

(Lee Kuan Yew)

Singapore Leader

Lee Kuan Yew

FOR Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's Prime Minister, chess—a favorite pastime—is an extension of the political life. It requires the ability to plan ahead. "I believe that politics must be played like chess," the 44-year-old statesman once said. Yesterday in London, after having failed to dissuade the British from accelerating their withdrawal from the Far East, Mr. Lee was planning ahead for the security of Singapore by describing his plans for development of an "Israeli-style" citizens' army for his country.

The problem of security is one that he has faced before, and it is unlikely that Mr. Lee has budged at all from the conviction he expressed on Aug. 9, 1965, when Singapore left the two-year-old Federation of Malaysia because of ethnic friction and distrust between the main part of Malaysia, which is mostly Malay and rural, and Singapore, which is mostly Chinese and urban.

Mr. Lee said then of his island state, "We have a right to survive."

"The first thing to think of," he continued, "is physical survival—and the second, how we can retain our national identity."

Family Came From China

There would be, he once noted with some humor, no problem to face if his great-grandfather—one of a group of peasants who left China about 100 years ago to work in Malaya—had taken his son with him when he returned to China after making "a little fortune."

The son who did not return to China, Mr. Lee's grandfather, managed a large Chinese commercial enterprise in Singapore, and Mr. Lee's father, also wealthy, saw to it that his son received a good education.

Mr. Lee, who was born on Sept. 16, 1923, received his secondary education at Raffles Institution, the preparatory school for Raffles College, named in honor of Sir Thomas Raffles, who founded the British colony of Singapore in 1819. Next Mr. Lee attended Raffles College, and then went off to Cambridge to carry out his father's wish that he become "the equal of any Englishman."

At Cambridge, Mr. Lee won highest honors in law, embraced Socialism, and fre-



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quented Labor party meetings, where he railed against British colonialism.

When he returned to Singapore in 1950 with a reputation as a bitter anticolonialist, Mr. Lee became legal adviser to the Postal Union. He showed such skill in negotiations, winning the postal workers a raise, that he quickly became widely sought after by other unions.

Helps to Form Party

By 1954, agitating against colonialism and cooperating with the Communists, he and a group of English-educated Asian socialists were founding the People's Action party. Mr. Lee began to master the techniques of politics, reading extensively on the subject and on philosophy, and working—as usual—a 17-hour day.

He split with the Communists in 1955, after he won a seat in the Singapore Legislative Assembly with a campaign for "an independent, democratic and non-Communist Malaya."

When a Communist faction within his People's Action party sought to seize control on the issue of the

leadership's decision to accept a compromise British offer of internal self-government for Singapore, Mr. Lee resigned his seat, recontested it on the question, and won again.

His ambivalent attitude toward Britain—loathing colonialism but admiring British civilization—has prompted some of Mr. Lee's detractors to characterize him as a British stooge.

Mr. Lee has replied this way: "Let me say this to show you that I am not an Anglophile. True, I know their culture, their history, their civilization. I have read all about the daffodils and the humblebee and heigh-ho, merry-ho and all the rest. It is part of my schooling. They pumped it into me. And I hated what they did, and I joined up with the Communists to get rid of them. But you know, they had wisdom."

Mr. Lee, who sought social reform and advocated eventual union with Malaya, and his party swept into power in elections in 1959 when Singapore was granted self-government. Mr. Lee formed a Government.

He formed a Cabinet that worked out a five-year plan for reforms and the development of industry.

Of the reforms, he said, "If we don't try, Singapore will become Communist. If we try and fail, it will become Communist. The important thing is for us to try."

In the years since, Mr. Lee has emerged as a leader determined to establish a stable, non-Communist regime driving toward industrialization. Such adjectives as tough, shrewd, eloquent, agile, blunt and forceful have been applied to him by those who have observed his growth.

Stand on U.S. Shifts

His attitude toward the United States has swung from cordiality in early 1956 to anger a few months later when he charged that the Central Intelligence Agency had tried to bribe him to conceal the fact that an agent had been caught trying to buy intelligence material from a Singapore official, to cautious support early last year for the American position in Vietnam.

When he leaves the problems of modern Asia behind him, Mr. Lee can be found in the modest home he shares with his wife, the former Kwa Geok Choo, also a Cambridge-educated lawyer, and their two sons and a daughter.