

SINGAPORE - ITS PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE - ONE-MONTH VISAS ONLY! - CLEAN!
- By Alex Josey, Published by Andre Deutsch - GOOD FOR DUTY-FREE SHOPPING!
- Book Review by Joseph Reader 1 April 82 - 3 FINE! - BUT NO LITNESSING!
- THE MOST MODERN, CIVILIZED & SAFEST CITY IN THE EAST!

INDEPENDENT SINGAPORE, ONLY 17 YEARS OLD IN 1962, IS UNIQUE. It is an amazing city state, the smallest in Asia, with the second highest standard of living. It attracts almost two million visitors a year from other countries, nearly the size of the population. The streets are safe & the natives are friendly to tourists - and hard on criminals! Singapore hangs murderers & thrashes criminals with a thick cane that can leave scars for life. It is a beautiful city, kept that way by strict government control on littering. In a typical week, 179 offenders are fined \$25,360 (Singapore dollars) for breaching the city. Neither does Singapore encourage long hair - in one year 620 males were refused entry into Singapore for having long hair & another 801 were let in once they had their hair cut! Long hair for males is associated with hippies, which the government definitely discourages because it is linked with drug abuse. Singapore is modern, with good roads that occupy 20% of the island's 225 square miles, for the more than 270,000 registered vehicles. There are skyscrapers, schools, colour TV, the best hospitals in the region & excellent dental service.

NEARLY EIGHT OUT OF TEN SINGAPOREANS ARE OF CHINESE ORIGIN. Many of the remainder came from India or Sri Lanka. Singapore is a socialist state which encourages private enterprise in all its forms. There are many millionaires in Singapore & still a lot of poor people. But no one is allowed to beg or to starve. There is no social security scheme. If you fall out of work your family & friends are expected to help. On the other hand, there is a government-operated scheme of compulsory savings to which all workers must contribute over 16% of their wages. This money is then used by the government to pay for national development & the govt. pays a small interest on it to the savers. The country is run from the top, yet there is still a great deal of consultation with the people through the community centres. The average Singaporean is affluent, hardworking, intelligent, talented & greatly interested in making money. The government frowns upon cigarette smoking as well as too many children. Family planning is popular & over 24 million condoms are sold every year. The authorities have worked out that the maximum population the island can sustain is four million, so they have planned accordingly.

WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED IN 1819 SINGAPORE WAS PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN & UNNOTICED. Sir Thomas Raffles, an Englishman, took possession on behalf of the East India Company. With several ships he anchored off the coast & worked out a deal with the natives for a base, then for trading rights & finally for the island itself. Singapore was now part of the British Commonwealth & remained that way for over 100 years. It was not involved in the First World War but in the Second World War the Japanese occupied the island for over 3 1/2 years. Shortly after the war Singapore became a colony & Malaya became a federation, both moving toward democracy. For a while there were plans to merge the two nations & a merger took place for three years, finally breaking up in 1965 as relations between Malaysia & Singapore deteriorated & Communists threatened both within & without. On Aug. 9 1965, Singapore became a democratic & independent nation under Prime Minister Lee & Singapore set out to prove that it could survive as an independent nation within the Commonwealth. The last British forces withdrew at the end of 1971.

SINGAPORE HAS PROGRESSED REMARKABLY EVER SINCE. It now has its own well-trained defence force, its own international airline & merchant fleet & the Singapore dollar is among the world's hardest currencies. The port has become one of the busiest in the world & Singapore ranks among the world leaders in oil refining, though it produces no oil of its own. It has also become the regional banking & manufacturing centre with more millionaires per square kilometre than anywhere else in Southeast Asia!

SINGAPORE IS THE IDEAL CENTRE FOR REGIONAL TOURISM, & some 2.4 million tourists are expected in 1982. From Singapore you can fly anywhere daily - Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bangkok, Bali, Manila, London or Paris if you wish. It is the best place in the region for services, shopping or food. Both Eastern & Western goods are available & you can buy Japanese cameras in Singapore cheaper than in Japan. Pure gold is also cheaper in Singapore than anywhere else. You can buy as much gold as you like & take it with you untaxed when you leave. The people are friendly, hardworking & among the brightest in the world. They like to bargain with you, but very few of them will cheat you. They are tolerant towards religion: mosques, temples, churches & synagogues stand side by side. English is the official language although official correspondence can be conducted in any of the four national languages - Malay, Tamil, Mandarin or English. The Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, is of Chinese origin but he speaks Malay, Chinese & English fluently as well as some Japanese.

SINGAPORE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF GENUINE HARMONY as Buddhist, Muslim, Jew & Christians live together peacefully. The government is the largest single employer & in everything the govt. touches merit, not race or religion, determines who does what.

SINGAPORE'S SEVEN MAJOR COMMODITIES are petroleum, machinery, transport equipment, rubber, timber, textiles & garments. These account for about 70% of Singapore's total external trade. Total foreign investment came to over \$4 billion at the end of 1977, of which was from the U.S. & an equal amount from the EC.

THE GOVERNMENT & WORKERS WORK TOGETHER & there are no serious work stoppages or strikes. As the Prime Minister said, "The desire to get even with the bosses - them & us - does not apply here. We all started poor - even the bosses are foreigners - work at 14 & many do. Seventy per cent of the construction workers are foreigners. The port is the third busiest in the world in terms of shipping tonnage. There are 200 ships in the harbour every day, with a ship arriving or departing every 15 minutes. There are nearly 50,000 vessel arrivals & departures every year & over 52 million freight tonnes of seaborne cargo are handled through the port.

THE UNIONS ARE ORGANIZED. The largest is the NTCU (National Trade Union Council), a federation of 51 affiliates representing 93% of organised labour. It is no longer a militant force, as unions are in some countries, but rather a group of multi-million-dollar unions engaged in a whole range of commercial activities, from travel & insurance to taxis & a chain of supermarkets. NTCU - COMFORT, one of the branches, operates over 2,000 taxis & 350 minibuses in Singapore.

ALTHOUGH SINGAPORE HAS FLOURISHING FREE ENTERPRISE, IT IS STILL A SOCIALIST COUNTRY. But where Singapore differs from European socialist governments is that it does not acquire industries by taking over existing privately-owned businesses, but mostly by creating new ones. Nor does Singapore own & run businesses on ideological grounds. The govt. does not buy private businesses in trouble so as to save jobs. If even a government-owned company loses money it is allowed to go bankrupt (except for the telephone network, etc., that provide essential services). The government is presently the biggest landlord & real estate owner in the country.

DISPUTE THE FACT THAT MOST SINGAPOREANS LIVE IN HIGH-RISE FLATS, THERE ARE STILL MORE THAN 15,000 FARMERS IN THE REPUBLIC. The average size of these farms is less than 2 acres, but only a handful till the land. Most of them are pig or poultry farmers. Singapore is self-sufficient in chickens & eggs & even exports chicks.

PROFIT IS NOT A DIRTY WORD IN SINGAPORE. Singapore workers hope that companies will make profits, the bigger the better. They want to share in the prosperity. As the Foreign Minister told a visiting dignitary, "We expect foreign investors to make profits. As a matter of fact, we are somewhat wary of foreign investors who tell us that they are pouring money into Singapore not to make profits but as an act of Christian charity. Investors not interested in making profits, in my view are more likely to make trouble..."

OF SINGAPORE'S 2.2 MILLION PEOPLE, 76% are Chinese, 15% are Malays & 7% Indians (including Pakistanis & Sri Lankans). About 75% of the population are Singapore-born & there are about 1,050 males to every 1,000 females. Women are important workers in the manufacturing sector & are women.

ON THE AVERAGE, WOMEN MARRY AT 24, MEN AT 28. It is a punishable offence for a non-Muslim to undergo any form of marriage, whether religious or not, without registering it. When it comes to rearing children in Singapore, mother's milk is best. There has been a breast feeding campaign & many nursing mothers are members of a mother's group & readily donate their milk in emergencies, to those mothers who have nursing children & must work. A photograph of a young Chinese mother, named as the champion donor, appeared recently in the newspaper together with the number of gallons of surplus milk she had donated to thirty babies!

IN EDUCATION, the government deliberately sets out to try to make young Singaporeans proud of the fact that "we are we, we have our own way of life & are different from our counterparts in the West". The education programme in Singapore consists of primary education for all (children must buy their own textbooks) for six years, then four years of secondary education for those able to pass the Primary School Leaving Examination. This is followed by two years of post-secondary education in junior colleges & leading secondary schools or two to three years of vocational or technical training at technical colleges or institutes. Attendance at school is voluntary; but education is highly valued in Singapore where over 95% of the children between the ages of 6 & 12 enroll in primary schools. The Education Ministry is the largest in the government. Ninety per cent of Singapore's children now go to classes in English, the link language or public language which all are encouraged to learn. Every community is encouraged to preserve & use its own language but to know English to communicate with the other language groups.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO FAVOURS RELIGIOUS BELIEF, "believing in something rather than being in nothing", as the Prime Minister put it. "I would rather have a devout Hindu, Muslim, than a permissive atheist", said Lee. He went on to say that the world is in

SINGAPORE IS AN ALMOST FLAT TROPICAL ISLAND OF SOME 225 SQUARE MILES. The longest river, at places often a stream, only runs for about 9 miles. There are 2,000 miles of first-class roads & more ultra-modern lamp-posts with highway lighting (60,000) than there are coconut trees. Singapore lays claim to being the cleanest & greenest city in the Far East & is certainly the smallest independent state in Asia. It is also one of the most crowded with 3,812 people per square kilometre (the second highest in the world). But life expectancy is 67 for males & 70 for females. The temperature rarely goes above 87°F or below 75°F, though humidity is high. An annual rainfall of 96 inches keeps the country green. Singapore has no night life comparable to that of many of the world's great ports. Most people are in bed well before midnight not because they are a Puritanical lot but rather because they are people who waste neither time nor money. And last but not least, mosquitoes & flies are forbidden in Singapore. It is a punishable offense to encourage either.

THE GOVERNMENT IS DEMOCRATIC. There is a Constitution which states that the govt. is responsible to Parliament. Parliament elects the President for a four-year term of office & also has the power to remove him, if necessary. The President may also appoint the Prime Minister (although Prime Minister Lee has been regularly re-appointed for over 20 years). Among the 69 MPs are doctors, teachers, businessmen & other professionals. Forty-eight of them are bilingual & some, including most of the Cabinet, are trilingual. Fifteen of the MPs are Christian, almost 22% of the House, whereas about 9% of the population are Christians. Seven of the 15 MPs are Catholics. It is the task of the MP to see that his constituency is well looked after all the time. He must service his constituency personally by attending weekly "Meet the People" sessions. In this way, every problem causing anxiety to the public is brought into Parliament & debated. And the Opposition at present has only been able to capture one seat, its first ever!

SINGAPOREANS ARE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT RULE OF LAW PREVAILS. Although there is crime, Singapore's crime figures are about average & the penalties are harsher than in many countries. Singapore believes in capital punishment & flogging. One rapist was given 20 strokes of the cane & sent to prison for life. Flogging is mandatory for nearly 30 crimes & the death sentence is mandatory for armed robbery. The laws are enforced: at the City Hall canten a cook was caught smoking while preparing food. He was taken to court & fined \$540. To cope with urban crime, some of the youngsters called up for National Service are sent into the police forces instead of the armed forces. Police patrol each neighborhood, including the high-rise flats. Pornography laws are strict & visitors should not try to bring in girls' magazines or photos. A citizen caught with a copy of Playboy was fined \$5130! As in most cities, police in Singapore have a live-and-let-live attitude towards the oldest profession. It has been estimated that Singapore has 10,000 female & 2,000 male prostitutes (and of the total, 44% are infected with either syphilis or gonorrhoea). There is also an efficient call-girl service, advertised in various subtle ways in the press. The law even treats prisoners well - most gain weight from their good diet during their sentences. They are allowed out of their cells for 12 hours daily to earn money at certain supervised jobs & provision is made for study, exercise & cinema shows. Prisoners can earn up to \$37.40/week & are the basis of a \$1.7 million industry in handicrafts & electronics. They must save at least 40% of their earnings & pay \$8.25 a week for their food. The authorities take a serious view of adultery. One Malay couple in Singapore were fined \$100 each for living together while the woman was married to another man.

IN SPITE OF THEIR CHARITABLE OUTLOOK, SINGAPOREANS GENERALLY BELIEVE IN PUNISHING CRIMINALS, NOT MOLLYCODDLING THEM. Cases where flogging is involved are beaten with a cane that is four feet long & half an inch thick. When a varder brings it down on the buttocks of a prisoner he uses the whole of his body weight, not just the strength of his arms. At the end of the cane, those who received more than three lashes are usually in a state of shock & for weeks the prisoner cannot sit down.

THE SOCIALIST BELIEF HAS SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTED CAPITALISM IN ALL FORMS, including multinational companies. Yet the poor are still taken care of. As Prime Minister Lee told a recent conference, "We still have the highest proportion of millionaires in South Asia. But we are one of the few places in Asia where there are no beggars, where nobody, old or young, dies of neglect & starvation. Singapore is a city with what may be the highest urban standard of living in the world, a GNP higher than Argentina's, a life better for a worker than, Heaven knows, you could find in New York City."

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THERE ARE FOUR REASONS which have enabled Singapore to survive & even prosper in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. First is its superb central location with a natural harbour; the second is government policy (belief in the virtue of free trade); the third is the nurturing of this free enterprise system; the fourth was the continuous & rapid development of neighboring countries under British & Dutch colonial administrations.

trouble because of its lack of religion. Lee told new parliamentarians, "Please do not behave. Anybody who has a paternity suit against him is out & there will be a by-election. That is all I say. Let us have none of this." And most of the people go along with this pragmatism & moral code.

IN SINGAPORE POLITICIANS DOMINATE THE SCENE. The politician makes all the speeches, he knows what is best. He gives the advice, the threats, the praise. He gets the most time in broadcasts & the most space in the papers. There are no civic personalities. And once he is out of office he quickly disappears from the public arena, whether he has been Minister or MP. And Singapore is now trying to encourage more qualified leaders to go into politics to replace the aging administration, when it finally has to step down. Prime Minister Lee warned that the quality of the leadership was decisive. "If Singapore is led by men who lack breath & vision, who do not place the national interest first & first & foremost, then the hard-earned gains of the past 20 years will be frittered away."

WHEN MR. LEE KUAN YEW CAME INTO POWER & line before the masses in the quickest & most extensive way. In different words, the Prime Minister of Singapore is determined that some thing when he defined the role of newspapers there. The government is determined that newspapers will not be used by foreign sources against Singapore's interests. Journalists who fail to report the receipt of funds from foreign sources for publishing a new item or adopting a particular bias, can be jailed for two years or fined up to \$5,000. Free-press of the press has certain limitations in that there are limits on what the media can say on political matters & there is censorship of films, books, TV ads & in places of public entertainment. In one period of three months the undesirable Publications Bureau seized 475 books & magazines. They were held because of their political or pornographic content. Practically all of them were in Chinese. Few books in English on Singapore, even the most critical written by pro-Communists, have ever been prohibited. Understandably, Editors pro-Communist armys journalists on foreign papers: there is little to write about. Editors pro-Communist armys journalists on foreign papers: there is little to write about. Editors pro-Communist armys journalists on foreign papers: there is little to write about.

JUST HOW TINY IS SINGAPORE? In terms of total trade Singapore's trade exceeds that of New Zealand, China, Pakistan, India and with rare exceptions, most of the countries in Africa or Latin America. But it still cannot afford social welfare on anything like the scale of the West. Yet no one is allowed to starve in Singapore & begging is an offence.

Regular patrols are carried out twice a day by social welfare workers looking for beggars. Destitutes are taken care of. Encouragement is given to the young to provide for themselves, to work hard & save. Over \$51 billion a year is paid into the compulsory savings scheme by some 700,000 workers. (Employers must match employee contributions.) Though Singapore is not a welfare state in the Western sense it does have the best state-owned & operated medical services in Southeast Asia & citizens take full advantage of this: on an average they visit a hospital or private doctor 16 times a year. Singapore is a healthy place to live in, though, curiously, leprosy still exists: about 60 cases are reported annually. In the USA where there are a great many free social services & welfare schemes, computer predictions are that if present trends of crime, lawlessness, welfare schemes, according to Singapore lights, by lavish welfare) & lawlessness continue, the great cities will become dead shells within 10 or 20 years, peopled by the indolent, parasites & criminals. The Singapore govt. deliberately withholds lavish welfare contributions, hoping thereby to force citizens to spend more time & money on charities. Lee strongly objects to anything which he feels could foster lawlessness or cause too much reliance to be placed by citizens on the charity of the govt. Nothing is for free, says Lee. You must work for what you want.

SINGAPORE IS ONE OF THE FIRST CITIES IN ASIA TO UNDERTAKE SLUM CLEARANCE & URBAN RE-DEVELOPMENT ON A NATIONAL SCALE. Probably nowhere else in the world is a city being so urgently demolished, redesigned & rebuilt. Slum residents are discarding shacks & going on rapidly to the modern multi-story houses, with shopping centres, cinemas, pools & parks. Five architects & three civil engineers carefully scrutinise all urban renewal plans to make sure there are enough pavements & shady trees. One million trees were planted in 1978 to help keep Singapore green, despite the million tonnes of concrete consumed every year by the building industry. About a third of the land in Singapore is private property. The balance is owned by the govt. or other official bodies.

SINGAPORE'S COMMUNICATIONS ARE EXCELLENT. It was one of the first cities in the East to have phones. In 1879, three years after Bell's invention. Today there are well over 600,000 telephones in the Republic & service is accessible to 179 countries. Singapore is now one of the largest telecommunications centres in the world.