

TRANSCRIPT OF A TELEVISION INTERVIEW WITH THE
PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, BY THREE FOREIGN PRESS
CORRESPONDENTS, MR. CREIGHTON BURNS OF THE MELBOURNE
AGE, MR. NIHAL SINGH OF THE STATESMAN OF INDIA, AND MR.
DENNIS BLOODWORTH OF THE LONDON OBSERVER, RECORDED AT
THE STUDIOS OF TELEVISION SINGAPURA ON 28TH JULY, 1966.

Good evening. In the Studios now with us is the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Three of us, Foreign Correspondents, are here to interview him. I am Creighton Burns of the MELBOURNE AGE.

I am Nihal Singh of the STATESMAN.

Dennis Bloodworth of the LONDON OBSERVER.

Mr. Burns: Mr. Prime Minister, a year ago after Separation, you spoke on a number of occasions about your hope and expectation that Singapore would eventually be reunified with Malaysia, though not necessarily on the same terms as before. Now, a year later, how do you feel about this and how do you assess these prospects?

Mr. Lee: I do not think I would alter anything which I said then about the long-term prospects. But the first anniversary of our independence -- which happened in quite a precipitate manner -- is hardly the best occasion to repeat what I think are fairly accurate long-term assessments but not necessarily palatable to those who live in the neighbourhood. So I think we just leave these things be. It is not going to happen within next five years; perhaps, not even in the next ten years. But I don't see these boundaries as being immutable.

Mr. Bloodworth: Mr. Prime Minister, this may well be. But, could you tell us whether you feel that you are doing and your government is doing everything possible to bring about what fundamentally has been agreed as a desirable state: the reunion of Malaysia and Singapore or, at any rate, a very much closer association. There has been a great deal of talking ... K.L. has not exactly been friendly towards Singapore but it does take two to make a quarrel, and one sometimes feels that the provocation is shared, rather than coming all from one direction...

Mr. Lee: You are trying to be fair now?

Mr. Bloodworth: Yes, I am certainly trying...
(laughter)

Mr. Lee: Can you tell me how we have in any way been provocative over the last three months?

Mr. Bloodworth: Well, there has not been a great deal of speech making -- I will say that -- and we have not had anybody writing in anniversary numbers of the PAP or anything of that sort in a way that was meant for Kuala Lumpur. But on the other hand, there are columns which are -- shall I say --
officially inspired, and there are Radio and TV programmes down here sometimes...

Mr. Lee: Columns of ... You mean, we inspire foreign newsmen like yourselves?

Mr. Bloodworth: No, no, not foreign newsmen... I mean, in newspapers which are connected with the government local publications and the Radio and TV Station which, after all is government-run, government institutions...

Mr. Lee: Such as?

Mr. Bloodworth: I mean, take your program, "What Others Say". Now, it can hardly be said that program which comes on every week on TV is conducive to a better atmosphere between Singapore and Malaysia...

Mr. Lee: Let us get straight... Are you suggesting that that programme is not what others say?

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Mr. Bloodworth: No, not in the least...

Mr. Lee: It is what others say, isn't it?

Mr. Bloodworth: Yes, it is very selective though, Sir. It is very easy to make extracts and be selective in this way, in a way

which is sort of unhelpful in terms of creating a better atmosphere. They are perfectly true... But, they don't really help, do they?

Mr. Lee: I don't direct these programmes. This is a fairly liberal society.

Mr. Bloodworth: This is not a personal attack on you...

Mr. Lee: But I should imagine that it is necessary that we should keep our people informed as to what others are saying. It is no use our pretending that there is the milk of human kindness all around us when all these barbed and poisonous darts are being thrown all over the place. I think the people should be informed: they must be made alive and sensitive to their environment.

I think what we want to achieve, in the first stage, is a working relationship. Let us forget all about sentiments. If we go into sentiments, emotions, feelings, there is going to be a great deal of antipathy. You know, you

can go into real orgies of bitterness and hate. Let us dampen out all this and let us just do business with each other.

Mr. Bloodworth: But that is precisely my point...

Mr. Lee: Yes. And this is the way we do business: we accept our neighbours for what they are and I think, in the end, they will get used to us being what we are and not malleable of suppliant people which, of course, would be much comfortable for them.

Mr. Singh: But do you think have to go on proving that you are not malleable? Don't you think they take ...

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Mr. Lee: No, I don't think we have to go on "proving" this. We will just have to go on being not so malleable. This is part of our nature.

Mr. Bloodworth: But is there anything constructive actually being done at any level to sort of bring the two parties together? That

is really my point, Sir. (There is at present) a froth of animosity ...

Mr. Lee: Let me put it in another way. What is there which I can achieve in reaching this new working arrangement -- a matter-of-fact, practical working arrangement -- which will be furthered by being over-enthusiastic or effusive or compliant? It won't serve any purpose. We are what we are; they are what they are. Let us get together on specific issues; let us work it out.

Mr. Burns: It is a matter of communication, not compliance or subservience, I would have thought. And, it is often seen there have been, in the last 12 months, issues of conflict or potential conflict between Singapore and Malaysia that there was no dialogue. People were talking in separate monologues as it were when perhaps, all that was needed was for somebody in the Ministry to pick up a telephone, ring up his opposite number in Kuala Lumpur and say, "Look, you know, what we propose to do is this...."

Mr. Lee: We do that. I not only pick up the telephone (but) follow it up with a letter to make quite sure that there is no mistake that the lines did not cross; that everything was heard clearly and crisply....

Mr. Burns: But this is done all the way down your government...

Mr. Lee: I should imagine so, yes, indeed.

Mr. Singh: You are quite satisfied with the way things are?

Mr. Lee: No, I don't think I am quite satisfied, but I am satisfied that this is about as much progress as can be made for some time.

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It goes back to certain basic fundamentals. I often ask myself.... This is raking over all files. I really don't want to do it: it is one of the things I want to avoid doing but since you have brought up this matter, I think we ought to go back to basic fundamentals... What did

they expect after they had ejected us from the Malaysian body politics? I may be wrong but I am constantly being reminded in so many different ways that they expected to go back to status quo ante, to what existed before Malaysia. In other words, a self-governing Singapore that was extremely anxious and keen to accommodate itself in order to bring about merger and Malaysia. It was a situation which was fairly one-sided but we bore with it because we said to ourselves, "Look, nothing is to be gained by really having a quid pro quo. We just lump it and try and rationalise it within one political unity."

But you can never go back to status quo ante. the

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people in Singapore had their fill of us. We persuaded them to Malaysia. We persuaded them to merger. They needed to be persuaded. They were not very keen on it. Then, they went through two hectic, sometimes frightening years, through awful moments when they felt that this was all a ghastly mistake and that wouldn't work. Then, all of a sudden, there was the break.

You cannot go back to that. And I think the mood here -
- not just my mood or that of my colleagues -- the mood
in Singapore is: "Well, look, let us, make the best we
can of this. We did not want this independence on our
own; this was not the best way to do it. But, if this is
what we have, then we will make it work." That is the
mood. This is a democracy, and you have to govern if
not with the consensus of every one, at least, by and
large, with the consent of a fair majority.

Mr. Singh:

The point, I think, that is being made here is: are you
going about it the best way -- in the terms of Malaysia, I
mean?

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Mr. Lee:

No, I am going about it in terms of Singapore, long-term.

My first responsibility is Singapore, and my first step is
a working relationship with all my neighbours. I will not
be able to influence what is going to happen in the long-
term -- in 15, 20, 50 years unless I establish certain
intermediary stages. One first stage is to show beyond

any doubt that in this given situation, an independent Singapore is viable and will not crumble under pressure.

Mr. Singh: Don't you think you have shown that?

Mr. Lee: I think we have to show that and, what is more important, you must have that sink home. Just as after years of confrontation, an Indonesian vessel is coming in tomorrow with a former Consul-General who was here in the 1950's and who was in the then Malaya I mean, we have gone through three years of confrontation. And there were people who believed that we would collapse; that without the entrepot trade, Singapore would be flat down.

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Mr. Bloodworth: Don't you feel, Sir, that even if you get the renewal of the entrepot trade now, and even if you get some prospect of other parts of your economic program succeeding -- that nevertheless that sort of keystone of the whole thing is going to be your economic relationship with Malaysia? Do you feel that between let us say, the Western and

Eastern European powers, the Anglo-Saxon powers, the possibility of getting some sort of tariff preferences Indonesian trade regulated but nevertheless developing -- do you feel that these things all put together can keep Singapore viable, can help you to deal with your unemployment problem and your other difficulties? Or, don't you feel that still your need of Malaysia and Malaysia's need of you is overriding?

Mr. Lee: I would say yes, in the long run -- in the long run.

Mr. Singh: But you are willing to sacrifice it, in the short run?

Mr. Lee: No, I am not willing to sacrifice it, but I am not prepared to accept -- and I don't think the people will accept -- a situation in which we just allow ourselves to be pushed back to status quo ante. It is not possible to go back to pre-Malaysia.

Let me give you a simple illustration of the kind of working arrangement which I think we must reach. Take

Malaysian Airways. There were certain proposals immediately after separation which were just not workable. We have certain assets in this kind of an airline co-operative venture; and, in the end, there has to be parity. So, we own 30 per cent, Malaysia owns 30 and the balance is owned by Brunei, QANTAS and BOAC. The name will have to be changed. You cannot fly a joint airline on the flag of one.

Mr. Singh: What is going to be the new name?

Mr. Lee: I don't know. They will probably work it out somehow. We are quite neutral: we are joint owners of this.

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And similarly, there are so many other problems. For instance, joint currency. I don't want to go into the intricacies of a currency, but we must insist that we must have control over our reserves. At the moment, we have a Currency Board, and nothing can be done without concurrence. In other words, our reserves, backing the currency, are quite safe and sound. It is not a matter of

trust or distrust; it is just the mechanics of a working arrangement. The original starting position was: we were in Malaysia and the Central Bank of Malaysia was going to take over the note issuing functions of the Currency Board and Brunei would, of course, leave. Now we are out of Malaysia, and the first starting proposal was: we carry on where we left off in Malaysia.

That presents me with a very acute problem. This is no longer an arrangement between one government in a federal set-up and one Central Government dispensing what it considers to be right and proper for the whole country. It is now an association for common good, for common benefit, between two independent countries.

And I cannot always assume that there will be policies which are sane, rational with no uncertainties about note issues and so on. We must have our position so guaranteed that if something goes wrong, our share of the assets will not be lost.

Mr. Singh: Well, that is fair enough...

Mr. Lee: You would say that that is fair enough?

Mr. Singh: Yes. I think we are discussing more the style...

Mr. Lee: It is not a matter of the style; this basic fundamentals, a matter of your attitude. And the first thing I have to establish is what Tun Dr. Ismail said: "We will deal with each other as two independent governments." I say that is good.

Mr. Bloodworth: Are you satisfied that, in fact, you and Malaysia are dealing with each other as two independent governments and this point has got across in Malaysia...?

Mr. Lee: In my view -- I may wrong -- but in my view, the answer is "No". This is the problem.

Mr. Bloodworth: Yes ...

Mr. Singh: So you think you are still fighting against?

Mr. Lee: No, no, no. I still think that the penny has not dropped.

Let me put it in another way. Supposing I had a really good Opposition here and not this half-constitutional, half-illegal type Opposition that talks in terms of slogans and sticks to a hard line laid down from outside which become more and more divorced from reality within Singapore and in the context of Southeast Asia...

Supposing there was an Opposition which was really good and which helps me in expounding what the alternatives are – and there are alternatives, very grim alternatives for us and for our neighbours -- I think the

penny will drop faster.

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Mr. Burns: May I take this point about the Opposition, Sir. A number of people who accept the fundamental proposition that really at the moment in Singapore domestic politics there is no alternative to the PAP Government but a left-wing one headed....by or like the

Barisan -- they still feel that the PAP itself may be facing a political problem in the next five years because of this lack of an Opposition, and that the problem of political leadership in a country like this is establishing an identity between the leaders and the community. And here you are, a government that has been in power for a number of years, with faces that are growing very familiar to the people, with no sign of an Opposition in sight: with a highly educated younger generation coming up who are likely to feel more and more alienated from the leadership simply because there is no debate going. They cannot become involved in this except pretty much on your terms....

Mr. Lee:

No, I do not see my problem in those terms. If I had a good lively Opposition, a sane one, not an insane one that talks in terms of unreality... If I had a sane Opposition, of course the joining of the issues would be better Things will crystallise in men's minds and so on. But I think the problem really, is that the alternative

government is a pro-Communist or a Communist government. This is the real problem about Singapore.

Mr. Singh: But aren't you asking for too much? I mean, on the one hand, you have been successfully suppressing the Opposition...

Mr. Lee: No, please I offer them television, I offer them the open encounter, I offer them the open debate.....

Mr. Singh: ... At a point when they are already at a rather low ebb -- not during the Referendum.

Mr. Lee: Can you say that we suppress them? Really, they kill themselves, isn't it?

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Mr. Singh: Well, they helped in the process.

Mr. Lee: Could I go back to this? I will tell you what the real problem is.

If you are going to run a democratic system, one of the basic ingredients of a democracy is you can change governments and policy without a revolution. This is one of the key ingredients of whether you have a democracy or a dictatorship. I met Mr. Edward Heath this time in a room in the House of Commons occupied by the leader of the Opposition. For the last ten years, I have been in and out of that room meeting Hugh Gaitskell and latterly, Harold Wilson. And I told Ted Heath -- and this is the first time that I met him in this room... I have almost become used to meeting only Labour leaders in that room -- I said to Heath: "How lucky you are that you can change leaderships, change policies and no heads have fallen." This is the real test.

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In other words, if we succeed, we must eventually create a situation in which there is a viable, intelligent non-Communist alternative. This is the real test of whether my colleagues and I succeed or fail -- not economically but politically, in creating a viable democracy. If the alternative to us is a group of Communists who do not

intend to work the democratic system once they get in,
then we have failed.

Mr. Burns: You view the problem as that?

Mr. Lee: I would say yes: the widest scope for legitimate,
democratic alternatives.

Mr. Burns: Yes, but done in a piece-meal way. or so it seems to me.
I mean, individuals can stand up here and say the
government has got it wrong. But what you need is an
institutional Opposition of a sort

Mr. Lee: Yes. There is nothing to prevent anybody from forming an
intelligent, alternative group.

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Mr. Burns: But where is it going to come from, Sir? It can only
come from within your own party at the moment because
there is nothing else; there is nothing else.

Mr. Lee:

It may well be in the end that an alternative will emerge not necessarily from within but from those who have been associated with us and who feel that we are either going too far right, accommodating ... Supposing I was not in the cabinet and that I was watching the PAP from the sidelines, just outside at branch committee level: I could find a lot at fault. I could say for instance, "Look, you are becoming too incentive-minded. You don't have the same care and feeling for people's welfare as against production." That is one score on which I could default the PAP policies at the moment. You know that there is too much emphasis on effort, incentive, rewards being tied up with incentives and production. There is also too much laissez-faire and free flow of capital and too much of the private sector is, in fact, outside capital; why does the state not go into more of the new enterprises; why 49 percent in Jurong shipyards instead of 51 and so on. I have the answers to these things. But somebody should pick them up, isn't it?

Mr. Burns:

But these are very theoretical...

Mr. Lee: No, they are not theoretical; it is where you are heading...

Mr. Burns: But these are not the sort of points to rally a new political grouping in Singapore. People aren't going to come together on the great issue of whether the flow of foreign capital ought to be a bit more controlled or a bit less controlled... But there has got to be a feeling that there is a different, general intelligent alternative... that is ... not Communist...

Mr. Lee: Yes, but unfortunately the Communists will never run the democratic system once they get in.

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Mr. Burns: No, no. We are excluding them....most certainly

Mr. Lee: This is our problem, is it not?

Mr. Burns: This is exactly my point, Sir. Your problem is that you must maintain a democratic... system in order to keep

the Communists out. But the more you do this, the more difficult it is for a legitimate, loyal Opposition to grow within your shadow...

Mr. Bloodworth: The point really Sir, is we don't seem to have an atmosphere here in which another political party can grow up. One of the phenomena of this state is that no new political party seems to register itself; no group seems to get together and start anything. It isn't for South Vietnam where you ... have 20 of them.....

Mr. Lee: But don't you think that that is, in part, because we have been doing what we have been doing? Namely, reflecting by and large the majority view. Our policies have carried the majority. If they have not, then I think the alternatives would have emerged.

Mr. Bloodworth: When you have some fairly stiff dialogues with, let us say, the University of Singapore and so on various questions like academic freedom, political freedom...

Mr. Lee: and this is still going on, and it will go on.....

Mr. Bloodworth: But this is the sort of nucleus from which something could grow....

Mr. Lee: Yes....

Mr. Bloodworth: I mean, once people get together and say, "We cannot stand this, we don't believe in this; this is fundamental. Let us do something let's form..."

Mr. Lee: It is up to them to do it and up to me....

Mr. Burns: to hammer them?

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Mr. Lee: No, no, no: to take them on. This is the business of democracy. You do not expect Mr. Harold Wilson to treat Mr. Ted Heath with kid gloves when they meet each other, do you?

If they are not equal in the contest of ideas

and policies, they don't deserve to be the alternative. They must be able take us on

Mr. Burns: But they are starting, Sir. Mr. Ted Heath is running what, after all, has been a growing concern for a number of years. And anybody who hives off from the PAP within the general acceptable political framework you know is really putting his neck out at the moment -- in a political sense now. If you....

Mr. Lee: How is it? He won't be butchered, he won't be massacred; he won 't be detained....

Mr. Burns: He will be a bit nervous about what you are going to say next time, you know. You will get up and you will wag your finger up at him Sir, and

Mr. Lee: No, no, I never wag my finger. I may wag my tongue but never my finger

Mr. Burns: ... clench your fist and say...

Mr. Lee: Well, if it is necessary for emphasis, by all means. I say they can clench their fist, too. They regularly do and, what is more, they shake it in my face.

Mr. Bloodworth: But don't you think your emphasis on discipline, Sir; for example, discipline for survival, is in its own way discouraging? This is a call closing the ranks, holding together...

Mr. Lee: No, no. This is fundamental. You are caught in a very tight situation, isn't it? It is not our wish that we should be in the tight situation, but we are; and the only means of survival is a highly organised, highly knitted community-- that can, if necessary, tighten its belt rather than cave in.

Mr. Bloodworth: Well, you have pretty well answered the question with those last two sentences because in that sort of atmosphere, you cannot have bunch of chaps getting together with a different view.

Mr. Lee: No; but there could be a bunch of chaps who say, "Look, we know how to form a tightly-knit society better than you, in a democratic society."

Mr. Singh: On your terms...?

Mr. Lee: No, no, better than us in a democratic way, and they might win the support of the people

Mr. Singh: But doesn't it strike you as odd that you are talking about survival now, to keep Singapore solvent, when you were using the same slogan to take Singapore into Malaysia?

Mr. Lee: No. I don't think they were quite the same situations. I don't know whether you were here in the years before Malaysia. But, it was quite different.

You know, there are certain things which we never wanted to have happen. But they have happened, and something has been triggered off in men's minds. And it

will never be the same again. This is one of the facts of life.

The thought processes, the values and the attitudes of a few million people -- not just in Singapore -- have gone through quite a transformation as a result of what has happened over the last few years. And what was possible then we tried; namely, the broad, tolerant multi-racial, multi-cultural approach in order to hold a heterogeneous group of people brought together over 150 years of the British Raj. We tried that. I don't want to apportion blame, but I think we really like tried.

Perhaps we were wanting in a few qualities like patience and tolerance, but we really did try to make the thing work. And that, I think, was the best long-term answer and it will, in the end, be the only answer perhaps.

But we have found ourselves now our own. It is a very great problem, with a population 95 per cent of which is of migrant stock. You are referring to Mr. Burns, an Australian and you will know the meaning of this. Only

five percent of the 12 percent Malays are indigenous; it is probably less. Othman Wok my colleague, is one of them. He was born and bred here and his ancestors were in Pulau Brani and in the islands there for generations. All the rest have come from Indonesia, from India, from China, and their roots go back to three major civilisations. And you have to give them that cohesiveness here in this tight situation or you perish; or you are always malleable not from your immediate neighbours but even from distant neighbours, which in the long run will pose a real big problem.

Mr. Singh: Another aspect of this, if I may....

Mr. Lee: Yes, surely...
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Mr. Singh: For how long do you expect the bases to last, really? I mean, you always say you calculate far in advance...

Mr. Lee: Yes... I would say that unless something drastic happens and Britain goes bankrupt -- which I don't think it will -- I think the bases are here for five years...

Mr. Singh: Five? You would...

Mr. Lee: I would say that unless there is a sudden collapse somewhere, the probabilities are that the base will offer us some protection in the first decade. It may not be kept in the same dimensions over the whole of the decade nor will it be necessarily tailed off at the end of the decade. But, let us take it at the other end of the spectrum. I don't want to be a prophet, but I don't think the bases will go on for ever; do you?

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Mr. Singh: No...

Mr. Lee: Therefore, at some point -- be it 15, be it 20 years -- a new equilibrium must be struck.

Mr. Bloodworth: Do you think that you can have the bases and have the trade with Indonesia for sure, with the next few years? Aren't you a little afraid that once confrontation ends, that there will be greater and greater pressure from Indonesia for foreign bases to go not only from Malaysia but also from Singapore, and you will be faced perhaps, with the choice when it comes down to trade? Or, do you feel that Indonesia's dependence on you is going to be so great for several years....

Mr. Lee: This is a very delicate sort of question which, if I answer, might cause a lot of unhappiness around. May I put it in another way: that, for one whole year after Separation, overture after overture was made and you do not need much imagination to guess what that the conditions were: full resumption of relations; if we would name a date, run down the thing and so on ... But some things are not negotiable. My survival and how I design my security is not negotiable. This is something fundamental. We may be small but we are sovereign, and we decide how we ensure our own security. This

has gone on for one year. And I am quite happy to let it go on for five years or ten years. I am not moving from this position, I can't. You draw your own conclusions from that...

Mr. Bloodworth: Yes.

Mr. Burns: Can I take two of these points up: if you have the guarantee or you believe you have the guarantee of external protection for five years and the injection into Singapore's economy that comes from the presence of the British bases here which is pretty fundamental economically -- isn't this the occasion, isn't this the last time you will have, as it were, to open the political system you know, to new forces not Communist....

Mr. Lee: How?

Mr. Burns: ... by more relaxing...

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Mr. Lee: relaxing, in what direction? How would I have made the situation better in the long run?

Mr. Burns: Well, in a negative way -- if there are people who get up and say things which you think are stupid, by not saying they are stupid.....

Mr. Lee: When they say stupid things, misleading my people, I can just to keep quiet and allow these mischievous, misleading statements to go unchallenged? Surely, it is part of the democratic system that when somebody says something, his ideas are tested against criticism, isn't it -- as my ideas are constantly being challenged and were challenged.

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Mr. Singh: No, I think the point that is being made really, is the fact that the atmosphere here conducive towards a one - party state rather than a democratic society as one understands it outside Singapore.

Mr. Lee: As I said, this is the real problem: that we haven't a democratic alternative.

Mr. Singh: Yes. But the problem is why?

Mr. Lee: The problem really, is because the Communist hold on the ground is so substantial that if you split up -- and people instinctively feel this -- that if they split up, then the Communists will win by default. The day we succeed not be force but by economic, social policies to whittle down Communist support to say, five, 10 per cent of the population, that day a new atmosphere will be created in which people will say, "Look, there is an alternative; we don't have to worry about the

Communists." At the moment, it is a real challenge.

Fortunately for me, the Communists have embarked on a very hard line which is completely unrelated to realities in the thinking, in the feel of the population that they are out on a limb; but organisationally, they are there all the time. When I went round Nee Soon just a few days ago, I knew they are there. There are posters put up on

rubber trees as I go into the kampongs. They are not friendly posters and they are not democratic protests: they are vicious protests: the sort of thing which makes people say we plotted to kill so and so; we wanted to murder so and so. You call that democratic opposition?

Would anybody suggest -- when the Australian Labour leader was shot -- that the Government paid so and so to go and shoot him?

Mr. Burns: They wouldn't publish it, Sir.

Mr. Lee: It wouldn't be published there, but here it is. It is and, what is more, it is painted on slogans on the walls, in red paint -- indelible. You tell me that this is the situation in which you can play it easy? It is not.

Mr. Singh: No, but don't you think it will be better in these circumstances to say frankly, "Look, we are a one-party state. We believe in that -- and proceed from that point.

After all, in many parts of the world, you have quite efficient or reasonably efficient one-party states.

Mr. Lee: I am not enamoured of the idea. That is all. Because I think that is not the long-term answer.

Mr. Singh: But do you think there is the other long-term answer? I think that is what...

Mr. Lee: We have to try; we have to try. I would say the real problem now in Singapore politically -- as different from the economics of it -- is: how do we, over the next ten years, allow a new generation to emerge to take over from us? This is important.

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We are not getting younger. We cannot go on forever.

And you must allow sufficient free play on the ground for a new generation to emerge well in time to take over.

Every time I go to the University... I went to Nanyang recently after I had been to the University of Singapore.

It was true in both instances: I was talking to a new generation of freshmen, new students, many of whom were beginning their secondary education or who were just finishing their primary education when we took over in 1959 and who have been educated in accordance with our policies: this multi-lingual, multi-racial approach in values and so on. And, in about ten years, we will no longer have that rapport with the younger mass base

This is a pyramid which is not very steep; this is a shallow pyramid, with a very broad base of the younger generation and a very small older generation.

If you look at the population statistics, you will see this.

Every year, there are about 40,000 voters going on the

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electoral rolls. In other words, by 1968, there will be about 200,000 voters who did not vote in 1963 and there

will be about 300,000 who didn't vote for us in 1959

because they just didn't vote for anybody. And they will

outnumber the older generation... This is the problem.

Up to a point, we meet the problem by getting the feel: what do the young want; what are their aspirations. And we try to reflect and at the same time mould them. It is not what they want alone, in vacuum. It is what they want in the context of the values which we have been drumming home over the last seven and more years.

Mr. Singh: Yes, but here..

Mr. Lee: If I could get this point across... But there will come a time when even Menzies says, "Well look, really I had enough." I mean, this is a new generation. Partly, they are the product of what I have been doing and partly, they are the product of what they are and the age in

which they live in. Somebody more akin to them must really take over. And this is what we must create. It has to start right now.

Mr. Singh: Yes... on this point really... You know, I think you do make a valid point when you talk to the young in particular, in saying, "Well, you know, you should do

this and you should do that"... They accept it: they make sense.

Mr. Lee: Thank you. Unfortunately, you are not a voter!

Mr. Singh: When they do what you say, you know, to the full extent they are supposed to, and they think for themselves etc. and argue ... Well, then if they go beyond a certain point -- a line drawn by you -- then they have had it ...

Mr. Lee: No, I don't think so.

Mr. Singh: Well, in various ways. I mean, I am not talking literally...

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Mr. Lee: How? You see, you use the phrase like "they have had it". How have they had it?

Mr. Singh: Well, if they want to be active politically, in the political life in Singapore...

Mr. Lee: There is nothing to prevent them.....

Mr. Singh: Yes, but the opportunities are very limited and either they decide, "All right, we join the PAP and from within we do something" or else, they won't enter politics.

Mr. Lee: And this is my problem. My problem is there are so many career opportunities now that unless we do something to make politics more attractive incentive wise, your best men are going into executive and managerial careers.

This will leave your second best careerist.. Any party faces it. They faced it all along Eastern Europe. The

second generation Communists is more of a careerist than an idealist. The first generation who were captured by Hitler and put in concentration camps all along -- I have met them -- they are all the first generation. They emerged naturally just as we emerged and the process of selection was natural. Either you felt strongly about the colonial system and you wanted a better society to take

the risk of being locked up or being clobbered by the British and then of being shot and killed or murdered by the Communists... Unless you feel strongly enough, you don't emerge; you just subside beneath the broad mass.

It is not the same now. Everybody says, 'Well, the country is running all right; three cheers to them. And I am after a good job.' And, there are many good jobs.

This is the problem. And, somehow, some device, some method, some system must be brought about to tap your best into political leadership. otherwise, the country won't tick.

Mr. Bloodworth:

Sir, given that charity begins at home, how does this

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work out within the PAP? Do you find that the younger generation are attracted to the Party and do they get a

chance once they are in it?

Mr. Lee:

My problem is that there are not enough young ones, bright young ones who join. They look around and say,

"Well, there are so many chaps above me on the snakes

and ladders... So, what is the point? I will go off and do something else." And there is also the difficulty of the older ones who are within the party machine saying, "Oh, they are new-comers, careerists -- not dedicated; let us put them to the test." There are both problems but I say the bigger problem is how to get the best in the younger generation feeling that this is important. Because you can be running the best oil refinery, producing the best profits in Southeast Asia for Shell or ICI or what have you. But if the country doesn't tick, the whole thing will go wrong. And you must have the best making sure that the country ticks. This is the problem.

Mr. Bloodworth: Well, Sir, having covered various of these points, I

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wonder now; we had one year now of independent Singapore. Could you give us some idea of how you feel the next year is going to go?

Mr. Lee: The first six months were the most difficult because things could have gone really wrong. And I think we have cause for congratulations that nothing went really

wrong. And with every passing year, the chances of anything going wrong will get less and less. I would say next year will be an easier year for my colleagues and I than last year, and an easier year for Singapore as a whole. We have rearranged the furniture in the room, we have redesigned the way the doors are built and the windows and so on, to make for comfort and security for a separate, independent household.

Mr. Singh: So you are quite satisfied with what has been done?

Mr. Lee: I would say we have left nothing undone which we had to do. We did everything that was possible in the one year. It was hard-work but also a bit of good fortune

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that nothing went wrong. I would say a lot of good fortune really, because people did want things to go wrong in the first few weeks.

Mr. Burns: You have rearranged the furniture, as you say. But are you getting worried that the room is getting more and more crowded now, and it may be difficult for people to

get their hands on the table where the food is? Your population growth is really, one of your big problems...

Mr. Lee:

No, I am not really worried about that -- not for the next five, ten years.... It is a curious thing, but we are going to slow down the rate of building of primary schools because birth control and family planning have taken effect with higher education and universal education particularly of the women-folk and also better living conditions. There is not the same pressure now on the primary schools. We have been watching the graphs and we are concentrating now on quality on secondary schools.

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No, I don't think that is the problem. The problem really is this: first five years consolidate; get a working arrangement with our neighbours. Next five years, perhaps a regional arrangement. Either the region begins to tick or the region begins to crumble. And, if it begins to crumble then we are all in for a very unhappy time. And, if it is going to tick, then I think Singapore can

play a very important role in making it tick. It is the sparking plug.

Mr. Singh: And you have kept a fairly clean, this sparking plug.

Mr. Lee: We have to. It is the only way in which we can live. We cannot afford oily spark plugs; not in Singapore. You haven't got that amount of leeway. You are either efficient and you can produce the services and deliver the goods or you go down very quickly.

Pressmen: Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister; thank you Sir.

Mr. Lee: Thank you.

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