

SINGAPORE'S PATH TO MODERNIZATION: AN ANALYSIS OF LEE KUAN YEW'S POLICIES

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Annotation: This article provides information about the economic and political life of Singapore, one of the most developed countries in Southeast Asia, in the second half of the 20th century. The reforms carried out in Singapore by Lee Kuan Yew, one of the largest representatives in the world of politics, are analyzed.

Keywords: "Asian values", Lee Kuan Yew, reform, Malay, education system, British, island.

In the post-World War II period, many countries in Southeast Asia were in a state of political and economic decline. In such circumstances, Singapore entered a turning point in its history. When it emerged from the British colonial system and separated from Malaysia in 1965, the country was mired in poverty, corruption, and selfishness. In this process, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who tried to transform Singapore into a modern and developed state while preserving its values, entered the stage of history. This article analyzes the thoughts of Lee Kuan Yew, one of the main architects of the idea of "Asian Values", and the policies he pursued in Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew identifies three main criteria for reforming any society. The first is decisive leadership, the second is an efficient administration, and the third is social discipline. According to Lee Kuan Yew, effective results can be achieved only when these three criteria are combined and applied in practice. Lee Kuan Yew and his fellow politicians understood that a number of reforms were needed to bring Singapore out of the situation outlined above. After separating from Malaysia in 1965, Lee Kuan Yew set himself several goals. In particular, he needed a force to support the isolated state. To this end, he tried to become a member of the UN. The presence of Malays and Chinese in the country could cause ethnic problems, so convincing them of the strength of the newly formed independent state was the main thing. In this situation, Singapore could only rely on itself and would be in danger of extinction if it did not create innovative innovations and military power. Lee Kuan Yew emphasized in his 1965 speech that we need to create a strong generation in order to survive. That is, a unique system was needed to develop a quality education system and cultivate patriotic youth loyal to Singaporean traditions.

Changes in the education system

In 1965 and thereafter, everyone understood that there was a close connection between the education system and the development of the economy. In the reforms of primary education by the government, every child was to be provided with 6 years of education starting from the age of 6. In this process, discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion and social origin was not allowed. In addition, the use of 2 languages was introduced in the education system in Singapore. English, which was accepted as the 2nd language, began to be taught in all secondary schools from 1966. The purpose of teaching English was to help young people quickly learn about the development of the West and the changes taking place in the world. The years 1959-1965 were very productive years for the Singapore education system. A curriculum was developed for 1961-1965. There were 3 priority areas of free education implemented during these years:

- four educational areas: equal treatment of Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English;
- the establishment of Malay as the national language of the new state;
- special attention to mathematics, natural sciences and technical sciences.

Lee Kuan Yew's main goal in this reform was to unite and develop a single society while preserving diversity. This diversity should not be an obstacle to development.

Another reform carried out by Lee Kuan Yew was military reform. This reform was carried out in order to ensure the security of the country, gain the trust of the population and not fall under the pressure of foreign countries. The Prime Minister announced compulsory military service for the population and relied on the Israeli and British military to form a standing army. In the 1960s and 1970s, an increase in the number of military personnel had to be carried out urgently for Singapore. Even though it was independent from Great Britain, the British military was still present in Singapore. The presence of the British military on the island was primarily beneficial for the economy, as the British traded on the island and paid rent. On the other hand, the issue of security and unity in Singapore directly depended on the British military. Seeing these aspects, Lee Kuan Yew tried to keep the British on the island until a regular military group was formed in Singapore. Because if the British troops were to leave early, the population would be confused and Malaysia could threaten again. It is no exaggeration to say that Lee Kuan Yew maintained peace in Singapore with the help of the British troops until the 1970s. In addition, having learned the lessons of World War II, Singapore avoided any military action on its territory. Another notable aspect of Lee Kuan Yew's policy is that he did not allow tension in economic and political reforms, and, in addition, he acted cautiously in relations with neighbors. This aspect was one of the main and important steps on the way to Singapore becoming a developed country.

Although Singapore entered the second half of the 20th century in a difficult situation after the end of World War II, in the 1960s and 1970s, the country underwent a series of major changes under the leadership of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. In this process, it is appropriate to recognize not only the courage of Lee Kuan Yew, but also the resilience and unity of the Singaporean people. It would not be wrong to say that the Singapore experience and Lee Kuan Yew's policies will be a worthy school of skills for countries that are just emerging or are now entering the development stage.

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