

TUNKU

*His Life
and
Times*

The Authorized Biography of
Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj

MUBIN SHEPPARD



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Preface

THIS BOOK tells in words and pictures the life and times of Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj (1903-1990); it chronicles his royal ancestry, early childhood, early education, initiation into politics and the attendant trials and tribulations, and his crowning achievement as the principal architect of Malaya's independence.

He was not politically brilliant, but he had a charisma very much his own. He did what no one else could have done at that time. Against all odds, he managed to unite the Malays, Chinese and Indians. He formed the Alliance—comprising UMNO, the MCA (led by Tun Tan Cheng Lock) and the MIC (led by Tun V.T. Sambanthan)—which won the 1954 Legislative Council elections. It was the first step towards racial harmony in a pluralistic society and a sure step towards independence, which came on August 31, 1957. Tunku led the campaign for independence through peaceful means. His unique qualities were invaluable and no one else could have united the three communities at all levels or could have pre-

461 run 63

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served this unity through the testing months before the Alliance's Merdeka Mission set off for London and achieved a miracle. The period between 1955 and 1957 marked an important transition in Malaya from colonial administration to political independence. It was also a time when the newly-elected Alliance Government, though not completely in control of the reins of power, began to grapple with the problems of nation-building in a multiracial society.

What made Tunku so determined to end British rule? Most of us know the oft-repeated incidents which particularly shaped his determination for self-rule, but it is worth recounting. While Tunku was an undergraduate in Cambridge, he was twice refused a place in the hall of residence. When he remonstrated to Reverend Chaytor, one of his tutors, he told him point blank: "The College was built for Englishmen. If I gave you a room to the exclusion of Englishmen, they would not like it."

From that moment on, there grew within him an intense anti-colonial feeling. He was determined to fight for the independence of his country. Incidentally, when it was found out later that he had been refused residence, a place was offered to him, but he refused it.

On August 3, 1955, when Tunku arrived in Kuala Lumpur to assume the office of Chief Minister (soon after the federal election in 1955), he found to his dismay and annoyance that no house had been allocated to him or any of his colleagues. There weren't any car or office space allotted to them either. The Deputy Chief Secretary told Tunku that these had not been provided because at the time they did not know who was going to come in and form the Government. Tunku remarked that whatever the election results might have been, they should have expected new people to take over the administration, working jointly with the colonial government.

The Deputy Chief Secretary then drove Tunku to see the government quarters which he said were available. When he saw the house, he was so disgusted that he refused to accept it; it had only two bedrooms. Though it was intended for clerical service officers, it was not even fit to be given to a lower echelon official of the Malayan Civil Service. Next day, the Deputy took him to view a big

house at 1 Hose Road. Though it looked old and dilapidated, he accepted it, and moved in. Then the weather changed and he found out the reason the house was vacant. "One night, during a severe storm, the roof developed multiple leaks. At three in the morning I woke up to find myself wet through. My wife and I had a lot of trouble trying to find a dry spot where we could push our bed to. Thereupon I decided that I could not put up with the colonial government any more. I would not wait four years for independence. At that late hour in the damp house, I made a vow to win our freedom in half the time—two years, not four."

This book also chronicles Tunku's career through the first nine golden years of his premiership during which he established Malaya, little known and economically underdeveloped, as a country which great nations were glad to be friends with; while at home, he became famous as an enthusiastic patron of Asian football, local horseracing and traditional Malay culture. At the same time, he created various imposing landmarks in the nation's capital, which soon adorned travel posters: the National Mosque, the National Museum, the National Monument and the Parliament House. Despite bitter opposition from Indonesia under Soekarno, Tunku brought together by means of his own patient diplomacy, Sabah, Sarawak, and for a time, Singapore, to form Malaysia.

When Tunku retired in September 1970, it was perhaps inevitable that most of his colleagues regarded his career as having come to an end. But King Faisal of Saudi Arabia recognized Tunku's enduring capacity for leadership, and persuaded him to undertake the task of establishing an Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah, with the principal purpose of uniting forty Muslim States, spread over the Middle East and North Africa. Tunku successfully completed his mission and went on to found an Islamic Development Bank despite almost insufferable non-cooperation from all quarters.

After his second retirement late in 1974, Tunku returned to his homeland, to find his past achievements ignored. With no political or commercial support, Tunku quietly emerged as a writer of weekly feature articles on current affairs which attracted readers all over

the peninsula. His writings were often revealing and sometimes controversial. No one took offence because they knew he harboured no malice. His views carried much weight, not only because of his key role in the independence struggle, but also because he could fairly lay claim to being one of the few public figures in the country without any vested interest in the outcome of current political controversies.

At the same time, his continued devotion to the cause of Islamic unity gained fresh international support and led to the establishment of a new Muslim organization extending over Southeast Asia and the Pacific, of which he was the pioneer President.

I have known Tunku since before independence and always felt a warm affection for him. I decided I would like to make some contribution in return.

Hence this book.

In the course of gathering material for this book and getting to meet Tunku on many occasions in Kuala Lumpur and in Penang, I came to understand better why Tunku was so honoured and loved by his fellowmen from all walks of life. But Tunku is not only a most likeable man, he is also a great national leader.

I cannot recall any other individual in Malay history or literature to whom he can be compared, and in English literature only King Arthur of Camelot and his Knights of the Round Table bear any resemblance.

In 1957, Tunku declared Malaya's independence after more than four hundred years of foreign domination, and he and his "Knights of the Round Table"—his first Cabinet—set themselves the task of creating a new Malaya in which racial harmony was to be a major objective.

Tunku's continued success was sometimes handicapped by his unwavering loyalty to his friends, his deep compassion for the unfortunate, and his unflagging devotion to racial harmony. It is tempting to mention his other rare virtues, such as his generous attitude towards defeated opponents, but I must ask you to discover them for yourself in this biography.

As Merdeka became imminent, I had to make the difficult choice between returning to my castle in Ireland, or remaining in Malaya, the country where I had lived for twenty-five years, and of which I was then very fond.

I made my decision.

Then in 1956, I sought an interview with Tunku to tell him that I would like to stay on after Merdeka to work for him. I asked him if he would accept me, and he said he would be glad to have me.

In 1958, Tunku gave me a chance to turn my favourite pastimes into a full-time occupation by giving me charge of public records, museums and cultural research. He made me responsible for setting up the National Archives and after that, the National Museum. We started the archives with just a clerk and an office boy, and Tunku took a great personal interest in the project.

Tunku's many virtues and faults combined to make him an ordinary man. He would be the first to admit that he was not without faults. His weaknesses, however, were all warm ones. Justice, for him, was always tempered with mercy. He won instinctive trust from all. Tunku once remarked: "I have been a good student and at the same time I have also been a failure, but I don't regret any of my past deeds. I learned good lessons which later served me well as Prime Minister. I was the happiest prime minister in the world; it's no exaggeration . . . not empty boasting. That's how I felt. One must understand human beings, their successes and failures—I have been through all these . . . I did well as a student at Cambridge but didn't do so well at the Bar in London because I showed more interest in the pleasures of the Roaring Twenties. This unfortunately ruined my studies. I came home, got married, and brought up my children. Then, twenty-five years later, I decided to return to complete my Bar final. By the grace of God, I got through. I returned to Malaya and resumed life as a Government servant, then took up politics in a big way and together with other dedicated Malaysians won independence for Malaya. When I was asked whether I would change my ways if I could live my life again, I said I would not. I have enjoyed my life and I have been of service to my country."

Tunku's unquestioned status as a Malaysian elder statesman clearly sets him apart from the rest. Malaysia no longer struggles to free itself from the tentacles of feudal bondage and colonial administration as it did during Tunku's era. But it is well that a nation remembers its heritage and guiding principles as it continues its march towards growth, stability and progress.

The final chapter of this book was written six years after the second half of the two-volume biography was published (1987) and three years after Tunku's death in 1990. Chapters one to ten were originally published in 1984 as the first volume, *Tunku: A Pictorial Biography 1903-1957*, while chapters eleven to seventeen were originally published in 1987 as the second volume, *Tunku: A Pictorial Biography 1957-1987*. Chapter eighteen is a new chapter, written specially for this new volume. When I wrote this, I was eighty-eight and the earlier flow of composition had been substantially halted. It was further restricted by a deterioration of my eyesight. Readers are therefore requested to pardon the resulting deficiencies.

Tan Sri Dato' Dr Mubin Sheppard
Kuala Lumpur, August 1, 1994



Tunku's Crest

WHEN Sultan Abdul Hamid, Tunku's father, went to England in 1911 for the coronation of King George V, he was attracted by a gold curio in the shape of an ornamental button which included a reproduction of the Sphinx.

The Sphinx was a monster of Greek mythology sent by Hera to ravage Thebes. It had the head of a woman, wings and the body of a lioness. It proposed a riddle to travellers and strangled those who failed to solve it. The legend had it that no one could succeed until Oedipus, a prince, came and saved the kingdom by providing the correct answer. The Sphinx then threw itself from its rocky perch to its death.

Tunku adopted the button as his crest and added the word "dibebaskan", which means "freed" in Malay and refers to the freedom which Tunku brought to Malaysia on August 31, 1957.

Contents

1. 1882-1910 / 1
 - I. The Kedah Background.
 - II. A Farewell to Feudalism.

2. 1910-1920 / 11
 - I. Schooldays in Alor Setar, Bangkok and Penang.
 - II. A Government Scholarship.

3. 1922-1931 / 19
 - I. Paradise at Cambridge.
 - II. Competing Priorities in London.

4. 1932-1941 / 29
 - I. Civil But Disobedient Servant.
 - II. Kuala Nerang, Langkawi, Sungei Patani, Kulim.
 - III. Fresh Initiative at the Inner Temple.
 - IV. Long Houses and Invasion.

5. 1941-1945 / 37

- I. Abduction of the Sultan.
- II. Fruitless Search in Singapore.
- III. Revenge of a Japanese General.
- IV. Education Without Books.
- V. Welfare Service for Refugees from the Burmese Death Railway.

6. 1945 / 53

- I. Interregnum and Administrative Paralysis.
- II. Parachutes Over Kedah.
- III. Communist Occupation of Alor Setar Foiled.

7. 1946-1948 / 61

- I. The Sultan Surrenders to MacMichael.
- II. Return of the Inner Temple.
- III. Hart the "Slave-driver".
- IV. Silver Jubilee Success.

8. 1949-1951 / 69

- I. No Post in Kedah.
- II. DPP in Kuala Lumpur.
- III. A Diffident Entry into Politics.
- IV. President of UMNO.

9. 1951-1955 / 77

- I. Revitalizing UMNO.
- II. Birth of the Alliance.
- III. Merdeka Mission "On a Shoestring".
- IV. Alliance Boycott.
- V. Midnight Compromise on "The Alert".
- VI. A Ninety-nine Per Cent Majority.

10. 1955-1957 / 97

- I. Chief Minister.
- II. Rapport with Lennox-Boyd.
- III. Second Merdeka Mission.

1.
1882 – 1910

I. The Kedah Background.
II. A Farewell to Feudalism.

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA AL-HAJ was the twentieth child of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halimshah, the twenty-fourth ruler of Kedah. For many centuries, the rulers of Kedah derived much of their wealth and authority from trade, and they lived on the bank of the Kedah river, either in a fortress at the mouth of the river or thirty miles upstream at Alor Setar. The town was named after a Malay fruit tree called *pokok setar* which grew in profusion on the borders of a great rice plain and along the banks of many canals or *alor* which flowed into the Kedah river. The ruler's principal residence was built and rebuilt there, on the bank of the Sungei Raja, a minor tributary of the Kedah river.

Successive Kedah rulers had tried to shield their subjects from external aggression by diplomatic means, somehow without achieving any long-term advantage. At different times they had turned for protection to the Siamese in Bangkok, the Dutch in Malacca and the British in Calcutta, but when the most destructive attack took

place in 1821 no one came to their aid. In November 1821, a large Siamese naval and military force appeared, without warning, off the mouth of the Kedah river, seized the fort and overran the whole country, which they then occupied for twenty-one years. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II was fortunate to escape, but many of his relatives were captured and massacred. The Sultan lived in exile in Penang and Malacca and only returned to Kedah in 1842.

Sultan Abdul Hamid's father, another Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah, reigned from 1854 to 1879. He married two influential wives, Wan Hajar and Wan Jah, whose offspring were to become rivals. Wan Hajar was the mother of Sultan Abdul Hamid and the grandmother of Tunku Abdul Rahman. She was the daughter of Wan Ismail, whose father, the old Dato' Laksamana of Kedah, received the leaders of the Siamese Army and Navy at Kuala Kedah in November 1821, and was treacherously murdered by their orders the very next day. Wan Ismail would probably have succeeded his father as Dato' Laksamana had not the exiled Sultan and his successor deliberately left this and other major non-royal Offices of State vacant. Although he held no title, Wan Ismail inherited the status and influence of his murdered father. When Sultan Zainal Rashid died in 1854 and the Raja Muda, Tunku Muhammad Said, tried to claim the throne, Wan Ismail led the opposition and secured the succession for the late Sultan's young son, Tunku Ahmad Tajuddin. Wan Ismail then married his daughter, Wan Hajar, to the newly proclaimed Sultan and negotiated the appointment of his very able son, Wan Muhammad Saman, as Chief Minister.

Soon after his proclamation as Sultan, and his marriage to Wan Hajar, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah travelled to Bangkok to pay his respects to the King of Siam and was given a second wife, Wan Jah, by the Siamese ruler. Wan Jah was related to the Malay royal family of Patani but had been adopted at an early age by King Rama IV.

Wan Jah was the first of the two wives to give birth to a son, Tunku Zainal Rashid, in 1857. Wan Hajar bore two daughters in 1859 and 1862 and only gave birth to her first son in 1864: he was

named Tunku Abdul Hamid. Her other sons were Tunku Abdul Aziz, born in 1870, and Tunku Mahmud, born in 1876: both played prominent roles in the history of Kedah.

When Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin died in 1879, the first phase of a power struggle began. A large delegation journeyed to Bangkok, taking with them the two candidates, Tunku Zainal Rashid, Wan Jah's son, and Tunku Abdul Hamid, the son of Wan Hajar. Tunku Yaacob, the Raja Muda, and Tunku Zia'uddin, both younger brothers of the late Sultan, headed the delegation. The Siamese chose Tunku Zainal Rashid, then twenty-two, to be Sultan and Tunku Abdul Hamid, who was only sixteen, was appointed Raja Muda, in place of his uncle, Tunku Yaacob. Although Sultan Zainal Rashid was twenty-two he is reported to have been incapable of carrying out his royal duties, and to have been addicted to smoking opium. Owing to his incapacity, his uncles, Tunku Yaacob and Tunku Zia'uddin, were appointed joint Regents. They were rivals in the power struggle and when Sultan Zainal Rashid died in 1881, Tunku Zia'uddin headed another delegation to Bangkok and tried to persuade the Siamese to appoint him Sultan.

Tunku Yaacob, Wan Muhammad Saman and Wan Hajar strongly opposed this and supported Tunku Abdul Hamid. Wan Hajar is reliably reported to have pawned most of her jewellery in Penang to help meet the expense of opposing and outmanoeuvring Tunku Zia'uddin. The Siamese were aware of the prominent part which Tunku Zia'uddin had taken in the Selangor Civil War in the 1870s and of his intimate association with the British while he was Viceroy of Selangor, and it was soon clear that he was not an acceptable candidate. Tunku Zia'uddin then proposed Tunku Kassim, another son of Wan Jah, as Sultan. Discussions continued for five months, but eventually the Siamese directed that Tunku Abdul Hamid be installed as Sultan. Tunku Zia'uddin vacated his position as joint Regent and retired to Penang. Tunku Yaacob retained his position as Regent and the post of Raja Muda was left vacant until Tunku Abdul Aziz, the new Sultan's younger brother, was old enough to assume it.

Sultan Abdul Hamid was eighteen when he was installed. He was light built, slim and appeared frail, in contrast to his robust maternal grandfather and mother. However, he inherited from his father a keen interest in the administration of the state. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah had travelled widely: he had imported tall Venetian glass mirrors and Italian crystal candelabra for his palace and a set of musical instruments to equip a full-brass band. He almost invariably wore Western-style suits in preference to Malay dress. Soon after his accession, Sultan Abdul Hamid handed the control of the administration to his dedicated Chief Minister, Dato' Wan Muhammad Saman, who was also his uncle, and began to visit other states. In 1893, he sailed to Singapore and on to Terengganu and Kelantan. In 1895, he visited India, and paid several informal visits to Bangkok, where he established a personal rapport with King Chulalongkorn. He studied some of the King's progressive projects, but the progress which he saw and admired in other countries was made possible by more modern administrative practices which were sadly absent in Kedah.

The Kedah system of government, in general, and the control of state revenue and expenditure, in particular, were feudal and autocratic, and had not been changed for several centuries. Taxes imposed on imports and exports had been the principal source of state revenue in Kedah since medieval times. All income was paid into the Sultan's office, and only the Sultan could authorize expenditure. But when the British established a duty-free trading station on Penang Island in 1786, after obtaining a lease from an earlier Sultan of Kedah, much of Kedah's trade was diverted to Penang. Sultan Abdul Hamid's grandfather and father were therefore obliged to seek new sources of income. These took the form of "revenue farms"—selling the right to collect taxes on rice, opium, spirits, tapioca and other lesser commodities. These "farms" were usually let annually. All payments were made into the Sultan's office and were recorded as payments into the "Sultan's Income Account".

At the beginning of his reign, Sultan Abdul Hamid appointed a well-known and much-respected Chinese businessman, named Lee

Yoke Siew, to be his State Treasurer, and the Sultan often visited his royal office, which was sited in an extension to the palace. He gave instructions that estimates of annual income and expenditure should be prepared, approved by him and adhered to.

The prospect of enlightened improvements in administration were tragically shattered when the young Sultan was paralysed by a stroke in 1895. The cause is not known. Less than a year later, before he had fully recovered, he set off with a large retinue to visit the Raja of Patani. Patani shared with Kedah an ancient history and culture, and it was the birthplace of his father's second wife. The journey, much of it through virgin forest, was made on elephants, and the baggage included crates of whiskey. Members of the royal family of both Kedah and Siam were in the habit of consuming alcohol, whiskey in particular, and in quantities which others considered excessive. Sultan Abdul Hamid had also acquired this habit. It was during the return journey from Patani that the Sultan suffered an attack of *delirium tremens*, which was followed by a second and more serious stroke. When he recovered he never drank alcohol again.

His recuperation was slow, but by the end of 1898 the Sultan's physical recovery appeared to be complete both to the members of his court and to his wives. It was however observed that he seldom visited his royal office and that he began to develop new and costly tastes, which included horseracing in Penang, gambling in Alor Setar and billiards. His appetite for gambling resulted in progressively heavy losses, mainly to Chinese revenue farmers. He purchased a number of billiard tables and invited a champion billiard player from England to visit Alor Setar. He also greatly expanded payments under the title "Royal Gifts" or *Ampun Kumia*. This form of benefaction was traditional and expenditure under this heading was made regularly by the Sultan's grandfather and father to reward those who were chosen to form a small circle of unofficial advisers who replaced the large number of title holders whose offices had been left vacant. But Sultan Abdul Hamid also used this form of royal bounty to buy jewellery for his wives and to gratify an increasing number of petitioners. When "revenue farms" were first intro-

duced, and for many subsequent decades, they provided a surplus of income in the royal treasury. But the effect of this lavish increase in expenditure was cumulative and was scarcely perceptible to members of the royal family, or to court officials, except the State Treasurer and the Raja Muda, whose advice the Sultan was unwilling to accept. When Dato' Wan Muhammad Saman, the Chief Minister, died in 1898, some of his responsibilities were taken over by Tunku Abdul Aziz, the Sultan's younger brother. He had been appointed *Pemangku Raja* or Acting Ruler during the period of the Sultan's recuperation after his first and second strokes, and Raja Muda in about 1889, but he had no authority over public finance, even after the death of the Chief Minister, and he could not control the Sultan's profligacy.

This extravagance reached a climax in June 1904 when the Sultan's five eldest children, two sons and three daughters, by different wives reached marriageable age. Sultan Abdul Hamid commanded that their wedding ceremonies and celebrations should be on a prodigious scale. He possessed a talent for planning magnificent pageantry, a gift which was inherited by his son, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and memories of these months of spectacle and prodigal hospitality survive in the London-based magazine, *The Illustrated London News*, and in Alor Setar to this day.

Preparations for the weddings began in 1903 with the demolition of the old Balai Besar (the Royal Audience Hall) and the erection of a larger and more decorative structure on the same site. An annexe to the old walled palace was built at the same time to provide a hall for the "Sitting-in-State" of the bridegrooms and brides: it was named *Rumah Pelamin* (the house for the bridal dais). Wedding guests included a Siamese prince, representatives of the Malay Rulers and the European community in Penang. Festivities were organized and hospitality was provided by the government in every district, and they continued in Alor Setar for more than a month. By the time the celebrations ended, debts amounting to over a million Malayan dollars had been incurred. Businessmen and firms in Penang formed the majority of the creditors.

Tunku Abdul Aziz, the Raja Muda, was now confronted with a crisis never before experienced in the long history of Kedah. Without consulting the Sultan, he travelled to Bangkok, conferred with Prince Damrong, the enlightened Minister of the Interior, and asked for a loan sufficient to pay all of Kedah's debts. Officials in Bangkok were already aware of the situation, and had probably decided to give assistance, but they thought it prudent to enquire what the reaction of the British in Singapore would be before giving Tunku Abdul Aziz a favourable reply. The terms of the loan were then explained and were provisionally accepted by the Raja Muda. He then returned to Alor Setar and had a letter prepared in the Sultan's office, in the name of the Sultan, asking the Siamese government to grant Kedah a loan of two million six hundred thousand dollars. In return, Kedah would accept a Financial Adviser, appointed by the Siamese, who would have complete control over the financial administration of the State until the loan had been fully repaid. Kedah would also agree to the creation of a five-man Council of State on which the Financial Adviser would serve. The Council would be responsible for general administration. The autocratic powers of the Sultan would thus be extinguished. Besides this document, Tunku Abdul Aziz, in his capacity as Raja Muda, prepared and signed a letter stating that the Sultan was no longer responsible for his actions. This letter was countersigned by Wan Hajar, the Sultan's mother.

Tunku Abdul Aziz carried these letters to Bangkok and handed them to Prince Damrong. The principal letter did not bear the Sultan's signature or seal but it was accepted in Siam as an official request from the Kedah government, and on June 16, 1905, the Kedah Loan Agreement was signed in Bangkok. Tunku Abdul Aziz was appointed Chairman of the Council of State.

Sultan Abdul Hamid bowed to the inevitable and turned his attention to religious studies and welfare work. The Sultan's grandfather had built a small timber mosque not far from the palace, but it had become much too small to accommodate the Muslim population of the state capital sixty years after its completion. Sultan Abdul Hamid directed that a new and much larger mosque be built op-

posite the Balai Besar, and Masjid Zahir was completed and officially opened by the Sultan in 1908. Sultan Abdul Hamid preached the first sermon. Late in 1905, the Sultan asked the Penang government to help set up a health service, and three years later a hospital was built in Alor Setar.

The transformation of the system of administration was only known to the inner circle of Kedah royalty and the most senior officials. In the eyes of the public, authority and patronage still lay within the walls of the old palace and in the Balai Besar. Tunku Abdul Rahman and his many brothers and sisters, as they grew from infancy to childhood, were given no hint of the changes.

In June 1909, the Sultan received an official letter from Sir John Anderson, the Governor in Singapore, informing him that an agreement had been signed between the British and the Siamese, in which Siam had transferred to Britain all its rights of suzerainty over Kedah, including the balance of the government loan. The letter was carried in a procession on a golden tray, and was received by the Sultan in the Balai Besar, and then read aloud.

In 1911, Sultan Abdul Hamid, accompanied by his younger brother, Tunku Mahmud, and a number of Kedah notables, sailed for England to attend the coronation of King George V. They embarked on a ship at the main wharf in Alor Setar and sailed down the river to Penang, watched by a crowd which stretched far beyond the borders of the town, and appeared at intervals along the river bank all the way to the river mouth, thirty miles away. The Sultan stayed at the Hotel Cecil in London, where his personal cook was made welcome by the head chef, anticipating by nearly a quarter of a century the introduction of Malay cooking to London by Tunku Abdul Rahman. The Sultan had not worn formal Malay dress in Kedah for years: on ceremonial occasions he wore Siamese-style uniform, at other times a coat and trousers, shirt and necktie and a low cotton *kopiah*. In London, the Kedah delegation wore Western-style suits, including morning coats, tailored in Penang. They were therefore embarrassed when, at short notice, a protocol officer from Buckingham Palace requested that the Sultan and his brother be

garbed in full Malay dress at the coronation. Handwoven silk was not available, but a famous London store provided a suitable substitute, and a tailor accredited to the Crown cut and sewed a Kedah-style dress, with an outer coat, an inner tunic, *sarong*, trousers and folded headdress, in time for the ceremony.

Sultan Abdul Hamid returned to Alor Setar by ship to a rapturous welcome. He appeared to be in excellent health, but in 1912 he suffered a third and much more serious stroke from which he never recovered. It affected him mentally and physically. For the next thirty years, until his death in 1943, the Sultan was never able to take any part in the government and administration of Kedah, and he fathered no more children. His last child, a daughter, was born to his favourite wife, Che Menjalara, in November 1912. Although she bore him twelve children, only eight of them grew to adulthood. These were Tunku Yusuf (1890), Tunku Kalthum (1893), Tunku Mohamed Jewa (1894), Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra (1903), Tunku Baharom (1904), Tunku Aminah (1906), Tunku Zakiah (1911) and Tunku Hafsa (1912).

Che Menjalara nursed the Sultan during his long illness until she died in 1941. When Tunku Mahmud, the Sultan's brother, became Regent in 1912, he wanted to send Sultan Abdul Hamid to a mental hospital outside the state, but Che Menjalara opposed the plan so vigorously that he abandoned it. After her death, the old Sultan, who had survived all his other wives, lived in lonely isolation in a newer palace, some distance from the town, called Istana Anak Bukit, attended only by a number of devoted servants. To them, and to many of his other subjects, Sultan Abdul Hamid was a *keramat*, a saintly figure who might on occasion heal a sick person. He often drove through the town in a horsedrawn carriage, stopping wherever and whenever he wished, and so long as he was able to stand, he attended Friday prayers in Masjid Zahir, an object of veneration by all who saw him.

2.
1910 – 1920

**I. Schooldays in Alor Setar,
Bangkok and Penang.**
II. A Government Scholarship.

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA was born on February 8, 1903 in Alor Setar in a three-storey building which resembled a Chinese Pagoda. Some of his earliest memories were of glazed tiles, covered with green dragons, which formed a frieze decorating the upper walls of the interior; of a number of other buildings which, together with the pagoda, formed a palace complex; of a high wall which surrounded these buildings and separated them from the world outside; of a small, slow-moving river, the Sungei Raja, where he swam by day and heard crocodiles fighting at night.

The whole palace complex was known as Dalam Kota—the inner residence, but Tunku's birthplace was often referred to as Istana Tiga Tingkat—the palace of three storeys. It had been constructed many years earlier by Chinese craftsmen living in Alor Setar and was demolished in 1912 to make room for new government offices.

Tunku's father, Sultan Abdul Hamid, and his grandmother, Wan Hajar, who was usually referred to in the palace circles as "Mak

Wan Besar", lived in the principal building, sited centrally. Tunku, his mother and her other children lived in the pagoda. In 1906 or thereabouts, Wan Hajar had a stroke which paralysed her legs, and for the rest of her life she was carried in a sedan chair when she went out of doors, and was propelled in a wheelchair, imported from England, when she wished to move from room to room. When she died in February 1909, Tunku's mother moved to the Sultan's room in the central building, but Tunku and her other children remained in the pagoda with a Siamese nurse.

A number of doorways with pointed arches in the outer wall of the palace compound gave access to the town of Alor Setar. As soon as he was old enough, leaving his brothers and sisters, Tunku ran outside the walled enclosure to play with boys of his own age who lived in the town. His mother strongly disapproved, but she was occupied caring for the Sultan and Tunku's nurse was unable to control him.

Until he went to England in 1920, Tunku was known to most people, other than his close relatives, as Tunku Putra, and his father called him Putra as long as he lived. But his mother and many of his brothers and sisters called him "Awang". In Kedah "Awang" was a nickname given to boys from the rice fields, whose skin was tanned by the sun. Tunku's skin was darker than that of his brothers, and so they called him "*kampung* boy".

Sultan Abdul Hamid had many wives and numerous children. He married Che Menjalara, Tunku's mother, in 1883 when he was twenty-three and she about seventeen. Tunku's mother was Siamese. She was the daughter of Luang Nara Borirak. Her father was descended from Chao Phya Maha Kota and Khun Yip Sup (Lady Sup). Chao Phya Maha Kota was the head of the state of Mataban, and when Burma attacked Siam in 1774, he and his family fled to Bangkok, the new capital, and settled there, acquiring considerable property. Part of this was eventually inherited by Tunku's mother.

Luang Nara Borirak had a little daughter named Nearng. The girl was also known as Menjalara, a Siamese name of endearment. Sultan Abdul Hamid's eldest sister, Tunku Aminah, who often vis-

ited Bangkok, saw and was attracted by the little girl and adopted her with Nara Borirak's permission. The child was later brought back to live at Kampong Kepala Bukit near Alor Setar, and had since then, used the longer name, Menjalara, because it sounded more Malay. A mosque, Masjid Hamidi Menjalara, was built there many years later in her memory.

Tunku Aminah observed that the girl possessed exceptional intelligence and charm, and she took her to live with her mother, Wan Hajar, in the walled palace. Wan Hajar was equally attracted by the girl and in 1886 she gave Menjalara to Sultan Abdul Hamid to be his fourth wife. Between December 1890 and October 1894 she bore him five children, and then nursed him while he was paralysed. Her next child, Tunku Putra, was not born until February 1903.

The circumstances surrounding Tunku's birth could only have happened during a feudal regime. One of the Sultan's trusted officials was the Keeper of the Ruler's Seal. The seal was affixed to every important document issued from the Sultan's office; without it the document was not valid. Among those which required the Sultan's approval and seal were grants of land. Land was in great demand then and the Keeper issued a number of land grants to which he affixed the ruler's seal without royal authority, and receiving substantial sums of money in return. The Sultan had been seriously ill and the Keeper thought that it was unlikely that the felony would be discovered. The penalties for the crime were well known to him—they had not been changed for centuries: execution of the Keeper and the amputation of the right thumb of the Keeper's wife and children. But only the Sultan could order the punishment. News of the crime reached the Sultan when he was recovering from his second stroke, and the Keeper was arrested and imprisoned. The Keeper's wife came to Menjalara's room in the Pagoda one night, and implored her to ask the Sultan for mercy. Menjalara replied that she could see no justification for clemency: the Keeper had taken advantage of the Sultan's illness to enrich himself. However, she later relented and devised a story which might have brought disaster to her married life.

At that time, the Sultan's physical health had greatly improved, but she was not yet pregnant. However, she told the Sultan that she was expecting a baby, and reminded him that, according to Malay superstition, if one of the parents caused the disfigurement of any person, the child which was due to be born would bear the same deformity. She therefore asked the Sultan to delay the imposition of any penalty until her child was born. Sultan Abdul Hamid agreed to do so. By good fortune Menjalara became pregnant soon afterwards and the child who was born from this confinement was given the name Tunku Putra. The Sultan then reduced the sentence on the Keeper to long-term imprisonment and remitted the punishment of the wife and children. Menjalara firmly believed that the compassion and mercy which were associated with her son's birth distinguished him from all his brothers and sisters and had a lifelong influence on his character.

When the now legendary weddings of his five half-brothers and -sisters took place in June, July and August 1904, Tunku was not yet two years old, but was carried in procession, with his elder brothers seated on a seven-tier platform called *Perutusan*. Other childhood memories were less happy. When he was four, he was vaccinated; he tried to elude his mother's servants, but was captured and taken to the room of his paralysed grandmother, where the brief but painful inoculation took place under her supervision. Cholera and malaria were then common all over Kedah, and penetrated the walled palace. At least two of Tunku's brothers and an elder sister died of cholera, and Tunku suffered from intermittent attacks of malaria until he arrived in England in 1920. When he was about six, as he was frying *keropok* or fish fritters in his mother's kitchen, a lighted fragment of firewood fell on his left ankle and burnt him. It was exceedingly painful. Tunku, wishing to conceal the accident from his mother, wrapped a cloth round his ankle and hoped that it would heal. But the wound turned septic and it was three years before Tunku was able to resume his games of football outside the palace walls. When he was nine, Tunku was circumcised with seven other boys. None of them were his relatives: all of them were his playmates from the

town. The event took place, at his request, in a room in the palace complex. The Royal Circumciser (Mudin di Raja) performed the minor operation, which occupied only a few seconds, but healing was slow. All the patients remained in the palace with Tunku for three weeks, while Malay and Javanese shadow plays were performed nightly for their entertainment.

Tunku's formal education started when he was about six years old at the only Malay elementary school in Alor Setar. His mother had hoped that school would keep him out of mischief, but he often ran away from class. When a small English-medium school was opened by a teacher named Mohamed Iskandar, Tunku's mother sent him there instead. In the afternoon, Tunku was taught to read the Quran.

In 1913, Tunku Yusuf, Tunku's eldest full-brother, returned from England. He had been sent there as a King's Scholar by the Siamese government to study at the British Military Academy at Woolwich, where army engineers were trained. Tunku Yusuf was a most industrious individual and he passed all the difficult examinations. When he returned to Alor Setar, he quickly realized that his younger brother was making no progress in his studies, and with the full agreement of their mother, the two brothers set off for Bangkok by sea from Singapore. Tunku Yusuf had married a European girl by the name of Lily de Whittle, and she accompanied him to Kedah and then to Bangkok, where they rented a house. Tunku was admitted to the Debsurin School, where the lessons were taught in Siamese. Tunku always possessed an unrivalled capacity for making friends with people of all communities and in Bangkok he was never lonely. His best friend was Tavil Guptarak: they attended the same school and were inseparable.

Tunku Yusuf was given a Commission in the Siamese Army on his arrival in Bangkok, and he spent much of his time on military operations against bandits. In 1915, he contracted pneumonia while in the jungle and died on his return to the Siamese capital. He was buried there, but many years later Tunku arranged for his remains to be exhumed and reburied in the royal cemetery at Langgar, near Alor

Setar. Tunku returned to Kedah, accompanied by his brother's widow. They were met at Songkhla by Che Menjalara, in the Sultan's large Siddeley motorcar. The Sultan and his close relatives had deplored the marriage of Tunku Yusuf to a European girl, and the widow was sent back to England.

Many Kedah boys of good family attended an English-medium school in Penang, and when Tunku returned his mother sent him to the Penang Free School. A number of talented teachers including H.R. Cheeseman were on the staff and perhaps for that reason Tunku developed a keen interest in his studies and twice obtained double promotion. The Kedah boys lived in a separate hostel in Penang; it was supervised by a Kedah-born man named Awang Osman. His skin was unusually dark. The supervisor came to know many influential members of the Kedah government and one of his sons was later admitted, as a special privilege, to the exclusive Kedah Civil Service. That young man possessed keen intelligence, great industry and insatiable ambition, and he eventually rose to fill the highest post in the establishment—Secretary to the Government. His name was Mohamed Shariff.

In 1912, when the Sultan's third stroke prevented him from carrying out his duties, his eldest son, Tunku Ibrahim, was appointed Regent. Although Tunku Ibrahim's own studies had ended when he left a Malay elementary school in Alor Setar, he was a man of wide interests. These included the higher education of his younger brothers. He had heard of the rapid progress of Tunku Putra at the Penang Free School and he secured the approval of the Council of State to the creation of a new scholarship to send a student to the University of Cambridge. The Headmaster, R.H. Pinhorn, was consulted, and he, supported by the Head of the Lower School, H.R. Cheeseman, recommended that the scholarship be awarded to Tunku Putra, who was then sixteen. The Kedah government then followed the normal procedure and wrote to the Crown Agents for the Colonies in London, asking them to obtain a passage for Tunku on a ship sailing to England, and to select a tutor who could prepare him to sit for the University Entrance Examination. In neither case were their serv-

ices satisfactory. The First World War had ended only a year previously and passenger ships were still scarce. Eventually a berth was reserved for Tunku on an old 9,000-ton ship of the Blue Funnel Line called *Rhesus*. It was a cargo vessel and carried only twelve passengers. It began its homeward voyage at Singapore, but had to take on cargo at Port Swettenham and Penang before sailing for Ceylon and England. Although it would have been logical for Tunku to board the ship in Penang, he was told to embark in Singapore. The flat, swampy land near Port Swettenham was notorious as a breeding place for anopheles mosquitoes, and while the *Rhesus* loaded cargo in the Klang River, Tunku contracted a fresh infection of malaria. He suffered acutely from high fever during the voyage and had barely recovered when the ship arrived at Tilbury on June 1, 1912.

The Crown Agents had arranged for Tunku to lodge with a Church-of-England clergyman in a small village called Little Stukeley, near Huntingdon, and not far from Cambridge. Tunku had been told that a representative of the clergyman by the name of Eccles would meet him when he docked. But *Rhesus* had not yet been allotted a berth at a wharf, and when the passengers were taken ashore by launch, Eccles could not be found. Fortunately a Kedah rubber planter named Atkins, who was a fellow passenger, had promised to look after Tunku if necessary and they waited in the summer sunshine, listening to the forecasts of the winner of the "Derby" horserace which was to be run that afternoon. This introduction to the "sport of kings", at one time a hobby of his father, was to be one of Tunku's favourite pastime for the rest of his life.

Eccles eventually appeared, and they set off, first to Central London and then by train to Huntingdon, passing a panorama of urban and rural English landscapes. Tunku had promised to write and tell his mother what England looked like; he did so as soon as he reached Little Stukeley. But he signed his letter "Putra" instead. He had left "Awang" far behind in Alor Setar.

3.
1922 – 1931

I. Paradise at Cambridge.
II. Competing Priorities in London.

TUNKU was seventeen when he arrived in Little Stukeley in June 1920. It was a typical small village of that period. An old stone church with a low tower and a yellow brick rectory, where the Church-of-England parson lived, were sited close together on the top of a low hill. A number of single-storey thatched cottages, arranged in no sort of order, stood on the slopes of the hill and housed the villagers. There was a small provision shop which was also the post office, and a public house called "The Swan", where the villagers, who cultivated the flat fen land for miles around, met daily to exchange gossip.

The Reverend Edgar Vigers, the elderly rector of the parish, lived in the brick rectory which was three-storey high. He supplemented his small stipend by taking in teenage boys who needed coaching before they sat for a variety of minor examinations. He had registered his name with the Crown Agents, and they had sent him some of his students, including Tunku. His wife, who kept house for

him, was a chain-smoker and Tunku acquired the habit of smoking cigarettes while he was at Little Stukeley. Most of the boys were English and remained there for only about six months, but when Tunku arrived, there were also three Siamese.

Living in an English village was a totally new experience for Tunku. It took him a little time to establish rapport with any of the villagers, and at first he spent most of his time in the company of the Siamese. But he bought a bicycle and found a football field and met some of the youths who played there in the evenings. They were more heavily built and slower, but Tunku could kick a football accurately and could run faster than any of them, and they invited him to take part in a practice game. Later he played regularly on the right wing for Little Stukeley. No one in the village had ever heard of Malaya or the Malays, and they called him "Bobby".

Reverend Vigers had no training as a teacher, and after about a year Tunku realized that he was making very little progress. He took a train from Huntingdon to London and went to see Mr Ezekiel, in the office of the Crown Agents, who had been designated his guardian. Ezekiel arranged for Tunku to move to Cambridge and to be taught by and live with Mr Basil Atkinson, a man of good family. Atkinson was an experienced tutor and he prepared Tunku to sit for an examination known as "Littlego", to enable him to enter the University. An Indian student taught him Geometry.

The entrance examination took place in the late summer of the following year. Tunku had worked hard and was well prepared, and Atkinson was confident that he would pass. There was an English essay paper which included a choice of topics. One was a set book, entitled *Cobbett's Rural Rides*, the others were general subjects, one of which was "An International Language".

Tunku knew *Cobbett's Rural Rides* almost by heart, but he chose "An International Language" instead and wrote about the universal use of English. After the examination Atkinson asked him how he had fared and was horrified to hear that Tunku had not chosen Cobbett's. He asked, "What do you know about 'Esperanto'?" Tunku admitted that he knew absolutely nothing. "That is the interna-

tional language to which the examiners referred. You will certainly fail."

When the results were published Tunku obtained high marks for all his other papers and was allowed a Pass for the whole examination. Soon afterwards he was informed that he had been accepted as an undergraduate at St Catherine's College, and had been allotted a sitting room and bedroom in one of the college's registered lodging houses at 11 Grange Road. He remained there for the next three years. The entry in the College Admission Register reads: "September 1922. (Tunku) Abdul Rahman, son of (Sultan) of Kedah Abdul Hamid. Born in Alor Setar, Kedah, Malay States, 8th February, 1903. Was admitted Pensioner."

St Catherine's was one of seventeen colleges which, at that time, formed the University of Cambridge. All the undergraduates were male. None of the colleges were exactly alike, but they shared a basic form. Tall stone buildings surrounded one or more large open spaces, known as "Courts". These were sometimes paved and sometimes covered with well-tended grass lawns. Admission was usually through double wooden doors in an arched gateway. These doors were open during the day, but were locked at night. College Door Keepers, known as "Porters", occupied an office just inside the entrance and controlled all entries and departures. College buildings included a large dining hall, offices and living rooms for the dean and senior tutor and a small college chapel, where Church-of-England services were conducted daily.

St Catherine's—usually referred to as "Cats"—was one of the smallest colleges in the university, and its principal stone buildings formed only three sides of a single rectangle. High decorative metal railings, painted black, stretched all across the fourth side, close to a public street. The Porter's Lodge and access to the college was sited at one end of the railings. A stone path bordered the college buildings, enclosing a neat grass lawn, guarded from human encroachment by no fence but only by ancient tradition. The college stood in the centre of the town, within a short distance of two of the most famous colleges, "Kings" and "Trinity".

Each new undergraduate was required to call on the dean of his college, to receive a brief summary of the university's rules and regulations. Tunku was told that an undergraduate must attend dinner in the college dining hall every evening during term time. He must wear a short, knee-length "gown", open in front, over his other garments, when attending dinner and lectures, and whenever he moved outside his college or his lodgings after dark. He must return to his lodgings by 10:00 P.M. every night. If he wished to remain outside for a longer period he must obtain a pass beforehand. If he returned late, the front door would be locked, and his landlady would record the time of his return and fine him one penny for each hour after ten.

The Kedah Regent had instructed Tunku to study Law at Cambridge, so that he could make use of it in the Civil Service when he returned. But after reading the syllabus for an Honours Degree in Law, Tunku decided to adopt a compromise, and he entered his name for a Pass Degree which included two years devoted to the study of Law and a final year studying History.

University of Cambridge in the early 1920s was a paradise for young men with private means and no particular ambition to excel in the academic field. Many aristocratic British families sent their sons to Cambridge to gain experience in social life. They attended a few lectures, read two or three textbooks, formed friendships which would continue into middle age, and if they failed to obtain a degree at the end of their third year they were not blamed.

Tunku Abdul Rahman entered this carefree world in October 1922 and quickly conformed to the social habits of other young men of good family, which included the use of ultra-baggy flannel trousers. Tunku had always been a gregarious person, without any feeling of snobbery. There were no other Malay students at Cambridge in 1922, and he took as his friends, English and Siamese undergraduates, some of them with expensive inclinations. He also visited the head cook in his college kitchen and taught him how to prepare rice and curry the Malay style. He met undergraduates from India, but they were absorbed with the politics of their home country: he

listened to them discuss how India could achieve independence, but found the subject tedious.

Football, hockey and cricket were played by undergraduates on the broad fields which bordered the town. Tunku's name was entered for the freshmen's soccer trial, but the organizers noted that he has not played football at any public school and his name was dropped. Later, he often played right-wing for his college second eleven. In the summer he played tennis. Like every other undergraduate, Tunku moved about the town on a bicycle to which was fitted a small, open topped basket, attached to the handlebars, in which he carried his gown and notebooks.

The university authorities strongly disapproved of ballroom dancing. There was only one dance hall in Cambridge, called "The Rendezvous". It was often raided by the Proctors—the University Security Guards—and any undergraduates found there were fined or punished in some other way. Tunku was fond of dancing and he discovered that the nearest dance hall was at Bedford, but it was thirty miles away.

Some publicity was given in the press in May 1923 to the London Motor Show, to be held at Olympia in June. Tunku went there on the opening day and placed an order for the latest sports model of a Riley car: the price was £550. He cabled his mother and asked for the money and she sent it, also by cable, enabling him to complete the purchase before the end of the show. The car was delivered to his lodgings in Cambridge a few days later. It had an aluminium body and red wings.

With his new car, Tunku now had a means of transport to visit Bedford and he became popular with the dance hostesses there. He possessed a natural sense of rhythm and was exceptionally light on his feet. He perfected his performance of the Foxtrot and learnt to dance the Charleston. Few undergraduates owned cars in 1923 and Tunku became widely known both to the university officials and to the local police. The latter issued summonses to him from time to time for exceeding the speed limit in the narrow streets of the university town.

The end of the academic year at Cambridge is in June. Tunku sat for examinations in Roman, Criminal and Constitutional Law, Contract and Tort at the end of his second year, in 1924, and obtained a Pass in all subjects. In May 1925, he sat for the History examination. The timetable extended over a week, and included certain subjects which he was not taking. On the morning scheduled for his final paper he sat in his lodgings, concentrating on last minute revision, believing that this paper was to be taken on the following day. A friend, cycling by, saw both the familiar sports car and a bicycle outside, and hurried in to tell Tunku of his mistake. Tunku rode his bicycle at top speed to the examination hall but he was too late, and was refused admission. When the results were published Tunku had passed in the other subjects, but he was informed that he must take the whole History examination again in six months' time.

London had always attracted Tunku, and while he was still at Cambridge he applied to the Inns of Court for admission to the Inner Temple and for permission to study Law as an external student. He told the authorities at Cambridge that he had done so, and when he wished to attend a social engagement in London during term time, he applied for a Pass to be absent from Cambridge for the night, giving as his reason that he had to "eat his dinners" at the Inner Temple, which was part of the process of qualifying to be a lawyer. But the dinners which he ate during these excursions were consumed elsewhere in the company of friends, not Law students. The summer and autumn of 1925 graced by peerless sunshine, passed all too quickly: spent partly in London and partly at Brighton and other holiday resorts. In November he drove to Cambridge to confirm his entry and to obtain the History examination timetable. To his dismay he discovered that one paper in the History syllabus in the new academic year had been slightly altered. Candidates were required, as before, to describe the life of one of three world famous people, but the names of the individuals had been changed. The new names were Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte and the Prophet Muhammad. Tunku hurried to Heffer's bookshop, bought a volume on the life of the Prophet and studied it in his London flat. But when he

presented himself at the examination hall, half an hour early, he was once again refused admission because he had not informed the examiners, in advance, which of the individuals he wished to write about. He pleaded with the invigilators and was finally admitted. After the examination, he returned to his flat in Warwick Road, near the Earls Court underground station. In due course he was informed that he had satisfied the examiners in the General Degree Examination in Law and History, and that he was entitled to place the letters B.A. after his name.

Five years had passed since he sailed from Singapore. The Crown Agents secured Tunku a berth in a P. & O. passenger ship which called at Penang. When he arrived back in Alor Setar, he was twenty-three years of age, handsome, dignified, and with the polished assurance of a young man of the world. His eldest brother, Tunku Ibrahim, who was still the Regent, was favourably impressed, and listened without comment while Tunku explained why he had taken a Pass Degree in Law and History instead of an Honours Degree in Law. After a short silence, the Regent raised his eyes from the desk in front of him, where the parchment with the University of Cambridge Coat of Arms lay, and said quietly, speaking in Malay, "You are still rather young to work as a junior administrative officer. You had better return to England and obtain a Law Degree at the Bar." Tunku would have preferred to remain in Kedah, but the Regent, despite his mild manner, was all-powerful, and not even Tunku's mother, proud as she was of her favourite son, was willing to intervene.

Tunku returned to London and continued his study of Law at the Inner Temple as a regular student. It was now 1926 and many other Malays had been sent to England to study Law, including Tuanku Abdul Rahman, the son of the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan, Nik Ahmed Kamil, the son of the Chief Minister of Kelantan, Raja Musa Raja Bot from Selangor and Abdul Wahab from Perak. State loyalties were still dominant in Malaya, and had it not been for Tunku, the Malay students in London would seldom have met socially. He cooked curries on Sundays at his flat, to which

all Malay students were invited, and on Tunku's initiative, a Malay Society of Great Britain was formed, with Tuanku Abdul Rahman of Negeri Sembilan as President and Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra as Honorary Secretary and the driving force behind the society.

Five years spent outside Kedah had broadened Tunku's horizon, but he observed that the other Malay students felt no sense of racial unity or of a common nationality. In informal talks, he urged his fellow students to think of themselves first as Malays and only as a subject of a particular ruler second. In this regard, his thinking was far ahead of his contemporaries.

Tunku studied Roman Law, Criminal and Constitutional Law, Legal History, and English Real Property and Conveyancing. The first three subjects were familiar to him, the last two repelled him and he made little attempt to master them. He always found it difficult to read textbooks and casebooks, but he had an excellent memory, and if friends who were also studying Law came to his flat, read part of a textbook with him and discussed points which he did not understand, he made some progress. This would have been substantially greater had it not been for other friends whose interest were horseracing, poker playing and dancing.

It was in his second year as a Law student in London that Tunku met Violet Coulson, an attractive woman five years his senior, who managed a restaurant where many Malayan students frequented to take their meals. When Tunku got tired of his Law studies they sometimes went out dancing.

At the end of Tunku's second year, his namesake from Negeri Sembilan, passed his final Law examination and the result was published in the Malay press. Some of Tunku's friends in Kedah wrote to congratulate him and to ask when he was returning home. This was embarrassing, but it did little to stimulate his interest in Law. He sat for Part One of the Bar examination in May 1930 and passed in Roman Law, Criminal and Constitutional Law and Legal History, but he scored hardly any marks in the Real Property and Conveyancing Paper. After the results were published, the Director of Legal Education sent for Tunku and asked him what he would do should he fail

the examination. Tunku replied that a post in the Kedah Civil Service was waiting for him, whether he passed or not. The Director of Studies held up Tunku's answer paper on Real Property: "You are fortunate to have an alternative form of employment. Judging by what you wrote here you seem to know nothing whatever about the subject and you will be well advised to give up all ideas of becoming a lawyer." Failure in a paper was fatal. The examiners took no account of Tunku's success in the three other papers, and he was recorded as having failed the whole of Part One. With his three years at the Inner Temple and all the interest and pleasures which London had offered at an end, Tunku sailed for Penang in January 1931.

Tunku's reputation as a "playboy" is largely derived from his three years at Cambridge and his early years at the Inns of Court in London. The expression is sometimes used in jest, but it is sometimes intended to be derogatory. But we should remember that the mid-1920s at Cambridge was a period of "Playboy Undergraduates", and that Tunku was a typical example of, and not an exception to, the contemporary vogue. And we should not forget that this "playboy" obtained, in the mid-1920s, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Law and History at Cambridge and passed four out of five papers in Part One of the Bar examination in London.

4.
1932 – 1941

- I. Civil But Disobedient Servant.**
- II. Kuala Nerang, Langkawi,
Sungei Patani, Kulim.**
- III. Fresh Initiative at the Inner Temple.**
- IV. Long Houses and Invasion.**

TUNKU had been sent to England on a State scholarship and was automatically a government servant when he returned. His eldest brother was still Regent, but when Tunku attempted to explain his failure to pass the Law examination in London the Regent made it clear in a brief interview that he was in disgrace. A few days later Tunku was informed by letter that he had been appointed a Cadet in the Kedah Civil Service, and was to report himself to the office of the Legal Adviser. His duties were uncongenial, and he was relieved to find an outlet for his energies in the preparations for the celebrations of his father's Golden Jubilee, which included an elaborate procession of floats.

Tunku had been allotted government quarters. Prompted perhaps by memories of the decoration of the pagoda in which he was born, he arranged for a pair of green dragons from one of the floats to be fastened to the walls of his verandah after the celebrations had ended. But the colour soon faded and he asked a tin-smith named

Chong, who had a flourishing business in the Chinese sector of the town, to come and remove them. Tunku had heard about Chong some weeks earlier from one of his sisters. Chong had joined with Tunku Ismail, his brother-in-law, in a mining enterprise in Perak. It had failed, and both men and his sister had lost the money which they had invested. Chong was a friendly individual, and after removing the dragons he paid several casual visits to Tunku's house. On one of these visits, he told Tunku that he had a daughter aged sixteen and knowing that Tunku was still a bachelor, invited him to marry her. Tunku did not take the suggestion seriously and soon afterwards he was transferred to Kulim as Assistant District Officer.

This was infinitely more congenial than sitting in an office in Alor Setar, and Tunku devoted much of his time to touring the district and getting to know the problems of the peasants who made up ninety per cent of the population. The District Officer welcomed this enthusiasm, but advised Tunku to devote some of his time to prepare for the Cadet's Law exam, in order that he could qualify for promotion. The government Law syllabus contained familiar subjects and the standard required was much lower than at the Inns of Court: he took the exam and passed it at his first attempt.

About a year later Tunku was transferred, on promotion, to be District Officer of Padang Terap. The district headquarters was at Kuala Nerang which lay in the northeast corner of the state. The district bordered Siam and included a community known as Sam-Sam, who were of Siamese descent. They spoke a mixture of Malay and Siamese, smuggled cattle across the border and led a life which was governed by superstition and was totally without hygiene. Tunku visited them on a number of occasions, and persuaded the leaders to give up cattle stealing, but failed to wean them from their antipathy to hygiene.

While Tunku was still at Kulim, Chong from Alor Setar paid him another visit. This time he brought his daughter along with him. Tunku observed that the girl was tall, strikingly good looking, and possessed a quiet self assurance, and so Miss Chong Ah Yong became "Meriam", and they were married by the local Kathi in



Sultan Abdul Hamid and Che Menjalara with their two favourite grandchildren, the son and daughter of Tunku Abdul Rahman: Tunku Ahmad Nerang and Tunku Khadijah.



Sultan Abdul Hamid in London in 1912, during his official visit to attend King George V's coronation.

L to R: Tunku Bahadur, Sultan Abdul Hamid and Wan Ahmad Kulim.



The Old Rectory at Little Stukeley, an English village in Huntingdonshire. Tunku occupied a room on the top floor on the left in 1919.



The interior of Tunku's lodging at 11 Grange Road in Cambridge.



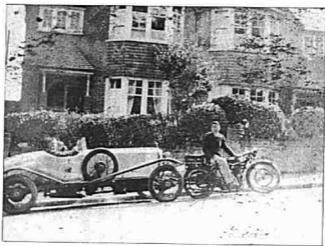
Tunku Badlishah, who was studying at Oxford, at the tennis courts at Little Stukeley when visiting Tunku.



Tunku at the tennis courts at Little Stukeley.



St Catherine's College Football Team, 1924-1925. They entered the final of the inter-college league. Tunku scored a goal in the final, but they were defeated.



Tunku's first motorcar, a Riley 1923.
He bought it at an Earls Court Motor Show in London.



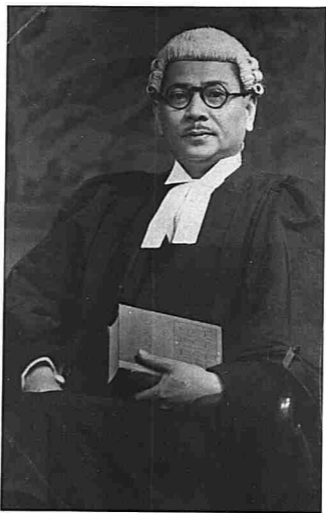
Tunku at the wheels of his car
with "an aluminium body and
red wings".



Tunku as a student sitting
outside the house of his tutor,
D. Atkinson, at Cambridge.



The house of the Penghulu of Sidim in which Sultan Abdul Hamid sought refuge in 1941 when the Japanese marched into Kedah. Sultan Abdul Hamid was spirited away from Alor Setar to Sidim, a small village 30km from Kulim. The village has since been renamed Kampung Lindungan Raja.



Tunku, looking extremely dignified in his wig and gown,
after his call to the Bar at Inner Temple in 1947.

Tunku's government quarters. He did not inform the Regent, and only told his mother when Meriam became pregnant. Soon after Meriam's conversion to Islam she learnt to pray, and when the fasting month began, although she was pregnant she fasted and persuaded Tunku to do so too. During his years overseas, Tunku had given up the practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan, indeed he seldom said his daily prayers. But his young wife set him an example which he was happy to follow for the rest of his life. And a year after their marriage Tunku's daughter was born: he called her Khadijah. And a year later a son was born. He was named Ahmad Nerang.

The post of District Officer of Padang Terap was an unpopular one. Kuala Nerang was notoriously unhealthy owing to the prevalence of malaria. As soon as he took over the district, Tunku gave orders for a survey to be made of the swamps which bordered the town, obtained an estimate for draining them and applied to the State Secretariat for the necessary funds: the cost would be \$10,000.

The post of Secretary to the Government—the head of the Secretariat—was held by an official named Mohamed Shariff: he had obtained rapid promotion as a result of his efficiency and industry. He was the son of the Hostel Supervisor in Penang. Mohamed Shariff had seen and formed an unfavourable opinion of Tunku, when he returned from England, and he was the exact opposite of Tunku in every respect: he loved office work and was rigid in his application of Government regulations. He now rejected Tunku's plea for funds.

A month after the birth of Meriam's second child she contracted a severe attack of malaria. She was weakened by her recent confinement, and although Tunku gave her the best remedies that he could obtain from Penang, she made little progress. An English lady doctor came from Alor Setar to visit her, bringing a phial of quinine and a hypodermic syringe. The doctor believed that the quinine had been heavily diluted and was ready for use. But it had not been prepared and she injected pure quinine into Meriam's vein. She died instantly.

It was a tragic misadventure but Tunku made no attempt to lodge an official report. Instead, he wrote again to the State Secretariat, asking that funds be made available to drain the swamp and to rid Kuala Nerang of the main breeding place of the carriers of malaria. This time the money was provided and the work was carried out under Tunku's supervision.

Malay students in London continued to patronize Violet Coulson's restaurant. It was a centre for the exchange of home news, and Meriam's death was among the news items which reached Violet. Without telling Tunku, Violet handed over the management of her restaurant and sailed for Singapore, and only wrote to him after she had arrived. When he left England, Tunku had had no intention of marrying Violet; but Meriam's death had left a vacuum. Tunku took the train to Singapore and met Violet at her hotel. They talked of old times, of their long friendship. They danced together at Raffles Hotel. Ignoring the disparity in their ages, Tunku took Violet to the Kathi in the principal Malay mosque in Arab Street and they were married according to Muslim rites.

Tunku arranged for Violet to live in Penang for there was a law in Kedah which forbade members of the royal family from marrying non-Malays without the prior approval of the Ruler or Regent. Anyone who violated this law was liable to be disinherited. Tunku Ibrahim, the Regent, was known to be strongly opposed to mixed marriages, but he died unexpectedly in 1934 and was succeeded by Tunku Mahmud, the Sultan's younger brother, who was more broad-minded and gave consent to the marriage. Violet moved to Kuala Nerang, but the Secretary to the Government showed his disapproval by transferring Tunku to the isolated post of Langkawi as District Officer.

The district consisted of a group of picturesque islands, thinly populated, sparsely cultivated, without roads and the object of a legendary curse whose term of seven generations was thought not yet to have expired. Langkawi had at least one advantage: it was much healthier than Kuala Nerang, and Tunku took Violet with him to Kuah, the district headquarters. There was no jetty there, although

small coastal motorboats from Penang and Kuala Kedah called daily. Government funds had not been provided for this or other improvements and Mohamed Shariff made sure that no applications for a financial supplement to the District Officer's slender vote was entertained when Tunku wrote to ask for it. But Tunku's genius for winning co-operation from members of the public of all communities led to the construction of a new jetty and, later, the opening of several earth roads using money and material which he had collected. Tunku also gathered the old legends which still haunted Langkawi, and pieced together the tragic story of the beautiful Mahsuri, who had been unjustly sentenced to a cruel death, and who had cursed the islands as she died. He caused a search to be made for her grave, and when it was found, totally neglected, Tunku collected donations to meet the cost of providing a white marble covering and an inscribed headstone. New life returned to Langkawi, and Tunku declared that the period of Mahsuri's curse had expired. S.W. Jones, MCS, who was acting British Adviser, Kedah, visited Langkawi and was so impressed by Tunku's initiative that he persuaded the Council of State to agree to the transfer of Tunku, on promotion, to be District Officer of Sungei Patani, the second most important district in the State.

Langkawi had been a kind of Shangri-la for Violet. She had adapted herself to its isolation, and to an inexhaustible programme of picnics. But Sungei Patani was a busy, cosmopolitan town, the centre of a large district, in which Tunku's every moment was fully occupied. Violet was no longer happy and Tunku had little time to spare to search for a remedy. Early in 1937, she sailed for England and resumed the management of her restaurant in London. When Tunku went to London in 1939 he met Violet again and they decided on an amicable divorce. Violet later married an American who had gone to England with the United States armed forces and who held the post of Judge Advocate.

Tunku very soon became the most popular District Officer Sungei Patani had ever known. His house was open to visitors with problems, day and night, at any hour, and he was constantly on the

move. The town had only a small timber mosque. Tunku opened a fund to meet the cost of building a much larger brick structure. He stood in the river with other volunteers to help cut *bakau* wood for piling. Tunku had been transferred before the Mosque was completed, but it was named "Al-Rahmaniah" after him. Tunku also associated himself closely with the sporting activities of the district, and he revived an inter-state tournament between Kedah and Perak, which he had initiated when he was in Kuala Nerang. Raja Muda Abdul Aziz captained the Perak team while Tunku led Kedah. The teams met in Sungei Patani over a long weekend. The tournament included tennis, football, badminton and golf. Tunku's team won by a narrow margin.

As District Officer, Tunku received instructions from the State Secretariat to implement official decisions. Sometimes he disagreed with the instructions and wrote to the Secretary to the Government expressing his views, although, as he anticipated, they were ignored. After some time he was summoned to Alor Setar and after a stormy interview, which was attended by Mohamed Shariff and the substantive British Adviser, J.D. Hall, he was threatened with disciplinary action if he continued to oppose decisions taken by the state government. The warning only served to stiffen his freedom of thought, and a crisis was reached when all district officers were ordered to enforce a new and arbitrary scheme, introduced by the Kedah Commissioner of Police, which required all taxi drivers to surrender their individual licences and to become members of a transport company. Tunku received complaints from taxi drivers in Sungei Patani, who protested that they would lose their regular source of livelihood if they followed the new instructions. He addressed a gathering of taxi drivers in front of the rest house in Sungei Patani and advised them to continue to operate their taxis, and to reject the new scheme. When some of the taxi drivers were brought to the Magistrate's Court, where Tunku was on the bench, he cautioned and discharged them despite vigorous protest from the Officer-in-Charge of the Police District. The Commissioner of Police, Kedah then called on the Secretary to the Government and

Tunku received an order to proceed on transfer to Kulim as District Officer, at twenty-four hours' notice. The next morning a convoy of about forty taxis escorted him to Kulim, a distance of about forty miles. In Kulim, his predecessor had already enforced the government order and there was nothing he could do to help. The people of Sungei Patani never forgot Tunku and his memorable term as District Officer, and when the first Federal Elections were held in 1955, he chose Kuala Muda as his constituency and the voters gave him a landslide victory.

Tunku had been happy in Sungei Patani, but now, even though he had many friends in Kulim, he felt that he was in disgrace and that the hostility of the Secretary to the Government would prejudice any prospect of future advancement. He decided to apply for long leave in order to return to London and to sit once more for the Bar Examination. He planned to leave the Civil Service and to enter private practice as soon as he had obtained a Law Degree. He now had a new incentive, and in the first year in London, in 1939, he succeeded in passing the Part One Examination. But in Europe, Adolf Hitler had invaded Poland and Britain declared war on Germany. He was recalled to Malaya and was ordered to resume duty as District Officer in Kulim, where he remained for the next three years.

Tunku's mother renewed her appeals to him to remarry, and with her blessing he chose a diminutive beauty, named Sharifa Roziah, the daughter of Syed Alwi Barakhbar of Alor Setar. Tunku was warmly welcomed on his return to Kulim. His friends included Malays, Chinese, European rubber planters and Air Force personnel who were stationed at Butterworth. The war in Europe was remote, and few Malayans believed that it would ever spread to the Far East. But Civil Defence schemes were prepared in Singapore and were sent to Kedah for implementation by district officers. They were given a very low order of priority locally. Tunku was appointed Deputy Director of Air Raid Precautions for South Kedah and was issued a dark green uniform and a steel helmet. An air raid on Kulim seems a fantasy to others, but Tunku, guided by his instinct, alone

among the district officers in Kedah, recognized the need to prepare for the evacuation of civilians in the event of invasion, and in the middle of 1941 he gave orders for the construction of six "long houses", made of round timber and attap thatch, on a low hill about two miles from the town. Funds for this work had been refused by the State Secretariat, and Tunku therefore invited donations from local town dwellers, who would benefit if evacuation became necessary. Japanese intelligence agents, posing as photographers and hairdressers, had been a feature of every sizeable town in the peninsular for the past three years. In Kedah they moved about freely on second-hand bicycles and sent their photographs and sketch maps to the Japanese Consuls in Siam and Singapore, for onward transmission to Tokyo. Their accurate record of jungle tracks, roads and bridges were of considerable value to the invading forces.

By October 1941, British troops had prepared defensive positions in North Kedah, and air fields at Sungei Patani and Butterworth were alive with fighters and bombers. Kedah was evidently expected to be a front-line area. The war, it seemed, would be a duel between Titans, Britain and Japan, but the people of Kedah could not expect to escape unscathed. In *kampongs* and coffeeshops, a Malay proverb passed from mouth to mouth: "*Gajah sama gajah berjuang, pelanduk mati ditengah-tengah*" (when elephants battle, if a mousedeer strays in between, it will be killed).

5.
1941 – 1945

- I. Abduction of the Sultan.**
- II. Fruitless Search in Singapore.**
- III. Revenge of a Japanese General.**
- IV. Education Without Books.**
- V. Welfare Service for Refugees from the Burmese Death Railway.**

TUNKU received a telephone call in his house in Kulim at half past seven on the morning of December 8, 1941. It was from a friend in Sungei Patani. "The Japanese planes have just attacked Sungei Patani airfield. We can see a lot of black smoke, but no British planes have gone up to retaliate. They seem to have been taken by surprise."

The attack was the first incident in the Japanese invasion of Kedah, and was quickly followed by the advance of General Yamashita's army which had landed unopposed on beaches near Singgora the previous night. A second assault force came ashore, unopposed, on the coast of Patani, and advanced towards Betong and Kroh. A third but smaller force landed close to Kota Bharu in Kelantan despite vigorous opposition. Though not yet aware of the extent of the Japanese attack, Tunku went to his office and ordered a general alert for his air wardens. A little later that morning he met the leading shopkeepers and advised them to prepare to evacuate

their families to the "Long Houses". Apart from these precautions, life in Kulim followed its usual pattern.

But in Alor Setar, only about ten miles south of the British Defence headquarters at Jitra, work came to a halt. Shops and offices closed, and town dwellers hurried to nearby *kampongs*. The Regent, the British Adviser, a Senior Army Officer, the Commissioner of Police and a few very senior Malay officials met in the Balai Besar. Their discussions were top secret.

Tunku kept in touch with Alor Setar by telephone. His chief contact was his brother-in-law, Syed Omar, who was the State Treasurer. Tunku Badlishah had succeeded Tunku Mahmud as Regent in 1937 when the latter died. He was now in control, since Sultan Abdul Hamid, although still alive, was a total invalid. Mohamed Shariff, his trusted adviser, was the Secretary to the Government.

At about nine o'clock on the night of the invasion, Syed Omar telephoned Tunku and told him that the Regent, in consultation with the most senior Military Police and Civil officials had decided to evacuate the seventy-seven-year-old Sultan to Penang, and thence to Singapore. Three nights earlier, in a vivid dream, Tunku heard his father's voice calling his name, "Putra, Putra, tolong Aku." In his dream, Tunku followed the direction of the voice, but could not see his father. In his dream the voice seemed to come from a tree outside the house. Tunku, while still in his dream, rushed out of the house towards a *germai* tree and was just in time to catch his father as he dropped from a branch above him.

It was only when Tunku received Syed Omar's telephone message that he understood the significance of his dream.

Tunku disagreed profoundly with the decision that his father, the Sultan, should be evacuated to Penang to avoid capture by the Japanese. He argued that the Sultan should remain with his people, though not necessarily in Alor Setar. Syed Omar replied that the decision had been taken by the Government and could not be altered.

Frustrated but defiant, Tunku sat alone in his house in Kulim. How could he prevent his father's removal? A plan began to hatch in his mind. He decided to ambush the Royal convoy and kidnap his

father, come what may. He telephoned Syed Omar and asked to be informed as soon as the time of departure of the Sultan from Alor Setar was known. Tunku then got into his car and drove rapidly to a little village called Sidim, twenty miles inland. On his arrival he told the Penghulu to prepare to receive the Sultan the very next morning. On his return to Kulim he telephoned his friend, Syed Abu Bakar al-Idrus, a District Health Inspector, and asked him to come to his house immediately.

Tunku then explained what he intended to do and asked Syed Abu Bakar for his help. It was then midnight.

Very early the next morning Syed Omar informed Tunku through the telephone that the Royal convoy would leave Alor Setar at seven o'clock. As it turned out when the convoy reached Gurun the Japanese warplanes were seen overhead going towards the island of Penang. The British military officer in charge of the convoy decided that they would phase out all the vehicles at two-minute intervals and proceed towards Penang. The main road south from Alor Setar runs through apparently limitless acres of paddy land, before reaching Butterworth and the Penang Ferry. Fifty miles from the capital there is a junction, at a place called Kepala Batas, where a road leads to Butterworth. Tunku drove to the road junction, soon after seven o'clock in the morning and parked his car fifty yards along the road to Kulim. Syed Abu Bakar was with him. There was an empty hut at the road junction. Tunku and Syed Abu Bakar stood just inside the hut, so that they could watch the main road without attracting the attention of any passing military or police. They wore Air Raid Precaution uniforms and steel helmets. Before long, two police jeeps drove past: they were the head of the convoy. What Tunku did not know was the new arrangement to phase out the convoy.

Tunku waited. There was an unexpected interval before the appearance of the next car, containing senior civil servants. The Regent followed two minutes later. His car had just disappeared down the road to Butterworth when the Rolls-Royce came into view. Tunku walked quickly to the centre of the road, held up his right

hand like a traffic constable, and stopped the yellow car. Opening the door nearest the Sultan, Tunku removed his helmet, made himself known to his father, and told him and Tunku Yahaya, a younger half-brother, who was acting as Assistant District Commissioner to the Sultan, that there had been a sudden change of plan and that the Sultan was to come to Kulim. The Sultan nodded approval. Tunku told the driver to follow him, he then ran to his car and told Syed Abu Bakar to drive ahead to Kulim, while he accompanied his father in the Rolls-Royce. Just as the yellow car turned left into the road leading to Kulim, the next vehicle in the extended column appeared in the distance, but drove straight on to Penang.

When the rest of the convoy, including the Regent and his family, reached the ferry in Butterworth, they discovered that the Sultan was not with them. Japanese planes were not far away and it was decided to proceed at once to Penang and then to try to discover the ruler's whereabouts.

Tunku took his father to his house and made him comfortable in a large armchair. The Sultan had visited him in Kulim before, accompanied by Tunku's mother, and he felt quite at ease. Tunku then confessed that he had abducted his father so that he could remain with his people. Tunku said that he believed that this would be the Sultan's own wish. The Sultan nodded again. Sultan Abdul Hamid was dressed in a coat and trousers, a shirt and necktie. Tunku then led the Sultan to a spare room, helped him to take off his coat and tie and asked him to lie down and rest.

Soon afterwards, the Regent telephoned from Penang to the Kulim Police Station and was told that the Sultan was in Tunku's house. The Regent then telephoned Tunku and ordered him to bring the Sultan to Penang immediately.

Tunku replied quietly but firmly: "I will not do so. And if you try to remove His Highness it will only be done over my dead body." There was a short interval of silence, the Regent then continued. He was very angry and his voice rose much above the quiet tone in which he normally spoke. "Adik, Man. You have committed a serious crime and if you don't deliver the Sultan to Penang within one

hour you will be arrested by the Police." Tunku replied, "Come and take him, over my dead body". The telephone line was then disconnected.

It was midday. Tunku said nothing of the conversation with the Regent to his father or his wife. His wife served lunch and immediately after the meal Tunku asked his father's permission to take him to Sidim. As before, the Sultan did not speak, but he nodded his head in agreement. The Sultan and Tunku Yahaya re-entered the Rolls-Royce, Tunku and Syed Abu Bakar led the way in Tunku's car along the narrow road. Penghulu Manap of Sidim had assembled all the young men of the neighbourhood and they were waiting outside his house when the two cars drove up. All the men carried spears, keris or long *parangs*, one or two had brought single-barrelled shot-guns. Tunku left the driver's seat of his car and walked quickly across to where the elderly Penghulu was standing. With a quiet "Follow me", Tunku led the Penghulu to the door of the Sultan's car, opened it, raised his hands in a *sembah* and said, "Your Highness, this is Penghulu Manap of Sidim. I beg Your Highness graciously to enter his house and to remain here for a day or two, until the danger of an attack by the Japanese army has passed." Tunku then helped his father to step down from the car and to enter the house, where a bed, screened by a curtain had been prepared. The single-storey house was made of timber, and was raised three feet from the ground on wooden pillars. Tunku then told the villagers that the Japanese army had invaded Kedah and had occupied Alor Setar. He thanked them for their willingness to help and asked them to protect the Sultan, if necessary, with their lives. Tunku then returned to Kulim. He took the Rolls-Royce with him, but left Tunku Yahaya at Sidim to keep his father company.

Tunku returned to his house. He was met by his friend Syed Abu Bakar, and by a crowd of Malays each of whom pressed forward, took his hand and kissed it and withdrew. Tunku stood on the steps of his house and spoke to the crowd briefly: "Thank you for coming here today. I am no criminal. I have helped our Sultan to remain here with his people. He is safer in Sidim than he would be in Penang. Let

us be patient. God's Will be done." Tunku went into his house and sat down alone. It was then half past three. He lit a cigarette. At a quarter to four the telephone rang. The Regent spoke again. But this time his voice had changed. It was the voice of a very frightened man. "Adik Man, the Japanese are bombing Penang. As soon as the air raid has ceased I shall come to Kulim. I shall telephone now to the Police and cancel my previous order, and I and my family will need accommodation somewhere in Kulim tonight." Tunku replied, "You and your family will be welcomed in Kulim and we will look after you."

The Japanese had perpetrated indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Penang. The air raid was repeated with greater destruction and loss of life on the following day. Later that evening the Regent and his family arrived in Kulim, visibly shaken, and were given accommodation in Tunku's house. The next morning, that is, December 10, Tunku took them all to Sidim where they were given accommodation in other small houses.

They were all in Sidim when the second and more severe bombing of Penang town took place on December 11. Hundreds of civilians were killed, proving how wise Tunku's kidnapping operation had been.

When Tunku returned to Kulim later that morning the situation had changed. The Police had taken off their uniforms and were no longer on duty. Tunku's first concern was to prevent looting, and he formed a Riot Squad with this as its priority task. The Kedah Volunteer Force had been disbanded but Tunku called all members in Kulim to come to his assistance. Their leader was a man named Ramdan Din, who in civil life was in the Telecommunications Department. These men formed a vigilante corps and Tunku arranged for them to patrol the town at night. This was necessary because although the Japanese army was still some distance away to the North, many of the town dwellers, Chinese in particular, had moved out to the evacuation camp which Tunku had prepared, leaving their shops locked but unprotected. When night fell Kulim was in total darkness. Before the British withdrew to Penang, they

had destroyed the electric power station. In the course of his tour of the town, Tunku discovered that the stock of rice in the shops was very low. He had a small reserve of petrol in his store and, with characteristic foresight, decided to use part of it to send a lorry the next morning to the Government Rice Mill at Bagan Serai in North Perak, to bring back a full load.

To add to Tunku's responsibilities officials in the State Secretariat, including the Secretary to the Government, had withdrawn from Alor Setar just before the Japanese army entered the town, and they came to Kulim to seek temporary accommodation. Fierce fighting took place between the British and the Japanese, but by December 16, the Japanese army had occupied the West coast of Kedah including all the main towns. The Japanese Military Governor of Kedah on assuming office was told that the Sultan was in Kulim, and he appointed Tunku's elder full-brother, Tunku Mohamed Jawa, to be the temporary Regent until the Sultan returned to Alor Setar.

The officer in charge of the Japanese Intelligence Service (the *Fujiwara Kikan*) was the first Japanese officer to arrive in Kulim. His name was Lieutenant Nakamiai. And on his arrival on about December 14, he enquired from Tunku as to the Sultan's place of retreat and began to make arrangements for the Sultan's return to Alor Setar. Tunku took Lieutenant Nakamiai to Sidim the next day and the situation was explained to the Sultan. Lieutenant Nakamiai remarked that the journey back to Alor Setar would be very uncomfortable. Every bridge had been destroyed by the British, during their withdrawal, and only very temporary repairs had been possible.

Nevertheless, on December 17, the Sultan, the Regent and his family, and senior officers of the State Government set off for Alor Setar with a military escort. The drive, along roads which had been shelled and bombed, and over bridges which were still wrecked, continued for eleven hours, and the old Sultan was completely exhausted when he eventually arrived at his palace at Anak Bukit.

The Japanese captured Singapore on February 15, 1942. Allied prisoners of war were confined in camps; locally enlisted members of the armed forces were segregated but not released. On the main-

land, relatives waited anxiously for news of their survival. Among these unhappy wives was Tunku Baharom, Tunku's full-sister, whose husband, Captain Raja Aman Shah, a cousin of the Sultan of Perak, had taken part in the defence of the island. He had held the post of District Officer of Port Dickson, and Tunku Baharom and her children had remained in Negeri Sembilan when her husband was given permission very early in December to be mobilized and to proceed on active service as a Company Commander in the Negeri Sembilan Battalion of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force. Tunku Baharom and her three children moved inland to Jelebu when the Japanese entered Seremban, the State capital, and as soon as communications were possible she asked Raja Shahar Shah, Raja Aman Shah's younger brother, to go to Tunku in Kedah and to ask him to try to rescue her husband.

There were several good reasons why Tunku should have declined to become involved. He was District Officer of a large district under a new and unpredictable master. He had no petrol, and there was no other way to travel except by private car. A journey of at least five hundred miles, through lawless country, controlled by irresponsible local military officers could only be undertaken at great personal risk, which Aman Shah's brother had shown no wish to share, and there were known to be at least 50,000 prisoners of war on Singapore island. To locate one man from among so many would be extremely difficult, next to impossible, in fact. But, as his sister knew, Tunku never considered his personal safety or convenience if others needed his help. Two days later he drove to Alor Setar, asked for and obtained permission from the Japanese Military Administration to proceed on short leave, and was given documents allowing him to travel to Singapore and back, and to carry a revolver. Tunku enlisted the help of Lieutenant Ramdan Din of the Kedah Volunteer Force, who agreed to be his co-driver and who knew a source of blackmarket petrol. They reached Singapore on the fourth evening, after many delays at checkpoints, and drove to the *Fujiwara Kikan* headquarters in Malcolm Road. While they waited to see a senior officer, Tunku met a Japanese named Ohta, who had been a barber in Alor

Setar, but who was now, openly, a member of the Japanese Security Service. He offered Tunku and Ramdan Din a room in his house. Tunku also met Ibrahim Yaacob, an ex-school teacher from Pahang, now in the close confidence of Colonel Fujiwara. He wore a Japanese military uniform with an arm band bearing the capital letter "F". Tunku asked if he had seen Raja Aman Shah or if he knew of his whereabouts, to which Ibrahim retorted, "Why did your brother-in-law fight for the British? I know nothing about him." The next day Tunku drove to Changi prison and to a large allied prisoner-of-war camp not far away, but there was no such name as Raja Aman Shah on the records in either place. They appeared to have exhausted all sources of information; they had also exhausted their supply of petrol. Even his Japanese barber friend, Ohta, could not help. But once again Tunku's wide range of friends came to his rescue. Lieutenant-Colonel G.Q. Jilani, whom he had known in Sungei Patani, as commander of an Indian regiment before the Japanese invasion, was now Officer-in-Charge of the embryonic Indian National Army in Singapore. Tunku went to see him, and although the Lieutenant-Colonel had no reserve supply, he emptied the tanks of some of his military vehicles and provided Tunku with enough petrol to take him back to Kedah. Tunku Baharom was still in Jelebu, and Tunku drove there, told her of his fruitless quest, packed her and her children into the back of the Chevrolet, and set off for Kulim.

The search had been a failure, but Tunku was never willing to admit defeat. His younger sister's distress and his own deep sympathy drove him to make a second attempt. He asked his two brothers-in-law, Syed Omar and Syed Sheh Shahabudin, to go with him. Ramdan Din again volunteered his service as co-driver, and Tunku was provided with fresh documents. Another source of hidden petrol was tapped and they set off early in March. On this visit Tunku decided to concentrate on the centres of Malay population on Singapore Island. There he met Malay members of the rank and file of the Straits Settlement Volunteer Force, who had served side by side with Volunteers from the Federated Malay States during the Japanese invasion of the island. He learnt that all the locally enlisted

prisoners of war had been segregated at Farrer Park and that Malay officers in the Malay Regiment and the Volunteer Forces had been confined in the Club House. Privates and NCOs had been released on the morning of February 28, but no one knew what had become of the officers. Tunku drove to Farrer Park, but the whole area was deserted. He made a final visit to Fujiwara's office, where he was told that there was no trace in their records of the name of Raja Aman Shah—a blatant lie, which was only refuted four years later, after the Japanese surrendered.

Dejected and defeated, they drove back across the Johor Causeway and were stopped at the military checkpoint. All the occupants of the car got out: Tunku had been sitting in front, beside the driver, his brothers-in-law behind. A young Japanese officer walked over to the car and put his hand through the opened front window and into the inside pocket of the front passenger seat. Tunku had placed his revolver there so that it was easily available in case of emergency. The officer quickly withdrew the pistol and aimed it at Tunku's head, at point-blank range. Syed Omar, who was standing just behind Tunku, leapt forward and thrust himself between Tunku and the Japanese. Tunku, apparently unperturbed, produced a Japanese document from his pocket authorizing him to carry the pistol and the crisis passed. But Tunku and his companions were taken into a military enquiry centre and it was long after dark before they were allowed to proceed. The Japanese confiscated Tunku's pistol.

After the war, further enquiries proved that all the Malay Officers, who had been at Farrer Park, including Raja Aman Shah, had been shot by the Japanese at Bedok, on the night of February 28, 1942, shortly before Tunku's second visit.

Tunku remained in Kulim as District Officer for another year, a reluctant servant of the Japanese Military Administration. In Alor Setar Mohamed Shariff demonstrated once again his talent for survival and was recalled to his former post. The old Sultan lived in the Istana Anak Bukit with the Regent. Much of his time was spent in the company of his religious teachers.

Friction between Tunku and the Japanese officials was inevitable and frequent. When Tunku heard that the bungalows of several European rubber planters had been looted, he ordered his volunteers to collect all the looted articles and bring them to his house. There they were carefully listed and then sent in a light lorry to the appropriate Japanese official in Alor Setar. The next day Tunku was told to come to Alor Setar, but instead of receiving congratulations on his devotion to duty, the Japanese Custodian of Enemy Property accused Tunku of stealing nine knives which appeared in the list but which could not be found when the lorry arrived in Alor Setar. Tunku had never before been called a thief, and it required exceptional self-control to resist the temptation to tell the Japanese that only a fool would make such an accusation. Later in 1942, the first Japanese Governor of Kedah was replaced by a more autocratic individual named General Okagawa. Tunku had received him on his first visit, but during a later tour of South Kedah he still expected the District Officer to await his arrival. Tunku thought differently and went to play golf.

Early in 1943 a senior Japanese official in Alor Setar sent orders to Tunku to have all the trees on a rubber estate felled and to have the land planted with cotton, using forced labour. Tunku informed the official that cotton would not grow on the soil, and furthermore he refused to force people in his district to work without pay on a project which could not possibly succeed. Tunku's blunt refusal brought speedy and vicious retribution. He was ordered to vacate his post as District Officer with twenty-four hours' notice and to proceed to Alor Setar. This had happened once before in Tunku's civil service career, but this time there was no escort of grateful taxi-drivers. Although there was plenty of public sympathy it could not be demonstrated. The order to proceed to Alor Setar was signed by the Governor. The penalties for opposition to the Japanese were multiple. The Transfer Order instructed Tunku to report for duty at the State Audit office, but gave him no appointment. He was not allotted any government quarters, although his own house in Alor Setar had been requisitioned by the military, and at such short no-

tice he could only find temporary accommodation for his wife and him in a very small house occupied by a friend. It was at this time that Tunku lost many of his treasured records, including his only photograph of Meriam, which he was never able to replace.

For more than a month Tunku endured this acute discomfort and humiliation. Then a high-level administrative decision, which had been taken some time previously, was implemented and the Japanese transferred responsibility for the Civil Administration of Kedah to the Siamese. Tunku was still well known and well liked in Bangkok and care was taken to include among the Siamese officials who were sent to Kedah those who were either Tunku's friends or acquaintances. Among these was his boyhood companion Tavil Gup-tarak, who had now risen to the rank of *Luang*, and was a graduate of Harvard University. Soon after the takeover by the Siamese, Tunku was appointed Superintendent of Education. The appointment was a sinecure, but his status was restored together with his house. The Japanese had closed down all English-medium schools, including the Sultan Abdul Hamid College which they converted into their military headquarters. There were no textbooks and paper in Malay-medium schools. Tunku decided to fill part of this vacuum by preparing a manual on good manners, which were so conspicuously absent from the conduct of their conquerors. The manual was dictated by Tunku, recorded by Senu Abdul Rahman, cyclostyled and distributed to all schools in the State.

In May 1943, while Tunku was still in Kulim, Sultan Abdul Hamid died. A few days before his death the old Sultan spoke to Tunku in a dream. He said, "Putra, I am ill." Tunku collected all the petrol which he could buy in the black market and drove to Alor Setar the next day. The Sultan was able to recognize him, but died a few days later. He was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Tunku's half-brother, Tunku Badlishah.

It was during this period that a new challenge emerged, at first scarcely recognized, which engaged Tunku's compassion, his philanthropy and his organizing ability. In 1942, the Japanese transported thousands of young male Malaysians, the majority of them *kampung*

Malays, to work on the construction of a railway from North Siam to Burma. The railway was intended to provide the Japanese with land access to South Burma, where they were fighting a prolonged campaign against the British. The mortality among these Malayan labourers, due to disease and malnutrition, was appallingly high. Cholera was common and lethal. At the end of the war, in 1945, it was estimated that at least one hundred thousand Malayan men died during this railway construction project: eighty thousand survivors were repatriated by the British.

Early in 1943, after months of increasing mortality and brutality, the first few Malay labourers, more intrepid and physically stronger than others, escaped from construction camps in North Siam and began to make their way, painfully and slowly, southwards. They moved through the Siamese countryside, sometimes finding temporary shelter and employment, but always emaciated and usually diseased. If they were recaptured by the Japanese they were executed. Japanese goods trains moved slowly south, carrying supplies of rice, and some of these refugees climbed into the wagons if they stopped at night, and hid there until they crossed the southern Siamese border. Late in 1943 the first few living skeletons arrived in Alor Setar. Their bodies, and in particular their legs, were covered with ulcers which gave out a repulsive stench. They were clothed in ragged *sarongs*, often made of sacks, and some wore nothing but a loin cloth. In Alor Setar there was an open-sided market building where villagers came to sell their fruit and vegetables. It was sometimes known as Pasar Yaacob because Tunku Yaacob, the elder half-brother of Tunku, had founded it before the war on his return from England where he had studied Agriculture. Other people called it Pasar Rabu. It was a meeting place, and the first refugees found it and begged for food and shelter. Few people could spare food, but the market, though it had no walls, provided better shelter than the slave labourers had been given in their construction camps, and they were reluctant to leave. But men covered with skin diseases were unwelcome even for a single night. Market officials applied for help to the State Secretariat, the District Officer and the Medical

Department, but no one was willing to take any official notice of the problem. It was inevitable that those who watched this new phenomenon grow should speak of it to Tunku; he was famous for his sympathy for the distressed.

Tunku visited the market, talked to some of the refugees and called a meeting in his house. Some of his "Young Men", including Mohamed Khir Johari, Senu Abdul Rahman, Syed Agil, Aziz Zain, Mohamed bin Jamil and Wan Ahmad bin Wan Omar, came, and agreed to help. The first priority was a shelter where the refugees could be housed in comparative isolation from the public. Tunku located a vacant space near a house belonging to the Religious Affairs department and commissioned a carpenter to erect a shed with long sleeping platforms which would provide shelter for a hundred. Tunku paid for the building and called it "Rumah Miskin"—Poor Men's Home. A regular supply of food was the next priority. Rice was always available but funds were nevertheless needed. Tunku and his Young Men canvassed potential supporters and some money and gifts became available, but from the beginning the major cost of the undertaking was borne by Tunku. The food was cooked in Tunku's house, under the supervision of Tunku's wife, and conveyed to the refugees by rickshaw. Tunku often visited the centre and in the course of time he, his wife and other helpers all contracted the highly contagious skin disease on their hands.

Tunku's Poor Men's Home provided an invaluable "staging post" where these men could recuperate and then continue their journey homewards, while others took their place. After a week or more in Alor Setar, men who appeared to be middle-aged on arrival, regained some semblance of their lost youth. Most of them had been enslaved when they were merely eighteen: few of them looked under forty when they returned.

Refugees continued to arrive early in 1945, but it became increasingly difficult to obtain donations to support them. Senu Abdul Rahman had written two plays: *Salah Pedoman*, about a young man who was sent to study overseas but somehow wasted his opportunities, and *Aku Berdosa*, a domestic drama. It was agreed that they

would stage these plays and raise funds through the sale of tickets. Tunku appointed himself producer; his Young Men took all the principal parts and supplied the costumes while others provided musical accompaniment. The pre-war amusement park in Alor Setar was reopened by the Japanese as a gambling centre and a company of professional actors and actresses performed *Bangsawan*-style entertainment several times a week. Senu's two plays were staged on nights when there was no *Bangsawan* performance. Although they were more serious than was expected they were well received. News of this enterprise reached Perlis, and the entire caste, headed by Tunku, set off by road in a lorry borrowed from the Kedah Public Works Department for a repeat performance. Vehicle maintenance had become almost impossible during the last year of the Japanese occupation, spare parts had ceased to exist, and early on their return journey they were obliged to abandon the lorry and to return to Alor Setar by train. It is doubtful whether the "Rumah Miskin" benefited financially from this theatrical enterprise: the costs of production consumed nearly all the income, but it encouraged other sympathizers to continue their support. Only the Secretary to the Government persisted in ignoring the disagreeable reality.

In September 1945, the Centre was still active under Tunku's supervision. One of the first British Civil Affairs Officers to arrive in Alor Setar was a Social Welfare Officer named Miss Blake. She had many other problems and responsibilities, but she asked the Secretary to the Government if she could visit the Centre, of which she had heard good reports. The post of Secretary to the Government was still held by Mohamed Shariff, and he took Miss Blake on a surprise visit to the Poor Men's Home without informing Tunku, and claimed all the credit for himself and his officers. Tunku was therefore never given any official recognition for his great personal initiative and individual generosity.

It may be a measure of the degradation to which these slave labourers were reduced by the brutality of their captors, and by their sufferings, that not one of all the hundreds of refugees who benefited from Tunku's "Rumah Miskin" ever wrote to say thank you.

6.
1945

- I. Interregnum and Administrative Paralysis.**
- II. Parachutes Over Kedah.**
- III. Communist Occupation of Alor Setar Foiled.**

IN MID-AUGUST 1945, Alor Setar was inundated with rumours: many of them sensational, few of them reliable.

Atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945 respectively. A week later, the Japanese Imperial Government in Tokyo agreed to an unconditional surrender. However, Lieutenant-General Itagaki, who commanded the Japanese troops in Malaya, with his headquarters in Singapore, declared that he would fight on regardless, but was persuaded to change his mind.

However, none of these facts were known to Tunku or to senior Kedah officials, but rumours of the Japanese surrender grew stronger and generated fears that if there was an interregnum, the well-armed communist guerrillas would emerge from the jungle and take the opportunity to seize control of the State. If they were successful, they were likely to victimize those whom they accused of collaborating with the Japanese, especially the police.

The Japanese army commander in Kedah, who remained in his headquarters, told Malay leaders who went to consult him that he saw no reason to interfere in the internal affairs of the State. Siamese officials, who had taken over responsibility for the Civil administration of Kedah from the Japanese in 1943, were busy preparing to return to Bangkok, and were equally adamant that the activities of Chinese guerrillas were no concern of theirs.

A period of psychological paralysis then appeared to descend on the State Secretariat: several most senior officers were not to be seen and the Central Police Station was evacuated one night and was left empty.

The crisis was no direct concern of the Superintendent of Education, but to Tunku it was unthinkable that in the State capital, of all places, authority should be rejected by those who shared its burden: the Japanese, the Siamese and the Malay officials. He assembled some of his trusted friends and called for volunteers to form an unofficial Vigilante Corps to maintain law and order, and to reoccupy the police stations. Tunku himself toured the town regularly on a bicycle to monitor the situation. Neither he nor any of his volunteers possessed a firearm.

About six weeks earlier, Tunku had received a secret message telling him that two of his nephews, Tunku Yusuf and Tunku Osman, had parachuted down near the Siamese border at different dates (Tunku Yusuf on June 25 and Tunku Osman on July 2) and were members of a British Resistance organization known as "Force 136", which had its headquarters in Ceylon. The news was followed by a request to Tunku to send Malay reinforcements. They were to go secretly to Kuala Nerang, where they would be met and taken into the jungle for training. The Malay name of their group was "Anak Melayu Setia".

Tunku knew of the activities of the communist guerrillas in the jungle, both in Kedah and elsewhere, but this message from Tunku Yusuf brought him the first definite information about a Malay Resistance force in Kedah. He gave it his immediate support. He sent small groups of young Malays totalling about fifty to Kuala Nerang,

telling the authorities that they were going to plant hill rice and tapioca to help remedy the shortage of food.

A Resistance Organization, which would transmit information from enemy-occupied territory, had been set up by the British in Europe at the beginning of the Second World War, but owing to the swiftness of the Japanese advance in December 1941 and January 1942 there was no time to set up "Stay Behind" parties in Peninsular Malaya and it was not until May 1943 that the first British Liaison Officer, John Davis, was infiltrated into the country by submarine. Before the fall of Singapore, leaders of the Malayan Communist Party had offered to help the British fight the Japanese; their offer was accepted, and some arms were supplied. Soon after the British surrender, some hardcore communists in Singapore escaped across the Straits of Tebrau and set up small guerrilla groups in South Johor; their activities later spread to Selangor, Perak, Pahang and Kedah. They called themselves the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). A Far Eastern branch of Force 136 was officially established in Ceylon early in 1944, its principal task was to supply these Chinese guerrillas with arms and equipment and to send them British Liaison Officers and Malayan technicians, with the long-term purpose of preparing for the reoccupation of Malaya, with the co-operation of the guerrillas.

Nothing was known in Ceylon of the existence of any Malay resistance, and it was not until the end of 1944 that a Malay-speaking British Liaison Officer by the name of Major Peter Dobree, was dropped by parachute into Upper Perak to explore the possibility of enlisting Malays into the Resistance movement. The response was so encouraging that more Malay-speaking Liaison Officers were sent in. One of the first was Major G.A. Hasler, who was sent to Upper Perak to receive a briefing from Dobree, and was then instructed to move across country to Kedah. He was later joined by Major Maze, an officer from the French army, Lieutenant Tunku Yusuf and Lieutenant Tunku Osman, and finally by Captain Derek Burr, who only arrived in Kedah in mid-July 1945.

Until the end of 1944 the only means of infiltration was by submarine. It was a difficult undertaking as the distance from Ceylon to the West Coast of Malaya was 1,500 miles. With the arrival of giant American "Liberator" bombers in Ceylon in December 1944, it was now possible to airdrop officers, technicians and supplies into Malaya in much larger numbers and quantities, both to the communists and to the Malays.

In July 1945, both Chinese and Malay guerrillas were informed by wireless that the British intended to invade Malaya very soon, and they were urged to prepare to disrupt Japanese communications. When the Japanese surrender was announced over the wireless in mid-August, plans were hurriedly prepared in Ceylon for the despatch of a British Military Administration. At the same time the top communist leaders in Malaya, notably the inscrutable Anamese, who was often referred to as "the Plen", and a young Malayan Chinese by the name of Chin Peng, decided to take the opportunity offered by the interregnum to try to seize control of the civil administration in as many states as possible. They quickly began spreading propaganda from the jungle, opposing the return of the British and they moved their armed forces nearer to the centres of population.

In Alor Setar, members of the Malay public became increasingly worried as news reached them of incidents in outlying villages involving communist guerrillas which included abduction of village headmen. One of these occurred at Alor Janggus, a little town about six miles from the capital. The residents of the town were mostly of Chinese origin, and a few of the younger generation instigated by messages from communist guerrillas on the fringe of the jungle, surrounded the police station after dark, and confined the police personnel and three prominent Malay civilians in the lock-up. As soon as Tunku received news of the incident—about three hours after it occurred—he asked his "Young Men", headed by Mohamed Khir Johari, to set off across country to Alor Janggus and to restore order. They arrived just before dawn and entered the police station. Khir Johari told the leader of the Chinese youths that he had been sent by

Tunku Abdul Rahman who ordered them to free the police and the local civilians, and leave the police station and not to interfere with the lawful government. The young Chinese leader was obviously impressed by Tunku's name, but he explained that he had received his orders from a guerrilla leader at Changloon near the Siamese border, and he would have to consult him before he could withdraw. He would try to telephone to Changloon, but it might take a little time to contact the head of the guerrillas. Tunku's emissaries agreed to return in an hour, and walked to the house of the Penghulu. Local morale was quickly restored and while his wife prepared a welcome meal, the Penghulu assembled a group of supporters and an hour later he led them to the police station, on the heels of Tunku's men, and watched while the local police were freed and resumed control. The Penghulu then provided a boat which took Khir and his companions back to Alor Setar, where they made their report to Tunku, weary but elated. They had proved that Tunku's name and influence were being accepted as a substitute for the official government.

News of the incident at Alor Janggus quickly spread throughout the State capital, and that night a crowd gathered on the open ground in front of the Balai Besar, calling for Tunku. When he appeared, the spokesman said that they believed that communist guerrillas were planning to enter Alor Setar and take control of the government. They offered Tunku their services in the defence of the State capital. Tunku told the crowd that he wanted to avoid bloodshed and violence. He asked them to be patient and not to take the law into their own hands. He added that his friend, Colonel Dara, who was serving with the Indian National Army at Jitra, had offered to bring Indian troops to protect the capital, but he had told the colonel to remain at his headquarters, and only to come if he asked him to do so. Some of the young men in the crowd were not satisfied; they told Tunku that they wished to arm themselves and be prepared. If Tunku was afraid to join them, they would act on their own. Tunku replied calmly, "Do not imagine that I am afraid to die, if my efforts to keep the peace fail, I will lead you against our common enemy."

That same night Tunku set off in his Austin Seven car with Khir Johari by his side, and drove to Kuala Nerang, twenty-four miles away. He had not yet finalized his plan, but he knew that the headquarters of Force 136 and Anak Melayu Setia were at Kuala Nerang and he intended to enlist their help. Twelve miles from Alor Setar Tunku had to pass through the little town of Pokok Sena, where the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army had established their advance headquarters and a roadblock. It seemed likely that this would be their base if they tried to enter Alor Setar. As expected, Tunku was stopped at the roadblock, but when he identified himself to the young Chinese on guard and said that he was on his way to visit relatives, they made no attempt to delay him further. He was known to some of the guerrillas as the man who had helped to save the lives of a number of Chinese from the Japanese military earlier in the occupation.

In Kuala Nerang, Tunku drove to the police station and asked to see the OCPD, Abdul Rahman bin Hashim. He was then taken to the Rest House where Major Hasler had moved from the jungle after the news of the Japanese surrender had been transmitted from Ceylon. Hasler welcomed Tunku and introduced his second in command, a French Officer, and Captain Derek Burr from the Royal Ulster Rifles.

Tunku explained the explosive situation in Alor Setar. He had discussed the situation with Khir Johari as he travelled the twenty-four miles from Alor Setar and had formed a plan. He now asked Major Hasler if he or one of his assistants would return with him to Alor Setar and go the very next morning to meet the Japanese army commander. The plan was to try to convince the Japanese that it was still his responsibility to preserve public order until the British returned, and that if he failed to do so, and serious intercommunal strife occurred, the Japanese would be held responsible. Such neglect was likely to be classified as a "war crime" and the senior officer responsible was liable to be severely punished. The Japanese commander should therefore be asked to send well-armed troops to take up defensive positions outside Alor Setar to prevent any armed

communist guerrillas from approaching the town. Hasler agreed to co-operate, but he told Tunku that he, himself, was in constant communication by wireless with Colombo, and had been ordered to remain at his headquarters. Major Maze, the Frenchman, was ruled out as he might have difficulty in being understood by the Japanese and Hasler would therefore send Captain Burr. Tunku had hoped to meet his two nephews, but they were both in the training camp, which was some distance from the town. Tunku told Captain Burr that there was a guerrilla roadblock, about half way to the capital and advised him to drive on another road, when he came down the next morning. Tunku and Khir Johari then returned to Alor Setar.

The Japanese commander, with an interpreter, received Captain Burr in his office. His face was expressionless, and he did not speak. Burr told him that he had received information from Colombo that British troops were on their way to Penang by sea and would be arriving very soon. He then described the situation in Alor Setar, and the imminence of a communist entry which would be fiercely resisted by the Kedah Malays. If this occurred, and heavy casualties were inevitable, the Japanese army commander would be held responsible. Burr continued, almost word for word, as Tunku had briefed him. He then asked the Japanese officer to send armed men in uniform to block the main roads leading into the town, in particular the road from Pokok Sena, and prevent any armed communist guerrillas from advancing, and to continue maintaining roadblocks until the arrival of the British.

The colonel stood up and marched stiffly out of the room followed by the interpreter; neither had spoken a word to Burr.

Japanese soldiers, whether officers or of other ranks, were not noted for their love of silence. A few minutes later, orders shouted fortissimo, echoed through the college buildings. Half an hour later the interpreter came back into the room and asked Burr to go to the front porch. There he watched three military lorries drive off each with a section of armed soldiers and a wooden barrier fitted with barbed wire. Burr's car then reappeared and he drove to Tunku's house to describe the outcome of his visit.

Tunku's plan was completely successful. When a reconnaissance party of communist guerrillas drove along the road from Pokok Sena at dusk, intending to find out how far they could proceed without opposition, they were dismayed to find that the approach to Alor Setar was blocked by well-armed Japanese soldiers. Reconnaissance along two other roads encountered similar obstacles. They withdrew and made no further attempt to enter the capital as an organized body.

In every other district in Kedah, communist guerrillas wearing three-star badges in their caps and calling themselves the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, occupied district offices and police stations and organized public rallies at which they announced that Kedah had become a communist republican state. There was no armed resistance from the public.

The situation would have been very different in Alor Setar. As soon as it was known that the communists had been turned back and had not returned, Tunku was showered with expressions of admiration and gratitude from members of the public, which his modesty brushed aside. The episode and the way in which Alor Setar was saved from bloodshed reflected so unfavourably on the State government at its highest level that no official recognition of Tunku's inspired initiative was ever proposed. But there can be no doubt that without his fearless leadership Alor Setar would have seen one of the worst catastrophes in the whole of the Japanese occupation.

7.
1946 – 1948

**I. The Sultan Surrenders
to MacMichael.**

II. Return to the Inner Temple.

III. Hart the "Slave-driver".

IV. Silver Jubilee Success.

THE SURRENDER of the Japanese was broadcast over the British Radio from Delhi on about August 17, 1945 and two days later the news became common knowledge in Alor Setar. Despite this the town people lived in a state of uncertainty for another fortnight. It was true that the threat of a communist takeover of the town had been removed, thanks to the courageous initiative of Tunku—that much was known and believed by everyone—but although government offices were opened again few senior or junior staff were to be seen, and there was still no sign of the rank and file of the police in the Central Police Station. A few Chinese guerrillas were visible, dressed in khaki uniform, but without arms, strolling in the Chinese portion of the town. Both Malays and Chinese avoided provocative talk or action.

Tunku continued to tour the town on his bicycle and to inspire respect and a measure of confidence in the hearts of the public. His "volunteers" continued to provide a skeleton staff at the Central Po-

lice Station, and patrolled the town centre after dark. In this hazardous task they were led by Khir Johari, Senu Abdul Rahman, Syed Agil, Mohamed bin Jamil and several of Tunku's other "young men". Very few people outside Alor Setar knew how the town had been saved from a bloodbath, and Tunku was the last person to publicize his personal role in that operation.

Hari Raya Puasa fell on September 9 in 1945. An unofficial amnesty was observed and some of the tensions of the past two months were relaxed. The British forces had arrived in Singapore, but were not yet available to enter Kedah. Lieutenant Abdul Hamid and the majority of the rank and file of the Malay guerrillas were granted leave and were reunited with their relatives. Lieutenant Tunku Osman had not seen his parents for ten years.

As soon as the short holiday ended, Major Hasler was instructed by wireless to assume, temporarily, the post of acting Senior Civil Affairs Officer, Kedah, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and to move into Alor Setar. Hasler had never had any official administrative experience, and he received the news of his appointment with dismay. Nevertheless, he sent a message to the Secretary to the Government, reporting the instructions which he had received and arranged to move to Alor Setar with his officers and the majority of his men, numbering about one hundred. Hasler also sent word to Tunku and arranged to meet him on the outskirts of the town and to drive to the Balai Besar together.

When Hasler arrived, the Sultan was not present, but the Secretary to the Government and senior government officials waited upstairs. Tunku led Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler, Major Maze, Lieutenant Tunku Osman and Lieutenant Tunku Yusuf up the curved staircase and presented them to Haji Mohamed Shariff.

Some of Tunku's stalwarts, headed by Khir Johari, waited down below. After the formalities, the Secretary to the Government invited Lieutenant-Colonel Hasler, in his capacity as British Senior Civil Affairs Officer, to a private room, where they conferred for about five minutes. Hasler and his companions then left the Balai Besar.

Tunku had invited Hasler and Maze to lunch at the house of his brother-in-law, Syed Omar, but he noticed, as they drove along, that Hasler's manner had changed. He was silent and seemed almost hostile. When they had entered Syed Omar's house, and were having cold drinks before lunch, Hasler turned to Tunku and said, "What is this I hear about your Secret Police? Mohamed Shariff told me that you have taken control of the Central Police Station." Tunku laughed. "Did he tell you where the regular police have been for the past month? They have been in hiding. And so was Haji Shariff and many other officials." Hasler frowned and said, "After lunch I will go and see for myself." Tunku asked Syed Agil, who was also at Syed Omar's lunch party, to telephone the Central Police Station and to tell his unarmed volunteers, who were still on duty, to disperse. When Hasler drove there after lunch, the building was empty.

Hasler, his officers and the majority of his men were allotted houses in a road then known as "Jalan Jail", later renamed "Jalan Day" and now called "Jalan Tunku Bahayah". Their principal task was the custody of "enemy property". Hasler remained in Alor Setar as officer commanding the Anak Melayu Setia until the last week of October, but he handed over the post of Senior Civil Affairs Officer to Lieutenant-Colonel G.W. Somerville, a former Forest officer, at the end of September.

At about the same time that Hasler and his men moved into Alor Setar, members of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army were allotted accommodation in government buildings at Bukit Pinang, a little further from the centre of the town. Both the Malays and the Chinese remained in their government accommodation until December 4, 1945 when about 120 Malays and about four hundred Chinese guerrillas took part in a farewell parade on the open ground in front of the Balai Besar. Tunku was present: Lieutenant Tunku Osman was the senior officer commanding the Anak Melayu Setia and the salute was taken by Brigadier H.C. Willan, the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Malaya. *

While this chapter in the chronicle of Malayan guerrillas drew to its conclusion, other more momentous events were taking place in Alor Setar and in every other royal capital in the peninsula.

The "three-star" guerrillas were not the only people in Malaya who planned to take control of the country when the Japanese surrendered. Groups of young Malays in Alor Setar and in other towns and states, disillusioned by the dramatic defeat of the British, and encouraged by reports from Indonesia, talked of independence and discussed how it might be attained. Malay societies were formed all over the peninsula with similar objectives, but with no co-ordination. In Kedah, a body called "Saberkas" was the most active. The name was an acronym for "Syarikat Bekerjasama Kebajikan Am Saiburi", meaning the People's Co-operative Company of Kedah by the Siamese. "Saiburi" was the name given to Kedah by the Siamese. Tunku's principal allies were all members of the society and he attended some of their discussions. But Tunku was already forty years old, many of the members were only twenty or even younger and they grew impatient and hostile when Tunku cautioned them against trying to obtain independence by force. After a time Tunku resigned from active membership and continued only as their patron.

On October 10, 1945, when the British Military Administration had established only a tenuous control over the peninsula, and the commanders of the communist guerrilla forces had accepted temporary amalgamation with British military units prior to disbandment, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Hall, issued his Policy Statement on a "Malayan Union". In Kedah both the principal Malay organizations held protest meetings and rallies. Tunku spoke forcefully at these, but he recommended opposition by peaceful means. He was nominated to be president of the "Persatuan Melayu Kedah", but, on the day of the election he was in Penang, addressing a different kind of rally, to celebrate the Prophet's birthday, and in his absence another candidate was chosen.

Sir Harold MacMichael, representing the British Labour Government, arrived in Kuala Lumpur on October 11 and came to Alor

Setar after visiting the Sultans of Johor, Selangor, Pahang and Perak and securing their signatures to a new treaty. The previous treaty between Kedah and the British, signed in 1926, prohibited any new transfer of sovereignty without the written consent of the Sultan in Council. When MacMichael came to Kedah he was told that the Ruler would consult his Council of State before holding discussions with him. While these consultations proceeded, rallies and processions in opposition to the treaty were held in every district and in the centre of Alor Setar. Tunku was one of the most popular speakers in Alor Setar, Sungei Patani and Kulim, but he was not invited to take part in any of the discussions convened by his half-brother, Sultan Badlishah. After three days of negotiations the Sultan followed the example of his brothers rulers, "because there was no alternative". Nevertheless, before he signed the treaty at 4:30 PM. on December 2 he declared that "it was the most distressing and painful moment in his life". The Sultan's surrender was vigorously criticized by the public and by Tunku, but MacMichael flew back to London, his mission completed, and the British Prime Minister announced that the Malayan Union would come into effect on April 1, 1946.

Tunku was despondent. A British officer named W.H.W. Little, who had held the post before the War, was appointed Superintendent of Education, Kedah. The State Government did not give Tunku any new post, and he remained a passenger in the Education office. Despite his immense popularity and his esteemed status as a Malay leader, he held no office in any Malay organization at a time when far-sighted planning and balanced opinions were of vital importance. Tunku applied for eighteen months' study leave and arranged to return to England to resume his law studies at the Inns of Court. He told his wife and children that if he succeeded in the Bar Final he would enter private practice: if not, he would never return.

Tunku disembarked in Liverpool on December 27, 1946 and travelled by train to London. He rented a small ground-floor flat belonging to Burns Hotel, in Barkston Gardens, Earls Court, and remained there for the next eighteen months. His room had a bed in one corner, a dressing table, a dining table, four upright chairs and a

long sofa. There was a gas fire to warm the room, and Tunku arranged to rent a cooking stove, so that he might cook Malay food for himself and his friends. England was still suffering from severe post-war shortage of food, clothing and petrol. These could only be purchased if coupons and cash were available. But coupons were never sufficient and Tunku received food parcels regularly from his wife and friends in Malaya.

Tunku's room in London quickly became a magnet for Malayan students. The Malay Society of Great Britain, which Tunku had founded before the War, had been revived. Mohamed Suffian bin Hashim, a young Malayan Civil Service Officer, was Secretary and Tunku was promptly elected President, with Abdul Razak from Pahang as Vice-President. Other students who came to London in 1947 included Raja Abdul Aziz (later Sultan of Selangor), Tunku Munawir (later Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan) and Taib Andak from Johor. Tunku also met and made friends with a Queen's Scholar named Lim Hong Bee. He had a brilliant intellect, but was an ardent communist. In their many discussions, Tunku advised Lim to go to China if he wished to experience Communism in practice, but not to try to introduce his political theories into Malaya.

As soon as Tunku had settled into his flat he made enquiries at the Inns of Court for a law coach. He was told that the best coach was a man called Colonel Gerald Hart, who had served in the war and had lost his left arm while in action. People said he was a "martinet", others called him a "slave-driver", but almost all his students had passed their examinations. Hart was able to choose from among those who applied and it was reported that he had rejected many overseas students, but he accepted Tunku. Hart had his room near the Inns of Court, and his students were required to present themselves there punctually at nine in the morning. Hart then allotted each individual specific sections or topics for study, and required them to produce written notes or answers the next day. Tunku knew from past experience that he needed others to read the textbooks with him, and to discuss difficult passages. Several of Tunku's friends came to his flat in the evening to help him. The most devoted of

these was Eusoffe Abdoolcader from Penang, who later obtained first-class honours at London University and eventually became a judge. Tunku worked virtuously with Hart five days a week, devoting his weekends to his favourite diversions. He never missed a Saturday afternoon football match at one of the London stadiums during the winter, and in the summer he sometimes attended race meetings. Soon after his return to London he renewed his friendship with David Rees-Williams, formerly of Penang, now Lord Ogmores, who lived in Croydon. He was then a prominent Member of Parliament in the post-war Labour Government and their friendship proved to be most valuable a few years later.

After a year, Tunku asked Hart if he was ready to sit for the Bar Final, but he was advised to study for another six months. Since Tunku's weakest subject was Equity, Eusoffe bought the standard textbook by Snell, and read it to Tunku. They sat together on the sofa, opposite the gas fire, with textbooks and notes on their knees. At six in the evening, Tunku closed his books, went to wash and then said his evening prayer. After his prayer, Tunku often cooked a simple meal which he shared with Eusoffe.

As the date of the Examination approached, Tunku suffered the tensions like most students. However, he possessed a deep faith in God's power to help him, and obtained a measure of relief from his anxieties in his daily prayers. The ordeal of uncertainty continued for another month after the examinations, and then, one morning, Daisy, his housekeeper, came to his room to bring him his morning cup of tea. He noticed that she had come earlier than usual, and enquired why. "Tunku", she said, "you have passed all your Law exams, and I wanted to be the first person to tell you." She explained that another law student living in the same building, had gone to the office of a well-known newspaper late the previous night, and had seen the results before they were published. He returned with the news, but Tunku was already fast asleep.

Tunku was not listening to Daisy's explanation. He was overcome with emotion, and tears trickled down his cheeks. He got out of bed, put on his dressing gown and went immediately to the tele-

phone. He called Abdul Razak and Eusoffe, and by 10:00 A.M., many of his close friends had arrived at his flat to congratulate him. That night, Tunku invited them all, and other Malayan students, to a dinner at Freddie Mills Chinese Restaurant in Tottenham Court Road.

Before Tunku could return to Kedah, he had first to be "called" to the English Bar. This ceremony required his presence at a formal dinner in the Great Hall of the Inner Temple, seated below full-length portraits of distinguished judges of old.

"Call night" was observed about two months after the examination results were published. The Treasurer of the Inner Temple presided: Benchers and members of the Inn and those barristers who belonged to the Inn and were able to attend, did so. They wore dinner jackets, black bowties and long gowns. The dinner menu of traditional British dishes was consumed by candlelight.

On "call night" a speech was made from the Bench, and the student who had obtained a gold medal replied. But in 1947, no gold medal had been awarded to a member of the Inner Temple and the privilege of replying was given to the oldest student. There was no doubt who qualified for this task, and Tunku was informed, a few days in advance, that he was invited to reply. Neil Lawson, a former gold medallist and a friend of Tunku, helped him prepare his speech and lent him the gown which he wore that night. Tunku had often made after-dinner speeches in England, though in less awe-inspiring surroundings, and he rose, genial and relaxed. He thanked his hosts for the privilege extended to an overseas student in this stronghold of British tradition. "It is possible", he remarked, "that some of you have overlooked the fact that I am not only the oldest of those who are to be called tonight, but the student who has devoted the longest period to the study of English law before achieving success. Tonight I am celebrating my Silver Jubilee as a law student."

The very next day, those who had been "called" were required to sign a declaration, undertaking to observe the honoured rules of legal conduct. Tunku was then free to leave for home.

8.
1949 – 1951

- I. No Post in Kedah.**
- II. DPP in Kuala Lumpur.**
- III. A Diffident Entry into Politics.**
- IV. President of UMNO.**

TUNKU sailed in the P. & O. *Corfu* in January 1949 and was met by his wife, children and friends in Penang. A few days later he called on the Secretary to the Government and informed him that he was now a qualified advocate and solicitor. Haji Mohamed Shariff, still entrenched as the head of the Kedah Civil Service, gave no indication that Tunku's success was welcomed, but informed him briefly that he could only offer him a place in the Kedah Legal Service, but the only appeal from Haji Mohamed Shariff's decision was to Sultan Badlishah and Tunku harboured no illusion as to his reply.

The State Legal Adviser was a European and Tunku was instructed to report to him for duty. Tunku's work was routine and he spent his days reading case files. As a minor compensation Tunku was invited to accept the chairmanship of the Kedah branch of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the premier Malay political party, which had been formed by Dato' Onn Jaafar and had expanded almost beyond recognition, while Tunku was away in Eng-

land. Tunku accepted the invitation gladly, but before long the Attorney-General, Stafford Foster-Sutton, visited Kedah, called on the Secretary to the Government and then met Tunku in his dingy office. He asked Tunku if he would like to take up a new appointment in Kuala Lumpur. There was a vacancy for a Deputy Public Prosecutor at his headquarters, and he would like to fill it with a Malay. Tunku was more than willing to exchange an unidentified position in the Kedah Legal Service for a new type of work in Kuala Lumpur. The Secretary to the Government welcomed Tunku's departure from the State, and the transfer was approved with immediate effect. Tunku's departure was an example of the skill with which the Secretary to the Government disposed of any possible rival. He had secured the key post in the civil administration more than twenty years before, and had retained it despite four major changes of external authority. He had filled many appointments in the State with his relatives, and so long as the ultimate source of patronage lay with the Ruler, Haji Mohamed Shariff had no misgivings. But the Sultan's surrender to Harold MacMichael in December 1945 had generated a new source of power, insignificant initially, but a source which he feared he would not be able to control or resist.

From the ashes of the Malayan Union, a Constitutional Proposal Conference had led to a Federation Agreement, and with it the creation of a new senior appointment of Menteri Besar, as the chief executive in each State. In Kedah, Malay organizations, headed by Saberkas, demanded that they should be consulted before this new appointment was filled, and the name of Tunku Abdul Rahman, while he was away in London, and his elder half-brother Tunku Yaacob, had been spoken of as desirable candidates. In December 1947, Haji Mohamed Shariff had advised the Sultan to refuse to consider any such proposal, and to retain the post of Secretary to the Government in Kedah, but he could not be sure how long he could continue to stifle these demands. Haji Mohamed Shariff was reputed to have an agent in every government department in Kedah, and he kept himself informed of the activities of Malay students in England. He knew of Tunku's success in the Bar examina-

tion long before Tunku returned, and he recognized the news as a danger signal and made preparations to meet the menace. Foster-Sutton's visit to Alor Setar was not fortuitous.

Tunku was allotted an office in the Federal Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, together with other Deputy Public Prosecutors. He moved into one of a row of hurriedly constructed single-storey timber government quarters in Kia Peng Road. His house stood at the end of the row, near the junction with Circular Road, now renamed Jalan Tun Razak. The work was totally new and unfamiliar to Tunku and he spent almost every night studying case files and preparing to appear in court the next morning. His genius at making friends once again came to his rescue. When he was in London in 1927 he met another Malayan law student named Teh Hun Yum. They became firm friends. Teh passed his final law examination long before Tunku, and then obtained a degree in Medicine at Edinburgh University. But on his return to Malaya, Teh decided to practice law. In his leisure time he came to Tunku's house at night and helped him to prepare the cases.

Not long later, Tunku's work received a favourable report and he was transferred, on promotion, to the post of President of the Selangor Sessions Court.

Tunku had lost contact with most of his friends in Saberkas, but political groups had proliferated, each seeking popular support for their demands for independence. Forty-one Malay associations from all over Malaya had brought UMNO into existence on March 1, 1946 at the Sultan Sulaiman Club in Kuala Lumpur. Their motto and slogan was "Hidup Melayu". But in June 1948, communist terrorists launched an armed rebellion from jungle bases, and the need for racial harmony and for non-communal politics became evident. This led Dato' Onn to propose to an UMNO General Assembly in May 1949 that UMNO should create Associate Memberships and admit non-Malays of proven loyalty. His proposal was only reluctantly accepted, but when he asked another UMNO Assembly at a later date to agree to a form of Malayan Nationality, he only secured tentative acceptance by resigning from the Presidency of UMNO.

The assembly, unprepared for these shock tactics, voted Onn back into office and accepted, reluctantly, his innovation. In the months that followed, Onn prepared new proposals to offer full membership in UMNO to certain categories of non-Malays, and to change the name of the party to United Malayan National Organization.

The next General Assembly was held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1951. Onn made it known that if proposals were not accepted at this meeting he would form a new political party. Early in August, Malay leaders discussed the crisis. They were adamant that they would not accept the new changes and they recognized that they must find a successor to Onn.

Onn had set a phenomenally high standard of leadership, ability and oratory. He had no heir apparent and no rival. Other members of the Central Executive Committee compared notes and admitted that none of them measured up to the national need. His deputy, Dato' Abdul Razak, was too young; Dato' Hamzah Abdullah of Selangor, the Treasurer, was too old; Captain Hussein Onn, the head of the youth section, was certain to follow his father. It was at this point that the name of Tunku Abdul Rahman was put forward by Kedah Malays. At that time his qualities and ability as a leader were almost unknown outside Kedah, except to members of the Malay Society of Great Britain, few of whom were involved in politics.

Tunku had shown no ambition to be a full-time politician, and when his friends came to his house in Kia Peng Road and suggested to him, informally, that he should accept the nomination, he was diffident. Abdul Razak, who was his close friend in London, and now State Secretary of Pahang, came to Kuala Lumpur and asked Tunku to agree, but Tunku replied that Razak himself was much better qualified to be nominated. Tunku knew that Razak had practised making political speeches, standing in front of a long mirror, while he was still a law student in London. Tunku had never made a political speech in his life. But Razak was only twenty-nine and he convinced Tunku that he was much too young to gain the support of the Malay masses in general, and of the existing UMNO members in particular. Razak's appeal was reinforced by that of Sheikh Ahmad,

the UMNO leader from Perlis and by two brothers from Johor, Sulaiman, a lawyer and Dr Ismail, sons of the former State Treasurer, Dato' Abdul Rahman Mohd Yassin and the leader of a "palace revolution".

Reluctantly and with considerable misgivings, Tunku accepted nomination and prepared his maiden speech in case he was elected. His message must, he knew, attract UMNO members all over the country if he was to retain their support after Onn's resignation. It was long before the age of television, before the worsening of the Emergency which led to the supply of radio receivers to rural areas, and Tunku relied on the Malay Press. His friend Melan Abdullah, editor of *Utusan Melayu*, promised him full coverage and helped in the preparation of his maiden speech.

The Assembly met on August 26, 1951 on the roof garden of the Hotel Majestic which was at that time the most modern hotel in Kuala Lumpur. It stood almost opposite the Railway Station, a hotel where all the Malay Rulers had assembled on April 1, 1946, ready to attend the installation of Sir Edward Gent as Governor of the Malayan Union. At the eleventh hour, Onn had persuaded them not to attend, and now he was ready to abandon UMNO and to form a new non-communal party. The atmosphere on the roof garden was tense. Malay dress was *de rigueur*, but the style varied. Onn wore the collarless *baju* with a single stud at the neck, much favoured in Johor. Tunku wore a white silk *baju* with a high collar and five gold studs down the front. Onn sat at a long table at one end of the hall, flanked by members of his executive committee. Delegates representing different State branches sat in groups: seventy-five were eligible to vote.

Onn made his farewell speech inviting his audience to join him and his new party, which would be composed of all communities, and to build a United Malayan nation. He was eloquent, aggressive and confident: he spoke for forty-five minutes and reminded his listeners that his resignation from UMNO was irrevocable. Nominations were then called for. Three candidates had been nominated for the post of President. Tunku's name was the first to be proposed. His

principal rival was C.M. Yusof from Perak. Voting was by show of hands. Tunku received fifty-seven votes, his nearest rival, eleven.

Tunku walked slowly to the main table. Onn vacated the President's chair and moved to another seat. Tunku smiled at Onn, not in triumph but as a gesture of goodwill. Only a flicker of response crossed Onn's gaunt face. They did not shake hands. Tunku sat while the Master of Ceremonies invited the new President to address them. The speech which Tunku delivered was in sharp contrast to that of his predecessor. He spoke humbly, recognizing the great services of Dato' Onn to the party and the country and his own inexperience. He asked God to guide and help him to undertake his new responsibilities. "The Malays," he said, "were never united under one leader until Dato' Onn formed UMNO. Now the task of preserving this unity has been passed to me." Tunku, however, criticized Onn's call to form a pan-Malayan party. "Who are these Malaysians that Dato' Onn speaks of?" Tunku asked. "This is a Malay country." The Malays will decide who should be included in the term Malayan. The Malays will welcome people of other races who give their undivided loyalty to our country." Tunku then demanded that independence should be granted to Malaya as soon as possible. If Indonesia and the Philippines with their multiplicity of racial groups can be granted independence, why should Malaya remain under colonial rule?

The speech made a most favourable impression on his audience, on all, except Onn's inner circle. They remained nominal supporters of UMNO but only for the purpose of sabotaging Tunku's assumption of responsibility. Tunku's speech and news of his election were given prominent coverage in the three Malay-language newspapers of the day, and Tunku continued to receive the fullest backing from the *Utusan Melayu*, which had the largest circulation. The paper laid emphasis on the fact that Tunku was the son and brother of a Sultan of Kedah.

Since there was no other business on the agenda, Dato' Onn closed the Assembly with this enigmatic remark, "UMNO came from the palace and now it returns to the palace."

Tunku and his friends went to his house in Kia Peng Road. There was none of the euphoria which followed his success in the final law exam: Dr Ismail advised Tunku to study the art of public speaking; Sheikh Ahmad of Perlis urged him to read the world news and to become more familiar with current affairs both local and overseas. "And you had better stop drinking alcohol," he added. Tunku's eyes twinkled with amusement. "If you had told me that this morning, Pa' Sheikh, I would have declined nomination." Then in a more serious vein Tunku continued, "People must accept me as I am: my bad habits and my virtues. At the age of forty-eight I cannot change them."

9.

1951 – 1955

I. Revitalizing UMNO.

II. Birth of the Alliance.

III. Merdeka Mission "On a Shoestring".

IV. Alliance Boycott.

V. Midnight Compromise on "The Alert".

VI. A Ninety-nine Per Cent Majority.

TUNKU'S experience of the cost of leadership and of his own generous nature should have deterred him from making any hasty decisions, but during the three weeks which had passed since he had been elected President of UMNO, he had taken three decisive steps. He informed Sir Stafford Foster-Sutton, who was now the Chief Justice, that he wished to resign from the government service and to devote full time to politics. He visited UMNO headquarters in Johor Bahru and quickly realized that the staff and most of the members of the Executive Committee were still loyal to Onn: he therefore closed it. He then set up a new headquarters in his own house in Telok Ayer Tawar, near Butterworth, and appointed a clerk, whose salary he paid himself.

Tunku was still President of the Sessions Court in Kuala Lumpur, with daily duties to perform, drawing a government salary and living in government quarters. He was still a Kedah civil servant, seconded to the Judicial department, and as soon as he resigned

from his judicial appointment in Kuala Lumpur he would lose both his salary and his quarters.

Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner, was informed of Tunku's decision. He realized how important it was for UMNO to continue to be in the hands of a responsible and enlightened leader, and that the party needed the service of this leader as soon as possible. A few days later Tunku received an official letter from the High Commissioner offering him a seat on the Federal Legislative Council, which carried an allowance of five hundred dollars a month. Apart from a modest monthly Ruling House Allowance from Kedah, that was Tunku's only regular income for many months to come.

When Tunku closed UMNO headquarters in Johor Bahru, party funds ceased to be available to the new President, and access to subscriptions also came to a halt. Tunku sold two of his houses in Penang and set off on a tour of state branches, driving himself in his own car. He soon discovered that UMNO members at branch and district levels had not yet been influenced by Onn's final resignation or his call to them to join his new party. Tunku possessed certain assets which offset Onn's superior talents. In the eyes of the average UMNO member, Tunku was, first and foremost, the brother of the Sultan of Kedah and a member of a royal house. In 1951, this still carried a lot of weight. He possessed charisma which affected even those who were ready to be hostile: he had a great sense of humour and an infectious laugh and he had acquired a wealth of experience as a district officer in Kedah, before the war, which enabled him to understand and sympathize with the problems of the rural population, who made up a large proportion of the UMNO membership. Onn had spoken to his audiences in Malay with polished fluency, at great length and often in an aggressive manner. Tunku had none of Onn's fluency or oratorical talent; he had studied for so many years in England, and more recently had held appointments where English was spoken, that he was not even fluent in Malay. But in the eyes of many *kampung* Malays even this was not regarded as a serious disadvantage. Oratory had never been a gift possessed by or required of Malay royalty.

Tunku was almost unknown to the Malay public when he was elected President of UMNO, but within two months of his election, he became the champion of a number of Malays in Singapore, who were under the death sentence, and he quickly attracted the respect of Malay men and women all over the peninsula. The affair had its origin in a riot which took place in Singapore, in which eighteen persons had died and 157 others were injured. The cause of the riot was a decision by a British judge to send to a Convent, a Dutch girl named Maria Hertogh, who had been adopted and brought up in Terengganu by a Malay woman, while a case for the custody of the girl was being heard. Six Malays and one Indian Muslim were sentenced to death. At the time of the sentence, representatives of the Malay community in Singapore had written to UMNO headquarters in Johor Bahru asking the party for assistance, and to support an appeal against the death sentence. But Onn, when he took the matter to his Executive Committee, opposed any intervention, and the matter was closed. At that time Tunku was still in government service in Kuala Lumpur, but he wrote to Onn and urged UMNO to help. His views were ignored. Now that he was President he went to Singapore, met Malay leaders there, found out that the appeal was still pending, and arranged for David Marshall, one of the best criminal lawyers in Singapore, to defend the seven men. When the case was heard, not long afterwards, it attracted widespread interest, not only in Singapore but all over the peninsula. And when the Judge commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment, the name of Tunku Abdul Rahman, as the man who was mainly responsible for engaging the talented lawyer, became familiar to thousands who had never heard it before.

While Tunku was making his first tour of State UMNO branches, Gurney, the High Commissioner, was ambushed and murdered by Communist terrorists on his way to Frasers Hill, on October 6, 1951. It was only about three months after the effective birth of Onn's Independence of Malaya Party. Gurney admired and supported Onn's political experiment, and had appointed him to the key post of Member for Home Affairs. At the time of his resignation

from the presidency of UMNO, Onn had predicted that the party would disintegrate within three months. But even before the end of that period it had become clear that although influential Chinese and some prominent Indians and Ceylonese had become members of Onn's new party, very few Malays had done so. And even the support of leading Chinese was cautious. Dato' Tan Cheng Lock of Malacca, President of the MCA, sat beside Onn on the day of the party's birth, but he adopted a neutral role and later withdrew. It has been suggested that if Gurney had survived he might have helped Onn to attract more influential Malays, and to encourage Chinese leaders to continue their support, but Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner General for Southeast Asia also supported Onn's initiative, without perceptible results.

Tunku held and expressed the view that Malayan communities could not be united within a single political party. He believed that each community needed its own political organization and leaders, and he was proved correct. The first trial of strength between Onn's IMP and the rival parties took place in January 1952. The government had agreed to hold elections at municipal and town council levels as a first step towards democratic government, and Kuala Lumpur was chosen as the venue for the first experiment. All the existing political parties prepared to enter. UMNO had been formed in 1946, the MCA in 1949, other smaller parties emerged later. The concept of a party which would unite Malayan Chinese may have owed something to the example of UMNO, but the initiative which actually brought it into existence can be attributed to two far-sighted men, Colonel H.S. Lee, the President of the Selangor Mining Association, who conceived the party, and Dato' Tan Cheng Lock of Malacca, who had been recognized even before the War as a spokesman for Chinese of Malayan origin and who gave it his full support. Colonel H.S. Lee was the chairman of the Selangor Branch of the MCA. He had never supported IMP, and he now prepared to oppose it. It occurred to him that if the MCA and UMNO formed a political alliance at municipal level, and fielded candidates who had been selected jointly, their chances of success would be greater. He

discussed the idea with his deputy, Ong Yoke Lin and together they met and sought the approval of Dato' Yahaya, the chairman of UMNO in Kuala Lumpur. They quickly reached an agreement. A combined committee consisting of three members each from the MCA and UMNO was formed, under the chairmanship of Colonel H.S. Lee and they selected twelve candidates, one for each ward, some Malays, some Chinese and one Indian, and then began a vigorous campaign to enlist support for the Alliance. IMP also selected candidates from the three communities. At the counting of votes on February 16, 1952, Malcolm MacDonald was present, and when the results were announced the Alliance had won nine seats, IMP two and an Independent one.

This highly successful experiment was initiated without the knowledge of either Tunku or Tan Cheng Lock. A press conference was held in Kuala Lumpur on the night the Alliance was formed, at which it was made clear that this coalition was solely for the purpose of the municipal election. News of the venture appeared in all the leading newspapers. Tunku was in Province Wellesley, campaigning for stronger support for UMNO when he read the report, and he received a telephone call from an UMNO leader in Kuala Lumpur asking him to come back at once for a discussion. Tunku arrived in Kuala Lumpur with an open mind. On his way to meet UMNO leaders he saw a leading member of IMP and asked for his opinion of the Alliance. "It will never succeed in practice. It is certain to fail" was the man's reply. Tunku moved on to be confronted by protesting political colleagues, and told them that he supported the Alliance and intended to help in the campaign in Kuala Lumpur. He urged them to do so too. Tan Cheng Lock was in a more delicate position. He was a founder member of IMP and also president of the MCA. Many members of the central committee of the MCA were also members of IMP and they strongly criticized Colonel Lee. But Tunku's prompt public support for the Alliance helped Tan Cheng Lock to resist pressure from other MCA leaders. He avoided making any public statement for as long as he could. Eventually he gave the Alliance his belated blessing.

The success which had been achieved in Kuala Lumpur was repeated in other municipal and town council elections, starting in Johor Bahru, where, to the chagrin of Dato' Onn, the Alliance won all the seats.

The new British High Commissioner, General Sir Gerald Templer, arrived in Kuala Lumpur just before the first municipal election. He brought with him a policy statement from London which gave further encouragement to the Alliance. Part of it read, "It will be your duty to guide the people of Malaya towards the attainment of a United Malayan Nation". It also called for "the partnership of all communities".

General Templer had served in Palestine in the Army in 1936, and brought with him to Malaya vivid memories of the horrors of inter-racial conflict. He sympathized with the demand of Malay leaders for independence, but he feared that Malaya might become another Palestine, and he preferred a programme for the introduction of democratic elections by gradual stages. He viewed Onn's efforts to form a non-communal political party with favour, and Tunku's vociferous efforts to revitalize a staunchly communal Malay party with concern. Templer did not yet appreciate Tunku's sterling qualities of sincerity and loyalty. He regarded Tunku's outspoken criticism of the British government for delaying self government as potentially dangerous. He conveyed these views to Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Lyttleton had a distinguished career as a soldier in the First World War. In the interval between the two wars he had been Chairman of the London Tin Corporation and of the Anglo Oriental Company, which owned and managed forty-four tin dredges in Malaya—the biggest tin-dredging enterprise in the world. He first visited Malaya in 1937 and maintained contact with the country and with his business interests until the fall of Singapore. He was a member of Winston Churchill's War Cabinet from 1942 to 1945, but became a member of the Opposition during the rule of the Labour Party between 1945 and 1951. When the Conservative party regained control in the autumn of 1951 Lyttleton was appointed Sec-

retary of State for the Colonies, and within weeks of his first appointment he flew to Malaya, at the end of November, to examine the Emergency situation first hand. It was he who decided that the posts of High Commissioner and Director of Operations should be merged as a temporary measure, and should be filled by a General of exceptional qualities. Templer wrote regularly to Lyttleton and it can be assumed that his views and anxieties were carefully considered by the Secretary of State.

The formation of an UMNO-MCA Alliance at municipal level, and its prompt support by Tunku, gave Templer his first favourable impression of Tunku. In other fields he found Onn more balanced and easier to understand. Tunku followed up the municipal elections by holding on February 3, 1953 a round table conference attended by leaders of the MCA and UMNO, in the Selangor Miners Club, Kuala Lumpur. Those who came were Tan Cheng Lock, Colonel H.S. Lee, Leong Yew Koh, Ong Yoke Lin and S.M. Yong. Tunku brought Dr Ismail, Sardon Jubir, Bahaman bin Shamsuddin and Syed Nasir Ismail, with T.H. Tan as Secretary. Everyone agreed on establishing a permanent alliance of UMNO and MCA as a political body with independence for Malaya as its principal objective. They also discussed the possibility of forming a united front with the IMP. Tunku arranged a meeting with Dato' Onn. Tunku brought Colonel H.S. Lee and Dr Ismail. Onn brought three lawyers, Yong Shook Lin, Ramani and Thuraisingam, and two Malay civil servants, Raja Ayoub bin Raja Bot and Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas. After brief preliminaries, Dato' Onn told Tunku that the IMP could only work together with Alliance leaders if they disbanded the Alliance and joined the IMP. Tunku tried to find some ground for compromise, but Onn was adamant and the meeting ended.

Tunku disagreed fundamentally with Onn's conception of a single political party in which members of all communities combined. He knew that independence could only be obtained by constitutional means if the main communities proved that they were united, but he also knew by instinct that each community needed its own political party. The challenge which lay before him was how to unite

the communal parties. He was convinced that the Alliance was the solution.

Since the Alliance initiative had been rejected by Onn, Tunku accepted the fact that the Alliance must pursue its own campaign for independence without Onn. At a meeting of the Alliance leaders it was agreed that they should concentrate on demands for democratic elections to the Federal Legislative Council. They drew up proposals which included a request for an elected majority and a firm date not later than the end of 1954 for the first federal elections. Onn, who still held the portfolio of Member for Home Affairs, told the Legislative Council, of which Tunku was a member as the President of UMNO, that the holding of elections should be planned as a gradual process and he questioned whether Tunku's demands represented public opinion or merely the views of a small number of politicians. These remarks were relayed to the Secretary of State and tarnished Tunku's reputation. Onn attacked Tunku and called his initiative "irresponsible". Tunku on his part criticized Onn's caution as "pro-colonial".

In August, Templer offered Tunku a portfolio in the Government, but Tunku refused it on the grounds that, at least for the present, the leader of UMNO should not appear to be part of the Government, while working in opposition. Templer accepted Tunku's reason for refusing the offer, but asked him to persuade another UMNO leader to accept a portfolio and to ask Colonel H.S. Lee who had previously refused a portfolio to accept it now. At Tunku's request, both Dr Ismail and Colonel H.S. Lee agreed to serve as Members, but they were severely criticized by other Alliance leaders for doing so. They replied that they had only accepted the posts for one year and they were ready to resign at any time if called upon by the Alliance to do so.

Although the subject had been discussed in February, it was not until July 1953 that the government set up a working committee to examine the possibility of holding State and Federal Elections and to make recommendations as to how they should be organized and how far they should move. The delay in setting up this committee

was partly due to the extreme reluctance of the Malay Rulers to accept such proposals and their deep-rooted fear of what might befall them if independence was granted. Templer was obliged to obtain the concurrence of the Rulers, and to report their views to the Secretary of State, before he could proceed.

When the names of the members of the Election Committee were announced, Tunku observed that a majority were Onn's supporters, who included Chief Ministers in States and senior civil servants. Despite the undeniable support for the Alliance in municipal and town elections, only a small number of Alliance sympathizers were included. During the discussions, the members found themselves in two groups. The majority approved certain recommendations, the Alliance minority disagreed and made their own proposals. When the Committee's report was presented to the High Commissioner, it recommended that only a minority of the seats should be elected—only forty-four out of ninety-two—and no definite proposal was made as to the date on which these federal elections should be held. Tunku's minority group asked that there should be an elected majority. The elected members should amount to three-fifths of the total—and they asked for Federal Elections to be held no later than November 1954.

Representatives of the Alliance all over the country attacked the Government's proposals and accompanied their protest with a new rallying cry—*Merdeka*—or "Independence". By then, recommendations had been forwarded to London, and Tunku, in consultation with other Alliance leaders, decided that they must ask for an interview with the Secretary of State and seek to convince him that the minority recommendations should be given further consideration by him.

Tunku sent a long telegram to the Secretary of State asking him to meet a delegation from the Alliance and to delay approval of the Elections Committee's recommendations until he had heard what they had to say. Onn attacked the sending of the telegram and accused the Alliance of ignoring the Malay Rulers by sending a separate delegation. On April 14, a reply was received from the Secre-

tary of State. He rejected the request for an interview and stated that he had been fully informed of the views of the Alliance as well as those of the majority.

Emergency meetings of UMNO and MCA leaders were held, at which it was decided that a small delegation from the Alliance should be sent to London immediately and that they should try to meet the Secretary of State. This decision was severely criticized both inside and outside the Alliance and it required great courage and determination for Tunku to proceed. Finance was not the least of his problems. Tunku called another emergency meeting of UMNO in Malacca at which he asked for financial help. A quantity of money and even personal jewellery was handed to him. It was agreed that Tunku would fly to London accompanied by T.H. Tan, the Secretary-General of the Alliance. Dato' Tan Cheng Lock could not travel by air and it was proposed that he should follow by sea. Abdul Razak was in the United States on a travel grant and he would go to London to join the delegation. Tunku and T.H. Tan left Singapore on April 21.

Before he left, Tunku was aware that Onn had dissolved IMP and had formed a new political party which he called "Parti Negara"—"National Party". Onn now abandoned his vision of an all-community party and directed his attention to the Malay community, attempting to weaken UMNO. Tunku flew to London conscious of the doubts of his Alliance partners and of the strong criticism from Government officials, conscious of attempts to subvert some of his UMNO supporters, but conscious above all that he must go forward if the granting of independence was not to be delayed indefinitely.

London in mid-April 1954 was cold, damp and cheerless. There was not even one press reporter to meet him, in contrast to the crowd which had wished him Godspeed in Singapore. Knowing how meagre their financial resources were, Tunku took T.H. Tan with him to Gloucester Road Hotel in South Kensington, and booked a double room. He then telephoned his friend of long standing, the former David Rees-Williams. He was now a prominent member of

the British Labour Party and had been given a Barony by the party in 1950 with the title of Lord Ogmore. He had held the appointment of Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for the Colonies under the Labour government from 1947 to 1950, and although Lyttleton was then in the opposition party, Lord Ogmore knew him and other Conservative Members of Parliament.

He was a valuable and influential ally. Tunku and Tan went to call on him the next morning in his chambers near the Inner Temple. Lord Ogmore promised to do everything possible to persuade Oliver Lyttleton to receive Tunku and his delegation and said that in the meantime he would arrange for them to meet other Members of Parliament, Labour, Conservative and Liberal. His persuasion proved potent. On April 24, Lyttleton replied that he was willing to meet Tunku and his companions. There was however one problem. He had arranged to leave for Uganda on an official visit the following day and would not return until May 10.

It was a long time to wait and it would stretch their financial resources to the limit, but Tunku decided to stay on. Meanwhile, with Lord Ogmore's help, Tunku gave a press conference at which he explained to an otherwise ill-informed British public the extent of the popular support for the Alliance. Meetings with Members of Parliament of all three parties were arranged. Tunku's relaxed manner, the fluency of his spoken English and his genial personality attracted his listeners and provided ample justification for his mission.

Three days after Lyttleton left for Uganda the Colonial Office released the contents of the despatches exchanged between the Secretary of State and the Malayan High Commissioner on the subject of the Election Committee report. Only then did Tunku discover that the Secretary of State had not accepted all the recommendations of the Elections Committee, but had apparently given some consideration to the views of the minority.

There was to be an elected majority, though only six. Fifty-two elected members forty-six nominated. But Tunku was not satisfied. He had asked for at least sixty elected members. It was unlikely, he argued, that one party would win all the elected seats. The nomi-

nated members, who would all be selected by the High Commissioner, might not give the winning party their support on some controversial issue. A substantial majority of elected members was essential. While Lyttleton was overseas Tunku prepared his brief and on May 14, Tunku, Dato' Abdul Razak and T.H. Tan were ushered into the Secretary of State's room in the Colonial Office. Tunku was the spokesman and explained in detail the Alliance views on the importance of a workable elected majority and on the need for early elections. Lyttleton, the elder by ten years, listened and then in a friendly manner advised Tunku to return to Malaya and to give his election proposals a fair trial. Tunku, equally friendly, replied that his mandate from the Alliance was to ask for an elected majority of three-fifths, nothing less, but he could extract no concession from the Secretary of State. He then told Lyttleton that if Alliance leaders were forced to resign by the Colonial Office attitude, they would leave the way open for extremists to replace them. It was a warning, not a threat, and Lyttleton was obviously impressed. There was nothing more to say.

Tunku had to fly back to Kuala Lumpur on May 20 in order to attend the debate on the Elections Committee proposals in the Legislative Council, and Lyttleton promised to send Tunku a written reply before he left London. The letter was delivered to Tunku's hotel on the May 19. It was beautifully phrased, but the contents could be summarized in two words—no change. T.H. Tan cabled the gist of the reply to the Alliance co-chairman, Tan Cheng Lock, and Tunku and he left London for Singapore the next day, leaving Abdul Razak to open an UMNO-MCA Merdeka Freedom Bureau, through which publicity material in support of early independence could be distributed in England.

In Kuala Lumpur, Tunku met members of the UMNO Executive Committee in the morning and the "Alliance Round Table" members the same night. The Alliance leaders accepted the view that the Mission had achieved a measure of success. Members of the British Parliament and many members of the public in Britain became aware, for the first time, that the Alliance represented views of

a majority of all communities in Malaya. This could have been achieved in no other way, and probably by no person other than Tunku.

At the Alliance Round Table meeting it was agreed that the request from the Secretary of State to give the election proposals a trial could not be accepted. They then prepared a resolution which was drafted by Colonel H.S. Lee, rejecting the proposals made by the Colonial Office and asking for the appointment of a special independent Commission, composed of members drawn from outside Malaya, to recommend Constitutional reforms which were necessary to prepare the country for independence. The final paragraph read, "If the authorities insist on implementing the White Paper on Elections, the Alliance, with great regret, will have no other choice but to withdraw all its members from participation in the government."

Tunku, Dr Ismail and Leong Yew Koh, the Secretary-General of the MCA took a copy of the Resolution to General Templer's office the next day. He may have been expecting something like this, he certainly showed no surprise. Templer read the document without comment and then looked across the desk at Tunku, with a twinkle in his eyes, "So, Tunku, the pistol is out!" He made only one request—that the release of the resolution to the Press should be delayed until he had time to cable the contents to the Secretary of State and to pass a copy to the Rulers.

In the privacy of another meeting of the Alliance Round Table the same night, Tunku brought up a delicate question. The boycott might lead to a wider reaction from the public, and the government might order the arrest of some of the Alliance leaders. With this prospect in view, were they ready to proceed? The answer was prompt and unanimous.

Templer's term of office in Malaya would end in seven days. Tunku knew that if the General had continued to control the affairs of the country there would be no question of any political arrests, but Templer's successor, Donald MacGillivray, who was still at the moment his deputy, was a different type. He had come to Malaya af-

ter a distinguished career in the Colonial service, his last appointment had been Colonial Secretary in Jamaica. None of his previous posts had prepared him to negotiate with an aristocrat who had the common touch, or a son of the Sultan with whom all men counted, but none too much. They were qualities which had eluded MacGillivray and this deficiency made it more difficult for him to understand or work in harmony with Tunku. This lack of compatibility persisted throughout MacGillivray's tenure of office.

Lyttleton's reply to the Alliance request for an independent Constitutional Commission arrived ten days after Templer's departure. It was a qualified negative. Lyttleton could not decide unilaterally: the proposal should first be discussed with the Malay Rulers. In the meantime preparations for elections, as agreed, would proceed. MacGillivray invited an Alliance delegation to King's House and asked Dr Ismail and Colonel H.S. Lee to continue to fill their portfolios at least until after the Elections Bill was debated in the Legislative Council. He hoped that Alliance members in the Executive and Legislative Council would also continue to serve until the debate had been completed. Tunku agreed to take these requests to a meeting of the Alliance Round Table the same night and to inform him of their decision the next morning. The Alliance was as adamant as before and the boycott went into effect. About one thousand Alliance members at all levels took part. It was a subtle process with results which were not immediately felt, but which were cumulative. It was widely criticized. The Secretary of State had called for consultations with the Rulers by the High Commissioner. Tunku decided that the Alliance should take the initiative and present their views first.

On July 1, Tunku, accompanied by Dato' Tan Cheng Lock, called on Sultan Ibrahim of Johor and explained to him the Alliance views on the holding of elections, the need for an elected majority and the importance of drafting a new Constitution for the country. The Sultan met them in the massive government office building in Johor Bahru, he also came out on to the terrace where two thousand UMNO members had assembled in support of the proposals. The

Sultan had learned the need for caution in constitutional controversies, notably those which involved the Secretary of State, and he gave a genial but non-committal reply, and agreed to bring their views to a meeting of all the Rulers which would be held in two weeks' time.

Attempts to break the deadlock were made by Michael Hogan, the Attorney-General and David Gray, the acting Chief Secretary. Both men were friends of Tunku and of many of the Alliance leaders. The Alliance would not accept a slender elected majority of six, but Hogan and Gray suggested that the five other members of the Legislative Council who would be selected by the High Commissioner and would be persons representing Special Interests, offered the basis for a compromise. MacGillivray agreed to this initiative and Hogan and Gray met Colonel H.S. Lee in Kuala Lumpur and he kept in touch with Tunku and Dr Ismail who were in Johor Bahru. The crucial question was whether the High Commissioner would not only "consult" the leader of the majority party about filling these five seats, but would accept the leader's views. Only the High Commissioner could give this assurance, and he was about to leave on board the British frigate *Alert* at midnight on July 2 for an official visit to the Rulers of Terengganu and Kelantan, in his capacity as the new British High Commissioner. The visit could not be postponed nor could a solution to the mounting inconvenience caused by the Alliance non-cooperation be delayed.

Tunku agreed to meet MacGillivray that night on board the *Alert*. Lee and Dr Ismail were suspicious and questioned whether the venue had been chosen with some ulterior motive. After a long discussion in Johor Bahru, five men in two cars, Tunku, Lee and Ismail in one, with Hogan and Gray in the other, drove in the darkness across the Causeway to the Naval Base in Singapore, where the *Alert* was at anchor, and went on board. It was 11:00 P.M. MacGillivray was more relaxed than at their previous meeting in King's House, but he would only give a qualified agreement since he would have to seek the approval of the Secretary of State before he could confirm his undertaking. But he agreed to recommend the Alliance

request to Lyttleton. He then sailed, two hours late, up the East Coast. On July 6, MacGillivray flew from Kuala Terengganu to Kuala Lumpur to sign a letter in which he gave an assurance that he would consult with the leader of the majority party before making appointments to the five nominated seats. The Alliance then called off the boycott.

Elections to State Councils with Alliance participation could now proceed and Tunku and his colleagues travelled tirelessly to prepare for the coming trial of strength. Tunku took Dato' Tan Cheng Lock and Colonel H.S. Lee with him whenever possible and in particular when touring the northern Malay states, and emphasized the importance of unity among Malaysians of all communities. At each State capital, the Alliance leaders called on the Ruler and assured him of their loyalty and support. The links between UMNO and the MCA grew stronger and on Tunku's initiative, a National Council which became the supreme executive body of the Alliance, was established. It took the place of the Round Table which had had no executive power and Tunku was formally recognized as "Leader of the Alliance".

The first two elections to State Councils took place late in 1954 in Johor, Dato' Onn's home state, and in Terengganu. In both states the Alliance won sweeping victories. Parti Negara did not capture a single seat. Tunku was now a popular figure in every state and in almost every *kampung*. He travelled constantly. He had a phenomenal memory for the names of individuals, however humble, and his manner of winning and retaining support of UMNO was in marked contrast to that of his principal rival.

Towards the end of 1954, Tunku was invited by the Director of Operations, General Sir Geoffrey Bourne, to serve on the Federation War Executive Committee. Its membership had been confined to military and police officers and senior civil servants. Now Tunku, Colonel H.S. Lee, Dato' Onn, V.M.N. Menon and a European, H.R. Carey, who was Member for Works, were added. It was Tunku's first direct introduction to the conduct of the Emergency and to the tactics of the communist terrorists, and it was a valuable experience.

The government had promised to hold elections to the Federal Legislative Council in 1955, and in March of that year it was announced that Nomination Day would be in June, and that July 27, would be Election Day. Many Malay government officers resigned in order to offer themselves as candidates, among them Dato' Abdul Razak, who was then acting Menteri Besar of Pahang. As nomination day approached, Tunku was plagued by demands that a high proportion of the candidates should be Malays—some UMNO members wanted the proportion to be as high as ninety per cent. Tunku brought the matter to the next UMNO Assembly and urged the members to adopt what he called "a policy of racial unselfishness". He reminded those present that it was only with the support of the MCA that UMNO had obtained Elections in 1955 and it was because of the whole-hearted co-operation of the MCA that the boycott had succeeded. Now, when the time had come to give fair treatment to UMNO's allies, some members were unwilling to do so. "The validity of the Alliance is at stake," he continued. "If these first federal elections injure our racial harmony, our hope of early independence may be jeopardized." The arguments were compelling and Tunku won a unanimous vote of confidence. Almost at the eleventh hour Tunku's repeated emphasis on the importance of unity during the elections brought him a bonus. The Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), which had wavered in its support of Parti Negara, now promised to back the Alliance.

Dato' Onn, the seasoned politician, used every device to hamper and disrupt the Alliance. He tried to spread distrust of the MCA among UMNO members and among the Malays in general, hoping in the process to attract more Malays to Parti Negara. Tunku frequently criticized Onn for these tactics.

On Nomination Day, the Alliance entered a candidate in every one of the fifty-two constituencies: thirty-five were Malays, fifteen Chinese, and two Indians. Parti Negara entered thirty candidates: twenty-nine Malays and one Chinese. Four other political parties entered a total of twenty-nine candidates: eighteen others stood as Independents. Two weeks before Nomination Day, Onn announced

that he would stand in Johor Bahru, and challenged Tunku to stand against him. It was a tactical error. The Alliance let it be known that the party would decide where Tunku would stand, and it gave their headquarters an opportunity to select a candidate who could be expected to defeat Onn. They chose Sulaiman bin Dato' Abdul Rahman, a popular lawyer in Johor Bahru. Tunku chose Kuala Muda, in Kedah where he had been District Officer before the war. The choice left him free to travel all over the country, by car, by lorry, by boat, by bicycle and on foot. He seldom slept in the same bed on two consecutive nights, but he was tireless, inspiring and confident. He paid particular attention to those constituencies where the Alliance had put up Chinese candidates in areas where the population was predominantly Malay. Dato' Onn also campaigned with feverish energy. He had resigned from the post of Member for Home Affairs in order to concentrate on the election, but it was too late. Onn no longer hoped to win a majority, but he seemed confident that Parti Negara would provide a substantial opposition. Tunku resisted invitations to forecast the election results, but he let it be known that he was confident of an Alliance victory.

It was only during the last week of the election campaign that Tunku toured his own constituency. Everywhere he went he was promised total support. He spent the day before the Election in UMNO House in Alor Setar and telephoned the Alliance headquarters in every State to obtain last minute reports. On Polling Day, after casting his vote, he drove himself on a whirlwind tour of constituencies in Kedah and then set off for Kuala Lumpur, accompanied by T.H. Tan, the Executive Secretary of the Alliance. He stopped at every main Polling Station en route, and only arrived in Kuala Lumpur at 11:00 P.M. making it possible for him to enter the town unrecognized. Tunku always enjoyed the company of his friends. He had only to appear in the house of an acquaintance to be given the warmest welcome, but on the night of July 27, he was exhausted and he wanted to be alone. Alliance headquarters was expecting him: many of his close friends were waiting anxiously for his return, but he asked T.H. Tan to drive him to the old Eastern Hotel



Tunku with P. Ramlee. ✓





Tunku with some of his principal supporters at UMNO headquarters. *L to R*: Dato' Hassan, MB of Johor; Sardon Jubir, head of the Youth Wing of UMNO; and Dr Ismail.



Sultan Ibrahim, in military uniform, stands on the front verandah of the government offices, with Tunku on his left and Tan Cheng Lock, in the rear, on his right, while the Mufti of Johor recites a prayer. The British Adviser, D.A. Somerville, is on Tunku's right. July 1, 1954.



Tunku at the UMNO General Assembly, on the Roof Garden of the Hotel Majestic in Kuala Lumpur, on August 25, 1951, after being elected president. Dato' Onn Jaafar is making the closing speech.

Photo: National Archives.

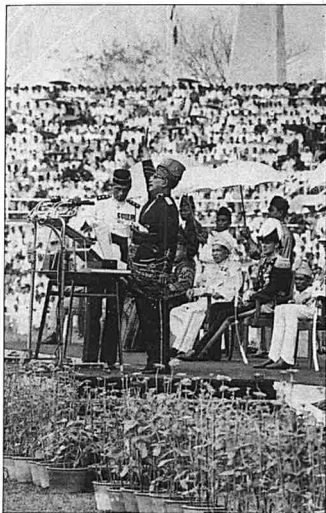
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Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State, and Tunku, leader of the Malayan Mission, signing the Merdeka Agreement on February 8, 1955 in Lancaster House, London. ✓



Tunku with David Marshall, Chief Minister of Singapore, and Tan Cheng Lock arriving at Baling for talks with Chin Peng in December 1955.



Tunku proclaiming Malaysia's Independence on August 31, 1957 in the presence of the Malay Rulers, the Duke of Gloucester and Sir Donald MacGillivray.



Sideview of the Residency, Tunku's official residence,
from 1957 to 1970.



Tunku making telephone calls at the Residency,
near the entrance hall in 1957.



Tunku calling on Sir Donald MacGillivray, the High Commissioner, on July 31, 1955.

Admiral Earl Mountbatten, Chief of the British Defence Staff, visits Tunku at the Residency on February 11, 1965. General Tunku Osman, Chief of the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff, stands in the background.





Baling, December 1955: Tunku with his team.
*L to R: Too Joon Hing, David Marshall, Tunku
and Tan Cheng Lock.*

2



Baling, December 1955: Chin Peng with his team.
L to R: Rashid Mahidin, Chin Peng and Chen Tian.



Tunku with Lee Kuan Yew during happier times.



Tunku with President Soekarno.



Tunku with Field Marshall Sir Gerald Templer in London at a reception given by Alan Lennox-Boyd in May 1957. Tunku was in London for constitutional talks.

Photo: Central Office of Information, London.



Tunku welcoming Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia in 1968.



President Richard Nixon
welcoming Tunku in
Washington, D.C.
Standing between them is
Ong Yoke Lin, the
Malayan Ambassador to
the United States.



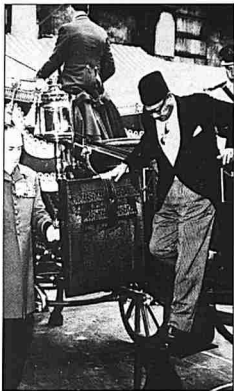
Prince Norodom
Sihanouk of Cambodia
presenting a high
Cambodian Order to
Tunku in Kuala Lumpur.



Tunku receiving Mrs Indira Gandhi,
the Prime Minister of India, in 1968.



Tunku with Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the British
Prime Minister, on April 6, 1985.



Tunku receiving the
Freedom of the City in
London in 1969.





Tunku tendering his resignation as Prime Minister to the new Yang di-Pertuan Agong in the presence of other Rulers and Chief Ministers on September 21, 1970.

X

Tunku embracing his nephew, the new Yang di-Pertuan Agong, on September 21, 1970.



A statue of Tunku outside the Parliament House, erected by Tun V.T. Sambanthan after Tunku's retirement.

in Ampang Road, where Tan had a single room. There Tunku spent the night, listening to Election results until the Kuala Lumpur Radio Station closed at 3:00 A.M. He learnt of his own victory, with a majority of over 20,000, and of Sulaiman's success in Johor Bahru, where he had polled 5,943 votes against Onn's 2,802. By 3:00 A.M. the Alliance had won 23 seats: the Opposition none. The remaining results would be known later that morning.

Tunku had shared a room with T.H. Tan once before, during the visit of the first Merdeka Mission to London. It was not an experience which he had intended to repeat. Tan's snores had kept him awake, but he was too tired to move anywhere else, and he remained in Tan's room for what was left of the night. A Chief Minister-elect, incognito.

10.
1955 – 1957

- I. Chief Minister.**
- II. Rapport with Lennox-Boyd.**
- III. Second Merdeka Mission.**
- IV. Confrontation with Chin Peng.**
- V. The Alliance Under Stress.**
- VI. Preparations for Independence.**
- VII. Midnight, August 30, 1957.**

TUNKU woke after scarcely two hours of sleep, sustained by the ecstasy of success. He rose, took a bath and said his morning prayers, adding a special thanksgiving to Allah for the Alliance victory. It was unbelievably peaceful after the perpetual motion and the multitude of friends and supporters who had deprived him of all privacy during the past month.

Tunku lay down again, focusing his mind on the immediate future. He must fly immediately to Johor Bahru and see two of his staunchest friends, Sulaiman and Dr Ismail. But before he left Kuala Lumpur he wanted to meet Colonel H.S. Lee and other colleagues and workers at the Alliance headquarters. He sat up. There was no time to relax.

While Tunku dressed, his first visitor arrived: his whereabouts had been discovered. The Alliance headquarters had sent him a summary of the election results. It read as follows: "Alliance, 51 seats; Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, 1 seat; and Other parties, Nil."

Parti Negara had been exterminated. Tunku put down the summary and continued to dress: he had forecast these figures a week ago. His next visitor was Colonel H.S. Lee. He had been the architect of the Alliance campaign strategy and a champion of tolerance. He now brought suggestions for the composition of the first Alliance Cabinet. While they talked, with the frankness of veteran politicians, another message was relayed to them, conveying the congratulations of the High Commissioner on their overwhelming victory.

Tunku was not overwhelmed: he was modest by nature, never arrogant. To make the headlines overnight in the world press made no difference to his character or his personality. No other politician in a colonial territory had ever won a ninety-nine per cent election victory: no other politician had accepted triumph with such gracious composure. After a brief but joyful encounter with his supporters at Alliance headquarters, Tunku flew to Singapore, where Dr Ismail, Sulaiman, Sardon Jubir and anyone else to whom news of Tunku's unscheduled arrival could be passed, were waiting. The UMNO headquarters in Johor Bahru and the road outside it was crowded: everyone wanted to congratulate their President. Tunku could only remain with his wife and friends for twenty-four hours: MacGillivray had invited him to King's House for a first formal discussion on Sunday, July 31.

Tunku handed the High Commissioner a list of eleven Cabinet Ministers: six Malays, three Chinese and two Indians. MacGillivray's approval was still necessary, but the nominations were so eminently sound that he had no comment. The list would still have to be passed to the Rulers for their formal concurrence: this would take a little time, but MacGillivray promised to arrange for all the Ministers to take their oaths of office on August 9. Sir Donald asked Tunku if he had thought about the nominations to fill the five special reserved seats, a reminder of last year's melodrama on the *Alert*. Tunku promised to bring his proposals in a few days time.

If MacGillivray noticed Tunku's old Plymouth car standing in the porch, as they said goodbye, he gave no sign. The matter of of-

office and living accommodation and transport for the Chief Minister had not been mentioned, although a directive on the subject could only come from the High Commissioner. All Tunku knew was that an office had been made available for him in the Federal Secretariat, and that he could occupy it the next morning.

On August 1, Tunku was received by a British Assistant Secretary to Government and climbed the wooden stairs at one end of the building, worn smooth by generations of civil servants. A phalanx of press photographers awaited him. As soon as they had departed, Tunku asked if he could be shown the house in which he was to live, since his only home for the past year had been in Johor Bahru. Whether by an inexcusable oversight or by deliberate neglect, no government quarters had been made ready for the Chief Minister or for any of the other Ministers. The Government Housing Officer, who was hurriedly summoned, regretted that he had nothing suitable to offer, but as a temporary solution he mentioned an old house in Hose Road, and suggested that Tunku might like to see it. They drove there, but the paintwork both inside and out was shabby, the furniture was worn and defective and there was an aroma of dampness and decay.

A man in Tunku's eminent position might have rejected the offer with acrimony, but he preferred to avoid a dispute on his first day in office, however well justified his complaint might be, and he agreed to occupy the house on the understanding that it would be repainted and, if necessary, repaired and that the work should be given top priority. Tunku moved into 1 Hose Road on August 8 and remained there for nine months. Back in his office Tunku asked when an official car for the Chief Minister would be available. His enquiry had, it appeared, been anticipated: Ministers, he was told, who wished to purchase new cars could be granted car loans by the Government and repayment by monthly instalments could be deducted from their salaries.

Tunku did not allow these frustrations to influence his first broadcast to the nation which he made on August 9 from an old wooden structure in Young Road. He repeated his determination to

strive for self-government and independence as soon as possible, by constitutional means. Others had been obliged to fight the colonial power before they managed to achieve their freedom: this would not be necessary in Malaya. The Alliance had proved that they had the support of at least eighty per cent of the adult population and that the three principal communities had worked closely together at all levels to win the election. He would take the opportunity of the visit of the new Secretary of State for the Colonies to Kuala Lumpur to ask him to arrange for constitutional talks in London as soon as possible; the present Federal Constitution was now unworkable. The Emergency continued to obstruct progress and to swallow up funds which should have been used for development: he would try to end the Emergency by a fresh initiative. He finally assured government officers who belonged to other political parties that they had no reason to fear official disfavour.

There had been another General Election in Britain, won again by the Conservatives. Lyttleton had become Viscount Chandos and had moved to the House of Lords and Alan Lennox-Boyd, the new Secretary of State for the colonies, had arranged to visit Southeast Asia and to be present at the inaugural meeting of the new Legislative Council on September 1. Before he arrived, Tunku paid two informal visits to Singapore and met the Chief Minister, David Marshall. They discussed the possibility of some form of Union between the two territories, but Marshall told Tunku that in his opinion Britain was unlikely to grant Singapore full independence to Malaya, and he abandoned the proposal.

Although Tunku had been well received by individual Conservative members of Parliament in London during his first Merdeka Mission, he still suspected that the party was basically "imperialist". Tunku was therefore sceptical of Lennox-Boyd's motives. But at their first informal meeting at King's House in Kuala Lumpur, Tunku found in the new Secretary of State an unexpected affinity. They were able to speak freely, they shared a sense of humour and when Lennox-Boyd commented that Tunku had been incorrect to speak of "my government" in the Legislative Council, Tunku replied, with

a chuckle, "we have not been given any suitable houses to live in and we have no official motor cars: obviously I must make it 'my government' as soon as possible".

Lennox-Boyd agreed to hold Constitutional Talks in London in January 1956, provided that the Rulers were represented, and when the Rulers held one of their periodic Conferences in Kuala Lumpur, at the end of September, Tunku sought and was granted a special audience. He assured the Rulers that the Alliance Government was pledged to uphold their position as Constitutional Rulers, and asked them to appoint representatives who could take part in preliminary discussions in Kuala Lumpur before the Constitutional Talks were held in London.

But such a quest for unity encountered unforeseen hazards. The eighty-two-year-old Sultan Ibrahim of Johor celebrated his Diamond Jubilee on September 17 and invited Tunku and all other Alliance Ministers to attend. They were encouraged to do so by Dr Ismail. But in his speech from the throne the Sultan went out of his way to caution those who, in his own words, were "clamouring for immediate independence". Tunku and his ministers sent letters, by hand, to the Menteri Besar, regretting their inability to attend the remaining functions, and returned to Kuala Lumpur.

This contretemps did not obstruct the plans for constitutional discussions, and the Rulers chose Dato' Abdul Wahab, the Menteri Besar of Perak, Dato' Seth, the Deputy Menteri Besar of Johor, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Majid, the Menteri Besar of Selangor and Dato' Nik Ahmed Kamil, who had been the Menteri Besar of Kelantan, but, after his defeat as a Parti Negara candidate in the elections, had moved to Kuala Lumpur and entered a legal firm. The Rulers also engaged Dato' Sir Roland Braddell as their legal adviser. The Alliance group consisted of Tunku, Colonel H.S. Lee, Dr Ismail, and Dato' Abdul Razak, with T.H. Tan and a senior civil servant, Abdul Kadir bin Samsuddin, as joint secretaries.

Tunku conceived the idea that the two Malayan delegations should travel together by sea as far as Karachi, and then fly to London. It was an inspired notion. Discussions in mid-ocean, divorced

from local pressures and protected from interruptions, offered the best possible opportunity to seek agreement on controversial questions. The Rulers' anxiety about their constitutional future extended to the subject of a single Ruler for the whole country after independence: they wished to be assured that the choice would be made by them, without political interference. The two delegations sailed together from Singapore on New Year's Day in 1956 in the *Asia*, a large Italian passenger liner. They met daily either in a screened portion of the dining saloon or in one of their cabins. They concentrated on a single objective: to present a series of proposals to the British which were unanimous. These included a resolution asking for the appointment of a special independent commission to make recommendations for a new constitution for independent Malaya. Before they arrived at Karachi their draft proposals had been finalized, and they entered Lancaster House in London on January 16 as "the Merdeka Mission", with a single leader—Tunku.

Tunku and Lennox-Boyd were men of integrity and sincerity, who spoke cordially and frankly. Progress was unhurried but positive. But there was no precedent for a Colonial territory to move, in one giant stride, from colonial status to independence. Had the Secretary of State been other than Lennox-Boyd the outcome might well have been different. Had the leader of the Malayan mission been a man other than Tunku, backed by a ninety-nine per cent majority, Colonial Office caution might have overridden the prevailing goodwill. Even the date of independence, for which Lennox-Boyd had warned of his almost pathological dislike, was written into the final paragraph, qualified only by the words "if possible", and on February 8—Tunku's fifty-third birthday—he and Lennox-Boyd signed the Merdeka agreement.

Tunku occasionally took the other members of the group to dinner at one of the London restaurants which he knew so well, but their most memorable night was spent at a State Banquet, given by Anthony Head, the Secretary of State for War. It was held in the ancient banquet hall of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea, and the genius who conceived the idea was Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, who

was then Chief of the Imperial General Staff. The hall was lit by silver candelabra: Templer brought his own regimental silver from Northern Ireland, and the food was served on silver plates lent by the Scots Guards, which had served in Malaya during an earlier period of the Emergency. Oil paintings of Charles II and William III, royal patrons of the Chelsea Hospital two hundred and fifty years ago, hung on the walls. Never before had the Army Council honoured an overseas delegation in such a manner. The army officers, headed by Templer, wore Mess Kit with Orders and Decorations. Tunku and his Malay companions, dreading the bitter cold of mid-winter in England, had left their colourful cloth-of-gold suits and sarongs behind and could only appear in black tailcoats and trousers and white waistcoats and bow-ties. The Conference had approved an Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement, and comradeship-in-arms was the main theme in the two short after-dinner speeches. But when Tunku sat down, ignoring protocol and precedent, the Malaysians called for a speech by Templer. He spoke impromptu, but with deep feelings. His short service in Malaya had been one of the most rewarding periods in his career. He retained the warmest feelings for Tunku and the Malayan people and he wished them success.

Tunku and his mission left London on February 16 and landed in Singapore four days later, after a short break in Cairo to meet Egypt's progressive Prime Minister, Colonel Nasser. The next morning they took an internal flight to Malacca where Tunku had decided to make his first public announcement of their success. February in Malacca was harvest time: a season of dry weather. At least a quarter of the multitude which had assembled to welcome Tunku had spent the previous night in the open. Any discomfort which they suffered was offset by the prospect of an eyewitness encounter with their Chief Minister. Standing erect, with right arm raised, Tunku rode in the leading car in a motorcade, past the ruins of a Portuguese fortress to the open reclamation ground beside the sea. His speech was simple and brief, muffled by the constant chorus of "Merdeka". Malaya, he said, would soon regain the independence which had been usurped by a foreign power more than four hundred

years ago. Euphoria swept the country. But Tunku and his colleagues recognized the obstacles which still stood in the way of real progress. One of these was, of course, the continuing Emergency.

Tunku had offered an amnesty to the communist terrorists soon after he became Chief Minister, and before he travelled to London. One hundred and eighty-six "Safe Areas" were named in four million leaflets, which were dropped over the jungle from Air Force planes. Tunku had no delusions about the fanaticism of the hardcore communists, but he hoped that the mounting pressure of the British and Malayan Security Forces as well as the significance of the recent general election results might influence the younger communists to surrender if favourable opportunities were offered. The direct results had been disappointing, but an unsigned letter in Chinese, addressed to Tunku and Tan Cheng Lock, which was stated to have come from communist headquarters in South Thailand, asked for a ceasefire. It also proposed that Tunku and Tan Cheng Lock should meet Chin Peng, who had been the Secretary General of the Malayan Communist Party since 1947. Tunku showed the letter to MacGillivray and General Bourne. MacGillivray delayed his agreement until he had consulted the Commissioner General and the Governor of Singapore. Then, with their agreement, Tunku issued a reply in the press stating that he was willing to meet Chin Peng, but only for the purpose of clarifying his amnesty offer. After a further exchange of letters, Tunku, Tan Cheng Lock and Chin Peng met at Baling, in Southeast Kedah, near the Siamese border in December 1955. Tunku had invited David Marshall, Chief Minister of Singapore, to be present. Some people, including certain senior Government officials, who did not know Tunku well, and were not aware of his previous encounters with communists in Kedah in August 1945, feared that he might make some concessions or even come to some secret agreement with Chin Peng, which would benefit the Alliance government. Their fears were unfounded. As soon as Tunku had taken his seat at a long trestle table opposite Chin Peng, he stated that he had only two objects in mind in coming to the meeting: one was to clarify, if necessary,

the amnesty terms, and the other to make it clear that he spoke for the people of Malaya and not as a representative of the British Government. He then invited Chin Peng to reply. The communist leader stated that he could not accept the amnesty terms because they did not allow communists in the jungle to enjoy an equal status with other Malaysians. He demanded legal recognition for the Malayan Communist Party, and told Tunku that members of the party would never give up their ideology. Discussions continued after dark without either side making any concessions. David Marshall asked Chin Peng, "If Malaya is granted independence, will your men lay down their arms?" Chin Peng replied that they would never agree to lay down their arms and repeated that he could not accept the amnesty offer. The talks ended at 10 A.M. the next morning, and Tunku left for London two days later. "This meeting taught me something," he remarked: "Malaya and Communism can never co-exist". When Tunku returned from London he announced that the period of the amnesty would end on February 8, 1956 (which happened to be his birthday), and fresh efforts would be made to end the Emergency, which would include central rice kitchens on rubber estates and in new villages.

A high-powered Constitutional Commission had been appointed by the Colonial Office, soon after Tunku's return. It was headed by Lord Reid, a Privy Councillor and Lord of Appeal in Ordinary. The Commission set up an office in Kuala Lumpur and then travelled to every State, hearing evidence and receiving memoranda. The two most controversial subjects were citizenship for non-Malays, and the Special position of the Malays. The Alliance National Council spent four months preparing a detailed memorandum for the Commission, most of which was accepted. But it made no mention of *Jus Soli*—citizenship by right of birth. During the drafting stage, there had been heated discussions among members of UMNO and the MCA. UMNO members hoped to secure more extensive privileges: the MCA argued that appeasement of UMNO had already gone too far, and questioned whether they should not withdraw from the Alliance. During this anxious period Tunku's

reputation for sincerity and equity was of immeasurable value to both sides.

The Commission's report was published in Kuala Lumpur in February 1957. MacGillivray then set up a Working Committee to prepare final recommendations for the considerations of the British Government. MacGillivray was chairman, Tunku, H.S. Lee, Dr Ismail and Abdul Razak and the four representatives of the Rulers were members. Once again, Tunku, as the inspired diplomat, was obliged to exert his exceptional skill in order to avoid a deadlock over the vexing question of *Jus Soli*. This subject had been included among the Commissioner's recommendations, although it had been omitted from the Alliance memorandum. Tunku finally persuaded the MCA leaders to agree to its omission from the official recommendations, which were sent to London for approval, on the understanding that the subject would be reconsidered by the Malayan government as soon as possible after independence.

Only six months remained before the date which had been adopted for the proclamation of independence. Other accessories of self-government, which were above politics and outside the range of Constitutional proposals, still awaited attention. Tunku possessed rare talents and interests which were of the greatest value to the country at this time. He had been surrounded by royal pageantry since his birth. He knew, by instinct, that Malaya must have a national anthem, Orders and Decorations, Regalia for the elected Ruler, and a form of ceremony for that ruler's installation. There was no central arena where independence could be proclaimed: it must be constructed. Tunku arranged for an announcement to be published, inviting musicians both at home and abroad to compose a national anthem for an independent Malaya. Tunku set up a committee to help him judge the entries, which numbered over seventy and included one by the world-famous British composer, Benjamin Britten. The choice, on musical merit, was scarcely open to debate, but after the first meeting of his committee, Tunku decided that the music of the national anthem of Malaya must be Malay. When they next met to listen to a short list of Malay compositions, Tunku re-

called an old melody, once familiar all over the peninsula called *Terang Bulan* until and even after it had been adopted by Sultan Idris of Perak as his state anthem, in 1888. It had long been forgotten, but Tunku asked the Inspector-General of Police to arrange for the tune to be orchestrated and played by the Police band, and the committee listened spellbound, beside the parade ground at the Police Depot. The quest had ended: Tunku renamed the old tune *Negara-ku* or *My Country*, and adopted it as the national anthem of Malaya.

Johor and Kelantan were the only Malay States which had created their own Orders and Medals before independence. British awards to people in other States and Settlements were conferred sparingly. Kedah had never introduced any decorations. Tunku found time to select from Malay literature titles which dated back to the old Malacca empire in the fifteenth century, and to an even earlier period in Kedah. One of these, "Tun", had been the prerogative of the hereditary Chief Ministers of Malacca, the other, "Tan", was a modification of the title of a territorial chief. But "Tan" could not now be used in isolation, for fear that it might be confused with a common Chinese surname. A Malay honorific prefix, "Sri" was therefore added to become "Tan Sri". Tunku decided that "Tun" would be the title associated with the highest award to any Malayan, other than a ruler: "Tan Sri" would be the second highest award. The famous firm of Garrard in Regent Street, London was asked to submit designs for these Orders, for Tunku's critical scrutiny and final approval.

Every Malay ruler possessed Regalia, or "*Alat Kebesaran*", treasured articles which they had inherited from their royal predecessors. They included weapons and sometimes a gold betel box or bowl, hundreds of years old. Tunku was determined that the new elected ruler should be equipped with a regalia of his own before he was installed. But heirlooms, such as the other rulers possessed were no longer obtainable. He therefore ordered long Keris, spears, war clubs and a pair of silver Mace to be made by the best craftsmen in Kelantan and Terengganu. A gold stand for an historic copy of the Quran was also commissioned from Kelantan. Tunku also decided that the

elected ruler—some referred to him as “the Paramount Ruler”—must be installed to the music of a *Nobat*, a form of royal Malay orchestra which, according to the *Malay Annals*, was presented by the ruler of Pasai in Sumatra to the first ruler of Malacca in about 1415, and may have been in use by rulers of Kedah for an even longer period. No trace of the Malacca *Nobat* survived the capture of the town by the Portuguese in 1511, but the Kedah *Nobat* had been in continuous use in the palace for more than five hundred years, and had escaped capture by the Siamese in 1821 almost by a miracle. Tunku therefore asked for the loan of the Kedah *Nobat*.

As soon as a provisional date had been fixed for Independence Day, Tunku instructed the Director of Public Works to excavate a low hill near the centre of the town, bordering Birch Road, and to prepare a large open air stadium where the Proclamation of Independence ceremony could be held and which could then become a centre for sporting activities, notably football. Tunku also chose a site for another one of his special projects—a National Mosque. The site was near the Railway Station, but it included a deep valley, and had at first appeared to be unsuitable on that account. But the earth which was excavated from the high ground to create the stadium was transported to fill the valley off Venning Road—killing two birds with one stone.

Tunku set up a committee, of which he was chairman, with Dato' Abdul Razak as his deputy, to plan and organize the ceremony and he named the stadium “Stadium Merdeka.” Through the months which followed Tunku maintained an unruffled calm and the final week of August arrived without any misadventure.

Kuala Lumpur had acquired a new airport, and for several days before the end of the month, official guests were received and escorted to the best accommodation available in town. The Duke of Gloucester, accompanied by his wife, arrived to represent Queen Elizabeth II. They were met by Tunku, by MacGillivray, who would be their host, and by Cabinet Ministers. The Malay Rulers assembled in Kuala Lumpur to elect one of their number to be the “Yang di-Pertuan Agong”—the Paramount Ruler—for the next five years.

The great stadium was ready. Very early on the morning of August 31, members of the public began to file through the entrance gates and to occupy the uncovered stands which surrounded an oval expanse of smooth green grass. A large rectangular carpeted dais stood near the centre, still devoid of any furniture. Heavy rain started to fall before dawn and continued until nearly 8:00 A.M. Dato' Abdul Razak visited the stadium looked anxiously at the pools of water which lay where the Guard of Honour of Malay soldiers must march, and at the sodden carpet on the uncovered dais. The arm chairs for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and nine Rulers, for the Duke of Gloucester, for the High Commissioner and for Tunku, and the ornamental table on which the proclamation would be placed, were still safely stored in a waiting room. Dato' Razak conferred by telephone with the Meteorological officials and with Tunku at his residence, and postponed the time of arrival of the Rulers, the Duke and the High Commissioner for one hour. The uncovered seats were shrouded by ten thousand umbrellas.

The rain stopped at a little before nine as predicted. The sun forced its way through the low clouds and scattered flashes of gold across the waterlogged lawn. The armchairs and the long strips of red carpet, which would cover the approach to the dais, were immediately carried out. Tunku, dressed in a Malay uniform of heavy black silk, bordered with gold thread inspired by a traditional Kedah style worn only by royalty, received the Duke, who wore the white tropical uniform of a British Field Marshall. The Rulers, sheltered by nine yellow silk umbrellas, were already in position on the dais. The Paramount Ruler sat at the centre with the Duke on his right and Tunku on his left. The Duke handed the "Constitutional Instrument" to Tunku. It conveyed sovereignty over Penang and Malacca and withdrew protection from the Malay States. Tunku then spoke: "Independence is only the threshold to high endeavour. At this solemn moment I call on you all to dedicate yourselves to the service of the new Malaya." He then read the Proclamation of Independence: ". . . Now in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, I, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, Prime Minister of the Persekutuan

Tanah Melayu, with the concurrence and approval of Their Highnesses, the Rulers of the Malay States, hereby proclaim and declare that the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu is, and with God's blessing, shall be for ever a sovereign democratic and independent State . . ."

A microphone carried Tunku's voice across the arena, but his words were drowned, time after time, by a massive chorus: "Merdeka! Merdeka!". Photographs from scores of cameras captured this historic event.

By comparison, the scene at midnight on August 30 was witnessed by relatively few and photographs of the first moments of Merdeka are rarely reproduced. The event took place on the playing field between the Moorish-style Government Secretariat and the Tudor-style Royal Selangor Club. That night, crowds covered every foot of the playing area and directed their eyes, not at any football or tennis player, but at two flag poles planted side by side, and at a tall floodlit clock tower above them. Tunku stood near the flag poles, with Dato' Abdul Razak, Dr Ismail, Colonel H.S. Lee, Sardon Jubir, Sulaiman and V.T. Sambanthan beside him. MacGillivray, Field Marshall Templer and a few other overseas guests sat on the low verandah of the Royal Selangor Club. A moment after midnight Malaya would be independent. The clock in the tower began to strike: the Union Jack on one flag pole and the new Federation Flag on the other began to move slowly and simultaneously,—the Union Jack downwards, the Federation Flag upwards. As the last stroke of midnight resonated above the heads of the crowd, still silent, a band played *God Save the Queen* followed by *Negara-ku*—not yet familiar to the public but arresting and captivating.

Tunku, who was the epitome of dignity and decorum later that morning, then raised both his arms above his head and dance a *pas seul* in uncontrolled rapture. The moment the band stopped playing the Malayan national anthem, the silence was shattered by a roar, consisting of a single word, "Merdeka", shouted repeatedly by at least ten thousand voices. Sardon Jubir, the Head of UMNO Youth, stood a little to the rear and when Tunku lowered his arms and stood temporarily motionless, Sardon held out a medallion with the words

"Bapa Merdeka"—"Father of Independence" on it, and slipped the ribbon from which it was suspended over Tunku's head. Tunku walked slowly across to speak to Templer and MacGillivray: he would have liked to linger with his friends, but a ceremony of unparalleled significance was only hours away. His official car standing in the club porch drove him up the slope to his residence—the former British Residency.

The night sky was clear: August 31, 1957 had arrived. Contrary to the forecast of some of his opponents, a new nation had been born in an atmosphere of racial harmony. The years of uncertainty, of resolute dedication, of political struggle against phenomenal obstacles were behind him. For a few short hours before the dawn prayer, Tunku could sleep soundly—the sleep of a man who had dreamt of a near-miracle and had achieved it.

11.
1957 – 1966

I. The Golden Years.
II. Tunku's First Cabinet.

THE EUPHORIA of independence perfumed the air of Kuala Lumpur and the minds of the population for days. A euphoria of a mellow variety recurred on Wednesday, September 10, 1957, in the hearts of the twelve men who assembled to attend the first meeting of the Malayan Cabinet. They met in the same room in the headquarters building of the Public Works Department, where a similar body had deliberated on so many previous Wednesdays, but now the British High Commissioner had departed and Tunku sat in his place.

Tunku brought to that meeting and to those which followed a spirit of mutual understanding and confidence which had been absent in the days of Donald MacGillivray.

Tunku and almost all the other ministers wore lightweight suits, collars and ties, but at later meetings Tunku and Dato' Abdul Razak wore Malay dress and black *songkoks*.

Tunku had adopted the old Selangor Residency, on a low hill overlooking the town, as his official headquarters at the beginning

of 1957, and he continued to live there until he retired thirteen years later. Before the end of this first Cabinet meeting, Tunku invited all those present to lunch at his house and in the weeks that followed, the other ministers took it in turns to host post-Cabinet lunches.

It was Tunku's intention that these lunches should provide an opportunity for Ministers to discuss informally matters or problems which had not yet been resolved during the morning, and they served a valuable purpose.

Tunku's first Cabinet had twelve members, all of them stalwarts who had worked closely with him to achieve Malayan independence through peaceful means.

Dato' Abdul Razak held the portfolios of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Colonel H.S. Lee was Minister of Finance, Sulaiman bin Abdul Rahman of Johor was Minister of the Interior and Justice, V.T. Sambanthan was Minister of Health, Sardon Haji Jubir was Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications, Ong Yoke Lin was Minister of Labour and Social Welfare. Tan Siew Sin was Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdul Aziz Ishak was Minister of Agriculture, Mohamed Khir Johari was Minister of Education, Bahaman bin Shamsuddin was Minister of Natural Resources and Abdul Rahman bin Haji Talib was Minister of Transport. Tunku also held the portfolio of External Affairs, which in those days was also responsible for the Immigration Department.

Tunku made several changes to the Cabinet in 1959, 1961 and 1962. Dr Ismail, the younger brother of Dato' Sulaiman, returned from Washington in 1959 and was appointed Minister of External Affairs, but in 1961 he took over the Ministry of Internal Security—later renamed Home Affairs—which he continued to hold until he retired on grounds of ill health in 1967.

In 1961, Dato' Abdul Razak added the new portfolio of "Rural Development" to his responsibilities. In that year, Colonel H.S. Lee retired from the Cabinet, and Tan Siew Sin replaced him as Minister of Finance. Mohamed Khir Johari succeeded him as Minister of Commerce and Industry and in that year Tun Leong Yew Koh joined

the Cabinet as Minister of Justice bringing the total number to thirteen. In 1962, Tunku created a new ministry of information and broadcasting and added it to his own responsibilities.

This Cabinet meeting ushered in a new era in the life and history of this country. Tunku was recognized by all communities as the Father of Independence, and as he guided his new government, created new policies, and undertook new projects, never before contemplated, he received co-operation tinged with devotion, from his colleagues, and growing admiration from the leaders of other lands, notably from the heads of other Commonwealth countries.

Tunku was a modest man and did not allow popularity to influence his character, his actions or his ambitions. To describe his tireless programme, spread among so many different interests, would occupy much more space than is available here. The pages which follow will relate a few of the highlights of the next nine golden years.

Tunku's personal timetable began at dawn, when he rose, bathed, and said his early morning prayers. The hour which followed provided him with the opportunity to concentrate, undisturbed, on major problems or projects. During this tranquil interval, his intuition sometimes rose to the surface of his mind. At other times, when a solution to a problem eluded him, he took up a copy of Pickthall's translation of the Holy Quran, opened it at random and read the first passage which came to his attention. It was during this early morning vigil that Tunku conceived some of the major projects which have enriched the capital and the country. Tunku used a spacious room on the ground floor as his personal office.

His two major portfolios encompassed a variety of subjects and departments. As Prime Minister, he was responsible for Cabinet business, Constitutional matters, relations with the Rulers and with the Malay States, Archives and Records, Orders and Decorations at Federal level, ceremonial, accommodation for distinguished guests, security, official secrets, economic policy, the Colombo Plan and ECAFE affairs. As Minister of External Affairs he controlled treaties and agreements with other countries, diplomatic, consular and

trade representation of Malaya, overseas' student welfare, including Malaya Hall, in London.

It was a challenging array of responsibilities. Tunku initiated a Malayan Foreign Policy as soon as he assumed the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. He recognized that his first duty was to preserve the independence which he had so recently helped achieve. An Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement had been signed six weeks before independence. The nine-year-old Emergency operations against communist terrorists were nearing a successful conclusion, but Tunku guaranteed his continued hostility to communist countries. He applied for the admission of Malaya to the British Commonwealth and for membership of the United Nations, but he decided not to apply for membership of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization, and adopted an aloof attitude to the Afro-Asian Non-Aligned Movement. He gave some priority to the establishment of direct relations with the Arab States, notably Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Although Indonesia was Malaya's closest neighbour, with long standing racial and cultural links, Tunku regarded the Republic with suspicion and declined to recognize Indonesia as the natural leader in the region. At a later date, Tunku took the initiative himself in proposing an economic association between Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines on a basis of equality.

The response to Malaya's diplomatic initiative was prompt and favourable. If someone other than Tunku had held the post of Prime Minister in those early days, when Malaya was still virtually unknown, it is unlikely that this response would have been so speedy or cordial. Although still a junior and little-known figure, Tunku took the initiative at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1961 in condemning Apartheid and proposing that South Africa should be expelled and his proposal was approved.

Tunku made many friends at these gatherings of Prime Ministers. His genial personality, his excellent command of the English language and his grasp of western manners and customs were major assets when he first moved in high-level diplomatic circles in the West.

At his first Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1960, Malaya and Nigeria had achieved independence at about the same time and their representatives were seated side by side. The Nigerian Prime Minister was Sir Abu Bakar Tafawa Balewa. Tunku was attracted by his dignity and by the fact that, unlike some other African leaders, he spoke quietly. They often met informally outside the Conference Hall, and sometimes dined together.

At a later meeting of the Conference, after Soekarno had proclaimed Confrontation against Malaysia, some other Commonwealth leaders who were also members of the Afro-Asian Non-Aligned Movement, spoke in favour of Indonesia and criticized Malaya, but the Prime Minister of Nigeria spoke vigorously in favour of Malaya. Sir Abu Bakar was later a victim of an Ibo revolt and was never heard of again.

Tunku also renewed his friendship with Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister of Independent India, whom he had first met in 1934 during a visit by Nehru to Penang. They had met again in 1946 when Nehru came to Alor Setar and Tunku presided at a public rally.

When they met again in London, Tunku enjoyed Nehru's company and he accepted an invitation to pay a State visit to India in 1962. During this visit, when Tunku stayed at the palace of the former Viceroys, Nehru came to meet him at the palace, driving himself. Tunku thanked him but said that it was not proper for the Prime Minister of India to come so informally. Nehru replied, "What is protocol among friends?" This was Tunku's only State visit to India, but he went to call on a succession of Presidents of Pakistan and was lavishly entertained by them.

Two far-eastern Heads of State who were previously unknown to Tunku, came to Kuala Lumpur for the independence celebrations—President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam and Prince Norodom Sihanoukh of Cambodia. Though their personalities and backgrounds were very different, Tunku became friends with both.

Ngo Dinh Diem was staunchly anti-communist, dedicated to the service of his people and a devout Catholic. He expressed keen interest in the military and civil methods of resisting the communist

attempt to take control of Malaya. Tunku sent him on tour and arranged to supply him, unofficially, with some surplus weapons, and subsequently visited Saigon. His presence was regarded with suspicion and disfavour by many American military advisers. Ngo adopted an independent attitude towards the Americans, and they in turn regarded him as non-cooperative. Ngo himself was an honest man, but many of his officials were corrupt, and some of his senior army officers, after securing an assurance of non-intervention from the American military commander, mounted a revolt in Saigon in 1963. Ngo took refuge in a Catholic cathedral and asked, in vain, for American protection. He was brutally murdered the next day, opening the way to the "Ten Thousand-day War" and the ultimate communist control of the whole of Vietnam.

Prince Norodom Sihanoukh was a very different character. His ancestors had ruled Cambodia for centuries, exercising a form of benevolent dictatorship. He watched the elimination of royalty further north and assumed the post of Head of State in place of the rank of monarch. His people—the Khmers—were loyal to him and hated their neighbours, the Vietnamese.

When Tunku was in Phnom Penh on a return visit, the Prince entertained him royally. Tunku was attracted by the University of Fine Arts, sited just outside the capital, where traditional Khmer dancing, music, a dance-drama, two varieties of shadowplay and many crafts had been revived and were being taught to young Cambodians of both sexes. At the palace, Tunku watched a large troupe of Royal Khmer dancers and the royal *gamelan*.

Tunku discussed mutual problems and asked the Prince whether he would feel more secure if he moved further from the communists and closer to the Americans. Sihanoukh replied, "I am a Prince, you are a Prince: We can never be communists. I prefer to remain neutral."

Sihanoukh visited Kuala Lumpur on a number of occasions, informally and sometimes unexpectedly. Wishing to reciprocate Tunku's well-intentioned attempts to protect him from his enemies, the Prince invited President Macapagal of the Philippines to Phnom

Penh. He invited Tunku to come at the same time, but did not tell Tunku that he would meet Macapagal. The Prince was concerned about the Philippines' claim to Sabah which had been officially endorsed by the Philippines House of Representatives in April 1962, and he hoped that an informal encounter might provide an opportunity for a frank discussion.

During this visit, the Prince assembled a mammoth regatta on the Mekong in which several hundred boats were propelled by Khmers in colourful costumes. They reminded Tunku of the boat races which were held in Kedah annually during his father's reign. It was a memorable diversion, and although Tunku and Macapagal were able to discuss their problems in private (the Prince stayed away), no solution was achieved.

The rebellion and subsequent civil war in Vietnam made no immediate impact on the stability of Sihanouk's elegant regime, but in 1972, while the Prince was absent on a visit to Europe, Lon Nol led a revolt, reputedly with the connivance of the American government, and opened the door to a fanatical enemy of royalty and freedom—Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge supporters—and ultimately to the invasion by the Russian-backed Vietnamese.

Tunku's friendly association with Ngo and Sihanouk did not affect his relations with the United States, and he was welcomed and entertained by successive presidents, beginning with Dwight D. Eisenhower, including John F. Kennedy, Richard M. Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson.

President Garcia invited Tunku to the Philippines in 1960, and he attended a banquet at Baguio to which President Soekarno was to be the guest of honour. Soekarno arrived three hours late, accompanied by an escort of local beauties, but offered no apology. While they waited, Tunku talked informally with his host and with some of the other guests about the possibility of setting up an organization in the region to promote good relations and economic links. Tunku quoted the European Economic Community as a model and offered Kuala Lumpur as a headquarters. President Garcia responded favourably but he was replaced by Macapagal and any prospect of such

a scheme was deferred indefinitely by the claim to Sabah, which Garcia had never mentioned.

Tunku's foreign affairs portfolio did not monopolize his interests and he found time to devote close personal attention to a number of major building projects.

Long before independence, Tunku dreamed of building a national mosque in Kuala Lumpur. As the date of independence approached he chose a site near the railway station where development had not yet been mooted. When his choice of site became known, critics argued that it was too far from the Muslim population of the town and that a deep ravine bisected it. Tunku filled the ravine with thousands of lorry loads of earth, excavated from the site of the Merdeka Stadium, and replied that the Muslim community would greatly multiply before the mosque was completed.

Undeterred by criticism, Tunku arranged for a young Malay architect in the Public Works Department, Baharuddin Kassim, to be sent to tour Muslim countries, to study the design of their principal mosques. On his return, his preliminary plans were examined by Tunku who made his comments. The architect resumed his travels in search of the finest marble and mosaic.

The national mosque, Tunku directed, must provide space for a congregation of eight thousand, a figure which at the time was considered by many others to be far in excess of the number which was likely to assemble there even on major festivals.

Tunku persevered. A white minaret 235 feet high and a pink-pleated dome two hundred feet in diameter were to be the principal features.

Tunku's Merdeka Stadium, which was in constant use for football matches, after August 31, 1957, acquired another use during the fasting month in 1960 as the site of the First National Quran Reading Competition. This was organized on Tunku's initiative and under his personal supervision.

It was the first time that such a competition had been held in Kuala Lumpur, but a similar contest on a smaller scale had been held in Kedah during the 1930s. Tunku adopted the Kedah rules and sys-

tem of administration and in March 1960 every state in the peninsula sent men and women competitors.

The innovation was a great success and attracted large crowds to the stadium from 9:00 P.M. to midnight. State champions were selected at contests held in state capitals earlier in the month and Tunku's initiatives aroused a hitherto latent interest in the melodious chanting in public of selected passages from the Quran. Kedah champions won the principal national awards for several years, before competitors from other states replaced them. Later, a competition at international level, was opened to other Muslim countries, and although the panel of judges included experts from the Arab States, Malayan competitors continued to win the highest awards.

The national mosque was officially opened for public worship by the third Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Putra, on August 27, 1965.

Tunku sited a national mausoleum close by, where national heroes could be buried. The first two to be so designated were Tun Dr Ismail and Tun Abdul Razak. Tunku made it known that when he died he wished to be buried near his family in the royal cemetery at Langgar near Alor Setar.

While the construction of the great mosque continued, Tunku turned his attention to another national need—a permanent home for Malaya's Parliament. He chose a commanding site at one end of the Lake Gardens and directed the Public Works Department to prepare a design. A senior architect, A. Shipley, submitted a plan which combined a western-style tower block standing beside debating chambers and a banquet hall, covered by Malay-style roofs. The tower block would provide accommodation for Members of Parliament when Parliament was in session and included offices for ministers. Tunku approved the plans and the foundation stone was laid on Independence Day 1962. The first session of Parliament, under Tunku's leadership, was officially opened on November 2, 1963.

The Government of the Federated Malay States built two museums long before the First World War—the Perak Museum in Taiping, in 1886 and the Selangor Museum in Kuala Lumpur, which was

completed in 1904. The latter stood on a site overlooking one end of the Lake Gardens and continued to be maintained and open to the public during the Japanese Occupation. But on March 10, 1945 it was demolished by two misdirected salvos of bombs dropped by American B29 planes. The bombs were intended to destroy the railway marshalling yard on the opposite side of the road.

For more than a decade, the blackened site of the Selangor Museum remained vacant while other priorities absorbed any available government funds. But in 1958, Tunku persuaded his Minister of Finance to enter a token vote in the annual estimates under a new subheading—National Museum. Tunku directed that it should be erected on the same site, but when an architect in the Public Works Department submitted a design of a western-style structure, Tunku rejected it outright, and invited a private architect who was also an artist to prepare three sketches of a building which followed traditional Malay house forms.

The architect, Ho Kok Hoe, set off on a motor tour of the northern Malay States, accompanied by the Director of Museums designate. Tunku chose one of the designs, which drew some of its inspiration from the historic Balai Besar—the great Council Hall in Alor Setar, Kedah—and gave the appearance of being raised above the ground in traditional form on pillars five feet high.

Most of the contents of the Selangor Museum had been destroyed in 1945, but while construction work proceeded, a country-wide search was made, with Tunku's backing, for Malay weapons, costumes, musical instruments, shadow-play figures and other heirlooms still in private ownership. Had Tunku's initiative been delayed, many of the treasures now on display in the National Museum would have passed into other hands.

A prominent feature in the design for the face of the new museum was a pair of murals, covering more than half of the front of the building. Funds for the construction of the museum, which the Minister of Finance was reported to regard as of no economic value, were rigidly restricted by him, and did not include the cost of the murals. Tunku was reluctant to press his minister for a supplement,

and decided, instead, to ask Datuk Lee Kong Chian, the rubber tycoon, to come to the rescue. Ho Kok Hoe, the architect, whose design would lose much of its appeal if the space intended for the murals was left vacant, collected Tunku's letter to Datuk Lee on the morning of February 8, 1963, and flew with it to Singapore. It was Tunku's birthday and the magic of its message, when delivered the same day, received an immediate and favourable reply. Datuk Lee would meet the cost of providing and installing a pair of murals made from the finest Venetian glass mosaic. Ho Kok Hoe flew to Venice, and the murals were installed, bearing the name of the munificent donor and of the artist whose design had been chosen, a month before the official opening.

On August 31, 1963, the date chosen for the proclamation of Malaysia, Tunku decided to delay the public announcement until the report from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was received in Kuala Lumpur. Tunku directed that the vacant date should be filled by the official opening of the new National Museum instead. The third Yang di-Pertuan Agong performed the opening ceremony.

Two years later, work began on the construction of a "National Monument". Tunku's interest in the armed forces of Malaya and of the Commonwealth dated back to December 1941 and to the Emergency years, between 1950 and 1957. A "Remembrance Day" ceremony to honour those who had died during the First and Second World Wars had been held at a small granite cenotaph, erected by the British in the 1920s near the railway station. It seemed to have little Malayan significance.

Tunku conceived the idea of erecting an impressive national monument which would honour and keep in public memory those who had died in the defence of Malaysia during the Emergency as well as during the two world wars. He chose a site on high ground overlooking the Lake Gardens, but it was not until he revisited Washington, D.C. in 1962 that he saw a monument which conveyed the spirit of courage and determination which he was seeking. This monument commemorated the capture of the Japanese-owned is-

lands of Iwojima, a volcanic island in the Pacific, in February 1945 by the American Marine Corps. Casualties amounted to 20,000 Japanese and 6,800 Americans killed and 18,000 Americans wounded. The island was the only one in the Pacific which could provide the United States with an advance air-base from which high-level bombers could carry out decisive and continuous raids on the Japanese mainland in the closing phase of the War. The heavy casualties on both sides was evidence of the vital importance attached to its ownership.

An American sculptor, Felix de Welden, was chosen to design and erect a memorial appropriate to the unique display of gallantry on both sides. His composition showed the moment when the American flag was raised on the island, signifying a hard-won victory. To Tunku the message could be applied with equal realism to the victory of Malayan and Commonwealth forces over the communists during the Emergency. He invited de Welden to meet him in Washington, and they discussed his initial concept. Later, Felix de Welden came to Kuala Lumpur to see the site and to submit designs and estimates. These were accepted and work started on the site in August 1965. The towering monument was unveiled by the fourth Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Ismail of Terengganu, on Tunku's birthday in 1966. For a number of years thereafter, the annual "Remembrance Day" ceremony, at which the Yang di-Pertuan Agong laid a wreath, was held at the base of the monument.

A national stadium, a parliament building, a national mosque, a national museum, and a national monument were all planned and accomplished by Tunku during the golden years of his premiership.

Today, these landmarks are so much part of the local landscape that few can remember how featureless the town was before the genius of Tunku embellished the capital with evidence of his own vision and imagination.

During these years four men—sometimes referred to as "the Directorate"—administered Malaya. Tunku as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; Tun Abdul Razak as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Rural Development; Tun Dr Ismail as Minister

for Home Affairs and Tun Tan Siew Sin as Minister of Finance. Tunku possessed a very different personality from the other three. Tunku was usually genial, Tun Razak usually grave, Tun Dr Ismail was strong-willed and sometimes hot-tempered. All three recognized in Tun Tan Siew Sin a Malaysian of indefatigable industry and unfailing integrity. Tunku sometimes adopted the role of a supra-communal figure but was accepted by his colleagues as their leader. None of his three close friends ever quarrelled with him openly, though they sometimes held differing views.

If the years following the 1966 elections are regarded as a period of waning radiance, when so many dreams and ambitions had been brought to triumphal success, when political rivals (including those in his own party) exercised growing influence on public opinion, it should always be remembered that during those nine golden years, Malaya, under Tunku's leadership, had emerged from the inferior status of a small colonial territory to a level of popularity and respect both within the Commonwealth and in Asia which has never since been equalled.

12.
1957

**I. Favourite Diversions,
Productive Diversions.**

II. Football.

III. Horseracing: The Sport of Kings.

IV. Revival of Malay Culture.

TUNKU had always been a man with a variety of interests and has shown a genius for devising ways in which these interests could be developed to benefit others. His passion for football, beginning in his school days, raised him to positions of leadership at state, national and international levels. But in the early 1950s before independence, he had asked, in vain, for funds to construct a central football stadium in Kuala Lumpur. He had enjoyed watching professional football matches in England, played in large stadiums by famous teams at great financial advantage to the teams concerned.

Tunku managed to achieve his purpose before independence by means of a different approach. The independence ceremony, to be graced by all the Rulers and a representative of Queen Elizabeth II, could not be mounted on any existing open space: it demanded its own stadium. Tunku chose a low hill not far from the Railway Station. A massive earth-moving operation was set in motion which would "kill two birds with one stone", indeed, in this case, it would

achieve yet another purpose, one which Tunku had dreamed of for several years.

The mountain of excavated earth was transferred to a deep ravine, beyond the railway station, and created a site for another one of Tunku's treasured projects—the well-known National Mosque.

The account of this major achievement—another example of Tunku's inspired initiative, is told elsewhere. But the stadium was completed just in time for the Independence Day ceremony, and was promptly adapted for use as the venue of the first international football tournament, named after Malayan Independence.

Tunku's record as the "Father of Malayan Football" can be stretched back to the year of his final success in his law studies. As soon as he returned to Kedah in 1949 he was elected President of the Kedah Football Association. But before he had time to take any part in Kedah Football, he was appointed a Deputy Public Prosecutor in Kuala Lumpur.

Football has been played in Malaya since the beginning of the century and a "Selangor Football League" was founded in 1905. This was succeeded by the Selangor Football Association in 1926. Very soon after Tunku's arrival in Kuala Lumpur in 1949, the principal office-bearers of the Selangor Football Association asked him to accept nomination as President at the next Annual General Meeting.

Another football organization was also in existence in Kuala Lumpur, with a different function. When the Battleship *H.M.S. Malaya* visited Malaya in 1920, the officers and men presented a "Malaya Cup" for competition. It was decided to hold an annual tournament between teams representing the different States and Settlements in Malaya, and this became a major sporting event from 1926 onwards. In 1920 the tournament was organized by a special committee, but in 1926 the Football Association of Malaya (FAM) was founded and it took over the organization of the Malaya Cup tournament. The FAM was revived in 1947 but post-war conditions handicapped its progress, until in 1951, Tunku Abdul Rahman was elected President of the FAM and the association began a new life.

Despite the fact that Tunku had only recently been elected President of UMNO, with the formidable task of a country-wide campaign to reunite the party, Tunku accepted the Presidency of the Football Association of Malaya and continued not only to hold the post but to play an active part in its vigorous existence for the next twenty-five years. Tunku's first notable contribution to Malayan football was the inauguration of the Merdeka Football Tournament in 1957. It was open to all countries in Asia with the exception of Israel, and was organized by the Football Association of Malaya, under Tunku's personal direction. It aroused an enthusiasm for the game of football in the Asian countries where it was previously almost unknown. Malaya announced that all the expenses of all competing teams would be paid by the host country. These would be met from gate collections. Tunku calmed those who questioned whether enough funds would be available. He was confident that the tournament would attract capacity crowds, and he was right.

One of the indirect results of this most successful tournament was the rebirth of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). It had been founded in Manila in 1954, but had made slow progress.

In 1958, the Asian Games were held in Tokyo. New office-bearers in the Asian Football Confederation were chosen and Tunku, though not present, was elected President. He accepted the appointment and moved the AFC headquarters to Kuala Lumpur. Israel was one of the founder members. With Tunku's leadership other countries joined the Confederation, including a number of Arab States.

In October 1974, the Asian Games were held in Teheran and Tunku attended as President of the Football Confederation. He was confronted with three serious disputes. The Iranian government allowed sportsmen from Israel to enter the country but refused to admit representatives from Taiwan. They did so in response to objections from the People's Republic of China which was also represented at the Games. Before the Games began the leading delegates from Kuwait objected strongly to the presence of footballers from Israel and demanded that they be expelled.

Tunku, as President of the AFC, spoke against the Kuwait resolution. He told the delegates that the Confederation had been established in order to preserve harmony among sportsmen all over Asia. Politics should have no place in the Confederation. But Arab delegates gave Kuwait their full support and Israel players were expelled.

Tunku's support for Israel, a country which he himself had excluded from the Merdeka Tournament, was a notable example of his moral courage. He was subjected to a vicious attack in a leading Kuwaiti magazine.

While this and the Games continued, the football teams from North Korea and South Korea refused to meet each other in the quarter-finals. The game was held up for nearly an hour, but the two teams eventually agreed to play, after much persuasion.

The Kuwaiti attack on Tunku continued after the end of the Asian Games. Tunku tolerated it in silence for some time but then wrote to the Emir. In his letter, Tunku reminded the Emir that he had been Prime Minister of Malaya (and later Malaysia) for thirteen years. He recalled that he had been responsible for convening, in Kuala Lumpur, in 1964, the first Islamic Conference ever held, and for three years he had held the post of Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah. He had also initiated the foundation of the Islamic Development Bank. He had conducted a meeting of the Asian Football Confederation fairly and justly and in the interests of international football. The vote by delegates at the Conference against Israel's continued membership had been carried by a majority and had been implemented. There was therefore no reason for any person, except the Israeli delegate, to feel aggrieved.

Tunku asked the Emir of Kuwait to allow him to institute legal proceedings in Kuwait's Court of Justice. The letter was acknowledged but permission to proceed was never given.

Tunku was real disappointed at the lack of support from the Malaysian delegates and when the next annual general meeting of the Football Association of Malaya was held, he declined nomination as President. His position was taken, for a short time by Tun Abdul

Razak, though he was then a very sick man, and when Tun Razak died in January 1976 he was replaced by Tan Sri Hamzah Abu Samah.

When the next Conference of the Asian Football Confederation was held in Hong Kong in 1977, a motion was proposed asking for the expulsion of both Israel and Taiwan. Tunku was not in favour, but Tan Sri Hamzah who was the President of the Football Association of Malaya, proposed the Resolution and it was passed. Many of the original members of the AFC asked Tunku to continue to serve as President but Tunku recognized that new and disturbing influences were changing Asian Football and he decided to retire after an unequalled period of leadership extending over nineteen years.

Tunku never received any adequate recognition for his unique contribution to football in Malaya and in Asia. But in 1981 the United States Sports Academy gave him a "Distinguished Service Award" for "noteworthy contributions to international sport". Later, in 1985, the Asian Football Confederation presented him with their own "Distinguished Service Award". Both awards could be considered to be "Too Little: Too Late".

Although football was Tunku's favourite sport, horseracing—"the Sport of Kings"—ranked a close second, but it was a late starter. Tunku's father, Sultan Abdul Hamid, enjoyed horseriding when he was a young man, and sometimes led a cavalcade of thirty riders, all mounted on horses from the royal stables, through the town and out into the country, when the rice fields were dry after the harvest. While he was still a little boy, Tunku learnt to ride and owned a piebald pony of which he was very fond.

A Turf Club was founded in Penang in 1864 and annual race meetings were held there.

In 1898, the number of race meetings was increased to two a year: two days in January and two days in July. The Sultan of Kedah attended these meetings until his third stroke in 1912. Tunku Ibrahim, his eldest son, who became Regent in that year, also attended Penang Race Meetings and sometimes took Tunku with him.

In Alor Setar, the Sultan and his adult relatives gave their patronage to a different form of riding contest, known as a "Gymkhana", an Anglo-Indian word. In Kedah, the Gymkhana was held once a year, on a levelled area close to the palace. Riders competed in jumping their mounts over obstacles, and also in "tent-pegging". Both called for considerable equestrian skills. Some years later, a race course was laid out and amateur flat races were held there. Tunku watched the annual Gymkhana but was too young to take part. Some of the horses and ponies which took part performed other duties for the rest of the year.

It was perhaps more than a coincidence that Tunku first arrived in England in June 1920 on "Derby Day", when the premier English horse race was run at Epsom. He was sent to Little Stukeley to be given tuition before sitting for the entrance examination to the University of Cambridge. Mrs Vigers, his tutor's wife, was a racing addict. She placed bets on horses almost daily and often asked Tunku to take her bets to a bookmaker in nearby Huntingdon. Later he began to bet himself. Cambridge was only a few miles from Newmarket, where race meetings were held and where well-known horses were trained at racing stables. Tunku's interest in horseracing grew and while he was at Cambridge University, and later in London, he often accompanied friends to race meetings instead of attending lectures. But Tunku never placed large bets and never incurred racing debts. His interest was in the horses, not the lure of betting.

In 1947, when studying for his Bar Final Examination in London, Tunku deserted horseracing and spent many Saturday nights watching professional football in one or other of the large stadiums around London.

Horseracing in this region began in Singapore in 1842 with the formation of the Singapore Sporting Club. The Penang Turf Club was founded in 1869, the Perak Turf Club, racing at Taiping, was founded in 1890 (it moved to Ipoh in 1926) and the Selangor Turf Club came fourth, in 1896. The all continued to flourish until 1942.

A few race meetings, on a small scale, were held during the Japanese Occupation, and in November 1945, very soon after the

return of the British, General Sir Miles Dempsey set up a Veterinary Committee to inspect and report on surviving race horses. The Selangor Turf Club held its first post-war New Year Race Meeting on January 1, 1946.

Tunku was then too preoccupied with the demands of his political career to take more than a passing interest in horseracing, and it was not until 1959 that it recaptured his attention when he paid an official visit to Australia. His visit coincided with the most popular and prestigious event in the Australian racing calendar—the race for the Melbourne Cup, which is run on the first Tuesday of November. There is no country in the world where horseracing is so universally popular as in Australia, and on the very day of the Melbourne Cup, young and old, rich and poor, talk and think of very little else.

Tunku's introduction to Australian horseracing on that day aroused in his mind a new attitude to horseracing in Malaya. He decided to seek ways and means to make it more popular among the general public and more profitable to the Government.

When Malaya achieved independence, local horseracing only contributed about four million dollars to the annual national revenue. On his return to Kuala Lumpur from Melbourne, Tunku held discussions with his Finance Minister and with leaders of the racing community and then introduced "off-course betting". This was an immediate success. He then arranged to allow a twelve per cent discount on bets of \$50 and above. Soon afterwards he arranged for the setting up of three-digit and four-digit lotteries. These innovations contributed substantially to Government revenue. Horseracing became a major industry. A regular flow of well-bred yearlings came to Malaya from Australia, New Zealand, England and Ireland. Racing stables and training establishments were set up.

With Tunku's encouragement, a "Tote Board" was established which would be responsible for the collection of income from Turf Clubs, and in due course Government income from horseracing reached one hundred million dollars a year.

Not long after Tunku's return from Australia in 1959, two of his racing friends—Datuk Tan Chin Nam of Ipoh and Rick Sullivan, a

businessman from Queensland, invited Tunku to form a partnership as joint-owners of a racehorse. Tunku agreed. The cost of maintaining a horse at that time was only about \$250 a month. In the years that followed, this syndicate bought a number of horses, bred overseas and trained locally. One of these, named *Pingat Emas*, was personally selected by Tunku from a number of yearlings, recently imported. It was sent for training and won a number of races.

This racing partnership was unaffected by political vicissitudes, and in 1975, after Tunku's return from Jeddah, his faithful partners offered him a share in their most successful horse, which was racing exclusively in Australia. It was named *Prince of All* and had previously won the South Australian Derby and the "Adelaide Guineas". Now it was entered for the famous Melbourne Cup. Tunku's two friends also owned an equally famous horse named *Think Big*, which had won the Melbourne Cup in November 1974. Datuk Tan and Sullivan both hoped that *The Prince* would follow the example of *Think Big* which was also entered for the Melbourne Cup.

Datuk Tan replied that "It has already won the Melbourne Cup and it will have to carry extra weight. Only two other horses have ever won the Melbourne Cup twice and *Think Big's* chances of a second win are very slight."

But Tunku replied that he had a strong presentiment that *Think Big* would win again. He would prefer to accept a share in that horse rather than in the *Prince of All*, and he would travel to Melbourne to watch the race.

And so, on a windy November day, with driving rain shower, Tunku joined thousands of other racing enthusiasts at the palatial Flemington race course and placed his bet of A\$50 on *Think Big*. His partners backed another horse. Earlier in the day, Tunku had accompanied his partners to the Athenaeum Club when he bid for *Think Big* in the "Calcutta Sweepstake". The auctioneer was Sir Henry Bolte, a former Premier of Victoria, and Tunku's bid was successful.

At the Flemington race course, heavy showers, though continuing for only ten minutes at a time, badly affected the ground and the

winner's time was the slowest on record. But as the horses rounded the last curve of the course, *Think Big*—a big gelding—thrust ahead and won by three-quarters of a length from his stable mate *Holiday Wagon*. Both Tunku's partners and the trainer had backed *Holiday Wagon* as it was the favourite among the betting public.

Tunku had visited *Think Big* before the race, and he walked out to lead his miracle horse in and later to receive the massive Melbourne Cup. Tunku wore a black "morning coat", striped black trousers, a silver-grey tie, and a large white carnation in his buttonhole. He had discarded the grey top hat, which normally accompanied a "morning coat" at a fashionable race meeting. He replaced it with a black Malay *songkok*.

Tunku stood erect, a model of dignity and composure, to receive the Cup, but the miracle win, the maze of microphones and the battery of cameras banished from his mind the words which he had hurriedly tried to assemble after the unexpected race result was announced. "I thank God for our victory" was all that he could say, and he repeated the same words again at the Victory Cup Ball.

Tunku's interest in horseracing in Malaya never waned. He can still be seen, if his other engagements and his health allow, at the race courses in Penang or Kuala Lumpur, but few of the crowds of present-day racegoers realize the debt which they owe to Tunku for his transformation of a small-scale pastime to one of the most popular and remunerative industries in the country.

Even before Tunku became Prime Minister, one of his ambitions was to create in Kuala Lumpur a centre of Malay culture where the heritage of past centuries could be revived. It was a formidable objective. Rulers and major chiefs in states other than Kedah, with the solitary exception of Dato' Nik Ahmed Kamil of Kelantan, had ceased to provide traditional patronage to Malay culture.

His senior political colleagues were occupied with other priorities. Tunku, ever the optimist, declined to be discouraged and organized a festival of Malay culture in Kuala Lumpur in August 1956. It included displays of Malay, Chinese and Indian music, dances and drama as well as some aboriginal dances. It also assembled kite-fly-

ers and top-spinners, mainly from the east coast, and exponents of the Malay and Chinese arts of self-defence. It was called "PESTA" and has never since been attempted on such a nationwide scale. It was an immense success and attracted thousands of eager onlookers for three days and nights.

Six years later, Tunku set up a new Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which he hoped would provide a media for transmitting traditional Malay music. Two years later, in 1964, Tunku established the embryo of a Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. The new portfolios were both added to Tunku's already heavy burden. Both major initiatives involved government funds and civil servants, over whom Tunku could only exercise intermittent influence.

Prince Sihanouk's University of Fine Arts on the outskirts of Phnom Penh had shown what a royal autocrat could achieve if he was also Head of State, but it could only serve as an inspiring example, to be included in the blueprint of his Ministry of Culture.

Meanwhile, Tunku chose a target which was within his personal compass—the revival of traditional Malay dancing in his own official residence.

Before the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945, Malay dancing and the *Ronggeng*, in particular, was popular all over the peninsula. In 1945, the country was almost derelict and it was several years before Malay youths revived a modern version of the oldest Malay dance, calling it *Joget Modern*.

When Tunku moved into the Selangor Residency at the beginning of 1957, he was at last able to entertain in style the foreign guests who flocked to Kuala Lumpur. He was familiar with the criteria of Western hospitality, but he wanted to give his guests an introduction, however brief, to his own cultural background.

Tunku was a connoisseur of good food and his wife made sure that dinners at the Residency were delicious, but, while other hosts concentrated on their menus, Tunku decided to introduce Malay dancing—not a display by professionals but an opportunity for male guests, however eminent, to join their host and a few of his Malay friends on the dance floor.

Tunku's initiative may have been stimulated by David Marshall, who was then Chief Minister of Singapore. He invited Tunku to Singapore to celebrate Tunku's landslide victory in the 1955 general election and arranged for a talented young violinist—Hamzah Dolmat—to play Malay dance tunes of long ago, accompanied by a Malay singer.

Not long afterwards, Tunku invited Hamzah Dolmat to come to Kuala Lumpur and helped him seek employment there. When Tunku began to include Malay dancing in his after-dinner hospitality, Hamzah and his lead singer were always present.

But the dining room at the Residency had not been designed for such diversions, and while it was being enlarged Tunku gave dinners followed by Malay dancing in the Ballroom at the Lake Club.

Tunku possessed a natural sense of rhythm and a grace of movement, which included the arms and hands, and which few others could equal. When he stepped on to the dance floor after dinner to the melodious lilt of Hamzah's violin there was something infectious about the ease with which he danced not only the *Ronggeng* but also *Chinta Sayang*, his favourite, and *Mak Inang*. Presidents and ambassadors from other countries shuffled to and fro, opposite each other, but not touching their Malay dance hostesses, and glowed with a sense of goodwill and closer understanding when they returned to their seats.

Tunku's initiative was followed by the first Yang di-Pertuan Agong at his palace and by senior Malay officials and politicians both in Kuala Lumpur and at State capitals. Tunku had revived the *Ronggeng*, and his example was continued when Tun Abdul Razak succeeded him in 1970.

Tunku founded the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in August 1964. He handed the portfolio of Information and Broadcasting to Senu Abdul Rahman, a Kedah veteran, and adopted the new ministry himself. But he had no staff, no office accommodation and only a driving purpose to rescue traditional Malay culture before its twin rivals—films and broadcasting—had exterminated what little survived.

It was almost too late. Young Malays who had grown up in a cultural vacuum, observed with interest that Tunku had included Youth and Sports in his new portfolio, but dismissed the notion of a cultural revival as obsolete.

The infant ministry must be weaned by a foster mother. Tunku chose for this formidable role his first Private Secretary, Zainal Abidin Endut, who in 1964 held a senior post in the Establishment Office. It was an inspired choice.

Though not himself a specialist in any of the branches of his Ministry, Zainal's service in the Establishment Office helped him to locate and enlist the services of Ariff Ahmad from the Ministry of Information as his Personal Assistant, Ismail Bakti, a dedicated authority on East Coast cultural survivals, Khoo Oon Soe of the Welfare Department, Mahesan and A.S.P. Mobarak to take charge of Youth and Sports. They operated from a single floor in a rented building—Fook Chuan Mansion—in the centre of the town.

Within a year, Zainal Abidin was able to report to Tunku that he had set up branches of the Ministry in almost every State in the peninsula and that he had rented and moved to a large private house at Ampang Road, with a spacious compound where Tunku saw, on an informal visit, a shadow-play theatre and stages for dance rehearsals and for *Ma'jong* performances.

In that year also, a group of Malay dancers—young men and girls—specially trained by Ismail Bakti and costumed with the advice of Tunku's wife—performed at official functions in Kuala Lumpur and were sent to the Sydney Trade Fair.

In August 1967, Tunku allotted to Senu Abdul Rahman, the Minister of Information, his own additional portfolio of Culture, Youth and Sports, but gave him a Junior Minister to assist him.

By 1967, Tunku's favourite and productive diversions, football and horseracing, had grown out of all recognition, under Tunku's guidance, and had become an important part of the leisure-time pursuits of Malaysians of all communities, while Malay dancing had blossomed into an essential part of a full-scale Ministry.

13.
1961 – 1965

- I. Malaysia.**
- II. Soekarno's Confrontation.**
- III. Singapore's Separation
from Malaysia.**

WHEN TUNKU addressed the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Southeast Asia at a lunch meeting in Singapore on May 27, 1961, he devoted most of his speech to topics such as the need for loyalty on the part of the Chinese population in Singapore, communism, ideological fence-sitters and the ASA project. It was familiar material, and many of the journalists took very little notes. And then, without warning, Tunku said: "Malaya, today, realizes that she cannot stand alone, in isolation. Sooner or later she should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. It is premature for me to say how this closer understanding can be brought about but it is inevitable that we should look ahead to this objective and think of a plan whereby these territories can be brought together in political and economic co-operation." This particular section of Tunku's speech attracted widespread interest but its significance is often exaggerated.

A merger between Malaya and Singapore had been discussed by leaders of both territories as far back as 1956, but although a Malay Head of State of Singapore was appointed in December 1958, Tunku made it known that he was not in favour of such a proposal. Singapore, British North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak were still British colonies, Brunei was a British Protectorate, but perhaps as a result of Tunku's speech, Lord Selkirk, the British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, arranged to hold a discussion in June 1961 with the Governors of the three States and the Deputy High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya on the concept of Malaysia. They concluded that there was no prospect of an early change of status.

In Singapore, David Marshall and Lim Yew Hock strongly favoured a merger with Malaya, but they were succeeded by a more sophisticated politician, Lee Kuan Yew, the head of the People's Action Party (PAP), in June 1959. He recognized the obstacles and reserved his opinion.

The "Emergency" on the mainland had been brought to a decisive and successful conclusion in August 1960, relieving both territories of any immediate communist threat. But to Tunku there was one main objection: the population of Singapore, numbering nearly one million, were mainly Chinese whose links with Mainland China were still close. Their loyalty would need to be transferred to Malaya before a merger could be favourably considered.

But to some at least, Tunku's remarks to the foreign correspondents might indicate a change of heart. Was Tunku, the Father of Malaya's Independence preparing to expand his horizon? Did he, like Browning, believe that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?"

At one stage in the protracted discussions which followed, Tunku thought it possible that the inclusion of British North Borneo and Sarawak in Malaysia would provide a counter-balance to neighbouring Singapore. But later, political developments there caused him to make an irrevocable decision against any form of political or constitutional merger.

Before the end of 1961, President Diosdado Macapagal of the Philippines, encouraged by a substantial part of the local press, announced his opposition to Tunku's plans and disinterred an ancient and long defunct treaty, by which a sultan of Brunei had ceded to a sultan of Sulu that part of Borneo which later became part of the Philippines. In June 1962, the Philippines Government took its claim to the British Foreign Office in London. The British offered to discuss Anglo-Philippines relations, but gave no indication that they would accept or consider the claim.

In Indonesia, President Soekarno watched with growing hostility. If Tunku's plans took a more tangible shape, he was determined to mount active opposition. When a fact-finding mission visited the Borneo territory and had expressed its support for Malaysia, in February 1963, and when another mission was expected to follow, Soekarno announced his total opposition to Tunku's plans and proclaimed a policy of "Confrontation".

Tunku had hoped to forestall this militant opposition by proposing a Cultural and Economic Association among Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, while President Carlos P. Garcia was still President of the Philippines, but the project was still dormant when Soekarno issued his proclamation.

Before this crisis occurred, Tunku flew to London in February 1961 to attend a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and took the opportunity to discuss the Malaysia project with Harold MacMillan, the British Prime Minister. He also invited the opinions of other Commonwealth leaders, notably those from Australia and New Zealand.

MacMillan was non-committal and advised Tunku to avoid giving any impression that Malaya wished to force the Borneo States to join them.

At this early stage, political leaders in Sarawak expressed strong opposition to any plan which would place Sarawak under the control of Malaya.

In Sabah, a substantial portion of the population belonged to hill tribes, a majority of which were pagans. They had occupied

these inland areas since ancient times and had no affinity whatsoever with coastal Malays or Malaya. The fact that Datu Mustapha, a descendant of a Sulu chief, was Chief Minister and a friend of Tunku was only likely to be of cosmetic value.

Eight months after his initial discussion with MacMillan, Tunku was invited to return to London for exploratory talks, and a joint statement was issued in London to the effect that in the view of the British Government, Malaysia was a desirable project. This was followed by the despatch of a commission headed by Lord Cobbold, a former Governor of the Bank of England, to ascertain the views of the people of Sabah and Sarawak. Sir Anthony Abell and Sir David Watherstone represented the British Government; Ghazali Shafie and Wong Pow Nee represented Malaya.

Tunku, Dato' Razak and Tan Siew Sin flew to London in July 1962 for further discussions. After two weeks of frank and outspoken talks, the British officials agreed to prepare and to present to Parliament a Bill authorizing the creation of Malaysia, and a year later in July 1963, the Bill was passed without division.

The initial opposition to Malaysia which was shared by all political leaders in Sabah and Sarawak dissolved slowly, partly as a result of well-organized "study tours" of the Malay peninsula by these leaders, which included visits to some of Dato' Razak's land development schemes. A Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee was set up, and an Inter-Government Committee, including officials from Britain, the Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak, followed soon afterwards.

The announcement that the British Government had accepted the Malaysia Plan further influenced local public opinion. A threat, still unofficial, that Indonesia intended to appropriate the Borneo territories, as it had done in Irian, was recognized as a most unacceptable alternative.

Indonesian hostility to Tunku's Malaysia Plan stemmed from a deep feeling of jealousy in the minds of Soekarno and his Foreign Minister Dr Subandrio. They watched independent Malaya, under Tunku's leadership, progressing and prospering, while Indonesia,

now free from Dutch dominance, was unable to achieve comparable economic success.

Tunku had made a well-intentioned attempt to mediate between Indonesia and the Dutch in 1960 over the West Irian dispute. It had been misunderstood by Subandrio and had strengthened his determination to obstruct any of Tunku's plans for territorial expansion.

Indonesian opposition initially took the form of subversion, notably in Brunei, where Azahari and his Parti Rakyat, with the promise of material support from Indonesia, organized a rebellion against the Sultan. Azahari also made it known that he strongly opposed the Sultan's inclination to join Malaysia.

The revolt began on December 8, 1960, but it was soon crushed by British Armed Forces. Tunku sent a batch of Malayan Police to strengthen the civil government. Azahari had withdrawn to Manila before the outbreak of the rebellion, and issued boastful broadcasts released to the foreign press.

Six weeks later, Soekarno announced his total opposition to the Malaysia Plan and on February 1, 1963, he proclaimed the launching of a campaign of armed obstruction, for which he coined the word "Confrontation".

Soekarno claimed that Tunku represented "Neo-Colonial" and "Neo-Imperial" forces, hostile to freedom and independence.

In Manila, President Macapagal declared his support for Indonesia. Soekarno ordered his armed forces to be on the alert and directed that his naval vessels should fire on any defenceless Malayan fishing boats which were found in Indonesian waters.

Tunku knew that he could call on Britain, Australia or New Zealand for help, if necessary, under their Defence Treaty and was not unduly disturbed.

Ever a man of peace and patience, Tunku continued to search for an accommodation with both the Philippines and Indonesia, and early in July 1963, the Foreign Ministers of the Philippines—Pelaez, Indonesia—Dr Subandrio and Malaysia—Tun Abdul Razak, met in Manila and agreed to adopt what became known as the "Manila Ac-

cord", accepting the formation of Malaysia provided that a Referendum was conducted in the Borneo States to ascertain finally the views of the people, under the supervision of the United Nations.

This proposal was probably intended to delay the realization of Tunku's proposal for a substantial period. But Tunku asked the Head of the United Nations Technical Aid Commission to send an urgent request to U Thant, the United Nations Secretary-General, to send a fact-finding mission to ascertain, once and for all, the wishes of the people of Borneo.

When Tunku was next in Manila, he spoke to President Macapagal about the Muslim population living in the Southern provinces, numbering about three million, and asked that permission be given for the Muslims of the Philippines to erect at least one mosque and to reserve at least one area for Muslim burial ground somewhere in the area of the Philippines capital, but Macapagal declined to consider these modest requests.

The three Heads of State waited in Manila for a reply from the United Nations: Tunku hoping and praying for a speedy and favourable decision, Macapagal and Soekarno determined to obstruct and destroy what might be the end of the final chapter in an epic of Southeast Asian history.

U Thant replied that he was sending a nine-man mission, headed by a former Director of Personnel in the United Nations Secretariat, and including a Czech official. They would start work on a four-part questionnaire as soon as possible.

It now became evident that Tunku's plan to proclaim Malaysia on August 31, 1963, the anniversary of the declaration of the Independence of Malaya, would not be feasible. A delay of at least two weeks was inevitable.

Tunku accepted this with well-controlled resignation. Dr Subandrio then demanded that Indonesian observers should accompany the United Nations' mission. This too was accepted by Tunku, although it was an obvious last-minute attempt to sabotage the proceedings. These observers arrived, carrying propaganda leaflets. There were many more than were necessary and they were

screened, their number substantially reduced and their leaflets confiscated by United Nations officials. The work then proceeded smoothly and rapidly and the findings were sent by air to U Thant's headquarters. His conclusions, based on the mission's report, were delivered in Kuala Lumpur on September 14, 1963 and declared that the people of Sabah and Sarawak had chosen to become part of Malaysia, freely and without any external pressure.

Malaysia was proclaimed in Kuala Lumpur on the morning of September 16, 1963. It was a triumph for Tunku's patient diplomacy. Throughout these negotiations Tunku was recognized as the chief protagonist of the Malaysia Plan, and he received the full and continuing support of the other three members of "the Directorate".

A brief account of the events leading to the merger between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore and of the subsequent negotiations between the two governments, which took place prior to the proclamation of Malaysia, needs to be added here.

We have followed Tunku's protracted discussions with the leaders of Indonesia and the Philippines, and his efforts to establish, by means of independent enquiries, the wishes of the Borneo people. But the subject of a merger between Malaya and Singapore was also actively discussed by Tunku in London as well as in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. There was, however, a marked difference between the authority exercised by the Dictator of Indonesia, the powerful President of the Philippines and the leader of the People's Action Party of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, with whom Tunku conducted discussions and negotiations.

The PAP was under constant attack from its political opponents, notably the radical socialists. Lee Kuan Yew and his party were in favour of a merger with Malaya, but his opponents were not. They preferred to establish Singapore as a stronghold of Chinese radicalism, with some communist support. Tunku was fully aware of this menace, and he insisted that if merger was approved the Malayan government must control Singapore's internal security. This radical threat also generated a high degree of political ingenuity and skill in the incisive mind of Lee Kuan Yew.

As a precaution, Lee secured a vote of confidence in his government, in the Legislative Assembly, in July 1961, very soon after his party had lost an important by-election. Soon afterwards he decided that a decision on a merger should not be arrived at by a general election, but should be the subject of a special Referendum, in which the public was to be given a choice of three alternatives. This was held on September 1, 1962. Seventy-one per cent of those eligible to vote favoured "Alternative A"—a Penang-style merger—and two days later, Lee Kuan Yew announced in the Legislative Assembly that "the battle for merger had been won".

A year followed, crowded with diplomatic activity by Tunku in Manila, London and Kuala Lumpur. During this period, relations between the political leaders of the Malayan Alliance and the DAP deteriorated. Protracted negotiations to decide the terms on which Singapore could enter Malaysia—notably between March and July 1963—were increasingly unfriendly. Tunku was more tolerant than many of his colleagues, but he was greatly incensed by Lee Kuan Yew's unilateral proclamation of Malaysia on August 31, 1963, ignoring Tunku's personal appeal to him to delay the announcement until September 16, by which time U Thant's approval was likely to be received.

This irresponsible action augured ill for future Malaya-Singapore relations after the establishment of Malaysia.

In September 1963, no one on either side of the causeway could have imagined that in slightly less than two years' time, Singapore would cease to be a part of Malaysia.

But "Separation" was accepted by both governments on September 9, 1965.

What were the principal causes of this political catastrophe? An early and continuing factor was the fiery rhetoric of Lee Kuan Yew and his decision to enter PAP candidates in the 1964 general election. Election campaigns offer opportunities for the expression of intemperate opinions, which might otherwise remain unspoken. This rhetoric, admirably suited to the political scene in Singapore, soon antagonized Malayan leaders, including the ever-tolerant Tunku.

Lee told one rally that Tunku was not of the calibre to lead the nation. At another rally he told his audience: "We have to save the Tunku from his so-called friends", and at another, that "the Chinese leadership in the Alliance by the MCA is replaceable". There were also many other attacks on the MCA and attempts to split the UMNO-MCA alliance.

As a result, the entry of the PAP into Malayan politics was viewed by the majority of voters with suspicion, and when the results were announced on April 25, 1964, the Alliance won 89 seats, out of a total of 104, the MCA won 27 seats, which was more than in the 1959 elections and the PAP, which had entered nine candidates, won only one seat and then only with a majority of less than a thousand.

Not long after the 1964 Federal Elections, the British Prime Minister, Douglas Home, took the opportunity of a visit to London by Tunku to urge him to form a coalition government with the PAP, and when Lee came to London in September, a leading article appeared in an influential London-based newspaper criticizing the slow pace of Chinese advancement to parity in Malaya, under Tunku's leadership. It has since been disclosed that during this visit, Lee also met Mountbatten, Thornycroft, the British Minister of Defence, Sandys, the Commonwealth Secretary, and Harold Wilson, who by then had become Prime Minister.

Tunku decided to take action to de-escalate the incendiary atmosphere, and he arranged a meeting at which he, Tun Abdul Razak and Tan Siew Sin met Lee Kuan Yew, Lim Kim San and Dr Toh Chin Chye of the PAP. This was followed by an announcement in the press that a "two-year truce" had been declared, and that both sides had agreed not to raise sensitive issues relating to the position of the communities in Malaysia.

This did not deter Dr Toh from visiting Ipoh in November 1964 and holding talks with the President of the People's Progressive Party, S.P. Seenivasagam.

At the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the PAP in November 1964, Tunku sent a congratulatory message.

But in late November and early December 1964, financial and economic issues raised during the Budget debate in the Federal Parliament precipitated a fresh clash of opinions between Singapore and Malaya.

By the middle of December inter-governmental co-operation between Singapore and the central government had deteriorated to such a serious extent that mention of the possibility of Singapore's separation was discussed by ministers in both territories. Tunku spoke of a "breakaway" on December 9, but declared that it would be a calamity for both Singapore and Malaysia.

In early March 1965, the PAP adopted a different initiative, and announced an alliance of some political parties in Peninsular Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak with the PAP in opposition to the Malayan Alliance, and on March 5, Lee Kuan Yew first used "a Malaysian Malaysia" which he declared was his objective.

On the same day, Lee left Singapore for a tour of Australia and New Zealand, as a guest of the two governments. Reports of his statements while overseas caused a recurrence of hostility towards him among politicians in the peninsula.

Lee visited Tunku a few days after his return but the meeting did nothing to improve the situation.

Very soon afterwards, Tunku stated at the Third Annual Malaysia Alliance Convention that "Singapore came into the Federation with its eyes open and they came in of their own accord. Now, having joined the Federation, the party in power in Singapore must try to make Malaysia workable."

By May 1965, the "truce" had ceased to function, and on May 9 the PAP formed a Malaysia Solidarity Convention, with a non-Malay communal membership.

Six days after the founding of the MSC, the 18th General Assembly of UMNO began. Tunku and Tun Dr Ismail were severely criticized for being too tolerant and mild in their dealings with Lee Kuan Yew, and Tunku had difficulty in moderating resolutions demanding stronger action. His efforts were further handicapped by a speech by Lee Kuan Yew on May 21, containing the words, "If we

must have trouble, let us have it now. If we find that Malaysia cannot work, then we can make alternative arrangements."

The very next day, Lee stated publicly that the MSC wanted the fundamental concept of a Malaysian Malaysia to be written into the Constitution, and added that the reservations of certain rights for the Malays was not a fundamental provision of the Constitution.

A session of Parliament, which began on May 26 opened the floodgates for bitter exchanges. Tunku, almost alone, remained silent, and his self-control, while he deliberated on the future, was misinterpreted in some quarters as a sign of sympathy for Singapore.

While this belligerent session of Parliament continued, Tunku flew to London to attend a session of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, but on June 25, he succumbed to a severe attack of shingles and was admitted to hospital in great pain. He was obliged reluctantly to spend the next fifty-four days in hospital or recuperating in Switzerland.

While he was convalescing, Tunku wrote to Tun Abdul Razak and asked him to discuss the subject of separation with the three other senior members of the Cabinet. Tunku also asked him to have a discussion on this subject with Lee Kuan Yew.

Tunku was not aware that Tun Razak had already met Lee, at the latter's request, a few days earlier, but had reached no agreement to halt the continuing verbal war and had not raised any other subject.

It was evident that Lee, after winning the second Hong Lim by-election on July 10, felt himself to be even more securely in control of the PAP and its policies.

Tun Razak replied to Tunku on July 22, 1965 telling him that the four most senior cabinet ministers, Dr Ismail, Tan Siew Sin, V.T. Sambanthan and he himself were unanimously of the opinion that no agreement with the Singapore Government was possible and that Singapore should be separated from Malaya.

Tunku, in London, may still have entertained the hope that an alternative solution could be found. But he now wrote back to Tun Razak requesting him to instruct the Attorney-General to prepare

the necessary amendment to the Constitution, and other legal documents, and to arrange for Parliament to be recalled.

Before Tunku returned, Dr Goh Keng Swee came to see Tun Razak and told him that, in his opinion, the only way to prevent a head-on collision between Malaya and Singapore was to separate the two governments.

Before he left London Tunku explained to a representative of the *London Times* that he should not regard Lee Kuan Yew as representing all the Chinese of Malaysia and added that Lee was in conflict with a large Chinese opposition party in Singapore as well as the principal Chinese political party in Malaya.

Tunku eventually arrived back in Kuala Lumpur early on August 6 and met his four most senior cabinet colleagues later the same day. Tunku then wrote to Harold Wilson, who had succeeded Douglas Home as the British Prime Minister, telling him that he and his ministers had decided on separation. He added, "... we have arranged to set up a joint Council of Defence." He continued, "I propose to sponsor Singapore's admission to the United Nations and also as a member of the Commonwealth."

Both the Alliance and the PAP leaders recognized that only Tunku could make the final decision and they had awaited his return. PAP leaders were in Kuala Lumpur. Lee Kuan Yew was in Cameron Highlands.

On the evening of August 6, Dr Goh Keng Swee and his colleagues who were in Kuala Lumpur were told of the Alliance decision. Lee Kuan Yew, who was informed by telephone, motored to Kuala Lumpur early the next morning. He was advised by Dr Goh that the decision was final, but he drove to see Tunku at about mid-day on Saturday, August 7.

Lee Kuan Yew found Tunku rather adamant. Tunku produced the "Separation Agreement" and handed it to him. Lee signed it, but asked Tunku for a note which he could show to any of his own cabinet colleagues who might be unwilling to sign. This was prepared and signed immediately by Tunku. The document was signed by all the PAP ministers and was delivered to Tunku the next morning.

August 8 was a Sunday. A meeting of the Alliance National Council had been convened that morning. It was attended by representatives from all over the Malaysian territories. Tunku informed the Council of the separation decision.

An hour later, Tunku met Alliance Ministers and State Chief Ministers and informed them that a Separation Bill would be presented in Parliament. The statement was received without any adverse comment.

That same morning, news of the decision reached the British High Commissioner, Lord Head, and he made a number of attempts to meet Tunku, but without success. That night Tunku, Tun Razak and Tun Tan Siew Sin had accepted an invitation to a dinner party. Lord Head drove to the house of Tunku's host, gained admission, and made a last-minute appeal for a delay. It was not entertained.

Tunku was due at Parliament House at 10:00 A.M. on Monday, August 9. At 8:45 A.M., Lord Head arrived at the Residency to make another appeal for postponement. It was equally unsuccessful.

At 9:30 A.M., Tunku met Alliance MPs and told them of the separation decision. He asked for at least a two-thirds majority, which was needed under the Malayan Constitution. They then moved into the Chamber. After a two-hour debate, the Separation Bill was passed by 126 votes to none. A few hours later the Senate approved the Bill unanimously.

In Singapore, at 10:00 A.M. the same morning, members of the House of Representatives assembled to hear Lee Kuan Yew announce the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. He provided no opportunity for debate. The decision was final.

14.
1969

I. The 1969 Elections.

II. May 13, 1969.

ELECTIONS to Parliament were held in 1955, 1961 and 1964. The Alliance captured all the seats except one in 1955. They maintained a formidable majority in 1961 and won 89 seats out of 104 in 1964.

But between 1964 and 1969, many changes and conflicts occurred. Foremost of these was the emergence of a larger, better organized non-Malay opposition. They included dissidents from the MCA, a Malayan offshoot of Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party in Singapore, and a vigorous Labour Party. The Malay Pan-Malayan Islamic Party had extended its sphere of influence, notably in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah, and left-wing activists deriving their political views and some finance from communist sources were more numerous.

In 1968, Tunku was both Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs. The majority of his Cabinet were men of middle age who had served with Tunku since 1955. Tun Abdul Razak was still Deputy Prime Minister and had adopted the Ministry for Home Affairs

when Tun Dr Ismail resigned in 1967. Tun Tan Siew Sin, President of the MCA, was still Minister of Finance. Tun V.T. Sambanthan still led the Malayan Indian Congress.

The political structure of the Alliance was stable, reliable, but uninspiring to the younger generation of voters. Indonesian Confrontation which helped to rally support in 1964 ended in August 1966 and although the Philippines' claim to Sabah had been revived, it was of no interest to voters in the peninsula. But there were other incidents and developments which preceded the opening of the election campaign in 1969 and which influenced public opinion and benefited the opposition.

While Confrontation was at its height, six young Chinese from Pontian, on the west coast of Johor, were recruited locally, trained in Sumatra and were then parachuted back near Labis, further north, in September 1965. They were captured soon afterwards by Malaysian Armed Forces and were later charged in Court with treason and sentenced to death.

Their appeals failed but their defence lawyer, Miss P.G. Lim, the sister of a prominent opposition Member of Parliament, filed an appeal for clemency. The affairs of these six young men were then taken up by opposition politicians led by Dr Tan Chee Khoon, the Member of Parliament for Batu, near Kuala Lumpur.

The Attorney-General informed the press that only a Ruler of a state or the Governor of a settlement could pardon a prisoner, once his appeal to a High Court had failed.

Tunku was in London attending a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and Dr Tan Chee Khoon sent a cable to him asking him to intervene. Miss Lim's appeal and Dr Tan Chee Khoon's cable were given wide publicity in the Malayan press.

Subsequent press reports added that these men had admitted that they had been recruited by a member of the Socialist Front in Pontian and had been sent to Sumatera for training in the use of firearms and in parachuting before they returned. Dr Tan Chee Khoon then took up the cause of five other Chinese who had been convicted, sentenced to death and were awaiting execution, also in

Johor. The eleven men then became the subject of mounting political polemics.

The vigour with which the opposition supported an appeal for clemency aroused widespread resistance to any show of mercy among leaders of UMNO and senior government officials. Tunku, from London, asked the Attorney-General to restudy the cases. While the opposing political parties continued their demands, the Johor Pardons Board met and rejected the appeal for clemency on July 11. A cable was then despatched, in the name of the parents of six of the condemned men, to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. Other episodes in the political campaign for pardon included a signature campaign, a request that a new Pardons Board be appointed, a telegram to the Sultan of Johor, and cables to the Pope, U Thant and General Suharto.

None of the senior members of cabinet were in favour of intervention. Tun Razak had taken over the portfolio of Home Affairs since the resignation of Tun Dr Ismail, and he waited with growing anxiety for Tunku's decision. Amnesty International cabled Tunku on July 19. The help of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization was requested and Dr Tan Chee Khoon appealed to the Conference of Rulers. Two more condemned Malay men then came to public notice. They had parachuted from Sumatera to Sitiawan in Perak in 1964 and were also awaiting execution.

Tunku returned from London and listened to the views of Tun Razak and other cabinet colleagues. They were nearly all firmly opposed to any intervention. But Tunku was by nature a man of deep compassion, and the opportunity to save the lives of eleven young Chinese and two young Malays proved irresistible. He wrote to the Sultan of Johor, the Regent of Perak and the two State Pardons Boards. He pointed out that Confrontation had ended and the men had waited in acute misery for over two years, but this personal request for pardon was rejected.

Opposition politicians urged Tunku to renew his efforts. The DAP planned a "Mercy March" of the thirteen volunteers who had collected ten thousand signatures, but the police refused to grant

permission. Preparations for the executions went forward. The parents were requested to come to the prison in Johor Bahru to sign documents.

A demonstration by Chinese near the centre of Kuala Lumpur called for pardon. Thirteen youths were arrested and requests to hold other demonstrations were refused by the police. The spectre of public disorder grew more menacing.

During the first ten days of August, Tunku, in isolated prominence, sought a solution in harassed meditation. The political campaign, organized by opposition parties, spread from Kuala Lumpur to other urban areas. International organizations, with slender opportunities to assess the merits of the subject, continued to urge the Prime Minister to save the lives of these young men. Malay opinion, represented by UMNO and voiced in the Malay press, could see no good reason for clemency. Opinions diametrically opposite, expressed forcefully by two communities, threatened to erupt into inter-communal clashes.

Tunku's personal inclination was to show mercy. The young men had been in prison for two years, their execution drawing ever closer. Confrontation had ended and friendly relations with Indonesia had been restored. To pardon these men now could be regarded as another gesture of goodwill to a former enemy.

In the cabinet, not all his ministers opposed intervention. If Tunku allowed the law to take its course and serious inter-racial clashes resulted, he would feel guilty and might be forever blamed for the consequent catastrophe.

Tunku's decision took the form of an appeal to the public of all communities for tolerance. He reinforced his earlier warning of the disastrous results which might follow any further breaches of the peace.

It was a strongly-worded warning and, as he intended, it reached the Sultan of Johor and the Regent of Perak. Two days later, the Johor Pardons Board held an emergency meeting and postponed the execution. A week later, the Sultan commuted the death sentence of eleven Chinese to life imprisonment. The Regent of Perak

followed his example early in September and commuted the death sentence on the two Malays.

Tunku's indirect solution was greeted with vociferous praise by his political opponents. His cabinet colleagues accepted his unilateral actions, but many Malays criticized him and remarked among themselves that Tunku was making too many concessions to the Chinese. The MCA refrained from comment, but they viewed the consequent popularity of opposition leaders with dismay.

Not long afterwards, Tunku was at the centre of another controversy—championing a new National Language Act in which he supported the teaching of English as a second language and rejected the demands of Malay leaders headed by Syed Nasir Ismail of Johor that Malay should not only be accepted as the national language but should be the sole medium of official communication.

He urged that no further concessions to the Chinese should be allowed. Syed Nasir's views were widely circulated and equally strongly supported by Malays of both UMNO and PMIP. Syed Nasir became a popular figure and spoke with increasing vigour, often criticizing Tunku.

But Tunku, adopting again the role of a far-sighted national leader, introduced his National Language Act in Parliament in March 1967 and spoke eloquently in Malay in its support. Tun Dr Ismail, who was about to retire on grounds of ill health, spoke in favour of Tunku's Act and when the debate ended, Syed Nasir and some of his closest supporters, Dato' Harun Idris, Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Abdul Rahman Yaakub preferred to be absent. Tunku again showed his magnanimity, after the passage of the Act in Parliament, by accepting a letter of apology from Syed Nasir and permitting him to continue to head the Language and Literature Bureau. But Malay opposition to the Act continued to weaken the support of school teachers for the Alliance with grave results in the 1969 elections.

The long period which was provided for the May election campaign favoured the opposition and gave them the opportunity to exploit sensitive issues with steadily increasing irresponsibility. After a

short "honeymoon" period of relative goodwill and moderation, communal issues were given increasing prominence and interracial antagonism was deliberately stimulated.

The PMIP, operating mainly in the rural areas, demanded exclusive privileges for the Malays and their language. The DAP, operating in the towns, campaigned for a "Malaysian Malaysia" and declared that the MCA could never give effective support to the legitimate claims of Malaysian Chinese.

Tunku, Tun Razak, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan toured the peninsula and before long realized the gravity of the political situation, but they could not control the increasingly vicious and irresponsible whirlwind of hostility. During the later period of the campaign, Tunku was accused of disloyalty to the Malay population and to the Muslim religion: charges which caused him great mental anguish. In Kedah, character assassination took the form of illustrated leaflets showing Tunku sitting at a table, holding chopsticks and facing a roasted pig. Another pamphlet, even more widely distributed in Kedah, showed Mohamed Khir Johari, the Minister of Education, dressed in Mandarin robes.

Tunku and other Alliance leaders devoted the last few days to their constituencies, unaware of the events which were creating a major crisis in Kuala Lumpur.

National security was in the hands of the Minister for Home Affairs, Tun Abdul Razak. His Permanent Secretary was Tan Sri Sheikh Abdullah. The Inspector-General of Police was Tan Sri Mohd Salleh. His security chief—the Head of the Special Branch at police headquarters was Abdul Rahman bin Hashim and the Chief Police Officer, Selangor, was Dato' Mohd Ariff. It was their responsibility to inform the Minister for Home Affairs, who was far away in Pahang, of the skilful plotting of a group of communist supporters lurking on the outskirts of the city.

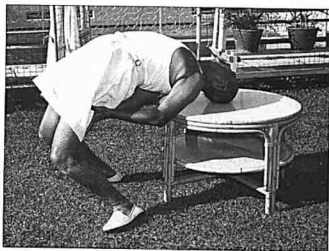
An event which occurred on May 4 provided a golden opportunity for which leaders of the extreme left were waiting. The speed and skill with which they took advantage of it was clear evidence of the size and efficiency of their organization.



Tunku exercising in the garden at the Residency.



Tunku taking a dive in his swimming pool near the Residency.



Another one of Tunku's exercise routines.



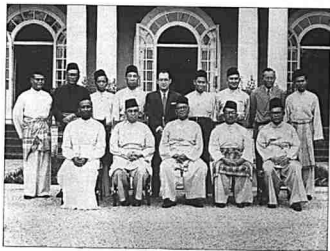
Tunku playing golf with Dato' Abdul Razak in 1958.



Tunku demonstrating how he exercises while Dato' Abdul Razak looks on.



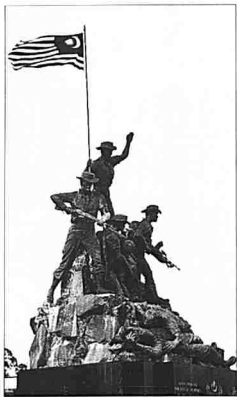
Tunku's First Cabinet at its first meeting
on September 10, 1957.



The Second Cabinet outside Istana Negara,
after taking the Oath of Loyalty before the Yang di-Pertuan
Agong on August 22, 1960.



A memorial service was held at the Lake Gardens in Kuala Lumpur on August 1, 1960 to commemorate those who had died fighting the communists during the Emergency.



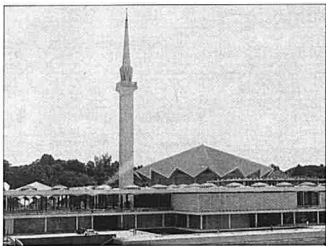
The National Monument.



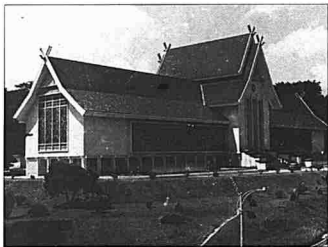
Tunku and Mohamed
Khir Johari in Singapore
on March 26, 1962.



Tunku with Mubin
Sheppard, the biographer.



A view of the National Mosque.
Opened on August 27, 1965.



A view of the National Museum.
Opened on August 31, 1963.



Tunku entertaining his guests with
Malay dances after dinner.





Tunku having his portrait painted.



Tunku posing for a bust.



Tunku with Dr Mahathir Mohamad.



A walk down memory lane . . . Tunku and Mubin Sheppard. Recalling the past as they study some of the exhibits at the "Pameran Riwayat Tunku" at Muzium Negara on June 10, 1987.



Tunku and Taib Mahmud looking at a model of the Patriots' Memorial in Kuching, November 1990.

A boycott campaign had been launched by the Labour Party. A branch had been formed in the Chinese shanty village which formed part of a long established township called Kepong, the headquarters of the Government Forest Research Institute and six miles from Kuala Lumpur. In the early hours of May 4, a group of Kepong Chinese youths were sent to paint "Boycott the Election" in large letters on the main road. A three-man mobile police patrol saw them at work and tried to arrest them. The slogan-painters resisted vigorously, using pieces of firewood and metal bars and in the struggle one of the police fired a shot which hit a member of the Kepong group. The Chinese disappeared into the darkness carrying their wounded comrade. The youth was hurried to the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital but he died on the way.

News of the death of the young man spread like wildfire in Kepong and was immediately recognized by communist sympathizers as the golden opportunity to create disorder for which they had been waiting.

The father of the dead man was advised to leave all the funeral arrangements to members of the Kepong Branch of the Labour Party, and instead of bringing the body back to his house, it was taken from the hospital mortuary to a well-known "death house" in Sultan Street, in the heart of the Chinese business district of Kuala Lumpur.

Processions are a normal part of a Chinese funeral, but if they take place in a town, a police permit is required. Lim, the father of the dead boy, did not come to ask for a permit until May 6, and when he did so the date chosen for the procession was Saturday, May 10, the day of the General Election. He was told that the date could not be approved, for obvious reasons.

Police Intelligence officers were by then aware that Labour Party officials in Kepong were taking an active part in the organization of the funeral procession. This information was reported to police headquarters and the request for a funeral procession through the town was referred to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The police would have preferred to refuse the application, but in view of the tense situation in the town they needed the support of the Minister.

The Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, was far away, campaigning in Pahang and Kelantan, and when he was contacted, he gave instructions that the police must avoid any action or restriction which might precipitate left wing public protests immediately before Election Day.

Tunku, whose memory of his dialogue with Chin Peng in December 1955 had remained undimmed, and with it an enduring recognition of the communist threat to the stability of Malaya, was not consulted. If he had been, the decision might have been different.

When Lim, the father, returned the next day accompanied by two members of the Labour Party and asked that the procession be held on May 9, he was told that this could be approved, but he must return the following day for the permit.

Lim did not return the next day, but two members of the Kepong Branch of the Labour Party appeared, stating that they had come in his place. They were accompanied by the Malay president of the University of Malaya's Students' Union. They had come to take delivery of the permit. The suspicions of the police were reinforced, but their instructions from the Ministry were explicit: all they could do was to restrict the route which the procession must follow and to limit the number of persons who could take part. These conditions were entered on the permit.

The Labour Party members were critical of the limitations, but accepted them with a bad grace. The senior of the two remarked, "We don't want to see any of your men wearing red caps: they might annoy some of our members." He referred to men of the Federal Reserve Unit, a tough section of the police force who were trained to handle riots and civil disturbances: they wore peaked caps with red tops. They were accordingly withdrawn.

Preparations were already well advanced when the local Labour Party officials returned to Kepong with the permit. And in a conference in Kepong that night, it was agreed that they could safely ig-

nore the conditions written on the document, and an entirely different route through the centre of Kuala Lumpur was chosen.

With the benefit of hindsight and subsequent investigations, we can form an acceptable idea of the events which took place in the planning headquarters. Chinese secret societies, clandestine groups of armed thugs, flourished unobtrusively in every town in Malaya. The Chinese community was well aware of their strength and their ruthless efficiency. The planners sent out an urgent invitation to these Secret Societies to assemble on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur on May 8. Branches of the Labour Party were urged to send as many members as possible. Workers who could draw and paint Chinese characters on banners were allotted specified tasks and slogans. Five hundred young Chinese who owned or could borrow motorcycles were enlisted to contribute a deafening escort. Well-wishers were urged to join the procession along the route.

At 9.55 A.M. on May 9, the head of the procession left the "death house", a banner bearing the Labour Party symbol, and a portrait of the dead man on a large placard, preceded the coffin. Almost from the outset no attempt was made to follow the authorized route. The head of the procession turned into Petaling Street and led those who followed through the very centre of the town. They stopped frequently to enable trained Chinese speakers to address the crowds, mainly Chinese, who lined the route. Portraits of Mao Tze Tung and sayings from his *Red Book* were carried and repeated. Tunku's name, his government and the police were vilified. Within an hour, the members taking part in the procession had increased to at least five thousand.

At about noon the head of the procession had reached the main crossroads along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, in the heart of the town. Here they were joined by the motorcyclists, a formidable and spectacular supplement. Provocative insults were repeatedly directed at the Malay policemen who accompanied the procession but who maintained a remarkably high level of tolerance.

The changed route through the main streets had one advantage. The procession thus completely avoided the Malay residential

area. It was however witnessed by many Malays, pedestrians or passengers in cars or buses which were overtaken by the huge crowd and waited patiently for it to pass. And when it reached the MARA and UMNO headquarters, where many Malays worked, the police had great difficulty in preventing Malay reprisals.

By nightfall the body had been buried, the procession had dispersed and the organizers were congratulating each other on the fact that in the space of four days they had assembled the largest and most spectacular demonstration of Labour Party authority in the whole period of the election campaign. The number of people who took part was officially estimated to total ten thousand.

It was indeed a near miracle that no outbreak of inter-communal violence took place on that day, but the terrible events of May 13 can be directly linked to the criminal excesses of provocation and direct insults perpetrated during the so-called "Funeral Procession" on May 9.

The general election on the following day was carried out without a single incident, despite the fact that hundreds of trained agitators and secret society gangsters were still in Kuala Lumpur. But as the election results were reported throughout the night and on the following morning, the Alliance headquarters found that it had lost 23 seats in Parliament and 79 in the various State Assemblies.

A relatively new political party named "Gerakan Rakyat" which included Lim Chong Eu, a former MCA leader, and Dr Tan Chee Khoo, a former strongman in the Labour Party, won control of Penang.

The Gerakan and their campaign allies, the DAP, had won unexpected successes in Selangor, and Dr Tan Chee Khoo, the leader of the Gerakan in the state, applied to the Kuala Lumpur Police for a permit to hold a "Victory Parade" on May 12.

Despite widespread forebodings, the procession on May 9 and the General Election on May 10 had passed without a single breach of the peace. There seemed, therefore, to be no justification for refusing the application and a permit was issued for a "Victory Parade" along certain specified streets, ending at 8:00 PM.

Party supporters, some mounted on small trade vehicles and some on foot, followed the route laid down by the police, but they combined shouts of victory with jeers and insulting remarks aimed at Malays, wherever they were encountered.

When the main body dispersed, groups of troublemakers, Indian and Chinese, toured the main Malay residential area and deliberately insulted the residents, sometimes accompanying their remarks with indecent gestures. No breach of the peace occurred, but the deliberate provocation contributed powerfully to a demand, the next morning—May 13—for a Malay counter-procession: a demand which could not be refused.

There is reason to doubt whether senior officers at police headquarters recognized the gravity of the emergency that morning, and even in the afternoon the Army had not yet been put on the alert.

Tunku, after a brief interval of rest in Alor Setar, returned to Kuala Lumpur at midday on May 13. He had retained his seat, but with a much reduced majority. Khir Johari, despite scurrilous attempts at character assassination by the PMIP, was returned with a majority of 375. A former Minister, Senu Abdul Rahman, was defeated, so was Dr Mahathir Mohamad, both by Kedah voters.

Tunku knew nothing about the processions in Kuala Lumpur on May 9 and 12 or the tense atmosphere in the city. He was promptly informed by his principal private secretary of those events and was told that a Malay procession was to be held the same evening. At Sri Taman, Tun Razak received a telephone call from Dato' Harun Idris, the former Chief Minister of Selangor and now awaiting a compromise pact with the Gerakan before retaining that post. Harun told Tun Razak that a Malay procession through part of Kuala Lumpur had been demanded by UMNO members, to redress the insults and provocation heaped on them during the last week. It could not be refused. The procession was to start from his house at dusk.

Before the Malay procession could move off along Jalan Raja Muda, a minor clash between Malays and Chinese occurred at Setapak, three miles to the North. Exaggerated reports of its gravity generated other violence near the Malay residential settlement. Dato'

Harun telephoned Tun Razak again to report that he could not control his followers. At about the same time, Tunku received a surprise visit from the police officer-in-charge of traffic to tell him that a curfew had been imposed on the whole town.

Tunku telephoned Tun Razak and they drove to the Selangor Police Headquarters and listened to security reports as they came in. They were horrifying and showed that the violence which had so nearly erupted on May 9 and 12 was now widespread.

Tunku returned to the Residency to say his prayers and then arranged with Radio Malaysia to send an official to record impromptu a message to be broadcast to the nation. Tunku then drove to the television headquarters and arrangements were made to interrupt the normal programme. Tunku was now deeply distressed and he had much difficulty in controlling his emotions. He spoke in Malay and English, repeating his appeal to all Malaysians to prevent the violence from spreading and suggested the formation of goodwill committees throughout the country, if necessary. It was then 10.30 PM.

In the days and weeks which followed, many people searched for a scapegoat.

No serious breaches of the peace or acts of violence took place in any other part of the peninsula on or after May 13. It should have been abundantly clear that the atrocities of May 13 were the direct results of the two processions on May 8 and 12, and that the principal responsibility for the mammoth funeral procession on May 8 and the excesses which occurred during the latter part of the Gerakan-DAP "Victory Parade" procession on May 12 lay with communist agitators and left-wing extremists who wished to disrupt the peace of the country as the communists had hoped to do during the Emergency.

To blame Tunku, as some people did, was to ignore the facts and was an act of deplorable ingratitude for a life dedicated to the service of the nation since 1951.

15.
May 14, 1969 – 1970

I. Resignation.

II. Retirement.

TUNKU rose at dawn on May 14, 1969 after a sleepless night. He devoted much longer than usual to his prayers and then moved out to the broad verandah facing the town.

The Residency had been sited in 1880 on a hill, separated by the Gombak River from an overgrown tin-mining village of attap-roofed huts.

Tunku's house still commanded a panoramic view, but the waterlogged settlement of the 1880s had been replaced by rows of modern shophouses and offices, humming with activity.

Tunku looked at the familiar scene, but the whole area was now silent.

During the night Tunku had identified his immediate priorities. It was Wednesday—Cabinet day. It was also the day when he would normally have asked for an audience with His Majesty, at which, as the leader of the successful political party, he would receive the Royal Command to form a new government.

This was manifestly inappropriate, but he must give His Majesty a brief report of the action which had been taken and inform him of the proclamation of a State of Emergency which was being prepared and which he would be asked to sign later in the day.

He walked slowly down the private stairs leading to his personal office. While he sat in deep thought, Tun Abdul Razak telephoned: Tun Dr Ismail had spoken to him late on the previous night, offering his services in any capacity. Tun Razak suggested that he and Tun Dr Ismail should come to the Residency as soon as possible for a discussion, and that he should also bring along Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun Sambanthan.

The Directorate had reassembled an hour later. The priorities were speedily agreed: a Declaration of a State of Emergency covering the whole peninsula, the temporary suspension of Parliamentary government, the creation of a National Operations Council (soon to be known as the NOC) and the postponement of elections in Sabah and Sarawak. Tun Razak proposed that the National Operations Council should be chaired and largely manned by the military, but Tunku did not agree. Tunku asked Tun Razak to accept the chairmanship of the Operations Council, while he, as Prime Minister, would continue to preside over a new cabinet, yet to be selected and gazetted.

Tunku took the proclamation of a State of Emergency, hurriedly prepared by the Solicitor-General, to the palace. While Tun Razak informed members of the previous cabinet of the action which was being taken.

Tunku, the humanitarian, gave directions for the immediate setting up of a distribution centre where essential food items would be assembled, parcelled and distributed to areas which were still under a 24-hour curfew where thousands of people of all communities were confined. Tunku chose a large secondary school at the foot of the drive leading to the Residency and called for volunteers over the radio to man it.

Later in the day, Tunku revisited the radio and television headquarters and told the public what was being done. He then drove to

the Selangor Police Headquarters to obtain information about the security situation in Penang and Melaka where minor incidents had been reported.

On the following day, the membership of the NOC was finalized. It included three members of the previous cabinet, Tun Razak, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun Sambanthan and a former Cabinet Minister, Tun Dr Ismail. To these were added General Tunku Osman, Chief of the Armed Forces Staff, Tan Sri Mohd Salleh, the Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Abdullah bin Shamsuddin, Director-General of Public Services, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Lieutenant-General Dato' Ibrahim Ismail as Executive Officer. Dato' Hamzah bin Dato' Abu Samah, the newly-appointed Minister of Information and Broadcasting, was also included.

That night Tunku heard that two Malay trishaw riders in Melaka had been assaulted by Chinese thugs and he flew to Melaka the next morning, satisfied himself that there was no danger of repercussions, and then drove to UMNO headquarters. There he met hundreds of Malays who were unable to return home owing to the curfew. Many of them had come to Melaka to take part in the traditional custom of purification at the seafront on the last day of the month of *safar*.

Tunku was informed later that a member of an opposition party had paid the thugs to assault the Malays.

As soon as Tunku returned to Kuala Lumpur, he called a meeting of senior cabinet ministers and announced the formal appointment of Tun Abdul Razak as Director of Operations and his appointment was gazetted the next day.

Tunku then drove on to the Merdeka Stadium where many refugees, including some of those who lost their houses on the night of May 13, had been given shelter.

Later, Tunku made another broadcast over Radio and Television Malaya and announced the Declaration of a State of Emergency and the introduction of a set of Emergency Regulations, which he urged everyone to obey. He also announced the setting up

of the National Operations Council and stated that arrangements were being made to appoint Operations Councils at state level. He ended his broadcast with the words "May God help us to restore peace to the country which we love."

Tunku, in consultation with Tun Razak, selected the members of his new cabinet and the names were gazetted on May 30. On the very same day, all the cabinet members assembled at Parliament House to take their Oaths of Office. The members were: Tunku, Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports; Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Acting Minister of Finance; Tun Dr Ismail, Minister of Home Affairs; Tun Tan Siew Sin, Minister with Special Functions; Tun Sambanthan, Minister of Works, Posts and Telecommunications; Tan Sri Sardon, Minister of Health; Tan Sri Ong Yoke Lin, who was still in Washington, Minister without Portfolio; Mohamed Khir Johari, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Acting Minister of Local Government and Housing; Khaw Kai Boh, Minister without Portfolio; Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Minister of Sarawak Affairs; V. Manickavasagam, Minister of Labour and Acting Minister of Transport; Dato' Mohd Ghazali bin Jawi, Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives; Dato' Abdul Rahman Yaakub, Minister of Education; Abdul Ghafar Baba, Minister of National and Rural Development and Minister of Lands and Mines; Dato' Ganie Gilong, Minister of justice; Lee Sick Yew, Minister without Portfolio; Dato' Hamzah bin Dato' Abu Samah, Minister of Information and Broadcasting; Tan Sri Fatimah Haji Hashim, Minister of Welfare Services; and Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Yusof, Attorney-General.

A small group of ambitious members of UMNO held views which were opposed to the "give and take" attitude of Tunku and his close colleagues. After the 1969 elections, they moved closer together and agreed that a "new model" government was needed under a new leader.

Such a situation had been witnessed in other countries, both in Asia and Europe, where politics had been in practice for a much longer period. In Malaysia, its novelty gave it greater shock value.

This group was headed by Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had been a Member of Parliament for a rural area in North Kedah until he was defeated by a Malay opponent from the PMIP in the May elections. His close associates included Syed Nasir Ismail, Dato' Harun Idris of Selangor, Musa Hitam from Johor and Syed Ja'afar Albar, a mercurial protagonist of Malay rights.

They and other like-minded UMNO members observed with disgust the composition of Tunku's new cabinet. They noted that six members of Tunku's 1957 cabinet had been retained. Three MCA stalwarts had been included, but without portfolios.

Dr Mahathir, Syed Nasir and Syed Ja'afar Albar issued a statement for publication in the leading Malay language newspaper, urging the continued exclusion of members of the MCA from the cabinet.

Tunku immediately sent a brief note, in Malay, to each of them which read "in the name of God I ask you to help the government in its task of restoring peace and harmony to our country. One of the ways is to restrain yourself from issuing statements which can worsen the situation."

Tunku's right eye had become seriously inflamed as a result of the constant strain of the last few days and he was persuaded to be admitted to hospital, the day after he despatched his reproof to the three agitators. An operation for glaucoma was necessary and Tunku could not be discharged until June 15.

Two days later, Tunku received a letter through the post. The letter was written in Malay. It was typed and covered four pages. It was signed by Dr Mahathir. Copies of it were sent to Tun Dr Ismail, Dato' Harun and Musa Hitam.

The letter contained a bitter personal attack on Tunku, blaming him for the party's heavy losses in the recent election and for the communal violence of May 13. Dr Mahathir demanded that Tunku should resign immediately from the post of Prime Minister and that he should withdraw from politics. Thousands of copies were later cyclostyled and distributed all over the peninsula by others.

Tunku was deeply wounded by this personal attack, but apart from sending a copy of the letter to Tun Razak "for such action as he thought fit", Tunku took no action.

Tun Razak, in his capacity as the Deputy Chairman of UMNO, summoned a meeting of the Party's Executive Council, to be held in his official residence, "Seri Taman", on July 12.

Tunku did not attend: Dr Mahathir was there to present his point of view. The discussion lasted two hours. The letter, it was argued, was calculated to aggravate the prevailing sensitive situation. It was proposed that Dr Mahathir be directed to resign from the party's Executive Council in view of a serious breach of party discipline which he had committed. Twenty-five members voted in favour while five dissented.

Two days later, Tun Dr Ismail, as Minister for Home Affairs, made an order under the Internal Security Act, prohibiting the possession, distribution or publication of Dr Mahathir's letter to Tunku.

Tunku's senior colleagues were staunchly loyal and supportive. Tun Abdul Razak, although recognized as Tunku's heir apparent, made it known that Tunku must be allowed to decide for himself if or when he wished to retire.

To Tunku, retirement, at this critical instant, would be tantamount to abdication at a time of the gravest crisis the nation had ever experienced. Such action was unthinkable. He was in good health and in vigorous physical condition. It was, he believed, his duty to continue to lead his government at least until the prevailing State of Emergency had been brought to a conclusion.

He turned his attention to the setting up of a National Goodwill Council, with similar bodies in every state. But some of Tunku's political opponents were not so easily subdued. They turned their attention to Malay students in the University of Malaya, where a well-organized University of Malaya Students' Union offered an obvious and easily influenced alliance. The President of the Students' Union had joined two members of the Kepong Branch of the Labour Party on May 7 in their application for a police permit for the funeral procession. He was likely to give equal co-operation to UMNO mal-

contents. Their activities would have to be confined to the university campus, but the press could be informed in advance and would publish what reporters heard and saw.

The first demonstration, by students carrying placards and shouting slogans, was held on July 17. Some of the slogans resembled those which had been circulated by Indonesian agents during the Confrontation: they were all directed at Tunku.

Similar demonstrations continued at intervals for more than a month. Students at the MARA Institute of Technology followed the example of those at the university.

If these examples of underground pressure had any influence on Tunku, they only served to strengthen his determination to continue to lead the government for some time to come. In due course, the leaders of the campaign for Tunku's resignation became tired of their sterile efforts.

Tunku continued to promote inter-communal goodwill by means of his National Goodwill Council through its State branches, and to fulfil his duties as Head of State with his customary proficiency. He received King Faisal of Saudi Arabia on his first state visit to Malaysia in June 1970 and paid an official visit to Japan in July of the same year. He also welcomed Tun Adam Malek, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, and combined friendly discussions with a round of golf.

It was during his visit that King Faisal invited Tunku to accept the post of Secretary-General of an Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah, which he would be required to bring into existence. The King first sent his Ambassador to see Tunku and to broach the subject. He then met Tunku in the privacy of the National Guest House—*Is-tana Tetamu*—and delivered his personal invitation.

The establishment of the Islamic Secretariat had been approved in principle at a conference of Muslim Heads of State in Morocco at which Tunku was present, but no mention of a candidate for the key position had been made. Tunku's appointment was approved at a subsequent conference in Karachi.

It was a formidable undertaking, but if Tunku hesitated to accept the invitation, it was on other grounds. King Faisal, in his wisdom, had chosen Tunku, in preference to an array of Arabs. In his opinion, Tunku, at the age of 67, was the only individual who could bring together the leaders of forty Muslim states and harness the wealth of the Middle East to promote Islamic unity.

Tunku had recognized the fact that the moment for his retirement was approaching, but he had, as yet, no definite idea as to how he would then occupy his time and energy.

Here now was a challenge, hitherto beyond his contemplation. He accepted the King's offer, which to others would have held out little if any attraction, and started to scan a new horizon.

Tunku discussed arrangements for his retirement first with Tun Razak and later with his senior cabinet colleagues. Tunku decided to link his retirement with the installation of the fifth Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Sultan of Kedah, which was due to take place on September 21, 1970.

This installation would follow established procedure, but arrangements appropriate to the retirement of a national leader, after thirteen years as Prime Minister and twenty years as President of UMNO, had no precedent.

Tunku, whose expert management of such matters at the highest level dated back to 1956, made sure, in close consultation with Tun Razak, that on this occasion there would be no lessening of the superlative quality of Malay ceremonial.

On August 19, Tunku made his first official reference to his imminent intention to retire, when he gave what was termed as the "Eve of National Day" broadcast. Tunku, with the consent of the NOC, had directed that the 1970 celebrations of Malaysia's National Day should be organized on a scale similar to the pre-Emergency days and had forecast further moves to lift the remaining restrictions. He predicted the reconvening of Parliament and the restoration of the rule of democracy and told his listeners that he would make an announcement pertaining to his retirement on August 30, 1970.

Knowledge of Tunku's discussions at top cabinet level had been well preserved, and there was speculation in the press that Tunku might "step down" in December.

Tunku then flew to Kuala Terengganu for an audience with the fourth Yang di-Pertuan Agong, at which he discussed the arrangements for Sultan Ismail's retirement and the accession of his successor on September 21.

Two days later, Tunku broadcast his views on the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, and criticized communist objections to the presence of Taiwan as an existing member of the world body. To the general public, there was no hint of an imminent retirement.

But on the night of August 30, Tunku returned to the mass media and told everyone that he would retire on September 22. He would preside at the installation of his nephew as the new Yang di-Pertuan Agong and then, on the next morning, tender his resignation and request the Agong to appoint Tun Razak as the new Prime Minister.

There was still much work to be done. Tun Razak would announce the composition of his new cabinet on the day of his assumption of the premiership, and invitations had to be sent to UMNO leaders and senior members all over the peninsula to assemble in Kuala Lumpur on September 23.

Tunku was a man of deep emotions, emotions normally hidden from even the closest of his colleagues. To onlookers, near and far, he maintained the familiar appearance of a still, dominant leader, genial and gentle.

At the palace on the morning of September 21, Tunku wore the white official uniform of the Prime Minister, with a single insignia and sash, that of Kedah's highest award. The myriad Orders and Decorations conferred on him by foreign countries hung in his residence or in the Penang Museum.

On the lawn, below the palace, the guard of honour and the pick of the military bands waited in the sunlight.

The new Agong, wearing the traditional headdress, tunic, sarong and trousers, heavy with gold thread, and holding the kris-of-state, stood in the palace while Tunku read the Proclamation, and then took the Oath of Office. Tunku then escorted his nephew out of the building to receive a royal salute and to inspect his guard of honour on the lawn.

That night Tunku attended a royal banquet, also in the palace, at which the other Rulers were present.

At 9 o'clock on the morning of September 22, Tunku and Tun Razak again drove to the palace; Tunku wore the official white uniform of the Prime Minister for the last time. He handed his document of resignation to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and then, in a unique expression of emotion, embraced his nephew warmly. Formality was rapidly restored, and Tunku requested the Agong to hand to Tun Razak his document of appointment as Prime Minister.

Very soon afterwards, Tunku and Tun Razak drove to the headquarters of the Language and Literature Institute, where four hundred leaders of UMNO had assembled in its largest conference room. Tun Razak, with the inspiration of his newly-conferred premiership, addressed the assembly, announcing his cabinet appointments, including the return of MCA members to Cabinet posts, and his plans for the future government of the country. It was a stirring speech and when Tunku rose to say farewell, the sense of anti-climax recalled Tennyson's "authority forgets a dying King", and robbed his remarks of any prospect of a favourable reception. There was little applause and he left the hall almost unescorted.

A farewell state banquet in the great Hall of Parliament was held the following night, at which Tunku was the guest of honour and banished at least temporarily a sense of ingratitude.

Five hundred guests were present. They included every Minister, the Chief Ministers of every state, high-ranking officers of the Malaysian Armed Forces and Malaysian Police, senior government officials, Ambassadors and High Commissioners and their wives.

Everyone present recognized that the occasion marked the end of an era. At the conclusion of his speech, Tun Razak turned to

Tunku and handed him a very large silver tray. A gold medallion lay in the centre, bearing the Arms of Malaysia. It was surrounded by a forest of signatures, the autographs of every Minister and every State and Settlement Chief Minister. They had been engraved and skilfully arranged so that they covered almost the entire surface.

In a brief inscription in Malay, which occupied a small space below the medallion, the key word was *persembahan* or "offering", a word normally used only when addressing royalty, and carrying a sense of homage. The tray was a farewell offering to Tunku from the nation's leaders.

16.
1957 – 1982

- I. Towards Islamic Unity.**
- II. PERKIM.**
- III. Father of Islamic Unity.**

WHEN TUNKU became the first Prime Minister of Malaya in 1957, there was no unity whatsoever among the Arab states and no attempt was made to unite them either.

Tunku was a pioneer in a continuing crusade to unite the Islamic states which included such giants as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan.

There were a number of problems common to all Muslim states in which uniform practice would be an obvious advantage, notably the determination of the first day of the fasting month.

If the advantage of uniformity was seriously discussed, such an attempt received no public expression until Tunku took the initiative. This he did in 1960, on the first morning of the Festival of the Haj—generally known as Id-il-Adha. In 1960, the festival coincided with the first Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London.

There was no central mosque in London at that time, and Tunku, as well as many other Muslims, had to travel to Woking, a small town in Surrey, south of London, to take part in the festival prayers.

At the end of the prayers, the *imam* of the mosque invited Tunku to address the congregation which included Muslims from many different countries. Among them, although unbeknownst to Tunku, was Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Tunku was chosen to speak because he was a prime minister and was known to be accustomed to speaking English in public.

Tunku was given no warning of this invitation and had not contemplated the likelihood that he might have to speak, but he accepted the invitation anyway.

As he stood there, a handsome figure, elegantly clothed in a Malay suit of light yellow silk with a high collar, thoughts rose in his mind, to which he had never previously given serious attention, and he decided, on the spur of the moment, to speak on the need for Muslim unity.

It was an inspired choice and his extemporaneous remarks made a lasting impression on at least one member of his audience—Prince Faisal, who was then the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Prince possessed a good knowledge of English although he would never speak it on official occasions.

When Tunku returned to Kuala Lumpur, he decided to follow up his speech and its message and he invited the Head of Department of Religious Affairs in Johor to lead a modest delegation to visit prominent Heads of Muslim states, and to seek their support for a meeting of Muslim leaders to discuss problems of common interest. The response to this first initiative was non-committal.

A second mission, sent two years later, though it was given more attention, did not bring back any definite response. But in 1963, Tunku sent a third and more dynamic delegation and the leader brought back positive promises of support. Therefore, the first conference of representatives of Muslim countries ever to be held met in Kuala Lumpur at the beginning of February 1964 during the fast-

ing month. The conference was held in the Tunku Abdul Rahman Hall and was attended by representatives from nineteen Muslim states, including the Chief Mufti of Palestine, Syed Amin Al-Hussaini. The conference was financed by the World Muslim Congress—*Mutamar Al-Alam Al-Islami*, whose headquarters was in Karachi, Pakistan.

Tunku declared the conference open and Tun Razak officiated as Chairman. Tunku invited all delegates to break their fast and enjoy his hospitality at his official residence. The conference discussed a number of problems which were common to Muslim people and states all over the world and passed a number of resolutions, including one condemning Israel and calling for united action to free Palestine from Jewish occupation.

In June 1970, King Faisal made a state visit to Malaysia and was warmly received and entertained by Tunku as Prime Minister. The King included in his programme a visit to the Muslim College in Petaling Jaya for which Tunku had appealed for funds. The college had previously been accommodated for fifteen years in one of the Sultan of Selangor's rambling palaces at Klang, about twenty miles away.

It was during this visit that King Faisal extended a formal invitation to Tunku to accept the appointment of Secretary-General of a new organization, which was to be called the Islamic Secretariat and was to be sited in Jeddah.

Tunku replied that he was a man who enjoyed good company, horseracing and an occasional game of cards, and was ill-suited for such a post. King Faisal seldom smiled, but a gleam of amusement shone for a moment from his hooded eyes. "I know all about you," he replied, "I am not asking you to be the *imam*, I only invite you to help to organize Muslim unity, a task which you can do much to achieve."

Tunku then accepted.

King Faisal had brought his proposal to set up an Islamic Secretariat to a meeting of Muslim Heads of State in Rabat, Morocco in September 1969, where it was unanimously approved in principle.

The meeting in Rabat was convened to condemn Israel for the partial destruction by fire of the ancient Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in August 1968.

Tunku was present at Rabat, as Prime Minister of Malaysia, and on his way home, he attended a meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He took the opportunity to condemn in vigorous terms the complete embargo in the American press of any mention of the critical resolution by the Muslim Heads of State at Rabat. Tunku was aware that much of the American press was controlled by Jews and he was not surprised when no reference to his speech appeared the next day in any of the leading newspapers in Washington, D.C.

Tunku retired from his post of Prime Minister on September 22, 1970, but before he retired he arranged to enlist senior staff to accompany him to Jeddah and to assist him in what was a pioneer undertaking. These Malaysian officers responded to a government circular inviting individuals to volunteer for secondment for two years. Seven officials were finally selected: Datuk Ali Abdullah, a member of the senior staff of the Ministry of External Affairs, was appointed Permanent Secretary; Omardin Abdul Wahab was appointed Political Secretary; Abdul Razak Hussein was Assistant Secretary; S.A. Lim was Finance Officer; Yunus was Chief Clerk; Redzuan was Correspondence Clerk and Syed Hussein Jamalullil served as Tunku's Private Secretary.

King Faisal offered Tunku a choice of several palaces in Jeddah. Tunku chose a guest palace, a two-storey building with a banquet hall and fifteen rooms, sited about half an hour's drive from the sea. The whole building was air-conditioned, elegantly furnished and carpeted. Office equipment was purchased locally. The palace had a large compound. The interior and the compound were looked after by servants who were recruited in Jeddah. In 1970, Jeddah had acquired many of the amenities of a modern seaport. Tens of thousands of Muslims passed through it during the pilgrimage season, and the oil of Saudi Arabia flowed through it to supply the outside world.

Looking back at his period as Secretary-General, Tunku remarked that the task was more difficult than that which he had undertaken, almost single-handedly, to reorganize and revitalize UMNO in 1950. Tunku soon realized why the project had not been undertaken earlier and why King Faisal had chosen a foreigner, rather than an Arab, to fill the key appointment.

It became increasingly clear to Tunku that King Faisal was the only Muslim Head of State in the Middle East and North Africa who was genuinely interested in implementing the concept of Muslim unity.

Tunku received many visitors and was treated with great respect; some of his visitors spoke English, others spoke Arabic and Tunku relied on an interpreter. Tunku usually wore a lightweight western-style suit, with a shirt, collar and tie and a black *songkok*. He wore Malay dress on Fridays and when going to the mosque. He never wore Arab costume.

The first major task was to enrol member-states and to obtain from them promises of annual subventions. Some of the largest states, with unlimited wealth at their disposal, were reluctant to contribute funds which would be used to benefit the poorer states. Small states were willing to enrol as members, but could only offer very small annual grants.

Progress was slow and Tunku asked for telex equipment to expedite communications. The official concerned replied that Tunku was free to make use of the government telex equipment but declined to provide a separate installation. Tunku was therefore obliged to travel long distances to speak personally with influential officials.

Tunku eventually managed to enrol forty Muslim countries as members of the Islamic Secretariat but as time passed, Tunku reached the conclusion that the Secretariat had made very little progress in establishing Muslim unity. Some positive action to provide mutual benefits for those in need was necessary.

Tunku went to see King Faisal and proposed that an Islamic Development Bank be set up, with capital subscribed by all the member

states. This would bring material benefits to the poorer states and would help to create a sense of Islamic unity. Richer states would experience no difficulty in making a substantial contribution, people in the poor states could draw on the bank to finance development schemes and would enjoy a better standard of living.

King Faisal brought Tunku's proposal to the next meeting of the Conference of Foreign Ministers and persuaded them to give the scheme their unanimous approval.

But it was simply not enough to secure agreement: the project must be organized and implemented, and King Faisal directed that Tunku should hand over the post of Secretary-General and take up the new and heavy responsibility of setting up the Islamic Development Bank.

The scheme which Tunku presented not long afterwards to a Conference of Islamic Finance Ministers was accepted, but the Finance Minister of Saudi Arabia was not in favour of the project and did not attend the vital first meeting of Finance Ministers.

Immediately after the meeting, Tunku drove to Taif in the searing mid-day heat to see the King, to report the absence of his Finance Minister, without whose presence the whole scheme might collapse.

The King expressed his anger at this incident and Tunku drove back to Jeddah, exhausted but confident that there would be no further opposition from that official in the immediate future.

Tunku had then to prepare the Charter, with the help of a committee of five, three of whom were Arabs and two were Malays. In this he received valuable advice from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. A Declaration of Intent was signed in December 1973, and the Charter was approved by another meeting of the Conference of Islamic Finance Ministers in August 1974.

Tunku arranged to establish the headquarters of the bank in Kuala Lumpur, but before it had time to operate, the new Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat, Hassan El Tohamy, Tunku's successor, secured the agreement of another meeting of Finance Ministers to take control of the Islamic Development Bank, and transfer

its headquarters to Jeddah since Saudi Arabia was the largest subscriber. At the same time, the Conference of Finance Ministers, guided by its Saudi Arabian member, decided to appoint a new President, in succession to Tunku. Before he retired Tunku had the satisfaction of seeing that twenty-six Arab countries had become subscribing members and that the Bank had an authorized capital of US\$2,000 million—a total which was to be paid up in five annual instalments.

The concept of Islamic unity among Arab states had now acquired a framework and the mechanism for development, but there was still no unity among the Muslims in Europe. King Faisal once again took the initiative and with Tunku's help set up a Muslim Council of Europe.

In London, the number of Muslims living in different parts of the city had greatly multiplied, but a proposal to build a mosque in Central London, planned by the Aga Khan fifty years ago, was still dormant. A few Muslims attended Friday prayers in part of a tall building in the residential area near Kensington Gardens. Tunku had often prayed there when he lived in London and he now discovered that the official-in-charge was a member of a Muslim sect which attached no importance to the provision of mosques.

Once again, Tunku went to see King Faisal and told him of the deplorable situation. More than fifteen years earlier, King Faisal and Tunku had been obliged to travel by train to a mosque in Surrey on the morning of the Haj Festival, and Faisal, now King, agreed to take an active part in building a central mosque in London. An appeal for funds from the King, backed by a substantial contribution from the Saudi Arabian government, met with speedy support and a mosque was completed in 1980.

Tunku attended the official opening of the handsome mosque and mourned the absence of King Faisal who had been assassinated in 1975.

Tunku's three and a half years in Jeddah had brought greater benefits to Muslims in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe than anyone could have contemplated in 1970, but his single-

mindful endeavours and achievements passed almost unnoticed and wholly unrecognized in Malaysia.

In Jeddah, Tunku's successor-in-charge of the Islamic Secretariat did his very best to expunge all traces of Tunku's pioneering effort. He ordered all Secretariat files compiled by Tunku and his staff to be burnt, leaving no trace of their existence. He also had a brochure produced about the Islamic Secretariat in which he claimed full responsibility for the entire project and made no mention of Tunku at all.

Other men might have abandoned their lifetime ambition, content with the knowledge that it had been achieved. Was it not time to relax and enjoy the benefits of a retirement long overdue?

In Southeast Asia, Muslim unity had not yet been contemplated, and Tunku's work in the Middle East appeared irrelevant. King Faisal was dead, but one other legacy of his far-sighted benevolence lived on to benefit Muslim activities everywhere, including Malaysia. The organization was named *Rabitah, Al Alami Al Islami*—the Muslim World League.

Before Tunku became Prime Minister, the encouragement of unity among Muslims of different racial origins in Malaya was never regarded as anyone's responsibility.

Few Malayan Chinese had ever become Muslims even in the East Coast states, where they had formed a long-established minority.

A Muslim missionary society had been founded in Singapore by Indian Muslims, and a branch had been formed in Kuala Lumpur in the 1950s, but it was moribund.

In 1960, Tunku decided to form a new Malayan missionary body in Kuala Lumpur. He held an inaugural meeting in his house on August 19. He named it *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam, Malaya* (or PERKIM) or the Malayan Muslim Welfare Organization, with the spreading of a knowledge of Islam to Malayan Chinese as its principal objective. Tunku included the word *kebaikan* or welfare in the title in order to emphasize the importance of mutual assistance in missionary work.

Tunku's official duties and overseas activities left him very little time to devote to the progress of this new example of his devotion to the ideal of Muslim unity, but he invited PERKIM committee members to arrange simple conversion ceremonies, followed by an evening meal, in his official residence, and thereby gave great encouragement both to PERKIM members and to Muslim converts. The majority of them came from Klang, a historic centre of long-established Chinese families, twenty miles away.

With this high-level support, branches of PERKIM were formed in almost every state in the Peninsula, and a vision of unity among the races of Malaya through Islam began to take shape.

Tunku continued to give PERKIM encouragement and some financial support for the next decade and requested state governments to do likewise. PERKIM's work continued at a slower pace during Tunku's absence in Jeddah, but soon after his return, the office-bearers asked him to accept the post of President, instead of Chief Patron, and Tunku agreed to do so.

PERKIM still had no home of its own, although a site had been made available by the Selangor state government some years earlier.

Soon after becoming President, Tunku requested an architect to design a fifteen-storey tower block where PERKIM could operate and expand, and where many floors could be let to commercial firms. A podium block of five storeys was also planned and was completed in January 1980 and the whole structure was officially opened in 1982.

Tunku's far-ranging interest in Muslim unity soon began to identify new objectives. Muslim refugees from Cambodia, a fraction of the previous Muslim community, who had escaped the indiscriminate slaughter of the Pol Pot regime, and had made their way through South Thailand to the northern border of Malaya, were given a warm welcome and temporary accommodation in hatted camps. The United Nations responded to Tunku's appeal and provided funds. Tunku then directed his sympathy to other Muslim minorities in the Far East, such as in Burma, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and South Korea. This expansion of interest was logical, pro-

vided that an adequate Muslim organization was available: it was manifestly beyond the competence of PERKIM.

Undeterred, Tunku sought support from *Rabitah*, the organization set up by King Faisal. Tunku also asked for aid from Libya.

A survey of countries in the South Pacific revealed the existence of many Muslim minority groups: Tunku's attention was also drawn to the existence of a thriving though scattered Muslim immigrant community in Australia.

A conference initiated by Tunku met in Kuala Lumpur in January 1980 to discuss the problems of Muslims in Southeast Asia and the Pacific: it was attended by delegates from seventeen countries and by the Secretary-General of *Rabitah*, Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harakan.

The delegates decided to set up, forthwith, a new organization to be called the Regional Islamic Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (RISEAP), and Tunku was elected its first President.

Three vice-presidents were appointed, Datuk Amar Haji Taib Mahmud, (a vice-president of PERKIM) who was the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Dr Mohammad Ali Wang from Australia and Prof Osman Raliby from Indonesia. A six-man Executive Committee was also elected consisting of Hj Badaruddin bin Othman from Brunei, Ghani Mohammad Hashim from Burma, Dr Ashfaq Ahmad from Papua New Guinea, Ali Tamidar Muhrir from Japan, Haji Dawood S.M. Ting from Hong Kong and S.M.K. Sherani from Fiji. RISEAP headquarters was allotted accommodation in the new PERKIM building, and received a launching grant of US\$50,000 from *Rabitah*.

A year after PERKIM was founded, two young Korean Muslims returning from the pilgrimage, broke their journey at Penang, came to Kuala Lumpur and asked if they could meet Tunku. They were members of a small group living in Seoul, who had been converted to Islam by a Turkish soldier who had been sent to South Korea as part of the United Nations military contingent during the Korean War. They were the first Koreans ever to go to Mecca.

Tunku welcomed them and after a fact-finding interview learnt that out of a population of many millions, the majority of whom were Buddhists, there were less than one hundred Korean Muslims.

Tunku promised to help them and after several months of diplomatic communications, a group of a dozen Malayan Muslims, headed by the President and Vice-President of PERKIM, flew to Seoul. They were given VIP treatment and were accorded an interview with the Korean President who promised to make available a central site for a mosque.

As a result of Tunku's initiative, a Korean Muslim Association was founded, and a dozen young Korean Muslims came to Kuala Lumpur and attended a three-month course in Islamic studies at the Muslim College at Klang, while Tunku launched an appeal for funds to build the first mosque in Korea. The Korean students, after their course, returned to Seoul to spread the knowledge of Islam among their countrymen. The Muslim community grew steadily and the mosque in Seoul was officially opened by Tunku in 1968.

The President of the China Islamic Association in Peking, Haji Mohd Ali Zang Jie and other Chinese Muslim leaders, welcomed Tunku and his delegation and some of them accompanied him on his ten-day tour, starting in Peking, including Canton, and ending in Hong Kong. Tunku offered to arrange special *dakwah* or missionary courses in Kuala Lumpur for young Chinese Muslims and expressed his fear that the future of Islam in Eastern China was in danger, unless positive action was taken to teach Islam to the younger generation of Chinese Muslims.

Tunku visited old mosques in Peking, Shanghai, Hang Chow and Canton, one of which was built seven hundred years ago, and gave donations to the officials at each of them.

Tunku was accompanied on this visit by Tun Omar Ong, Tan Sri Haji Yusuf Ibrahim, Dato' Hussain Osman, Haji Hashim bin Halim, Owen Chung, Tunku's ADC and Samad Mokhtar, Tunku's bodyguard.

Tunku was the first Muslim leader of international status, other than the Malay Heads of State, ever to visit China since it became a

Communist Republic. The Prime Minister received him in the Ming Palace, an honour reserved for special guests, and wherever Tunku and his delegation went they were treated with great courtesy and friendliness.

It was a notable expedition, undertaken by a man aged nearly eighty years, sustained by a rare tenacity of purpose—to serve the cause of Islamic unity as long as he was able.

Tunku's unequalled initiative benefited countless Muslims in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Australia. Should not this selfless legacy be recognized by offering him one more title: "Father of Islamic Unity"?

17.
1974 – 1987

I. A New Life.
II. Tunku The Writer.

TUNKU left Jeddah on his second retirement in May 1974. He had been requested by the Conference of Finance Ministers, on King Faisal's express recommendation, to organize an Islamic Development Bank and to be its first head. But once he had completed the difficult preliminary work, which included the Declaration of Intent and the Articles of Agreement, it was obvious his services would be dispensed with.

In the last few months before he retired from his post as Prime Minister, Tunku visited Alor Setar and Penang. He still owned a small house in Alor Setar but most of his old friends in Kedah had either died or moved elsewhere and he decided to settle in Penang. He was offered two houses of modest size, one relatively new and another more than fifty years old. Tunku preferred the old house: it had been built for the use of senior executives of the firm of Guthrie, but was now available at a favourable price and Tunku arranged to buy it using part of the retirement gratuity which he would receive

from the Government. The house needed extensive repairs and Tunku added a patio on the upper floor and several rooms both upstairs and downstairs.

Thus, when his services in Jeddah as the first head of the Islamic Development Bank were terminated with such ungracious speed, he had a home to retire to.

After living an intensely busy life for more than twenty years, Tunku could not accept the prospect of unlimited leisure. Although he graduated as a Barrister at the Inner Temple in London in 1947 and served as a Deputy Public Prosecutor in the Malayan Government soon afterwards, he had never been called to the Bar in Malaysia.

When Tunku returned to Penang, after completing his service as Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah, he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do, but he told his old friend Datuk Eusoffe Abdoolcader, who was then a Judge, that he would consider it an honour if he was called to the Malaysian Bar.

The request was welcomed at all levels of the Judiciary and by members of the Bar, and on July 4, 1974 Tunku attended a ceremony in the High Court of Penang, in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. Tunku's admission was proposed by Datuk Justice Eusoffe Abdoolcader and was cordially supported by the Chairman of the Bar Council, States of Malaya, Dato' Justice V.C. George.

Tunku was then seventy-one, and he had no plan to practise law, but he declared that he considered his admission to the Bar of his home country a privilege which gave him much pleasure. A full report of the ceremony was published in the *Malayan Law Journal* in September 1974.

A business career, even a number of Directorships, did not appeal to him. Islamic unity was still an unfulfilled ambition, but opportunities for local expansion appeared to be minimal.

Then, as if in answer to an unspoken prayer, Datuk Loh Boon Siew, a wealthy Penang businessman, who imported Japanese motorcars and motorcycles, came to see him. Datuk Loh also owned an

English-language newspaper called *The Star*. It was published in Penang, and its small circulation did not extend to the mainland.

Datuk Loh asked Tunku for his advice. A junior Minister from Kuala Lumpur had paid him a visit. He wished to obtain control of *The Star*, and although Datuk Loh had replied that he did not wish to sell, the Assistant Minister had expressed annoyance and Datuk Loh feared that he and his business might suffer. But if Tunku would agree to acquire a controlling interest in the paper and accept the appointment of Chairman of the Board of Directors, *The Star* would be safe.

Tunku had never engaged in business, he had never even bought shares in a commercial firm and was not a wealthy man. Others in his position might have expressed sympathy and advised the beleaguered tycoon to look for help elsewhere.

But this was the type of challenge which Tunku could not reject. He consulted his bank manager, arranged for a substantial loan and agreed to buy 300,000 shares; *The Star* agreed to pay the monthly interest. He also cabled Tun Mustapha and when his old friend arrived in Penang, Tunku asked him to add his financial support.

The Star was now safe. But it was an unattractive publication. Tunku undertook to write feature articles under the column "Looking Back" in which he would give his personal account of the growth of UMNO and their struggle for Malayan independence. The first article was published on December 16, 1974 and described Tunku's first step as an amateur journalist, editing a cyclostyled broadsheet, issued free to UMNO members. It was a fascinating success story. Tunku changed the name from *Suara UMNO* to *Suara Merdeka* (*Voice of Independence*), organized a campaign against two other Malay newspapers which opposed UMNO and set up a small printing press in Johor Bahru, but that was more than twenty years ago.

In Penang the circulation of *The Star* increased substantially. Tunku helped to improve the management and his articles attracted readers in other states. Before long, Tunku and his Board of Directors decided to move their headquarters to Kuala Lumpur and to convert *The Star* into a national newspaper.

They needed new machinery and more capital. This the MCA agreed to provide, but Tunku retained 30,000 of his shares and his position as Chairman and continued to write a weekly article. Their scope was extended to include Tunku's views and comments on current affairs, under the column "As I See It". These articles established Tunku's reputation as an Elder Statesman, whose sagacious opinions were avidly and eagerly read by people of all communities.

These articles have been republished in eight volumes: *Looking Back*, published in 1977; *View Points* (1978); *As a Matter of Interest* (1981); *Lest We Forget* (1983); *Something to Remember* (1983); *Contemporary Issues in Malaysian Politics* (1984); *Challenging Times* (1986) and *Political Awakening* (1987).

Although Tunku's home is in Penang, he maintains a small house and office in Jalan Tunku, Kuala Lumpur. He now owns the house, but it was formerly the quarters of a senior government officer. The office, a timber annexe, was added by Tunku.

Tunku writes all his articles; he does not dictate them. He once said that only two men could read his handwriting—his two secretaries—Jee Guan Huat in Penang and Cheah Phee Cheok in Kuala Lumpur. Jee died in 1984, leaving the indefatigable Cheah, who spends most of his time in Kuala Lumpur. There he finalizes, types and forwards the weekly articles to *The Star's* head office in Petaling Jaya. Besides these, he has other responsibilities. He keeps Tunku's diary of engagements, assembles and replies part of Tunku's voluminous correspondence, replies to telephone calls which are sometimes almost continuous, intercepts visitors, many of them without appointments, and is ready to leave at short notice for Penang, should Tunku need him.

Tunku's close interest in the promotion of Islamic unity has been described elsewhere. But since his return from Jeddah, there has been a notable expansion of Islamic activity in Malaysia, East Asia and the South Pacific, as a result of his incessant initiative. Other members of Muslim minorities gave him loyal support, but the ultimate responsibility for sustained activity and progress still rest on Tunku's aged shoulders.

So many decorations, honours and awards have been conferred on Tunku in the course of his long and illustrious career that neither he nor Cheah can supply a complete list. But they include the highest awards from Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam (in pre-Communist days), Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Morocco, Ethiopia, Netherlands, Belgium and West Germany.

Many universities acquired merit just by conferring on Tunku Honorary degrees, usually in Law or Letters. These included the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, the University of Malaya, the National University of Malaya, the Science University of Malaysia in Penang, the Prince of Songkla University and the Chula Longkorn University in Thailand, the University of Manila, the University of Araneta (also in the Phillipines), the University of Sydney in Australia and the University of Aligarh in India.

Awards of an even greater international prestige were conferred on Tunku in 1983, when he was eighty years of age. On March 1, 1983 Tunku received the Faisal Award from King Fahd, son and heir of the late King Faisal, in the royal capital of Saudi Arabia.

Three weeks later, Tunku flew to Islamabad to receive from General Zia-ul-Huq, President of Pakistan, the Hijrah Award. Tunku was the first person to receive it.

Both these awards were given to Tunku in recognition of his unique contribution to the cause of Islamic unity at both international and national level.

The King Faisal Award was presented to Tunku in an assembly of Muslim leaders and scholars in a great hall in Riyadh. The presentation of the Hijrah Award took place out of doors, witnessed by thousands, and was part of a military ceremony which commemorated the anniversary of Pakistan's National Day.

Both these awards took the form of large gold medallions, accompanied by substantial cash gifts.

In 1987, shortly before Tunku's eighty-fourth birthday, the High Commissioner for Australia in Malaysia, David Evans, announced that Queen Elizabeth II had, on the advice of the President of Aus-

tralia, approved the appointment of Tunku as an Honorary Companion of the Order of Australia. The Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Rais Yatim, arranged for the presentation to take place in the Treaty Room of the Foreign Ministry building in Kuala Lumpur, appropriately named "Wisma Putra". The emblem of the Order is a large gold and light blue disc, representing a *Mimosa* flower.

Awards of a different category have been created and are being conferred each year, in Tunku's name, on some of the most talented Malaysian students for further studies overseas. These form part of the continuing benevolence of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation.

The Foundation was established as a national institution by an Act of Parliament approved at a session held on July 15, 1966 to commemorate Tunku's services to the nation.

Funds were contributed by the public, UMNO members, by firms, companies and state governments, and now total over ten million Malaysian dollars. These are administered by a board of trustees, whose Chairman is appointed by His Majesty, the Yang di-Per-tuan Agong, and whose members include a representative of the Ministry of Education and of the Treasury.

Tan Sri Mohamed Khir Johari and Datuk Lim Sun Hoe have played a prominent part in the administration of the foundation and in the implementation of the original project.

The Tunku Abdul Rahman Awards now include: a Tunku Fellowship for a Malaysian graduate for studies at Ph.D. level; two Tunku Abdul Rahman scholarships for Malaysian students for post-doctorate studies at Cambridge University; a scholarship to the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia; a scholarship for a student at the Prince of Songkla University; a special award to a blind student at Master's level; a gold medal, Pingat Tunku, awarded to the best graduate from local universities and the Tunku Chair, for the study of International Law, at the University of Malaya.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when Minister of Education, drew up a programme of Special Awards, and improved the administration of the foundation. These proposals were implemented by Dato' Musa

Hitam in 1979, and he organized a Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation Night in conjunction with Tunku's seventy-sixth birthday. At a dinner on that occasion, Tunku's Gold Medal, scholarships and prizes were presented to the winners of the awards. This function has been continued annually.

Tunku takes a keen interest in the activities of the foundation and in the winners of these awards.

Tunku has always possessed the gift of making friends at all levels of society and among all communities. It was an immense advantage during the long struggle for independence by peaceful means, a feat which no one else but he could have achieved.

As he grew older, his relatives and many friends delighted to join in celebrating his birthday. Even in his old age, he has retained the natural charm, the infectious chuckle and a spontaneous sense of humour.

In February 1987, his family in Alor Setar and Penang and his friends in Kuala Lumpur competed for the privilege of organizing the celebration of his eighty-eighth birthday. In the end, they agreed on a compromise—extending the festivities over three days.

A dinner party in Kuala Lumpur on the Friday night of February 6 was the "curtain-raiser".

Some years earlier Tunku had appealed to his friends not to give him any more presents: donations to one of Tunku's favourite charities were the only exception. Icing-decorated cakes would be relayed to welfare homes.

But on the night of February 6, Tunku's hosts, the heads of Sime Darby and Genting, decided to ignore his embargo. At an appropriate moment, after a congratulatory speech, Tunku Ahmad Yahaya, representing one of Tunku's principal hosts, handed him a decoratively wrapped parcel. The cover was quickly removed and Tunku gazed in delighted surprise at a book, elegantly bound in red leather with gilded tooling. The book had been printed in Penang in 1824. The author, John Anderson, was an official in the service of the British East India Company and he described at length events leading up to the occupation of Kedah (spelt Quedah) by the Siamese in

1821. A watercolour portrait of the refugee Sultan had been inserted as a frontispiece. The book was believed to be the only surviving copy in private ownership and had been purchased at an auction in London at a fabulous price.

Tunku's knowledge of Kedah history is unequalled by any layman, and he promised himself at least an hour of uninterrupted browsing as soon as possible.

The next morning, Saturday, February 7, friends began to assemble at Tunku's house in Kuala Lumpur before he had left his bedroom and to await him in a large sitting room which had recently been redecorated, as if to prepare for the occasion.

Tunku emerged, wearing a white bush jacket, and touched the hands of a dozen well-wishers who had assembled in the hall.

The President of PETRONAS, Tan Sri Abdullah Salleh, had come to hand Tunku a cheque for RM10,000 as a birthday donation to one or more of Tunku's chosen charities.

Tunku faced a barrage of cameras clicking as he accepted the cheque and announced that he would give half to the victims of a recent fire which had destroyed one hundred timber houses in Kuala Lumpur and one half to PERKIM to enable the publications committee to print and publish more booklets for Muslim converts.

Tunku dispensed light refreshments in the dining room with the air of a man with no other engagements.

But in Tunku's outer office, Cheah waited anxiously. Tunku had still to finalize the text of a speech which he was due to deliver that afternoon.

The telephone rang almost continuously with birthday messages. Samad, Tunku's veteran bodyguard, another survivor from Tunku's years as Prime Minister, stood guard at the entrance to Tunku's inner office, restraining optimistic visitors, autograph hunters and newspaper reporters who had bypassed the front entrance of the house. Cheah also knew that a double pile of Tunku's latest book were standing on Tunku's desk waiting to be autographed.

Tunku had arranged to fly to Penang that night, but not until Abdul Ghafar Baba, the Deputy Prime Minister, had launched his

latest book called *Political Awakening* in the ballroom of a well-known hotel.

Every chair in the ballroom was occupied when Tunku stepped on to the carpeted platform at five o'clock, followed by Ghafar Baba, Ng Tieh Chuan, the publisher, and Tan Sri Lee Siow Mong. Tan Sri Lee's presence was not related to the launching ceremony, but he had flown from Singapore so that he could present to Tunku, on the eve of his birthday, a gift of his own devising. It was not an historic heirloom, but it was almost as rare. After a short speech praising Tunku's work to promote inter-racial harmony, Tan Sri Lee handed Tunku an elegant Chinese scroll inscribed by him with birthday greetings in the Malay or Jawi script, using Indian ink.

Ghafar Baba spoke with affection of his long political association with Tunku, dating back to 1950. It was then Tunku's turn. His audience, which included ambassadors, community leaders and old friends, watched with some alarm as Tunku extracted from his pocket several large sheets of paper, on which he had written notes, big enough for him to see, despite his failing eyesight. They were soon reassured: Tunku scarcely glanced at his text and spoke extemporaneously. He had the gift of shaping his phrases so that they generate spontaneous laughter. He spoke first in Malay and then in English. Nearing the end of his remarks in English he paused for a moment before saying, "Whether we look East or West, we shall always be friends with England."

Tunku moved across to relax with Ghafar Baba, Tun Tan Siew Sin, Tan Sri Lee and members of the diplomatic corps over cups of tea, while the majority of the audience purchased their autographed copies and consumed light refreshment at the other end of the ballroom.

Tunku drove to the airport that night and flew to Penang. He reached his brightly illuminated house at about eleven. Many members of his family were waiting to welcome him and it was midnight before he could turn off his bedside lamp.

But before the sun rose on February 8, Tunku, with astonishing resilience, had woken and had repeated his dawn prayer. His sisters,

only a little younger than Tunku, were also early astir, helping to prepare for the impending avalanche of visitors.

By nine o'clock, a double row of well-wishers, who had come by bus or on foot, were waiting outside the walled entrance to Tunku's compound. The name of the road had been changed by the municipal authorities in time for this morning's gathering and now read "Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman".

Tunku's honorary Penang ADC, Owen Chung, a member of an ancient Penang Chinese family, waited near the entrance until Tunku and his wife had taken their seats at one end of a long table in his dining room. The men at the head of the column were then admitted. Access to Tunku's dining room is through a spacious hall where its walls are covered with tall glass-fronted display cases full of Tunku's treasures.

The first thing everyone wanted to do was to touch Tunku's hand and to wish him a happy birthday; they then passed behind his chair and filed along the other side of the room. Refreshments, laid out on broad dishes, were now sampled and needed to be replenished frequently. These well-wishers were in many cases humble men and women, Chinese, Indians and Malays—the people of Penang.

The Deputy President of the MCA, Datuk Lee Kim Sai, and the Secretary-General of the DAP, Lim Kit Siang, Datuk Lee's political rival, arrived almost together; each was followed by a substantial group of supporters. Both groups sang birthday greetings, the MCA brought a mobile orchestra for good measure, and both presented Tunku with mammoth icing-decorated cakes.

Not long afterwards, while the flow of well-wishers continued, Tun Awang, the Governor of Penang and Dr Lim Chong Eu, the Chief Minister entered, sat beside Tunku for a short time and then withdrew. Tun Omar Ong and his wife Toh Puan Dr Aishah Ong had come from Kuala Lumpur to represent PERKIM. Locally-based members of the diplomatic corps followed.

Some Indian visitors placed garlands round Tunku's neck. Krishnan, an admirer, brought flower petals, a bottle of water and a

small basin so that his wife, Chandra, could bathe Tunku's feet, a gesture normally reserved for their own father.

Television cameras and press photographers covered much of the morning's cavalcade. Much to Tunku's relief they eventually withdrew.

As the visitors moved back to the entrance, they paused to gaze at the contents of the wall cases. These included a small selection of foreign honours and awards conferred on Tunku at different times in his career: many others are displayed in the Penang Museum.

In one wall case, a heavy-curved sword was prominent. It is a replica of the sword of the Prophet Muhammad. The original rests in the great museum in Istanbul and this copy was made, at the request of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and presented to Tunku personally by the King's son. Another case is crowded with large silver trays, each inscribed by the donors, and in yet another case are framed photographs of Heads of State whom Tunku had entertained or who had entertained Tunku. Pewter cylinders containing scrolls occupy another display case; prominent among them is the parchment which was presented to Tunku when he received the Freedom of the City of London in 1968.

Tunku and his family remained in the dining room to share a lunch of curry and rice which some of the family had helped to prepare. Tunku then walked slowly up the long, curved staircase to his bedroom for a short siesta.

In his office greeting telegrams had been delivered and a number of the largest cakes occupied a side table waiting for onward delivery.

Tunku reappeared at 3:00 P.M. He had promised himself a visit to the Penang Turf Club, although there was no race meeting—only off-course betting. But he knew that he would meet old friends at Batu Gantong. Kalimuthoo, his driver for nearly thirty years, swept him away and then a little before 5:00 P.M., drove him to the Penang Football Stadium, where Tunku watched Kedah beat Pahang, indeed another birthday present.

While the people of Penang, at all levels of society expressed their affection and admiration, newspapers in every language carried articles, photographs, biographical notes and full- or half-page birthday greetings.

The Star included a twelve-page supplement devoted exclusively to Tunku and his birthday. It also published a message from the Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. It read (in translation): "We are thankful to Allah that the Tunku is still able to contribute his invaluable service, especially in welfare services and missionary work. His willingness to serve society even at his age is a pride all Malaysians share."

Datuk Dr Ling Liong Sik, the Transport Minister and President of the MCA wrote: "The Tunku is one Malaysian who is loved and respected by the whole nation. He personally epitomizes the values cherished by all Malaysians—the values of goodwill, tolerance, moderation, peace and justice Let us return to the traditional values which the Tunku espoused, for these are the attributes which will hold the nation together."

Datuk S. Samy Vellu, the Minister of Works and President of the MIC wrote: "Years have gone by since you delivered us from the bondage of colonialism and gave the nation Merdeka, but the great principles by which you achieved nationhood are here to guide us. It is our pride that one of the greatest figures of our history is living with us, speaking to us and teaching us the way of living together . . ."

Tan Sri Mohamed Khir Johari wrote: "Malaysians of all racial origins and religious beliefs have good reason to be grateful to God that we still have the Tunku in our midst. During these uncertain times he gives us hope and inspiration. Malaysia needs him now more than ever."

Perhaps these and many other tributes which were offered to Tunku on his birthday can be summarized in some words which appeared on February 9 in the *New Straits Times's* second leading article, under the heading "A Rare Man": "The best present we can give the Tunku is to ensure that this nation enjoys his legacy of racial harmony, generation after generation."

18.
1987 – 1990

- I. Tunku's Last Years.**
- II. A Year of Celebration and Disaster.**
- III. The Babas and Nyonyas in Melaka.**
- IV. Legend and History of Kedah:
A Film Directed by Tunku.**
- V. Farewell to PERKIM.**
- VI. Tunku's Death and Funeral.**

TUNKU'S eighty-fourth birthday was the climax of a series of annual celebrations which Tunku's friends and relatives had delighted to offer to him year after year. On that day no one expected that this was to be the last.

During the next two months political rivalries in UMNO escalated, with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Musa Hitam confronting Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Ghafar Baba.

UMNO party elections were held in Kuala Lumpur on April 24. Counting votes continued until a late hour, and it was then announced that Dr Mahathir's group had won by a narrow majority. In the days which followed the result was questioned and the validity of some of the votes of the majority was disputed. Both groups claimed the right to continue to use the name UMNO, but the registrar accepted a speedier application from Dr Mahathir, and authorized him to adopt the name of UMNO Baru and Tengku Razaleigh was obliged to accept Semangat 46 as a substitute. The fact that

Tengku Razaleigh could not use the original name—UMNO—was a severe handicap to him and his followers.

An appeal to the High Court against the validity of the Election was strongly supported by Tunku, and after a long hearing UMNO was declared an unlawful society in April 1988, but UMNO Baru was in effective control of the government, and Tunku accepted the situation.

Soon after Tunku's birthday and before the UMNO Elections, preparations were made to mount and exhibit in the main hall of the National Museum, displaying the highlights of Tunku's career. It was officially opened by Tun Hussein Onn and in his speech he expressed his full support for a proposal to erect a Tunku Memorial Building and to launch a Tunku Memorial Fund.

The exhibition included some of Tunku's principal treasures—a replica of the Sword of the Prophet Muhammad, which was presented to Tunku by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, the Hijrah Award presented by President Zia-ul-Huq of Pakistan and some of Tunku's many decorations which he had received from other Rulers and heads of State. These and many other awards and gifts were shown to the public for the first time. Enlarged photographs mounted in frames showed major events in Tunku's official career. There was also a tall screen at one end of the halls showing the inauguration of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu on September 16, 1963.

It was an impressive exhibition which managed to attract 82,762 members of the public in a period of only twenty days. If it had been possible to take the exhibition on a tour of state capitals in Malaysia, the total would have been far greater.

Tunku held frequent discussions with Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters and continued to contribute a weekly article to *The Star*, but he refrained from any open criticism of the government.

Others were not so tolerant. Finally, on October 27, the Prime Minister directed the arrest and detention of approximately one hundred individuals. *The Star* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh* were closed for an indefinite period. The official name given to the sweeping deten-

tion order was "Operation Lallang" comparing the detainees to the coarse type of grass which poisoned agricultural land and needed to be eradicated vigorously.

Tunku was greatly distressed by the sudden arrest and detention of so many individuals, although most of them were members of political parties which were opposed to UMNO, and he wrote letters to those responsible criticizing their action, copies of which were sent to influential individuals overseas.

TUNKU had suffered from ill health for many years, but he never complained. To the world at large he was still a nation-builder, a genial diplomat, a fluent public speaker, a charming host and a generous friend. None of these characteristics were normally the features of a sick man.

The disruption of UMNO had caused acute mental distress which aggravated his ill health, but it seemed also to stimulate renewed interest in long-forgotten dreams.

One of these was an organization in Malacca named "Persatuan Peranakan China Malaysia", the Malaysian association of locally-born Chinese. The Malay word "*Peranakan*" was used in this context to identify a person who was resident in Malaya, notably in Malacca and Penang, whose parents were both of Chinese origin, but were locally-born and spoke Malay as their mother-tongue. They did not speak any Chinese dialect.

These *Peranakan* communities had been in existence for at least two centuries, and the wealthier members had built handsome two-storey houses of Chinese architectural design and ornamentation. In Malacca, many of these stood in two long rows north of the river, bordering the sea front.

In a multiracial country, a community which encouraged the merging of members of the two principal races was warmly commended by Tunku and he had appointed, as his first Minister of Finance, in 1957, a leading member of the *Peranakan* community in Malacca—Tan Siew Sin—who spoke fluent Malay but knew no Chinese dialect. This served as a moral support to the *Peranakan*,

but fifteen years later the community in Malacca was sustained by adults and was losing the support of the younger generation.

But in Tunku's old age, while resting in his Kuala Lumpur residence, the existence of a uniquely Malayan community rose to the surface of his memory and he made enquiries about the people who he sometimes referred to as the "Babas and Nyonyas".

He learnt that the leaders had formed an association which had been registered with the name "Persatuan Peranakan China Malaysia" and had set up a small private museum in 1985; there they displayed Baba bridal costumes, models of earlier Baba houses and ceramics of the earlier period.

In April 1988, Tunku invited the leaders of the Association to come to his house in Kuala Lumpur. The President, Koh Her Chew, and his group in paying their respects to Tunku, knelt on the carpeted floor, and raised their hands, palms joined, at the level of the chest in a traditional gesture of homage. He presented to Tunku a book of over three hundred *pantuns* which had been collected by Chia Kim Tek in 1950 and printed in Malacca. Many of these four-line Malay verses were sung to traditional Malay tunes on social occasions organized by members of the Association. The following is a typical example of one of the verses in the book of *pantuns* presented to Tunku, with a literal translation into English. Two of the Malay words in the fourth line were misspelt to fit the rhythm:

*Bungu Kekwah ditepi kolam,
Layu serangkai terkena jemur;
Minta doa siang dan malam,
Sobat andeh berpanjang umur.*

Translation:

*Chrysanthemum flowers grow by a pool,
A clump withers from the heat of the sun;
I pray, day and night,
That our friends will enjoy long life.*

Tunku in his response assured them of his full support, but reminded them that their traditional lifestyle could only survive if they made combined positive efforts to preserve it, and he sincerely hoped that they would do so.

OF all the Peninsular Malay states Kedah has the longest history and was probably an active associate in the ancient Malay maritime empire of Sriwijaya in the seventh century A.D.

The old palace in Alor Setar, where Tunku was born and where he lived with his brothers and sisters during their childhood, was a rich repository of history and legend which Tunku heard and treasured in his memory as he grew older.

When Tunku returned to Kedah in 1931, after five happy years at Cambridge and in London. He was appointed to the Kedah Civil Service and in 1934 he was sent to the island of Langkawi as District Officer.

The island was isolated and lacked all the amenities one normally took for granted, even a small jetty, and no crops appeared to flourish.

Tunku was told that the island had been cursed more than a century earlier by a beautiful maiden, named Mahsuri, who had been wrongly accused of adultery and had been executed by the Penghulu, and that the curse prevails to this day.

Tunku wrote down the details of this story and some years later converted it into a stage play, which was produced on the lines of a *Bangsawan* and was very popular. The play was later staged by others in Singapore. In 1958, Cathay Keris Film Production converted it into a film in Singapore. Tunku was not consulted and B.N. Rao was the director. The film was shot in black and white and all the locations were in Singapore Island. Tunku was fully occupied with his responsibilities as Prime Minister and took no part in the production.

In the years that followed, during his periodic visits to Kedah Tunku took the opportunity to revive his interest in the legend of Mahsuri, and he discovered that the romantic tragedy possessed an

elaborate historical background, in which Siamese and Malay officials were deeply involved.

After the introduction of "Operation Lallang", Tunku could no longer contribute articles to *The Star* and he decided to translate the true story of Mahsuri, the Langkawi maiden, into an historical film.

Tunku's eyesight did not permit him to write, but he dictated the film script to his secretary in Penang, and when he had completed the first draft, he began to plan the production. Tunku also decided that he would not offer the script to a commercial film company, but would direct the film himself.

His first step was to phone Jamil Sulong, a well-known Malay film director, who had worked with both Shaw Bros and Cathay Keris and had also held a post in the Government film unit, Filem Negara.

Jamil came to Tunku's house in Kuala Lumpur in April 1988 and Tunku told him that he planned to produce the film in colour in Kedah, and asked Jamil for professional advice, but stated that he, Tunku, would personally supervise the whole film from beginning to end. He would also be responsible for providing the funds to meet the cost of production and salaries of the performers.

Jamil accepted the invitation and after reading the outline of the script he accompanied Tunku to Alor Setar and Langkawi. He then began to select the principal actors and actresses.

Jamil hired the equipment and engaged the technical staff. Tunku was assisted by members of his family. The leading players were Norlidah Ahmad and Yusuf Wahab.

The preliminary film production occupied about six months but it was a year before *Sumpah Mahsuri* was ready for screening to the public. It was a spectacular success and Mahsuri Filem gave a lavishly organized charity presentation under the Royal Patronage Their Majesties the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Azlan Shah, and his consort on September 22, 1989 in Kuala Lumpur.

The legend of a murdered Langkawi maiden had grown into a full-length multi-coloured film. The production would have taxed the strength of a man many years his junior, but Tunku appeared to

be tireless. He stated that he felt morally satisfied. He had done justice to the true history of Mahsuri.

BY the time Tunku had completed his film on Mahsuri in September 1989, the determination which enabled him to surmount the challenges of a major film production had weakened and he found it increasingly burdensome to continue to undertake some of his other responsibilities. One of these was the Presidency of PERKIM, the Malaysian Muslim Welfare Organization.

He had founded PERKIM in 1960 while he was Prime Minister, and had accepted the position of President after his return from Saudi Arabia in 1973. Under his inspired direction PERKIM had erected a fourteen-storey building which provided the organization its headquarters and rental space for other firms and offices. Funds for the construction were borrowed, with the backing of Tunku and PERKIM later expanded its activities to include Muslim minorities in the region. Tunku had presided at every meeting of the PERKIM Council.

When PERKIM was founded by Tunku, there was no other Muslim missionary organization in Peninsular Malaya, but under his inspired leadership its influence extended all over Asia.

It was no easy task finding a successor, and his supporters begged him to continue to preside at Council meetings and to continue to generate unflagging co-operation.

For several years there was no acceptable successor. Although some Malayan office bearers possessed the experience, they could not command the support of other Muslim leaders or from the Malaysian public.

The solution to the problem emerged, not in the Peninsula but in Sarawak, where Tunku's close friend Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud had expanded Muslim missionary work, and had, through his wife, created a flourishing organization for Muslim women, which extended all over the Malayan peninsula as well. Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud had accepted the position of Vice-President of PERKIM but it was recognized that his responsibilities as Chief Minister of

Sarawak were likely to restrict his ability to provide an adequate successor for Tunku.

In 1989 Tunku's health had deteriorated, and although he maintained his deep affection for PERKIM and its work, Tunku told Dato' Patinggi Taib that he had reluctantly decided to step down, provided that Dato' Patinggi Taib would take his place.

Tunku announced his resignation at the Annual General Meeting of PERKIM on December 3, 1989, and at the same time proposed that Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud be elected in his place. The two proposals were accepted with the regretful recognition that there was no better solution.

WHEN the Japanese Military Administration surrendered in Malaya and Sarawak in August 1945 both territories had been left in a state of economic ruin. In Malaya, the British Labour Party Government decided to introduce a new form of direct administration, which they referred to as "Malayan Union", and in Sarawak they welcomed a proposal from Sir Charles Vyner Brooke to cede the territory to Britain, after Brooke had secured the agreement of the Council Negeri by a very narrow majority. Sarawak was to be a British Colony with its own governor.

In both territories there was widespread opposition from the public, notably from the younger generation, and groups of young Malays met and discussed the possibility of resisting colonial expansion by force.

Tunku left for England to continue his Law studies in December 1946, but before he did so, he advised Kedah "hot heads" to plan and achieve the aim by peaceful means, and his advice was accepted.

But there was no Tunku in Sarawak and among the groups of young Malays was one which took the name of "Rukun Tigabelas" and decided to oppose the arrival of the second British Governor, Sir Duncan Stewart, by murdering him. The members of "Rukun Tigabelas" drew lots to decide who was to commit the crime and Roslie Dhoby, aged eighteen, was made responsible.

Roslie stood with a row of welcoming schoolchildren at Sibulanding stage and as Stewart walked towards a waiting group of officials he stabbed the governor in the lower abdomen. Stewart was flown to Singapore but he died in the hospital a few days later. Roslie was charged with murder and was later hanged.

On December 3, 1949, the population of Malaya was preoccupied with the opposition to the Malayan Union, and Stewart's murder in Sarawak attracted very little notice in the Malayan press.

Tunku had by then returned from England, but he was serving a minor post in the Legal Department in Alor Setar and it is doubtful whether he heard of Roslie's execution.

It is unlikely that the tragedy in 1949 in Sarawak occurred to Tunku when he prepared his speech to the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia in Singapore in May 1961. And when he remarked, "Malaya today realizes that she cannot stand alone in isolation, she should have an understanding with Britain and with the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak." Opposition to British Colonial administration in both Malaya and Sarawak had been overshadowed by the growing threat from Indonesia and the Philippines.

Tunku visited Sarawak in 1961 and observed that local leaders were strongly against any political control by Malaya. It was probably during his visits to Sarawak that Tunku heard of the patriotic sacrifice of Roslie in 1949, but he was preoccupied with multiple problems which he had first initiated in 1961.

As a result of Tunku's patient diplomacy and the invaluable cooperation of U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Malaysia was proclaimed in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu on September 16, 1963. The memory of a pioneer in the cause of freedom from British control was probably ignored, but Tunku, the Father of Independence, discussed the incident with the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud, and suggested that a Patriots' Memorial be erected in Kuching.

Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud had many other plans demanding his immediate action and a Patriots' Memorial remained in the

planning stage. But Tunku's love of freedom and his intense admiration for courage and self-sacrifice urged him to persevere. Courage assumes many forms and is not always recognized. And Tunku was a man of great courage.

It seems probable that Tunku recognized that the completion of a memorial to the patriots of Sarawak would consume more time than he could expect to live, unless he exerted pressure on the Sarawak administration.

Tunku's ill health had progressively become more serious. He himself asked his nephew, who was an architect, to prepare a design for a memorial, and Dato' Patinggi Taib directed the Public Works Department to prepare a separate plan for an imposing monument. This work and the calling for tenders occupied longer than had been expected and in October 1990 the plans had not been completed.

Tunku recognized that he had only a short time to live and he was determined to lay the foundation stone of the Patriots' Memorial before he died.

The most appropriate site had been chosen on a mound, near the State Museum. It was the rainy season which would not normally have been chosen, but Tunku insisted that the ceremony should be held not later than the end of November.

Tunku was then in the Penang Hospital but despite the entreaties of his family and the strongest advice by medical specialists and doctors in Penang, he flew to Kuching with Dato' Patinggi Taib on November 28. On the next morning Tunku took the leading part in an impressive ceremony seated in a wheel chair.

Although it was not included in the programme, Tunku delivered a speech in which he referred to the gallant action of Roslie and his companions which had previously been given little attention, and he appealed to the people of Sarawak and of Peninsular Malaya to be loyal to Malaysia and to be united in the defence of freedom and in support of interracial goodwill.

Tunku punctuated his speech on three occasions with the call "Merdeka" in the same stirring tone which he had used in the Merdeka Stadium in 1957. Tears of emotion flowed down his cheeks.

The ceremony lasted an hour and Tunku was exhausted, but as he was wheeled away from the pavilion to a waiting motorcar he was heard to say in a low voice, "Now at last I can go."

TUNKU was flown back from Kuching to Kuala Lumpur on the morning of November 30, and was immediately admitted to the Intensive Care Ward in the General Hospital. Five doctors devoted their every effort to prolong his life, but like Tunku himself, they soon recognized that he had completed his service to humanity and the nation, and that they need not strive any longer.

A month earlier, Tunku had been conscious that his health was deteriorating, and he appeared to have given further thought to his place of burial. On November 5, he issued a typed and signed statement which he sent to Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, the Chief Secretary to the Government, informing him that he wished his body to be buried in his family burial ground in Kedah, near his father, mother and brothers. When Tunku flew to Kuching, plans had already been made to carry out his wishes.

Medical reports from Penang a few days later warned the Chief Secretary that there was a degree of urgency in making the preparations, and the fact that these were carried out with unrivalled efficiency reflects great credit on Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, who took charge of the elaborate programme from beginning to end.

Tunku lay in a single room, where only a few of his visitors were admitted. These included His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah, the Sultan of Terengganu and the Raja of Perlis. He died from a bleeding of the colon (*ischemic colitis*) at 10.25 P.M. on Friday, December 6, 1990 at the age of eighty-seven. The Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and the Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, were at Tunku's bedside when he passed away.

Tunku's death was announced by Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid to the world a few minutes after his death.

Tunku's body was taken in a waiting hearse to his house in Jalan Tunku, where his relatives had assembled. During the night, his

body was prepared for burial and the next morning, Tunku's body, in a handsome casket, was driven in a hearse to the Parliament House.

News of Tunku's death spread like wildfire during the night, and friends and admirers began assembling on the hilltop. For two hours a seemingly endless stream of mourners filed past Tunku's casket to pay their last respects. These included His Majesty the Yang di-Per-tuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah and Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister, and they led a procession, on foot, slowly down the slope to Merdeka Square. An even larger number were waiting on the grass space opposite the High Court building. Motorcars for the Agong, the Prime Minister and other distinguished persons stood along the roadside.

The hearse, followed by the principal motorcars, then moved off towards the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base at Sungei Besi, where a transport aircraft was waiting. The casket was then transferred to the Hercules C130 aircraft, accompanied by Tunku's family, including Tunku Ahmad Nerang, Tunku's eldest son, and Tunku Yaacob, Tunku's eldest surviving brother.

An immense crowd had gathered at the airport at Alor Setar and as the Tunku's casket was lifted down from the aircraft, a seventeen-gun salute was fired. A carriage draped with yellow silk cloth carried Tunku's casket to the State mosque accompanied by members of his family, relatives and friends. After traditional prayers, the casket was driven to the Balai Besar for a final brief lying-in-state to enable a small part of the vast crowd which had assembled there to file past. Only fifty minutes were allowed for this, and then, as the hearse drove off towards the family burial ground at Langgar, the Royal Kedah *Nobat*, the centuries-old court orchestra, played the traditional *lagu*. It could only be played for Malay Royalty and it was indeed a fitting farewell and tribute to Kedah's greatest royal son.

Acknowledgement

MANY BIOGRAPHERS of famous men have been obliged to depend on diaries, letters, official documents and the memories of relatives and friends of the deceased. In this case, the author's task has been made infinitely easier and all the more pleasant by having direct access to Tunku Abdul Rahman in person. Much of the contents of this biography have been drawn from personal interviews with Tunku, sandwiched between his many other engagements, including a period while he was receiving specialist treatment in London and had very few other visitors.

A second and almost equally valuable source had been the articles written by Tunku, beginning in December 1974 and published weekly in *The Star*. These articles, collected in several volumes, provided a galaxy of priceless material, only waiting for his biographer to locate a particular incident in a kind of literary treasure hunt.

The thanks which are usually distributed by the author to the many individuals who have contributed to his fund of knowledge

are on this occasion offered, with affectionate gratitude to Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra himself.

Much of the information in this biography was assembled by a simple system which was followed at fairly frequent intervals for over a year. The author prepared a list of questions, related to the particular chapter or incident which he was researching. These questions were read to Tunku, one by one, and his replies were then transferred to tape. The taped replies were then transferred to typed pages and filed by the author as part of the source material. These tapes were eventually deposited in the National Archives.

The historical background for chapters one and two was drawn from *Al-Tarikh Salasi Negeri Kedah* by Muhammad Hassan and *Sejarah Kedah* by Haji Buyong Adil and, from writings by Professor Sharom Ahmat of University Sains Malaysia in Penang and from articles by J.M. Gullick. Tunku's entry and meteoric rise to the stratosphere of Malayan politics, and his dedicated struggle to achieve independence by peaceful means were partly described by Tunku and were partly derived from press coverage, and partly from the recollections of his political colleagues, most notably Mohamed Khir Johari and the late Tun H.S. Lee.

The final draft of these pages was then read to Tunku by his personal secretary in Kuala Lumpur and was approved by him after minor amendments. Tunku was then eighty-two. A biography of an eighty-two-year-old statesman which stops when the subject is still making a sage contribution to public opinion and is still actively promoting Muslim missionary work, is likely to be regarded as incomplete. I therefore decided, with Tunku's approval and the agreement of the publisher, to divide the work initially into two volumes.

The assembling of illustrations occupied nearly as much time, and consumed even more effort than the collection of the facts. The principal sources have been Tunku's own photograph albums and his miscellaneous collection of other photographs which have still to be filed, in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Alor Setar. The National Archives and the Photo Division of the Department of Information have made valuable contributions and friends of Tunku have filled

gaps which at one time seemed fated to be left vacant, notably Mohamed Khir Johari and Dato' Justice Eusoffe Abdoolcader. Tan Sri Mohamed Khir Johari supplemented Tunku's memory, from time to time, and kindly read the whole of the final typescript and endorsed the accuracy of the contents with only very minor amendments. But the most spectacular cache was discovered in the library of *The Illustrated London News*, the century-old periodical, which published four full pages of photographs in September 1904, covering the "million-dollar wedding" in Alor Setar. The source was discovered through the Registrar of the Rural Archives at Windsor Castle to whom the author had written.

Old photographs of the timber palace with its walled enclosure in Alor Setar, where Tunku spent part of his childhood, have been made available by Nabihah, the Curator of the Kedah Museum. And the photograph of the old nine-thousand-ton cargo ship in which Tunku sailed to England in 1920 was recovered from the Archives of the Blue Funnel Line with the help of W.J.V. Cook.

Few pictures of Tunku's undergraduate days at Cambridge have survived the Japanese Occupation, but Professor E.J.H. Corner, at one time Director of Gardens, Straits Settlements, and later Professor of Tropical Botany at Cambridge University, kindly arranged for photographs to be taken at Little Stukeley, near Huntingdon, where Tunku was sent to a Tutor on his arrival in England. He also sent a photograph of St Catherine's College and obtained a copy of Tunku's academic record at the end of his three idyllic years there.

Many more photographs of Tunku's early service in Kedah, after his return from Cambridge and London, might have been available had it not been for his transfer from Kulim to Alor Setar, on the order of the Japanese Governor, at twenty-four hours' notice, in 1943. The losses included the only photograph of Tunku's first wife and photographs of his mother. John Cloake, the biographer of the late Field Marshall Gerald Templer, has made available a photograph of Tunku and the Field Marshall in London in July 1957, with the help of the National Army Museum and the Central Office of Information.

For the chapter on "Malaysia" I have made extensive use of Mohamed Noordin Sopiee's *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation: Political Unification in the Malaysian Region, 1945-1965* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1976), and I would like to record my gratitude to him. The National Archives of Malaysia has also served as a valuable source of reference for this and other subjects.

But there are still some major gaps. No one seems to have taken any photograph of Tunku and his Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah between 1971 and 1974. Despite his long and distinguished service to Malayan football, photographs seem to be limited to a few groups of officials of the Football Association of Malaya and of the Asian Football Confederation.

Cheah Phee Cheok, Tunku's personal secretary in Kuala Lumpur, has given unfailing co-operation, by arranging appointments, relaying messages and locating photographs and documents with unruffled composure. He has proved a most valuable ally in the quest to fill the many gaps in Tunku's life.

When most of the material had been assembled, I withdrew to Fraser's Hill for three mid-week days for several months, whenever other activities allowed, and I am greatly indebted to the General Manager of the Malaysian Tobacco Company for making available a bungalow. There, I wrote and rewrote—for an average of nine hours a day, in complete seclusion.

The events which followed Tunku's eighty-second birthday were related to me by his close friends. I acknowledge with gratitude the great help which I received from them as I could not have written the closing passages without their assistance. Foremost amongst them is Dato' Yaacob Hussain Merican, whose wife Tunku Sofiah Jewa is Tunku's niece, who kept photograph albums and volumes of records. Details of Tunku's links with the legend of Mahsuri were first provided when Tunku was District Officer of Langkawi in 1953 and they culminated in a full-length film in which Jamil Sulong provided professional assistance. Dato' Patinggi Taib Mahmud, a key figure in another tragedy, provided Tunku with an opportunity to

TUNKU: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

erect a Patriots' Memorial, which now stands as a stark reminder of Tunku's courageous determination to commemorate a teenage hero. He laid the foundation only a week before he died.

Tan Sri Dato' Dr Mubin Sheppard
Kuala Lumpur, August 1, 1994

The Author

MUBIN SHEPPARD, of Anglo-Irish ancestry, obtained an Honours Degree in History at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and arrived in Kuala Lumpur in January 1928 as a Cadet in the Malayan Civil Service. During the time preceding World War II, he filled administrative posts in five Malay states and in the Federal Secretariat. He was in the Malayan campaign against the Japanese as a Company Commander in the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force and spent three and a half years as a civilian internee in Singapore.

Sheppard's first postwar appointment in 1946 was as Director of Public Relations Malaya—the forerunner of the Department of Information. He later served as British Adviser in two Malay states and in 1956 was made responsible for Emergency Food Denial over the whole Malay peninsula. When Tunku Abdul Rahman and Yaakob Abdul Latif organized a Cultural Festival (PESTA) in July 1956, he produced a spectacular historical Water Pageant in Lake Gardens as part of the programme.

After independence, Sheppard continued in the Government Service and Tunku Abdul Rahman made him responsible for setting up the National Archives and, eighteen months later, the National Museum. After his retirement in 1964, his activities have included service as Branch Chairman and Vice-President of the Ex-Services Association of Malaysia, Editor of the magazine of the Malaysian Historical Society, and Editor and Honorary Secretary of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. In 1960, when Tunku Abdul Rahman founded the Muslim Welfare Organization of Malaysia (PERKIM), he was appointed the first Honorary Secretary-General. More recently, he has helped to found and was the first Honorary Secretary of the Heritage of Malaysia Trust.

Sheppard has written seventeen books, mainly about the culture and history of Malaysia; the best known of which are *Taman Indera* (now reissued as *A Royal Pleasure Ground: Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*), *The Magic Kite and Other Stories from the Ma'jong*, *A Short History of Trengganu*, *A Short History of Negeri Sembilan*, *Living Crafts of Malaysia*, *Taman Budiman* (now reissued as *Memoirs of an Unorthodox Civil Servant*) and *Taman Saujana*. He received the Golden Caravel Award at the International Film Festival in Rome in 1979 for his book *Living Crafts of Malaysia*, and in 1984, he received one of the two biennial awards to individuals from the Tun Abdul Razak Foundation.

He received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia. He received the Award of Tan Sri from the Federal Government and the title of Dato' from the Rulers of Negeri Sembilan and Selangor.

Mubin Sheppard, though no longer living, lives on through his prodigious output of cultural and literary legacies. He died on September 11, 1994 of old age.

INDEX

- Abdul Aziz Abdul Majid, 101
Abdul Aziz Ishak, 114
Abdul Ghafar Baba, 168,
196-197, 201
Abdul Hamid, Lieutenant, 62
Abdul Kadir bin Samsuddin, 101
Abdul Kadir Yusof, 168
Abdul Rahman bin Haji Talib,
114
Abdul Rahman bin Hashim, 58,
158
Abdul Rahman Mohd Yassin, 73
Abdul Rahman Yaakub, 157,
168
Abdul Razak, 66, 68, 72, 86, 88,
93, 101, 106, 108-110,
113-114, 121, 124-125,
130-131, 137, 142-143, 147,
149-151, 153, 155, 158, 160,
163-164, 166-168, 170, 179
Abdul Wahab, 25, 101
Abdullah Salleh, 196
Abell, Sir Anthony, 142
Abu Bakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir,
117
AFC, *see* Asian Football
Confederation
Afro-Asian Non-Aligned
Movement, 116-117
Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity
Organization, 155
Ahmad Nerang, 31, 212

- Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, 211
 Aishah Ong, 198
Aku Berdosa, 50
 Alliance, 77, 81-94, 97-98,
 100-101, 105-106, 147, 150,
 153-154
 American Marine Corps, 124
 Anak Melayu Setia, 54, 58, 63
 Anderson, Sir John, 8, 195
 Anglo-Malayan Defence
 Agreement, 103, 116
 Apartheid, 116
 Ariff Ahmad, 138
 Asian Development Bank, 182
 Asian Football Confederation,
 129, 131
 Asian Football Confederation,
 President of the, 129-130
 Atkinson, Basil, 20
 Awang Osman, 16
 Aziz Zain, 50
- Bahaman bin Shamsuddin, 83,
 114
 Baharuddin Kassim, 120
 Balai Besar, 6, 8, 57, 62-63, 122,
 212
 Baling, in Southeast Kedah, 104
 Bapa Merdeka, *see* Father of
 Independence
 Books by Tunku Abdul Rahman,
As a Matter of Interest, 192
Challenging Times, 192
*Contemporary Issues in
 Malaysian Politics*, 192
Lest We Forget, 192
Looking Back, 192
Political Awakening, 192, 197
Something to Remember, 192
View Points, 192
 Bourne, General Sir Geoffrey,
 92, 104
 Braddell, Sir Roland, 101
 British High Commissioner, 113
 British Military Administration,
 56, 64
 British Residency, 111
 Britten, Benjamin, 106
 Brooke, Sir Charles Vyner, 208
 Burr, Captain Derek, 55, 58-59
- C.M. Yusof, 74
 Cambridge, 20, 23
 Carey, H.R., 92
 Central rice kitchens, 105
 Chandos, Viscount, 100
 Chao Phya Maha Kota, 12
 Che Menjalara, 9, 12-14, 16
 Cheah, Phee Cheok, 192
 Cheeseman, H.R., 16
 Chia, Kim Tek, 204
 Chin, Peng, 56, 97, 104-105, 160
 Chong, Ah Yong, *see* Meriam
 Chung, Owen, 198
 Churchill, Winston, 82
 Cobbold, Lord, 142
 Colombo Plan, 115
 Commonwealth Prime
 Ministers' Conference,
 116-117, 141, 149, 177

- Commonwealth, 115, 116-117, 123, 125, 141, 150
- Confrontation, 117, 139, 141, 149-150, 154, 171
- Constitution, 151
- Coulson, Violet, 26, 32-33
- Crown Agents for the Colonies, 16-17, 19-20, 25
- DAP, see Democratic Action Party
- Davis, John, 55
- de Welden, Felix, 124
- de Whittle, Lily, 15
- Debsurin School, 15
- Democratic Action Party, 146, 155, 158, 162, 164, 198
- Dempsey, General Sir Miles, 133
- District Officer of Kulim, 35, 46
- District Officer of Langkawi, 32, 205
- District Officer of Padang Terap, 30-31
- District Officer of Sungei Patani, 33
- Dobree, Major Peter, 55
- Duke of Gloucester, 108-109
- Eisenhower, Dwight D., 119
- Emergency, 73, 83, 92, 100, 104-105, 116, 124, 140, 172
- European Economic Community, 119
- Eusoffe Abdoolcader, 67-68, 190
- Evans, David, 193
- FAM, see Football Association of Malaya
- Father of Independence, 111, 115, 140, 209
- Father of Malayan Football, 128
- Fatimah Haji Hashim, 168
- Federal Legislative Council, 78, 84, 93
- Federal Secretariat, 71, 99
- Federated Malay States Volunteer Service, 44
- Federated Malay States, 45, 121
- Federation Agreement, 70
- Federation Flag, 110
- First World War, 17, 82, 121, 123
- Football Association of Malaya, 128-131
- Football, 127-131, 138
- Force 136, 54-55, 58
- Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia, 139, 209
- Foster-Sutton, Stafford, 70-71, 77
- Fujiwara Kikan, see Japanese Intelligence Service
- Fujiwara, Colonel, 45-46
- G.Q. Jilani, Lieutenant-Colonel, 45
- Ganie Gilong, 168
- Garcia, Carlos P., 119-120, 141
- Gent, Sir Edward, 73
- George, V.C., 190
- Gerakan, 162-164

- Ghazali Shafie, 167
God Save the Queen, 110
 Goh, Keng Swee, 150
 Government Secretariat, 110
 Gray, David, 91
 Gurney, Sir Henry, 78-79
- Hall, George, 64
 Hall, J.D., 34
 Hamzah Abdullah, 72
 Hamzah Abu Samah, 131,
 167-168
 Hamzah Dolmat, 137
 Hart, Colonel Gerald, 66-67
 Harun Idris, 157, 163-164, 169
 Hasler, Major G.A., 55, 58-59,
 61-63
 Head, Anthony, 102
 Hertogh, Maria, 79
 Hiroshima, 53
 Hitler, Adolf, 35
 Ho, Kok Hoe, 122-123
 Hogan, Michael, 91
 Home, Douglas, 147, 150
 Horseracing, 127, 131-135, 138
 Huntingdon, 17, 132
 Hussein Onn, 72, 202
- Ibrahim Ismail,
 Lieutenant-General 167
 Ibrahim Yaacob, 45
 IMP, see Independence of
 Malaya Party
 Independence of Malaya Party,
 79-81, 83, 86
- Indian National Army, 57
 Inner Temple, 24, 27, 61, 68
 Inns of Court, 24, 27, 65-66
 Islamic Development Bank,
 130, 182, 190
 Ismail Bakti, 138
 Ismail, Tun Dr, 75, 83-84, 89-91,
 97-98, 101, 106, 110, 114,
 121, 124-125, 149, 154-155,
 166-168, 170-171
 Istana Anak Bukit, 46
 Istana Tiga Tingkat, 11
 Itagaki, Lieutenant-General, 53
- Jamil Sulong, 206
 Japanese Custodian of Enemy
 Property, 47
 Japanese Intelligence Service,
 43-44
 Japanese Military
 Administration, 44, 46, 208
 Japanese Occupation, 122, 132,
 136
 Japanese Security Service, 45
 Jee, Guan Huat, 192
 Johnson, Lyndon B., 119
 Jones, S.W., 33
Jus Soli, 105-106
- Kedah Civil Service, 16, 22, 27,
 29, 35, 69, 205
 Kedah Football Association,
 President of the, 128
 Kedah Legal Service, 69-70
 Kedah Loan Agreement, 7

TUNKU: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

- Kedah Volunteer Force, 44
 Kedah Volunteer Service, 42
 Keeper of the Ruler's Seal, 13
 Kennedy, John F., 119
 Khadijah, 31
 Khaw, Kai Boh, 168
 Khmer Rouge, 119
 Khoo, Oon Soe, 138
 Khun Yip Sup, 12
 King Chulalongkorn, 4
 King Faisal, 171-172, 178-185,
 193, 199, 202
 King George V, 8
 King Rama IV, 2
 Koh, Her Chew, 204

 Lady Sup, see Khun Yip Sup
 Lawson, Neil, 68
 Lee, H.S., 80-81, 83-84, 89-92,
 97-98, 101, 106, 110, 114
 Lee, Kim Sai, 198
 Lee, Kong Chian, 123
 Lee, Kuan Yew, 140, 145-151,
 153
 Lee, Sick Yew, 168
 Lee, Siow Mong, 197
 Lee, Yoke Siew, 4-5
 Lennox-Boyd, Alan, 97, 100-102
 Leong, Yew Koh, 83, 89, 114
 Lim, Chong Eu, 162, 198
 Lim, Hong Bee, 66
 Lim, Kim San, 147
 Lim, Kit Siang, 198
 Lim, P.G., 154
 Lim, Sun Hoe, 194

 Lim, Yew Hock, 140
 Ling, Liong Sik, 200
 Little Stukeley, 17, 19-20, 132
 Little, W.H.W., 65
 Loh, Boon Siew, 190-191
London Times, 150
 Lord Ogmores, 87
 Luang Nara Borirak, 12-13
 Lyttleton, Oliver, 82-83, 87-88,
 90, 92, 100

 Macapagal, Diosdado, 118-119,
 141, 143-144
 MacDonald, Malcolm, 81
 MacGillivray, Donald, 89-92,
 98, 104, 106, 108, 110-111,
 113
 MacMichael, Sir Harold, 61,
 64-65, 70
 MacMillan, Harold, 141-142
 Mahathir Mohamad, 157, 163,
 169-170, 194, 200-201, 211,
 212
 Mahsuri, 33, 206-207
 Majlis Amanah Rakyat, 162
 Mak Wan Besar, see Wan Hajar
Malay Annals, 108
 Malay culture, 127, 135-138
 Malay Society of Great Britain,
 26, 66, 72
 Malayan Cabinet, 113
 Malayan Chinese Association,
 80-81, 83, 86, 88-89, 93,
 105-106, 153-154, 147,
 157-158, 169

- Malayan Communist Party, 55, 104-105
- Malayan Indian Congress, 93, 154
- Malayan Law Journal*, 190
- Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, 55, 58, 60, 63
- Malayan Union, 64-65, 70, 208-209
- Malaysia Solidarity Convention, 148-149
- Malaysian Chinese Association, 192, 198
- Manickavasagam, V., 168
- MARA, see Majlis Amanah Rakyat
- Marshall, David, 79, 100, 104-105, 137, 140
- Masjid Hamidi Menjalara, 13
- Masjid Zahir, 8-9
- Maze, Major, 62-63
- MCA, see Malayan Chinese Association and Malaysian Chinese Association
- McDonald, Malcolm, 80
- MCP, see Malayan Communist Party
- Melan Abdullah, 73
- Menjalara, see Che Menjalara
- Menon, W.M.N., 92
- Merdeka Football Tournament, 129-130
- Merdeka Mission, 77, 95, 97, 100, 102
- Merdeka Stadium, 108, 120, 210
- Meriam, 30-32, 48
- MIC, see Malayan Indian Congress
- Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, 136-137
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 136
- Mohamed bin Jamil, 50, 62
- Mohamed Iskandar, 15
- Mohamed Khir Johari, 50, 56-59, 62, 114, 158, 163, 168, 194, 200
- Mohamed Shariff, 16, 31, 33-34, 38, 46, 51, 62-63, 69-70
- Mohamed Suffian bin Hashim, 66
- Mohd Ariff, 158
- Mohd Ghazali bin Jawi, 168
- Mohd Salleh, 158
- Mountbatten, 147
- MPAJA, see Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
- MSC, see Malaysia Solidarity Convention
- Musa Hitam, 169, 194-195, 201
- Mustapha, Datu, 142
- Nagasaki, 53
- Nakamiai, Lieutenant, 43
- Nasser, Colonel, 103
- National Language Act, 157
- National Mosque, 108, 128
- National Museum, 122, 202
- National Operations Council, 166-168, 172

- National Party, *see* Parti Negara
Negara-ku, 107, 110
 Nehru, Pandit, 117
New Straits Times, 200
 Ngo, Dinh Diem, 117-119
 Nik Ahmed Kamil, 25, 101, 135
 Nixon, Richard M., 119
Nobat, 108, 212
 NOC, *see* National Operations Council
- Ogmore, Lord, *see*
 Rees-Williams, David
- Omar Ong, *see* Ong, Yoke Lin
- Ong, Yoke Lin, 81, 83, 114, 168, 198
- Onn Jaafar, 71-72, 74, 78-79, 82-84, 86, 92-94
- Operation Lallang, 203, 206
- Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, 97, 153, 157-158, 163, 169
- PAP, *see* People's Action Party
- Parliament House, 212
- Parti Negara, 86, 92-94, 98, 101
- Patriots' Memorial, 209
- Penang Free School, 16
- Penang Turf Club, 132, 199
- People's Action Party, 140, 145-150, 153
- People's Progressive Party, 147
- Perak Turf Club, 132
- Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaya, 177, 185-187, 196, 198, 201, 207-208
- PERKIM, *see* Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaya
- Persekutuan Tanah Melayu, 109-110
- PETRONAS, 196
- Pinhorn, R.H., 16
- PMIP, *see* Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
- Pol Pot, 119, 185
- Poor Men's Home, 50-51
- PPP, *see* People's Progressive Party
- Proclamation of Independence, 108-109
- Prophet Muhammad, 199
- Queen Elizabeth II, 108, 127, 193
- Rabitah*, 184, 186
- Railway Station, 108
- Rais Yatim, 194
- Raja Abdul Aziz, 66
- Raja Aman Shah, Captain, 44-46
- Raja Ayoub bin Raja Bot, 83
- Raja Musa Raja Bot, 25
- Raja Shahar Shah, 44
- Ramdan Din, 42, 44-45
- Razaleigh Hamzah, Tengku, 201-202
- Rees-Williams, David, 67, 86
- Regional Islamic Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, 186

- Reid, Lord, 105
Rhesus, 17
 RISEAP, *see* Regional Islamic Council for Southeast Asia and the Pacific
 RMAF, *see* Royal Malaysian Air Force, 212
 Roslie Dhoby, 208-210
 Royal Selangor Club, 110
- Saberkas, 64, 70
Salah Pedoman, 50
 Sambanthan, V.T., 110, 114, 149, 154, 158, 166-168
 Samy Vellu, S., 200
 Sardon Jubir, 83, 98, 110, 168
 SEATO, *see* South-East Asia Treaty Organization
 Second World War, 55, 123
 Seenivasagam, S.P., 147
 Selangor Civil War, 3
 Selangor Residency, 113, 136-137, 164-165
 Selangor Turf Club, 132-133
 Semangat 46, 201
 Senu Abdul Rahman, 48, 50-51, 137-138, 163
 Sharifa Roziah, 35
 Sheikh Abdullah, 158
 Sheikh Ahmad, 72, 75
 Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Harakan, 186
 Sihanoukh, Norodom, 117-119, 136
Sin Chew Jit Poh, 202
- Soekarno, 117, 119, 139, 141-144
 Somerville, Lieutenant-Colonel G.W., 63
 South-East Asia Treaty Organization, 116
 St Catherine's College, 21
- State Secretariat, 32, 36, 49, 54
 Stewart, Sir Duncan, 208-209
 Straits Settlement Volunteer Force, 45
Suara Merdeka, *see* *Suara UMNO*
Suara UMNO, 191
 Subandrio, 142-143
 Suharto, General, 155
 Sulaiman bin Dato' Abdul Rahman, 94, 97, 110, 114
 Sullivan, Rick, 133
 Sultan Abdul Hamid Halimshah, *see* Sultan Abdul Hamid
 Sultan Abdul Hamid, 1-5, 7-9, 11-14, 38, 40, 48
 Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II, 2
 Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Mukarram Shah, *see* Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin
 Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, 2-4
 Sultan Azlan Shah, 206, 211-212
 Sultan Badlishah, 65, 69
 Sultan Ibrahim of Johor, 101
 Sultan Idris of Perak, 107

- Sultan Zainal Rashid, 2-3
 Syarikat Bekerjasama Kebajikan
 Am Saiburi, *see* Saberkas
 Syed Abu Bakar al-Idrus, 39-41
 Syed Agil, 50, 62-63
 Syed Alwi Barakhbar, 35
 Syed Ja'afar Albar, 169
 Syed Nasir Ismail, 83, 157, 169
 Syed Omar, 38-39, 45-46, 63
 Syed Sheh Shahabudin, 45
- Taib Andak, 66
 Taib Mahmud, 207-210
 Tan, Chee Khoo, 154-155, 162
 Tan, Cheng Lock, 80-81, 83, 86,
 88, 90, 92, 104
 Tan, Chin Nam, 133-134
 Tan, Siew Sin, 114, 125, 142,
 147, 149, 151, 154, 158,
 166-168, 197, 203
 Tan, T.H., 83, 86-88, 94-95, 101
 Tavit Guptarak, 15, 48
 Temenggong Jugah, 168
 Templer, General Sir Gerald,
 82-83, 85, 89, 102-103,
 110-111
Terang Bulan, 107
The Star, 191-192, 200, 202, 206
 Toh, Chin Chye, 147
 Tuanku Abdul Rahman, 25-26
 Tunku Abdul Aziz, 3, 7
 Tunku Ahmad Tajuddin, *see*
 Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin
 Tunku Aminah, 9, 12-13
 Tunku Badlishah, 38, 48
 Tunku Baharom, 9, 44-45
 Tunku Hafsa, 9
 Tunku Ibrahim, 16, 25, 32
 Tunku Kaltum, 9
 Tunku Kassim, 3
 Tunku Mahmud, 3, 8-9, 32, 38
 Tunku Memorial Building, 202
 Tunku Memorial Fund, 202
 Tunku Mohamed Jewa, 9, 43
 Tunku Muhammad Said, 2
 Tunku Munawir, 66
 Tunku Osman, 54-55, 62-63
 Tunku Yaacob, 3, 49, 70, 212
 Tunku Yahaya, 40-41
 Tunku Yusuf, 9, 15-16, 54-55, 62
 Tunku Zainal Rashid, *see* Sultan
 Zainal Rashid
 Tunku Zakiah, 9
 Tunku Zia'uddin, 3
- U Thant, 144-146, 155, 209
 UMNO Baru, 201-202
 UMNO, *see* United Malays
 National Organization
 UMNO, President of, 129
 United Malays National
 Organization, 69, 71-74,
 77-81, 83-84, 86, 88, 90,
 92-93, 105, 148, 155-157,
 162-163, 167-170, 172-173,
 181, 191, 201-203
 United Nations, 116, 180, 185
 University of Cambridge, 16,
 21-22, 24, 27, 132, 205
Utusan Melayu, 73-74

TUNKU: HIS LIFE AND TIMES

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Vigers, Reverend Edgar, 19-20 | Wong, Pow Nee, 142 |
| | World Bank, 182 |
| Wan Ahmad bin Wan Omar, 50 | |
| Wan Hajar, 2-3, 7, 11-13 | Yamashita, General, 37 |
| Wan Ismail, 2 | Yong, S.M., 83 |
| Wan Jah, 2-3 | Yong, Shook Lin, 83 |
| Wan Muhammad Saman, 2-4 | |
| Watherstone, Sir David, 142 | Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas, 83 |
| Willan, H.C., 63 | Zainal Abidin Endut, 138 |
| Wilson, Harold, 147, 150 | Zia-ul-Huq, 193, 202 |