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SINGAPORE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Singapore is a city-state in Southeast Asia that occupies several dozen islands and is separated from Malaysia by a narrow strait. The country could boast of almost nothing. At that time, Singapore had no mineral resources, no skilled and educated population, no army, no industry. There were even problems with quality drinking water, so it had to be exported. All Singapore had at that time was crime, total unemployment, and the threat of being swallowed up by its neighbors.

Everything began to change rapidly when Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew came to power. He led the country from 1959 to 1990. He set an ambitious goal, which was to achieve perfection. However, this task of creating an “ideal” state required the presence of “ideal” citizens. Therefore, the development of high-tech production went hand in hand with the creation of a new unique people. At the time, Singapore was home to people with quite different languages, religions, and cultures, and the first step toward uniting them was the introduction of English, which later became one of the three official languages and was mandatory for every citizen. However, this reform was introduced gradually to avoid uprisings and discontent. It took 30 years to complete the entire process, after which education in Singapore's universities was completely translated from Chinese to English. At the same time, the goal was not to completely erase religious, cultural, and linguistic differences; on the contrary, the goal was to build a strong, united nation based on the traditions and centuries of wisdom of different peoples. The only problematic part of the population that worried Lee Kuan Yew because of its separateness from others and unwillingness to unite was the Muslim population. First of all, this unwillingness to unite with other peoples was caused by their religion, according to which Muslims could not afford certain things and live in society without restrictions. Therefore, Singapore's strategy is aimed at combating manifestations of Islam that clearly separate its representatives from other groups.

To create a viable nation, the emphasis was not on birth rates, but on immigration and the influx of highly skilled personnel from abroad, who were attracted on the best terms. Therefore, in the next few years, the government encouraged abortions or sterilization of women, and the ideology of “stop at

two” was introduced. This paid off, and the birth rate dropped significantly. However, the state still needed children, but they had to be intelligent.

Over time, it became clear that an intelligent and educated population was not enough for an ideal state; it had to be honest, and therefore corruption had to be eradicated. The methods of eradication were very radical, but they worked. Officials in Singapore are deprived of their property even if there is no direct evidence of bribery, but there are funds whose origin a person cannot explain. Thanks to this policy, the country is consistently ranked among the five least corrupt in the world. Along with corruption, crime, which was present in the form of triads, has been defeated. Due to the large number of citizens intimidated by criminals and afraid to testify in court, the rules were changed, and now three anonymous witnesses were enough to convict a member of a criminal group. Subsequently, there was no mafia left in the country.

The country’s economic prosperity was made possible by persistent investment attraction, with each potential investor being assigned a special official by the authorities whose main task was to persuade them to invest in production in the country. In addition, the country has simplified the procedure for starting a business and reduced taxes. A clear indicator and signal to potential investors was that the United States and the West were willing to invest in Singapore during the Cold War for geopolitical and economic reasons.

Today, Singapore specializes in oil refining, pharmaceuticals, computer equipment, and transportation. It is also worth highlighting how the country’s authorities created comfortable and inspiring conditions for ideal people by bringing the urban environment to the appropriate level. Parks, squares, cultural spaces, and perfect cleanliness of the streets appeared in the city. This issue was addressed even before the healthcare system was established and corruption was defeated. Nowadays, keeping the city clean and tidy is supported by strict laws, and failure to comply with them or violation of them entails various types of punishment. Starting with large fines, corporal punishment, and even imprisonment. The whole of Singapore is filled with cameras on every corner that monitor compliance with the rules. This program is called the “smart nation” and monitors everyone at all times.

The other side of these large-scale reforms is the immutability of the government, in regular elections held democratically, Lee Kuan Yew's party was elected and dominated the country for 12 years in a row. In his personal opinion, the constant change of power is harmful, because fearing the next election, politicians will postpone not so visible but important things that are usually done last.

All the methods of Singapore’s formation since the mid-20th century cannot be called democratic, but Singapore is an unusual country that requires an unusual approach that was built step by step based on the country’s realities of the time and its needs for such a tangible economic boost and development of the entire society at the same time.