHAH, Prime Minister of Malaysia, with the concurrence and approval of His

Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia, DO HEREBY DECLARE AND PROCLAIM that, as from the 9th day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five, Singapore shall cease to be a State of Malaysia and shall forever be an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from and independent of Malaysia, and that the Government of Malaysia recognises the present Government of Singapore as an independent and sovereign government of Singapore and will always work in friendship and co-operation with it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tunku Abdul Razak', with a horizontal line underneath.

*Perdana Menteri, Malaysia.*

Dated this 9th day of August, 1965.

## CHAPTER I

### *Introduction*

The history of Malaysia, as an independent and sovereign nation in South-East Asia, began with the achievement of independence by the Federation of Malaya on August 31, 1957.

On May 27, 1961, the first formal reference to the concept of Malaysia as a desirable, practical objective was made by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malayan Prime Minister who said:

“Malaya today as a nation realises that she cannot stand alone. Sooner or later, Malaya must have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak.”

Brunei decided against membership. On September 16, 1963, the eleven states of Malaya were joined by the three new States of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, and the new name of Malaysia was adopted for the enlarged federation.

Malaysia then had a total population of just over 10,000,000 scattered across more than 130,000 square miles of land.

In the eleven states of Malaya, out of a total population of about 7,000,000, 50.1 per cent are Malays, 36.9 per cent Chinese, 11.1 per cent Indians and Pakistans and 1.9 per cent others. In Singapore, out of a total population 1.7 million, 75.2 per cent are of Chinese origin.

The Malaysian Parliament is bicameral in structure and comprises of a House of Representatives (Dewan Ra'ayat) and the Senate (Dewan Negara). Of the 159 members of the House of Representatives, the States of Malaya have 104 seats, Sabah 16, Sarawak 24 and Singapore had 15. Representatives from the States of Malaya are returned from single member constituencies: at

present, representatives from Sabah and Sarawak are elected by their respective State Legislative Assemblies. Singapore's representatives were also elected by its State Legislative Assembly.

Barely two years later, Singapore — which is geographically very much part of Malaya, and the commercial and trading centre for South-East Asia — was evicted from the Federation of Malaysia as formed on September 16, 1963.

### *Early Singapore-Malaya Relations*

Not long after the formation of Malaysia, differences between the Central Government of Malaysia and the State Government of Singapore became evident mainly as a result of their different policies and objectives and the methods adopted to implement their aims, Singapore preferring the socialist solution. Another fundamental issue dividing the two governments, however, was the approach to solve the problem of nation building in a multi-racial and multi-religious society.

With the formation of Malaysia, its people were provided with the choice of alternative leaderships. One of them was the People's Action Party dedicated to socialism and multi-racial equality and in the words of Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, leader of the People's Action Party, the party went into the political arena of Malaysia:

“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 for a more effective way of raising their educational and living standards.”

The effective non-communal approach of the People's Action Party on Malaysia's social and economic problems alarmed the conservative and traditionalist leaders of the Alliance government in Kuala Lumpur and particularly the United Malays National Organisation.

Having unsuccessfully attempted to foster their pattern of political authority over Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, the communal Ultras realised that the time may come when their policies of exclusiveness and intolerance may bring about a situation where an alternative multi-racial leadership on a Pan-Malaysia basis, will emerge as a coherent national force.

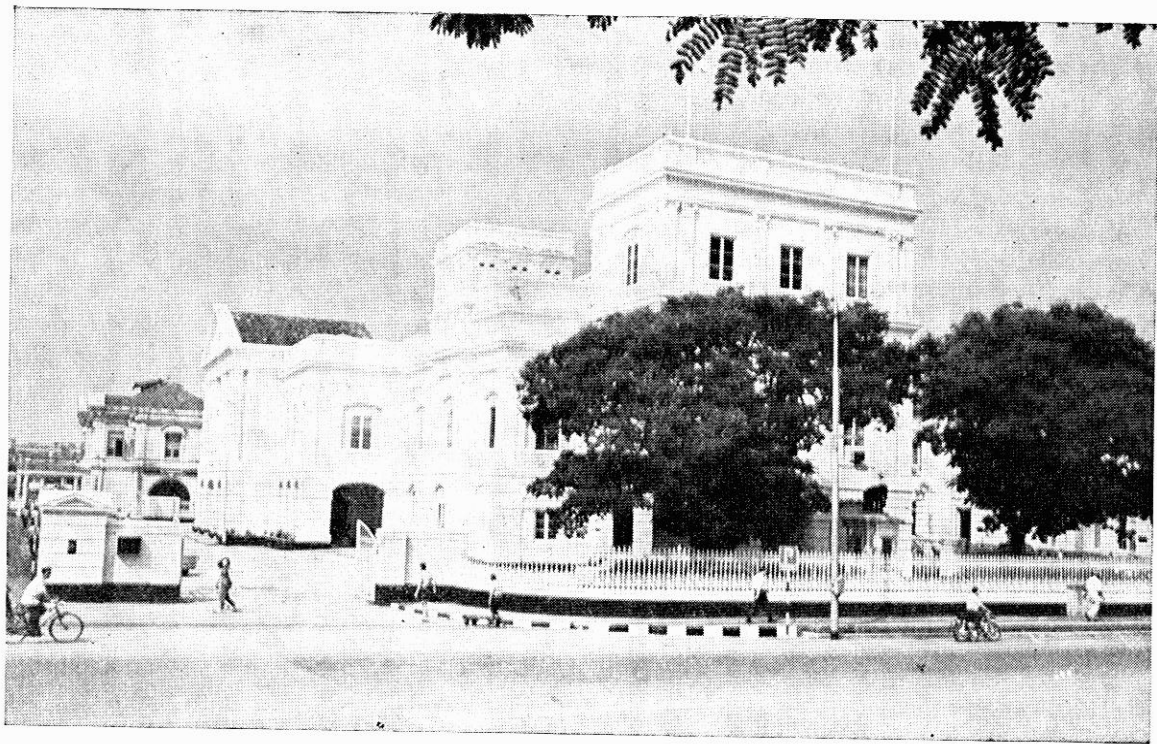
It is obvious that Allianceism, which Mr. Lee Kuan Yew described as "the policies of conservative Malay traditionalist leaders collaborating with Chinese compradores and capitalists for mutual benefit" had no hope of ever competing successfully with the democratic socialism of the People's Action Party.

Without any hope of winning over the large urban areas, and anxious to retain their hold on their rural base in Malaya, Alliance leaders made vigorous attempts to undermine the multi-racial appeal of the People's Action Party and to regain Malay support that had gone to the People's Action Party.

"To this end," explained Mr. Lee, "highly charged communal appeals were systematically made both in speeches and publications." Yet whilst "they distort and falsely represent the People's Action Party in *Utusan Melayu* and *Malaya Merdeka*, as being anti-Malay, they have never been able to quote one single word, let alone point to one single deed, in which we were anti the Malays."

Mr. Lee said that "Alliance leaders make a habit of saying that all who challenge their authority intend to oppress the Malays."

Mr. Lee believed that it was disastrous for Malaysian political parties to be organised on the basis of "*Chinese unite*," "*Malays unite*" and "*Indians unite*." The Prime Minister contended that democratic socialism was the "less painful way to solve rural poverty." It could not be solved by "financial policies of those with vast rubber interests and lands", pre-occupied with the preservation of "a structure of society in which they make their wealth bigger." Fundamentally then, the conflict could be seen as one between two different textures of societies in Malaya and in Singapore:



A view of Singapore's Parliament House.

“One was a conservative, static society, wanting to keep what was in the past and to reinforce the forces that kept the society where it was. The other was an innovating society, prepared to reach out for the stars, to experiment, and pick the best that suited the country.”

### *Relationship Deteriorates*

Two important aspects of the confrontation between the Kuala Lumpur and Singapore stood out in bold relief. One was the communal politicking and distortions by the Ultras in the Alliance Party, backed by the communalism of *Utusan Melayu* and *Malaya Merdeka*. The other was the non-communal reaction and multi-racial appeal of the People's Action Party.

The “verbal war” between the two governments only served to reveal and expose to all the political bankruptcy of the Ultras and the traditionalists. At an interview on March 5, 1965 to the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation in Australia, Mr. Lee said:

“... the impact of our multi-racial politics, where the issues are social and economic policies and not “*Malays unite*” or “*Chinese unite*” or “*Indians unite*” — has been such as to generate a great deal of frenzy among the Malay Ultras — the Ultra nationalists.”

Without any coherent and intelligent political philosophy and social programme, the communalists were unable to prevent and were alarmed at the popularity and increasing support among the people for the democratic socialism of the People's Action Party and the Malaysian Malaysia concept. To counter the trend towards a Malaysian Malaysia, the Ultras made blatant racialist appeals to the Malay electorate in the hope of retaining their own narrow vested interests under the pretext of Malay unity. Many unfounded and irresponsible charges were levelled against the People's Action Party and in particular Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, in their desperate attempts to confuse the electorate.

An ominous communal note was struck by *Utusan Melayu* on February 20, reporting the views of Inche Abdul Rahman Haji Talib, who was formerly a Cabinet Minister in the Tunku's Government, and had resigned following allegations of corruption. Inche Rahman Talib said the time had come for the people of Singapore to decide whether they preferred to live under the rule of Lee Kuan Yew, or the rule of the Tunku. If the people preferred Lee Kuan Yew then, Inche Rahman Talib said, "THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECONSIDER SINGAPORE'S POSITION IN MALAYSIA."

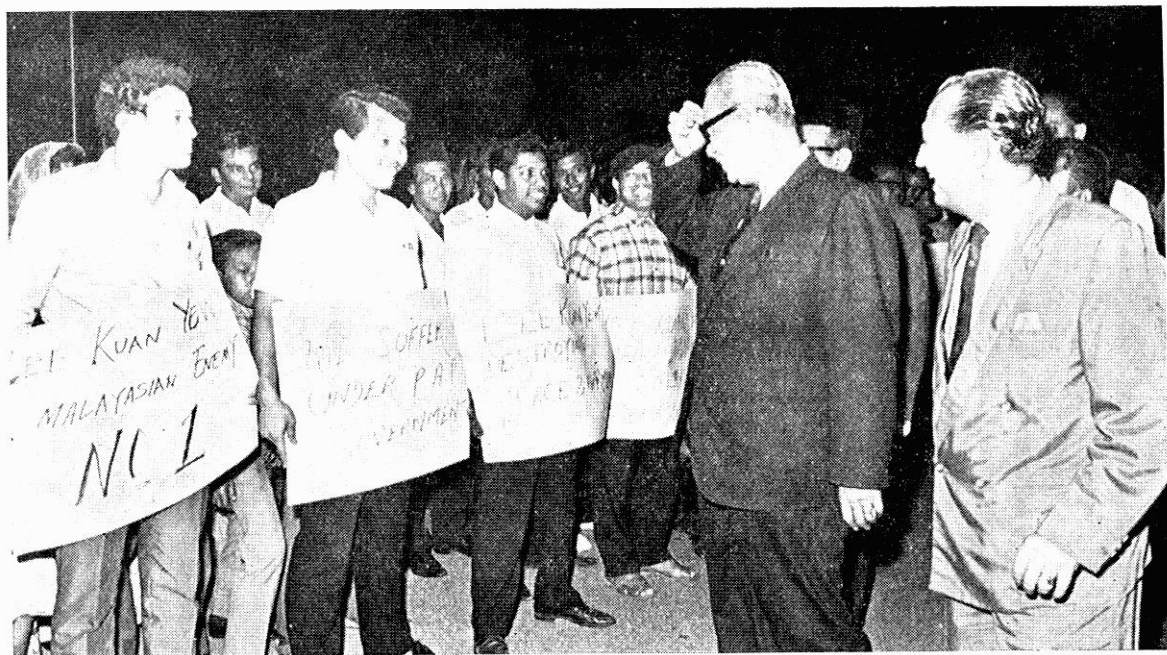
On March 22, *Utusan Melayu* carried a story by Dato Yahya Mohamed Seh under the following headlines:

**"UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANISATION MEMBERS REMINDED OF THE CATASTROPHE THAT WILL BEFALL THE MALAYS . . . IF THE PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY CAME TO POWER . . . MALAYS WHO FELL INTO PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY TRAP ASKED TO THINK OVER."**

Here then was the crux of the problem. This typified their daily politicking, demonstrating the fear of the communalists for a party whose appeal cut across racial, religious and cultural divisions.

The United Malays National Organisation rank-and-file, however, were conspicuous by their inconsistency in their campaign against the People's Action Party. On April 18, *Utusan Melayu* reported the accusations made by Puan Masni Yunus, the United Malays National Organisation Malay External Information Officer for the Southern Zone, to the effect that there was clear evidence to show that the ideology of the People's Action Party was similar to Marxian Communist ideology. She further claimed that the ideology manifested by the People's Action Party was contrary to the wishes of the Malays:

"And, more so, when socialism — a-la-Marx is definitely contrary to the teachings of Islam which is against Communism."



On Tunku Abdul Rahman's return from London on August 5, 1965, he was greeted by United Malay National Organisation supporters, bearing posters attacking Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore.

On April 21, *Utusan Melayu* reported Inche Samad Idris Deputy Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan as saying:

“The Malays must not think that non-Malays could help them. If the Malays join other parties especially those that are led by non-Malays, the consequences will be very grave.”

The basis of their appeal was in the words of Albar: “*Wherever I am, I am a Malay.*” And as Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew pointed out:

“It would have sounded enormously more comforting to all of us and it would have helped to consolidate the nation if it were: ‘*Wherever I am, I am a Malaysian.*’”

### *Threat to Communal Harmony*

Not unnaturally therefore, the Singapore Government began to be increasingly alarmed and concerned at the developing threats to communal harmony in Malaysia and took the view that this was inadequately appreciated by the Central government in Kuala Lumpur.

This fear was not ameliorated by the Tunku at a function held in Singapore to celebrate his 62nd birthday. After paying tribute to Singapore Ministers as “able and dedicated people” who could “do a lot to make Singapore a city I had dreamed of — the New York of Malaysia” he characterised them as “young men who want to rush things.” “Instead of doing what they want in a quiet and practical way,” said the Tunku, “they tread on everybody’s toes, knock everybody’s head and bring about chaos, suspicion, misunderstanding, hatred and trouble.”

This impatience of the Singapore leaders, said the Tunku, was manifested in their efforts to break down the walls dividing the various races:

“The suggestion from these young leaders is that you can do this (demolish the dividing walls between the races) overnight without making any attempt to put the timbers in shape. Why rush? After all the nation will live many long years.”

This was of course an over simplification of what was fundamentally a complex and difficult problem.

Yet another significant development that alarmed liberal and democratic leaders in Malaysia was the decision taken early this year to suspend all local government elections. On March 2, 1965 the *Straits Times* reported:

“Elected members now in office will continue to retain their seats unless they are declared incapacitated or voluntarily resign. Those who have died, or have resigned their seats, will be replaced by appointees made by the Ruler or Governor-in-Council from candidates submitted by the political party to which the original members belonged. In the case of independents, replacement will be made at the discretion of the Ruler or Governor-in-Council.”

To justify the suspension of local government election the Tunku spoke of the vast election machinery that would have to be set in motion to get the local council elections going:

“The Government will have to commandeer all its forces, officers and men, as well as the police force, to help run the elections and to maintain law and order during the elections.” “Besides this, large sums of money will have to be expended for setting up the machinery . . .”

Also, at election time, political parties would resort to the “unrestricted use of epithets” both against candidates and parties.

### *Sombre Background*

But it was quite clear to all that for certain Members of Parliament at least, confrontation was preferred to facing the electorate. It was against such a sombre background that the relationship between the Central and Singapore Governments began to deteriorate further.

On May 12, a group of United Malays National Organisation youths assembled outside the Kampong Dato Kramat Community Hall to burn an effigy of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore.



Another view of UMNO supporters who greeted Tunjku Abdul Rahman on his return from London on 6th August, 1965, carrying posters attacking Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.

On May 16, *Utusan Zaman* reported a "dramatic" incident in Kuala Lumpur, which occurred when the Tunku arrived at the Language and Literary Agency Building to declare open the United Malays National Organisation General Assembly. A group of Malays were picketing with posters such as:

"SUSPEND SINGAPORE'S CONSTITUTION",

"DETAIN LEE KUAN YEW"

"MAKE SINGAPORE A SECOND KERALA"

There were also shouts of "Merdeka", "Crush Lee Kuan Yew" and "We want action".

*Tamil Murasu* on May 17, 1965 reported the Minister of Information and Broadcasting as saying that:

"If the Singapore Government, in its propaganda campaign over Radio Singapore and Television Malaysia (Singapore) continues to attack and discredit the Central Government, the Central Government may have to take over these two services."

On the previous day May 16, 1965 *Utusan Zaman* reported that on May 15 the Malaysian United Malays National Organisation General Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution to demand the Central Government to take action to prevent People's Action Party leaders from making statements which might cause bloodshed. "That the General Assembly which meets today, takes a serious view of the speeches of the People's Action Party . . . and this conference resolves to demand that the Central Government take firm action to prevent incidents which may cause bloodshed."

The resolution which was submitted by the United Malays National Organisation Youth Movement through Senator Saidon Kechut was supported by other United Malays National Organisation divisions.

During the General Assembly there were repeated demands by speakers for the arrest and detention of Mr. Lee.

## *The Malaysian Solidarity Convention*

Under such ominous and disturbing circumstances it was hardly surprising to find liberal and democratically orientated leaders all over Malaysia coming together to check the steady drift towards communalism and anarchy in Malaysia. Thus was born the Malaysian Solidarity Convention. On May 9, 1965, delegates of Party Machinda, Sarawak United People's Party, United Democratic Party, People's Action Party and People's Progressive Party solemnly gathered at Sri Temasek and put their signatures to the Declaration of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention.

The Convention declared:

“We, the undersigned, conscious of the threat to Malaysia from without and deeply concerned over mounting signs of disruption through internal dissension are calling a Malaysia Solidarity Convention to rally our people to meet these twin threats.

“Malaysia's survival and consolidation are imperative to ensure the right of 10 million Malaysians to seek happiness, freedom and prosperity as a democratic and independent nation. We believe we can do this if we adhere sincerely to the spirit and intent of the basic principles enunciated during the various meetings of representatives of the territories—Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore and Malaya and embodied in the agreement signed in London. It is transgression of these basic principles rather than Indonesian confrontation and pro-Communist subversion which presents the greater threat to Malaysia. The peoples of Malaysia have so far stood up to Indonesian confrontation and Communist subversion simply because they feel that the principles and objectives of a Malaysian Malaysia are worth fighting for and dying for.

“It is with grave concern that we find that since the start of confrontation there have been utterances and manifestations by highly placed political leaders which are contrary to the spirit and purpose of Malaysia as conceived and agreed to by the vast majority of people.

## *Democratic Malaysian Malaysia*

“The basic principle on which Malaysia was founded can be summed up in three simple words: A Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia.

“By democracy we mean the provisions for the fundamental rights of all our citizens, and the system of parliamentary democracy enshrined in our present constitution. It not only permits divergence of views but also protects the right of any Malaysian to compete for popular influence and support through processes sanctioned by the constitution and for ends embodied in it.

“A Malaysian Malaysia means that the nation and the state is not identified with the supremacy, well-being and the interests of any one particular community or race. A Malaysian Malaysia is the antithesis of a Malay Malaysia, a Chinese Malaysia, a Dyak Malaysia, an Indian Malaysia or Kadazan Malaysia and so on. The special and legitimate interests of different communities must be secured and promoted within the framework of the collective rights, interests and responsibilities of all races. Support for the ideal of a Malaysian Malaysia means, in theory as well as in practice, educating and encouraging the various races in Malaysia to seek political affiliation not on the basis of race and religion but on the basis of common political ideologies and common social and economic aspirations, which is the real basis of ensuring the emergence of a truly free prosperous and equitable national community.

“The people of Malaysia did not vote for a non-democratic Malaysia. They did not vote for a Malaysia assuring hegemony to one community. Still less would they be prepared to fight for the preservation of so meaningless a Malaysia. It is because the concept of a Democratic, Malaysian Malaysia has been challenged by certain leaders that doubts and fears have arisen as to the future of Malaysia.

“Certain political leaders have allowed their resentment of criticism and opposition to some of their policies to degenerate into threats that if such criticism are persisted in then parliamentary



The spontaneous response of supporters from all parts of Malaysia, to the call for a Malaysian Malaysia at the Malaysian Solidarity Convention rally held in Singapore on 6th June, 1965.

democracy might be brought to an end. Others have gone so far as to enunciate the doctrine that the existence of democracy and Malaysia is conditional only on their unchallenged right to be the rulers of Malaysia and that therefore other groups should desist from trying to win following and support by constitutional and legitimate means. If they do not then dire consequences are predicted. These range from the ending of democracy to warnings about communal disturbances.

### *Communal Chauvinism*

“The growing tendency among some leaders to make open appeals to communal chauvinism to win and hold their following has gradually led them also to what has been tantamount to a repudiation of the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. This is not to deny the fact that communal fears and prejudices still influence popular political thinking and that the emergence of a Malaysian outlook may take time to develop. We are realistic enough to recognise that until such time as a Malaysian outlook takes strong roots, substantial sections of our population will be inclined to express themselves through communally organised political parties.

“But what occasions dismay and portends danger is the viciousness with which attacks are launched against those who, of whatever race, abandon communal forms of politics for non-communal politics. One would have thought that the more the people affiliated themselves to non-communal ideologies and organisations the nearer we are moving to our goal of a Malaysian Malaysia. If people are discouraged and denounced for abandoning communal loyalties because they have found common ground for political action with Malaysians of other races then the professed concern for a Malaysian Malaysia is open to serious doubts.

“We ourselves believe that the number of people who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia is large and that their influence is rapidly growing.

“The Convention is being called to disabuse those who believe that Malaysians are few, weak and unorganised and that they are

neither prepared to rally to defend and sustain the concept of a Malaysian Malaysia, nor are they determined to unite and work for its realisation, no matter how arduous or protracted the struggle may be.

“We believe that a Malaysian Malaysia has the support of the vast majority of the peoples. We also believe that silence and passivity on the part of Malaysians will only encourage the forces of communalism to become more virulent but that it will also set in train a sequence of events which must inevitably lead to turmoil and the eventual collapse of Malaysia. Assertion by one group of chauvinists must lead to counter-assertion by other chauvinistic groups and in no time a multi-racial Malaysia must be rent asunder by communal conflicts.

### *New Approach Needed*

“The purpose of this Convention is to get political leaders and interested individuals to come together to discuss and re-examine our many problems in the context of a truly Malaysian situation. For more than a decade political and other leaders in the constituent states of Malaysia have developed organisations, attitudes and philosophies which may have stood them in good stead before Malaysia. But what may have been practical and logical two years ago, before Malaysia Day, may be destructive of Malaysia at the present time. The Malaysian view cannot be a simple projection and extension of views that have been used to run the States of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah or Sarawak as separate entities. A great deal of our present internal difficulties spring from the failure of certain political leaders to realise that the Malaysian view and a Malaysian approach must be qualitatively different from our accustomed approach to things.

“It takes time and courage to accept the fact that each of us must change our ideas and political styles to fit with the new needs of a Malaysian nation. The economic, social and political problems that beset us are now Malaysian in scope and therefore require new concepts and new approaches for their solution.

“Unfortunately certain political leaders have persistently refused to consider objectively and calmly what adjustments must be made to accustomed modes of thinking in regard to Malaysian policies, Malaysian administration, Malaysian economics and, most important of all, how to subordinate racial, religious and state loyalties to a Malaysian loyalty.

### *First Organised Attempt*

“A convention like this is the first organised attempt to search for a Malaysian view through free and frank debate and how to put it into practice. Some of the problems that require urgent examination are how democratic competition between communally organised parties and non-communally organised parties can be conducted without intensification of communal animosities; how best to meet quickly and effectively the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the under-privileged majority of all races without destroying economic stability — in other words to define with as much precision as we can what we mean by a Democratic Malaysian Malaysia and how best we can move towards this goal.

“The Convention calls upon all Malaysians who believe in a Malaysian Malaysia to come forward to pool their ideas, energies and resources in order to help our advance towards realising it. The slogan that should rally us and guide us towards victory is: Malaysians Unite. We are convinced that if Malaysians unite they have sufficient strength to safeguard Malaysia against external threat and corrosion from within.

“A Malaysian Malaysia is worth fighting for because only in such a Malaysia is there a decent and dignified future for all Malaysians.

“It is in this spirit and expectation that we, the undersigned, appeal to all Malaysians to support this Convention.”

### *Liberal, Democratic Forces*

The formation of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention marked yet another significant attempt by progressive, democratic and

liberal forces within Malaysia to check the rising tide of extremism in Malaysian politics.

But pressure — for repressive measures against Singapore leaders — continued unabated. The more liberal and democratically orientated leaders in the Alliance Party such as the Tunku and Dato Dr. Ismail found it increasingly difficult to restrain these vociferous elements.

*Utusan Zaman* on May 16, 1965 reported Dato Dr. Ismail as saying that:

“If we detain People’s Action Party leaders or ban the People’s Action Party it will mean that as a big political party we have admitted defeat.”

It was clear however, that Malaysia was reaching a critical stage in her development. Although the situation was rapidly deteriorating, *an entente* was still possible. Towards this end, the Singapore Government spared no effort to reach an amicable understanding with Kuala Lumpur.

### *Hostile Attitude of U.M.N.O.*

At the request of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew the Singapore Prime Minister, a conference was held in Kuala Lumpur on June 29 between the Singapore Prime Minister and Tun Abdul Razak the Acting Malaysian Premier. (The Malaysian Prime Minister was then abroad.) There were frank discussions on the issues involved, but it soon became clear that no conference could resolve the fundamental differences between the two governments.

The situation was further aggravated by the hostile attitude of the United Malays National Organisation branches to the talks.

*Utusan Melayu* on July 1, 1965 reported that the Central Committee of United Malays National Organisation Youth would hold an extraordinary meeting in connection with the conference between the Singapore Prime Minister and the Acting Malaysian Premier, Tun Abdul Razak.

Prior to this, the committee of the United Malays National Organisation Malaysian Youth Movement, at a meeting at the residence of the Head of the Movement, Inche Senu Abdul Rahman passed a resolution to request the Tunku and Tun Abdul Razak not to meet the Singapore Premier so long as he (Mr. Lee Kuan Yew) would not apologise to the Malays (The Prime Minister was alleged to have insulted the Malays). The next day the *Malay Mail* reported:

“The Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, yesterday called on United Malays National Organisation Youth to be calm and vigilant in facing political problems in the country.”

He made the call when a delegation of United Malays National Organisation youth leaders headed by Inche Senu, in his capacity as national leader of United Malays National Organisation Youth, met him at his office, in connection with his talks with the Singapore Prime Minister.

### *Hong Lim By-Election*

Meanwhile in a surprise move to embarrass and weaken the Singapore government in its fight against the extremists in Malaysia, Mr. Ong Eng Guan, sole representative of the United People's Party in the Singapore Assembly resigned his seat in the Hong Lim constituency.

Despite their bravado in public the Singapore branch of the Alliance Party failed to field any candidate for the by-election. Instead, the right-wing forces joined the extremist left-wing forces in a concerted but futile attempt to check and undermine the progress and confidence of the Singapore government. The Alliance Party and *Utusan Melayu* openly backed the Barisan candidate Mr. Ong Chang Sam.

The by-election turned out to be a straight fight between Mr. Lee Khoon Choy of the People's Action Party and the Barisan Sosialis candidate Mr. Ong Chang Sam. On July 10 the Hong Lim

electorate decided overwhelmingly in favour of the People's Action Party. The victory was clearly a victory for the leadership of the People's Action Party and its concept of a Malaysian Malaysia. It was a staggering blow to the sectarian and racial politicking of the Ultras in the Alliance, who wanted to see the defeat of the People's Action Party in the Hong Lim constituency, in order to vindicate their policy of communalism, and to use the defeat as an excuse to carry out repressive measures against Singapore.

The victory of the People's Action Party in the Hong Lim by-election marked perhaps a turning point in the mechanics of power in Kuala Lumpur. Unable to undermine the political base of the People's Action Party and fearful of the grave consequences of repressive actions contemplated against Singapore leaders, Kuala Lumpur in its dilemma increasingly toyed with the idea of expelling the Island State from Malaysia.

Attempts were made soon after the by-election to gather Singapore support for the Alliance. The Acting Prime Minister, the Federal Minister of Finance and other ministers visited Singapore.

### *Attempt to Belittle Singapore*

During these visits, especially to the predominantly Malay constituencies Alliance leaders belittled the Singapore Government, alleging that the omission of Federal Development Plans for Singapore was due to lack of co-operation by the Singapore Government. These allegations were effectively disproved by the Singapore Government's tangible progress in these areas. These efforts having proved futile the idea of expelling Singapore loomed large in Alliance circles. Meanwhile on July 16, 1965, *Utusan Melayu* reported that the Singapore Alliance had accused the People's Action Party of launching a "Partition" Campaign while hiding behind its "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan. In the same statement the Alliance attributed the victory of the People's Action Party in the Hong Lim by-election to the "Crush Malaysia" slogan of the Barisan Sosialis. The statement continued that the future

political struggle in Singapore was to be between the honest and sincere Malaysian movement and the People's Action Party.

On the same day, *Utusan Melayu* also reported that the Menteri Besar of Trengganu, Dato Ibrahim Fikri bin Mohamad had repeated his accusation that the People's Action Party was opposing the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers, Special Malay Rights, Islam and the National Language. He also added that the People's Action Party was opposed to the Constitution. These accusations were, however, unsubstantiated.

On August 5 the Tunku returned from London. The stage had already been set for the expulsion of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia.

Meetings were held in Kuala Lumpur between Singapore and Central Government leaders from Malaya. But these last minute talks failed to bring about any lasting solution and Singapore leaders had no option but to leave the federation in the interests of communal peace and harmony and to avoid the possibility of more serious conflicts and consequences in the future.

## *Separation*

A candid admission that the Ultra pressure groups within the ruling Alliance had demanded "totalitarian methods to force the 'rebellious' State of Singapore into submission" was made by the Tunku a few days after Singapore's separation from the Malaysian Federation.

"I was exposed to this temptation, but doing a thing like that is against my conscience and I accordingly resisted it", the Malaysian Prime Minister declared. "Things had gone so much out of hand that my colleagues and I were left with no alternative but to legislate Singapore out of the Federation."

The Tunku's exposure of the facts was published in the Sunday edition of the *Malayan Times* on August 15, 1965. This paper quoted *Malaya Merdeka* (official organ of UMNO) which carried

the Tunku's revelation. The Tunku was quoted in *Malaya Merdeka* as saying that it was not possible for one country to have two prime ministers: "Therefore, the only solution was for the separation of Singapore so that Singapore Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, could, like myself, assume full premiership in his state (but without that process affecting Malaysia.)"

On the morning of August 9, Singapore was separated from Malaysia and Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew declared in a radio broadcast:

"Singapore shall forever be a sovereign and independent nation, separate from and independent of Malaysia."

In the final analysis Singapore's departure from the embryonic state of Malaysia was not unexpected. As early as September 10, 1964, the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, in a speech to Malaysian students at Malaysia Hall in London, warned:

"I said last year (1963) that Malaysia was inevitable: its formation was inevitable. I did not say then, nor do I say now, that its success is inevitable. I think it depends on what we make of Malaysia."

Again, on February 24, 1965, this year, the Prime Minister at a meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, warned of the threat by obscurantist forces to the concept of a united Malaysian Malaysia:

"They . . . (the Ultras in the Alliance) are left with two alternatives. First, to change their attitudes to the changed circumstances of Malaysia. Second, if they will not do this, to change circumstances of Malaysia to suit their old policies and tactics."



## CHAPTER II

### *Reasons for Optimism*

At the press conference held immediately after separation, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister emphasised that:

“In the years ahead the Singapore and Malaysian Governments must work with the closest co-operation, not just in defence and security, but also in commerce and industry. I would like as little changes as possible with this separation, such as in the movement of goods, people and currency.”

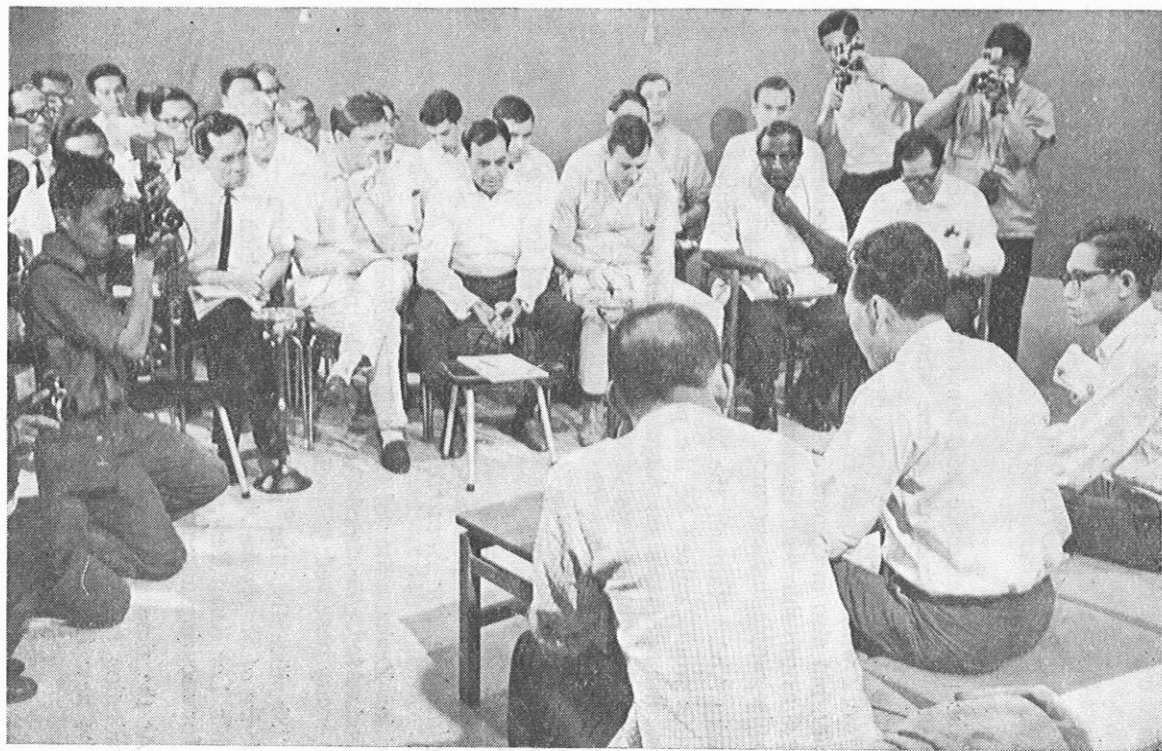
Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysian Prime Minister confirmed that this would indeed be the posture of the two nations. In a statement made public on August 9, the Malaysian Prime Minister disclosed that “in matters of defence, trade and commerce, there will be close links between the two states. Terms of this have been agreed on, and working committees would be set up as soon as possible to seek out the ways and means for providing those links.”

### *Mechanism for Securing Agreement*

Adrian Zecha, editor of the *Asia Magazine* in a special issue of the *Asia Magazine* dated August 15 to mark Malaysia's second anniversary observed:

“Significantly, the instrument of separation — the *Independence of Singapore Agreement 1965* — which Tunku Rahman and Mr. Lee Kuan Yew signed . . . clearly establishes the mechanism for securing agreement in defence and in the economic field.

“At the time the break came, there was already a system of consultation between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, particularly in the new fields of development. The fact that the agreement



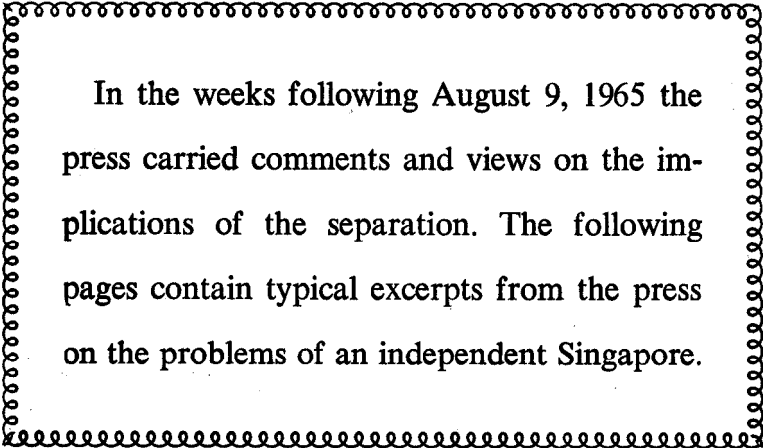
Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister at a press conference held soon after Singapore's separation from Malaysia was announced.

includes a provision to give the process of consultation some status in law, should facilitate even more the task of economic co-operation."

Meanwhile, Singapore has been able, on the international and foreign relations level to gain increasing recognitions for herself. Among the Afro-Asian countries recognizing Singapore are the United Arab Republic, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, India, Cambodia, Burma and Japan. America, Canada, U.K. and Australia are some of the western countries which have accorded recognition to Singapore.

It is clear that Singapore is not isolated in the world of today. This alone is sufficient basis for confidence. On September 23, Singapore was admitted into the United Nations, an augury that she is destined to play a full part in the world community of nations.

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In the weeks following August 9, 1965 the press carried comments and views on the implications of the separation. The following pages contain typical excerpts from the press on the problems of an independent Singapore.

## CHAPTER III

# *Strategic Implications*

Mr. S. Rajaratnam, the Foreign Minister clarified Singapore's position on the use of British military bases. Their role, he said, should be purely defensive.

Singapore is opposed to their integration within the South-East Asia Treaty Organization framework. But it recognises that defensive operations might call for the use elsewhere in South-East Asia of ships and planes from the Singapore bases.

Mr. Rajaratnam had indicated his disagreement with the American bombing of North Vietnam.

In renegotiating the bases agreements with Britain, there would be no specific clause barring occasional use of the Singapore naval base by American warships. Singapore would like to leave this question open and flexible.

### *Non-alignment*

"While we are still within the purview of Confrontation, trade is not between friends but between enemies. Recognition would mean we are no longer regarded as an enemy and trading is then possible.

"As far as Singapore is concerned our foreign policy is not one which has any pretensions to shaping or directing the flow of events in this part of the world. Being small, with few resources our foreign policy will be an extension of our domestic objectives, will be one of reaction to the pressures and counter-pressures in this region in order to ensure Singapore's survival and independence and prosperity. The less there is of power politics in this part of the world, the happier we will be. But, to achieve this, we have

enunciated a policy of non-alignment with any major power groupings, lest we be drawn into their struggles. Should any power group bring pressures to bear to try and shift us from our position, then naturally, as a small country, we shall have to fall back on some other grouping merely to retain our non-aligned position.

“Any grouping that is for purposes of power politics, for purposes of intensifying conflicts — such blocs are ones which we would keep out of. Any grouping to ensure economic development, to ensure stability, peace and security in this region — whether NEFO or neutralist — we would be interested in adding our widow’s mite to the success of such a grouping.”

### *Can Malaysia be Defended?*

The German paper *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, on August 10 asked “Is Malaysia Breaking up?”

“Britain, Australia and New Zealand, the protecting powers, are now faced with the problem of whether the rest of Malaysia can be defended at all. THE FACT THAT SINGAPORE IS TO REMAIN A BRITISH MILITARY BASE AND THUS ALSO AVAILABLE TO MALAYSIA MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO THE POLITICAL WORSENING OF THE SITUATION. At the very least it is now going to be even more difficult to maintain Malaysia’s claims on Sabah and Sarawak. For the aboriginal peoples living in these territories, the Government in far-away Kuala Lumpur is a foreign government. And the strong and intelligent Chinese minorities in the areas are aligned with Singapore.”

### *Separation Forces British Revaluation*

In an article entitled “Policemen’s Lot,” the *Sunday Times* (U.K.) on August 15, 1965 said:

“What are our interests? Contributing to the general stability of the area is no longer, if it ever was, an adequate answer. No one could claim, after last week, that Malaysia today was a good

example of stability — indeed, the British presence has probably contributed, however unwittingly, to embolden both Malay and Chinese extremists in their collision course. To protect essential economic interests will not really do either. On the cost-effectiveness basis, we are spending in Malaysia £100 million annually in an attempt to make secure above £150 million worth of British investments — surely one of the most outrageous insurance premiums in modern history.

“The best short term justification for our military presence east of Suez is in terms of our formal commitments; to the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation, to Malaysia, to the Commonwealth. These commitments cannot be unilaterally laid aside, but they do need urgently to be re-examined if only because the Malays in Kuala Lumpur and the Chinese in Singapore must not be left thinking that they have got a permanent British blank cheque at their disposal. The Tunku’s reported threats against Singapore if the latter tries to establish relations with Indonesia is an unwelcome augury both for relations between the two States and for the prospect of British involvement in an internecine situation. In any case, Indonesia’s threat cannot last forever. One day it will presumably roll away, either because the Federation it menaces ceases to exist as such, or through a deliberate shift in Indonesian policy. When that happens, and it may be sooner rather than later, there will be no purely British role east of Suez, for dreams of providing nuclear umbrellas for India may be pleasant to indulge in, but, like most dreams, have only tenuous links with reality.”

### *Britain’s Role in the Far East*

*The Observer* on August 15 stated:

“The crisis in Malaysia has pointed up the fragile basis of Britain’s defence commitments in the Far East: we have responsibilities in Malaysia which we cannot abandon overnight — however mistaken we may have been in taking them in the first place.



Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister, speaking at the City Hall steps soon after the proclamation of Malaysia, on 16th September, 1963:

"We have decided this day to go into it (Malaysia) in unity, willingly and freely, with our brothers in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak and we shall help to bear our share of the burden that Independence brings to us.

"In return, all we ask for is an honourable relationship between the states and the Central Government, a relationship between brothers... not a relationship between masters and servants."

"It seems now that the Federation we are protecting may simply break up. This would still leave us with some awkward problems . . . particularly Singapore's dependence on military spending. But the pretense (of economic aid) should not be pretext for keeping our base indefinitely.

"The question is: What Britain's military presence in the Far East serves. Are we still (there) in an ostensible Great Power role? Our defence commitments in the Far East are urgently in need of reassessment."

### *Indonesians Say Bases Must Go*

On August 16 a Reuter cable from Jakarta quoted Dr. Subandrio, Indonesian Foreign Minister as reiterating his Government's opposition to the presence of foreign military bases in Asia. Asked when he might visit Singapore, he replied: "When they remove the bases."

He was speaking at Jakarta Airport, where he welcomed Chen Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, on his arrival for talks with Indonesian leaders.

### *Minorities in Malaysia*

*The Christian Science Monitor* dated August 21, carried an article by John Hughes:

"Mr. Lee voiced concern over United States estimates of the Malaysian situation. If the Seventh Fleet and the United States were drawn into defence of the present Kuala Lumpur administration against minority elements in the country, then Malaysia could become another Vietnam."

# *Economic Implications*

The Federation of Malaysia as formed on September 16, 1963, was a brave but brief attempt to integrate the economies of Singapore and Malaya.

The interdependence of the two economies can be seen from the fact that Singapore handles about 32 per cent of Malaya's exports and 41 per cent of its imports. On the other hand, Singapore's distributing, processing and trading functions are very much dependent upon the raw materials of the hinterland, to maintain sound economic growth.

Yet, today an artificial economic and political barrier is operating at the Causeway, but because the economic, political and military complex of the two territories are so interwoven, it is not possible for any man to keep up the barriers for long.

### *Need for Economic Co-operation*

*The Sunday Times* (London) correspondent Richard Hughes on August 15, 1965 commented:

"The reopening of the Singapore branch of the People's Bank of China, which Malaysia had closed might indicate that Singapore Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is likely to seek trade and diplomatic ties with China before he approaches Indonesia."

He reported that trade between Singapore and Malaysia was almost at a halt, following Mr. Lee's restrictions on the import of 185 vital items from the mainland, including textiles, footwear, tyres, refrigerators and foodstuffs. He also quoted Dr. Lim Swee Aun, Malaysia Commerce Minister as saying: "that some Malayan factories depended on Singapore for 40 per cent of their market and that he had appointed a special committee to recommend suitable measures."

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malaysian Prime Minister, was quoted as saying that Singapore would face "great economic losses" if its government was unfriendly to Malaysia on trade.

*The Sunday Telegraph* on August 15 stated that:

"The general feeling now is that the problems that kept the Malaysian Federal Government and the Singapore State authorities bickering bitterly for over a year have merely been transferred from the internal to the international plane.

"Many in fact, believe Singapore's departure has actually worsened the future outlook for the two territories.

"The Tunku sparked off even higher emotions in Singapore by making veiled threats to cut the island's water supply from the mainland of Malaysia if Mr. Lee Kuan Yew chose to establish diplomatic or trade links with Indonesia."

### *Fear of an Economic War*

*The Guardian* on August 16, 1965 in an article entitled "Malaysia locked in Economic War with Singapore" said:

"Malaysia and Singapore, which separated a week ago, are involved in a full-scale economic war. Twenty-four hours after becoming independent, Singapore clamped down on 185 articles manufactured in the mainland."

The report continued, that in retaliation Malaysia had made a buy "Made in Malaya" order to government departments. Mr. Tan Siew Sin, the Malaysian Finance Minister was quoted as saying that: "There is no reason why Malaysia should not prosper without Singapore. The Malaysian market without Singapore is larger than the Singapore market." *The Times* carried the same story under the headline: "Economic Sniping between Singapore and Malaysia."

### *Economic Consequences*

*The Daily Telegraph*, August 18, reported on the economic consequences of Singapore's separation from Malaysia as follows:

“It is accepted that the loss of Singapore’s revenues will force Malaysia to tighten its belt, but there are widely differing interpretations of what the consequences may be and what the effect will be on Malaya’s relationship with Sarawak and Sabah.

“Malaya’s net balance of trade on the current account slipped from a credit of 350 million Straits dollars (about £40 million) in 1962 to a deficit of more than 200 million (about £26 million) in 1962 and 1963. Its balance of payments deficit was 153 million (£19¼ million) in 1964.

“*Kuala Lumpur’s reduced circumstances will be heavily strained to provide the Borneo territories with the financial support they demand.*”

### *Common Market Needed*

Reporting on the announcement by the Malaysian Finance Minister Mr. Tan Siew Sin that a joint Singapore-Kuala Lumpur committee had recommended restoration of trade between the two territories to pre-separation conditions, *The Telegraph* correspondent quoted a business executive as saying:

“Unless there is a common market, and unfortunately we are a long way from that, no one is going to invest here except in small factories. Certainly no one will invest while Borneo territories are making up their minds. At a minimum, Singapore had 40 per cent of the purchasing money of Malaysia. It may well have been as high as 60 per cent.”

He had cancelled advertising worth 250,000 Straits dollars (about £30,000) for the immediate future. And he expected to reduce his advertising budget by two million dollars (about £235,000) next year and perhaps phase out of production completely.

### *Trade with Indonesia*

*The Evening Trade Bulletin* of Philadelphia, August 11, observed editorially and quoting Syed Albar that “Malaysia without Singapore is illogical” reported:

“Singapore Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, at a news conference today repeated his stand that his government would welcome resumption of trade with Indonesia, the great port’s chief trading partner before Soekarno launched his campaign against Malaysia.

“Indonesian barter trading was banned last year on grounds that the vessels were bringing in saboteurs and explosives to carry out terrorist acts. Soekarno previously had banned trade between Indonesia and Malaysia.”

### *Malaysian Trade Missions to China*

*The Manchester Guardian* on August 28 published a report that the Malaysian Minister of Commerce, Dr. Lim Swee Aun was ready to approve fresh trade contracts with Communist China. The Minister was quoted as saying:

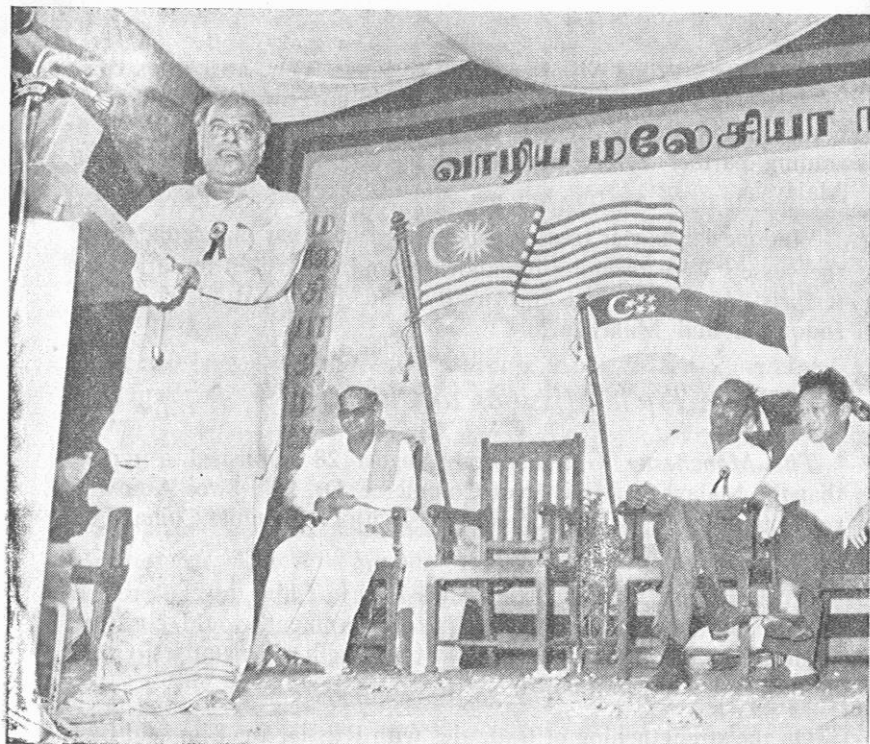
“If merchants wanted to send missions to China to explore the possibilities of increased trade, the Government would consider them. The Government believed in trade with all countries, Communist and non-Communist.”

On the strengthening of trade ties with Russia, Dr. Lim said that Malaysia, the world’s biggest tin exporter, would gain most from by-passing the tin middleman in London:

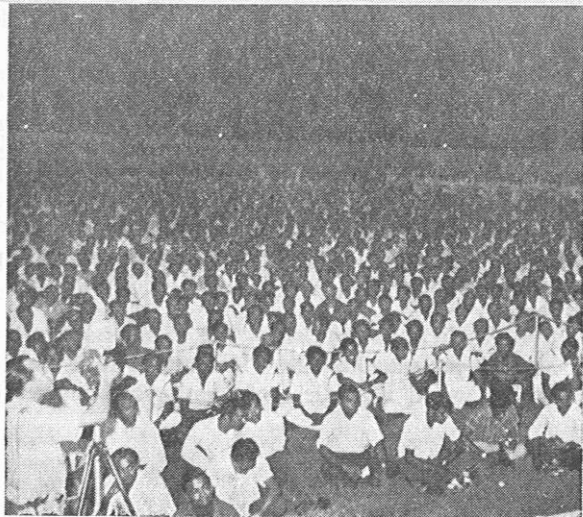
“Most Malaysian rubber — this country is also the world’s main supplier of natural rubber — was already going direct to Russia. But there might be a market for Malaysian pineapple, timber, and plywood in Russia.”

A Reuter message of the same day said that the Singapore Prime Minister had invited Russia to set up a permanent Rubber Buying Mission in Singapore.

Both these reports show the relentless efforts by both Malaysia and Singapore today to widen their trade links with all countries of the world regardless of ideological differences.



Mr. C. N. Annadurai, an Indian member of Parliament spoke at a rally in Singapore. Mr. Annadurai earlier said that a nation need not necessarily be made up of one race, one religion and one language.



## *Singapore's Economic Prospects*

On August 10, the German paper *Suddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich) spoke of the economic future of independent Singapore in reassuring terms:

“An independent, neutral Singapore could have an easier time of it economically, particularly if it is able to take up once more its old function of processing and reselling Indonesian products, now that Soekarno's hostility is no longer in the way. Economic considerations like these, however, are certainly not the main reason for the breakway, which has taken place remarkably quietly and without much trouble. Instead of recriminations there has been mutual regret.”



## CHAPTER V

### *External Political Implications*

The eviction of Singapore from Malaysia was generally seen by news correspondents and editors as a serious blow to British Far Eastern policy as well as the failure of Australia, New Zealand, and Commonwealth in their attempts to secure peace in the South-East Asian region.

Western reaction was typified by *The Dominion* (New Zealand) which on August 10, said in an editorial:

“Singapore’s dramatic secession from the Federation of Malaysia is at once a blow to the Commonwealth — which less than two years ago welcomed the union of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak — and an additional threat to security in South-East Asia.

“It could hold grave implications for New Zealand and Australia, both of whom regard the defence of Malaysia as their primary overseas commitment. For nothing seems more certain than that, in addition to encouraging subversive elements within the Federation, it will prompt Indonesia to step up her confrontation activities”.

*The New Zealand Otago Daily Times* of August 10, warned that:

“There could be further lapses from Malaysia. The danger is that the reaction to Singapore’s action will intensify the pressures rather than act as a shock to compel a more realistic assessment of what is at stake. There will be a great responsibility on the leaders on the peninsula and in Singapore not to exploit the breach to divert attention from the difficulties which both must now suffer.”

## *Collapse of Malaysian Unity*

*The New Zealand Herald* expressed its fear editorially the day after Singapore's separation (August 9) that unless intimate association between the two territories could be maintained, "political and strategic unity will be thrown to the winds". In its leader the paper said:

"The collapse of the link between Singapore and Malaya, a union which at one time seemed to promise so much, imposes fresh strains on the security of South-East Asia. Unless some continuing and intimate association between the two territories can be maintained, political stability and strategic unity will be thrown to the winds. From the first the union was seen to be a delicate matter. So great are the differences of race, class, background and temperament in the ruling circles that every other factor had to be favourable for the new Malaysian Federation to thrive.

"Malaysia has not been vouchsafed such conditions. The confrontation policy of Soekarno has made little military progress; but Indonesian agents have found it fatally easy to play on the latent suspicions and jealousies of widely disparate racial groups. Fears have been fostered among the Chinese that the Malays would maintain political dominance at all costs and would erode the rights and privileges of other peoples. On the opposite side Malay extremists have been encouraged to make outrageous demands and accusations".

## *Rumblings in Eastern Malaysia*

On August 19, 1965, the *Times* Special Correspondent reported that:

"Opposition leaders in East Malaysia have bluntly declared, with some justification, that Malaysia without Singapore is not the Malaysia they agreed to join. However, while this is generally

conceded to be a common reaction in the two territories, it is held inconceivable both in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore that there can be any serious thought of further dislocation.

“For all that, the leaders of Sarawak and Sabah will want to know that their trade relations with Singapore are not going to be prejudiced. Doubtless they will seek firm commitments that Federal Development assistance is not going to be reduced”.

Mr. Arthur Cook the *Daily Mail's* Far East reporter, on August 20, 1965, wrote:

“The state (Sabah) is annoyed that Tunku should have evicted Singapore without consulting her. What makes it worse is that Sabah has her own internal political troubles. The talk among many of the politicians in Jesselton, the capital — and there are several parties vying for power — is for an immediate break with Kuala Lumpur. If that is not possible they want a much looser Federation with Malaya in which they can have more of their own voice.

“The Chinese, 25 per cent of the population, have most to lose if the Kuala Lumpur-style racial domination is next turned on Sabah, but strangely it is the Chinese Chief Minister, Mr. Peter Lo, and several leaders of the Chinese business community who are advocating caution.”

*The Observer* in an article by Gavin Young commented on Dato Donald Stephen's resignation as Federal Cabinet Minister on August 21:

“Stephen's resignation indicates Sabah politicians' irritation and frustration at not being consulted by him (the Tunku) before he reached agreement with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on Singapore's secession.

“Dato Stephen's party, the United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Organisation (U.P.K.O.), is one leg of the Malaysia alliance which rules Sabah.

“Unlike its fellow member party, U.P.K.O. has long resented any attempt to make Sabah politics a mere off-shoot of the Malay-dominated Federal Government, of which the Tunku is Prime Minister. Earlier this year, when Stephens was Chief Minister of Sabah, a serious split developed in Sabah leadership on this issue and was avoided only by a compromise that gave Stephens his post in Kuala Lumpur. Now the Dato has resigned and new political unrest looms.”

In an article “Flying Tunku Fails to Stop the Rot” on August 23, 1965, Mr. Arthur Cook wrote:

“For Sarawak the situation is even more dangerous than that of Sabah. Already it is riddled with members of the clandestine Communist organisation pledged to fight for the inclusion of Sarawak in Indonesia.

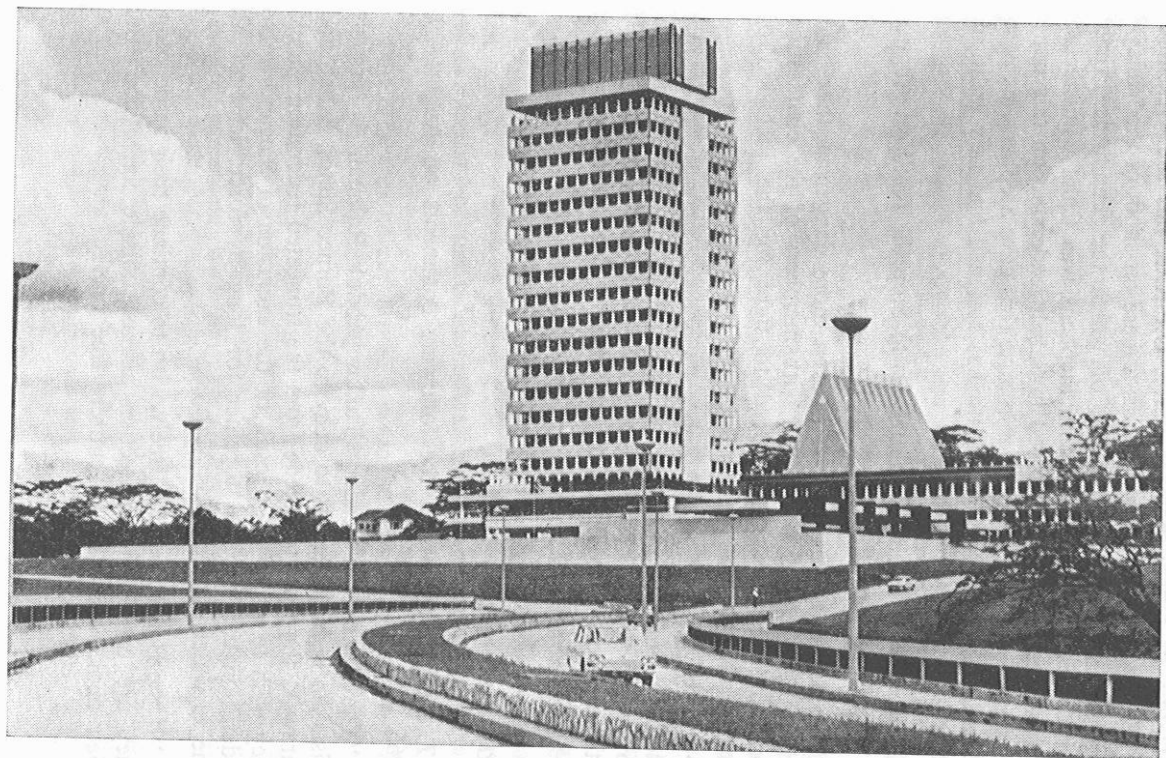
“The Sarawak United People’s Party has always been against federation and last Thursday the Tunku branded it as Communist. Now a new party, Machinda, as multi-racial as Singapore’s PAP, with members of Malay, Chinese, Indian, Dyak and Iban origin has come out firmly on the side of secession.”

### *Captive Friends*

*The Observer* carried the following comments on August 29, 1965.

“The Malaysian leader, Tunku Abdul Rahman is gravely mistaken in his attempts to deny to the Borneo States, Sabah and Sarawak, the right to secede from the truncated federation should they wish to do so as a result of the exclusion of Singapore. No federation can be held together for long by force, least of all one as widely scattered as Malaysia.

“If the Borneo peoples freely wish to continue their association, they are entitled to protection against outside aggression. But their choice must be an entirely free one.”



Parliament House — Federation of Malaysia.

## Malaysia Reconsidered

*The Daily Telegraph* in an article by Mr. Denis Warner on August 31, 1965 reviewed the situation in Malaysia.

### *Constitutional Reconsideration*

“One impression stands out above all others after one talks to political leaders in Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak: Malaysia in its present form is unlikely to survive. This is not necessarily a pessimistic conclusion. The worst solution to the problems that have arisen since Singapore’s secession would be for Malaya and the Borneo territories to continue their relationship in a state of constant friction and discord while Singapore, with its exploding population and aggravated economic problems, simply withered on the vine.

“Peking and Jakarta would then need to do no more than sit by and wait for their harvest. The overwhelming need in the days that followed Singapore’s secession was to preserve stability. Generally speaking, common sense scored well. After the initial shock, when threats and counterthreats were being hurled across the Causeway, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore revealed a capacity for moderation that was rarely apparent during their Malaysian association. In Sabah, Britain, Australia and New Zealand moved as a Commonwealth team to restrain Dato Donald Stephens, a national leader comparable in his own jungle land with Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaya or Mr. Lee in Singapore, from leading a new secession movement.

### *Resistance to Change Dangerous*

“Their efforts were successful and in the circumstances undoubtedly wise. Now that the initial period of crisis has passed, however, it would be folly if Malaya, the Commonwealth and

the other Powers interested in the well-being and security of the region were to base their policies on a rigid assumption that the status quo must at all costs be maintained. Dogged resistance to change, whether from Kuala Lumpur or from abroad, may in fact prove dangerous.”

### *The Problem of Counterweight*

“As the overwhelming majority of politically aware people in Borneo assess the situation, Malaysia without Singapore is not the Malaysia the Borneo territories joined. Just as Kuala Lumpur regarded Borneo’s diverse people as providing a counter-balance against Singapore’s Chinese, Sabah and Sarawak regarded Singapore’s Chinese population and leadership as a counterbalance to Kuala Lumpur.

“Although Mr. Lee Kuan Yew did not have the numbers in the Federal Parliament, he was widely counted on in the Borneo territories to exercise a restraining influence on Malaysian policies. His was the true voice, it seems of a Malaysian Malaysia.”

Mr. Denis Warner then added:

“Their (the Borneo territories) fears seemed to be that with Singapore’s expulsion the emphasis henceforth would be on “Malayisation” rather than on “Malaysianisation”. Pressure to accelerate the use of Malaya’s National Language and to replace expatriate British civil servants with Malays from Malaya, the activities in Borneo of the United Malays National Organisation and concern that extremists in UMNO are gaining ground at the expense of moderates like the Tunku are among the many causes of Borneo’s anxiety.

### *Heavy-handed Interference*

“Every new federation has had its teething troubles but few have ever been expected to survive such a major operation as

Singapore's secession. Malaysia without Singapore "is like a body without a stomach", said Mr. Michael Buma, leader of the new Machinda party in Sarawak, in what may prove an apt simile.

"Kuala Lumpur in the past has been heavy-handed in interfering in the internal affairs of Sabah and Sarawak. Worse may yet be to come.

"Seeking to stamp out the kindling fires of revolt, the Tunku has never appeared so much out of character as on his visit to Sabah. Just how far Dato Stephens was prepared to go in leading a move for secession was not public knowledge. To most of his listeners, therefore, the Tunku's talk of treason was double-Dutch and those who expected him to be conciliatory were shocked, angered and bitterly disappointed when he resorted to threats.

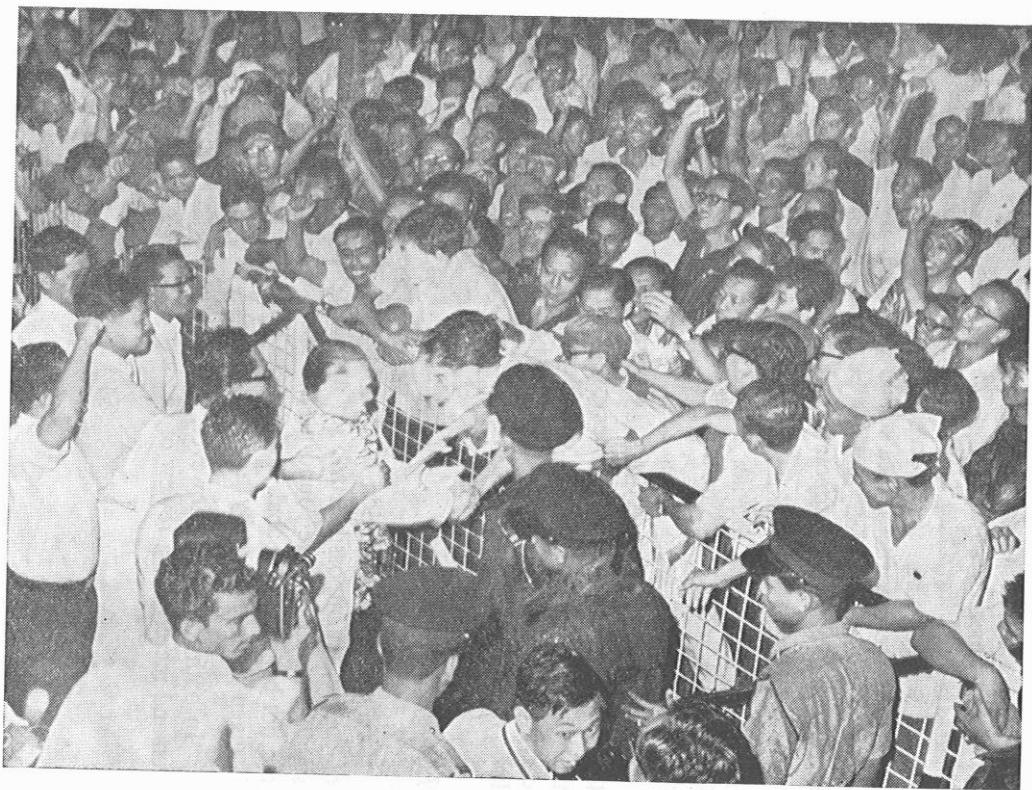
"In a sophisticated political society Dato Donald Stephens, who is not regarded as Eurasian but as wholly Kadazan, might get few second looks. In Sabah he is the only political leader of real stature.

"He was the man who carried Sabah into Malaysia. Whether left to his own political devices or placed under arrest (a move that Kuala Lumpur unwisely considered) he is the man who could carry Sabah out of Malaysia. And where Sabah goes it is unrealistic not to expect Sarawak to follow.

### *Hanging Together*

"To test public opinion in countries like Sabah or Sarawak is, of course, an impossible task for any individual. But it is at least significant that I have found no one in Jesselton or Kuching who did not believe that Sabah and Sarawak would opt out of Malaysia if given their chance by a plebiscite.

"In both territories, however, the feeling is usually couched as a demand merely for a review of the terms of entry into Malaysia.



"The verdict in Hong Lim is clear and decisive: sixty-odd per cent in favour of a Malaysian Malaysia and the alternative to a Malaysian Malaysia is not a communal Malaysia but "crush Malaysia". That received nearly 40 per cent of the votes. Let everybody in Malaysia ponder over the meaning of this."

**Prime Minister.**

Mr. Lee Khoo Choy who won the Hong Lim by-election on 10th July, 1965, being congratulated by supporters.

“With fear of Indonesia as a significant inhibiting factor there is appreciation that economic viability alone is not enough. Sabah, with a healthy expanding timber export industry and substantial untapped resources, would be viable alone. In the absence of any proven discovery of oil, Sarawak would not. In neither territory do the dissidents want to go it alone. For security and for continued economic development, it is understood that they must hang together or they will be hanged separately.

“In fact, in the urgent re-examination of Malaysia now going on, there is much more cause for hope than for despair. Borneo’s second thoughts seem both reasoned and reasonable. There is no desire in Sabah, or Sarawak either, to “punish” Malaya or to exile themselves from the economic benefits and security Malaysia once promised. What is looked for is a more comfortable relationship wherein the abrasions of the past may be eliminated.

### *Brunei’s Role*

“One alternative under serious re-examination is a return to the pre-Malaysian concept of a Borneo Confederation to include Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei, working in the closest possible collaboration with both Malaya and Singapore. Whether the Ibans of Sarawak, with long memories of oppressive Brunei rule, would ever accept the titular leadership of the Sultan of Brunei over a Borneo Confederation — the price Brunei would certainly demand for contributing its oil royalties to the common weal — seems on the surface questionable. It is the considered view, however, of responsible dispassionate observers in Kuching that the Ibans have learned in Malaysia to appreciate that the Malay Governor acts in a purely constitutional way and that real power rests with the Chief Minister.

“Apart from some Chinese with vested political or economic interests, I found very few people in either Sabah or Sarawak who felt that the relationship with Malaya should be scrapped in

favour of a merger with Singapore. What many felt strongly, however, was that a Borneo Confederation, perhaps linked as a single unit in a political union with Malaya, could also with mutual benefits embrace Singapore in an economic union.

“This would satisfy Kuala Lumpur’s strongly held feelings against political union with Singapore while leaving the door ajar. It would also provide economic incentive and hopes that Singapore certainly needs if Mr. Lee Kuan Yew’s People’s Action Party is to keep the Communist-infiltrated Barisan Sosialis Party at bay.”



## CHAPTER VI

### *General Comments*

*The Times* of August 16 said editorially that:

There was no purpose in Britain rushing forward with bright ideas for a reunion of Singapore with Malaysia. It felt that no cause would be served now by trying to bring about a reunion. The newspaper also said that there is equally no cause for re-  
crimination over a policy that had failed, when no alternative to the Federation was ever proposed. It felt that by all logic of geography and economics the two territories should be joined again as soon as it becomes feasible.

It was an admitted weakness of the Malaysian Federation that none of its four components had a developed national identity. As Britain was powerless to stop the divorce of Singapore and Malaysia so are there factors at work in all four territories beyond British power to direct.

The paper concluded that it may take some time for the dust to settle. After that some of the interested Commonwealth countries might take a hand either in bringing the parts together or in guaranteeing any new alignments that seem to offer a stable future in the area.

#### *Two Ugly Possibilities*

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of August 10 commented:

“Racial antagonism has succeeded, where two years of Indonesian pressure failed, in breaking up the Federation of Malaysia. The full consequences of Singapore’s secession — expulsion is the

juster word — have yet to be felt, but there are two very ugly possibilities. The first is that Indonesia will seek to exploit the situation by launching a full-scale military attack aimed at detaching the two Borneo States from Malaya. The second is that the Chinese in Malaya and the Borneo States, their champion in Singapore lost and communal passions inflamed, will despair of their future under Malay domination and be tempted to take up arms against it.

“From being an oasis of security in a troubled area Malaysia has, almost over-night, become a danger spot itself. The hopes that the Federation would be a stabilising factor in the region and a bulwark against Communist expansionism can no longer be sustained. It is doubtful whether an independent Singapore can survive as a viable state even in a form of confederation; it is certain that the strong Chinese Communist elements in Singapore will now be encouraged to seek control. As for Malaya, with a population almost equally divided between Malays and Chinese, the prospects of preserving communal harmony, even if open communal strife is avoided, are poor indeed.

“In the Borneo States, which were brought into the Federation principally to provide a counter-balance to a Chinese Singapore the enemies of the federation can be expected to revive their opposition to it and the Chinese minorities may increasingly see their best hope of survival in supporting the Chinese Communist resistance movement. It is a thoroughly bleak outlook.”

### *Grave Issues Unsolved*

In an article on August 15 in the *Sunday Telegraph* entitled “Rough Water Ahead in Malaysia” Mr. Alex Josey wrote:

“For the time being, perhaps for a brief while, Tunku Abdul Rahman has obtained relief from his pressing worries by kicking Singapore out of Malaysia. But he had not solved his basic problem.



Mr. D. R. Sreenivasagam President of the People's Progressive Party (Malaya) speaking at the rally of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention held at the National Theatre on June 6, 1965.

“Although open conflict between the Malay dominated Kuala Lumpur Government and the Chinese dominated Singapore Government has been averted, grave issues still remain unsolved. Providing British bases stay, the new independent State of Singapore can survive. What of the remnants of Malaysia? What of the Malayan Peninsula?

“In Kuala Lumpur, the Tunku has said he would refuse to let Sabah or Sarawak leave Malaysia. “Sabah and Sarawak have been real assets to us, and we do not intend to let these loyal people go,” he told reporters. Few Malays live in Sabah or Sarawak, but there are thousands of Chinese in both states.

“So far, neither state has gained much from the Kuala Lumpur Government since becoming part of Malaysia, and moves to declare independence cannot be ruled out. They will ask themselves what the advantages are of staying in Malaysia. If they want to leave, the Tunku cannot stop them.

### *Dangers of Malay Extremism*

“But the problem goes far beyond holding on to Sabah and Sarawak. The even more pressing question is whether the Tunku can retain the leadership in Malaya.

“Malaysia is disintegrating. If the Tunku cannot or will not contain Malay extremism and promote genuine multi-racialism, the outlook for Malaya and Malaysia is bleak.

“This is an area in which Communist exploiters of trouble are experts. A Vietnam situation in Malaya could very quickly result.”

### *Indonesian Attitude*

In Jakarta, the news of Singapore's secession left Indonesia temporarily nonplussed, but she recovered quickly and welcomed the news as a vindication of her “Crush Malaysia” policy. The following article from the *Indonesian Herald* of August 11 typified Indonesian viewpoint:

“We must pay special attention to one part of the statement made by the Tunku when announcing the secession of Singapore to the puppet parliament. In the field of defence, trade and commerce, the two states shall continue their close and strong relations. What do these words mean? Do they mean that the two parties are going to adopt a number of administrative rather than fundamental changes to the arrangements as imposed by the London Agreement on the basis of which “Malaysia” had been created? This is not yet clear at this present juncture.

“On the other hand, we also have the words of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew who had been quoted to have said that he was seeking a “settlement” with Indonesia. His statement found an immediate response in the comment made by First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio who pointed out that Indonesia would extend diplomatic recognition to Singapore if that island proves to be a fully sovereign nation.

“There is also need for us to know more thoroughly what Mr. Lee Kuan Yew himself has in mind as to the future of his Island State. Singapore certainly cannot afford to live in confrontation with Indonesia and Kuala Lumpur simultaneously. Hence Mr. Lee’s statement that he wanted to seek a settlement with Indonesia.

### *Welcome Development*

“We in Indonesia have every reason to welcome his gestures. In fact, we should welcome every move on the part of Mr. Lee to explain what he really had in mind when he talked about a “settlement”. Under these circumstances, some good may be obtained if we facilitate a visit by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew to Indonesia.

“While in Djakarta, Mr. Lee will have first hand opportunity to observe the militancy of the Indonesian people in the fight against all forms of neocolonial domination. This would help him to make up his mind as to the future status of his Island State.



On September 22, Singapore was admitted into the United Nations. The Singapore flag is seen alongside others at the United Nations.

“We will soon be celebrating the dwiwarsa of our proclamation day. The secession of Singapore is certainly a major achievement in our confrontation policy and a welcome development to celebrate on August 17.

“But this does not mean that we can relax our confrontation. As we pointed out above, Singapore’s secession does not automatically mean the end of British neo-colonialism. And our confrontation is directed against this very evil system at our front door. In the meantime, let us await and follow closely the repercussions of Singapore’s secession.”

### *Falling Apart from Within*

President Soekarno’s 1965 Independence Day speech touched on the “axis” between China, Indonesia, North Vietnam, North Korea, and Cambodia against Imperialism.

According to a Reuter cable from Jakarta on August 16 he only made a passing comment on Singapore’s separation from Malaysia. This reflected Indonesia’s “wait-and-see” attitude:

“Secession demonstrated clearly the failure of British colonial policy. Malaysia was falling apart from within, and the controversy between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur was sharper than between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.”

### *Instructive Indication*

The *Sunday Times* August 15, in an article from Kuala Lumpur by Richard Hughes noted:

“The nice legal distinction which the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, has already drawn between “aggression” and “defence”, to define Indonesian tolerance of Malaysian bases and British forces on Singapore Island. This he regarded as an instructive indication of the course which could be shaped for an “agreement” between Singapore and Indonesia.

“There are dark clouds over Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak, the uneasy non-Malay remnants of Malaysia. Few informed observers here have the slightest doubt that if another referendum were held in both these former colonies, they would vote for a quick return to the British Imperialist yoke. Another disturbing development has been Peking’s immediate acceptance of Harry Lee’s reprieve for the Singapore branch of the People’s Bank of China, which against his wishes had been axed by the Malaysian Government.”

Mr. Kiyooki Murata a correspondent of the *Japan Times* on August 19, 1965 wrote:

“Singapore has left Malaysia but this fact alone does not automatically make her a welcome ally to Indonesia. What matters, according to Indonesia’s criteria, would be how she stands with regard to “neo-colonialism,” colonialism and imperialism.

### *Position of Malaysia Weakened*

“Perhaps to the disappointment of Soekarno and his followers, Singapore, like Malaysia, will not, at least for the time being, alter the defence arrangement with Britain, which had existed with Malaysia prior to the separation. And this means the continued presence of British military bases in Singapore as well as in the various parts of Malaysia. If Indonesia is to stick to the principle by which she has been objecting to Malaysia, obviously, she could not become friendly with Singapore until the British bases are removed.

“Inevitable though it must have been, the secession of Singapore from Malaysia has seriously weakened the position of Malaysia *vis-a-vis* Indonesia’s hostile policy, and subsequently that of the West in its power relationship with the Communist world.”

The *Guardian* of August 14 quoted Mr. Lee as saying:

“That is why it is important to show the world that Singapore is not a Chinese Singapore nor a Malay Singapore, nor an Indian Singapore. It is a multi-racial nation belonging to all Singaporeans.”



Tunku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of Malaysia.

## *Tunku Against Trade with Indonesia*

The *Guardian* also quoted the Tunku as saying that "He would not allow 'bankrupt Indonesia' to renew trade relations with Singapore under the separation agreement. Indonesia, he said, had seized the occasion to propose a renewal of trade relations with Singapore.

"No doubt this will be followed by the setting up of diplomatic relations, but we have seen to it that under the agreement with Singapore she will be denied this opportunity."

The Tunku said that if Malaysia allowed Singapore to become friendly with the Jakarta regime this would be tantamount to allowing the Island to "transport Indonesia right to our doorstep." He declined to state what action Malaysia would take against Singapore if it refused to keep the agreement, but commented: "Singapore is more dependent on us than we are on Singapore."

*Life Magazine* of August 17 was of the opinion that:

"The decision of Malaysian Prime Minister Abdul Rahman to expel Singapore is no solution at all to the old and worrisome problem of race and communal strife that the Federation was intended to solve.

"A minority in both Singapore and the rest of Malaysia argues that it is still not too late to renew the federation. We hope they are right and that the minority view would soon become the majority view."

## *Extremists Achieve Objective*

The *Economist* of August 14, 1965 maintained that:

"Singapore's eviction from the Malaysia federation may have made a frustrated Mr. Lee Kuan Yew weep with anguish at man's stupidity; but in a later, more collected moment, he recognised that the separation would solve certain difficulties, at least temporarily. Mr. Lee was anxious and impatient for Malaysia to become a truly

multi-racial nation. Malay extremists, however, were determined that, in mainland Malaya if nowhere else, the Malays must be dominant politically. Singapore's departure has achieved this objective (though some of the extremists might have preferred to see it achieved by repression). But one must not overlook the fact that on the mainland there are almost as many non-Malays (mostly Chinese) as Malays. Even there Malay political domination cannot be unqualified.

"In Singapore, ministers speak of the separation as "tragic" and say that it solves no problem finally either for Kuala Lumpur or for Singapore. But the tragedy to which they refer is that Malaysia — a unity in name only — never really got going; they do not regret that it was attempted. Although they are sad that the attempt at fusion has not succeeded, nobody is in despair, or convinced that this is a final disaster. This distinction is important. Singapore's government is confident that some kind of Malaysia must come into being some day, perhaps in the form of a much looser federation.

"As for Sabah and Sarawak, these states might soon drift away from Malaya and, as independent countries, link up with Brunei, and with Singapore, in a loose federal arrangement. If this happened (preferably after a referendum in each country), Malaya itself might then be coaxed back into a new Malaysian federation. The future is by no means as bleak as some would have us believe; except that the burden of responsibility for defending these countries, in one form or another, seems likely to rest on Britain for a long time to come."

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