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OF  
POLITICAL  
BONDAGE

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RANJIT GILL

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An authorised biography of Tunku Abdul Rahman,  
Malaysia's first Prime Minister and his continuing  
participation in contemporary politics.

RANJIT GILL

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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**Perpustakaan Negara  
Malaysia**



*This book is humbly dedicated to  
future generations of Malaysians  
so that they may know of the  
achievements of a Prince who became Prime  
Minister, the Servant of God and his people.*

## PREFACE

Outstanding men inevitably leave an indelible mark upon the community of which they are a part, while their actions influence the lives of countless individuals they touch. In the case of Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's first Prime Minister, the country's Father of Independence and the driving force behind the formation of ASEAN, his sphere of influence has extended beyond the boundaries of Malaysia to include other regional nationals. I am among them.

I first had the honour of meeting the Tunku in 1959. As a young reporter for the *Singapore Tiger Standard* I was on assignment in Johore covering the forthcoming elections. I caught up with the Tunku in Segamat, and during a break in the campaign he spoke to me for almost half an hour, seated on a bench in the tuck shop of a primary school.

That interview has remained etched in my memory ever since: here was the Prime Minister of Malaysia taking time off a busy schedule to brief an inexperienced reporter! Such was his kindness that I vowed then someday to write his autobiography.

Over the years I have interviewed the Tunku on numerous occasions and like many other journalists sought in vain to obtain permission to undertake an authorised biography. Imagine then my surprise when he finally agreed in September last year, at the end of an interview I undertook on behalf of *The Daily Telegraph*.

Given the heightened political situation in Malaysia, the Tunku's return to the fray after an absence of nearly twenty years and the fact that he is in his 89th year, clearly there was no time to lose. It meant dropping other research projects but the experiences of the past nine months, spent in trying to faithfully reconstruct the life and times of Malaysia's most illustrious son

of this century, have been deeply enriching.

Deciding on what to recount and which salient developments to include within the limitations of a single, small volume proved quite a task, given the rich and varied life the Tunku has enjoyed and the large shadow he has cast over the Malaysian landscape. Since the early 1950s he has played a key role in the political developments, first of Malaya and later Malaysia, and many of the policies pursued by subsequent Governments bear the hallmark of the Tunku's long range vision and his commitment to creating a just and equitable nation which now stands poised to enter the ranks of other regional newly industrialised countries.

The Tunku has put down his many thoughts in the various book he has penned and the presence of his wealth of information has made my task easier. For this I am grateful, and deeply obliged to the Tunku for his kind understanding and patience he has shown throughout this undertaking. It is these characteristics and a genuine compassion for his fellow beings that have set the Tunku apart from all those who have followed in his path.

I would like to thank, in addition to the Tunku, his many friends who provided encouragement as I laboured happily throughout this fascinating and challenging assignment. It is my humble hope that it serves as a lasting historical record of the life and contributions of one of the most outstanding political leaders to have walked tall across the regional political stage. He was, without doubt, the most compassionate of Prime Ministers and remains, happily for all Malaysians, a fierce advocate of justice and democracy.

Ranjit Gill  
May 1990

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## CHAPTER 1

As befits an extraordinary man, the circumstances of the Tunku's birth are equally unusual. He himself has been known to say: "I was born under a lie". In truth it was a charitable deception invented by his mother Cik Menjelara and which fate chose to reward by divining that she should bear Malaysia's most illustrious son of the century. Shortly before the Tunku was born on February 8, 1902, the Keeper of the Ruler's Seal of Kedah was discovered to have misused his position of trust and ordered by Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Tunku's father, to suffer death. He also ordered that the right thumbs of the Keeper's wife and all their children be chopped off.

The harshness of the punishment could in part be attributed to the Sultan's state of mind. A just and deeply religious man he nevertheless lived the life of a recluse from 1896 to his death in 1943, with the Regent taking responsibility for the affairs of the state. Though some writers have depicted the Sultan as suffering from a malady, the fact is he became less active after suffering a stroke. This did not prevent him from outliving several of the eight legal wives he had, and who bore him an astonishing 45 sons and daughters, and through them more than 90 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The distraught Keeper's wife sought the assistance of Menjelara, who as the Sultan's sixth wife, was generally considered to be his favourite. Menjelara was persuaded to intervene and pleaded with the Sultan saying that he should not provoke the anger of the Almighty — even though the Sultan's word was law in the State — while she was pregnant with yet another child of his. Menjelara had earlier given him three sons and three daughters, though one of the boys had died in infancy. The Sultan was moved by her plea and commuted the sentence, ordering the ex-Keeper to prison and

suspending punishment on the family. The truth is Menjelara was not pregnant and conceived only shortly thereafter. The child born was the Tunku.

Those familiar with the circumstances and who believed in portents ascribe the Tunku's generous disposition, a hallmark of his character, to the charity of Menjelara's intervention. Menjelara herself was of Siamese extract and the daughter of the Governor of a small province to the north of Bangkok. Her ancestors originated from Burma. The Tunku, more so than his eleven other brothers and sisters, displays the swarthy complexion of a Siamese-Malay-Burmese mixture.

Menjelara had come to Kedah as a child and married Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1887 when she was nineteen. She was reputedly a wealthy and shrewd woman who acquired numerous houses and tracts of land both in Thailand and Alor Star. She is also attributed with having built the first major road through her land in Alor Star, flanked by shops. The street, known as Jalan Bahru, still exists though it has since been transformed into one of the most crowded thoroughfares in the Kedah state capital. She also built the first central market for the town.

She and her children lived in a three-storey brick building named Istana Kota Lama, centrally located amidst the Royal compound. The architecture resembled that of a Chinese pagoda and consequently became one of the landmarks of old Alor Star. The Sultan regularly visited his wife and family after Friday prayers and usually stayed over. As his father was an infrequent visitor the Tunku inevitably became more attached to his mother. When he speaks of his father — who he still holds in awe — it is tinged with the regret of not having been closer to him.

Conditions in Kedah at the time of the Tunku's childhood were appalling. The buildings and roads were in a state of disrepair, having been neglected for almost twenty years, and it was not until the mid 1920's that measures were taken to tackle the sanitary problems that beset the town. It took years and the efforts of a British doctor to check the dreaded Malaria disease that inflicted so many, including the Tunku. He also was badly affected by yaws.

Kedah's woes then can be traced to the rather lax control over the State's funds and the lavish lifestyle of Sultan Abdul



Hamid. Matters came to a head when he laid on a right regal bash to celebrate the wedding of his eldest son, Tunku Ibrahim, his first-born. Tunku Ibrahim's wedding and that of four other sons were held concurrently. To finance the celebrations the Sultan borrowed heavily from Indian moneylenders in Penang. The cost of three days and nights of feasting and merry making were not budgeted for and consequently when the bills were presented the State was unable to meet them. With bankruptcy imminent, Tunku Ibrahim, then Regent, sought the assistance of Thailand.

The King of Siam agreed to lend the sum of Sterling Pounds 360,000 (then about M\$2.6 million), bearing a six percent interest rate. Conditions of the loan included radical reforms and the appointment of a Financial Advisor who was to manage the State's fiscal affairs. Matters improved considerably thereafter, and in addition to meeting its obligations to the King of Siam, changes were instituted to improve living standards and to educate Kedahans.

The Tunku was largely unaffected by the rather dire financial situation in the State and was brought up in the manner befitting a Prince. He was nicknamed Awang and enjoyed a rather carefree childhood, though he was clearly embarrassed by being carried on the shoulders of a retainer to school in Alor Star.

This made him the butt of jokes but his affable manner and determination to integrate with his classmates made him a popular figure. This plus the fact that he excelled in football, a sport he continued to play for many years. His first school was a small timber building. The teachers were from Penang and his headmaster in 1909 was 'Master' Mohamad Iskandar, father of Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, the present Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The headmaster objected to the Tunku's wearing royal regalia, complete with a gold-studded cap — primarily for fear that he would be held responsible should it be lost or stolen. The ever-practical Menjelara was eventually persuaded to the teacher's viewpoint.

"I was running wild with my classmates and used to swim in the river behind the palace, which was infested with crocodiles. My mother was appalled and decided to send me to a Malay school instead," the Tunku admits.

Later he was sent to a new English school but his pranks got him into trouble. After receiving a caning from a Chinese teacher — ‘Master’ Iskandar had since moved on to the Audit Department — he complained to his mother who had the teacher sacked. “I must admit I exhausted the patience of my teachers. There was nothing for them to do but tolerate me or get the sack.”

In 1915 he was despatched to Bangkok to the Tebsurin School and came under the eye of his elder brother, Tunku Yusof who served in the Royal Thai Military Forces. Tunku Yusof chose Bangkok instead of Kedah because of the difficulties he had with British officials who objected to his marriage to an English woman.

The Tunku describes his days in Bangkok. “My brother spent most of his time fighting bandits and he regularly went off to the jungles but it was a joyous occasion to have him back safe and sound. He used to take us to the cinema, one of the two ramshackle cinema houses, but we were fortunate in that being part of a Royal family we had a box. However, whenever I accompanied my brother I had to wear an Eton collar with a white jacket and black trousers. I was never allowed to go out to cinema on my own.”

The tradition of wearing British style clothing was largely at the insistence of their father. In matters of dress he was an unabashed Anglophile. Despite the humidity, they were compelled to wear tweeds on formal occasions, a custom borrowed from the Siamese Court. Twice a year an English tailor from a branch of Pritchards, then located in Penang, travelled to Alor Star to outfit the Royal family. The change came only many years later when the Sultan of Kedah was invited to the coronation of George the Fifth. The Royal party took along black tails, frock coats, pin-striped trousers, and of course their tweeds.

However, when it was discovered that none of the Malay Royal households present were to dress in national costume a tailor was summoned to produce at very short notice traditional Malay clothing befitting Royalty. Bolts of silk were chosen as there was insufficient time to send for the rich gold thread cloth out of which formal attire is crafted. Only after the return of the Sultan to Alor Star did white drill replace frock clothes and tweeds. But to return to the Tunku’s youth in Bangkok.

Despite the constraints and the rather restricted attire he nevertheless managed to make the best of his time in Bangkok. It was for the most a happy two years and he describes in endearing terms the attitude of the common Thai people that his sojourns brought him into contact with.

“I thought Bangkok was a nice place with many canals and wide open spaces despite the swarms of mosquitoes; there was also plenty of rice and fruits, particularly oranges and vegetables nicely wrapped and prepared, and betel-nuts. I used to spend lots of my time chatting with them which is how I improved my Thai. I found them all so kind and motherly.”

For transportation he often utilised a pony drawn carriage but enjoyed most of all sitting in what he refers to as the “dickey seat” of his brother’s two-seater Morris Oxford.

His innocent and pleasant childhood came to a tragic and sudden end, brought upon by his brother’s death. He was killed by bandits. Though he was just twelve it fell upon the Tunku’s shoulders to make the arrangements for Tunku Yusof’s burial.

Initially, Tunku Yusof was buried in Mahang Muslim Cemetery in Bangkok, but years later, after he had stepped down as Prime Minister the Tunku sought the assistance of Tun Hussein Onn to have his brother’s remains returned and re-buried in Alor Star. The event is etched in his memory because of some scurrilous comments that followed the death in 1973 of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Ismail. A State funeral was ordered and the late Tun Ismail became the first national leader to lie in state in the mausoleum of the National Mosque. Critics alleged that the Tunku had planned to create a Hero’s Mausoleum “for myself alone”. His wish to this day is that when his time comes, his remains will be returned to the Royal Cemetery of Kedah to repose there with the rest of his family.

His brother’s death meant returning to Alor Star but after a short break he was sent in 1916 to the Penang Free School where some of his other brothers had earlier been enrolled. At Penang Free School the Tunku became fully exposed to ways of the Colonial Malaya, a lifestyle less pronounced in Alor Star. It was, as Harry Miller described, “a British world of horse and carriage, of dainty parasoles and long skirts, and of moustached Englishmen, severe in stole white trousers and straight cut

cloaks which buttoned up under the chin and gave them a heated if not strangled look." It was also a world of Chinese, with their long queus and top hats or bowlers incongruously capping their Mandarin costumes.

The long schooling hours added to the aggravation of constant teasing that he and other Kedahans were subject to by the Penang boys who thought them to be little more than country bumpkins. His doting mother, despite her kind intentions in sending him heavily embroidered pillows, made him the object of derision and he recalls the many brawls which ended up with he and his friends and their opponents having a fair share of bloody noses.

Apart from not applying himself diligently the young Tunku was always up to mischief. Among the pranks he pulled was keeping fighting cocks hidden in the top of the mosquito net until the housemaster was out of sight. He clearly was an outdoor person who enjoyed, in addition to football, a wide range of other sporting activities. He also learned to shoot, a sport which became a life long passion, and was a keen scout.

## CHAPTER 2

Back home in Kedah moves were afoot to provide overseas scholarships for outstanding students. While the Tunku could hardly be classified as one, nevertheless at his mother's insistence and with the support of senior British advisors, he succeeded in getting the first State scholarship. In May 1920, a year after the first World War came to an end Tunku Abdul Rahman set off for England. He had just turned 16 and plans were made for him to enter Cambridge where he planned to read law. It was to be a saga of unending proportions and even though it took him more than almost a quarter of a century to achieve this ambition, the exposure to Britain and a whole new spectrum of socio-economic concepts kindled new interests which significantly influenced his political perspective.

To win a place at Cambridge the Tunku had to pass the entrance exam — the Little Go. The task for preparing him was first given to the Rev. Edgar Vigers. This meant the Tunku had to live in Little Stukely, a village some 60 miles north of London. Though the town had little of the attractions he had hoped for he nevertheless took to the countryside. His first objective was to ensure that he would matriculate and win entry into Cambridge. Though he found it a bit of a bother he had no qualms about getting into the thick of village activities.

He quickly integrated himself into the little community which fully appreciated his services as a right winger of the Stukely Football team. But Bobbie, as they nicknamed him, was not getting anywhere with his studies and he was sent to a new tutor, Mr. Atkinson, a kindly but shrewd teacher. Under him the appeal of Cambridge — the glamour rather than the scholastic opportunities that it provided — inspired the young Tunku to work as never before and he was finally accepted as a student at St. Catharine's College.

Starting out to read law he quickly made the switch instead to History which he felt was an easier subject to get his degree. That also proved to be no mean task, given the demands of the hectic social life he enjoyed. He had a Riley sports car and was only too happy to drive his friends to rugby matches whenever the Cambridge team played away. This displeased the university authorities who later introduced measures to restrict car usage by students. Despite the endless parties and week-ends at the races the Tunku did forge some interesting relationships.

Among the people he came into contact early was Ivor Jennings, who later as a constitutional law expert was part of the panel that drew up the constitution of the independent Federation of Malaya. Other friends included H.V. Davis, and one George Brown, and through them the Tunku began to be drawn into the mainstream of British politics. Davis in particular, an ardent admirer of Lloyd George, the wartime Prime Minister, was a thoroughbred Liberal and it is tempting to speculate on how he may have influenced the Tunku's own thinking. One area could well be his even-handed approach to multi-racial politics in the turbulent '50s and '60s, even while Malay firebrands harped on the advantages the Chinese community had enjoyed during the Colonial era.

Just as important, it was his friends who impressed upon him the importance of obtaining his degree. He wasted six months when he got the date of his last paper in History wrong and turned up late. Despite his protestations and a novel excuse he was forced to wait for the next exams. Eventually in December 1925 he was awarded a B.A., becoming the first Kedah Prince to gain a degree in any British University.

He decided after six years in England to return to Alor Star but was quickly ordered back to complete his law studies. His second stint in England was to last for another six years but he made little progress towards obtaining his law degree. Much has been made of the time and expense showered upon him in what then appeared to be a futile attempt to get him to take his responsibilities more seriously. While he did fritter away several years indulging into his favourite past-times the second visit to England was anything but unrewarding. It brought him into contact with a number of Malaysians who later were to emerge as the nucleus of the first group of Government leaders and civil servants who attained positions of great eminence after Malaya gained its independence in 1957.

Pertinently, during this period he obtained a better understanding of the contrasting viewpoints of an elite group of Malays who did not share common backgrounds. They engaged in hundreds of hours of meaningful discussion which focussed on the kind of Malaya they envisaged once they became masters of their own destiny. The early '30s were also a momentous period with a new set of political perceptions being welded before the onset of the Second World War. These precepts and subsequent developments heralded the end of Britain's far flung empire, an arena in which Malaya's fate would also be determined.

The Tunku has always been the first to admit that horse racing, the dogs, and partying in London had a greater appeal for him than Roman Law or Constitutional Law. This seeming indifference towards his studies however ignored a more serious side, particularly a new and growing awareness which began to manifest itself in discussions with fellow Malaysians. They included his namesake, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who later became the Sultan of Negri Sembilan and also the first King of Malaya, Nik Ahmad Kamil, who later became Menteri Besar of Kelantan, and Syed Sheikh Barakbah, later an outstanding judge and ambassador. An important English contemporary was Neil Lawson, later advisor to the Malay rulers when discussions began on the future constitution of independent Malaya.

The Tunku then lived in a flat in Warick Road, Kensington, with his elder brother, Yakob, who was taking his degree in agriculture. His Malay friends would call regularly knowing there was always food and good company to be enjoyed. The late nights however took their toll and he would depend on his friends to coach him on the following day. He however was rarely prepared before noon.

He also found it easier to absorb the information when it was read out aloud to him rather than he reading it, and later adopted this approach during his political career.

Unity among the Malays was uppermost in his mind. His concern was that because of the cultural peculiarities attached to each state there was little or no cooperation resulting in each community being highly insular. This apparent lack of unity became an obsession with the Tunku and though he was in no position at that time to offer constructive solutions he did the next best thing: he invited as many Malay students as he knew



were in London and formed the Malay Society of Great Britain, with Tunku Abdul Rahman of Negri Sembilan elected as its first President. The Tunku was named Honorary Secretary.

The group of some thirty-odd members met fairly regularly and the Tunku advocated that they should speak Malay when they met. At the second meeting of the Society, the Tunku was elected President, replacing his predecessor who had passed his law examinations and returned home. The Tunku's interest in matters political and the early search for consensus among Malays, and later Malaysians, meant that his law studies, which he in any case loathed, suffered further. In 1930, when he sat for Part One, he managed to pass only in three papers but failed miserably in Real Property and Conveyancing, so badly that his tutor firmly recommended that he should return to Kedah and join the Civil Service and abandon any ideas of continuing his law studies.

Privately the Tunku was deeply embarrassed, humiliated even, but he maintained a bold exterior. The thought of returning to Malaya, while appealing, also meant parting with a young English lady, Violet Coulson. Their friendship had blossomed but marriage was not on the cards. He was uncertain of his own future and there was also the problem of obtaining the permission to marry someone of another race. His relationship with Violet was known but little was said when he returned in 1931 as a cadet in the Kedah civil service.

The State itself was in a strong financial position but nationwide matters were in turmoil as a consequence of reforms aimed at bringing greater cohesion among the nine Malay States, moves initiated by the Governor of The Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Federated and Unfederated Malay States, Sir Cecil Clementi. In a nutshell his programme called for the establishment of a Malayan Union and the decentralisation of the Federated Malay States. While the long term objective meant that individual State traditions and policies would be welded into a single, cohesive and centralised policy making entity, the proposals were not well received.

On the face of it Clementi's proposals afforded Malays greater opportunities but this prompted Chinese fears which were articulated by Tan Cheng Lock, who later was to become a champion of Malay/Chinese unity in his years as President

of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). The Malays argued against the Malayan Union concept primarily because of the fear that the Malay character of the States would be lost by large scale development financed by Chinese capital. Finally, recognising the difficulty, the British abandoned the proposal. It was mooted again fourteen years later and pushed through despite the misgivings on the part of many of the Malay rulers. It however won the support of the emerging political leaders who would take Malaysia down the path to independence.

The Tunku's induction into the Kedah Civil Service was anything but plain sailing. His first row was over salary. Though he was on par with other recruits from Cambridge and Oxford he was penalised for not having passed his law examinations. Despite his objections he was given a starting pay of M\$300 per month and an increment every three years instead of annually. He asked instead to return to England to pursue his studies at the Bar but his superiors insisted that he work out the scholarship period which carried a three year bond.

His postings included Kulim and Sungei Patani, and later in 1935, Kuala Nerang. The latter assignment was memorable. The Tunku recalls: "It was a malaria-infested area and no person who had been there before had come back safe from this disease. The first thing I did when I took over was to look for the mosquito breeding grounds. It was not difficult to establish the source. It was just behind the Government offices and all that was needed was M\$10,400 to drain the area".

Part of the problem at Kuala Nerang was the Samsam Siamese whose primitive lifestyle was characterised by poor personal hygiene. Under the stilt-supported huts where pigs and cattle wandered sanitary conditions were totally lacking.

In addition to the frustration of trying to get the local inhabitants to improve their lifestyle malaria claimed the life of one near and dear to the Tunku. Prior to his Kuala Nerang appointment the Tunku married Meriam, a Siamese Chinese daughter of a Chinese tin dealer who he knew well in Alor Star. She was to bear him two children, the eldest a daughter Kathijah, and Tunku Nerang. The marriage had been arranged by his mother who chaffed at the fact that he remained unmarried at the age of thirty. Despite his affection for Violet Coulson, with whom he kept in touch by mail, he gave in to his mother's request.

Thirty-three days after Tunku Nerang's birth, Meriam died as a result of contracting malaria. "I asked the Government for money but since the high officials in Alor Star were in no danger from malaria they paid no heed to my request until my wife was struck down", the Tunku laments. Her condition was aggravated by a undiluted quinine intravenous injection, administered by a expatriate lady doctor, which the Tunku says killed her instantly. The State Government reacted by providing the necessary money to clean up the town and according to the Tunku, the Menteri Besar appealed to him not to seek any compensation for the loss of his wife. "I told them I was not out to make money from my wife's death; on the contrary I wanted them to build this drain immediately. This they did."

## CHAPTER 3

A few month's after Meriam's death the Tunku went to Singapore on leave. An adamant Violet had arrived there earlier and offered to take care of the two children. Soon after the Tunku married her secretly according to Muslim rites. Violet lived in Penang and the Tunku in Kuala Nerang but it was impossible to keep their relationship secret. Fortunately the new Regent, Tunku Mahmood, was less strict about inter-racial marriages. "I asked permission to marry Violet and he gave it. We did not go through a second ceremony. It was unnecessary".

The marriage did not go down well with some senior officials in Alor Star and the Tunku was promptly transferred to the Langkawi Islands as District Officer. Secretly he was relieved: it was a refreshing change from the malaria-infested Kuala Nerang, and though it was a fairly lonely life they enjoyed the tranquility of the islands away from prying eyes and wagging tongues that abounded in Alor Star.

Langkawi is rich in legends, the most famous of them being the curse of Mahsuri. While some claim she is a mythical Princess the Tunku believes otherwise. "Mahsuri was a very real person, a lady of great beauty, the daughter of Pandak Maer, a businessman who lived in Langkawi. Mahsuri married a businessman but because of her beauty she incurred the wrath and jealousy of other women. And so it was that she was put to death by the Chief of Langkawi on the charge of adultery".

The story has it that at the point of death, she uttered a loud and clear warning: "I curse this island which for seven generations shall be devastated". Subsequently, Langkawi was attacked by the Thais, resulting in Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Shah fleeing to Penang and seeking the support of

Captain Francis Light. In the years thereafter the island seethed with strife and intrigue resulting in the wholesale slaughter of large sections of the community, following clashes between rival Malay groups.

Much later when people returned they found in place of the former padi fields and fruit trees only castor trees, as Mahsuri had warned. Various early attempts to develop Langkawi failed, including efforts to set up a marble quarry and establish a sardine canary. Believing that the bizarre events were related to Princess Mashuri's curse the Tunku ordered a tomb to be built to commemorate her memory. Much later, as Prime Minister he devoted quite a bit of attention to Langkawi, establishing a jetty and ferry service and the first resort, Langkawi Country Club.

The years of loneliness and separation from a life of social activity to which both the Tunku and Violet were more accustomed to slowly took their toll on the marriage. After he was transferred to Sungei Patani as District Officer they agreed on a separation and Violet returned to England in 1937. She decided later not to return to Malaya. They met again when he returned to England in 1938 to further pursue his law studies but it was not until 1946 that they were officially divorced.

In 1939 the Tunku married again. His bride was Sharifah Rodzih, the daughter of a well known family in Alor Star. Though she did not bear him any children it has been a decidedly happy marriage spanning more than fifty years. Her support over the years was a crucial factor as the Tunku's public stature grew, and rarely was she ever away from his side, both in times of trouble and triumph.

Sungei Patani also shaped the political style that the Tunku adopted in later years. He tramped through the rice fields in the kampungs and cycled out to meet the people. His home was one constant open house where he met with peasants who came miles to discuss their problems. To the locals his attitude was refreshing; here was a Prince eating and drinking with them in their homes or in the local coffee shops. He developed a tremendous following and it came as no surprise that in 1955 he won a landslide victory in the Federal elections from this constituency. His popularity with the locals however did not enamour him to his bosses in Alor Star. When he refused an outright order to cancel licenses of taxis in Sungei Patani and

instruct the owners to form a company, he was sharply reprimanded. Instead of being sacked he was reposted to Kulim again, and given twenty-four hours to report there.

The war interrupted his second attempt to complete his bar examinations and he was ordered back home at the outset of hostilities. Kedah woke up to the reality of the Japanese invasion when it was attacked at dawn on December 8, 1941. A Japanese squadron of medium sized bombers attacked Sungei Patani Airbase and put out of action several RAF planes and blew up petrol dumps.

After a series of attacks it was decided to move the Tunku's father, the Sultan, to Penang. The Tunku objected, believing that Penang would be the next target. His assessment proved right and had he not followed his instincts the Sultan may have come to grief. Dramatically he staged his father's kidnapping. It was an audacious plan and widely criticised by many. Later however they were forced to accept that the Tunku had acted out of great love and correctly judged the situation.

A less than obvious convoy had been planned for the trip from Alor Star to Butterworth and then to Georgetown. In overalls and donning a helmet the Tunku stationed himself at a fork of two main roads some fifty miles south of Alor Star. "The cars passed one by one. I was standing inside a hut at the junction so that none of the Kedah Government people could see me. When my father's car approached, I walked to the centre of the road and stopped it. I revealed myself to the Sultan and said that orders had been changed and that I had been instructed to take him to Kulim instead".

When his action was discovered he was warned that he could be arrested. Despite the threat the Tunku ensconced his father in a house in a pleasant valley in the village of Siddim. While the Sultan rested in safety the Japanese increased their attacks. The devastating raids on airfields at Butterworth preshadowed the invasion and subsequent control of Penang. The war went badly for the British and in December 19, 1942, the Sultan returned to Kulim where he signed an agreement with the Japanese governor. The Tunku himself reluctantly served as an interpreter between the Japanese and the local government.

"It was an awkward position to be in. The State had been officially transferred to Thailand while in fact the Japanese

were still giving orders and I had to carry them out. I asked the Thai officials why they did not take over the State and end Japanese rule. The reply was, "why should we take the bone and return the meat?"

Many Chinese in Kedah owe their lives to the Tunku's unstinting efforts to intercede on their behalf even though such intervention meant that he was putting his life on the line. He also made it his personal responsibility to care for the destitute, and survivors of the notorious death railway from Siam to Burma. The Tunku rallied several friends to help in this humane undertaking. Two of them later became members of his Government. One was (Datuk) Senu bin Abdul Rahman, a teacher in a Malay school, and the other (Tan Sri) Mohamed Khir bin Johari, who worked in the Civil Defence Department. Together the three became the nucleus of a welfare group that collected money and food for the needy. Food was cooked in the Tunku's house by his wife.

In 1943 the Japanese formally handed Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu back to Siam. They claimed they were rectifying an injustice done when Britain had forced Siam to give up the Malay States. The Tunku, who had originally been in the Audit department, was then made Superintendent of Education of Kedah.

For all their brutality and inhumane treatment of sections of the community the Japanese did plant the seeds of nationalism into younger Malays. They spoke of independence which they had ostensibly granted Burma, Siam, Indonesia and the Philippines and encouraged Indonesian politicians who supported the Japanese line to send a delegation to meet with the Malay political luminary of the time, Datuk Onn bin Jafar, the son of the former Menteri Besar of Johore. (His son the late Tun Hussein Onn became the third Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1976). Though Datuk Onn was clearly not impressed by the Indonesians, the delegation continued northwards and in Kedah spoke freely of *Merdeka* (independence). Years later this would be the Tunku's clarion call to all Malaysians.

Though the Tunku was suspicious of the Indonesians, Khir Johari and Senu were more receptive. They secretly formed an association called Saberka (Unity) under the guise of being a corporative store. The Tunku was persuaded to be its first



patron though he made it patently clear that his primary concern was encouraging a more democratic system of Government in Kedah. In 1943 Sultan Tunku Badlishah, ascended the throne, succeeding the Tunku's father who passed away after a sixty-one year rule.

In addition to its welfare programmes Saberkas also acted as a liaison group helping recruit soldiers for the fabled Force 136, part of the underground resistance engaged in sabotaging Japanese plans for the continued occupation of the country. In August 1945 the Tunku was among the first to be told by a senior Japanese Officer that surrender was imminent. The Officer offered him sacks of money and rice, encouraging Saberkas to continue with its charity work. They accepted only the rice. Later the State took over the home without as much as even acknowledging the founders' pioneering efforts.

The surrender of the Japanese ushered in immediate conflicts between the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) which initially had been a part of the overall resistance movement but which now sought to take over. In Kedah they planned to raise their own three-star red emblem signifying control over the State. The plan caused tension between the Malay and Chinese communities in Kedah and the Tunku was forced to intercede.

As rival factions gathered outside the Alor Star Police Station he defused the situation by appealing to both sides to sink their differences and get on with the reconstruction of the war-torn state. He refused to be intimidated by the Communists and quite soon was being hailed as a hero. But his newly-gained popularity was not without a price. His strong stance against the Communists prompted mischievous speculation that he was planning a coup to take over the State from the Sultan. Though baseless these rumours further strained relations between himself and the Sultan. **(See Appendix I)**

## CHAPTER 4

Even as Malaysians began the arduous task of rebuilding shattered lives and businesses the British laid plans to reshape Malaya's constitution. While giving equal citizenship rights to those living in the country they planned to assume more power over the affairs of the Malay states, thus effectively converting them into individual Colonies.

The man given this contentious assignment was Sir Harold MacMichael. He ruthlessly persuaded the Rulers to sign various agreements despite criticisms within Malaya and even in Britain over the heavy handed approach. Though unintended what the MacMichael treaty did was to cause an eruption of Malay political consciousness. In Johor Datuk Onn formed a national movement of Peninsular Malays to protest against the Malayan Union. When membership passed the hundred thousand mark the first All-Malay Congress was staged in Kuala Lumpur on March 1, 1946.

On that day history was made. The forty-one associations represented, including Saberkas, formed the United Malay National Organisation or UMNO, which has since that time been the vanguard of Malay political domination in the country. Datuk Onn spoke out vigorously against the Malayan Union concept and demanded a return to the status quo. The British refused to yield and instead announced that the Governor designate of the new Malayan Union, Sir Edward Geddes, would be installed on April 1. Invitations were sent out to all the Rulers who gathered in Kuala Lumpur.

At that point Datuk Onn personally conveyed to the Rulers a message from UMNO advising them against attending the installation and warned that if the Rulers insisted on going ahead they would be disowned by the people. The Rulers, clearly taken aback, acquiesced. Not one of them attended. In

response thousands of Malays descended upon the hotel where the Rulers were staying and publicly pledged loyalty, crying "Long live the Sultan".

In the face of such obvious opposition to the Malayan Union two British MPs were sent to Malaya to ascertain the views of the people. One of them was David Rees-Williams, an old friend of the Tunku from his District Officer days. Rees had practised law in Penang and had gained a considerable reputation as a criminal trial lawyer. (Much later he was made a peer and known as Lord Ogmore).

The two MPs began their assessment with Rees starting out from Penang and his colleague, Captain L.D. Gammans, from Johor. Throughout their travels they witnessed first-hand the galvanising strength of the nationalist movement and noted the prominent role played by Malay women. Everywhere the British MPs went they saw women carrying banners denouncing the MacMichael treaty. In no state was Malay opposition to the Union more clearly demonstrated than in Kedah with the Tunku playing a major role in orchestrating large public displays of disapproval.

He drove up to the Residency where Rees stayed, in a broken-down truck, and in a subsequent meeting made out a persuasive case against the Union. The MPs later met with UMNO leaders and also with the Rulers. The meetings were held in a more relaxed atmosphere and they later reported in the House of Commons that while the objectives of the Malay and British Government were similar the crisis had been sparked off because the plan had been pushed through without adequate consultation. Discussions were reopened with the British delegation headed by the first Governor General of Malaya, Mr Malcom MacDonald.

Though the political winds of change began to blow across the country the Tunku was more preoccupied with his own future. He felt politically unwanted. In addition to his poor relationship with the Sultan, he also objected to the strident opposition of Saberkas, who were prepared to use violence to achieve their objectives. Failing to persuade them that negotiations and not violence, were the key, he resigned from the organisation. He decided to return to England and complete his law studies.

He told his wife "I'm going to England to finish my law. If

I don't pass, you will have seen the last of me. I won't come back to this country anymore." She teasingly told him not to behave like a fool. While waiting for the S.S. Priam to cast its moorings, the Tunku saw what he describes as a phenomenon. "I saw water sprouting up into the air in the direction of Telok Ayer Tawar," where he had a coconut plantation. Once before he had seen a similar spectacle, on the way home from Penang. "No one else except my wife and I could see the rising columns of water. I did not know what it might signify". Years later he would recall the incident and realise that it portended the fulfilment of a life-time's dream — to be called to the Bar.

He arrived in December of 1946 amidst a harsh winter. After first staying with his brother, Tunku Shuieby — who had lived in Britain throughout the war and enlisted for service — in a small Richmond flat, they moved to Queensway where he settled down to the task before him.

The Inner Temple which boasted the finest law library in the Commonwealth prior to the war, had been flattened by German bombs. "I made a point of getting to the new library at 10 o'clock in the morning and returned at 4 o'clock, from Mondays to Fridays," the Tunku says. He also engaged a coach, a Mr. Hart, "who really kept me up to the mark" and enlisted the help of his old friend, Neil Lawson, who was then in Chambers at the Inner Temple.

Later he moved into Burns Hotel. The week-ends heralded a break and that in turn meant a full social calendar. His visitors included members of other royal Malay families, and he in turn, regularly visited Russell Square where most of the Malay students lived. He also revived the flagging Malay Society. To his much younger colleagues the Tunku was more like an uncle, someone they could turn to for advice, and touch for a loan before their remittance arrived.

A regular was Taib Haji Andak (the present Chief Minister of Sarawak). "He would show me photographs of his children. It would melt my heart". Later he discovered that (the late Tun) Razak, a close mutual friend, withheld Taib's allowance because "no matter how much money he had, he (Taib) would spend like a lord and be broke for the rest of the month".

In September 1947, Abdul Razak bin Hussein, then twenty-five and the scion of a leading Pahang family arrived to read law at Lincoln's Inn. He and the Tunku immediately took to

each other and in time they developed a special kindredship. As fate would have it one would succeed the other as Prime Minister of the country. The Tunku recalls Razak's brilliance. "He passed his Bar in eighteen months instead of the normal thirty-six, and this meant he had to wait until May 1950 before he would be called".

By this time the Tunku had moved into Barkston Gardens. His housekeeper, of whom he speaks with much affection, was Daisy Tallich, a bubbly personality who showed him much kindness. Abdul Razak tactfully urged the Tunku to give priority to his studies and offered to help. Such was their closeness that the Tunku later confided in him his ultimate ambition: to make a career in law and to enter politics.

A mini UMNO sprang up in London and events in India and Sri Lanka soon had the Malays setting their sights on independence. But there were obstacles. The Tunku and Abdul Razak were particularly concerned about whether the Malays and Chinese could live in harmony if and when they gained independence. Through letters from home they heard of increasing tension and, more pertinently, the articulate assessment of the problem by Tan Cheng Lock who came from a wealthy Malacca family, and who as early as 1926 had expressed concern about racial enmity between the main communities. This led the Tunku and Abdul Razak to conclude that there was no alternative for Malaya; either the various races demonstrated a willingness and commitment to live and work together, otherwise the country may have to be subdivided. The alternative was horrendous as it portended bloodshed.

In 1947 the British published a White Paper, setting out proposals for the new Malayan Constitution. The anxiety which it engendered permeated throughout Malaya and quickly touched the Malay community in England. The ambiguities and generalisations apart, the White Paper made it clear that the British intended to hold on for as long as they could. There was no hint of independence.

Abdul Razak, who by that time had become very attached to Tunku, (he called the Tunku Ayah Hitam, or Black Uncle) extracted a promise from the Tunku that he would be more active in UMNO when he returned. The Tunku meanwhile had his hands full, in addition to grappling with his forthcoming

examinations. To compound matters old wounds with Kedah reopened when a movement began in London to persuade the Kedah government to appoint the Tunku the next Menteri Besar. The well-intended lobby backlashed. The Sultan on being advised, promptly nominated the incumbent for a further term.

The Tunku publicly acknowledged that the incumbent (Tuan Haji Shariff) was an outstanding administrator; but clearly the reappointment meant that autocratic rule in feudal Kedah would be perpetuated even as the independence movement gathered steam across the country.

The Tunku recalls his final examinations in September, 1948. Apart from Neil Lawson and Abdul Razak, a regular visitor was Eusoffe Abdoolcader, later to become an eminent jurist. "The day before the examinations, Lady Winston, a doctor, gave me a pep pill which according to her would give me strength to sit through the exams. So I was well tuned up for the great day. In fact, in the last paper instead of answering ten questions I answered all twelve questions. But later it occurred to me that under the influence of the pep pill I might have made plenty of mistakes. I was afraid that I may not have done quite so well".

A month later the results were announced in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. Nervous, the Tunku temporarily disappeared the day before. When he did return it was to receive the joyous news from housekeeper Daisy. "You have passed your exams!" she screamed. "That was the happiest moment of my life. I was then 46 years old and was perhaps the oldest student at the Bar, which I first joined it in 1924. After Daisy left the room I was overcome with emotion and cried. All the injustices from the past and the humiliation I experienced came to mind. I said to myself 'now at last I have vindicated myself'. Let those people who had condemned me eat their words. Immediately, I knelt down in prayer and thanked Allah for his mercy".

By noon his apartment was filled with well-wishers. "That night I gave a big dinner at Freddie Mills Chinese Restaurant. It was money well spent, for indeed for me it was a great achievement". His admission to the Bar was crowned by a rare honour. He was asked to make an acceptance speech. It was filled with pithy anecdotes which he rounded off by saying,

“Tonight is a unique occasion for the Inn because it is the first time a student has been called after staying with it for 25 years. Tonight, I not only celebrate my being called to the Bar but also my silver jubilee as a student at this Inn”. His many well wishers, including Abdul Razak, were moved to tears. Ayah had indeed made it!

In January 1949 he sailed home aboard the P & O liner, Corfu. “I knew when the ship docked it was not a journey’s end; it was the beginning of a new life”. Though happy to return home the Tunku braced himself to come to terms with the harsh realities that awaited him. He was dismayed that although Kedah had become a unit of the Federation of Malaya it still remained aloof and autocratic. There was also a marked remoteness between the Sultan, who wielded awesome powers, and his subjects.

On a more personal note the Tunku faced the ignominious prospect of starting again as a Cadet Officer in the Legal Advisor’s Department. According to him he was the bane of the Menteri Besar, and since the State legal advisor, Mr. Boyle, had barely enough to keep himself fully occupied, the Tunku had little else to do but to look out of the windows upon the other Government offices. Nevertheless he accepted his position philosophically, using the spare time to monitor the throbbing national political pulse, and in particular Malay political developments. As chairman of the Kedah division of UMNO, he took an active role in propagating the party’s objectives. The Malay Rulers, clearly alarmed by UMNO’s repeated calls for Merdeka, began to harbour suspicions that they might meet the same fate as the rulers of recently independent India.

The Tunku’s salary at the time was a maximum of M\$4,920 per annum, hardly a princely sum. However he had a lucky break when the Attorney-General in Kuala Lumpur, Foster Sutton, asked him to join his Chambers as a Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP). “I accepted without hesitation and on April 11, 1949, left to take up my new appointment in Kuala Lumpur on secondment from the Kedah Civil Service with an additional allowance of M\$150 per mensem. I had to find quarters which was not so easy, so I stayed at the Majestic Hotel. It cost much more than the allowance I received from the Kedah Government but to me any sacrifice was good enough just to escape the persecution in my home State”.



A month later he leapt into limelight with a scathing article published in the *Utusan Melayu*. It was a combination of an attack on his brother, the Sultan, a warning to the Rulers generally and included a small dose of strong advice to the British Government. Not unexpectedly it infuriated his brother, who perceived UMNO as a threat, refusing to believe that the Tunku understood the concerns of the Rulers and that he was committed to ensuring that Malaya remained a monarchy. It was years later before they were reconciled.

The political scene at that time was both frenetic and confused. With the Malays crying out for Merdeka and the Chinese recognising that they would have to join hands with their Malay brethren in order to achieve the objective, both communities faced another common foe: the Malayan Communist Party which had since gone underground and whose murderous attacks led to the declaration of the Emergency.

Tan Cheng Lock was urged to come out openly against the terrorists and he called upon his country-men to "make up and unite, not only among yourselves but also with the Malays and other communities to make this land one country and one nation". This followed the formation of the Malayan Chinese Association — a move that set off alarm bells in some sections of UMNO and triggered off a spate of terrorist attacks on Chinese establishments. The communal divisions led Datuk Onn to suggest that UMNO should admit some non-Malays as associate members. It met with considerable opposition, and later on resulted in his stepping down as president of the party.

The Tunku recognised Datuk Onn's sincere desire for unity but he was just as concerned with bringing to an end feudal rule in the States. Being an officer in the Legal Department the Tunku was obliged to give up his position as Chairman of UMNO in Kedah after he arrived in Kuala Lumpur. Thus, despite the activity around him, the two years as a DPP meant taking a back seat. The only alternative was to throw himself into his work and this there was plenty of. He was soon appointed a Sessions Court Judge and as things stood, unless he entered the mainstream of politics, he appeared headed for the Bench. But fate took a hand and very rapidly thrust him to the forefront of UMNO, and the nation's drive towards independence.

## CHAPTER 5

Towards the end of 1950, UMNO faced its first major crisis. Datuk Onn was determined to widen the scope of UMNO and despite the advice of influential leaders including Abdul Razak, who had assumed the presidency of UMNO Youth, he decided to press the issue. Failing to win sufficient support he announced his resignation as President and that of the entire executive committee. It was a political gambit that on this occasion paid off.

Thousands of members pleaded with him to continue and he was re-elected almost unanimously at the next UMNO Assembly. Equally important, the Assembly endorsed the party's decision to enable non-Malays to obtain federal citizenship more easily. After a period of relative calm Datuk Onn returned to what had now become an obsession despite clear warnings that only a minority of the party was with him.

Meanwhile Sir Henry Gurney, the High Commissioner, managed to persuade Whitehall that the nominated Executive Council should be transformed to give it some semblance of a Cabinet, with members having responsibility for specific functions. As a consequence, in 1951, the first Ministers were appointed. Datuk Onn was named Member for Home Affairs while the Tunku's brother, Tunku Yaacob was named Member for Agriculture and Forestry. Two others, an English tin miner and a Chinese, were also named Members.

A defiant Datuk Onn finally played his last card, threatening at the 1951 UMNO Assembly that if the party refused to accept non-Malays as members, he would resign and form his own non-communal party. He had in mind the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) with the objective of achieving independence by 1958. This time he read the mood wrongly and when he resigned again no appeals or

demonstrations were made to persuade him to withdraw his resignation. UMNO leaders then turned their attention to a successor.

The Tunku's first reaction, when offered the Presidency was, "I do not think I am suitable". He in turn urged Abdul Razak to accept the leadership but the latter claimed that he was far too young. Abdul Razak pleaded with the Tunku, promising support and assuring him that the weight of Pahang UMNO would be behind his nomination.

Tan Sri Khir Johari recalls: "We knew his qualities, we knew he could be a bit of a dictator because he always wanted his own way. We had our quarrels with him but we knew that there was nobody else who could come to the rescue of UMNO. The Malays required a sincere man. We knew from experience that Tunku possessed that quality. He was not that smart but we knew he would make a sincere and a real leader".

There were others less enthusiastic and scoffed at the idea of a Prince being President of UMNO. Nevertheless, the Tunku trounced his two other rivals who challenged his nomination. His election marked the fulfilment of the first half of a prediction made by an Indian astrologer in Kulim, in 1939. The man told him he would one day be Prime Minister of the country. His reaction then was: "The prediction amused me but I couldn't help having a sneaky regard for his claim because I was a patriot at heart, and who knows, I might well be the first Prime Minister of my country. During the Japanese occupation I faced dangers but because of what the astrologer had said, I thought to myself: 'If it is the will of God that I should be made Prime Minister, then God will certainly preserve me for the future role'".

Upon his election he made a stirring acceptance speech. He said that, like Mahatma Ghandi he would serve the Malays not as a master but as a servant. "I am just a creature of God, humble and insignificant. I am aware that I am taking over from a Malay leader who is known not only in Malaya but also in other countries. The Malays were never united under one leader and one banner until Datuk Onn started UMNO. Now his job has been thrust upon me, I pray to God for his assistance".

He went on: "This is a Malay country and privileges should be given to the Malays. What would become of the Malays if we

concede everytime to the insatiable demands of the other races. However, we shall not forget the contributions that other races had made. The independence of this country must be handed over to us with all possible speed and the Malay Rulers should consider what would happen if this country is handed over to Malayans — and not Malays. It is certain that their palaces would be torn down. We on our part pledge to destroy the Federation agreement in the same way as we destroyed the Malayan Union five years ago and establish instead real freedom for our people”. **(See Appendix III)**

He demonstrated courage from the minute he assumed office. The first executive committee meeting was held at the Majestic. Fears were expressed that the British Special Branch had bugged the room. The Tunku's retort was: “Let's have it here. I will give British Intelligence the satisfaction of knowing what I have to say about them”.

The first meeting also tested his hold over the party. There were some whose sympathies still lay with Dato Onn. The Tunku warned that those bent on obstructing the party's quest for independence and its determination to maintain Malay political supremacy faced expulsion.

Later the Tunku was to realise that the British would only grant independence to a country if the races were truly united and there was equal representation based on popular support. It left little choice to the UMNO and MCA leaders who then agreed that they should join forces.

To test the ground the parties decided to cooperate and contest the Municipal elections in Kuala Lumpur in 1952. Four Malay candidates were put up, seven Chinese, and one Indian. The new born Alliance won eleven of the twelve seats. This pattern followed in all other Municipal elections in the other States and emboldened the Alliance to make fresh demands for a more democratic election to the Legislative Assembly. This in turn led to direct negotiations with Whitehall.

At that juncture, the Tunku faced a personal dilemma. He had to decide whether to resign immediately from Government, but not being rich he had to do a fair amount of soul-searching. Sir Henry Gurney was appraised of this and advanced a solution that ensured that the Tunku could devote himself entirely to UMNO. The formula enabled the Tunku to go on leave prior to retirement with a pension two years before

Government regulations allowed. For the next two years he was given full pay leave, then another two years on half pay leave and finally no pay leave. This amounted to a monthly pension of some M\$288 a month. In addition, Sir Henry Gurney declared that the President of UMNO should be a member of the Federal Legislative Council. For this the Tunku received an additional M\$500 a month.

Over the years however the Tunku was forced to sell some of his inherited land and houses to defray political expenses because UMNO did not have adequate funds to keep its machinery going. He drove his own car because he could not afford a driver, and it was not uncommon to see him cleaning his vehicle when he stayed at the old Rest House behind the Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur.

To raise funds UMNO had to depend on various novel ideas, not all of which yielded dividends. "The maddening question was where to find the money to back our battle for independence. The government's machinery was all geared up to fight the Alliance." The Alliance launched a lottery but it did not succeed. "The first two draws were not successful. The first time we bungled because we were new at it. The second one was badly handled by agents to whom we had entrusted the sale of tickets. Finally we believed we had learnt from our mistakes and were confident that the third draw would be in our favour. The government promptly withdrew the licence." As a consequence the MCA also had its lottery licence revoked. More successfully however was Suara Merdeka, the UMNO organ. High sales enabled the party to purchase its own printing press and for many years the newsletter proved to be a highly profitable undertaking.

The Tunku had little choice but to move fast. Twenty-one days after leaving UMNO Datuk Onn formed the IMP. Initially, he enjoyed the support of Datuk Sir Tan Cheng Lock who promised support from Chinese associations throughout the country. However within months it was clear that the IMP had considerably less appeal than its charismatic founder and progressively it slipped into oblivion. It was eliminated first at Municipal, and later Federal election levels.

The victory of the Alliance in 1952 Municipal elections was a watershed in the drive towards independence but it was hard earned. The Tunku recalls: "The President of UMNO Wanita in

Kuala Lumpur, Datin Mariah Puteh, was among many still very loyal to Datuk Onn, and they originally opposed the Alliance. I then called on those who opposed the Alliance to resign or to be prepared to face expulsion”.

The electoral victory came at a critical time, soon after the assassination of Sir Henry Gurney while returning from his Fraser's Hill retreat. He was gunned down by communist guerillas. Prior to General Sir Gerald Templer's taking office in 1952, Mr Oliver Lyttleton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited Malaysia to see for himself the situation created by the communist insurrection and to assess changes after the Tunku had taken over at the helm of the UMNO.

The meeting with Mr Lyttleton yielded very little; he was guarded and evasive when asked whether the British would give self government to Malaya. The Tunku was at pains to point out to him that under the recently formed Malayan Federation the position of the Malays had not improved. “I told him we were as poor as we were under direct British rule. Very few Malays were given Malayan Civil Service (MCS) appointments, and no Malays were appointed to senior posts in the Police Force. Also there seemed to be more expatriate officers in the Government and I understood that more expatriate officers were expected from Burma, Ceylon and some from India. As our objective had been to free Malaya from foreign rule we clearly were not getting very far.”

Days before Sir General Templer took up office, a national conference between UMNO and MCA was called. Prior to this, cooperation had been at state level only. The late Tan Sri T.H. Tan recalled in his autobiography: “Those present were Tunku Abdul Rahman, Datuk Sir Tan Cheng Lock, Col. (later Tun) H.S. Lee, Mr. Leong Yew Koh, Mr. S.M. Yong, Mr. (later Tan Sri Omar) Ong Yoke Lin, Enchik (later Tun) Sardon Bin Jubir, Enchik Bahman bin Samuddin, Dr. (later Tun) Ismail bin Datuk Abdul Rahman, Enchik (later Tan Sri) Syed Nasir bin Ismail, and myself as Secretary. The first meeting was a complete success. The Tunku told the press later it formed the basis of Sino-Malay friendship and collaboration as symbolised by the UMNO-MCA Alliance.

“A meeting with Datuk Onn to reconcile political differences took place at the house of Sir Clough Thuraisingham who took it upon himself to suggest that it

might be a good thing for Datuk Onn and the Tunku to get together to try and work for the good of the country. The Tunku said that nothing would please him more and met with Datuk Onn that evening.

“Datuk Onn unfortunately was rather brusque in his behaviour towards us. He told us in no uncertain terms that he would not agree to any coalition with the Alliance but said if we were serious about independence we should join hands with the IMP”.

“The Tunku said that was asking too much, bearing in mind the Alliance’s proven support. Dato Onn and his followers were invited to rejoin UMNO. Datuk Onn pooh-pooed the idea and the Tunku told him in no uncertain terms that if that was his attitude then he would go all out to fight him and his party or die in the attempt”.

Meanwhile, Sir General Templer carried the war to the communists with greater vigour. He asked for all-out public support to ensure victory and under his command the tide began to turn in favour of the security forces. Sir Gerald also met the Rulers to canvass their opinions of political developments in the country, and criss-crossed the Peninsula tirelessly, meeting different groups to try and understand the mood that prevailed. The Tunku, as a Legislative Council member, had met with him several times and his impression of Sir Gerald was that he “was upright and frank and that he meant business”. But he still represented the Colonial rulers and as such the Tunku had little choice but to step up his criticism of Britain as he went round the country addressing rallies. As the attacks increased in sting Sir Gerald sent for him. “He suggested that I temper my speeches but I told him if he didn’t like it the only way to stop me was to shut me up in detention”. He turned around me and said “Why should I make a martyr of you?”.

Earlier, in 1951 the Tunku undertook the defence of the seven men under sentence of death in Singapore. The seven had taken part in violent rioting in protest against the forcible conversion to Christianity of Maria Hertogh, otherwise known as Nadra.

Before the riots were finally brought under control, Datuk Onn and Datuk Razak, who were then on their way to Colombo, had been asked to try and use their influence to calm

down the rioters. They tried to do so but had to make a quick escape as the rioters refused to listen to reason. Instead they became aggressive and hostile towards the mediators.

Subsequently several Malays were charged before Mr. Justice T.A. Brown. Seven received death sentences, the remainder terms of imprisonment. Mr. Justice Brown, who heard the case on December 2, 1950 ordered the 13 year-old Nadra, to be returned to her natural mother. Cik Aminah, her foster-mother, had looked after the child after Nadra's mother left her in the old lady's care shortly before fleeing from the impending Japanese invasion.

The girl grew up as a Muslim but when the British saw the child, who was clearly a Caucasian, they agreed to send her back to her natural parents at their request, but against the girl's wishes. Cik Aminah hastily arranged her marriage to one, Mansor Adabi, to prevent her being taken away. This marriage led to the court case and the riots that followed.

On January 7, 1951 UMNO received an appeal to intervene but at a secret meeting decided against it. "My first disagreement with Datuk Onn occurred over this case. I felt that the action of the British in forcibly removing the girl from the custody of her adopted mother, Cik Aminah, and putting her in the Convent of the Good Shepherd to be reconverted to Christianity, was a direct insult to all Muslims. He disagreed. On August 26, 1951 I was elected president of UMNO. One of my first actions was to start a fund-raising campaign for the defence of these seven men. There was nothing that could be done about Nadra herself as she had already been removed to Holland. From my home in Telok Ayer Tawar I called publicly for funds to help the condemned men in their appeal, which was still pending. Money poured in from all quarters, and we were able to brief Mr. David Marshall to appear in their defence. I travelled to Singapore to work with David Marshall on the case." The Appellate Court subsequently amended the sentences to life imprisonment.



## CHAPTER.6

In February 1953 the Majestic Hotel was the scene of the first national political convention with delegates representing ninety percent of the population of the country and six main political parties including UMNO, MCA and the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP or PAS). The UMNO-MCA Alliance demanded federal elections in 1954, a call that worried the other parties who began to appreciate that the Alliance's formidable organisation rendered their chances of winning federal seats somewhat remote.

The Menteri Besars, too, decided to hold a congress for all political parties in Kuala Lumpur and appealed to the various organisations to form one political entity. The objective was contained in the invitation sent out in April 1953 and signed by all but two Menteri Besars, those of Perlis and Pahang. As members of UMNO they chose to stand by their party.

The IMP attended the MB's congress but it was a flop. The initiator of all-party congress, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang, Menteri Besar of Perak, had been the first Secretary General of UMNO when it was officially formed but he later refused to accept office. When Datuk Onn left UMNO he was Deputy President but showed no interest and later resigned to fight UMNO. Subsequently, despite a lack of grass roots support he managed to wrest the chairmanship of UMNO Perak. The basic difference between him and the Tunku was that the Menteri Besar, like many of those who originally left UMNO, wanted to perpetuate their slogan of *Hidup Melayu* (Long Live The Malays) instead of *Merdeka*. Months later when he openly defied the party line he was ousted.

At a meeting with Sir Gerald Templer in October 1953 the Tunku was offered a Ministership but declined on the grounds that it would compromise his position as a party leader. Instead

he offered to nominate other leaders to join the Cabinet. These included Dr. Ismail, and Col. H.S. Lee. They were subsequently drafted into the Cabinet together with the Tunku as an Official Member, but without salary.

The reaction of several UMNO members was to oppose the appointments on the grounds that as they were struggling for independence they should not be seen to be part of the same Government they sought to replace. The Tunku persuaded them that the independence struggle should be waged constitutionally and not by a unnecessary show of strength.

In February 1954 a Government committee appointed to study the proposed elections submitted their recommendations. The report, which the Government accepted, recommended a 98 member-house made up of a Speaker, ex-officio Members, State representatives, vested interests, minorities, and eight Government nominees. There were to be only 40 elected representatives.

UMNO rejected the report out of hand and suggested instead that elected members should account for not less than 75% of the total and that Government servants should be allowed to take part in politics. Those born in the Federation of Malaya and who had lived in the country without a break of five years should be allowed to vote and those born in Malaya but working in Singapore would qualify if they had lived in Malaya for not less than seven years. They also proposed elections should be held not later than November 1954.

The High Commissioner and the Rulers rejected the Alliance's proposals and chose to go ahead with the elections on Government terms. The Alliance then decided that the Tunku and T.H. Tan should visit London to meet the Secretary of State for the Colonies. **(See Appendix II)**

Before they left the Tunku recalls an extraordinary conference of UMNO and MCA in Malacca, in April 1954. "The huge group gathered gave their unstinted and unqualified support for the London mission and gave us a wonderful send off. Many ladies showered us with money and jewellery. I remember in particular Tunku Puan Kursiah (later to be the first Queen) who took off her bracelets and threw them down from the balcony of the building".

The trip to London however was less successful, with the Secretary, Oliver Lyttleton, initially refusing to meet with the

delegation and not even giving a reason for his reluctance. Later Mr. Lyttleton in a pained response claimed he was "fully seized" of the views of all parties and their opinion including that of the Alliance's and that he could therefore see "no occasion for further intervention by any of them in the discussion and exchanges of views between the High Commissioner, their Highnesses the Rulers, and myself". He added that if he was to receive the Alliance delegation, "I should also have to give time and opportunity to others if they too wanted to send delegations".

The Tunku then sought the help of his old friends including Lord Ogmore and Tom Procter, both members of the Labour Party. Through Lord Ogmore's intervention Mr. Lyttleton finally agreed to see the Tunku but as he was due to visit Uganda the meeting could only take place three weeks later. While he was elated at having won "half of the political victory" he received a rather rude shock when the Colonial Office released the exchange of despatches about elections and constitutional changes between Mr. Lyttleton and the High Commissioner of the Federation, Sir Gerald. These disclosed an agreement between the High Commissioner and the Rulers to create a new Legislative Council which would have 52 elected and 46 nominated members. The High Commissioner would also nominate seven other members of his choice.

The Tunku's reaction was to call a press conference in the committee room of the House of Lords. Despite the poor press turnout The Times carried a few paragraphs, as did the Manchester Guardian. The Tunku, while waiting for the Secretary of State to return, was joined by Datuk Abdul Razak who had been in America on government business. Shortly before the meeting the Tunku received a telegram from Dr. Ismail saying: "UMNO executive committee met this morning and urge you to return as soon as possible before May 23 as Government very likely to decide on elections bill on May 25". The delegation immediately booked seats to leave London on May 20 though this meant that the Tunku had to cancel a much sought appointment with Pandit Jawarhlal Neru, the Indian Prime Minister.

The meeting with Mr. Lyttleton lasted two hours. The Tunku refused to budge on the electoral reforms sought and at the end of it the Secretary agreed to give the Tunku a letter to

deliver to the High Commissioner. He showed him the letter, the gist of which was "that if in practice it is found that the ability of the majority elected party to function effectively was being frustrated by a deliberately destructive majority then the High Commissioner must take steps to remedy it". The Tunku argued that there must be elections and that three fifths of the members should be elected and that the nine official members to be appointed should have the consent and approval of the Alliance.

The nine official nominees were to be Government men and business representatives, says the Tunku. "This I could not accept. However, we reached agreement on all the other points. I maintained that until this particular matter of official nominees was cleared I would not accept any compromise. I then knew the standing and views of the British Government. I returned and met the High Commissioner who said he would carry on with the election and appointment of the nominees. I had no choice but to disagree with him and left him without even a handshake".

The Alliance leaders decided to withdraw from the Government and State Councils. The Tunku met Sir Gerald to hand over the resolution. His reaction on reading it was: "Well the pistol is out". A week later Sir Gerald returned home, his term completed.

The Alliance resolution read: "In order to get an unbiased assessment of the country's progress towards self-government, the Alliance requests that a special independent commission consisting entirely of members from outside Malaya be sent immediately to the Federation with the concurrence of Her Majesty and Their Highnesses to report on constitutional reforms in the Federation.

"Fully realising its responsibilities towards the people and the country the Alliance will continue to give its fullest co-operation to the Government in all respects, particularly with a view to bringing the Emergency to an early end if this request is acceded to."

Then came the ultimatum: "If the authorities insist on the implementation of the White Paper the Alliance with great regret will have no choice but to withdraw all its members from participation in the Government."

Caught by this sudden turn in events the British

Government decided that it had to be resolved and on July 2 1954, the Tunku was invited to meet the new High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray, on the British frigate, HMS Alert, at the Naval Base in Singapore. Together with the Tunku was Dr. Ismail and Col. H.S. Lee. Any fears that the Tunku may have entertained that the British had tricked him aboard with the view of sending him into exile were dismissed by the reception committee which greeted him.

In the Admiral's quarters, in easy chairs and intimate surroundings, the Tunku and Sir Donald, after exchanging pleasantries, got down to brass tacks. The British, now aware of the strength and depth of the Alliance support and its capability of bringing the administration to a standstill, had decided to alter its position. As Sir Donald explained, the party that won the elections would be consulted over the appointment of the five members to be nominated whilst the two expatriate members would be nominated by the High Commissioner, but again with the winning party's approval. This of course meant that the Alliance would have to win at least 99% of the seats up for election to be in a position to nominate five additional members who would then sit on their bench.

Part of the compromise included an end to the boycott and for all former Legislative Council Members and members of State councils and Boards to resume office. Since State positions were the prerogative of the Malay rulers, as the Tunku pointed out, Sir Donald indicated his willingness to urge the Rulers to agree to the re-appointments.

Two days later the news of the changes were announced. It was generally well received, except by a handful, who despite their allegiance to the Alliance, were less temperate in seeking solutions in overcoming the obstacles that lay in the path of independence. Though some of the Rulers and Whitehall had strong misgivings about the boycott and show of strength, in retrospect it brought a closer understanding between Britain and the new group of Malayan leaders who were clearly determined to break bondage of British colonialism.

With elections set for July 27 1955, the Alliance machinery began to gear up in earnest. Though they had almost eleven months the Tunku was not taking any chances. A council

comprising fifteen UMNO and fifteen MCA officials was formed with the Tunku chairing the first three sessions. It drew up what was to be the Alliance's manifesto and included resolutions to uphold democracy, to work towards self government and independence of Malaya, to uphold the Ruler's rights and perogatives, to guarantee the freedom of association, to work for unity of all people of Malaya and to provide social, economic and political upliftment of the people.

With the Alliance looking unbeatable, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) joined the grouping. This brought about immediate returns in the Penang State elections in which the MIC contributed to a resounding Alliance victory. The IMP, led by Datuk Onn, was roundly defeated in State elections, and he decided to change the name to Party Negara and launch a new political platform quite distinct from the original non-communal party he advocated.

Says the Tunku: "He had to pay the penalty for his mistake. He was the man who first stood up to the British Raj, the Rulers, in defence of the rights of the humble people, in particular the Malays; and he won a great name for himself as a redoubtable leader".

The apportionment of seats among the Alliance was a delicate matter and the Tunku had to call upon his Malay colleagues to make some sacrifices. Finally it was agreed that 35 UMNO candidates would be fielded, 15 from the MCA and two from the MIC.

Quite unexpectedly the Federation of Chinese School Teachers demanded that Chinese should be made one of the official languages of Malaya. The Tunku was furious. "I met the representatives at the house of Datuk Sir Tan Cheng Lock and told them point blank that they had accepted the Alliance manifesto which made Malay and English the official languages; and in the manifesto we had agreed to back the request for more Chinese and Indian schools and for them to be upgraded to be on par with other government schools. As such they had no reason to bring up a new issue on the eve of the election. I warned them that if we fail in our quest for self determination I would hold them responsible. After two hours of argument they gave in and left rather sheepishly".

In the run up to the elections the political atmosphere

become progressively charged. Datuk Onn had resigned as Member for Home Affairs to devote himself to the campaign and made fiery, communalistic speeches in a desperate attempt to break UMNO's hold. This did not help his cause.

The Tunku appealed to the electorate on a broader front, harping on independence and end to the Emergency and a better life for all. According to the Tunku, Party Negara had the tacit support of the Government. In addition they had considerably more funds at their disposal to organise campaigns which were held daily in almost every major town and village.

Two months before the elections the Alliance suffered a defeat in Legislative Council on a Party Negara resolution calling for the restriction on the use of private motor vehicles on polling day. The Alliance's single-vote defeat came about when several Government officials abstained from voting. The Tunku described the resolution as "a calculated conspiracy to cripple the Alliance in its election campaign". He accused the Government of dishonouring a pledge made earlier. The Tunku, Dr. Ismail and Col. Lee resigned from the Executive Council in protest. They however did not resign their seats in the Legislative Council. The move compelled Sir Donald to issue a statement regretting the decision of the trio to resign.

For the Tunku the campaign meant criss-crossing the country, by boat, lorry, train and car, speaking for up to fifteen hours a day and hardly ever returning home to his family.

The Tunku's emphasis on racial harmony and equal opportunities between the races had by now earned him wide respect. Despite setbacks he refused to compromise on what had become an article of faith. This was tested within UMNO itself. At the mid-term general assembly of the party, prior to the elections, he threatened to resign if hard liners persisted in insisting that 90% of election candidates should be Malays. "A prerequisite to independence", he declared, "is the willingness to make sacrifices. We in Malaya do not need to sacrifice our lives for our objectives; ours is constitutional struggle. In the past few months a section of our members have fallen victim to the influence of our enemies. I would like to remind them that it was in combination with the MCA that we demanded the federal elections be held and that it was MCA who joined the boycott of the Council. Now that federal elections have come

some of these members do not want to give fair consideration to our friends". He appealed to the assembly to be careful lest independence "which is within sight and grasp will disappear, and God only will know when we shall have the same opportunity that is before us now".

The Tunku and the central executive committee of UMNO won a unanimous vote of confidence. But this did not mean a let-up in campaigning. The Tunku, Datuk Abdul Razak, Datuk Dr. Ismail, and his brother Datuk Sulaiman, went round the country urging Malays to forget racial interests and to support Chinese or Indian candidates put up for the elections. He personally worked tirelessly to assist in the campaigns of non-Malay Alliance candidates, at the same time refuting charges that he had sold out to the Chinese. "I want to tell you that no amount of money can buy the Malay race. The Malays can be bought only with my life", he declared.

On nomination day 129 candidates filed their papers. The Alliance fielded 52 candidates for all seats, Datuk Onn's Party Negara 30 candidates, the PMIP eleven, Perak National Party and Progressive Party of Perak two each, and 18 independents.

The Tunku stood in the Sungei Muda constituency, in his old District Officer's stamping ground of Sungei Patani. Returning to Alor Star on the eve he telephoned every Alliance State H.Q. along the West Coast to find out if everything was in order. Satisfied that he could do no more he took a break — the first in months of intense campaigning, chatting with old friends into the wee hours of the morning.

The morning of election day did not however pass without incident. "When I reached Tikam Batu I entered the polling station to greet my election agents. As I did an Elections Officer, the State Conservator of Forests, rose from his chair and ordered me to leave in a threatening manner. I told him I had every right to be there. An argument broke out and we nearly exchanged blows. He shouted for the police but they recognised me and did not intervene." Years later when he was Prime Minister the very same expatriate officer, then in the Government service in Sarawak, approached the Tunku and offered his apologies. The Tunku replied: "Well, you can be sure I won't drive you out of Sarawak so long as you behave yourself."

Conservative estimates gave the Alliance between 29 and



35 seats and Party Negara between 8 and 12. After casting his vote the Tunku drove southwards with T.H. Tan, stopping at polling booths on the way to Kuala Lumpur. He arrived there at around seven o'clock, an hour before polling closed. Instead of going to the Alliance headquarters he and T.H. Tan checked into the latter's hotel room to monitor the results. Few of his colleagues knew he was in Kuala Lumpur on that historic night.

The Alliance won 51 out of the 52 seats. It was a resounding victory. The Tunku himself won by a majority of more than 22,000 votes while Datuk Onn was crushed by Datuk Sulaiman by nearly 4,000 votes. As the final results trickled in the Tunku made his way to the Selangor Club Padang and joined the crowd outside the Selangor Club watching the results being tabulated on a giant score board. Each Alliance victory was greeted with a roar of Merdeka. No one noticed the Chief Minister-elect of Malaya who casually slipped out of the night to prepare for a dawn and a new future — one which the fortune teller had predicted more than 25 years earlier.

## CHAPTER 7

Harry Miller, who interviewed the Tunku in the wee hours of the morning reported: "A tousled head looked out from behind the open door. It was Abdul Rahman awake after two hours' sleep. "Come in," he said, displaying no bombast for a man who had stepped into the spotlight of the world. I asked him for his reaction and he replied, "I had complete faith in victories for our Chinese and Indian candidates who were in the strongest UMNO areas. Frankly, we dared not put them anywhere else; we had to wait to try to win the confidence of the people first".

The journalist asked him for one reason for the victory and the Tunku replied: "The people's enthusiasm for independence". Pausing, he added firmly: "The British Government cannot ignore the fact that our success resulted from the issue of independence and nothing else — absolutely nothing else".

Soon after, the Tunku was invited to Kuala Lumpur to discuss the membership of the Cabinet and he submitted a list of ten. In addition to being named the Chief Minister the Tunku took on the Internal Affairs portfolio. Datuk Abdul Razak was named Minister for Education; Datuk Dr. Ismail, Minister for Land and Mines; Col. H.S. Lee, Minister for Transport; Enchik Abdul Aziz Ishak, Agricultural and Fisheries Minister; Leong Yew Koh, Health Minister, V.T. Sambanthan, Labour Minister; Datuk Sardon Jubir, Works Minister; and Datuk Sulaiman Abdul Rahman, Housing and Development Minister. The Telecommunications Ministry went to Tun Omar Ong Yoke Lin, who together with the Tunku and Tan Sri Khir Johari are the only survivors of Malaya's early Cabinets.

As Chief Minister, the Tunku received a salary of M\$3,000 a month and an allowance of \$1,000, and for his responsibilities

as Chief Minister and leader of the Government an entertainment allowance of M\$500, and transport allowance. The Tunku however was displeased with the house offered and the unwillingness of the Government to provide him and his Ministers with cars. "When we took up our appointment we had no where to live except those who were residents in Kuala Lumpur. Many high Government officials were given an official car with a chauffeur while for the new Federal Ministers there were no cars, no homes, no welcome. We were treated like unwanted outcasts and intruders."

This contrasted with the multitude of well wishers who continued to stream in from all parts of the countries to pledge their loyalty to the Tunku, and many who felt that they could go to him with their personal problems. In fact, anyone with the slightest grumble or complaint sought the Tunku's help personally. Some of his Cabinet colleagues complained that he was far too accessible and spent too much time entertaining the personal problems of ordinary Malaysians. But the Tunku's standard answer was, "How can I send them away? They have come many miles to see me".

The Tunku was finally given a house at No. 1 Horse Road. Prior to that he had been offered a clerks' quarters with two rooms in Federal Hill which he refused. Believing that No. 1 Horse Road with its large gardens and seemingly comfortable accommodation would be suitable he moved in without too much reservation. But the old house gave him an initiation which he hardly expected. "We had been there for a few days when the heavy rains started to leak, through the roof, wetting us in bed. So my wife and I had to get up and move the bed to another corner. Unfortunately, the bedding got wet and we had to remove it and sleep on the wooden planks. Naturally, I couldn't sleep all night and I swore that the British must go quickly".

Later the British Advisor to the State of Selangor, F.D. Duckworth, offered the Tunku his own residence, and the Government gave him a loan to buy an Austin A17.

"When I first went to live at the Residency there were all kinds of stories spread about it. Some said they had seen an apparition — a white lady dressed in white robes roaming the corridors after mid-night and in the early hours of the morning. In all the fifteen years that I stayed there I never once saw the

apparition — be it white, black, brown or yellow — and I moved about the house very freely at all times of the day and night.

“Only once did I get the fright of my life. Suddenly I was awakened by voices near my bed. I switched on the light, sweat dripping all over my forehead, and found that I had not replaced the telephone back on the receiver. The operator at the other end was desperately trying to get me to respond.

“I then understood that the phone of a Prime Minister is constantly under watch; if it goes wrong or “out of order” a red light shows up, as it did on this occasion; so the poor operator had to find out exactly what the trouble was. That was the only “ghostly voice” I ever heard in the Residency”.

The Residency witnessed weddings and births, and one funeral. That was for a Chinese lady, a Mrs. Lam Tong, who on her death-bed in hospital asked to be converted to Islam. “At that time I was in Singapore but I directed that her body should be brought to the Residency and that she be given a grand funeral from there.”

Among the VIPs who visited the Residency was HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, on his way to Singapore in 1956. “In fact, he had to change plans and stop over in Kuala Lumpur because there was trouble in Singapore. I went to meet him on the Royal Yacht ‘Britannia’ at Langkawi, and together we flew down to Kuala Lumpur. When I reached the Residency there was the familiar, unsavoury smell of durians, then in season. Quickly I ordered the fruits to be moved out. As the Duke was coming for lunch I ordered European food to be served.

“When the Duke arrived I told him about the durians. “Where are they?” he asked. “I want to eat some”.

I said I had given them to the servants. He went straight down to their quarters with me following him, to try and salvage the remains, but the servants had already made a feast of the durians; only the thorny skins were left”.

The household was large, with domestic staff, gardeners, chauffeurs, living inside the Residency compound. “They in turn had so many children that it was impossible to count their number. Every year there were additions to the families; no sooner had you finished counting, more came”.

“Once I reckoned that their number rose to almost like a hundred. Their voices, either crying or laughing, filled the air,

morning, noon and night. They were indeed pleasant sounds to hear. One of my staff called their quarters 'Kampung Tunku'.

"My adopted daughter, Mariam, was then a small child, as was Suleiman, and towards the end of my stay I had two "additions" to my family, Faridah and Noor. There was never a dull moment in my life at the Residency. We held parties on the children's birthdays and at Hari Raya; all would run round screaming away with delight over the presents they received. All of them were happy, making the adults happy, too.

"The servants had many amenities — a TV set, ping-pong tables and other indoor games, but in the evenings most of them would crowd around the television. My valet, Ah Seong, looked after my bedroom and clothing. If one vest or shirt was missing on my return from any trip abroad, Ah Seong would bring the matter to my notice.

"He always had ready two lists of things to take with me on my journeys, written out in Chinese — one for home-trips, another for journeys abroad. Even if new things were added, he would still include the old ones. Inevitably this led to bigger and bigger bags, and more missing things on each return."

Mr. (later Viscount) Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colony arrived in Kuala Lumpur in August, 1955 and the Tunku wasted no time in seeing him. His earlier suspicions that Lennox-Boyd represented imperialistic motives were quickly allayed. He said later: "When I met Lennox-Boyd at King's house, I felt immediately that he was a sincere and straight man. I felt I could do a lot with him, he was my counterpart." In the course of his representations, the Tunku used the term "my Government". His visitor chided him saying, "You know Tunku, you cannot yet call the Federation Government your Government, it isn't yours. It is a Government formed by agreement between the Queen and the Malay Rulers." To which the Tunku responded: "Is that so? I'm glad to know that," adding, "I must make it my Government as soon as possible then".

In their discussions the Tunku put forward five proposals. These included the offer of a general amnesty to the communists; to have a Legislative Assembly with fully elected members; to appoint a Commission to prepare the constitution of independent Malaya; to decide on the citizenship of the country; and to decide on the education policy. To this the

Secretary of State intimated that Malaya deserved to be given self-determination which would lead to independence. The Tunku however made it clear that his Government was determined to seek independence without any further ado.

He later told a gathering which included the Secretary that the British Government and the Malay Rulers had no choice but to foster the growth of genuine nationalism and give independence to the Federation or hand over the country to the Malayan Communist Party. "If independence is delayed beyond the four years stipulated by the Alliance Government, you will help spread communism since communism thrives and flourishes on Colonialism". It was finally agreed that constitutional discussions would take place in London the following January, but the Rulers would also have to be represented as they would be affected by any major changes to the constitution.

There were a number of pressing issues, notably trying to persuade the Rulers to go along with the independence programme and also to bring to an end the long running and bloody communist insurgency. But there were other equally important housekeeping matters that had to be settled.

Along Batu Road, since renamed Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, UMNO leased at a very modest price a site for its headquarters. A fine four-storey building costing M\$135,000 was built. At the opening by the Sultan of Selangor, the Ruler expressed the hope that "UMNO under Tunku Abdul Rahman would go a long way," and prayed that the people would be served and the country will enjoy peace and prosperity.

The Tunku also decided that sport should receive due attention, especially the growing interest in football. When he was in the Legislative Assembly years before, he had sought support for a permanent home and a stadium but his suggestions were laughed out. Soon after becoming Chief Minister he set his sights on a hill which had been used as a military depot and requisitioned it. At the same time the Government also acquired a valley at the site of the old Bungsar Hospital. Earth from the hill was removed and used to fill the valley. At the end of the day the people had not one but two national monuments, the National Mosque and Merdeka Stadium. Later on, he turned his attention to Parliament House which was previously housed in the old PWD Building.

Today's Parliament House, a majestic structure that overlooks the heart of the city, was built during Tunku's tenth year in office.

The Tunku's first meeting with the Rulers took place at the end of September 1955. He took pains to reassure them that their positions as constitutional monarchs would be upheld after independence. He nevertheless reminded them that they would be at variance with the wishes of the people if they posed an obstacle to independence. He invited them to appoint representatives for preliminary discussions with the Alliance prior to talks at Lancaster House in London in January of 1956.

At the same time, a general amnesty was offered to the communists with RAF planes saturating the jungle with some forty million leaflets setting out the terms. Those who accepted the amnesty were promised freedom from prosecution for any offence connected with the Emergency — most generous terms when one considers the barbarous and wholesale slaughter that the communists had perpetrated on countless thousands of innocent victims, army and police personnel. To whip up support the Alliance held demonstrations throughout the country urging terrorists to lay down their arms. It produced the desired effect. Chin Peng, the CPM chief, announced he was prepared to meet with the Tunku.

While the Tunku viewed this as a godsent opportunity to confront the enemy there were many in his Government, not to mention the Special Branch, who had reservations. The High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray's reaction was to suggest that the Tunku meet with high ranking British officials in Singapore including Commissioner General for South East Asia, Sir Malcom McDonald.

Prior to the meeting, the Tunku called up David Marshall, Singapore's first Chief Minister. The support he expected from his Singapore counterpart was not quite forthcoming. Says the Tunku: "When I went into the conference room I found that he had arraigned himself with the officials. So I was worse off than before."

## CHAPTER 8

On December 28 1955, the Tunku boarded a train at Kuala Lumpur for the journey to Prai from whence they would travel to Baling to meet Chin Peng. His travelling companions included David Marshall. "I was disappointed with David Marshall who was supposed to take my side but instead joined the British officials. I said to him on the train, "You needn't have come because you are not on my side". He replied: "Never mind, I will come with you". I answered "But you can't influence me".

It was not a propitious start but the Tunku had made up his mind on how to deal with Chin Peng. Despite reassuring the British that he would not come to any terms with Chin Peng — worse still shake his hand, a firm demand of the British officials in Singapore — the Tunku was determined to take charge of the discussions.

They were met by Sir Tan Cheng Lock and drove to the meeting point in Baling. Press photographers were allowed in for a few minutes and after they had done, the meeting began in earnest, shortly after 2:30 pm. The Tunku arranged for the discussions to be taped. Harry Miller described Chin Peng, who had not been seen for more than eight years as "stout and his face was pasty, the blue white pastiness usually found on terrorists who surrender after living for years in the steaming half light of the Malayan jungle." Chin Peng, who had come under the influence of the communists as a schoolboy of fourteen, rose quickly through the ranks, becoming the second Secretary General of the Communist Party of Malaya in 1947. Together with him at the talks were Rashid Maïdin and Chen Tien. The fourth member of their party, a cook, did not attend the meeting.



The Tunku opened the discussions by inviting Chin Peng to speak his mind. "He was quite sincere in what he had to say — straightforward, honest and forthright. At 5:30 we decided to adjourn for a short interval and at 6:30 we met again. One of Chin Peng's requests was that the communists who accepted the amnesty and gave themselves up to the authorities should not be detained for investigation but should be given complete freedom. At 8:05 we adjourned for the night. I asked Chin Peng whether he was being looked after to his satisfaction and he said he was.

"The next morning at 10:30 we met again. I asked Chin Peng to accept our terms and said we were not prepared to add anything to what we had said the previous day, which was for the shooting to stop and for all the CPM members to come back into society and take part in the politics of the country in accordance with the Constitution.

"David Marshall then said that Chin Peng must surrender and lay down his arms because Malaya would then get its independence. Chin Peng appeared to be provoked and finally blurted out, 'I don't believe that the British will give complete independence to this country. However, I will say here and now that when the Tunku has gone to London and comes back to declare independence we will give up our struggle'. David Marshall asked him to confirm this on a piece of paper and this needed Chin Peng further".

Chin Peng persisted in his demands that the CPM be recognised as a legitimate political party and that none of the surrenderees should be investigated. The Tunku, while assuring him that those who surrendered would be released after preliminary investigations, refused to budge on the matter of recognition.

Chin Peng was then asked why the CPM continued to wage war against the country. He explained that their fight was for the dignity of man, whereas the Tunku and David Marshall continued to stress that the main task before them was to achieve independence and that the CPM's continued guerilla warfare was an impediment. Chin Peng did make one or two concessions and quite surprised the Tunku when he said: "If Tunku obtains control of internal security and national defence then we will stop our hostilities at once." But he made it clear that laying down their weapons did not mean handing them

over to the Government. Again, they were divided.

That finally brought the talks to an end and as the Tunku put it: "There was no point carrying on. I told him I would ensure he could return to the safety of his jungle hideout whenever he was ready to return."

Though the talks did not result in Chin Peng capitulating they did strengthen the hand of the Alliance. It had become patently clear that even the terrorists were prepared to talk, but only to the Tunku's Government and not to the British. "I was encouraged to push ahead with our demand for talks on Malaya's independence. I did however tell the British that Chin Peng must not be killed; but if he gives himself up or was captured, I would give him complete freedom to go anywhere he chooses, except to stay in Malaya".

In December 1989, some 34 years later, in the southern Thailand town of Haadyai, Chin Peng finally accepted a joint Thai-Malayan truce. Whether he returns to Malaysia and runs for public office remains uncertain.

The Tunku's handling of Chin Peng was impressive, prompting some to remark that it had to do with his legendary prowess as a poker player, skills that have been refined over the years.

In the case of the Rulers, before the so-called Merdeka talks in 1956, he faced an equally formidable challenge. Here was a group of men who were genuinely concerned about their future wellbeing once independence had been granted to the country. The experience of their Asian brethren was anything but reassuring. However, the fact that the Tunku was of royal stock and an heir, though very distant, to the throne of Kedah, must have reassured them to some extent of his integrity. In addition they knew he had never broken his word even while choosing to disagree. His commitment to independence, together with his proven ability to carry the Alliance through to an overwhelming victory in the 1955 elections, were tangible manifestations of both the widespread support he clearly enjoyed and his single-minded determination to achieve the goals he had set out notwithstanding any opposition to the contrary.

To emphasise his commitment to the Rulers and reassure them that their respective positions as constitutional Heads of the States would not be altered, the Tunku made clear to them

that, "This is the first time in the history of Malaya that Malays, Chinese, Indians and others have joined together in common loyalty to Malaya and to their Highnesses the Rulers."

It had been arranged that the Alliance should send four representatives to talks and that the Rulers would be similarly represented. Believing that if the eight could meet outside Malaya prior to arriving in London much ground could be achieved, the Tunku suggested that they first travel by sea (on board the S.S. Asia) to Karachi and then fly on to London. The Alliance team led by the Tunku included Datuk Abdul Razak, then Minister for Education, Datuk Dr. Ismail, Minister for National Resources, Col. H.S. Lee Minister for Transport, and Alliance Party Secretary T.H. Tan.

The Rulers' representatives were the Menteri Besars of Perak and Selangor, the Deputy Menteri Besar of Johor, and the former Menteri Besar of Kelantan, Datuk Nik Ahmad Kamil. Datuk Nik Kamil had stood on a Party Negara ticket in the federal elections and had been defeated by an Alliance candidate. He returned to his law practice and was later to become Malaysia's first High Commissioner in London.

The Tunku recalls that by the time they reached Karachi there was hardly any point on which there was disagreement. The Rulers' representatives emphasised that they were concerned about their position and prestige as constitutional sovereigns and their right to have full autonomy and to raise revenue from taxation. They also felt that Malaya should have a constitutional Ruler for the whole Federation, to be chosen from among the Rulers themselves. Thus evolved the idea of a constitutional King. It also served as a safeguard against fears that Malaya might become a Republic.

The Alliance delegation agreed with these and they jointly issued a statement to this effect, adding that a new Federal Constitution should be drafted by luminaries drawn from the Commonwealth. The proposed commission would have to pay special regard to upholding the position of the Rulers and their States and "the safeguarding of the special position of the Malays and of the legitimate interests of other communities." It was a UMNO proposal and initially caused some controversy amongst component members of the Alliance. Nevertheless it was enshrined in the Constitution that was subsequently drawn up. Much later, this position was reinforced in 1972 by the

enactment of the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the Tunku's successor, Tun Razak.

By the time the talks opened in the Music Room of Lancaster House, on January 18 1956, the Rulers and the Alliance spoke in one voice, thus leaving the British with very little to disagree about, let alone postpone independence for much longer. The Tunku's sincerity and total honesty clearly made a very strong impression on the British who agreed that during the transition period before independence, as Chief Minister, the High Commissioner would have to act on his advice and that of the Executive Council on all matters except defence and foreign policy. Malayan Ministers of Internal Security, Defence, Finance, and Commercial and Industry would gradually take over from their British counterparts. The Tunku was also quick to allay British fears about the position of their officers in the civil service, and British investments.

While the Colonial Office wanted a longer transition period the multi-racial character of the Tunku's mandate and his confidence that Malaya could manage its own affairs finally convinced the British to agree on August 31, 1957. Officially their position was that "if possible, Malaya would become an independent country," on that date. The discussions were held in a highly cordial atmosphere, much of which was due to be the Tunku's charm and wit. At one stage he asked for tickets to watch Arsenal play in the FA Cup final.

Later he spoke of the strategy employed in negotiations. "You've got to remember that the British are sportsmen and also have a sense of humour," adding: "with the British, it's no use going to them and saying I demand, I demand, I demand. You say that and you won't get it. In other words, if you point a pistol at their head you will get shot instead". On his 54th birthday, on February 8 1956, at Lancaster House the Merdeka agreement was signed.

The delegation returned home to a tremendous welcome. In Malacca the Tunku was met by thousands, led by Inche Ghafar Baba. All were overwhelmed by emotion. One of his first tasks was to call upon Chin Peng to honour his pledge at Baling and surrender now that security and defence were in the hands of Malaya. He was not exactly surprised by the lack of response.

The package negotiated with the British, while seemingly

reasonable, had however to be sold to the various communities and it fell upon the Tunku and his closest colleagues Datuk Razak, Dr. Ismail and Sir Tan Cheng Lock to persuade the people that the terms were just. The non-Malays wanted citizenship on the terms of *jus soli*, or citizenship by right of birth. This was to become the main issue when representations were made to an independent commission under the chairmanship of Lord Reid, who came to Malaya to seek the views of the people.

While the Tunku assured Malayans that the constitutional commission had the liberty to recommend *jus soli* he was compelled to seek UMNO's support for the proposal. In a broadcast the Tunku stated bluntly: "The Malays are prepared within reason to share their rights with others who owe loyalty to this country. I must however ask non-Malays to be fair and considerate and not to make unreasonable demands. It is well to remember that no natives of any country in the world have given away so much as the Malays have done; no natives have been as friendly to immigrant people as the Malays have been."

After this the *jus soli* issue died down a little but it took a great deal of persuasion from the soothing tongue of the Tunku to win over all the parties. Ultimately, the commission advocated the acceptance of *jus soli*. The institution of Islam as the State religion and the provision of special Malay privileges with regard to land reservations, admission quotas to the public services and the allocation of permits and licences, scholarships, bursaries and other educational aids, were accepted without argument.

In late August 1957, the Duke of Gloucester arrived as the Queen's representative to present the Tunku with the constitutional instrument that made the federation a free and Sovereign State. As the Malayan flag rose above the descending Union Jack thousands of people in the grounds of the Selangor Club Padang screamed "Merdeka, Merdeka, Merdeka!" The Tunku pronounced the birth of a new nation, one in which he had played the principal role. His voice choked with emotion, but still strong and filled with pride, he declared Malaya independent and free. Thousands who filled the 10-acre padang rejoiced as the chimes of the clock heralded a new beginning. The Tunku's colleagues honoured him by declaring him "Bapa Merdeka" or "Father of Independence", and a gold

medallion with the inscription was placed around his neck.

His eyes glistening with tears of joy the Tunku responded: "Today a new page is turned and Malaya steps forward to take her rightful place as a free, independent partner in the great community of nations. Though we fully realise that difficulties and problems lie ahead, we are confident that with the blessing from God these difficulties will be overcome and today's event will be our inspiration and our guide".

Behind him on the dais stood the eight Malay Rulers and the newly elected King from Negri Sembilan, the same Tunku Abdul Rahman who had been his contemporary in their youthful days in London. It was a moment of great joy and a significant milestone down a long and treacherous road to independence and the fulfilment of a quest. **(See Appendixes IV and V)**

## CHAPTER 9

With independence came the burden of taking full responsibility for the wellbeing of the Malayan people, a promise which had been a major plank of the pro-independence platform. While the politicians and a large section of the Malayan community welcomed the opportunity to steer their own course, there were those including Malays, who harboured doubts as to whether the Tunku and his Government had the ability to provide them with a better life. The thrust of his national policy was to be: provide the people food instead of bullets, clothing instead of uniforms, and homes instead of barracks.

While long-term policies were being planned the ever — practical Tunku turned his attention first to existing roads in the country. They were only linked to the larger towns and the better roads had been built explicitly to link the large foreign-owned estates and tin mines. “There was only one road from Kedah to Perlis and in Perlis itself there was one road which led to the two main towns and then to Kuala Perlis. There were only metal roads in Kota Baru but outside of the town limits there were dirt roads utilised by bullock carts. It was the same in Trengganu and Pahang. The east coast states were ignored and neglected because no large British or European business was located there.”

The industrial scene was also equally bleak, with the bulk of the country's commodity exports being shipped to Britain and Europe in return for manufactured goods. In the field of education there was one University, in Singapore, and two colleges for higher studies. For those eager to go abroad to get a better education, failure to obtain admission to the University in Malaya meant going abroad to a select Commonwealth country to ensure that their degrees would be recognised.

When the University of Malaya commenced in Kuala Lumpur, limited subjects were taught and the Malay intake was a mere nine percent. The Tunku noted: "In the Malay schools, the standard of education was very low and the subject matter taught was no higher than primary school standard. Among the text books given out to students in the higher forms were "Hikayat Abdullah" and all that one learned from it was how to be loyal to the British. It was not surprising therefore that the Malays never made the grade in higher education at that time."

By contrast, Chinese schools provided a much better education largely because they were financed by wealthy Chinese businessmen. The Tunku summed up the position of the Malays at the time of independence. "In the economic life of the nation foreigners got all the advantages and privileges with the enterprising Chinese coming second. The Malays had no share in the business life of the country. Their lot was indeed a dismal one because they led a hand-to-mouth existence. For too long they were repeatedly told, and believed, that the Colonial government were their benefactors and so they lived on in ignorance and quiet contentment."

To boost agriculture and directly improve the lot of Malays, the Minister for Agriculture, Encik Aziz Ishak was sent to India to study developments there. On his return a department of Community Development was set up. The project unfortunately proved to be a failure principally because the Indian situation was not applicable to Malaya. In Malaya's case the problem was too much land with few people to work it.

A department of Rural Development under Datuk Abdul Razak was set up. Land was allotted to the poor for the planting of rubber and palm oil and they were funded during the period of initial planting. They were provided housing, schools, financial help and technical assistance while a network of roads to link the farms with neighbouring towns was established. "We decided to phase this rural development over a five year period and as the scheme progressed each milestone was recorded in detail into a red book. When completed it was reproduced in a blue book. It proved a great success".

There was of course the inevitable abuse of government's generosity. They also discovered that large numbers of Chinese who had been moved out to new villages during the



Emergency had successfully grown produce on State land before they were resettled. However they were not given titles to the land that they had nurtured. Tun Razak, as Prime Minister, was later to right this anomaly and provide them with due titles.

To ensure planning and control, a Economic Planning Unit (EPU) was set up in the Prime Minister's office to deal with all matters pertaining to business activities in the country.

All appeared to go well in the years immediately after independence but politically things were astir as the country moved to its first general elections as an independent nation in 1959. In the interim period new political parties had sprung up, notably the Labour Party and the People's Progressive Party, who made capital of the government's decision to detain more than a hundred people who were no more than front men of the CPM, planning to stand for the forthcoming elections.

Inevitably the government, and in particular Datuk Razak, then Defence Minister, were accused of arresting persons who were not a threat to the state but more so to the ruling Alliance. Under the circumstances it was decided that Datuk Razak should chair a special committee to plan an electoral strategy common to the partners in the Alliance and to put together the front's manifesto. To carry the Alliance fight to the ground the Tunku stepped down temporarily as Prime Minister, allowing Datuk Razak to take over.

This sparked off speculation that the Tunku was showing some signs of wanting to retire. There were even hints of a coup within UMNO but this was pure fiction. Nevertheless the move coincided with a fresh crisis that the Alliance faced.

Before that the Government had to put down inter-communal rioting on the island of Pangkor. Rival Malay and Chinese groups, mostly hooligans, chose to clash when a Malay boy who had fallen in love with a Chinese girl decided to marry her. What would ordinarily have passed off as a domestic difference was blown out of proportion and exploited by criminal elements resulting in injuries and damage to property. It took the arrival of Datuk Razak and two hundred extra policemen from the Federal Riot Squad to quell the rioting.

Then came the MCA crisis. A challenge to the leadership of the MCA was mounted by a faction aligned to Dr. Lim Chong Eu. He ousted Sir Tan Cheng Lock and introduced a new policy

aimed at acquiring more rights for the Chinese, including making Chinese one of the official languages of the country.

The Tunku recalls. "Dr Lim sent me an ultimatum in which he set out the new MCA demands. The letter was also published in the press and I had no choice but to reject his ultimatum and call for an extraordinary general meeting of UMNO on July 12." Within the MCA, (the late Tun) Tan Siew Sin was proposed as the party's new leader and the old guard in MCA including Tun Omar Ong Yoke Lin, and Tan Sri T.H. Tan endorsed his nomination. It was obvious that Dr. Lim and his group had misread the mood and over estimated their strength in the party.

In the 1959 state elections, which preceded Federal elections, the Alliance won 207 of the 282 seats contested but secured only a little more than 55% of the total votes cast. It was clear that it would have won fewer seats had the opposition parties presented a united front.

Much worse was the result in Kelantan where the Alliance won only two of the 30 seats and thus lost control of the State Government. Haughty local party officials who had lost touch with reality were to blame. The same applied to Trengganu where the Alliance won seven seats against 13 for the PMIP and four for the Party Negara. Inroads were also made by the People's Progressive Party and the Socialist Front in other States.

Datuk Razak turned to the Tunku to revive national interest in the Alliance at the critical parliamentary elections that followed. The Tunku pleaded for moderation and repeatedly reminded the Malays they had a sense of responsibility to their MCA and MIC candidates because it was this tripartite understanding that had enabled the country to obtain its independence.

UMNO hard liners meanwhile pushed for a greater role for Malay candidates in the general elections. When the line up for 104 constituencies to be contested was announced 74 went to the Malays, 28 to the MCA and two to the MIC. The MCA, still temporarily under the control of Dr. Lim, flatly refused to accept the allocation, insisting that the Chinese should be given 35% of the seats to correctly reflect the number of registered voters. UMNO struck back and the Tunku informed Dr. Lim that the MCA was no longer a partner in the coalition

but that it would however accept individual members of the MCA (who supported Tan Siew Sin) to join them and the MIC. Dr. Lim resigned, as did other leaders of the abortive revolt. (Later Dr. Lim set up the Gerakan Rakyat party.)

As a gesture of goodwill, UMNO gave up five of its seats, three to the MCA and two to the MIC. When the results were tallied the Alliance had won 74 of the 103 contested and one uncontested seat. PMIP on the other hand won nine of the ten seats in Kelantan and in Tregganu took four of the six seats, with another going to Datuk Onn, whose electoral campaign was effectively run by the PMIP. The opposition Party Rakyat, headed by Ahmad Boestamam, who had been released after seven years imprisonment for subversive activities, won two seats, not with Malay support but in areas where Chinese and Indian voters were predominant.

The Perak Progressive Party, formed by the brothers Seenivasagam, and which later changed its name to the PPP, took four seats. The Socialist Front won eight seats and the Malayan Party, one.

The Tunku recalls the great celebrations to mark the Alliance's triumph. "Especially important was Tan Siew Sin's speech, in which he noted the support given to the Alliance by the Malays. In his belief the Alliance would continue to control the destiny of the country of the people for the next one hundred years at least." The Tunku assumed the Prime Ministership again with Datuk Razak as his deputy, and Minister responsible for both Defence and Internal Security.

The Tunku describes the year following their electoral success. "Everything seemed to go well for the nation. So well that I, as leader of party and government, had a foreboding that something might go wrong because the year was much too good to be true." The Tunku's task was made easier by the tireless efforts of his cabinet colleagues who used his strong personal rapport with the populace to push forward critical development plans.

Datuk Razak, who later took over the National and Rural Development Portfolio, ran it along the lines of a military operation. At State and District levels there were operation rooms and in each of these planning centres the progress made was charted to ensure that the objectives were achieved. The various schemes attempted were anything but a national secret.

The approach adopted was intended to open it to constructive criticism to ensure that obstacles to the successful completion of a particular sector would be overcome.

Datuk Razak, the beaver in the Cabinet, was a no-nonsense man who considered wastage of time a cardinal sin. Whenever delays were encountered he would roll out his favourite Chinese proverb, the one which says that it is impossible to buy an inch of time with an inch of gold. His attitude is summed up by a statement he repeated often: "In the five years allocated to each plan there are 1,825 days, but if you deduct all non-working days such as Sundays, half Saturdays, public and religious holidays and all those days given up to leave, sickness, bad weather, flooding, breakdowns and other causes then a five year plan has got to be achieved in 1,000 full working days".

The Tunku could not have had a better work horse to implement the second five year plan which began in 1961. It was highly ambitious and envisaged the expenditure of more than M\$2 billion, more than twice that of the first plan. By 1965 when the plan ended, 62 land schemes each covering roughly 4,000 acres, most of it recovered from the jungle, were in operation for the resettlement of farmers.

## CHAPTER 10

Such was Malaya's visible progress that by late 1961 the Borneo States of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore were keen on a suggestion by the Tunku that they should merge with the Malayan Federation. The British declared support for the formation of Malaysia but suggested that an official decision be deferred until the views of people living in the countries were ascertained.

It has been suggested that the Tunku's Malaysia plan was motivated in part by two developments: firstly the end of the Emergency in 1960, and because he was sceptical of Indonesia and the Philippines, who were known to have territorial ambitions over Borneo. In the case of Singapore the Island was plagued with left-wing labour unrest with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew barely able to stave off a strong challenge by communist leaders who previously had joined him in seeking self-government. The opposition in Singapore was made up of a dangerous mix of professional agitators and political adventurers of various persuasions. Under the circumstances it was not entirely unexpected that Lee Kuan Yew reacted with alacrity to the Malaysia proposal. The Tunku on his part stressed the economic advantages that would accrue from such a merger.

Mr. Lee's opponents in Parliament and some colleagues broke with him over the issue and for a while Mr. Lee found himself with a bare working majority. Though shaken he redoubled his efforts in the battle for merger that would automatically give Singapore its independence. It also enabled him to effectively crush his opponents.

Another early respondent to the Malaysia proposal was the Sultan of Brunei, Sir Omar Saifuddin, who flew to Kuala Lumpur to assure the Tunku that Brunei would be the first to join. This was not to be.

In 1962 the British and Malayan Governments agreed to appoint a commission headed by Lord Cobold to investigate the wishes of the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak and prepare the constitution of Malaysia. Singapore meanwhile had a referendum and the majority affirmed their desire to join the new federation. Following the Cobold commission report a delegation of representatives from the States of Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei met with the British Government's representative, Lord Landowne, then Minister for Colonies. In Brunei however the Party Rakyat led by Azahari opposed Brunei's entry and made a counter proposal for a separate state of Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah. The rebellion was put down after eight days by the Gurkhas and Malayan Police Force personnel.

President Sukarno of Malaysia voiced his disapproval of Malaysia and declared that he would crush it. President Macapagal of the Philippines then staked his claim to Sabah. The Foreign Ministers of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines met to discuss the opposition to the Malaysian Federation. Following a meeting in Manila on June 7 1963, the Foreign Ministers decided to invite the Secretary General of the United Nations to confirm yet again the wishes of the peoples of the various states though the majority had earlier affirmed their desire to join the proposed Malaysian Federation.

At a initial meeting of the leaders, President Macapagal eulogised on the brotherhood of Maphilindo — the proposed tri-partite union of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, but was evasive when asked what his specific objections to Malaysia were.

The Tunku recalls: "When he finished Sukarno refused to say anything, so there was no need for me to talk either. The ominous signs of tension were blatantly obvious, so we decided not to provoke each other and remained silent."

Two weeks before Malaysia came into being on August 31 1963, the United Nations delegation visited Borneo. No sooner had they published a report announcing unanimous support for Malaysia than President Sukarno declared Indonesia's Confrontation of the new Federation. President Sukarno's opposition was not entirely un-expected, says the Tunku. "In 1956, when I was Chief Minister I visited him and tried to win his friendship, "I told him of our problems and that we looked

to Indonesia for guidance and help". Sukarno listened politely but volunteered little of any substance.

"When the concept of Malaysia began to take place I noticed Sukarno's utterances had lost a lot of balance. Formerly a charmer now he had become boastful and very arrogant."

The Tunku summed up the situation. "It was clear to me that both Indonesia and the Philippines made their frivolous claim purely to divide Malaya and the Borneo States between themselves. Sukarno wanted Malaya, and the Philippines the Borneo States, thinking that Malaya was not strong enough to resist their claim. We anticipated this move because Sukarno had been voicing his claim long before Malaya received its independence. He had established a fifth column in Kuala Lumpur and among them Malay leaders who were promised top posts when Malaysia fell to Sukarno. These included Party Rakyat and PMIP officials, and one UMNO Cabinet Minister, who resigned from government."

The Tunku says Sukarno became obsessed with his self-importance and began to display the same traits as Hitler and Mussolini. Sukarno's grandiose plans were based on his belief that since the Indonesians and the Malays originated from the same stock they should then form a larger cohesive group. Similarly, Macapagal also felt that since Filipinos once controlled the Sulu area, Sabah thus belonged to the Philippines.

The Indonesians infiltrated their forces into mainland Malaya, notably on the South West Coast, and also through the borders between Sabah and Sarawak and East Kalimantan. Many of their soldiers who lost their way were taken prisoners. They had been told by their commanders that as soon as they arrived in Malaya they would be joined by throngs of locals who were bent on overthrowing the Government. The Indonesians deployed various strategies to justify their confrontation of Malaysia. Their task was made a little easier by internal squabbings which they capitalised upon.

There was disagreement between Britain and Indonesia and the Philippines over the number of Asian observers who should be included in a UN Commission to reconfirm that the Lansdowne commission was correct in interpreting the views of the peoples of Borneo States. Ultimately Sukarno used this as an opportunity to reject the UN team's findings.

In Singapore the Government reacted sharply to suggestions that Malaysia was to be a Malay Federation or that the Island could enter into a new confederation of Malay nations to be called Malphilindo. Lee Kuan Yew's response was that if the original concept was changed in any way or the proposal postponed Singapore would go ahead and declare itself an independent state on August 31, 1963. Britain and Malaya were alarmed by this unilateral declaration but it was clear to observers that there were sufficient British troops on the Island to prevent such a move in the event Mr Lee decided to carry out the threat.

The Tunku, un-perturbed by Indonesia's threats, went ahead with the formation of Malaysia. The confrontation continued into 1964 despite several rounds of talks and when matters reached a head in March 1964, Datuk Razak, as Minister for Defence, announced that in the event of more widespread attacks all those between the ages of 21 and 28 would be liable to be called up for national service. This did not augur well for the somewhat fragile relations between the Malays and Chinese, and to a lesser extent the Indians.

In June 1965 the Tunku met again with Sukarno in Tokyo, but only after he was persuaded that the latter was going to be sincere. Again Sukarno proved difficult.

"Soon after we started, Sukarno said he had an appointment and would return after attending to it. After three hours we were still waiting. He finally showed up, after attending a party. After forty-five minutes the talks broke up. We got no-where even though Macapagal seemed genuinely keen on trying to find a solution."

His suggestion was to set up a Afro-Asian Conciliatory Commission. The Tunku rejected this. Malaysia was prepared for the worst from its once-friendly neighbours. But fate intervened within months.

In May 1965 diplomatic relations between Kuala Lumpur and Manila were restored. A month later Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, held a final round of talks with the Malaysians. He was told bluntly, "There are two ways open to us; peace or war, you can't have it both ways". But Dr Subandrio's position, which remained unaltered throughout, was that Indonesia would not be the aggressor as from their point of view no such state as Malaysia existed.



Within weeks came the failed coup in Indonesia, led by the communists. It led to Sukarno's downfall, and the imprisonment of Dr. Subandrio. Soon thereafter, newly elected President Suharto's new Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, met with Datuk Razak in Bangkok. Indonesia thereafter formally recognised the existence of Malaysia.

New problems then emerged within Malaysia, especially between Singapore and the Federal Government in Kuala Lumpur. The problem with Singapore stemmed from real fears that the Chinese-dominated Government of Singapore may one day replace the Malayan Chinese Association as the representative of Chinese throughout Malaysia, and concern that Mr. Lee had set his sights on becoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Conversely, Singapore took the view that the MCA was undermining the PAP's support by wooing Singapore's Chinese community.

The first differences emerged as early as late 1963, months after the Federation was born. In the 1963 Singapore elections, the PAP faced a challenge by the Singapore People's Alliance which received overt support from Kuala Lumpur. The PAP nevertheless trounced the opposition, winning 37 out of 51 seats. Under the terms of the merger it gave Singapore the right to nominate 12 members to represent Singapore in the Malaysian Federal Parliament.

The PAP decided to test its strength in several Chinese majority areas during the 1964 Malaysian Federal elections, pitching itself to the electorate as being multi-racial and calling for a Malaysian Malaysia — a statement which the Malays viewed as a direct challenge to their special position enshrined in the constitution. The PAP however made it clear that it supported the Alliance under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, a move which was seen as an attempt to drive a wedge into the existing UMNO-MCA-MIC Alliance.

While the Tunku was restrained in his response, Datuk Razak, and more so, Syed Jaafar Albar, Secretary-General of UMNO, appeared bent on taking on Mr. Lee at every given opportunity. They called on the Malays to vote against the PAP and pointedly warned the Chinese that to support chauvinistic policies could only lead to serious trouble in the future.

The Malay leaders and their followers were understandably offended by contemptuous remarks suggesting that some of

the UMNO leaders were "feudalistic, not of the right calibre and naive." The Tunku literally had to bite his tongue on numerous occasions. He was understandably irked by the failure of the Alliance Party in Singapore to win seats even in predominantly Malay areas. He was particularly disappointed since the Alliance had in 1961 help save the PAP from being ousted by a group of hardcore Marxists. Privately the Tunku held the view that Singapore would not remain in Malaysia for long and suspected that the increasingly strident verbal exchanges would hasten its departure.

## CHAPTER 11

As it turned out the PAP won a single seat in the 1964 Malaysian elections — high cost indeed for its hasty attempt to establish a Malaysian-wide base. The candidate elected was C.V. Devan Nair, later President of Singapore until he was forced to resign.

The formation of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC, comprising non-Malay opposition political parties) exacerbated an already tense situation. In Parliament the PAP demanded better terms in respect of its financial contribution and taxation, among others. The emotional exchanges between Mr. Lee and his colleagues and Cabinet Ministers did not help matters.

In July 1964 racial riots broke out in Singapore. The British Government tried to persuade the Tunku, who was on a visit to London, to form a coalition with the PAP. Any chances of the Tunku and his Cabinet even considering such a proposition were tossed out of the window when Mr. Lee made a contentious claim. "None of the three races in Malaysia could claim to be more native than the others because all their ancestors came to Malaysia not more than a thousand years ago." With Malay leaders clamouring for Mr. Lee's detention the Tunku was faced with a dilemma. To him it became clear "that the Malays and Chinese were dangerously polarising towards extremes.

"For the sake of peace and equanimity within Malaysia I made a new proposal. My object was to arrive at a new arrangement that would maintain a stable equilibrium with Singapore. My idea was that Singapore should handle her own domestic financial, economic and social affairs, but the Central Government would retain the ultimate levers of power namely, Defence, Internal Security and Foreign Affairs.

“In this way, I envisaged that Singapore would continue, when the new plan was working, to enjoy the benefits of a Malaysian common market, and in return for these benefits Singapore’s political parties would refrain from taking part in activities outside their own State.

On March 2, 1965 the Tunku sent a letter to Mr. Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, who voiced increasing concern about what was happening in Malaysia. “What I have in view is that there should be a rearrangement of State and Federal powers between Singapore and the Central Government without affecting the status of Singapore as a member-State of Malaysia.

“We have come to this conclusion after one-and-a-half years of experience of working together. It would not change in any way Singapore’s relations with the Central Government. On the other hand it will give Singapore greater autonomy with which to administer the State, having in mind the peculiar situation obtaining in that State. The changes, if any, will be worked out in easy stages, without giving any indication that there is any conflict of interest between the State and Central Government.

“I am convinced — so is the Prime Minister of Singapore — that this reshuffling of State and Federal powers will bring about better relationships between the State and Central Governments.”

The Tunku explained the rationale behind the proposal. “Once again we had set out to achieve peace through negotiations. In this way we had united and brought Malaya into being bloodlessly. We were endeavouring to limit our current conflict of interest with Indonesia to talks around a table, not a “war” on land, sea or air. The first effort had succeeded; our second with Indonesia, seeming at times to be coming our way, was still undecided.

“Surely therefore, if Singapore really meant what it had preached for years past, that independence for Singapore was impossible without Malaysia, then our differing ideas of who should exercise control, when and how, could be smoothly ironed out. Well, optimists can hope, pessimists pull long faces of warning, but in the end who decides? Malaysia, I believed, would survive. Would I be right or wrong?”

This new initiative failed to get off the drawing board. Politicians from both sides continued to engage in bristling polemics. Finally, his patience nearly spent, the Tunku consulted with four of his senior Ministers and came to the decision that Singapore should be asked to withdraw from the Federation. He deliberately kept his decision a secret from London, and other allies including the Australians. He did this for fear that they might attempt to prevent him from evicting Singapore.

The Tunku later explained, "I had to keep it secret and consultation was confined to the minimum number of people. I did not want the British to get wind of what I was about to do. If they had known they would have done their worse to frustrate my plan. The British were in a strong position to exert pressure on us as our defence at that stage was still dependent on Great Britain. I decided to confront the British with a fait accompli".

In his formal statement, the Tunku said: "For some time there have been great differences between the Central Government leaders and the leaders of the Singapore Government and these differences take so many forms and are of so many kinds that it has not been possible to resolve them in any other way but for the new state to part company. The states that make up Malaysia have all shown support for the Central Government without which it could not be possible for a federation like ours to function. But we found that Singapore would not give it that support. So rather than force a show down of Singapore I am convinced that amicable settlement this way is the best. So we now separate on terms of friendship, Singapore under a proclamation will be an independent and sovereign state and we will sponsor her admission to the United Nations."

Dr. Toh Chin Chye, then deputy Prime Minister, was among the first in Singapore to be appraised of what the Tunku planned. But it did not lessen the shock which followed. On the morning of August 9th, the Tunku made the sombre declaration. He spoke of Singapore being "a State Government that had ceased to give even a measure of loyalty to the Central Government". He later feigned weakness, claiming that, "If I was strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might have delayed the action, but I am not".

This led to some speculation that the Tunku was under pressure by his colleagues in UMNO and that his position had been challenged. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact it was a ploy which many including some Singapore leaders fell for. Later he was to reveal that the decision to send Singapore packing was made months earlier, while lying in a hospital bed in London. "I summed up the situation and it seemed only a matter of time before Singapore would have to go. I decided to let it run its full course before announcing my decision."

Inevitably the separation caused some problems for both countries, and for Singapore it was especially traumatic. Singapore was left to fend for itself but the sense of desperation and a determination to succeed drove its leaders and people to create a new culture of self-reliance which has seen it evolve into the most prosperous and vibrant economy in the region. Whether it would have done less well if it had stayed in Malaysia is a matter of conjecture.

In 1989, during a meeting with Mr. Lee, the Tunku acknowledged the vast progress that Singapore has made under Mr. Lee's leadership. However in private interviews he has been more critical of Mr. Lee. He says Mr. Lee "bugged me day and night when he wanted in. But once in, he was not content. He wanted his cake and to eat it. Singapore has prospered and I am happy but that doesn't change my opinion of him".

Sensing the need for greater regional co-operation and seizing the opportunity as peace returned to South East Asia, the Tunku quietly weighed up the possibility of an informal union of countries in the region. This was to be inspiration for the creation of the Association of South East Asian Nations or ASEAN. The organisation was preceded by two earlier initiatives.

The first was the formation of the Association of South East Asia (ASA), established in July 1961, and inspired largely by the historic Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries in 1955. ASA covered Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand but from the beginning it was handicapped by its limited membership. In the face of accusations that it was pro-West, ASA kept a low political profile but this did not prevent a steady deterioration of relations between members after 1963. Indonesia supported

a Filipino proposal for a "Greater Malay Confederation" to embrace Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia, and by implication, exclude Thailand. (Singapore was then part of Malaysia). The concept was still-born as its appeal was not only limited but could have alienated non-Muslim nationals in those countries.

That conciliatory and tireless worker for peace, Thailand's Thanat Khoman, was the prime mover of a "larger-than-ASA" grouping. By advancing it in the midst of the 1966 peace discussions between Malaysia and Indonesia the concept had considerable merit and appeal. Thanat first formally proposed the idea to the Tunku in May 1967 but had sounded out Adam Malik shortly before. It later transpired that Thanat and Malik had in mind a larger grouping to include India, Burma and Cambodia.

The Tunku met with Thanat and Malik informally at Bangkok Airport on May 23, 1967. The Tunku was en route to Tokyo and Adam Malik had completed a round trip to Phnom Penh, Rangoon and Manila.

By the time he reached Tokyo the Tunku had made up his mind. The future of ASA was to be re-considered, he declared, probably bearing in mind Malik's remark that "there is no place in ASA or ASPAC (the Asia and Pacific Area Council) for Indonesia."

"I feel there is no room for two organisations," the Tunku told Foreign Minister Miki, referring to ASA and ASPAC, which the Japanese were obviously keen on supporting.

A flurry of activity followed with three separate meetings of ASA in a week. Privately the governments conferred and assessed a working paper that Thanat had earlier circulated. It was called a "Draft Joint Declaration" proposing the establishment of a "South East Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SEAARC)". (This later formed the basis of the ASEAN declaration and the final agreement also drew heavily on the concept.)

In their deliberations the leaders of Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore sensed that a vital opportunity which could result in lasting peace was at hand. The price to be paid was acceptance of Indonesia's unique role as a first among equals. Given that it was in dire need of assistance (from the West) for economic reconstruction, its international image was

of the utmost importance. Thus an opportunity to assist in bolstering Indonesia's credibility presented itself. Clearly, in doing so Indonesia's neighbours could count on nothing less than total cooperation from the Republic. Never was the timing and circumstances to secure regional peace better. Indonesia on its part graciously accept the tacit leadership role it was offered.

On August 8 1967 the five Foreign Ministers, meeting in Bangkok, agreed to establish a new regional organisation — known tentatively as the Association of South East Asian Nations. ASA was to be "kept alive" until meetings in Kuala Lumpur on August 29 and that of a standing committee in Jakarta. A number of issues were discussed, including the choice of the name. The Philippines objected to "SEAARC" on the grounds that it sounded "too much like a shark!". Thus ASEAN was born.



## CHAPTER 12

Armed with a fresh mandate from the electorate after the 1964 elections, UMNO decided to address more urgently the needs of the Malays and to this end a programme was initiated to ensure that they would not be left out of the mainstream development that was taking place in the country. In 1965 the first Bumiputra Economic Congress was held to identify ways and means of increasing Malay participation in the economic life of the country.

Among an elite group of young professional Malays who advised Datuk Razak on socio-political issues was Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who had returned to Kelantan following the death of his father, the Menteri Besar of the State. A protege of the Tunku and later a confidante of Datuk Razak, Tengku Razaleigh quickly made his mark on the Malaysian scene. He had declined to contest the Rantau Panjang by-election in 1962, and despite further persuasion by Datuk Razak again refused to take up the offer of a safe Federal constituency.

Tengku Razaleigh was then offered the chairmanship of Bank Bumiputra — set up as a direct consequence of proposals made at the Malay Congress. He had earlier been sent to London to study operations in the city. Again he declined in favour of another outstanding Malay economist, the late Enchik Mohamed Raslan, who was tragically killed in a car accident some years later. Tengku Razaleigh accepted the position of Executive Director but on Enchik Raslan's death took over as chairman.

Bank Bumiputra's role was primarily to complement and finance other quasi-government bodies established to assist the Malays. MARA, which began in 1954 as a coir and ropemaking centre was progressively expanded into a full scale institution for business and professional studies in 1965.

Other important agencies set up included Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), and FAMA, the Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority. These fledgling organisations, which were closely supervised by the Tunku and Datuk Razak, were however unable to wholly fulfill the expectations of sections of the Malay community. Their frustration, compounded by the provocations of a group of militant Chinese chauvinists, would later explode into racial violence.

On the part of the long-deprived Malays it was very much a case of wanting to achieve too much too quickly, without being adequately equipped to do so. The latter limitation was never addressed squarely initially.

The Second Malaysia Plan recognised this. It said: "Despite the significant progress made in improving the economic well being of the have-nots, the problem of economic imbalance remains. Although there were some improvements (out of agriculture) the gap between the traditional sector and the modern sector continued to exist. They arose from differing opportunities for education, employment and ownership or access to entrepreneurial resources." As a consequence many Malays were concentrated in low income objectives.

There were glaring examples and pertinent statistics which clearly emphasised the existing disparity. The bulk of development in the country was taking place in the urban areas where the Chinese were concentrated. The quality of life, amenities and economic opportunities appeared to be better in the urban areas thus allowing the economic imbalance to be further interpreted in racial terms. The Malays in the late 60s owned barely 1% of the share capital of the companies registered in the country while the Chinese share stood at around 23%.

In 1967 a row broke out over the wider usage of the Malay language. Even though the Alliance ultimately came out to reaffirm its agreement on Malay being the sole national language, and despite the Tunku's best efforts to encourage greater use of Malay among all Malaysians, ultras in the party kept accusing him of giving in too much to the Chinese.

There were other problems, too, notably in Borneo. The Sarawak crisis arose from attempts to oust the Chief Minister Datu Stephen Kalong Ningkan leader of the predominantly

Dayak Sarawak National Party (SNAP). This followed allegations of the existence of a financially important minority of Chinese who the Chief Minister was accused of favouring at the expense of his own people. Among his challengers was Taib Mahmud (now Tan Sri Datuk Patingi, Chief Minister of Sarawak). The first round went to Ningkan, whose advisers were expatriates. In late 1966 more than half the members of the Sarawak State Assembly signed a letter to the Governor declaring their lack of confidence in him as Chief Minister. Ningkan declined to resign and was later dismissed, but not before he made stinging attacks on Federal leaders. Of the Tunku he complained: "I know the Tunku feels disappointed with me ..... he did not succeed in making me a stooge, in making Sarawak a Colony."

Ningkan went to court and the High Court annulled his dismissal. Reinstated, the Chief Minister once again faced a vote of no confidence. Datuk Razak on the advice of the Tunku moved a Bill to amend the Constitution so that the Governor of Sarawak could allow a motion of no confidence against the Chief Minister. In the event he lacked the Assembly's confidence he was to be dismissed. A State of Emergency was also declared in Sarawak. Ningkan was duly voted out of office in September. The upshot of it all was anger expressed by Dayaks who argued that their interests were being subordinated to those of the Malays — something their erstwhile champion had all but ignored while in office. Meanwhile things were brewing also in Sabah.

## CHAPTER 13

The problems that beset the Alliance exploded unexpectedly in 1969, making it a watershed year in Malaysian political history and a turning point in the political career of the Tunku. In May that year, May the 13th precisely, the country was temporarily thrown into anarchy following violent racial clashes between the Malays and the Chinese.

It was largely the work of the Communists who, frustrated by their inability to overcome the Malaysian Security Forces hunting them down in their jungle hideouts decided to resort to urban warfare and exploit divisions within the ruling Alliance as well as latent racial animosities.

Sadly, as it later transpired, the Communists were able to manipulate sections of two ostensibly socialist parties, the Labour Front and the Gerakan. The Democratic Action Party (originally an offshoot of the People's Action Party which officially withdrew from the Malaysian political scene after separation) later became embroiled, as did the secret societies. This tragic episode claimed hundreds of innocent victims and also temporarily checked the progress made along the thorny path towards genuinely harmonious relationships between the main communities in Malaysia.

What the rioting did was to tear through the tenuous and fragile facade of tolerance that had been painstakingly woven for more than a decade — but which clearly was not strong enough to withstand exploitation by nefarious elements.

The first hint, the shadows that presaged the events of '69, came in June 1968, when 11 members of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) were sentenced to death for aiding former Indonesia President Sukarno's soldiers to invade Malaysia. They were to be executed on October 13. Execution orders had also been signed against two Malay traitors in Perak.

Despite appeals by the opposition Labour Party the Sultans of Johor and Perak refused to commute the death sentences. Demonstrations at Pudu Prison were mounted by Communist sympathisers, and fearing racial unrest the Tunku made a personal appeal to their Highnesses, who then agreed to commute the death sentences to life imprisonment.

Though tension eased, the Tunku feared that the communists had proved a dangerous point; they had successfully aroused Chinese sentiments. By contrast few Malays had vocally sought clemency on behalf of the two in Taiping Prison.

Soon after the Labour Party decided that it would boycott the general elections due in 1969, and its MP Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, crossed over to become Secretary-General of the new Gerakan party. The Gerakan, made up of MCA dissidents and a handful of purported Chinese intellectuals, enjoyed substantial support within the community but little did their leaders, or for that matter, those of the Labour Party, realise that they were being ruthlessly exploited by the CPM.

The Tunku was sensitive to the shifting political winds blowing across the country but he had been assured by security advisers that the situation was "well under control". Did they too misread the situation? He was thus confident that within the framework of the democratic process he had stamped on the country, there would be sufficient room for disagreement of a non-violent character. This was not to be the case even as Malaysians celebrated three days of festivities during a rare conjunction of Hari Raya and Christmas in December 1968. Sadly, the coming months revealed how vulnerable the communal bonds were, in the face of contrived professional agitation and Communist-inspired scare tactics.

On nomination day, April 5, 1969, the opposition was led by the PMIP, who in addition to controlling Kelantan State had nine MPs in Parliament. The recently-formed Gerakan, led by Dr. Lim Chong Eu, V. David and Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, were expected to give the MCA incumbents they sought to unseat a run for their money. Allied with them were the Democratic Action Party (DAP) led by Goh Hock Guan and Lim Kit Siang. The People's Progressive Party (PPP), with Dato S. P. Seenivasagam as President, and the recently formed United Malay Chinese Organisation, were among the other opponents of the Alliance.

The seven-week campaign got off to a fiery start with a police constable's motor scooter being burnt and mobile police vehicles in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur being stoned. The police also discovered 55 Communists flags in Perak where Labour Party youths had earlier held a lightning demonstration in Kuala Lumpur. The Tunku recalls: "From the very beginning of the campaign, the PMIP played up racial and religious sentiments to win the support of the Malays. On the other hand, also in full swing, the DAP, the Gerakan and the PPP stirred up Chinese emotions and sentiments, declaring that they intended to deprive the Malays of the rights provided in the Constitution."

The Tunku contends that the campaigns of the Chinese parties were to a large extent managed by the Communists, who realising that friction between the major races still existed, decided to exploit these differences to topple the Alliance. What surprised the Tunku more was a later-day discovery that the PMIP received financial backing from left-wing groups, a paradoxical development which he describes as "the cruellest of hoaxes for the PMIP leaders to play on their own people." (The PMIP was originally an offshoot of UMNO, serving as its religious wing. It however split from the parent when it decided to politicise its activities).

The PMIP campaign was virulent to say the least, and among the low blows were a picture of the Tunku at a Chinese dinner using a pair of chopsticks. Superimposed on the photograph was a suckling pig in the centre of the table. They attacked him as being an un-devout Muslim, ignoring the fact that he had made his pilgrimage to Mecca. He never made a secret of attending the races and imbibing at dinners and those who knew him well remember him as a staunch Muslim and the first leader to attempt to try and create a Commonwealth of Islamic countries.

Another target of the PMIP's scurrilous attacks was (Tan Sri) Khir Johari. On a previous Chinese New Year he and his wife, Che Tom, donned Mandarin dress in a greeting card to their friends. This joke was crudely twisted by the PMIP who distributed thousands of copies of the photographs suggesting otherwise.

Stung by the jibes, several UMNO leaders chose to retaliate. Dr Mahathir Mohamad, already a champion of Malay rights, and singled out for greater things, hit back. He reportedly told

the Chinese in his Kedah Parliamentary constituency that he would win even if they did not support him. The Tunku took exception to such statements but in the heat of the campaign there was little time to reprimand errant UMNO candidates.

Another irony of the 1969 campaign was while the PMIP was carrying out its attacks on the Alliance, Malaysia was hosting a historic Islamic conference. Having led the way in Koran competitions which began in 1960, Malaysia was at the forefront of efforts to create a community of Islamic countries. The 1969 conference was attended by twenty-three other Muslim countries.

The first of a series of violent and provocative incidents occurred on April 24th when a Malay worker was killed by a mob and then smeared with red paint. The same red paint had been used to deface walls all over the country, calling on the electorate to boycott the elections. On May 4th when two young men were apprehended while painting signs in Kuala Lumpur, they set upon the police, attacking them with iron spikes and rods. The constables were forced to open fire in self-defence. One youth, Lim Soon Seng, 24, was killed. This was the opportunity the Communists were waiting for. They exploited it to the hilt.

The police received an application to hold a funeral procession for Lim on May 10th but turned it down because they were suspicious of the motives. They finally agreed to the funeral procession taking place on May 9th on the express condition that the procession would follow a certain route and be limited to a small number of mourners. As it turned out the funeral became one of the largest ever seen in Kuala Lumpur.

Subsequent police statements which the Tunku received clearly indicated that the arrangements for the funeral procession were taken over by non-family members including representatives of the Labour Party and the University of Malaya Students' Union. The terms agreed to limited the procession to a maximum of one thousand persons along a designated route. From the word go, the so-called funeral procession turned into a political melee.

Pictures of Mao Tse Tung were displayed and within an hour the unruly mobs began to provoke and bait police officers who quickly lost control of the procession and the route they followed. So well was the procession organised that at certain

points in the city they were joined by fresh organised groups, and on one occasion by five hundred waiting motorcycles. What was to be a short procession in fact lasted from 10 am to almost 6 pm with more than ten thousand involved.

Subsequently questions were raised as to why the police did not disperse the procession much earlier. The Tunku concurs with the explanation one of the officers who said: "Thousands would have been killed if we had not exercised tolerance and patience. I have no doubt about that. It was clear that the object of the exercise was to provoke the police into retaliating and thereby give the Communists an excuse to launch counter attacks on Malays in the country."

While the police standoff saved the day it was only a temporary respite, though no one could have foreseen the violence of the ensuing days. General election day, May 10th, was bright and sunny and the Tunku, like all the other leaders, returned to his constituency. While making his rounds of the polling booths in Pulau Langkawi he was surprised to discover that some PMIP supporters were actually voting for Chinese candidates. The Alliance also faced an unknown factor in the 1969 polls. There were a large number of young voters whose loyalties were in doubt.

After the polling booths closed at 8 pm the Tunku returned to his home and was soon glued to the radio, tabulating the returns. The early urban results indicated that the Alliance would lose its control over Penang. In Selangor the DAP was chalking up a number of surprise victories. The final tally was a grim picture for the Alliance, which despite retaining control of all the States, with the exception of Kelantan, saw its popular support eroded severely. Two Cabinet Ministers, Datuk Senu Abdul Rahman and Dr. Lim Swee Aun lost their seats as did some incumbent UMNO candidates including Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and Mohammed Zahir.

The Tunku's 11,000 majority was cut down to just over 3,000. At the Federal level, the Alliance won 76 seats while 37 were captured by the seven opposition parties. The DAP won 13, the PMIP 12, Gerakan 8, and PPP 4. The Alliance majority was reduced by 13. The Tunku's first reaction was that "the unholy Alliance of DAP, PPP, Gerakan and PMIP had brought to the non-Malay parties a strength they had not enjoyed before. The loss of UMNO seats in Perak, Selangor and Kedah



did not benefit the Malays or the PMIP.”

The only comfort for UMNO was the two additional State seats it won in Kelantan. One of them went to Tengku Razaleigh who romped home in Ulu Kelantan Barat and later became Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly. The first breakthrough in Kelantan had been achieved but it paled in the face of the overall results. To the Malays and the country in general it was a severe setback. They failed to remember what the Tunku had said much earlier: “Only the Malays would be the undoing of their own people.”

On the morning of May 12, Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, who won his seat in Batu sought permission to hold a victory procession by members of the Gerakan Party. A permit was granted on condition that the procession followed a route authorised by the police. As in the case of the slain youth, and despite Dr. Tan’s assurances, the procession quickly degenerated into rowdy hooliganism, in defiance of police instructions. DAP supporters joined the procession, thus igniting the smouldering powder keg.

The trouble erupted when the jubilant supporters began flaunting their victory in the face of the Malays. Worse still, as they passed through Malay communities such as Kampong Baru, mobs started shouting “Melayu mati” (Death to Malays). They also exposed themselves to womenfolk and accused the Malays of being stupid. They further goaded them over the losses that several UMNO candidates had suffered.

While the official procession broke up at 8 pm, other groups, ostensibly celebrating the DAP’s victories, started roaming through the town. Many of them were drunk. Tension was running high by the time the Tunku returned to Kuala Lumpur. He was appraised of what had transpired and received more alarming news: UMNO youths, the Special Branch had ascertained, were planning a counter demonstration.

The same evening the Tunku met with leaders of the MCA. They acknowledged that the Chinese appeared to have lost their confidence in the MCA, and its leadership decided not to take part in the Cabinet. “My reply to them was to the effect that it would be a great loss to the Cabinet if they did not participate as their services to the country and the Alliance had been most invaluable in the past. I said that perhaps after a period of time they might be able to return to the fold but advised them to give

the decision more thought. When they left I asked myself what would follow in the wake? It was clear that the Chinese community had let down the leaders who had served them so well for more than a decade since independence." The MIC leaders too took a similar view but the Tunku prevailed on them to stay in the Cabinet.

At 6.45 pm that evening the Tunku received a call that some Chinese had been assaulted by Malay youths in Jalan Raja Muda. The killings had begun. He rushed to police headquarters and after monitoring the situation went on radio to address the nation. "Trouble has broken out in Kuala Lumpur and security forces have taken control of the situation and many places are considered a security risk. I have no choice now but declare a State of Emergency in Kuala Lumpur and if necessary, to declare a State of Emergency throughout Malaysia. It is my duty to safeguard life and property and to maintain peace at any cost in this country. There should never have been in the first place this trouble. It should never have occurred. I know what occurred during the procession held by opposition parties and I hold them responsible for what is happening now, but retaliation does not help matters." The Tunku himself had a taste of the violence when a marauding gang almost set upon his car as he was returning to the Residency.

Kuala Lumpur was ablaze throughout the night. It resulted from clashes by rival gangs including elements from UMNO Youth who had gathered in the home of Selangor Menteri Besar, Datuk Harun Idris, with the intention of mounting a city-long march. Datuk Razak was against issuing a licence to UMNO Youth and decided to consult the Tunku. But before they could meet, the permit was issued. Even as the UMNO Youth were organising themselves, news came through that Chinese groups had attacked Malays in Setapak. All hell broke loose and passing motorists were attacked and killed in indiscriminate retaliation.

It was a sleepless night for the Tunku and many of his colleagues who could do little else but monitor the attempts by the police to enforce the Emergency and diffuse the situation. Pacing the floor of his Residency into the wee hours of the morning the Tunku determined that a plan of action must be implemented to prevent further recurrence of the day's killings.

On Wednesday May the 14th he called for a emergency Cabinet meeting where it was decided that a State of Emergency throughout the country was unavoidable. Polling in East Malaysia which was due to begin a week later would have to be postponed. The Tunku received the permission of the King and simultaneously set up a National Operations Council. The Tunku named Datuk Razak as Director of the National Operations Council. The appointment was criticised by some quarters, compelling the Tunku to respond.

“Attempts at character assassination against Abdul Razak had been made by certain sections of the Chinese, saying he disliked the Chinese, in other words, that he was anti-Chinese. I have known him for many years both as a colleague and a friend and during all my experience as Prime Minister I have always found him to be a nationalist, a patriot and a person who is dedicated and fair-minded.” Another important consideration for choosing him was that Datuk Razak was younger and more active and thus better suited to the arduous task of restoring the country to normalcy. His vast experience in handling the Defence and National Portfolios made him the logical choice.

“I was therefore prepared to step down a rung or two to give him full authority to carry on with this important task but I still remained Prime Minister and thus he would continuously consult with me.” There have been suggestions that Datuk Razak may have allowed the situation to precipitate in order to lay the blame at the Tunku’s feet. The actions of Datuk Harun Idris also fuelled fears of a power struggle in the Cabinet. Miscommunication and emotional responses may have contributed to the speculation but there is no hard evidence of a coup being planned at that time to oust the Tunku.

One of the first measures Datuk Razak instituted was to withdraw all non-Muslim police and soldiers from the Kampong Baru area and to replace them with men from the 5th and 7th battalions of the Royal Malay Regiment. A poignant story worth recounting was the predicament of a Chinese who took refuge in the Kampong Baru Mosque. Unknown to the Malays he was hidden in a locked room by Mosque leaders for his own protection. He had been innocently caught up in the first day’s rioting and sought sanctuary in the Mosque.

The next day, working to a preconceived plan, two UMNO

leaders including Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, later to be Foreign Minister, distracted the attention of worshippers in the Mosque compound while the young Chinese was transferred to the boot of a car.

Taking stock of the situation nationwide, it was evident that outbreaks of violence had been largely limited to Selangor and Malacca. There was also rioting in Singapore following attacks on local Malays carried out by Chinese secret society fighters who had slipped across the Causeway.

The strain of the tension-filled days took its toll on the Tunku. His vision seriously impaired by the sleepless nights of the previous weeks, he entered hospital on June 6th to have a long- deferred eye operation performed. His surgeons had warned that the mounting pressure on his right eye had been seriously affected and if not attended to might cause the loss of sight.

Datuk Razak had his hands full. In addition to restoring security he had to deal with a resurgence of communist terrorist activities. On May 16, 90 hardcore communist supporters were detained and a day later a further 60. They had been apprehended for being equipped with an array of weapons and stopped in the nick of time before they launched attacks on the Police and Army.

## CHAPTER 14

The Tunku was discharged on the 16th, somewhat relieved to hear that tension in the country had eased. But a rude shock awaited him.

“Two days later, I received a scurrilous letter from Dr. Mahathir, a member of the Executive Council of UMNO. It was a letter the likes of which I had never seen before in all my political career, and the most unlikely communication I would have expected to get from a man who had always put himself forward, at least outwardly, as a staunch supporter of the party even though he disagreed with some of the policies.”

It was a four-page letter typed in Bahasa Malaysia, dated June 17th, and written from Dr. Mahathir's home in Alor Star. The Tunku was stunned and hurt by its contents. Initially he refused to discuss the contents but it ensued that the thrust of the letter from Dr. Mahathir was to blame the Tunku for the desertion from UMNO to the PMIP, of large numbers of Malays, which resulted in the electoral setback. Dr. Mahathir also demanded the resignation of the Tunku as Prime Minister and further suggested he should withdraw from politics altogether. What offended the Tunku more was that thousands of copies were cyclostyled and circulated.

The Tunku eventually sent a copy to Datuk Razak who called an emergency party meeting on July 12th. Dr. Mahathir attended to defend his letter but the Tunku stayed away. The seven-hour meeting at Sri Taman was predictably heated. At the end of the marathon session the UMNO Executive Council ordered Dr. Mahathir to resign. Though the decision was one of consensus Dr. Mahathir was not without supporters in the Supreme Council, who sympathised and shared his views on the electoral debacle.

Despite Dr. Mahathir's attempts to justify his attack, Datuk

Razak for one, would not entertain any suggestion of the Tunku's forced departure from the political scene. Such was the seriousness of the allegations that the Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail (who returned to serve in Cabinet despite being ill and having retired earlier) made an order prohibiting the publication, distribution or possession of copies of the letter.

The Tunku, describing the events before and after the May 13 has this to say then: "Who is Dr. Mahathir and where does he stand in UMNO? The answer is that there is a group of men usually referred to as the "ultras" or as they prefer to be known, the intellectuals. They have manoeuvred themselves into positions in UMNO. Some of them live in Kuala Lumpur but none of them has much contact with people on the ground, especially in the rural areas. They can never hope to win mass support of their own but they can make a lot of trouble and this is what they are out to do. Behind this internal opposition within UMNO there must be a man who knows how to plan and how to get others to operate."

The Tunku reviewed the situation within the party and discovered that the "ultras" wanted a new order of things. They considered his policies to be outdated and out of line with those prevailing in other Afro-Asian countries.

The Tunku was more concerned with some Malay extremists. Quoting one confidential report he said: "Now, Sukarno has gone but his ideas, his money, his immediate followers and converts are still spread throughout Asia and his policy is still being pursued fervently by these people. During his regime, his trusted officers, whether in Government or in business were in direct contact with various organisations, with leaders of left-wing parties and individuals in Malaysia, and plans were formulated as how best to topple the Government.

"Many of the so-called Malay leaders had been brainwashed and had become ardent and useful instruments for the implementation of his plans. These included the establishment of a new grouping along the east and west coast of Malaysia and the Thai borders. Arms and ammunitions were to be supplied by sea. An intensive campaign of hatred and vilification was prepared and the means employed was by circulating poison letters discrediting the well known leaders

of UMNO and in particular me, who had to be toppled at all cost."

Despite his dismissal, Dr. Mahathir clearly enjoyed the support of a group of younger Malays: one of them was Datuk Musa Hitam, who left the country shortly after 1969 to pursue his further studies abroad. On July 17th banners were found outside the University of Malaya Mosque calling on the Tunku to step down. Others urged him to keep away from poker players and racegoers.

Some of Dr. Mahathir's supporters made speeches denouncing the Tunku as a traitor. The attacks against the Tunku continued and it became clear that there was much more to it than a mere critical letter, from one second-echelon leader.

Divisions within the party intensified even as Datuk Razak continued in his tireless efforts to return the country to normalcy. In 1970, he set up a National Consultative Council aimed at initiating a dialogue among the various communities with the objective of discussing ways and means of strengthening racial harmony and providing a secure base for the restoration of parliamentary democracy. The programme was aimed in particular at forging inter-racial cooperation and social integration for the growth of a Malaysian identity.

The 66-member Council represented a wide spectrum of interest groups and comprised politicians both in the Alliance and the opposition parties, religious leaders, industrial managers, trade union leaders and professionals. The Consultative Council made considerable progress and by May 1970 the suspended elections in Sabah and Sarawak were held.

USNO in Sabah was returned but in Sarawak matters were more complicated. Of the 24 parliamentary seats SNAP took nine, SUPP five and an assortment of other parties, between one and four each. The net result gave the Alliance 92 parliamentary seats, just short of the two thirds majority they had aimed for. Before long, however, Datuk Razak reached an agreement with SUPP in Sarawak whereby the party pledged not to oppose the Government's policy including the passage of a Bill to entrench Malay privileges in the Constitution.

Despite concerted attempts by factions in UMNO to force the Tunku out of office, his Cabinet colleagues rallied behind him, and the Tunku himself took a firm stance when he

declared, "I have dedicated my whole life to this nation and I am not going to be deterred from continuing to do so by the mere irresponsible demand made by these people whose aim is to wreck the peace, harmony and stability of our country."

Privately, and even before the May 13th debacle, the Tunku had in fact been planning to step down. He was almost 67 years old and there were indications that his nephew, then the Sultan of Kedah, would soon ascend the Malaysian throne. In the context of Malay custom it was not quite becoming for a veteran statesman and Prime Minister to have his nephew as the constitutional head of the country. Others however chose to suggest that sharp differences between the Tunku and Datuk Razak, and Ministers close to him, had emerged. In fact although the two disagreed in private over some aspects of the long-term solutions they maintained utmost discretion, giving no hint in public.

The 1970 Independence Day celebrations were devoted almost entirely to the promotion of inter-communal goodwill and national solidarity. A national ideology, the Rukunegara, was launched. It called on Malaysians to work towards a just and progressive society through belief in God, loyalty to King and Country, upholding the Constitution and Rule of Law, and the promotion of moral discipline, tolerance and mutual respect. As a gesture of goodwill, the Government released a number of political detainees including Lim Kit Siang.

The Tunku had more or less made up his mind at that point. The election results, he felt, suggested that the time had come to pass on the baton. "I realised all along the feelings of the people. But just because they had thought aloud I decided not to give up until the appropriate moment arrived. To leave just as they wanted me to would be giving in to my enemies and that would be a cowardly way out."

Then there were UMNO stalwarts whom he felt obliged to consult before deciding. Sadly some not only concurred with alacrity, but "couldn't wait for the old man to step down," he later noted.

The Tunku later revealed some of the contents of Dr. Mahathir's letter. Among other things Dr. Mahathir alleged that even during the May 13 crisis the Tunku was playing poker instead of attending to State duties. "This was nothing less than an attempt to assassinate my character among the Malays. He



charged me in such a vicious letter with neglect of duty during the period of violence. It is an outright lie. All those who saw me on television for the three worst nights, 13th to the 15th of May and again on the 16th must know that these charges are untrue”.

The Tunku goes on to say that Dr. Mahathir “mentioned that the Malay members of the Security Forces and the Police Force and the Malay government servants hated me. This shows to what extent he was prepared to carry out a campaign of malice and recrimination against me”. The Tunku said the criticism begged the question as to whether Dr. Mahathir would have in fact written the letter had he retained his seat. At one stage the Tunku lodged a police report against Dr. Mahathir and was seriously considering bringing charges of criminal libel against him. He later decided not to pursue the matter in order to heal the rift that had broken out in UMNO.

The Tunku has never denied his indulgence in poker and his interest in horse-racing. “Once in a while I enjoy having a game of poker with my friends. These are good friends and companions and never has one of them abused the friendship with me. I regard poker as fun and a happy way of passing time. And as with racing, my bets are modest. My interest in horse-racing began in England and the development of horse-racing in Malaysia which I have encouraged, has helped raised considerable revenue for the country.” The Tunku has always been a keen supporter of football and was President of the Football Association of Malaysia for twenty years from 1949. A keen golfer, though he described himself as a “third rate player” who played more for the exercise, he launched the inaugural Putra Cup tournament. This event has now been included in the Asian Golf Circuit.

“There is hardly a sport played in Asia in which I am not interested actively. I like walking, sailing, fishing, driving cars and when I was in London, going to the dogs. I go to watch tennis, cricket, badminton, hockey, athletics. The only frustration I ever felt was for one year when I was President of the Selangor Flying Club. I wanted to take lessons but my friends and family ganged up on me so I never had the thrill of being a pilot.”

On August 31st, 1970, the Tunku announced that he was stepping down from office. He had decided to hand over to his

able successor, Datuk Razak, who he had carefully groomed since they took political office. His last official duty was to lift the suspension of Parliament and the various State Legislative Assemblies. It was for Malaysians a sad moment but the Tunku felt the time had come to devote "the evening of my life to the service of my religion". He had previously been approached by the King of Saudi Arabia to accept the position of Secretary General of the Islamic Secretariat which had been set up in Jeddah in early 1970.

He however left Government a sad man, with only a M\$200,000 gratuity and a M\$4,000 monthly pension to show for his selfless sacrifices of more than two decades.

## CHAPTER 15

As was to be expected, the new Prime Minister, Tun Razak, made changes to the composition of his Cabinet in order to mark a break with the past, and in particular, the darkest hours of May 13th. In September 1971, Tun Razak named Tun Dr. Ismail his Deputy Prime Minister, and Tun Tan Siew Sin as Minister of Finance. A notable cabinet newcomer was (the recently deceased Tun) Datuk Hussein Onn, the son of Datuk Onn bin Jaffar, who was given the Education portfolio. He subsequently succeeded Tun Razak when the latter tragically passed away after a prolonged illness.

Tun Razak had always been known as a serious minded politician who rarely smiled in public and ran both his private and public life in the way a headmaster managed a combination of dutiful and errant students. The Tunku remarked once that Tun Razak wore a permanent scowl. "One day he came to see me and from the appearance of his face I knew it was a serious matter. I looked at him and said: 'If you could put a smile on your face and remove the scowl you would appear more human and we could settle whatever you have in mind smoothly and amicably'. Immediately after that both of us laughed and sure enough the matter was settled."

It is possible that Tun Razak was not entirely well when he took office in early 1972. The duties as Director of National Operations were rigorously demanding. Then there was the excruciatingly difficult problem created by increasing demands by a section of UMNO for the Tunku to step down. For Tun Razak this was a painful decision. He was divided by his deep love and loyalty to the Tunku and the equally pressing need for the party and Government to address the aspirations of a new generation of politicians and citizens who felt that the country should review basic policies and that a new captain was needed to chart this new course.

The Tunku's decision to voluntarily step down eased some of the pressure but Tun Razak had to resist demands for more sweeping changes to be made in his new Cabinet. He chose as his deputy another man who rarely smiled and was the bane of civil servants, Tun Dr. Ismail.

The Tunku describes Tun Dr. Ismail as a man "with a golden heart but a fiery temper". During the '60s when Dr. Ismail was Foreign Minister the Tunku had course to interfere with a Foreign Ministry decision. Tun Ismail was outraged and threatened to resign. "I heard him coming up the driveway of the Residency and hid myself and told them to say I was not in. He went away. In the afternoon he appeared again and was told the same thing and he decided not to come again. Meanwhile his temper cooled down and he did not raise the matter again when the May 13th riots broke out. In 1969, he was Chairman of Guthrie. He left Guthrie and offered to return to Cabinet. He felt that it was his duty to stand by me. He was a noble one."

Tun Razak's most pressing problem was to restructure the whole economy so as to correct the disparities which had persisted in the years since independence. In 1971 he felt that to ensure lasting peace between the main communities the standard of living of the Malays had to be raised. He thus ordered the Economic Planning Unit to formulate what was later formally adopted as the New Economic Policy (NEP). A census of 1970 showed that the mean monthly income of Malay households was M\$179 compared to M\$387 for the Chinese and M\$310 for the Indians. Overall, the household income of some 90% of those in the rural areas was below M\$100 a month and over 76% earned a gross monthly income of between M\$100 and M\$200. These figures were especially pertinent as they reflected the income in areas where the Malays accounted for 65% of the community's population.

To bring about a realignment of the existing disparities a target of attainment for the Malays was set. The objective was that by 1990, the Malays would acquire 30% of the corporate ownership of the nation. This has not been achieved to date and a new policy to replace the retiring NEP has since come into place. Nevertheless, considerable gains have been made, though it necessitated radical changes including privileged concessions for the Malays.

In restructuring the workforce Tun Razak's Government faced mounting unemployment, and his second Five Year Plan (the Second Malaysia Plan) was designed to create some 600,000 new jobs annually over the period of the Plan. To improve the position of the Malays a number of public and joint enterprises were launched. Notable among them was MARA and PERNAS whose original tasks were to provide technical and financial assistance for existing Malay enterprises and to help set up new ones, particularly in areas where private enterprise appeared to be lacking. PERNAS was visibly successful and its gains given widespread publicity. Much of its early success has been attributed to the dynamic leadership of its first chairman, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who also headed Bank Bumiputra, and later the State national oil company, Petronas.

While the economic restructuring was taking place Tun Razak also sought a realignment of the country's foreign policy, believing that Malaysia's conservatism and over-dependence on alignment with the Western democracies was not in the country's best interests. Steps were taken to identify more closely with the Third World. Malaysia as a member of the Non-Aligned group of Nations began to take a more active role. In this exercise, Tun Razak was aided by Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, then Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and later Minister for Foreign Affairs.

According to Datuk Abdullah Ahmad's study of Malaysia's Foreign Policy under Tunku Abdul Rahman, it was Tun Razak who gave Malaysia "the international personality it had always sought. Whereas pragmatism was now elevated to the status of an ideology the Tunku could claim to have practised genuine pragmatism with considerable flair and flexibility, thus laying consciously or unconsciously the foundations of the new Malaysian international personality which was to come".

The author says that a decade and a half ago Malaysia used to be described as a country somewhere between Bangkok and Singapore because it had a blend of practical foreign policy, with sustained peace and flourishing prosperity. He argues that it was Tun Razak and not the Tunku who made Malaysia Non-Aligned as Nehru made India, and for the same reason, that in a world divided into power blocs, non-alignment was safer than the tension of alliances. Tun Razak

turned the Tunku's pro-West foreign policy 180 degrees without any internal controversy. The Tunku's foreign policy, he says, had a defect in that it was not well balanced. "It was too pro-West and so averse to Russia, China and North Vietnam (though he changed his attitude towards Russia in 1968). He neglected the Afro-Asian and Muslim countries until he was forced to woo them".

The author quotes Tan Sri Zain Azraai, then a senior foreign ministry official, and presently Secretary-General to the Ministry of Finance, as saying: "What kind of foreign policy was that when you quarrel with your biggest neighbour, Indonesia, and have only marginal relations with the rest of the world except for close relationships with Britain, a white Commonwealth country, and Thailand. The Tunku's mistake and the country's source of trouble in foreign relations was that he pretended that Sukarno was not important and consequently he never gave Indonesia and Sukarno the recognition of the regional *prima facie* leadership entitlement Sukarno claimed."

The Tunku never made any bones about the dangers that he foresaw in trying to pursue policies similar to those of the Afro-Asian nations. Almost a decade after stepping down he had this to say. "What had been expected to be a viable force working for the well being of the underdogs, Asia and Africa has turned out to be a Frankenstein with internecine trouble breaking out in most of these member countries. It was particularly bad in the African countries. So what started with good intentions and great expectations has turned out to be a flop."

"Those young people of ours who had favoured the Afro-Asian politics must have changed their minds by now, and of course the intellectuals and the former university students who were after my blood then have grown up to be husbands, fathers and high-salaried men."

## CHAPTER 16

For the Tunku, his departure for Jeddah was clouded by a sense of sorrow, of being let down by a party he had so selfishly served for years. He recalls leaving the UMNO Assembly for the last time in 1970. "Sadly, there were shouts of joy from the back of the hall". These members, dubbed the 'ultras', were obviously echoing the sentiments of a section of the party who believed that the Tunku's departure would allow a new leadership free reign to institute major policy changes which they were convinced were necessary. Though he was saddened, the Tunku retorted: "Listen to the voices of the merchants of evil." The Tunku says that among their plans, he suspected was an attempt to lobby for the removal of the Constitutional Monarchy and establish a Republic in Malaysia instead.

"These young men, particularly the University students, had been thoroughly brainwashed and became hardened supporters of the ultras. They carried out intensive campaigns of hatred and vilification against some UMNO leaders who were not with them. Fortunately their number was confined to the so-called intellectuals and those in the University. Elsewhere they got no support. The students carried placards in demonstrations in the compound of the University condemning me as a feudalist, a gambler, a dictator and accused me of many other sins I had not been aware of. These were new epithets, whereas before they called me "Bapa Merdeka", and "Anak Raja Jang Berjiwa Rakyat". Their blend of politics had become dangerous but it was confined only to a handful. Most of them had just come out of the kampung to take up a course of study at the University and felt very flattered to be approached and wooed by politicians."

Years later one of the leaders met the Tunku in Mecca. He

expressed regret and considered what he had done as a “stupid exercise in youthful expression”.

But at that time there was little consolation to be had as he made a sad exit from the political stage he had dominated for more than two decades. “Only a handful of old faithfuls walked out with me to the door to wish me goodbye. The Assembly continued without a break”. The bitterness he experienced then was rivalled only by his sorrow over the events of May 13th.

“What followed was even worse. I was treated like a political pariah. All my activities in the Middle East were blacked out. To crown it all there were efforts to sabotage the Conference of the International Islamic News Agencies held in August 1972 in Kuala Lumpur. I had booked the main conference hall in the Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka months ahead but the administrators cancelled the booking at the last minute. They said it was needed for the signing of a spelling agreement between Indonesia and Malaysia.”

They offered the Tunku a room which was totally unsuited for an international conference. Immediately after the conference the Tunku, confessing to a rare loss of face, rushed the delegations to Penang where he gave them a grand reception. The delegates, while somewhat surprised by the cool reception given to an illustrious former Prime Minister, chose not to add to the Tunku’s embarrassment. If anything, the success of the conference added to the Tunku’s standing in the Muslim world.

The offer from King Feisal to head the Secretariat of Islamic Foreign Ministers in fact came before the Tunku had actually retired from the premiership. It was the first organised attempt aimed at bringing unity among Islamic nations. Among those who accompanied the Tunku from Kuala Lumpur were six officials including a Chinese convert, Mr. S.A. Lim.

The Tunku recalls the early days. “The Arabs were not prepared to accept new ideas for they were always suspicious of each other. Silently we pressed on until after three long years of perseverance forty countries joined the organisation and for the first time in the history of Islam, nations stretching across the continents of Asia and Africa came together”.

The Tunku was to spend the next five years largely in the Middle East, moving on to create the Islamic Development



Bank which was later taken over by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Finance. He also initiated the Conference of Islamic Cultural Centres which set up centres in Europe in 1973. They remain the focal point of Islam in Europe.

The man who selected the Tunku and who supported his ideas, the late King Feisal, was reported to have said when the Tunku demurred at the suggestion of taking a leading role in the establishment of the Islamic Secretariat: "I know all your faults, and I am not asking you to be the Mufti of Mecca. All I want you to do is help organise Islamic unity in the name of Allah." The Tunku's decision to accept the challenge was based on his belief that unity among the Arab countries and their Muslim brothers throughout the world is vital to the continuing propagation of the Islamic faith.

He recalls the first meeting of Muslim Heads of States in Rabat, Morocco, in 1969, where the main point of the agenda was to formulate a response after the Arabs took a drubbing at the hands of Israel in the 1967 war. The subsequent loss of Jerusalem in particular was a bitter pill to swallow, no less than the loss of Palestine.

The Tunku explains the importance of Jerusalem to the Muslims. "In the words of the Holy Prophet there are only three Mosques to which you should journey — the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, the Prophet's in Medina, and the Mosque of Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the Muslims also believe is the centre of the Universe, the closest point on Earth to Heaven." Prior to the Jewish occupation of Jerusalem, Muslims, Jews and Christians worshipped there.

"One of the problems contributing to a lack of unity among Muslims worldwide was the failure of the Arab States to consult with other Muslim countries, thus reducing the Arab-Israel war to a purely Middle East problem which had little impact on Muslim countries far removed from the hostilities. Even the decision to liberate Palestine was limited to the Arab states". The late King Feisal, recognising the absence of a cohesive and institutional centre thus decided to launch the Islamic Secretariat, also known as the Conference of Muslim Foreign Ministers.

They were difficult and frustrating years in many ways, and unknown to but a few, his work in Jeddah added to his financial hardship. Having left office with very little money, largely

because of his generous contributions to UMNO during its formative years, he had to depend on his M\$4,000 monthly pension. However most of this was held back to pay income tax arrears. The taxman's demands and the leadership's reluctance to intervene did little to alleviate the growing gulf between the Tunku and the new Administration.

As Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat the Tunku received no financial benefits except a token salary. "None of the people in Malaysia cared to help despite the fact I was doing God's work".

One person who did hear of the Tunku's plight was (Tun) Datuk Mustapha bin Datuk Harun of Sabah. However, to screen his identity as the real donor, Datuk Mustapha arranged for Sterling Pounds 5,000 to be paid into the Tunku's account. Says the Tunku: "All I knew was what I heard from the bank manager; he said a friend who refused to divulge his name had banked in the money. I thought perhaps it was King Feisal. I only learnt about Mustapha's generosity later and from someone else."

In late 1973 the Secretariat was fully operational and King Feisal was then persuaded to establish the Islamic Development Bank. It was an important milestone and one of the last significant measures advanced by King Feisal before his assassination. Indeed, the words of his assassin for justifying the dastardly crime — "he spent too much of money on religion" — made him a true martyr to the cause of Islam.

Setting up the Bank was no easy task. There were attempts to politicise the bank and certain countries sought hegemony over it. The Tunku, using his usual tact and equal amounts of firmness, managed to persuade them that the Bank should be impartial both in character and operation.

To the Tunku also fell the task of persuading member countries to subscribe capital. The Saudi Government, as its principle subscriber, later took over the running of the bank, thus enabling the Tunku to turn his interest to other matters.

After the handing over, the Tunku noted: "These were among the rare attempts by Muslim countries to strengthen Islamic unity. But they still have no military pact to defend their countries or their religion. They must therefore form one with the aid of military experts from European countries. The problem is the Arabs are sensitive about this matter because they

consider it undignified and humiliating for them to seek expert knowledge from those who are not of their own people. But I maintain that if we are sick or feeling out of sorts whatever medicine that can help us regain our strength must be used. And when such medicine is not available in our country we must look elsewhere for it. What is most important is our health.”

Closer to home the Tunku devoted himself to expanding Perkim’s base. It marked the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire to serve the cause of Islam — one that has always held a special appeal for him. Contrary to mischievous suggestions that he was anything but a good example of what a Muslim should be, the Tunku’s life and his conduct has been governed by Islamic values which he holds dear. He admits that as a young man he was playful and cared little for matters religious. “Then during the Japanese Occupation we faced the greatest challenge to life. As a result I took to prayer and made a study of religion. From that moment on my life changed. I became more serious and more interested in the affairs of our country and people, and more observant. My luck seemed to have changed too, and for the better.”

Perkim was founded in August 1960. The pioneers were Tan Sri S.O.K. Ubaidullah, Tuan Haji Mohd. Ali bin Taib, Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard and Datuk Haji Alli Maricar. The Tunku’s first association with Perkim was at the missionary training centre in Jalan Ampang. Impressed by the objectives of the body he allocated a piece of land in Maxwell Road to the organisation but the lack of funds prevented its administrators from building a permanent home. While he was Prime Minister quite surprisingly, Perkim did not seek funds from Government.

Much later, when he was in Jeddah his secretary, (Tan Sri) Abdul Aziz Zain, a Perkim official, suggested that they approach Col. Gadaffi of Libya for a M\$12 million loan to build Perkim’s headquarters. Col. Gadaffi agreed in principle but the delay in working out the details meant shelving plans for the building. After he took over as President in 1975 the Tunku launched a major drive to revive Perkim. With Tun Mustapha’s assistance — he provided a soft loan — Perkim made its presence felt throughout the Muslim world and within a matter of years more than 100,000 new converts were won over to Islam.

On one occasion while he was in Jeddah the Tunku was invited by the Council of Christian Churches to a meeting in Geneva. The objective was to promote goodwill and understanding between Christians and Muslims. When he arrived there he discovered that the real reason he had been invited was to seek his assistance to intercede on behalf of five missionaries who had been asked to leave Sabah by Tun Mustapha's Government. He explained he could not because Sabah had complete and absolute control over immigration matters. He also pointed out that many Muslims in the Philippines had been driven out of their homes, forcing them to seek asylum in Sabah.

A positive development of his Geneva trip was an audience with Pope John. Again the Pope brought up the question of the missionaries. The Tunku was unable to provide any assurances but it gave him an opportunity to reiterate to the Pope the importance of religious tolerance, particularly in multi-racial countries.

Through Perkim, the Regional Islamic Organisation for South-East Asia, (RISEA), was established with the objective of bringing together Muslim minorities in the Pacific region. RISEA was also intended to be used as a model for other regional bodies throughout the world. The primary aim was to enable these minority groups to discuss matters of common interest and problems that Muslims face in countries where they live. Prior to RISEA an attempt was made to establish a regional secretariat for the whole of South Asia, and South East Asia, in Karachi, but it failed to take off.

The growth of RISEA has not been particularly easy in some countries which view minority religious organisation as potentially subversive. Papua New Guinea was among one of those who originally refused to register the organisation. Part of the reason was that they did not understand what the organisation stood for. But there were other notable successes such as in China, which allowed a group of Chinese Muslims to attend a RISEA Conference in Kuala Lumpur. They were taken round to various institutes, schools, Perkim clinics and shown the work of such an Islamic body both in the propagation of its faith as well as providing an important service to the communities.

In recognition of his work at Perkim and RISEA the Tunku

received high awards. These include the King Feisal Award, and the Hijrah Award of Pakistan. "If I had been told one day I would be honoured as a Muslim leader and given such high rewards I would not have believed it. I had not always been deeply religious, but rather a man of the world who made the best of life in his younger days. I did not believe the Indian fortune teller when he told me in 1939 that I would one day be the Prime Minister of Malaya. But even as a young man deep in my heart I was religious and was quick to defend my religion if any attack was made upon it. Sadly it was a fashion in those days for some British officers to find fault with Islam. They seem to regard Islam as an enemy of mankind".

The Tunku shared the King Feisal International Award with Sheik Massanein Maka, who at 93 could read every word of the Koran by heart. The Tunku considers it a high point of his career to share the honour with such a great religious man. The Tunku was also the first ever recipient of the Pakistani Hijrah Award. He considers the awards "an unusual tribute to Malaysia, to a person from a secular state given to democratic practices. Allah is great and he knows best".

The Tunku continues to resist any form of religious extremism. Speaking about activities of some Muslim extremists in the North and Eastern states of Malaysia in the early 80's he said that the so-called extremists were made up of political and religious bigots unable to win recognition through the ballot box.

"People are aware of what is good for the country. Watching their activities I don't see that they pose any real danger at the present time. However I feel more encouragement should be given to voluntary organisations such as Perkim to counter the terrorist tactics of the more militant Muslims".

To him Muslims should make a greater effort to have Islam better understood by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In his opinion talks on radio and television have achieved very little because occasionally there is a lack of commitment or concern on the part of the propagaters. He quotes one example: "I was shocked when an old man from Kedah supposedly one hundred years old was charged in Court for Khalwat with a forty-year old woman. It is hard to imagine that a man of that age could have had such an affair. Nevertheless the Religious

Department prosecuted him for Khalwat and he had to pay a fine. He subsequently had to get rid of the lady helper and later died of neglect and exhaustion. This is an act of cruelty which we did not expect from the religious authority and it made a mockery of our religion. Islam stands for peace and goodwill among men. To a Malay his religion is second nature; this together with Adat, (custom) mean everything to him”.

Of Tun Mustapha's interest in the Perkim, the Tunku says it arose from the fact that the largest number of converts to Islam came from the State of Sabah. Though the Tun has been accused of forcibly converting large numbers of non-Muslims to Islam the Tunku does not believe this.

One man who was deeply touched by the Tunku's magnanimity was the late Lim Yew Hock, the second Chief Minister of Singapore. After being ousted in 1959 and spending more than ten years in the political wilderness, and hitting a low with his personal life in the late 60s, Lim Yew Hock approached the Tunku in 1972 asking to be accepted in the Muslim faith.

Says Lim Yew Hock in his book *Reflections*: “For this rebirth my gratitude goes out to one man — Tunku Abdul Rahman. I personally know he prays five times a day, how he strictly observes the fast during Ramadan. He is kind, considerate and helpful. He is humble though born a Prince and has attained great heights. He is God-fearing. Above all his greatest virtue is that he is human and humane with a great understanding and sympathy for human frailties”.

Mr Lim's initiation into the Muslim religion took place on July 27, 1972, in the home of the Tunku, witnessed by a handful of friends. The Tunku later arranged for Mr Lim to be a general assistant in the Islamic Secretariat and he spent several years there rising to a senior position in the political section. Later Mr Lim was to spend a further fourteen months as Executive Secretary of Perkim in Kuala Lumpur. He also served as Special Assistant to the President of the Islamic Development Bank.

## CHAPTER 17

Meanwhile at home, Tun Razak, having launched the NEP decided that there was a need for a national coalition Government to incorporate as wide a cross section of political opinions and communal interests to ensure that racial polarisation would not rear its ugly head again.

His first success was in Penang in February 1972 when he persuaded the Gerakan to join the Alliance in a coalition in the State Assembly. Subsequently similar arrangements were entered into with the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in Perak, and this was followed by negotiations to bring about vital co-operation between the Alliance and the PMIP, which had since changed its name to Party Islam or, Pas.

By September that year, after months of tough bargaining it was decided that Pas President, Datuk Mohamed Asri, would join the Federal Cabinet as Minister for Land Development and Minister with Special Functions. This new arrangement and the establishment of the Barisan National (National Front), was put in place before the 1974 general elections, the first after 1969. The Front however had to contend with other parties which did not share its view of a single ruling alliance.

The Democratic Action Party (DAP), the Social Justice Party (Pekemas), the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), and United Sabah Action Party decided to form a united front to oppose them. This led to the election of Lim Kit Siang, of the DAP, as Leader of the Opposition. There were also a number of squabbles within the component parties of the National Front itself.

Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, currently Minister of Primary Industries, and then Minister with Special Functions in the Federal Government, was forced to resign after he failed in an attempt to replace Tun Tan Siew Sin as president of the MCA. Within a

month MIC president Tun V.T. Sambanthan, who had led the party for more than 18 years, resigned under pressure from his cabinet colleagues in favour of his deputy, V. Manickavasagam.

Fighting a general election for the first time as Prime Minister Tun Razak's National Front secured 135 parliamentary seats with only 19 going to opposition parties. It also secured control of all 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia and was also triumphant in Sarawak, taking 30 of the 48 seats there. State elections were not held in Sabah. By that time relations between the State and Kuala Lumpur were close to breaking point, largely due to sharp differences between Tun Razak and Sabah's Chief Minister Tun Mustapha.

Tun Razak viewed Tun Mustapha's lifestyle with unconcealed dismay and this coloured his view of the manner in which the Tun ruled Sabah. In his opinion Tun Mustapha practised an authoritarian form of government whose policies were often at variance with those advocated by Kuala Lumpur. There is little doubt that Tun Mustapha was a flamboyant leader who rarely sought the counsel of his colleagues. The patronage he disbursed ensured that all those in Usno, the ruling party, were beholden unto him.

Tun Razak however would not have any truck with the Tun's eccentric conduct. To compound matters Tun Razak was persuaded to believe that Tun Mustapha was prepared to take Sabah out of the Malaysian Federation if challenged. To counter this Tun Razak decided to make Tun Mustapha Defence Minister and thus more responsible to Kuala Lumpur.

Tun Mustapha did not directly reject the offer but at the same time he made no attempt to take up his appointment or to resign as Chief Minister. Privately he indicated he would only settle for the appointment as Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia — a demand Tun Razak rejected out of hand.

Much has been made of Tun Mustapha's personal lifestyle and the use of private jets reportedly purchased with State funds. The existence of the jets and Tun Mustapha's frequent use of them to ferry friends to Europe, Britain and Australia has never been disputed. Whether such frequent trips were funded by public funds is another matter. Tun Mustapha has always insisted that at least one of the aircraft, a Boeing 707, was paid for by him. Tun Mustapha's free wheeling policies and his high living in London is also a fact. Pilots and cabin staff, and hotel



staff in London, who were beneficiaries of his generosity tell of all-night parties at which Tun Mustapha would often play his violin.

The Tunku's view is that Tun Mustapha never seriously intended to take Sabah out of Malaysia Federation. As for the planes he says that he had on one occasion been a guest of Tun Mustapha and saw little that suggested the interior was ornately outfitted at a cost of several million dollars.

Tun Razak however was convinced otherwise. In one unpublicised incident Tun Mustapha was ordered to Kuala Lumpur but he instructed his pilot to land in Penang instead. Unconfirmed reports say the aircraft was surrounded by armed personnel and Tun Mustapha ordered to Kuala Lumpur for talks that he had assiduously avoided.

In January 1975, Tun Mustapha, finding himself in serious disagreement with Tun Razak announced that Usno would pull out of the National Front and the Sabah Alliance. He was critical of the Sabah Alliance but denied that he planned to merge Sabah with provinces in the Philippines, in which Muslims were dominant.

Sensing the imminent dangers, Tun Razak decided that time had come to put a stop to Tun Mustapha's vagaries. He encouraged elements in Usno, notably Tun Faud Stephens and Datuk Harris Salleh, a protegy of Tun Mustapha, to break with him.

Tun Razak was just as concerned with Tun Mustapha's rejection of the terms that Petronas had announced to undertake exploitation of offshore oil discoveries by foreign contractors and the royalty which states like Sabah and Sarawak would receive. While Sarawak, too, initially made excessive demands it was Sabah which took a rigid stand on the matter. Tun Mustapha said the oil belonged to the State of Sabah by virtue of its territorial waters as defined by the Emergency Powers (of 1969). This he interpreted to mean that the State had total sovereignty over oil found offshore. He however generously offered to part with 10 or 20 percent of the proceeds. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, Chairman of Petronas, rejected the arguments put forward.

Kuala Lumpur's patience wore thinner and thus began a well orchestrated campaign to oust Tun Mustapha from office. One of the fatal errors Tun Mustapha made was a secret plan to

borrow US\$600 million from an overseas broker to be guaranteed by the Federal Government. Kuala Lumpur refused, seeking instead a counter guarantee that the funds would be used on development projects.

The Tunku, as a close friend of Tun Mustapha, was asked to reason with him. At that point Datuk Harris Salleh was encouraged to set up the rival Berjaya Party, funded by Kuala Lumpur. The new party was led by Sabah's Head of State and Tun Mustapha's long time political rival, Tun Haji Mohammed Faud Stevens, who was known as Datuk Donald Stevens prior to his conversion.

When Berjaya's formation was first announced on July 16, 1975, it was obvious that it had the support of Kuala Lumpur. Tun Razak however publicly distanced himself from the party and this led to considerable confusion as to whether Berjaya would be accepted as a member of the National Front, in the event it was able to wrest control of the State.

As the battle for control of Sabah intensified the campaigning was marred by personal differences including the breakup of the betrothal of Datuk Faud Stevens' daughter and Tun Mustapha's son.

By July 1975 the situation in Sabah worsened. It was clear that positive action had to be taken before matters deteriorated into a full scale emergency. Tun Mustapha arrived in Penang on July 17 to consult with the Tunku before returning to Kota Kinabalu. The meeting at the Tunku's house was to prove critical to the future of both Tun Mustapha and Sabah.

Awaiting Tun Mustapha was Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, representing the Federal Government. Tun Mustapha was told that the National Front agreed to the formation of Berjaya because of concern over cessation and the prospect of snap elections. Despite being upset by news that the Federal Government was on the point of ditching him Tun Mustapha returned to Kota Kinabalu in high spirits, clearly determined to join in the fray.

Efforts meanwhile were underway to try and get Tun Mustapha to resign, while at the same time allowing his party, Usno, and Berjaya to co-exist. A key role in the discussions was played by Datuk Syed Kechik who, while supporting Tun Mustapha, briefed Tun Hussein Onn, then deputy prime minister, on the harsh realities of Sabah politics and in

particular the hand that many of the new Berjaya leaders had in a number of controversial business enterprises which received the support of Tun Mustapha.

When it became clear that Tun Razak was adamant that Tun Mustapha had to go, Datuk Syed Kechik, realising the futility of persuading Kuala Lumpur otherwise, returned to Sabah and gave Tun Mustapha the bad news. At the end of the discussion Tun Mustapha prepared a post-dated letter of resignation, dated October 31, 1975, but insisted that the letter be held by the Tunku. Tun Razak was not entirely satisfied, wanting Tun Mustapha to step down immediately as President of Usno and to bow out of the political scene completely. He was also less than happy that the critical letter from Tun Mustapha was being held by the Tunku, believing that it should have been entrusted to with him.

The wrangling in Sabah continued but Tun Mustapha did step down as Chief Minister on October 31, and Tan Sri Said was sworn in as his successor. Nomination day was set for November 22 and polling for December 8. However the elections were deferred to January 23 1976, but a week earlier Tun Razak unexpectedly passed away. The elections were further postponed while negotiations continued between USNO and Berjaya over a power sharing agreement.

Talks failed and when Sabah went to polls in April 1976, Berjaya took 28 seats as against 20 for Usno. Tun Faud Stevens took over as Chief Minister but only weeks later, on June 6, he and three other Sabah ministers and six others were killed when their aircraft crashed a short distance away before landing at Kota Kinabalu. Datuk Harris Salleh, with the consent of recently installed Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn, then took over as Chief Minister of Sabah.

## CHAPTER 18

Sadly Tun Razak did not live to see the fruits of much of his political labours. Few in government had any inkling that leukaemia had in fact been detected as far back as 1970 and his doctors had given him much less than the six years he lived thereafter. His premature death changed the face of Malaysian politics and many feel that had he not met an early demise the problems that confront UMNO today and the battle for Malay political supremacy may have been avoided.

They contend that had Tun Razak served even two, and possibly three terms, the succession policy that had previously prevailed in UMNO would have been continued. This of course would have meant that given the poor health of his deputy, (the late) Tun Hussein Onn may never have assumed the premiership. According to that scenario Dr. Mahathir might conceivably have become Prime Minister only in the mid or late 80's and may have at best served two terms. In such an event, too, Enchik Ghafar Baba may have become Deputy Prime Minister before Dr. Mahathir and in those circumstances the positions of Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa Hitam would have been significantly different from they are today. However that must remain in the realm of conjecture.

Tun Razak was largely responsible for Dr. Mahathir's return to the UMNO fold. It was a decision that did not sit well with the Tunku but he accepted it graciously. Dr. Mahathir's return paved the way for a number of key supporters of him who had been sidelined, including Datuk Musa Hitam, who rejoined the mainstream of Malaysian politics.

Tengku Razaleigh's fortunes also soared under Tun Razak's stewardship. His meteoric rise was encouraged by Tun Razak and also by Tun Hussein Onn who clearly recognised his skills as a perceptive economist and an adroit manager of business.

Little wonder then, that prior to his death Tun Razak continued to cajole Tengku Razaleigh into joining the Cabinet.

Though the age gap between them was 15 years they enjoyed a special closeness. Soon after Tengku Razaleigh's re-election as an UMNO vice-president in 1974 Tun Razak further encouraged him to accept a Ministry. But the latter declined.

At about this time confidantes began to become increasingly concerned about Tun Razak's health — and he about the future. Tun Razak dispatched Dr. Lim Chong Eu to meet with Tengku Razaleigh at the Kuala Lumpur Hilton. Tengku Razaleigh was finally persuaded that the time had come for him to accept a Cabinet posting. Of the various portfolios mentioned Tengku Razaleigh expressed interest in the Finance Ministry.

In December 1975 Tun Razak decided to take some leave in Europe and have a check-up in London. Five days after Tun Razak arrived in Paris he became ill and was rushed to the London Clinic. Among the two persons summoned to London was Tengku Razaleigh, who recalls that fateful week: "When I arrived in London I was met by a High Commission official. I wanted to check in and head for the hospital to see Tun. Much to my surprise I was told to wait as the Tun would come to the hotel. Later that evening we had a quiet dinner at Simpsons. The Tun had Tun Mustapha's intransigence on his mind and also spoke of his unease over Datuk Harun Idris' conduct. The next morning we took a walk and later went to the Mosque.

"Despite being ill there was still no indications that his time was at hand. He talked about launching the Third Malaysian Plan in Langkawi on January 16th, a few weeks ahead. He swore me to secrecy over changes that he planned to make. We dined at the Mirabelle the next night. He took ill half-way through dinner, and had to be rushed to hospital again. I wanted to stay in London but he persuaded me to return. Only on the day of my departure did I discover the extent of his illness."

Together with Tun Hussein Onn, Ghafar Baba and Dr. Mahathir they kept a nightly vigil in Kuala Lumpur, waiting for news of Tun Razak's condition. Sensing that the end was near Tun Razak insisted on flying back to Kuala Lumpur, despite his doctor's reservations. Hours before he was to board the aircraft on January 14th 1976, Tun Razak passed away.

Tun Hussein, deeply saddened by the loss, nevertheless quickly gathered the reigns of powers to ensure continuity in the party and government.

Tengku Razaleigh visited the Tunku and revealed details of his discussions with Tun Razak prior to his death. The Tunku urged Tengku Razaleigh to fulfil his promise to Tun Razak, to accept the Finance portfolio. They also discussed sensitive party matters. Later Tengku Razaleigh had a private meeting in his flat in Jalan Stonor with Ghafar Baba and Dr. Mahathir.

Rumours abounded that Tun Hussein was planning to name Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie as deputy prime minister. If he had done so it would have been a serious breach of UMNO tradition. The trio then met with Tun Hussein and expressed their frank views on the matter. Much to their surprise Tun Hussein chose Dr. Mahathir ahead of Ghafar Baba, who was most senior of the three vice presidents.

Tun Hussein's tenure is best remembered as a period during which Malaysia enjoyed considerable economic prosperity and political stability. The exceptions of course were the continuing saga in Sabah, the withdrawal of PAS from the National Front in 1977, and the imprisonment of Datuk Harun Idris, former Menteri Besar of Selangor on criminal charges. Commentators recall that the Tun Hussein's era was noteworthy in that the government subscribed to honest-to-goodness policies, demonstrating equality to all races and stressing education as a tool to progress. Tun Hussein has been described as tough yet reasonable, and prepared to face the most unpleasant challenges without flinching.

He had an ardent supporter in the Tunku who in the late 70's continued to show keen interest in the social and political developments in the country. The Tunku constantly travelled and was frequently invited to comment on pertinent national developments. His return to public life was largely Tun Hussein's doing.

A major test for the National Front government came in September 1977 when Datuk Asri clashed with his own party leader Datuk Mohamed bin Nasir, Menteri Besar of Kelantan. Their differences were over land policy. The Tunku takes up the story. "Datuk Asri, as head of PAS sought to oust the Menteri Besar despite widespread support for the latter."

"PAS supporters resisted the move and what followed

were demonstrations which endangered the peace. Datuk Hussein Onn was compelled to proclaim a State of Emergency in Kelantan, suspending the State Assembly and the Executive Council and allowing Datuk Nasir to carry on as a caretaker Menteri Besar."

The Tunku suggested that the wishes of the people of Kelantan should have been elicited to decide on whom they wanted to lead the State. "Unfortunately, this was not done. The National Front met on December 5, 1977 and requested PAS to expel the 13 State Councillors who did not vote for the Government's Bill to declare an Emergency in Kelantan. This compounded the situation with Datuk Asri himself having no choice but to fight back and meet the consequences. By that time he too faced the prospect of expulsion from his party."

Datuk Asri attacked the government and UMNO, claiming the party lacked morale courage. He accused Tun Hussein of vacillation and challenged the Government to carry out its threat, hinting of dire consequences in Kelantan.

The crisis arose initially over several pieces of land which had been leased out under somewhat controversial terms. The first related to 350,000 acres of land leased to Timber Mine Co. of Singapore. It was repossessed by the Federal Government who compensated the company M\$3.6 million. Datuk Asri who approved the lease was angered by the move, arguing that the lease contract should have been terminated. A second piece of land bordering Perak and Kelantan, covering an area of 240,000 acres had been leased to Rik Seng Company. The Government declared the location a security area, thus forbidding commercial use of land.

Then there was the takeover of Malayan Tobacco's curing stations in Kelantan by the PPP, a company financed by the State Economic Board of which Datuk Asri was the Chairman. A M\$2.6 million loan had been obtained for development but when the company became defunct the lender bank demanded immediate repayment. Datuk Asri in turn asked Datuk Nasir to give a State Government guarantee for the extension of the loan but the latter refused to oblige.

The rivalry in PAS broke out into the open in October, 1977 with Datuk Nasir threatening to expose alleged corrupt awards of timber concessions by fellow members of PAS. He was ousted on November 15th when 20 PAS assembly-men voted

in favour of a no confidence motion against him, while UMNO members walked out of the chamber.

For both PAS and the National Front the Kelantan crisis provided a renewed test of Malay solidarity structured around UMNO and PAS. In addition to the ideological appeal of the parties, the issue in Kelantan — land alienation, or so it appeared — kindled the emotions of voters. Given the keen historical rivalry neither group could ignore the inherent risks involved in misreading the situation.

In early November PAS rejected a formula advanced by Dr. Mahathir with the blessing of Tun Hussein Onn. Datuk Asri submitted counter proposals. Tun Hussein Onn met with Datuk Asri and after two hours of tense negotiations gave PAS 72 hours to respond to his proposals. Tun Hussein unexpectedly stated that his proposals were made in the name of the Prime Minister, and not in his capacity as head of UMNO or the National Front. Rioting meanwhile had broken out in some towns in Kelantan.

By November 9th with no hint of the impasse being resolved, and PAS hardening its position, Kelantan came under Federal rule — with Tun Hussein moving the Emergency Powers (Kelantan) Bill 1977 in Parliament.

Tun Hussein, while agreeing that the Bill had political implications which touched on fundamental democratic principles, nevertheless decided to put public order before politics. "There is no meaning, if because of [my] political interest I close my eyes and ears to killing and destruction of property," he stated. "That is what is happening in Kelantan and it may spread to other States if this Bill is not tabled and approved by this House. As God is my witness, I am not playing politics."

Choosing not to defend the merits of the Bill or apportion blame on either of the feuding PAS factions, the Prime Minister said the gravity of the situation warranted Federal intervention. Some 4,000 additional police personnel were sent to maintain law and order in the State, and a curfew was imposed in Kota Bahru and Kubang Krian.

On the constitutionality of Federal rule, Tun Hussein acknowledged the Regent's right to accept or reject the request for the dissolution of the State Assembly — a stumbling block to the earlier National Front-sponsored formula to diffuse the



crisis. "But the Regent has not made any decision, probably because he feels that whatever decision he makes will cause dissatisfaction among certain groups."

Meanwhile, 19 people had been seriously injured, 325 houses and shops damaged, and more than 280 arrests made.

Though the overall situation was under control Tun Hussein expressed fears that "this disturbance would lead to racial clashes and spread to the other States. If this happens it will threaten the security of the nation as well. This possibility is all the more serious because Kelantan shares a common border with Thailand."

Following the passage of the Bill, the Executive and Legislative powers of the Kelantan Assembly were placed under the Prime Minister's office, and exercised in the State by a nominated Director. But to ensure that the effects of the Bill did not impinge upon the Kelantan State Constitution, the office of the Menteri Besar, State Executive Council, and the State Assembly were not abrogated.

Datuk Asri, opposing the Bill, charged that it represented a gross transgression of democratic rights. The use of Article 150 of the Constitution, which allowed for Federal rule, was only warranted in extreme cases and when other measures had failed. "In this case no other measure has been tried or even considered," he fumed, adding, "future generations will judge whether this is a real emergency or an emergency of convenience."

Implying that Tun Hussein's perception had been coloured by "certain people with certain aims", Datuk Asri said the passage of the Bill made it incumbent for all PAS Ministers, deputy Ministers and parliamentary secretaries to resign their positions. "My colleagues and I have to leave government, but not the National Front, to safeguard the good image of our Prime Minister," he declared.

Any lingering hopes of keeping PAS in the National Front fold were however summarily dashed by a dramatic counter-attack in Kedah. There PAS introduced a no-confidence motion against the Menteri Besar, Dato Seri Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin. (Similar motions were filed in other States).

Tengku Razaleigh flew to Kedah on the eve of the Kedah State Legislative Assembly sitting, with a directive to the 12 UMNO Assemblymen not to support the PAS motion.

Disciplinary action, he warned, would be taken against those who ignored the directives. The dispatch of Tengku Razaleigh, who was regarded as an expert on PAS tactics, signalled concern among UMNO and the National Front over PAS' growing influence in Kedah, and their longer-term objectives of controlling this rice-bowl northern state.

The next day, with the passing of the deadline, PAS was formally expelled from the National Front — for not expelling representatives who had voted in Parliament against Federal rule for Kelantan and for supporting the no-confidence motion in the Kedah Assembly. The dismissal motion, before a special meeting of the Front, was sponsored by UMNO leaders.

On February 12th 1978, Emergency rule in Kelantan was lifted as a prelude to State elections. Datuk Nasir, who had since formed a new party, Berjasa, was reinstated as Menteri Besar. The Government's explanation was that when faced with a no-confidence motion in October of the previous year, Datuk Nasir had requested the Regent of Kelantan to dissolve the Assembly. In the ensuing confusion he could not act on the advice and soon thereafter Emergency Rule was implemented. Datuk Nasir, on his reappointment spoke of co-operation with UMNO in the coming elections. UMNO, led by Tengku Razaleigh, fielded 24 candidates, including 13 incumbents. Berjasa fielded 25 — after consultation with UMNO — while PAS contested in all of the 36 constituencies.

The burning question, not just in Kota Bahru, or in Kuala Lumpur, but throughout the country was whether UMNO, after three defeats, could finally wrest control of Kelantan from the formidable PAS. The election was aptly described as one in which "cassettes were pitched against *ceramas*" (which literally means discussion rather than a political rally in the conventional sense of the hustings.)

The election results signalled UMNO's finest hour, and PAS's darkest day. National Front candidates took 23 seats, Berjasa 11 and PAS only two — a reverse of the 1959 trouncing it had handed out to the Alliance. PAS collected 33 per cent of votes cast, half as much as in 1959. The National Front, though contesting in only 24 constituencies, took 37 per cent of the popular vote.

Five months later in September 1978, Tengku Razaleigh established himself as the No. 3 ranking leader in UMNO —

polling the highest number of votes in his third vice-presidential contest. On this occasion, with 763 votes, he overtook Encik Ghafar Baba who polled 706 votes. Dato' Musa Hitam was also elected a vice-president, polling more votes than the fourth-placed UMNO secretary-general, Datuk Senu Abdul Rahman.

## CHAPTER 19

The roots of the on-going UMNO saga and the continued challenge to Dr. Mahathir's leadership can be traced back to 1981 when Tun Hussein Onn indicated his desire to step down after suffering two heart attacks. Tun Hussein however was persuaded by his deputy Dr. Mahathir to remain as UMNO President until 1982.

At the same time Tengku Razaleigh, then a senior vice president announced his decision in 1981 to seek the deputy presidency for as long as Tun Hussein stood by his position to step down as party leader and Prime Minister. The qualification was a prudent move, for soon after Tun Hussein stepped down he criticised the new administration. This led to suggestions that he may have resigned for other than personal reasons.

Much to the surprise of UMNO members Datuk Musa Hitam also announced his candidacy for the deputy president's position. Though it was the first time a senior position in the party was being contested by one "heavyweight" and a "middleweight" — as they were then viewed — the general feeling was that the new-found strength of UMNO and its mature membership would allow for a healthy and friendly challenge without any serious repercussions. This was not to be the case once it became clear that Dr. Mahathir tacitly supported Datuk Musa. More surprises were to follow, this time from Tun Hussein.

The Tunku was careful not to openly support either candidate but commended Tengku Razaleigh for his services and the sacrifices he made to strengthen UMNO. At the same time the Tunku made it clear his principal concern was that the loser should accept defeat with grace and remain in UMNO and in Government.

Tengku Razaleigh, who was initially lulled into a false

sense of confidence by media assessments which put him well ahead in the contest, soon realised that he was in for a fight and that Dr. Mahathir was clearly backing his rival. The Tunku comments on Dr. Mahathir's role in advance of the elections. "He recognised that things were getting heated and even commented that it appeared as though the contestants were from different parties. Yet publicly he had said nothing, and though he as President should not take sides, such was the situation that I believe he should have stepped in and diffused the smear tactics that were being used."

In his opening address Tun Hussein Onn surprised his audience when instead of discussing the state of the country in general he emphasised the gains made in education. This was seen by some delegates as a signal since Datuk Musa was Minister for Education. Tengku Razaleigh says he was astonished by this turn around especially since Tun Hussein had expressly asked him, prior to stepping down, "whether I could work with Dr. Mahathir". He took this to mean that Tun Hussein favoured him for the No. 2 position. At the end of the day Datuk Musa won by 722 to 517 votes. The first deep divisions in the party surfaced thereafter.

Foremost in the minds of UMNO's stalwarts, including the Tunku, was the danger that the party and the Government might lose the services of Tengku Razaleigh, something it could ill afford. Tun Hussein and Dr. Mahathir joined in the chorus appealing to Tengku Razaleigh to accept appointment to the UMNO Supreme Council and to remain in Government.

Tengku Razaleigh's response was: "I appreciate the good intentions of the delegates and others who urge me to continue to serve the party and the government. Making the decision is a heavy responsibility because it has a lot of implications both for the party and me personally. But as a Malay and a Muslim I am prepared to humble myself for the sake of the party. I pledge that I will serve UMNO until my last breath".

At the request of the Prime Minister and UMNO leaders he later decided to continue as Finance Minister and was part of the team that saw the National Front winning a resounding victory in the 1982 elections.

On Tengku Razaleigh's defeat, the Tunku was moved to recall later the role of Malaysian Royalty in the political development of the country. "Unfortunately some of Datuk

Musa's supporters were heard saying that Tengku Razaleigh's defeat marked the end of Royal personages in positions of great influence. These people were exhilarated because they felt that time had come for them to take over. But in reality their only claim to distinction is that they can smear the character of others by using their foul tongues and vicious pens. The business community anxiously and nervously waited for the result of the contest and have since accepted the outcome.

"It is a relief that Tengku Razaleigh has decided to remain in Cabinet. The people should not forget the work he put in Kelantan to restore UMNO supremacy and the sacrifices that he made to achieve this, using his own resources. He spent his own money to build up UMNO's strength and image. He spent years working at it and never sought recognition".

After the results of the election set the party leadership resolved to close ranks and on the face of it succeeded. But beneath the calm divisions within the UMNO widened progressively between the 1981 and 1984 party elections. The country on the other hand went through a phase of renewed prosperity.

The new Mahathir Administration began on a upbeat note with commitments to create a more efficient and dynamic government apparatus free of graft. Dr. Mahathir began by cracking the whip: moves compelling civil servants to clock-in, identify themselves and be more accountable to the public, augured well and brought accolades from neighbouring countries. Singapore warmed to the new Administration and over the years a new relationship based on mutual trust and strong personal bonds between Dr. Mahathir and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew ushered in a new era of cooperation.

In February 1983 the Tunku turned 80. Malaysians from all walks of life called on the Tunku at his Penang home to celebrate yet another milestone. For the Tunku it was an opportunity to reminisce in the supplements which all the leading newspapers carried. He spoke of past achievements, his disappointments and his hope for the future.

The re-emergence of the Tunku into the public eye closed an unhappy five-year chapter during which most of his missionary work went unreported. No less than the *New Straits Times*, referring to the Tunku's departure 10 years earlier, commented on the near-total obscurity into which he had

slipped. The paper noted: "The men around Tun Razak were instrumental in having the former Prime Minister blacked out at the press and almost ignored at public functions. It was Tun Hussein Onn, son of the Tunku's old political antagonist who welcomed him back to public life, treating him at functions as the elder statesman he was".

The Tunku himself chose not to dwell too much on the personal ignominy he endured and said instead: "I count my blessings; I have led a full existence and I am very grateful to God for having given me such an abundance of good things in life: health, luck, a sense of justice and above all integrity. I like to think I am a man of principles. I have always endeavoured to carry out what I had to do, regardless of what people may think or say". Asked how he was able to apportion his time between public and state responsibilities and his private life, he replied: "When I was in full harness I gave 75% of my life to the country, the people and my religion. I kept the other 25% for myself and my family, to do what I like with. That was more than enough. That was the secret of my contentment. I was satisfied with what I had. I did not want more for myself".

Speaking of his hobbies he regretted having to give up golf and not having anymore poker friends to enjoy a game with. But he maintained a lively interest in racing.

Apart from travelling around the country to special functions the Tunku spends most of his time in his Jalan Ayer Rajah home in Penang. As he has difficulty walking up the staircase the ground floor rooms have been renovated. One of them has been converted into a bedroom and another into a study.

His daily routine is anything but exceptional. He sleeps only for a few hours at night and rises as early as 3 am. He prays five times each day, beginning at 6 am. "I find prayers keep me composed and at peace. When I pray I surrender myself to God and put my life completely in his hands".

In one of the 80th birthday interviews he gave his views of developments since he stepped down from office. "We are still a young country and we have plenty of time ahead of us in which to strive for great progress. But we can achieve nothing without stability. And the greatest stability comes from racial harmony". He advised Malaysians to "stop politicking and get down seriously to the business of making Malaysia the best

country to live in. Not necessarily the best country in which to make money but the country in which we strive to provide the greatest good for the greatest number”.

Asked whether he felt the Mahathir Administration had lived up to its pledges he said a good start had been made and the government should be given more time to prove itself. On attempts to eradicate corruption he said “to get to the root of it you must go for the big fishes as well as small fry. We have had graft in Malaysia all the time. We cannot stop it completely.”

Pressed to assess the Mahathir administration he said: “No country, no Government is perfect. The present one I suppose is as good as any. One must however give it credit for trying to do better. We are fortunate in having the same pattern of Government, the same broad base party in power. Whoever is Prime Minister the Government has to continue the same consistent policy to make Malaysia one country for all. I tried to stop corruption when I was Prime Minister. I could have been a rich man myself but I ended up relatively unwealthy except for my own inheritance in Kedah. Corruption is a widespread evil. It’s one thing to try and get rid of it and another to succeed completely”.

Among the many accolades paid to the Tunku were revealing compliments from his children. Said Tunku Noor, then 16: “Pak is most sporty, he is not at all that strict about my going to parties or on dates. But Mak would definitely not agree. We girls must have a chaperone or go out in a group with other girls.” His son Tunku Sulaiman, then 28 said: “It’s the way he teaches us about life. He doesn’t force us to do anything; instead he lets us observe and learn the good and the bad, giving us advice when we needed.” Yet another daughter Tunku Faridah had this to say. “Although he was brought up in a different time, a different era, he does take the trouble to see things from our point of view”.

His beloved wife of more than 50 years, Sharifah said: “He tries to oblige everybody and ends up spending less time with his family sometimes. But that is his way of life: he has always taken other people’s welfare seriously and he is still doing so now. I am very proud of him”. She said she worried a lot over the strenuous schedule that he maintains. “He exerts himself too hard and sometimes I have to tell him to take it easy. He is not a young man anymore. But he believes in what he is doing



and I really don't have the heart to stop him. She described him as, "a most considerate and loving husband. He is kind, patient and understanding. In fact he is much too lenient with the children. It is me who is a strict disciplinarian while the Tunku is considered more sporting".

A final tribute to *Bapak Malaysia*, the compliment that the Tunku says is nearest and dearest to him, came from a housekeeper of many years. "He is the most considerate boss anybody could have. He built me a house near Rumah Merdeka and even paid for my children's school fees. He seldom loses his temper. If he is annoyed by your mistake he corrects you directly. He does not scold you behind your back or keep anything to heart. The one thing he hates most is dishonesty."

Despite the Tunku's advice that there should be less politicking it was not heeded in UMNO circles. Supporters of both Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa squared up in advance of the "second round contest" between them. Tengku Razaleigh adopted a different strategy to that in 1981 and the media constantly referred to him as "the new Tengku Razaleigh so unlike a man who took on Musa in 1981". He realised that Dr. Mahathir would continue to support his deputy, as part of the '2M' leadership. The Finance Minister, raising the tenor of the challenge stressed national issues and called the development of the national culture. He also warned again being misled by pseudo-nationalists.

The early declaration of support by Dr. Mahathir for his deputy did not go down well with sections of the party who felt that he should remain impartial. Later he tried to restate his position. "It is not that I want to support Musa. In fact even he is confused thinking I am supporting him." He said his earlier endorsement was necessary because "people are spreading rumours that he and I don't talk to each other or see eye to eye on several issues".

A new element was the challenge posed by Datuk Harun Idris who had since been released from prison. Despite being in jail he had been elected one of the three vice-presidents, a clear display of widespread support he enjoyed among the younger UMNO members. Datuk Harun openly voiced his disapproval of the Prime Minister's backing of Datuk Musa. Ironically it had been Datuk Harun who played a major part in Dr. Mahathir being re-accepted by UMNO during the tenure of

Tun Razak. Similarly after Dr. Mahathir became Prime Minister he petitioned for Datuk Harun to be pardoned. He was subsequently offered a full pardon by the King.

In April 1984, as Tengku Razaleigh's campaign entered into high gear a totally unexpected source of flak emanated from Hong Kong.

It came from the Carrian's scandal which resulted from Bank Bumiputra's Hong Kong subsidiary making doubtful loans running into hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mak Foon Than was accused of killing Encik Jalil Ibrahim, a Bank Bumi official who was investigating the loans. Mak, in an initial statement, claimed that he had visited Hong Kong earlier to collect US\$6 million from Kuok brothers on behalf of the Malaysian Finance Minister. Mak further claimed he worked for the Finance Ministry. In his statement he however did not refer to Tengku Razaleigh by name. Nevertheless the timing of his statement was very damaging.

After the party elections Mak, in May 1984, denied in a Hong Kong Court having named the Minister of Finance in his cautioned statement. He claimed that he was told that one of the cautioned statements was for the "personal use" of the interrogating officer only. At the time of making the statement he was in constant pain as a result of sustaining a fracture while trying to avoid arrest. Despite Mak's retraction and the request for a select committee to look into the allegations the Malaysian Government remained tight-lipped. This forced Tengku Razaleigh to declare that an 'invisible power' was at work.

Speaking to thousands of supporters he did not mince his words when referring to the elections in 1981 and 1984. "In 1981 I was linked with the UMBC affair (sale of shares in the bank to the Multi Purpose Group) but I had to keep quiet because of the collective responsibility towards leaders in the government). This time the BMF matter has been raised shortly before the UMNO Assembly. The case was due to be held in September 1983 but was arranged to begin only a month before the Assembly."

The Tunku attended the 1984 UMNO Assembly and was surprised at the huge attendance. "Hundreds could not get into the conference room and had to be satisfied with watching the proceedings from the close circuit televisions and to listen to the Prime Minister's speech from outside the conference room.

This shows how important UMNO has become, how much progress has been made and how much confidence it has won from the people. So when the Prime Minister mentioned in his speech that money was being lavished to obtain places in the UMNO division, branches and the hierarchy, I thought to myself, this is only natural as the party has become so important to the Malays”.

In his address Dr. Mahathir said: “Attitudes have changed and today people see a lot of prestige and even power to be got by winning a seat in the UMNO policy making body. It is not just that, it is the perks that come with it. They also see a lot of prestige and opportunity coming with the post. Therefore, we now have a mixture of people — some who wish to serve and some to gain the opportunity”.

During the course of his speech Dr. Mahathir attempted to justify amendments to the Constitution. As an example he cited Singapore which was expelled from Malaysia. The people were not consulted then (by the Tunku’s government) he said. As such there was no need to consult the people directly on the matter of the changes to the Constitution, he argued.

The Tunku took exception to this. “I had explained before that the circumstances (in the case of Singapore) were quite different. The situation was charged and we had a major crisis on our hands. I did it to preserve peace in the country and that was good enough reason”. The Tunku of course did consult with his close cabinet colleagues before making that momentous decision. Nevertheless Dr. Mahathir has cited that example on a number of occasions since.

On Tengku Razaleigh’s defeat, the Tunku commiserated with him saying: “Take heart, the time will come when you will have better luck but the fact that you contested the seat shows the spirit which has helped to glorify UMNO. There is always success and failure, gladness and sadness, but that is the way of politics.”

Following his defeat Tengku Razaleigh offered to step down from the Cabinet but again was persuaded by Dr. Mahathir to remain and accept the Trade and Industry Portfolio. He however lost control as UMNO Kelantan Chief following a decision by the Assembly that only the Chief Ministers were to head the UMNO party in their respective states.

But more drama was to follow. First in Sabah where matters came to a head; but even more dramatic was the sudden end to the much touted '2M' relationship. It would have a major bearing on the 1987 party elections and developments thereafter.

The ruling Berjaya party which was returned in 1981 under Datuk Harris Salleh faced a leadership crisis in late 1984 when Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan broke with Datuk Harris. He took on Berjaya as a independent in the Tambunan Constituency. He trounced the ruling party's candidate, prompting an irate Datuk Harris to immediately reduce the status of the Tambunan district and remove Government officers to another district.

The public outrage further angered Datuk Harris and he blamed the media for waging a campaign against his party. His press aide Datuk Majid Khan went as far as to say: "These journalists would offer their hand to Berjaya for a price; and when the demands are rejected, they turn against Berjaya and the Government."

The Tunku resented the statement and said: "This is a very serious charge to make against our press which has been so well respected. I can say for sure that *The Star*, (of which the Tunku was Chairman) did not approach Berjaya for such a kick-back. I don't think any other journalist would have resorted to such acts of depravity".

In defence of the drastic action taken by the Sabah Government Tan Sri Sufflan Koroh said that the Government's duty to provide development, economic opportunities and other benefits were limited to its supporters, and that it could not be expected to provide equal care to its opponents. According to him the State Government action was nothing new. He claimed that the Tunku as Prime Minister ordered the Government to stop work on bridges midway in Kelantan and Trengganu because PAS won the elections there in the early 1960's.

The Tunku responded: "I have little recollection of this and even if I did do those things, then the Sabah government should be the last to emulate an error. In 1959 PAS won both states. To the best of my memory all Federal projects were carried out in these two states wherever possible. And I remembered too there were certain projects which we wanted to carry out but which the PAS Government opposed. For

example when we wanted to build a hospital in Kota Bahru, the PAS Government refused to give us the site for the hospital”.

The hospital has since been completed. “They also refused to accept the land development schemes attempts because they were afraid that the Federal Government would get the credit and they would lose face. It was only natural that when we carried out any projects in the states we made a song about it. Politics being what it is, the louder we sing the more applause we get”.

Returning to the Sabah situation the Tunku said. “Nobody in his right senses would agree with what was done by the Sabah government in abrogating the status of the district because of the defeat Berjaya had suffered. Datuk Harris Salleh explained that this was not the first time it was done — three other districts have had their status abrogated but that was for other reasons. In the case of Tambunan it suffered punishment because the people had voted against his party. Nobody can deny that the government action is both cruel and unjust and contrary to our idea of democracy. This Sabah-style democracy is not one for which we are sworn to uphold”.

A little more than a year later Datuk Pairin Kitingan’s PBS party swept into power, ousting Berjaya. Datuk Harris cried foul and attempted to get the Federal Government to declare a state of Emergency on the grounds that the Christain-led government would wage a war of vendetta against the Muslims in Sabah. Datuk Musa Hitam as Deputy Prime Minister at that time refused the request.

Later Dato Musa was compelled to take some tough decisions during the Memali incident. The army and police were called in to quell a group of PAS extremists who were prepared to spill blood in defence of a village which they controlled in Kedah. On both occasions the Prime Minister was abroad. Then came the bombshell.

Barely nine months after he had been re-elected Deputy President of UMNO, Datuk Musa resigned dramatically, on February 27th 1985, claiming that he was no longer consulted on important matters and that the Prime Minister was surrounded by a kitchen cabinet made up of Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin, then Agriculture Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and then Minister of National and Rural Development Datuk

Sanusi Junid. Datuk Musa's decision to break with his leader followed a statement by Dr. Mahathir at a UMNO Supreme Council meeting that certain leaders were slandering him as being corrupt in an endeavour to overthrow him. He later admitted he had Datuk Musa to mind.

Quite unexpectedly Dr. Mahathir chose as Deputy Prime Minister veteran politician, Encik Ghafar Baba. Encik Ghafar had resigned from Cabinet in 1976 after he had been passed over by Tun Hussein Onn who chose Dr. Mahathir instead as his No. 2. Says the Tunku: "There was nobody more suited to succeed Datuk Musa than Abdul Ghafar Baba". According to the Tunku, Ghafar is the attribute of Allah meaning "all forgiving". The name must however be preceded by a prefix "Abdul" meaning "servant".

Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba at the time of his election was the oldest serving UMNO vice president and began his political career as a member of the Malay Nationalist Party in the early 40's. He left UMNO when Datuk Onn was President but returned when the Tunku took over.

The Tunku recalls Encik Ghafar Baba's invaluable contribution to UMNO particularly in the 50's when as head of Malacca division he played a critical role in galvanising support. "The meeting in Malacca in 1953 resolved to call for general elections and with it a challenge to the government to make good the intention to give Malaya self-determination through the process of elections. The Malacca meeting made a great impact in the minds of the people of the country and we must thank Abdul Ghafar for organising it."

Significantly, when the date of independence was agreed, the Tunku formally announced it in Malacca. The Alliance party symbol was also a Malacca sailing boat.

## CHAPTER 20

On Encik Ghafar's return to power, the Tunku says: "This might well put him in the running for the post of Prime Minister after Dr. Mahathir. On the basis of seniority and popularity one might have thought that he would have been appointed deputy to Hussein Onn. But perhaps because of his inability to show a university degree he was passed over in favour of Dr. Mahathir. Many years ago I mentioned to him that he was still young and that he might want to break away for a few years from his government duties to acquire a degree for himself. But he had to support a family and refused my suggestion. I saw in him the potential to become one of the top leaders of the country one day." The Tunku notes that Encik Ghafar shares the same zodiac sign as Tun Hussein and himself — Aquarius.

Within a week of the Nasional Front's sweeping victory in 1986 Dr. Mahathir embarked on a major exercise to downgrade perceived allies and supporters of Dato Musa. Intended as an exercise in consolidation, if not self-preservation, it nevertheless whipped up an UMNO backlash at the 37th Assembly held a month later.

The Cabinet reshuffle saw Finance Minister Datuk Daim Zainuddin — so often in the eye of controversies — retaining his position. Anwar Ibrahim was named Education Minister while his cabinet rival and party former Secretary - General, Dato Sanusi Junid took the Agriculture portfolio.

Dato Musa's "boys" were adversely affected. Dato Abdul Ajib Ahmad, former Johore Chief Minister was made a deputy minister in the Prime Minister's office — a move clearly aimed at removing a key figure from Dato Musa's home base. Federal Territory Minister, Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad, was given the Welfare Portfolio, while Land and Regional Development Minister, Dato Seri Adib Adam was dropped. Outgoing Pahang

Chief Minister, Datuk Najib Abdul Razak, once a protege of Tengku Razaleigh and also perceived to be an ally of Dato Musa, was given the Culture, Youth & Sports portfolio.

Tengku Razaleigh retained his Trade & Industry portfolio, a move designed to demonstrate that he had been "rewarded" for delivering the Kelantan votes, and also allow Dr. Mahathir to keep an eye on him.

The Cabinet changes prompted the Tunku at the time to recall the composition and the manner in which Cabinet meetings were run during his tenure. After 1964 the Government had only thirteen Cabinet Ministers, and prior to the Cabinet meetings which began at 10 am, the Prime Minister would brief the King on the business of the day and seek any views that he may have to offer. On occasions the Minister concerned would meet with the King to explain more fully the matter in question. Such a practice, says the Tunku, was desirable to ensure that the King was properly briefed on what went on in the day-to-day government business.

The Tunku also wrote, and spoke at length on the Amendment to Article 181(2) which in essence abrogated the King's power of assent. Introduced by Dr. Mahathir's Government it meant that if the King failed to assent to a bill within two weeks it automatically became law.

The Amendment caused a stir throughout the nation, highlighting as it did "the weakness in our Constitution which can be amended so easily", the Tunku noted. "We find it difficult to lay our hands on any particular subject which has been retained in its original form. Most of the articles of the Constitution have been amended particularly in respect of the Emergency Powers."

The Amendment did not sit well with most of the Rulers; they feared that the already nominal powers of the King were being further eroded. Dr. Mahathir convincingly carried his reasons for the Amendment to the *rakyat*. He argued that a Monarch who chose not to fulfil his constitutional responsibilities could frustrate the Executive and in times of an Emergency thus paralyse the functions of government. The Amendment provoked strong feelings in many States among subjects who revere their Ruler but Dr. Mahathir's deft handling of the situation rapidly diffused the tension that had been engendered during the weeks of public discussion.



The monarch at the time was the Sultan of Johor, Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Ismail, who ascended the throne as the eighth King of Malaysia in 1984. The new King came in for some media bashing in London and the Tunku wrote a stinging rebuttal protesting a cartoon which lampooned the monarch, and articles that insinuated he was a brutal individual. The Tunku said: "The whole article cast serious aspersions on the integrity of our Government and country. It is a shocking revelation of the spite and ignorance on the part of the writer. The article alleged that the King had ordered offenders to be tortured and claimed that any person crossing his path might disappear altogether after being beaten to death by one of his henchmen or even himself.

"The Sultan may have committed some acts which were not proper but to accuse him of killing his victims and disposing of their corpses is outrageous." The article also included glaring errors about the Sultan's personal life and the Tunku condemned the writer (a lady) as being "a vindictive and wicked old witch whose sole intention was to harm and ridicule others for the sake of cheap sensation."

In late October 1986 the Tunku underwent a month's treatment for a slipped disc in London. Despite the agony of traction treatment for nearly ten days he steadily regained his appetite, and went on to put on a bit of weight. On his return he was met by a large group of well wishers which included the Deputy Foreign Minister and a number of Ambassadors.

The presence of a Minister at the airport signalled the correct, if not cordial relations, that the Tunku maintained with Dr. Mahathir's government. The reproachment, initiated by Dr. Mahathir in 1982, was widely welcomed by Malaysians who preferred to forget the bitter exchanges that took place between them from 1969 until 1982 when Dr. Mahathir offered a tacit apology. Dr. Mahathir also attended the Tunku's 82nd birthday celebrated in Kuala Lumpur. The occasion coincided with the launching of gold and silver commemorative medallions in honour of the Tunku. The \$600,000 raised was later handed over to the Tunku Abdul Rahman Foundation for the setting up of a Chair for International Law Studies at the University of Malaya.

A newspaper account of the occasion says that, "At 4 pm sharp the Tunku arrived in a wheelchair and was helped to the

seat on the dais. Ten minutes later the Prime Minister arrived". The article referred to the convivial atmosphere and the light-hearted exchange between the two. The Deputy Minister present, Dr. Fadzil Che Wan, was moved to say in his speech: "Tunku is Malaysia and Malaysia is Tunku. We love the country and we love *Bapak Malaysia*."

Meanwhile, in the political arena impassioned statements by UMNO leaders ensured that a mood of Malay nationalism dominated the September 1986 party caucus. But not without its consequences. Malay politicians repeatedly emphasised that most of the MCA and Gerakan MPs had won primarily because of UMNO support, but their Chinese partners rebutted the claims, arguing instead that their losses were due to excessively pro-*Bumiputra* policies.

Sensing the mood of the members, several leaders sought to capitalise on the situation by forcefully adopting a "more Malay than thou" stance. Even the Prime Minister, while endeavouring to temper heated passions was moved to state that: "We were patient when they criticised the Government. We remained silent when sarcasm was used in the newspapers, when several chauvinists talked as if Malays had no rights in this country, as if this country was not originally the land of the Malays but part of a foreign land".

The Assembly was also used by delegates to press for an extension of the National Economic Policy (NEP) beyond 1990. Seizing the opportunity Dr. Mahathir assured them that the National Front government would extend the policy until the targets were achieved because "the policy mirrors our willingness to compromise and give importance to non-*bumiputras*". Pointedly he added: "Let no one presume that when we remain silent when our rights are challenged, we feel we are weak or in the wrong. We do not wish to rob other people of their rights. But let no one try to rob us of ours".

Dato Musa, appearing for the time together with Dr. Mahathir, since their rift, endeavoured to test his support on the ground. Johore delegates demanded to know the true facts leading to his resignation but neither of the two leaders were prepared for a showdown in public.

But Dato Musa's speech did draw widespread criticism from pro-Mahathir supporters. Dato Musa had warned delegates against falling victim to the 'silent syndrome',

whether voluntarily or on instruction “every time an issue arises that requires your voice to be heard or proper action be taken”. He added: “That syndrome will take root when you are all insensitive or cold to current political development ... or if you choose to be a mere commentator for statements made by certain leaders with the aim of attracting the attention of these leaders and becoming better known to them.

“If today you have continuity in leadership do you have continuity in style or philosophy?” he asked. He warned of “defects in the struggle” which could cause the party to lose direction. It was a mild rebuke at the Prime Minister’s leadership style — variously described as combative and dictatorial. In retrospect his warning presaged the fate that UMNO has since met.

It was also the first salvo of a comeback — one that was not lost on the pro-Mahathir faction in the Supreme Council. Later Dato Musa would complain of not being consulted despite being deputy president of UMNO. Such complaints were brushed away but the increasing isolation of a perceived leader would in time bring into question Dr. Mahathir’s claim to uphold UMNO’s democratic philosophy.

A bystander at the 1986 assembly was Tengku Razaleigh. Though he did not take an active part in the debate it was an ideal opportunity to gauge the levels of support for Dr. Mahathir and Dato Musa and to take political soundings of which way the current was flowing. The challenge thus came into sharper focus.

In a blunt assessment of the Malaysian economy, one report concluded that it was “in pellmell retreat” and that the government’s fiscal policies were “in complete disarray”. Any lingering hopes that the country might have weathered the M\$6 billion drop in commodity export earnings were brutally dispelled by the 1987 budget estimates presented by Finance Minister Daim in October 1986.

The Minister confirmed that deficits in the budget, and in the current account, had deteriorated sharply; in short that the steady improvements since 1982 had been reversed. Datuk Daim’s gloomy forecast confirmed wide-spread suspicions that Malaysia was in a worse financial position than even the earlier pessimistic forecasts. A grim-faced parliament heard the Finance Minister forecast a GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in real

terms. "Malaysians, who are used to good times", he said, "must now face the reality of difficult times ... we have to take bold and decisive measures."

At about the same time the World Bank called for an "unshackling" of the country's industrial investment policy, and in particular rigid rules designed to enhance *Bumiputra* participation. It also expressed concern over Malaysia's (then) US\$16.5 billion debt burden.

It noted that after having gone through a period of remarkable growth the economy seemed to be in the doldrums, at a time when a primary producer like Malaysia needed capital more urgently than ever to industrialise. Its exports prospects were clouded, thus reducing the chances of attracting foreign investment.

The report coincided with reports in October 1986 that Dr. Mahathir had suggested to his Japanese counterpart the possibility of converting Japanese loans into equity, and a reduction in interest rates. The requests came in the face of a 60 per cent appreciation of the Yen against the Ringgit. In 1986, according to the Ministry of Finance, Japan accounted for 57 percent of the country's gross borrowings of \$5.5 billion during that fiscal year. At that time 17 per cent of the outstanding debt of \$40 billion was denominated in Yen. (This has since been reduced substantially given the buoyant economic up-turn in 1989).

Dr. Mahathir's "equitising" the Yen debt proposal caught bankers by surprise as it flew in the face of the NEP whose main goal is to transfer foreign equity in local companies to Malaysians, particularly *Bumiputras*. They were just as concerned with the showpiece projects in which Japanese equity was substantial — the Proton Saga project, and the Perwaja Trengganu Iron and Steel Works. These together with the Kedah Cement project were among the more publicised of a half dozen industrialisation projects launched in the 1980's. The Proton project, undertaken by Hicom Industries, has since turned around, and efforts are being made to rehabilitate Perwaja.

Amidst the uphill economic battle the foreign media launched a series of exposes, revealing the role of the government and senior officials in several financial transactions. The principal target of several *Asian Wall Street*

*Journal* articles was Datuk Daim, who the paper claimed was the principal beneficiary. After almost a year the government's patience cracked. It suspended the *Journal* for a period of three months from September 26, and rescinded the work permits of two of its correspondents.

No specific reason for the ban was offered, with Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Datuk Megat Junid saying only that the *Journal* had 'created feelings of uncertainty among the people'. He later accused the *Journal* of sabotaging the country's economic development.

Dr. Mahathir was more forthright. Having accused one of the correspondents of being "against Malaysia", he condemned the articles as "lies by omission, lies by commission". Datuk Daim himself described one of the articles as "trash". He however, said he would not sue because the *Journal* "was trying to lay a trap for me to fall in by means of dirty untruths". The *Journal's* New York — based parent publication condemned what it termed "the moral rot" in Malaysia.

Two months later Dr. Mahathir won parliamentary approval for his controversial Official Secrets Act (OSA). The OSA, described as an "anti-espionage legacy of pre-World War I Britain" was amended to tighten secrecy laws after two earlier versions tabled by the government were withdrawn in the face of criticism from wide sections of the community.

The final Amendment, passed in December 1986, also met fierce criticism and was preceded by a series of protest meetings by lawyers and public interest groups, pickets by 2,000 journalists, and a nation-wide signature campaign. Justifying a mandatory jail sentence Dr. Mahathir said "the problem for the Government is to differentiate between protests with political overtones and genuine grievances. He said there were opposition groups for whom "opposing everything the Government does has become a practice".

The existing Act, he said, was too wide and instead he introduced a schedule categorising secrets under three broad categories: cabinet and government papers; documents covering defence and national security; and documents referring to foreign relations. A custodial sentence he said was the only suitable deterrent for those who leak government secrets.

The point was not lost on many who had been regular recipients of an array of classified documents which revealed

less-than totally arms-length dealings by many in positions of influence. To this the leader of the opposition, Lim Kit Siang, replied: "Knowledge is power. Without information, the right of freedom of speech and expression has no meaning." His party's objection was to the revelation of information "which would not compromise national security ... but merely embarrass the Government of the day in highlighting the ineptitude, incompetence, misjudgement, wrong doing or corrupt practices of ministers, political leaders and civil servants."

The Malaysian Bar Council also demanded an inquiry into the country's economic woes and charges of nepotism. Their demands were brushed aside and viewed as being politically motivated.

1986 also brought to an end the long festering saga within the MCA. Previously the party was seriously divided over the challenge by Tan Koon Swan to acting President, Dr. Neo Yee Pan — a bitter and bruising battle that embroiled the National Front. Tan, once described as the man with the midas touch, sunk millions in his attempt to wrest control from Dr. Neo who had been the choice of outgoing President Datuk Lee San Choon. At the height of the struggle, (then Deputy Prime Minister) Dato Musa suggested that the MCA should withdraw from the National Front and settle their internal squabbles.

The Tunku did not share this view. "Withdrawal of the MCA from the National Front would mean that one of the pillars which supports the party in power has broken down and this may eventually lead to its collapse. The MCA and UMNO have been the mainstay of the political solidarity of this country. We started together during those difficult periods to fight for independence and together we won glory for the country". Though Mr. Tan was elected president of the MCA a year later his political career and his business empire crumbled.

## CHAPTER 21

Before 1987 was out the country witnessed the ignominious spectacle of the Co-operatives scandal which resulted in a blow to the morale of the Chinese. But the national consequences were wider and in time would put a further strain on communal relations. As one report put it: "While not actually rejoicing in the misfortune of the co-operatives, the Malays feel a sense of relief because the scandal, for a change, puts the spotlight on Chinese corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency".

The consequences went beyond the huge financial losses, some M\$600 million, suffered by thousands of members. The long-festered scandal finally surfaced in late August 1986, when the Finance Minister announced the suspension of 23 of the deposit — taking co-operatives (DTC's) and the freezing of \$1.4 billion in deposits. In addition 72 directors and principal officers were ordered to disclose their assets to the Central Bank. They were also ordered to hand over their passports to the Immigration Department.

The crackdown had begun in July with some 17 private accounting firms retained by the Government to vet the books of the Co-operatives. But by this time massive runs on a number of financial institutions had taken place.

The list of officer-bearers, when released, set off reverberations across the upper echelons of Malaysian politics and business. It included deputy finance minister, Datuk Tan Tiong Hong, MCA heavyweights Tan Koon Swan (by then serving a jail sentence in Singapore for his role in the Pan-Electric debacle), MCA Youth leader, Datuk Kee Yong Wee, and deputy minister, Wang Choon Wing. (In the months ahead several more were prosecuted and jailed).

Given the close ties between some leaders of the MCA and

the Co-operatives, the reaction to the crackdown — which revealed massive fraud in the form of unsecured loans for share-market speculation — was mixed. Party president Datuk Dr. Ling Liong Sik defended Bank Negara's "quick and decisive action". Others however were furious that the Bank's action pre-empted efforts to form a consortium to salvage what was left.

Small depositors by the thousands were stunned by the revelations which put paid to the credibility of some Chinese leaders they had faithfully supported. It would take a year before many of the depositors received part-payment against deposits frozen by the authorities.

Dr. Mahathir's "simmering irritation" with his detractors spilled over while addressing a 4,000-strong rally. His target was "intellectual elites" who he said used their organisations to build up a personal power base. His exasperation with their leaders turned into open confrontation when he challenged the groups — later identified as Aliran, the Bar Council, Selangor Graduates Association, Consumers Association of Penang and the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia — to register as political organisations.

"The majority must respect the right of the minority to voice their opinions but the majority must not be forced to accept minority views," he stated. Despite the success of the National Front at the polls his critics would not gracefully accept the decision of the people, he complained.

Dismissing opposition to the OSA, the prime minister reminded his critics that the very fact an anti-OSA campaign received press coverage proved that democracy was alive in Malaysia, unlike some countries "where anyone who speaks out against the government will be thrown into prison. But (here) they are free to travel all over, to attack the government, to slander and lie all the time." These frustrated people had influenced "certain people" whom they dragged around to make speeches.

Among the likely targets of the Prime Minister was former Auditor-General, Tan Sri Ahmad Nordin Zakaria, who headed the Freedom of Information Movement. Tan Sri Nordin later responded by saying that criticising political decisions did not necessarily mean that one had political ambitions. "People should not be classified as being pro or anti-government. As



there are many colours so are there shadows of opinion”, he stressed.

The Prime Minister’s onslaught, amidst growing economic pressures, foreshadowed the challenge that was taking substance. A challenge, not from the outside, but from within UMNO.

The race for the leadership of UMNO began in earnest in late 1986 with campaigning for polls at branch and divisional levels. At stake during the triennial elections were 30 crucial seats — that of the president, deputy president, three vice-presidents and 25 Supreme Council members.

With Dr. Mahathir signalling his intention to seek a third term, the spotlight turned on a possible challenge to the presidency, and the contest for the No. 2 position in the party. As the incumbent deputy leader, there was never any doubt that Dato Musa would defend his position. And since Dr. Mahathir had chosen Ghafar Baba to succeed Dato Musa, he was expected to back his nominee. Speculation over the exact nature of the challenge for key positions mounted with various scenarios mooted — many of which were inspired more by the imagination. Initially it was rumoured that Datuk Harun Idris, former Menteri Besar of Selangor would offer the president a token challenge. Tengku Razaleigh was reported to be getting feedback before deciding on which position to contest, and Ghafar Baba was doing his best trying not to appear too eager to fit into Dato Musa’s shoes.

Rumours making the rounds suggested that Ghafar Baba in particular was in a predicament. Though hand-picked by Dr. Mahathir he had long enjoyed a close personal friendship with Tengku Razaleigh. On two previous occasions he had supported him against Dato Musa, and they were viewed as natural allies.

But having become deputy prime minister and thus by implication a “Mahathir man”, could he expect the Tengku to assist him? It is known that aides of the two men met to consider an agreement but reported that “Ghafar Baba’s hands are tied”. He thus faced the prospect of being challenged directly by Dato Musa, or worse still, embroiled in a three-corner fight involving the Tengku.

Dato Musa was among the first to fire the opening salvo. In a wide-ranging interview he lifted the veil on party politics and

his relations with other UMNO leaders. He suggested that political contests should not be viewed negatively — despite UMNO's long tradition of respecting as sacrosanct the top position in the party. "I always say what's wrong with a contest?"

Was it a signal that Dato Musa planned to take on Dr. Mahathir? He wouldn't commit himself, but went further to reveal the reasons for the rift between them. Asked whether his campaigning style in the States could have irked the president he replied: "Once in a while he would mention certain things and I, of course would explain, and he gave me the impression that the explanation was accepted. Mind you, on hindsight, he did say things about certain personalities of whom he was critical. So I suppose on this basis I had been thought (to be) heading for a confrontation. This was absolutely untrue. There was no reason for me to be grabbing ... to (try to) push the Prime Minister out. No reason at all, especially if you remember what Mahathir himself has said about succession: Why should I be impatient?"

Asked about Dr. Mahathir's statement that he resigned partly because of his (Dato Musa's) insistence that Tengku Razaleigh be dropped from the cabinet, he replied. "That so-called famous letter. I was only saying that I was already worried and weary of money politics, how much I had to face, yet knowing I could not afford it." Though he declined to elaborate, when the contents of the letter were leaked it revealed both a distrust and fear of Tengku Razaleigh's power base. But he remained coy about his plans towards the April 1987 UMNO election.

At this point few believed that Dr. Mahathir was under an imminent threat of a formidable challenge. Despite growing criticism of the style and substance of his leadership political analysts felt he was in no danger of losing the party's presidency.

Talk of a possible alliance between Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa first surfaced in early December. By that time feelers had already been sent out by Dato Musa's aides.

Initially the idea was scoffed at by supporters of Tengku Razaleigh, who himself did not seriously consider his arch-rival an asset. Many in Tengku Razaleigh's camp had not forgotten the fierce fights of 1981 and 1984 and the number of

party members whose careers had been jeopardised after Dr. Mahathir came to power. There were also fears of “further treachery”, implying that the pact was mooted as a ploy, and orchestrated by other prominent leaders to sabotage any plans that Tengku Razaleigh nursed.

The pact between Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa was not a formal one. No documents were exchanged but handshakes galore there were between most of the influential leaders from both factions. But not all. There were individual heavyweights who didn't whole-heartedly support the marriage of convenience, and at the grass-roots level in some divisions the news was received with stony politeness.

Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa had privately decided on the positions they would contest, but to ensure confidentiality it was a secret well-guarded but from a handful. By late February, despite his insistence that he would only contest “a top party post” it seemed certain that he would oppose Dr. Mahathir for the presidency. “There is only one post for him to contest”, former UMNO Supreme Council member Puan Marina Yusoff told the media. “He has got to go for No. 1, because in our party and government it is only the No. 1 that counts. The rest have little or no influence. Mahathir has had his six years.” It was a premature pronouncement.

That sentiment certainly wasn't shared by Dr. Mahathir and his team — in particular national personalities who had declared for him way in advance. They included Education Minister Encik Anwar Ibrahim, Trengganu Menteri Besar, Dato Wan Mokhtar, Malacca Chief Minister, Dato Rahim Thamby Chik, and of course, Ghafar Baba and Dato Daim Zainuddin.

Encik Anwar in particular hogged the headlines — the result of a well-orchestrated media campaign by heads of the party-controlled media including the television stations. The brash and boastful Dato Ahmad Sebi, a man reportedly close to the top leadership but now in oblivion abroad, played a key role. Encik Anwar feigned uncertainty but it was widely-known he planned to step down from UMNO Youth and bid for one of the three vice-presidencies. As one report put it: “For Anwar the way is up, and he has no choice but to go for the vice-presidency if only to survive.”

The Education Minister meanwhile baffled many by suing for peace with Parti Islam (PAS). The opposition PAS had

earlier accused UMNO members of being *kafir* (infidels). Following PAS's withdrawal from the Barisan Nasional in 1977 the idea of a rapprochement had been brought up on a number of occasions. Between 1979 and 1981, the Ulama Association, a body representing religious scholars and ABIM, the Muslim Youth organisation headed by Encik Anwar before he entered politics at the invitation of Dr. Mahathir, tried to mediate between the two parties. But it was not until 1982 that UMNO opened channels of communication with PAS. Encik Anwar's old ties with PAS leaders helped.

In 1984 PAS indicated it was ready for direct talks but charged that UMNO leaders were "too arrogant". Dr. Mahathir responded by challenging PAS leaders to a televised debate. But three days before it was scheduled to take place, the Conference of Rulers ordered that it be cancelled. They felt it would cause further divisions between the Muslims. The Tunku was among those who counselled against what was dubbed as the "debate of the century". If it had in fact taken place the consequences could have been dire for Malays in general.

In early 1986 the Prime Minister received PAS leaders at his official residence. Encik Anwar was part of the UMNO delegation. Later in the year he met with them again, this time in the U.S. He however, denied there was a private "four-eyes only" meeting. "We took part in a forum," he explained. "The whole thing took place in a very congenial and friendly atmosphere. There was no bitterness. This is a positive move. We can take it from here."

Dato Musa announced his decision to defend his position with eight weeks to go before the April polls. By going for No. 2 he made it clear that he never intended to challenge Dr. Mahathir — one of the allegations levelled against him. Other reasons could well have been the realisation that Tengku Razaleigh stood a better chance; alternatively Dato Musa preferred to play it safe.

"It is clear that he wants Mahathir out and he is only using Razaleigh," said current Minister of Information, Dato Mohammed Rahmat. A long-time foe of Dato Musa, he claimed "Musa is trying to kill two birds with one stone — embarrass Mahathir and kill off Razaleigh." Dato Rahmat's remarks, coming after he declared his support for Dr. Mahathir (despite

having been dropped from a previous Cabinet) were seen as driving a wedge between the new alliance.

Dato Musa appeared evenly matched against Ghafar but the odds favoured Dr. Mahathir in the event of a frontal challenge, observers felt. One asked: "What if Musa makes it alone and Razaleigh loses out? It's back to the old stalemate." It was a concern that was repeatedly advanced, even as Tengku Razaleigh stepped up his nation-wide travels to garner support. On one occasion he was guest of honour in Segamat, Dato Musa's power base, while the latter travelled to Tengku Razaleigh's bastion at Gua Musang, Kelantan.

Rumours hinted of a possibility of Trengganu's Dato Wan Mokhtar drifting towards the Razaleigh-Musa camp. This proved to be untrue. Pahang, home state of Datuk Najib Razak was also expected to back the joint-ticket, but at the last minute there was an unexplained switch of support. The battle for delegates from Selangor, Perak and Negri Sembilan proved decisive in shaping the final outcome.

As the battle cry resounded, with more divisions nominating Tengku Razaleigh for the presidency, he came out with a strong statement saying he would support those who backed him. "Whoever supports me, if there is such support it will be reciprocated." The declaration came on March 3, a day after Dato Musa openly advocated that he stand for the presidency. Tengku Razaleigh's decision was taken after "discussing it with my friends and the UMNO elders." This was a reference to Tunku Abdul Rahman and other old-guard leaders.

The Tunku watched the contest with mounting interest. In previous years he had rarely criticised Dr. Mahathir's Administration, though in his weekly articles in *The Star* he did comment candidly and advise on how best some of the national problems could be best resolved.

The Administration for its part refrained from commenting on the Tunku's suggestions. Though some ministers were irked by his continued participation in national politics they followed Dr. Mahathir's no-comment attitude — a safer recourse, given the Tunku's wide respect throughout the country. All this would change within a year.

## CHAPTER 22

By late March 1987 there was no doubt in anyone's mind that Dr. Mahathir was going to be challenged by Tengku Razaleigh. The campaign galvanised into a war of words with allegations of wrong doing traded fast and furiously. The joint-challenge by Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa meant pulling out all the stops.

Dato Musa chose a Penang divisional meeting — a Tengku Razaleigh stronghold — to make a blistering attack on those who he claimed hid their quest for personal glory behind “masks of morality”. These opportunists, he claimed, were not afraid to cheat or lie in order to project themselves to be more moral than others. This group of leaders who gave the appearance of being uncompromising towards corruption had instead allowed graft to spread before their eyes, he said.

There was little doubt who he was referring to. “What is said should come from the heart. Don't talk and mean something else. This is not in line with the clean, efficient and trustworthy concept which seems to have been forgotten. That concept which gave one hope in 1982 seems to have vanished.”

To soften the direct challenge to Dr. Mahathir, Dato Musa said he chose not to disparage anyone in particular but only wanted UMNO members to be aware of these matters. Turning to charges that those who dared to criticise the leadership were branded as part of the opposition, he said: “In this age those who are always “yes men” live and progress. Whereas those who for the sake of truth and justice say “no sir” become victims of circumstances.”

Not by coincidence alone the Government had begun to give more prominence to the fight against corruption. The continuing recession coupled with mismanagement witnessed

the collapse of several businesses including two leading banks. Even Dr. Mahathir — who vehemently denied any wrongdoing on the part of his Administration was moved to say in London, on the subject of tenders and bribes: “We live in a society which no longer has any honour”. It was a scathing generalisation which his critics capitalised on. They alleged that such practices among his own cronies had been left unchecked.

The final weeks in the run-up to the elections also witnessed a spate of “flying letters” — anonymous statements, many of which contained classified details — alluding to nepotism and favouritism of political allies in the award of government contracts. Under increasing pressure Dr. Mahathir offered to open up the files on several controversial projects to quell public speculation that his Government had acted improperly. Among those he mentioned were the Dayabumi office complex, the Penang Bridge, and Perwaja sponge iron and billet plant.

The foreign media publicised documents showing that Dayabumi was built by a Malaysian company, Zenecon Bumi Sdn. Bhd., acting as main building sub-contractor to a Japanese joint-venture, Takenaka Kumagai. The chairman of Zenecon was named as a relation of the Prime Minister. In a brief period of three years Zenecon enjoyed a meteoric rise, winning more than M\$600 million of building contracts, including the 40-storey UMNO complex. While the facts did not reveal any impropriety they nevertheless fuelled speculation of links between big businesses and senior politicians. Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin was not spared either. Dr. Mahathir's supporters attempted to hit back by dragging up Tengku Razaleigh's alleged association with the Carrian debacle.

Criticism of corrupt practices came from two respected Malaysians. Following Bank Negara's appointment to act as a receiver for one Co-operative, Justice (Tan Sri) Harun Hashim noted: “It is a case of the rich and powerful literally robbing the poor”. The Government's own White Paper on the Co-operative scandal, he said, revealed, “a parade of Tan Sri's, Datuks, politicians, some of whom are still in power, who have been taking money from the poor — the hawkers, the taxi-drivers, the vegetable vendors — in order to enrich themselves.”

Tan Sri Noordin who had earlier headed an investigation into the BMF scandal, pleaded for a regeneration of public morality from the bottom upwards, and said it seemed as if, "universal teachings that no man should strive for something by foul means which he can get by fair means is forgotten. Honesty or integrity is considered out of fashion."

In the face of rising tension some UMNO leaders called for restraint and a compromise as the election date drew nearer. Several Council members suggested that the "big four" — Dr. Mahathir, Tengku Razaleigh, Dato Musa and Ghafar Baba — thrash out their differences. But the die had already been cast.

In April the Australian government bestowed the Companion of Honour of Australia on the Tunku. The Foreign Minister at that time, Datuk Rais Yatim, cited the Tunku "as a man of multiple qualities whose life was inextricably intertwined with the history of the country". In his acceptance speech the Tunku said he was grateful at still being remembered "when most people of my age are forgotten".

On April 11th Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah announced that he would challenge Dr. Mahathir for the UMNO presidency at the party elections on April 24. His nomination papers were filed by a representative at the UMNO headquarters in Menara Datuk Onn. It also made official the understanding between him and Dato Musa.

Tengku Razaleigh received 37 nominations while Dr. Mahathir had been nominated by 88 divisions. Based on those official levels of support it heralded the first serious challenge against the incumbent president in the history of UMNO.

Six of the 19 candidates nominated to vie for the three vice-presidents' posts accepted. They were UMNO Youth leader Encik Anwar Ibrahim, Datuk Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Datuk Seri Ramli Ngah Talib, Datuk Harun Idris, Datuk Rais Yatim and Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Seventy-three of the 116 candidates nominated chose to contest the 25 UMNO Supreme Council seats at stake. Apart from Datuk Rais, all the other 19 incumbent members sought re-election.

Tengku Razaleigh said he was offering himself as the UMNO No. 1 in deference to "persuasion and advice" from party members and those outside the party. He said he had dared to make a challenge for the post because he had committed colleagues, including Dato Musa, who were



prepared to co-operate with him. At the same time Datuk Rais said his decision to contest the UMNO vice-president's post was based on the struggle of the Malays and not for personal glory. "I have offered to contest the post because I realise that a large number of UMNO members need a leader who is sincere and clean to lead the party and the government," he declared.

Tun Hussein Onn, asked for his views, made it clear that while it was illegal to go against the party's constitution it was not wrong to go against tradition — a complaint of Dr. Mahathir when asked about the challenge to his presidency. "One must always remember that tradition changes from time to time", Tun Hussein noted.

The days preceding the election on April 24th witnessed frenetic campaigning unprecedented in previous party polls. Having initially been shocked by Tengku Razaleigh's decision to challenge him — a move which automatically caused a number of UMNO traditions to fall by the wayside — Dr. Mahathir nevertheless sought comfort in the fact that no party president had ever been ousted in its 41-year old history. Indeed no one had been seriously challenged.

But the scope and depth of the opposition to Dr. Mahathir's leadership as revealed by the number of Ministers and Deputy Ministers who came out against the Prime Minister made it clear he had a battle royal on his hands. In simple terms the race was viewed as being between the two-term incumbent — whose unconventional leadership style and controversial policies became the main issues of the campaign — and a party stalwart whose rise to top had been checked by Dr. Mahathir.

Having started with only an outside chance Tengku Razaleigh gradually narrowed the gap to the point when an upset victory seemed imminent. The rank-and-file clearly wanted a change — or at least to shake up the incumbent into being more responsive — and sections of the leadership clearly got wind of the mood. As one commentator said on the eve of the polls: "If the challenger cannot win this time, with such a widespread revolt in the cabinet and the upper echelons, no one in future will dare to take on the UMNO president."

The battle had indeed split the party down the line, pitting members, delegates and candidates against each other as they became identified with one camp or the other. No one, it

appeared, could remain neutral. Given the major issues and personalities it was clear that the implications of the elections transcended the basic challenge between the protagonists. Veterans felt that succession in UMNO up to the next century, and the pace and direction of national policies — including the Islamisation programme — would be determined by the outcome.

A change of leadership was necessary, said Dr. Mahathir's critics. It was necessary in view of the prevailing "crisis of confidence" — a charge hotly denied — and also because UMNO policies had been relegated in the Government policy-making decision.

Dr. Mahathir was also accused of being authoritarian, canvassing only the views of handpicked Cabinet Ministers. His response was that there was consultation and that "certain foreigners" would prefer to see "weaker leaders" in office. This was dismissed as an attempt to divert attention from the more pressing issues, economic in particular, which had beset Malaysia.

On the morning of election day it became clear that the outcome was going to be a close call. The night before one of the largest political rallies ever to be witnessed took place in Kuala Lumpur's Regent Hotel. An estimated 10,000 packed the public areas bringing service operations to a halt. The wildly enthusiastic crowd came to hear final messages from Tengku Razaleigh and Dato Musa. Pandemonium raged as their supporters sensed victory.

The rival faction meanwhile lobbied in desperation for the 10-15 percent of uncommitted voters who were expected to influence the final result. Last minute defections were also taking place into the wee hours of April 24th. Particularly hard at work was Johore Menteri Besar, Datuk (Tan Sri) Haji Muhyiddin Yassin, trying to persuade fence-sitters from Johore to throw in their lot behind Dr. Mahathir. As was revealed later, Datuk Najib Razak of Pahang, also made a fateful decision to back Dr. Mahathir.

On the eve two other important UMNO meetings also took place, that of the Youth and Wanita wings. Dato Musa produced a vintage performance — replete with Malay kampong proverbs and assiduously avoiding turning it in a platform for a last-ditch attack. Wanita President Datin Rafidah

however hit back and reaffirmed her support for Dr. Mahathir. Encik Anwar Ibrahim chose to drive home his Islamic message: "The role of UMNO Youth is to support Islamic resurgence and to oppose those who oppose it", he stated. He meanwhile stepped down as Youth leader to contest the vice-presidency of the party.

## CHAPTER 23

The UMNO Assembly began on a rather discordant note. After the standing committee chairman's lengthy speech and the presidential address by Dr. Mahathir, the delegates were expected to start voting. It was hoped that the majority would cast their votes before the lunch break for Friday prayers. But it was not to be. By accident or design the keys to the ballot boxes, which had been sorted out earlier, were hopelessly mixed. Valuable time was lost in the process of sorting them out again.

After delegates voted many went across to shake the hand of the candidate they voted for, or his representative. It was the first clear indication of their choice. As one aide put it: "If the handshake was warm he definitely voted for our candidate. Otherwise, it was only a polite gesture". The "straw poll" after the first hour put Tengku Razaleigh marginally ahead. By the lunch break his supporters believed he was clearly in the lead. By then only about 60 per cent of the delegates had voted. Tengku Razaleigh was quietly confident when he went to give praise and thanks to Allah at Friday prayers for the support he had received.

His opponents, sensing possible defeat, put the break to fullest use. Many wild stories of vote-buying or strong-armed persuasion among those who had not voted yet, surfaced subsequently.

The tide turned in Dr. Mahathir's favour after lunch. Soon after 4.30 pm, when voting was complete, Tengku Razaleigh had an inkling of his narrow defeat. I recall his saying: "It's close but I think I've lost." However he kept a stiff upper lip and went home to rest and perform evening prayers. His supporters however, remained confident.

The counting was an inordinately long process, given that

the results of only the No. 1 and No. 2 positions were to be announced first. It was conducted under heavy security with the counting agents and election officials locked away from any contact with the crowd.

At around ten o'clock word leaked out that a re-count had been ordered. Clearly it was a close call, with conflicting "unofficial" results being touted.

Shortly after 10.45 p.m. the official result was announced. Dr. Mahathir had won by 43 votes, polling 761 to Tengku Razaleigh's 718. Dato Musa lost to Encik Ghafar by 40 votes, with 41 votes deemed spoilt. They were in fact blank.

Even at Sri Perdana the Prime Minister and his dinner guests took some time to digest the results. Thereafter fireworks were let off. At the home of Datuk Manan Othman, Tengku Razaleigh tried desperately to console his distraught aides. Many were lying prostrate on the floor, sobbing uncontrollably. The result was a stunning setback. Datuk Abdullah Badawi tried to reassure them they had fought a good fight and should accept the result. It was a difficult piece of advice to accept for many of the weeping supporters.

Tengku Razaleigh did not get much sleep that night. By early next morning he had prepared his letter of resignation from the cabinet. He took it to the Assembly where he received a standing ovation when he mounted the dais to congratulate Dr. Mahathir. His resignation, accepted some days later, marked the first step of a fresh battle. A new phase in the on-going titanic struggle for political leadership of the Malays had begun.

There were those among Tengku Razaleigh's detractors who described his resignation from the cabinet as a pre-emptive strike — designed to prevent Dr. Mahathir from sacking him. Others, while regretting his loss to the government, felt it was the proper course of action. More to the point Tengku Razaleigh resigned simply to forestall a witch-hunt which he feared would be carried out against all those who opposed Dr. Mahathir's faction. Publicly he stated that he was prepared to pledge his support for the party leadership "as long as there is no witch-hunt.

"The will of the majority must be respected. We must work together with the winners for the good of the party and the nation. But co-operation is a two-way street and they must also

extend their hand of friendship". But the winners had quite different plans and subsequent moves set the stage for the ultimate de-registration of UMNO.

According to press reports on the day after the elections, "there is no doubt that Dr. Mahathir's narrow majority reflected widespread disillusionment in UMNO over his leadership of both party and government in the past six years — especially his alleged authoritarianism and intolerance of criticism".

While his critics said he could emerge stronger they warned there was a need to make changes in his leadership style. Even Encik Anwar said "he needs to make some accommodation". Another party leader said the signal from the delegates was that adjustments "in the implementation of certain policies and the personalities involved must be made", if the Prime Minister was to be effective.

At the end of the day two of the three vice-presidents elected (Datuk Wan Mokhtar and Encik Anwar) were staunch supporters of Dr. Mahathir, with Datuk Abdullah Badawi retaining his position. Sixteen of the 25 Supreme Council seats went to Dr. Mahathir's men and women. Initially there was talk of reconciliation in the air. But this was shattered on April 30 when Dr. Mahathir purged all Tengku Razaleigh's supporters from the cabinet, after formally accepting the resignations of Tengku Razaleigh, Datuk Abdullah Badawi and Datuk Rais Yatim.

The "major surgery" prompted one journal to state: "the handshakes, hugs and unity speeches (at the Assembly) were indeed cosmetic and short-lived." The purge saw the sackings of three Ministers and four Deputy Ministers. Among those dropped were Datuk Shahrir, Datuk Abdul Ajib, Datuk Razdi Sheikh Ahmad, Datin Paduka Hajah Rahmah and Datuk Zainal Abidin.

The seven Ministers and deputies axed issued a joint-statement saying: "We accept the decision with an open heart, and full realisation that this action was taken solely because of our stand in the recent party election. We will struggle to restore public confidence in UMNO. We will oppose all actions that threaten UMNO unity". It was a hint of things to come.

While the seven had no qualms about being sacked they deplored the manner in which it was done. Apart from the letters they received informing them their services were no

longer required, their dismissals were announced in a two-page statement issued by the Chief Secretary while Dr. Mahathir was out of the country. "It was as if he wanted to show that they were not important", said an indignant Datuk Rais. "Well, the nine of us are going to be important."

"Mahathir is no different from his predecessors in wanting a cabinet that has confidence in him and in whom he has confidence", quipped Encik Anwar, who remained as Education Minister.

To this Datuk Ajib responded: "We accept that prerogative. The rule of democracy is simple. When you win by one vote, you win. But how you exercise your power reflects your leadership capabilities." He noted that Dr. Mahathir applied a corporate concept whereby the majority shareholder gets his way regardless of minority interests.

The antagonism engendered did not bode well, particularly in Kelantan, Johore, Penang and other states where support for Tengku Razaleigh remains substantial. In Johore the election repercussions were felt almost immediately. Pro-Musa State Executive Councillors were pressured into resigning, prompting Datuk Shahrir to say: "This is victimisation. It is fine to sack Ministers but this is carrying it too far." In the ensuing months the purge widened as did the split in UMNO which deepened as Dr. Mahathir's "political surgery" drove deeper into the dissident faction of the party. What followed thereafter was almost inevitable.

Dr. Mahathir's determination to weed out every critic and supporter of Tengku Razaleigh led prominent Malaysians to warn that public opinion must be heeded. The Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah, former Lord President of the Supreme Court (and now, King) spoke of "winds of change" blowing into Malaysia and the need for national leaders to pay heed to public opinion because it was "a powerful force which cannot be ignored". The Sultan noted that more people were making their voices heard and this development could contribute to democracy.

Tunku Abdul Rahman, describing the Sultan's call as "timely" said "democracy is the way of the world today but our young leaders seem a bit lost on the concept of democracy". Some of the leaders he said, displayed a tendency of expressing their views with scant regard to how people thought and felt.

“They like to bring up matters which tend to divide people instead of uniting them”. He said religion was again becoming an issue though, “we had already agreed on the matter when the Constitution was drawn up”.

Tengku Razaleigh, equally concerned about developments in and out of Government declared his intention to meet with Dr. Mahathir to discuss matters frankly. He expressed the hope that the Prime Minister would take into account the views of the 49 percent of the UMNO delegates who voted for him. He also pledged he would continue to give a real picture of the situation in the country to the people to check discrepancies and abuses of power. “Otherwise the leaders would be careless and neglect their responsibilities pertaining to the interest of race, religion and the nation”. Many people, he noted, were unhappy with the actions of some leaders and had expressed their uneasiness in an unprecedented manner.

Meanwhile Kedah UMNO leaders expressed concern over what it described as “secret meetings” between Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters as he travelled across the country. A Dr. Mahathir aide said: “Tengku Razaleigh should not go around meeting his supporters secretly as this will only create suspicions and misunderstandings.” He said Tengku Razaleigh should go through the State UMNO liaison office if he wanted to meet members.

Was Tengku Razaleigh whipping up support for a future UMNO election or was he planning to bring the President down in mid-term? Neither. He says he felt a strong moral obligation to meet with those who had supported him, and to assuage the hurt they had suffered at the hands of newly-installed party leaders.

Meanwhile, speculation over a legal challenge to test the validity of the elections began to mount. It was said that Tengku Razaleigh backed a group of “rebels” who were prepared to go to court. In reality Tengku Razaleigh did not initially support the proposed move. He had in fact tried to influence them against going to court and suggested instead that they resolve it through the Supreme Council. The issue was that of irregularities and the presence of illegal branches which could have materially affected the outcome of the April polls.

The matter was in fact first brought to the attention of the UMNO Supreme Council before the elections were held. No



action was taken. This implied that both factions, being aware of the situation, chose to use it as the basis for a legal challenge after the elections — depending of course on which side won. Appeals in late 1987 to the Supreme Council yielded no substantive response, contrary to later claims that “the matter would have been solved within the party instead of going to the courts.”

“The gang of 12”, as they were described by Dr. Mahathir’s supporters, exasperated by the failure of the Council to act on their complaint finally filed a suit on June 25, 1987 seeking to declare the elections null and void. They did so, not at the behest of Tengku Razaleigh, it later transpired, but with the support of a group who felt that they should act decisively. The 12, from 7 party divisions, claimed that the party had “deliberately and negligently” allowed delegates from 53 branches to attend divisional meetings which then elected delegates to the assembly. The party election, they alleged was “unconstitutional, illegal and null and void”. Tengku Razaleigh was never party to the suit though once it became clear no out-of-court compromise was likely, he threw his support behind the plaintiffs.

They pointed out that a change of 22 votes for the presidency, and 21 for the No. 2 position would have produced different results. The delegates’ elections at the various levels were “unlawfully contested so as to enhance the position of certain incumbent candidates at the national level, which was a political manoeuvre engineered by certain groups with vested interest”, the 12 claimed.

In the first week of July the 12 obtained from the High Court an order to inspect the files and documents pertaining to the registration of all UMNO branches in the seven divisions.

Mr. Justice Harun Hashim, in granting the order, criticised the Registrar of Societies over the keeping of records pertaining to UMNO. “There is a complete lack of imagination in the management of the registry’s office for the enforcement of the Societies Act. I am sorry, but I have to say so.” Thus yet another unprecedented challenge was mounted. Never in its 41-year history had the party been dragged into court.

The last quarter of 1987 was characterised by further divisions and political agitation. In October, Dr. Mahathir undertook a nation-wide tour “to build bridges” and “not to

remain a stranger”, amidst press reports of a split in the ruling team. Party sources said Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba wanted to check the rise of Encik Anwar Ibrahim. As deputy leader of UMNO the DPM was viewed as a “logical successor” but in Dr. Mahathir’s absences the Education Minister was being treated as the *de facto* leader. The DPM’s reservations were also shared by Datuk Sanusi Junid, the reports claimed.

As Dr. Mahathir continued with his tour the Tunku called for a round-table discussion. As UMNO president, he reiterated, it was up to Dr. Mahathir to extend the hand of friendship. Tengku Razaleigh replied he was willing to talk, but on the condition that “everybody refrains from acting or making statements which can create disunity in UMNO”. He added: “It’s really up to Mahathir. I don’t bear grudges or have ill feelings — towards anybody. I think it is Mahathir who bears a grudge against me, but I don’t know why.” Dr. Mahathir responded that there was no need for such a meeting. Instead he could meet Tengku Razaleigh in Kelantan when he visited there. They did meet but only briefly. A golden opportunity for a rapprochement was lost.

Critics of Dr. Mahathir continued to make serious allegations of government impropriety. He categorically denied this. Dr. Mahathir challenged critics of the Government today to prove their claim that certain people had fraudulently profited in the award of the contract for the privatisation of the \$3.4 billion North-South Highway. The Prime Minister also asked them to prove their allegations of “irregularities” in the awarding of the contract. He said that all procedures were closely followed and there was no hint of fraud as alleged by an opposition party.

“Accusations that I had received money from the privatisation of the highway project are outright lies,” Dr. Mahathir said at the opening of the Air-Keroh-Senawang Highway. He explained at length that the Government privatised the highway project because of the high cost of construction and maintenance of the highway.

He said the Government could build the highway by itself and not collect tolls but in that event, it would have to increase various taxes and the petrol price to meet the construction cost. This would not be fair to the people who did not use the highway. While Dr. Mahathir was speaking at the opening

ceremony of the \$258 million highway, DAP members, led by party secretary-general Lim Kit Siang gathered not far from the dais, protesting against the highway deal.

Meanwhile a racial time-bomb was ticking away. The seemingly innocuous promotion of more than 100 non-Mandarin speaking Chinese School teachers — which began as an administrative hiccup — rapidly escalated into an emotive issue which pitted the Chinese component parties, particularly the MCA, against UMNO. For the third time in a year some UMNO leaders demanded the resignation of Labour Minister Lim Kim Sai — for joining hands with the opposition DAP in demanding a withdrawal of the promotions or face a national boycott of Chinese schools.

UMNO saw this as confrontational and a breach of National Front discipline. Responding to a large Chinese gathering to protest the promotions and Government's alleged betrayal on agreements touching on Chinese education, UMNO Youth staged a counter-demonstration.

Even as sincere efforts were made to find a solution the DAP and UMNO Youth kept the issue burning by heated exchanges in the media. Adding to tension was a lone gunman who opened fire indiscriminately in a popular Chinese section of Kuala Lumpur. He was later identified as a soldier.

By October 18 people were stocking up food. Fears of a repeat of the May 13, 1969 race riots suddenly surfaced. A planned UMNO Youth rally was cancelled on police orders. Days later Dr. Mahathir cracked down on dissidents of all persuasions. A total of more than 115 persons were detained under the ISA.

Justifying the crackdown Dr. Mahathir told Malaysians that the country could not afford another bout of communal violence and political instability as it was already burdened by recession and unemployment. Those detained included politicians — notably from the DAP including leaders like Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh — a handful of MCA and UMNO activists, lawyers, academics, and officials from environmental and civic groups. One observer noted that “in one fell swoop every critic and opponent” of Dr. Mahathir had been detained. Another noted that Datuk Lee Kim Sai left for Australia as the arrests got underway.

At the same time three newspapers, including the MCA-

controlled, *The Star*, had their printing licences revoked. A climate of fear prevailed but by and large it was felt that most of the detentions were justified. What surprised some was why some agitators within UMNO's ruling group were not dealt with similarly. Months later most of those detained were released.

## CHAPTER 24

Even after the 11 grassroots leaders (one of the original 12 had a change of heart) filed their suit many felt that an out-of-court settlement could be reached. A number of moderate leaders much preferred an intra-party solution and a five-man mediation committee was set up to seek a solution. The Tunku initiated the move. Dr. Mahathir on his part promised "not to influence them in any way", after having said that, "just because a few people express their views it does not mean that we must take (it) seriously".

Initially the plaintiffs made two main demands. The first was for an end to the vendetta at all levels and secondly, the reinstatement of at least some of the seven Ministers and deputies who had been summarily dismissed. They argued that the replacements in the cabinet were not as competent, thus threatening the economic stability of the country.

After several meetings it was clear that the committee's best efforts were doomed. While Dr. Mahathir could have been persuaded to accept the first demand he had not however given the committee a mandate to negotiate on any matter which could compromise his Executive powers, such as making Cabinet appointments.

Dr. Mahathir's stand was that his opponents must pay the price of defeat in full. "It is a fact of life. If I had lost I would have stepped down". As for those who managed to win party positions but were subsequently sacked, he argued they had breached cabinet secrets during the election campaign.

After several rounds of fruitless discussions the plaintiffs said they had lost faith in the mediation efforts. The High Court had granted a two-week adjournment to allow for a resolution but in the face of the impasse clearly the law had to take its course. A plea was made by the Tunku in a lengthy column in

*The Star* of July 21. It is worth recalling.

"There has been a lot of reaction to my suggestion to Dr. Mahathir to call a meeting with Tengku Razaleigh and others, referred to as the Team B, for a round-table talk.

"The ball, I had said, was at the Prime Minister's feet and it was for him to make the first move. It was he in the first place who had suggested that UMNO should come together again."

"There were other suggestions; one, from the Menteri Besar of Trengganu, Datuk Seri Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, that Tengku Razaleigh and members of Team B should seek the meeting with the Prime Minister.

"That, in my mind, would not be right or acceptable because it was tantamount to asking a defeated party headed by Tengku Razaleigh to go with hat in hand to ask for forgiveness and be taken back.

"If that was done Tengku Razaleigh would lose face as well as the support of those on his side. It is unthinkable for him to do that and it would give him no choice but to leave UMNO."

"He is one of the staunchest members of UMNO. It was he who fought PAS when that party was in power in Kelantan and Trengganu, and he never wavered until UMNO had won back the two States.

"A man of that calibre is not likely to demean himself by cringing before the victor and admitting defeat. It is for the victor to show magnanimity by making the first move.

"According to Dr. Mahathir, they could see him any time as he is now going round the States and he will make time for them. In fact, he has seen Datuk Musa Hitam in Johore and other leaders.

"Also, according to Dr. Mahathir, he did not think there was a need for a round-table talk with Datuk Musa and Tengku Razaleigh (as I had suggested), as this had never been "the practice in UMNO or the Barisan Nasional." But there had been no occasion before to call for such talks because there had never been any such trouble in UMNO.

"Actually, a round-table talk is a get-together by leaders on opposing sides to resolve whatever differences they may have for the good of the party. Individual talks do not have the same impact or the same effect and significance as a round-table talk. It would be a get-together to thrash out any differences and come to some understanding in the interests of the party.

“He (Dr. Mahathir) also said: “There is no need to give them publicity. They represent nobody except themselves. There are only about two or three hundred of them but they aim to move mountains.

“His arguments are hard to follow. Perhaps Dr. Mahathir is afraid that he may have to give in to some of the demands that Tengku Razaleigh and his colleagues in Team B are likely to make, but what is there to worry about when the fate of UMNO hangs in the balance because of these differences?

“He, in fact, insinuated, that “they (Team B) are going to split UMNO further apart as a party of Malays” while he is touring the country and encouraging the people of UMNO to get together at all levels. Yet in the course of his speeches he blamed others and branded them traitors.

“That is not the way to bring about a reconciliation; that would instead hurt their feelings and drive them even further away. They are all members of UMNO from the time of their fathers and perhaps their grandfathers who had built up UMNO and won independence for the country. They cannot, must not be treated as intruders and power-seekers.

“There is no other party for the Malays except UMNO. We must face the problems together: we have been through trials and tribulations together and we have emerged unscathed and triumphant. The duty of every leader of UMNO is to see that the members stand united, not broken up. Together we stay alive and together we die.

“This country needs UMNO and the services of its members; the people of Malaysia depend on UMNO to keep everybody together and to ensure the country’s survival. After enjoying the benefits of independence, we want to make sure that those after us will continue to enjoy the joy and good fortune.

“The question of majority and minority does not arise, for they all are of the same party. The question uppermost in our minds is how to bring these people together again, how to maintain UMNO solidarity. It is the duty of the leader to effect this, and to this end he must devote his time and attention.”

As the date for the hearing of the UMNO action in February 1988 drew nearer, there were calls to make fundamental changes and review the Constitution. They came from all sections including the judiciary.

The Tunku called for a Rulers' Tribunal that could discipline and try a fellow Sultan because, under existing laws, a citizen could not seek redress against a Ruler who had committed an offence. The present King, the Sultan of Perak, supported a review of the Constitution and proposed that the Rukunegara, the country's national ideology, be written into it.

High Court Judge, Tan Sri Harun Hashim, suggested that the Senate should be revamped to contain elected members and participation from State Chief Ministers instead of the current system of appointment by nomination. All these proposals lent weight to calls for a Royal Commission to review the Constitution.

The response of Dr. Mahathir was characteristically blunt: "It is important for judges to avoid making their views public. If a judge has a personal stand, then it is his problem. But judges should refrain from publicising it." He added: "The involvement of some judges in activities of parties that oppose the government raises the question of whether these judges are siding with the opposition". He was to castigate members of the judiciary more severely later on.

Sections of the public were not convinced about the need for a constitutional review. Many Malays felt a review was unnecessary if it would change the basic constitutional agreement and compromise agreements worked out between the Malays and non-Malays. On the non-Malay side, many were supportive of a change as some saw it as an opportunity for a rewriting of the Constitution to address their demands. Still others supported a review because of the possibility of enacting Islamic laws and giving it supremacy within the Constitution.

The Malaysian Constitution in itself reflects the very different States, groups and interests that came together in forming the Federation. In his enlightening *An Introduction to the Constitution of Malaysia*, Tun Mohammed Suffian, former Lord President, highlighted the problems.

"We have an elected King who holds office for five years, nine hereditary Sultans who hold office for life, four appointed Governors, 14 State Governments, 14 State Legislatures and a host of other bodies established by the Constitution. At first sight it is difficult to imagine why such an elaborate arrangement has been found necessary, and more difficult still,



to imagine how it can possibly work.”

The Tunku responded to Dr. Mahathir's reaction: “The Prime Minister was annoyed with those who suggested a review; he branded them anti-government. His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak, the chairman of the Bar Council, and Tun Suffian have given their views, and so have others. As an old has-been I would ask the Prime Minister to exercise patience and not be unduly worried and angry about it”.

The urgency for a review of the Constitution was related to what many lawyers and socially concerned groups perceived as the increasing erosion of fundamental rights and liberties. It was pointed out that there are many mandatory sentences on offences — such as drug trafficking, possession of firearms and official secrets — that left the judiciary with little discretion in trying individual cases.

Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba said if there was a need for a constitutional review, the Government was eminently qualified to do it. Even after initially rejecting calls to review the Constitution Dr. Mahathir eventually did turn to Parliament to enact other legislative changes. But that was only in the aftermath of the UMNO trial and the traumatic fallout which viscerally grieved millions of Malays.

## CHAPTER 25

On February 4, 1988, Malaysia's High Court declared UMNO an unlawful society. The nation as a whole was stunned but Dr. Mahathir said UMNO would not appeal against the decision and the government would function normally. "No appeal. We will abide by the Court's decision ... what's important is that it has not affected the government which is elected by the people."

He added: "The Government will function as usual, the political stability would not be affected by the ruling. It's utter nonsense to say that political stability is affected. People should stay calm. This matter will be resolved in time. What is important is there are some people with ambitions in the party who wish to see UMNO destroyed. Perhaps this is UMNO's predicament." He nevertheless quickly rallied support from allies in the National Front to bolster his personal standing.

Three days after the shock ruling the main groups in the country's 13-party coalition government issued statements saying the decision of that court ruling did not affect Dr. Mahathir's position or their backing for him. "MCA is not the type of party to run away from its friends," said Transport Minister, Datuk Ling Liong Sik and party president. Datuk Samy Velu, head of the Malaysian Indian Congress, said his party's support for Dr. Mahathir was unstinting.

The main opposition Democratic Action Party however called for Dr. Mahathir and UMNO cabinet members to resign. The DAP contended the ruling meant that all UMNO members of Parliament were by definition independent MP's.

The Court's decision while traumatic did not entirely surprise the Tunku or Tengku Razaleigh and his key supporters. The line taken by counsel for UMNO clearly suggested that he was inviting the judge to declare the entire society

unlawful. According to sources the decision was taken after careful assessment and a conclusion reached that short of declaring UMNO an illegal society the judge might declare the 1987 elections null and void. This was unacceptable to Dr. Mahathir and some of the members of the Supreme Council of UMNO.

Tengku Razaleigh had kept the Tunku briefed and hours after the fateful decision by the High Court they met in the Tunku's residence in Penang. The Tunku was deeply pained by the official verdict and it took a great deal of persuasion to console him. "He was on the point of tears and understandably so", says a source. "Here was a party that he had built and which symbolised Malay political supremacy gone down to drain with a single stroke of the pen. We allowed him to release all the pent up frustrations that were bottled up within him. Tengku Razaleigh listened patiently and only when the Tunku was done did he broach the subject of an alternative party to rescue UMNO from the ashes".

It was obvious to them that Dr. Mahathir would move along similar lines, perhaps even that he already had taken some action, anticipating the outcome of the hearing. The discussions went on late into the night and a plan of action was drawn up.

The Tunku, after lengthy briefings by Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters, came out for them. He accused the leaders of the UMNO of destroying it and said they should step down if their positions were questioned. In a statement released at a function to celebrate his 85th birthday in Penang he also offered to revive the now illegal UMNO with the aid of another former Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn.

Though angered and upset by the turn of the events the Tunku refrained from naming the party's leaders in his statement. But he made no bones about who he had in mind. "The party which we built to protect the rights of Malays has been destroyed. Those in power have destroyed the party ... if there are signs that the leadership of the party is being questioned then it should step down for the sake of the party."

A day later the newspapers reported that the Tunku had formed a new political party to restore democracy in the face of what he termed a "dictatorial" government. "It's up to the people to choose between the new group and the current

dictatorial rule". The Tunku confirmed he had filed an application to register a new party — UMNO Malaysia. The application was made four days after UMNO was declared illegal.

The Tunku said his plan to set up a new party was aimed at "saving the country like I save it from the British. It's now a case of two former Prime Ministers against the current one." He also repeated earlier accusations that Dr. Mahathir had undermined basic rights in the nation.

Former Foreign Minister, Datuk Rais Yatim, added that the Tunku's initiative was not aimed at ousting Dr. Mahathir as Prime Minister. "It would be beautiful if the Prime Minister were to join the Tunku's committee" (set up to register UMNO Malaysia)."

The King, the Sultan of Johore surprised many by saying: "Loyalty and co-operation must be extended to the Prime Minister and his cabinet for peace and harmony ... to prevent chaos."

Almost a fortnight after the court ruling a jubilant Dr. Mahathir announced he had formed a new Malay-based party. "All problems have been resolved. UMNO is back to normal and accepted as head of the government coalition." He said the new party would be known as UMNO Baru (New UMNO) and had been formally registered on February 13. At the same time the Registrar of Societies rejected the Tunku's application.

The rejection marked the formal return to the political fray of the Tunku, after an absence of 28 years. Some were saddened by his decision but his life-long devotion to UMNO left him with few other options. Dr. Mahathir said he would chair UMNO Baru and announced that all former UMNO members would have to register to join the new party. He declined to comment when asked whether he would admit Tengku Razaleigh as a member.

The months that followed were characterised by a number of legal challenges, further changes to the Constitution and veiled attacks on sections of the judiciary. Reiterating his warning to the judiciary to keep out of politics, Dr. Mahathir told Parliament on March 17, 1988, that the Federal Constitution would be amended to "make clearer the position of the courts", particularly the separation of powers between the judiciary and the executive or legislature. "This is vital so that the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary are able to discharge

their functions without interfering or being interfered by others”.

The Prime Minister in moving the second reading of the Federal Constitution (Amendment) Bill in the Dewan Rakyat, said that there were signs that the Judiciary was touching on matters that were assumed to fall within the scope of the Executive. He warned that such interference in each other's functions by the respective arms of government could weaken its administration to the point that it could not guarantee national stability and justice. Touching on criticisms against the amendments, he said that they would not affect the freedom of the Judiciary. “They are not expected to be pro-government. They are only expected to hold fast to the laws of the nation passed by Parliament.”

If Parliament in Britain is regarded as supreme, the Malaysian Dewan Rakyat should also be given the same status in the formulation of the laws in the country, he argued. “To allow the courts to make the laws and then to implement them will mean that they will play the role of both the Legislature and the Judiciary. This will conflict with the doctrine of the separation of powers.”

Prior to the amendment the Federal Constitution vested the judicial powers of the Federation in the High Courts and the lower courts and gave the Supreme Court certain jurisdictions. The Bill deleted that provision and replaced it with another so that the jurisdiction and powers of all the courts were conferred by or under Federal law.

In trying to buttress his case on the need for written laws to reduce the discretion of the judges, Dr. Mahathir also discussed at length judicial practices in Britain, the concept of natural justice and judicial reviews. He said: “We accept democracy but it is not necessary for us to accept all the features that are regarded as democratic by others. In our democracy, the people have the power.”

Referring to a recent case which went against the Government, he said he had to clarify the legal shortcomings of that judgment to pre-empt questions on what actions the Government was planning to take. The Prime Minister was in fact referring to the decision by the Ipoh High Court to release opposition politician Karpal Singh from detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on the grounds that one of the six

allegations against him turned out to be without basis.

Even as Dr. Mahathir sought to limit the powers of the judiciary, Tengku Razaleigh's supporters increasingly sought recourse to the nation's courts. At least a dozen suits were filed including an appeal against Justice Harun's decision which rendered UMNO an illegal organisation.

The High Court on April 12 dismissed an application by the Tunku, Tun Hussein Onn and Datuk Manan Othman to block UMNO Baru from carrying out its activities. In a three-page judgment, Justice Ajaib Singh said there was no basis on which the court could restrain New UMNO from recruiting members as well as conducting transactions to transfer the assets of the old UMNO. He said it would also be wrong for the court to stop the defendants — Dr. Mahathir and Datuk Rahmat, the pro-tem president, and secretary-general of UMNO Baru respectively — from making any statement concerning UMNO Malaysia.

The Tunku, on the other hand said that efforts to revive the original UMNO was one way to overcome the recent problems in the party. He said the most important thing for all the "disputing parties" in UMNO was to bring back the UMNO that had since 1946 been the party of the Malays.

"I want only UMNO — that is, there should exist only UMNO ... not the old or the new ... only then will the problems existing at present be overcome." The Tunku said if UMNO was revived and elections held again to determine who the people wanted to lead the party the problems could be overcome.

Accordingly to the Tunku, "UMNO is the most important organisation for the Malays, so much so that in any reference to it, the party appears to be synonymous with the Malays and conversely, the Malays synonymous with UMNO."

As the split widened, Dato Musa, who initially accepted the appointment as divisional head New UMNO, Segamat, but did not apply for membership of the party, made a desperate call for unity.

In a seven-page press statement Dato Musa criticised both New UMNO for closing its doors to some former members and the proponents of UMNO Malaysia for taking court action to block the new party. Observers saw the statement of Dato Musa as an attempt to halt the increasing divisions within the Malay community in the face of rival attempts to inherit the

mantle of the original party.

Although Dato Musa was initially supportive of Dr. Mahathir's efforts, an aide said that he was disturbed at the trend of appointing only loyalists to leadership positions in the new party's divisions. He also criticised the backers of UMNO Malaysia for using an elder statesmen and Royalty in their campaign, which he said would only lead to a further split and deepen animosities within the Malay community. This provoked a sharp response from Tengku Razaleigh's supporters who criticised Dato Musa for distancing himself from the Tengku soon after losing the 1987 elections.

To avoid a total split following the deregistration of UMNO Dato Musa said the leadership of New UMNO should accept without qualification all members of UMNO and that those opposed to the new party should file a court action against it. "I (have said) several times that UMNO was declared unlawful merely from the point of the law and while the new party is called UMNO Baru, its principles and spirit should be the same as that of the old party which was formed in 1946. Unfortunately, I am worried by developments because New UMNO looks as if it is really new".

Dato Musa said the criterion for membership should not be whether a person is "for us" or "against us". Saying that the leaders of New UMNO seem to consider membership in the party a special privilege, and that those allowed to join should be grateful, he noted this was against the UMNO spirit. "I would like to remind (all concerned) that UMNO stands for United Malay National Organisation. And its aim is to unite Malays." He said that discriminatory actions only created animosity, confusion and frustration among members of old UMNO.

Touching on the demonstration in Kota Baru during the opening of Balai Islam by the Sultan of Kelantan, he said the "other side" should not have made use of the Palace in their campaign. (There were demonstrations calling for the resignation of the Menteri Besar, a New UMNO supporter, following the Sultan of Kelantan's perceived dissatisfaction with him.)

It later transpired that Dato Musa was trying to revive his "C" Team concept — first mooted after his defeat after the UMNO elections. A Tengku Razaleigh aide said: "We had

suspicious about his actions from the day after the elections. Having declared his allegiance to Tengku Razaleigh he decided to part company after they failed to dislodge Mahathir and company. Of course it's politics but many among his former supporters are aware of the assistance he, and they, received during the campaign. We are however pleased that he and (Datuk) Abdullah Badawi have separated themselves from Tengku Razaleigh. They are now in the political wilderness but their supporters will come across to us. Quite simply, Musa's loss, arising from his lack of credibility, is TR's gain".

The Tunku during a lengthy interview expressed his deep dismay at the political upheaval which increasingly divided the Malay community, brought into question long-pursued multi-racial national policies and threatened the economy. He was particularly concerned over the massive detentions under the (ISA) in October 1988.

"It (the ISA) was for fighting the communists you know, not for locking up opposition politicians like Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh and others. And they even locked up Chandra Muzaffar (Aliran president), a good man, an honest man, an intellectual with only the welfare of all Malaysians at heart. The poor chap was accused of threatening the peace among the races. That (the charge) was a shameful thing."

When it was pointed out it was he who allowed the ISA on the statute books in the first place, the Tunku closed his eyes for a moment and nodded thoughtfully. "We needed it in those days. It was necessary. We were fighting the communists. But now ... it should be repealed. The people should be told that if there is a serious communist threat again the Act can always be reintroduced."

He lamented the destruction of UMNO which he had helped to mould, and which was the political instrument used to secure independence from the British. "UMNO could have been saved very easily, you know. The Prime Minister, as Home Affairs Minister, could have used Section 70 of the Societies Act and issued a ministerial order and exempted the illegal branches from the provisions of the Act. It was so simple, entirely within his power. Even at the 11th hour he could have stopped the High Court decision by doing so. He had the power. Why did he not do it? I cannot understand that."

The immediate problem he stressed was to save UMNO



from destruction. An UMNO in limbo had vast ramifications affecting the lives and livelihoods of many thousands of people. Would a political leader not take any step necessary to save his party, especially when there were clear legal ways of doing so, he repeatedly asked?

The implicit suggestion was that Dr. Mahathir was only too aware that lawyers representing UMNO during the proceedings were embarking on a course that contributed to UMNO being declared an illegal organisation. The Tunku clearly did not believe that a Malaysian lawyer would have acted so boldly without a clear brief from his client. "I don't know", he said, "I don't understand him. He had all the information, all the advisers, including the Attorney-General. There are many lawyers in UMNO. And the Societies Act is very clear. If there are illegal branches the main society also becomes unlawful. The law is very clear."

Later he said: "I am willing to co-operate with Mahathir's (UMNO Baru) but there is nothing clear about the new party. The court case is not over. The appeal is still pending. The people who took action in court are going back to court again. They are appealing against the decision." He then spoke of his foreboding.

"Before the riots of May 13, 1969, I had a dream in which I was surrounded by sewer rats in a dark alley. The place was swarming with bluebottle flies, too. Just after that dream the race riots broke out. They were the huge rats. I had another dream recently. This time there were also many rats, but they were not so large. Most of them were light coloured. They were small rats. I think the problem is not so bad as May 13. But still it is bad," he said.

"Dr. Mahathir should have gone to Parliament if he wished to continue to be Prime Minister. But he preferred to make everyone swear personal allegiance to him. What kind of action is that? It is wrong. We are not a dictatorship. We are a parliamentary democracy. We must act according to the Constitution, according to the law. Proper form must be observed. There is no mandate left because the confidence of the majority in Parliament is questionable. It is not tested. It must be tested. There is no moral authority either. It is all vague and there are too many doubts in the public mind. How can he stay?"

## CHAPTER 26

The Hari Raya festivities of May 1988 saw the struggle between New UMNO and the faction aligned to Tengku Razaleigh rolling on relentlessly, with both sides using the occasion to visit followers throughout the country and drum up support for their respective causes.

The one question they repeatedly addressed was: Who killed UMNO? Dr. Mahathir's contention was that New UMNO came into being because his opponents led by Tengku Razaleigh refused to accept the outcome of the 1987 polls. He in turn was accused of murdering UMNO because of his refusal to use the power at his disposal — in his capacity as Minister for Home Affairs — to restore UMNO to its lawful status.

With the appeal due to be heard in early June, former Prime Minister Tun Hussein Onn attempted to narrow the differences between the opposing factions in a desperate bid to revive the old party. His efforts however were dogged by daily verbal exchanges aired through the media, none of which helped his mediation efforts. As the new alignments came into sharper focus, there were calls for those UMNO MPs who refused to join New UMNO to seek a fresh mandate. Three Johor MPs Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad, Tawfik Tun Dr. Ismail, and Datuk Radzi Sheik Ahmad, declared their intention of becoming Independent MP's. Later however only Datuk Shahrir was to test his strength in Johor Bahru with the support of Tengku Razaleigh.

Responding to calls for the dismissal of dissident UMNO MP's Dr. Mahathir acknowledged that the National Front had no such power. He however clarified that New UMNO itself could act against the individuals if it chose to. New UMNO meanwhile amended its Constitution to give the President additional powers which included the appointment or

dismissal of the Secretary-General, Treasurer, Information Chief, and the Heads of the Youth and Women's Wing. For the positions of President and Deputy President of the Party those nominated prior to the election were deemed to kick off with ten additional votes per nomination — a radical departure from the old UMNO's constitution which gave no edge to any candidate regardless of the number of nominations received in advance of elections.

Tengku Razaleigh's campaign got off to a good start when the supporters of New UMNO failed to oust former Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Harun Idris and his nominees from KUB, an UMNO cooperative. At the same time Dato Musa surprised many by declaring that he was relinquishing his position as New UMNO head of Segamat and that he did not intend to join the new party.

Tengku Razaleigh spent two months on the road criss-crossing the length and breadth of the country. By June all states in Peninsular Malaysia, with the exception of Penang, had established committees to revive the de-registered UMNO. These committees were later transformed into divisions of a new party, the Spirit of '46, Tengku Razaleigh's political vehicle. It was registered in early 1989.

The UMNO Appeal was originally scheduled to be heard in the first week of June 1988. The hopes of many were raised when the Lord President, Tun Mohamed Salleh Abas, ruled that all Supreme Court judges should be empanelled to hear the appeal. It would have been the first-ever sitting of the entire Bench.

Then came the bombshell. On May 29th Tun Salleh publicised a letter he wrote to the Prime Minister restating the position following their meeting of May 27th. At that meeting Dr. Mahathir expressed the King's unhappiness over a letter which Tun Salleh had written complaining about the Prime Minister's attacks on the Judiciary. Tun Salleh was originally given the opportunity — he later described it as a ultimatum — to resign.

In his letter Tun Salleh said he had changed his mind about taking early retirement and chose instead to face a Tribunal to clear himself of the charges against him. In reality he had been suspended from office on May 28th.

The Government subsequently announced that a Tribunal

of six jurists would be empanelled to investigate five allegations of misconduct against Tun Salleh. Included was a appeal in a 1986 ruling involving a minor's choice of religion but the main charges related to public speeches he made, the letter to the King, and his actions upon being suspended. In particular he was accused of trying to politicise issues with a view to discredit the Government.

Tun Salleh's first public response was emotionally charged. He said: "My future is tied up with the fate of this country. I come from an unknown family and I have reached the top of my profession. I have no desire to leave until I have reached the age of 65 years. I leave my fate to the judgment of Allah and as it is Friday I wish to quote the Quran which says; "no misfortune will fall on us except what has been decreed by Allah. He is our protector and whom the believers should place their trust. This passage from the Quran struck my heart as I entered the door of the Prime Minister's office and it remained with me throughout the course of the discussion, right till the end and my exit from his room".

His suspension stunned the nation. Few believed him capable of any form of misconduct. Instead the move was viewed as a deliberate attempt by the Government to make out a case that the Judiciary, and Tun Salleh in particular, were interfering in politics. The Tunku, deeply upset by the turn of events, made a stinging response. "To be a complete dictator you've got to take control of everything. There is only one thing blocking his way, an independent Judiciary. Now he wants to compromise their independence".

Tun Salleh refused to participate when the Tribunal began its proceedings on June 29th. His lawyers stated that he would not take part in the hearing as the Tribunal had turned down his application for postponement pending the outcome of an application before the High Court. What Tun Salleh sought was a writ of prohibition but the Tribunal ruled that as no order of prohibition had been granted — only a request — it was insufficient grounds to allow a postponement.

More drama was to follow. As the six-man Tribunal moved to conclude its findings in the absence of Tun Salleh the Supreme Court made up of a five-man bench convened on July 2nd. It allowed an order restraining the Tribunal from submitting any recommendations, reports or advice to the King.

The five judges had met in a special sitting at 12.55 p.m. after Justice Ajaib Singh refused to grant an interim stay of proceedings against the Tribunal. That fateful decision led to the suspension of the same five judges on July 6th. They were suspended by the King after representations from the acting Lord President, Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Omar, who had chaired the Tribunal investigating Tun Salleh. They were accused of deliberately attending the Supreme Court sitting on July 2nd while knowing the sitting did not have the permission or knowledge of the acting Lord President. Some of them were further accused of exempting themselves from sittings in other towns in order to be present at the High Court sitting in Kuala Lumpur.

The five argued that they did not refer the matter to Tan Sri Hamid as he was the first respondent in the application and therefore an interested party. They had also been informed that Tan Sri Hamid had ordered none of the Court staff be present, the Court doors be shut, and they be denied the use of facilities including the Court Seal.

Lawyers in the country took up the cudgels on behalf of the suspended judges. Eventually three were fully exonerated and the other two reprimanded. None of them was dismissed.

That fate however befell Tun Salleh, bringing to an end a illustrious career of a kampong boy who rose to the highest office in the Malaysian judiciary. Tun Salleh expectedly rejected the 52-page finding made in early August and which recommended his dismissal. While he was subsequently granted a partial pension, the deeply religious and upright Tun Salleh was known to have been shabbily treated in the days immediately after his dismissal took effect, by bureaucrats eager to please their political masters.

The Tunku, writing at that time, spoke of the sadness that pervaded the country. Commenting on the action against the judges he said: "If the people allow themselves to be used as stooges by this new party they will lose their identity as independent, free people and will revert to their old status as backward hangers-on". His warning of a retrogression — political and moral — followed two important developments in August: the rejection of the UMNO appeal, and the first challenge between the New UMNO and its adverseries, in the Johor Bahru parliamentary by-election.

On August 9th the Supreme Court upheld the High Court's finding that UMNO was a unlawful society because it had at the time 30 unlawful branches. It also allowed a cross appeal by former Secretary-General, Datuk Sanusi Junid, and four former division secretaries, to set aside the High Court's written findings that the office bearers elected in UMNO's 1984 General Assembly continue to be the lawful office bearers. Thus the legal battle to revive old UMNO came to an end. But the battle to revive the party continued unabated.

The Johor Bahru August 25th by-election will be remembered as a watershed in the current political struggle, in addition to being the first of several other by-elections that tested the relative strengths of New UMNO and the faction opposing it. Tengku Razaleigh and Spirit of '46 chose to throw their weight behind Datuk Shahrir, the incumbent who had earlier declared himself an independent. New UMNO pitted teacher Haji Masud Abdul Rahman against him.

The Tunku personally attended the nomination of Datuk Shahrir, arriving in a wheel chair and to a tumultuous reception. He declared that the by-election gave an opportunity for the people to decide which faction they supported. Appealing to other parties to stay out of the fray he said: "My plea is that the people should be allowed to make their choice as the intra-UMNO dispute stems from the party's origins on 11 May, 1946. The Malays spelt out what the party's name stood for: the United Malay National Organisation, a grouping determined to fight for the unity of Malays and the restoration of their rights".

In a straight fight Datuk Shahrir won a landslide victory, thus handing New UMNO its first major setback. The victory margin was attributed to a vigorous campaign masterminded by Tengku Razaleigh with Datuk Shahrir's mentor, Dato Musa Hitam, surprisingly playing a relatively minor role.

The strong showing by the anti-New UMNO faction and their narrow defeat in the subsequent Parit Raja state by-election, by a mere of 413 votes, had a profound effect on the battle royal that was being raged throughout the country. Parit Raja in fact proved a setback for Dato Musa who threw his weight completely behind Hamdam Yahya, who took on the New UMNO candidate Yassin Kamari. Enchik Yahya was not personally favoured by Tengku Razaleigh.

Thereafter Tengku Razaleigh continued to keep up the

heat on Dr. Mahathir, addressing large gatherings in Trengganu and Kelantan. Responding to Dr. Mahathir's later-day decision to open New UMNO to all Malays (previously he had adamantly excluded Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters), Tengku Razaleigh said that any reconciliation talks could only be held in the context of a broad forum of Malay leaders.

Pressured by the initial electoral setbacks and the growing opposition the Prime Minister was forced to turn the tables on his opponents. At the New UMNO assembly on October 30, 1988, he invited Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa Hitam to rejoin the Cabinet as Ministers without portfolio.

He described it as a sincere invitation, adding that it was made in view of "their suspicion that our earlier invitations to peace talks was made out of feelings of weakness. I hope this will end the disunity". Dato Musa was the first to reject the offer out of hand and the Tunku commented that the offer "added insult to injury". Tengku Razaleigh, in a detailed response, rejected the offer of a Cabinet position, declaring that he was not seeking high office in government. "All I want is to revive the spirit of UMNO '46". As for the ministerial position he added: "The ministerial position is not important. In fact in my opinion it has no relation to the question of Malay unity".

Dato Musa on his part said Malay unity could only be achieved through the attitude of the leadership, especially if those in power subscribed to a political culture based on the Malay nature: exercising compassion, courtesy, moderation, tolerance, being forgiving, and never arrogant.

Dr. Mahathir responded, warning that the stability and success of the country depended on the strength of Malays, and that the fate of the non-Malays also lay in the political strength of the Malays. "If we are responsible enough to the nation and the people we should strive to strengthen Malay political power". Calling for an immediate end to the political squabbles he said: "The Malays are not out of the woods yet. We have not achieved a satisfactory rate of progress. We also have a major responsibility to turn the Malays into a dignified and respectable race".

Regretably, Dr. Mahathir chose the first New UMNO Assembly to hit out at the Tunku in response to claims that his Government was undemocratic. According to Dr. Mahathir the first government of Malaysia under the Tunku was in fact guilty

of not practising democracy. Dr. Mahathir again cited the formation of the Federation (of Malaysia) and the separation of Singapore in 1965 to support his view. No consultation was made on the separation of Singapore from the Federation, he alleged, saying the decision was made in London and that only the late Tun Razak was informed of the decision. He also repeated the view that Syed Jaafar Albar, then UMNO secretary-general, protested against the move and lost his job in the party.

Tempering his earlier caustic comments Dr. Mahathir added: "We do not wish to touch on Tunku's Administration as well as his actions. We respect him as an elder statesman. But unfortunately he has let himself to be confused and embroiled in the political game of certain quarters to achieve their own ends".

The criticism brought a swift response from a number of Malay leaders who reminded Dr. Mahathir that the decision to expel Singapore was in fact taken at a meeting of no less than five senior cabinet ministers. The Tunku had acknowledged that secrecy was an important consideration lest the British or their Allies interfere in the momentous decision which, if not carried out at that time, could have ended in bloody recriminations which would have done neither Malaysia nor Singapore one wit of good.

Dr. Mahathir got unexpected flak from Dato Musa Hitam who made a statement in Hong Kong claiming that the Government planned to call a snap election. The Prime Minister hit back, describing Dato Musa's statement as "baseless and mischievous". He was especially angered by suggestions that he intended to declare a State of Emergency in the event New UMNO fared badly.

Dato Musa claimed that the Prime Minister would create tension in the country to legitimise his action and further added that the MCA was aghast at the thought of a snap election because it could be wiped out politically.

The Prime Minister charged that Dato Musa's claims were intended to subvert country's political stability. Several other New UMNO leaders chipped in and labelled the former Deputy Prime Minister's remarks as "treasonable". Responding, Dato Musa said in his opinion treason would only be committed against the King and country, not against individuals. On New



UMNO's plans to open the party's doors to all Malays, he said that any reconciliation with the party would depend on all Council members and Division heads who had been excluded being taken back. A further condition was that the Tunku and Tun Hussein Onn be made honorary Presidents for life. The fact that Dato Musa had suggested terms under which he was prepared to rejoin the New UMNO was read as a signal of his willingness to negotiate.

In time this was to prove correct. Clearly Dasto Musa and his supporters were preparing for a return on their terms, regardless of the more rigid stand adopted by the Tunku and Tengku Razaleigh, which called for nothing less than the revival of the old UMNO. The Tunku for his part expressed no desire to be an honorary president of New UMNO, standing by his call for the revival of the old party.

In an interview Dr. Mahathir was asked whether he would be prepared to bring New UMNO's constitution in line with that of the old party, as suggested by the Tunku. His answer was no, and that it was a matter of differing views on the subject between members of both groups. But he did indicate that if the majority of members of the New UMNO were willing to do so then their view would prevail. "If you want to join a political party you can't say change the party first, then I would join".

## CHAPTER 27

In December 1988, with indications that his legal options were fast being depleted Tengku Razaleigh took his fight to Parliament. On December 5th, in his capacity as MP for Gua Musang, Tengku Razaleigh tabled a motion seeking the approval of Parliament to present a Private Members Bill to amend the Society's Act (1966) to enable the revival of the de-registered UMNO. It was seconded by Dato Musa.

In presenting the motion Tengku Razaleigh reminded MP's that during the earlier March parliamentary session legislation had been introduced making unlawful only the unregistered branches of a society and not the whole body. Seeking to backdate the Amendment to January 1, 1987, Tengku Razaleigh said he was moving the motion not because he wanted to put the blame for the de-registration of the party on anyone but because he considered it vital to have the original party revived. Among the reasons cited was the need to defend the sovereignty of the Rulers, to unite the Malays, to achieve political stability and uphold the democratic process.

He noted that several attempts had already been made to revive the legal status of the party including appeals to the Supreme Court, to the Prime Minister, and to the Home Affairs Minister. In presenting his motion he reiterated that the de-registration of UMNO was set in motion when the previous party leadership refused to act on complaints regarding the existence of illegal branches and under-aged members. He claimed the party was de-registered because the lawyers representing the leadership had invited the Court to do so. He said the Home Affairs Minister could also have invoked Section 70 of the Societies Act to exempt the party from Section 12(3) and even from the entire Act even if he chose to.

Responding, New UMNO MPs hit back at the proposers of

the motion claiming that it was an attempt to interfere with the independence of the Judiciary — a point whose ironical overtones were not lost on many listening to the debate. Among those who opposed the motion was Datuk Abdullah Badawi, one of the first “Team B” leaders to join New UMNO.

In support Datuk Rais Yatim said the current leadership practised power politics and acted like “lions waiting to finish off their prey”. He added that efforts to deny the motion tabled by Tengku Razaleigh was like “killing UMNO for the second time”.

Following the anticipated defeat of the motion Tengku Razaleigh declared that henceforth the objective of his group would be to topple the leadership of New UMNO and that regardless of any attempts to drive a wedge between him and his followers he would continue with the struggle of reviving old UMNO.

Some Malay luminaries felt otherwise. In Johore efforts were underway to try and heal the rift that had politically divided the State’s leadership in the light of the results of the two by-elections held earlier in the year.

On December 18th several hundred representatives of community organisations met with the view of seeking a reconciliation. Among those who attended a series of conferences and receptions were prominent Johoreans including, Tun Hussein Onn, Dato Musa, the Menteri Besar of Johor, Tan Sri Muhyiddin, and Information Minister, Datuk Mohamed Rahmat. The meeting between Dato Musa and Datuk Rahmat was especially significant as they had been at loggerheads for years. Dato Musa was believed to have been instrumental in the removal of Datuk Rahmat from the cabinet when he was Deputy Prime Minister.

At the end of the Johore Unity Conference a resolution was adopted calling for the re-instatement of all office bearers elected at all levels during the 1987 party elections and the revival of the original constitution. Additionally all former UMNO members in Johor were to be accepted by the new party. Tun Hussein Onn stressed that in seeking unity an end to fault finding was essential. This was endorsed by Dato Musa. Not surprisingly, Dato Musa’s conciliatory tone — weeks only after his attack on the Prime Minister — raised speculation that he was on the point of re-joining new UMNO. He dismissed

such speculation as mere rumour.

The adoption of the Johor resolution received widespread publicity and momentarily raised hopes for an end to the conflict in UMNO. Tun Hussein Onn met with Tengku Razaleigh and suggested a similar blueprint should be implemented in all the other States. Following a hour-long discussion Tun Hussein said he would write to the Prime Minister to seek a meeting with him to explore ways in which the proposal could be implemented. However it soon became clear that a rift had emerged between Tengku Razaleigh's supporters in Johor and those of Dato Musa.

The Prime Minister announced that New UMNO accepted the Johor unity formula but with a qualification: it was not binding nationwide. On the automatic acceptance of Johor members he said they had to register first, as required by the party's constitution. This pre-condition was rejected by Tengku Razaleigh.

Explaining his rejection he expressed disappointment that New UMNO MPs had failed to take advantage of the opportunity presented when he attempted to revive the old party in Parliament. There were fears too that in the remote event that New UMNO adopted a constitution identical to that of the old party there would be little place for Tengku Razaleigh's supporters and that the only possible beneficiary would be Datuk Musa's faction.

With the government-backed MCA candidate, Ong Tee Kiat, comfortably beating Datuk Harun Idris in the Ampang Jaya by-election, Tengku Razaleigh dropped the first hints that his Spirit of '46 would seek co-operation with other political groups and parties in the country. Clearly he had decided that it was time to gather in the reigns and prepare for a major electoral confrontation at national and state level levels.

On another occasion he declared: "We must find friends to strengthen our struggle". It was the second time in weeks he talked about forming an alternative electoral alliance. Later he met with PAS leaders and an in-principle agreement was reached to co-operate in toppling the New UMNO-led coalition.

Despite its appeal the adoption of the Johor unity formula did not go down well with many existing members, evidenced by subsequent events including efforts to frustrate Datuk

Shahrir from contesting the chairmanship of the Johor Bahru divisional elections. Those who had replaced Dato Musa's faction in New UMNO at branch and division level were unwilling to give up their positions regardless of the larger objective of seeking a lasting solution to divisions between the Malay community.

Meanwhile the Tunku stepped down as Perkim president after 16 years at the helm. His decision was viewed by some as an attempt to avoid being replaced in view of his blunt opposition to the Government but, as he explained, he had been planning to do so for some time before.

"I have to call it quits. I am an old man with very poor eyes." On a suitable successor he noted that it ought to be either of the deputy presidents, Tun Haji Abdul Rahman Yaakub, former Chief Minister of Sarawak, or Tun Datuk Mustapha Harun.

"However, both of them are still active in politics," he said at Kedah Perkim's 21st annual general meeting at the Sultan Abdul Halim building. The meeting was opened by the Sultan of Kedah.

The Tunku said the president of Perkim must be able to devote all his time to the organisation on his own expenditure. "I would like to reiterate that the post is voluntary and the president does not get any allowance or pay," he said. Perkim, the Tunku said, now had assets amounting to more than \$100 million.

"The person who succeeds me must be trustworthy and moralistic, someone I am confident will bring more progress for Perkim. I have no intention of handing over Perkim's assets to irresponsible people," he said.

The Tunku said Perkim was suffering from financial problems in view of the economic situation. "There have been suggestions that we sell our headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, which is empty, to raise funds to develop Perkim," he said. "I am absolutely against this idea. We would have more money in our hands if we sold the building, but the more we have, the more we would spend. When that money is gone, Perkim will die." he added.

## CHAPTER 28

Events took a dramatic turn in January, 1989. Late on the evening of the 18th Dr. Mahathir was rushed to the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital after complaining of chest pains. Initially it had been thought that he suffered a bout of serious indigestion but hours later it was confirmed that the Prime Minister suffered a serious heart attack. The development immediately threw the political scene into turmoil with various scenarios emerging.

It was noted that his predecessor, Tun Hussein Onn, had suffered two heart attacks, and a year after having a by-pass in 1980, stepped down from the premiership. Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba also had a successful quintuple heart by-pass in London in November 1987. Soon after Enchik Ghafar's operation there was strong speculation that he would step down. It was fuelled by a careless remark by Dr. Mahathir to the effect that Enchik Ghafar could stay away for as long as he liked. This time attention re-focused on Enchik Ghafar who took over the reigns of the government even before being named acting Prime Minister.

Six days after his admission the Prime Minister underwent a coronary bypass. The operation was performed by a team of local doctors after his condition had been investigated by a team of American experts who had been flown in a day after he had been admitted. The American team reportedly advised that the Prime Minister undergo angioplasty in the U.S., a treatment in which blocked arteries are cleared by the use of a laser. The Prime Minister was reported to have been against the idea and the team itself was unwilling to undertake the operation in Kuala Lumpur.

The by-pass was successful and in the course numerous clogged arteries were successfully repaired. The media made

much of the fact that the Prime Minister was the first Malaysian leader to undergo coronary by-pass surgery locally. The Prime Minister was discharged in late January and chose to recuperate initially in Kuala Lumpur. He received a pleasant surprise, or so it appeared, when Dato Musa Hitam announced on January 31st that he had rejoined New UMNO.

Rumour had it that Dato Musa's decision was taken after meeting with the Prime Minister in hospital. Speaking of his decision Dato Musa said his reason included the fact that the leadership of New UMNO had softened its stand against the dissidents and was more prepared to compromise. Another factor was the acceptance of the Johor unity formula and the willingness of the top echelon leaders to enter into discussions. More important was the party's decision to accept all Malays including those branded as trouble makers and traitors at the height of the factional squabbling.

Pertinently he referred to the parting of the way with Tengku Razaleigh's faction, saying "I was never really accepted in the '46 movement."

Inevitably the timing of his return to New UMNO sparked off a spate of criticism. His motives were openly questioned but Dato Musa denounced attempts to link his return with the Prime Minister's health as being mischievous. Dato Musa denied that he intended to rejoin the government.

In Muar, a Spirit of '46 stronghold, banners criticising Dato Musa for rejoining New UMNO were displayed. It took Dato Musa's political foe, Datuk Rahmat, to urge the Malays not to question his return to the party. "I believe he is sincere in wanting to return to the fold. It must have been difficult for Dato Musa as a former UMNO deputy president and former deputy Prime Minister to make a decision on this matter. But he has accepted the reality of politics and I do not doubt his sincerity and I hope the debate over his rejoining the party will stop". New UMNO expected up to 60,000 members who had previously refused to join the party to follow Dato Musa's footsteps.

But Dato Musa's close ally, Datuk Shahrir, was non-committal about his return. It was only later in the month, after Enchik Ghafar announced a time limit for the automatic admission of former members to the party, that he indicated a willingness to do so. Other supporters of Dato Musa also

simultaneously announced they would rejoin the new party.

On February 5th Dr. Mahathir was discharged from the General Hospital. Though looking gaunt he smiled bravely in his first public interview saying, "I see some old faces here .... I feel fine". He took the opportunity to wish Chinese Malaysians a Happy New Year. Appearing on television he dispelled rumours that he had suffered a relapse. "My voice is not strong but it will get stronger in a day or two".

Days later Enchik Ghafar surprised the country when he publicly dismissed speculation of a succession struggle and said that the Prime Minister would return to work within two months. "The political structure in Malaysia is not going to change. Dr. Mahathir will continue as Prime Minister after he has recuperated from heart surgery". He expressed confidence that the Prime Minister could assume the heavy responsibilities of his office.

"From all accounts I know that Dr. Mahathir is well. He would be fully recovered by the time he returns to work". On reports of a tussle he said, "it is pure speculation. As far as I am concerned there is no question of Dr. Mahathir stepping down".

The speculation followed a report that Enchik Ghafar had private talks with Tan Sri Othman Saad, former Menteri Besar of Johore, and a staunch Spirit of '46 supporter. Enchik Ghafar explained that while he had met with Tan Sri Othman, he had attempted only to convince him and the group allied to Tengku Razaleigh that attempts to revive the old UMNO were futile.

"We did not discuss Tengku Razaleigh joining New UMNO. Tengku Razaleigh is old enough to make up his own mind. There is no need for me to convince him."

This ran contrary to other reports in which Enchik Ghafar had publicly appealed to Tengku Razaleigh to return to the fold. The about-turn was seen as a gesture to Dr. Mahathir's supporters who feared that in the event he relinquished the premiership and Enchik Ghafar assumed office, he would for a variety of reasons influence Tengku Razaleigh to return. Their warm personal relationship over the years, and the lack of personal attacks despite being in different camps, was seen as a plus for any future reconciliation.

Clearly concerned, Datuk Rahmat and Datuk Najib publicly declared that efforts to coax Tengku Razaleigh to rejoin New



UMNO should cease. The time for persuasion was long past, they argued, and time should not be wasted in continuing to woo him. Taking advantage of Dato Musa's return, the Menteri Besar of Selangor declared that Datuk Musa's decision symbolised the end of the dispute among the Malays. The claim followed those that New UMNO had attracted as many as 1.3 million members. The emphasis on the numbers was largely due to ongoing efforts to try and re-acquire assets of the old party held by the Official Assignee. New UMNO were required to prove that the majority of the old members of UMNO had in fact joined the new party before it could make a claim to the assets.

The pressure on Enchik Ghafar continued and he was compelled to publicly defend some of the Prime Minister's more controversial policies over the previous years. Denouncing those who claimed that Dr. Mahathir was a dictator he stressed that the party Supreme Council met and made decisions in the PM's absence. "If he was a dictator he would not have given up his powers after his operation. He would instead say 'don't make decisions, wait for me to get better'."

In a speech celebrating his 64th birthday Enchik Ghafar alluded to the difficulties of individuals becoming a Minister or Deputy Minister because of the intense rivalry for such positions. "It was even more difficult for the incumbent to step down from the top post," he said pointedly.

He went on to point out that the laws of nature were against those who want to go forever. "I do not know of anything that goes up and does not come down. Have you heard of an aeroplane that does not eventually land?" he asked rhetorically. He alluded to the halycon times when he served under the Tunku, and added he too would step down one day. "I realised my weaknesses and my short-comings. I know how far I can go. And I want to go before I am pushed out."

Observers noted that his remarks cut both ways, and that far from fading into the wilderness Enchik Ghafar believed whole-heartedly that he had every opportunity to assume the highest office of the land despite the criticism within New UMNO of his limitations. Such remarks emanated largely from the "contenders", which reportedly included Anwar Ibrahim, the newly return Dato Musa, and even Datuk Rahmat.

As the March 31st deadline to rejoin UMNO approached Datuk Shahrir again stepped into limelight, this time accusing party leaders of back pedalling and making it difficult for old members to join the party. In particular he said statements by Datuk Rahmat gave the impression that they were intent on blocking the entry of members. He criticised the party's indecisiveness, and in particular a resolution by 35 of the 43 branches of the Johor Bahru division which he once headed, that he was no longer welcome to rejoin the division. (Only much later was he able to contest, and win the division chairmanship.) Others in the party also chipped in saying that prodigal leaders who returned would not and should not be given their old positions.

Quite unexpectedly Enchik Ghafar declared a willingness to meet Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters to resolve the crisis. "If they are willing to meet me and are interested in unity we can meet. I am interested in unity." His remarks followed suggestions that talks should resume to end the rift — especially with Enchik Ghafar at the helm. This led to intense speculation that most of the former leaders, would return to New UMNO.

Datuk Rahmat, the party secretary-general, declared that 1989 would be a year of consolidation and that several key leaders in Tengku Razaleigh's faction had approached him and Enchik Ghafar with the view of re-joining New UMNO. Among the names mentioned were Tengku Razaleigh's No. 2, Datuk Rais Yatim, and Datuk Harun Idris. His predictions proved premature.

Shortly thereafter a backbench MP of the National Front startled Parliament when he claimed that there was a grand design at work to topple both the Prime Minister and Enchik Ghafar Baba. Accusing them of being "wolves in sheep's clothing" and more dangerous than opposition parties like PAS and the DAP, Mr. Saahidan Kassim claimed that five or six leaders were involved. He labelled them as insiders who used various government agencies and media organisations to advance their course. The claims were however not taken seriously. It was felt his statement had been inspired by one very senior leader who was concerned about the increasing rumblings in the corridors of power while Dr. Mahathir recovered from his operation.

At a dinner hosted for himself and the late Tun Hussein, the Tunku spoke of the danger of the Malays losing their political power unless they were united. "The Malays have forgotten about their responsibility to their race, religion and country. Everyone is fighting for power and no one remembers the turmoil we went through to achieve independence."

"We were lorded over by foreigners. We were humiliated and subjected to various forms of despicable acts. Malays should therefore not tread on the path which would take us back to pre-independence days."

"We Malays can lose everything we have gained if we do not know how to safeguard what we already have." He noted that UMNO had given the Malays power but the split between New UMNO and proponents of the old party threatened to take away the power. He advised the Spirit of '46 not to give up their struggle which he said was "the only saviour of the Malays".

He severely criticised Dr. Mahathir and urged the Spirit of '46 group not to compromise on their principles. "We want peace. We can make efforts towards peace. But we must not yield our principles."

His position contrasted somewhat with that of the late Tun Hussein who said: "When I offered to mediate after the Johor Malay Unity Forum my actions were misunderstood by many people. My friends were uneasy with my stand. Some felt by my actions I was giving my blessings to the abuses of the people in power. Maybe some felt there was no way they could reconcile with someone who had oppressed them."

"But I just wanted to see that disunity end. My offer was made because of the genuine and sincere desire for peace and unity among the Malays". Without disclosing the outcome of his earlier discussions with Tengku Razaleigh and Dr. Mahathir he said he "would not take sides."

The late Tun Hussein's remarks came in the light of criticism from the Tunku, after he had offered to mediate. The Tunku had been irked by the late Tun Hussein's change of heart after originally supporting Tengku Razaleigh's faction. The Tunku said he was confused by the late Tun Hussein's new stance.

Dr. Mahathir returned to work on April 4th, weeks before the installation of the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah as

Malaysia's new King. Commentators noted the importance of Dr. Mahathir establishing a cordial working relationship with the new King, who as a former Lord President and internationally recognised jurist, was expected to take a keener interest than his predecessors in the affairs of the state. It was suggested that Dr. Mahathir may need to explain more about his Government's policies, which would probably come under closer scrutiny before Royal assent was given, even though constitutionally the King's powers in withholding assent had been severely trimmed. There was also speculation that the previous year's judicial controversy might colour the King's views of Dr. Mahathir's objectiveness.

Sultan Azlan Shah's election as the King had been quietly challenged by some of his fellow Rulers. The Tunku noted: "Never have we seen such a division among the rulers." He nevertheless said the choice was a good one. "He deserves it, not only because he was next in line, but because he is the most suitable for the job." Commenting on the competition from at least one other ruler the Tunku said it had been "fanned by politicians. "The Rulers don't want to fight with each other but some people want them to quarrel." According to the Tunku, Sultan Azlan Shah had to be content with the whisper campaign against his wife who was not of Royal birth. "The law does not say the Consort of the King should be of Royal birth."

By the middle of 1989 it became clear that Tengku Razaleigh was set on establishing a formal opposition alliance. Following the registration of the Spirit of '46, a Muslim United Front (Angkatan), comprising members of the Spirit of '46, PAS and Berjasa was mooted. He also held discussions with the DAP.

The first test for the proposed Muslim Front took place during a by-election for the Trengganu State seat of Telok Pasu. To underline its solidarity with PAS that party was given the choice of nominating the candidate.

New UMNO made overtures towards PAS but the party rejected an offer for discussions on reconciling their political differences. PAS cited the prevailing political climate in the country, and in particular its decision to enter into an electoral alliance with the Spirit of '46 and Berjasa.

The union was soon to become a source for concern, not just for UMNO, but also for members of the ruling National

Front. The MCA said the proposed alliance was especially worrisome to the Chinese. "Even if this type of alliance cannot rule its existence will result in more tense relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and affect the political ability". The DAP on the other hand took a different view. Its secretary-general, Lim Kit Siang, said his party was prepared to consider any attempt to unite the opposition against the ruling coalition, despite some fundamental differences with PAS, especially its commitment to establishing an Islamic State. But electoral co-operation opened up a whole new realm of opportunities, he said.

Noting that the DAP had 24 seats in parliament, while the Spirit of '46 supporters had nine, and PAS one, he said the immediate areas of co-operation would focus on human rights, anti-corruption, and independence of the judiciary. He acknowledged however that over the long term it was unrealistic to expect the different opposition groups to compromise on their primary political objectives.

This was a direct reference to PAS's objective of establishing an Islamic nation. New UMNO expectedly drew attention to the fact that PAS's goal was one that the DAP, or for that the matter the MCA, could not conceivably support. This significant difference of objectives was emphasised in the run up to the Telok Pasu by-election, but despite attempts to drive a wedge between the emerging alliance, the PAS candidate scored a narrow victory.

The victory substantially strengthened the position of Tengku Razaleigh and gave fresh impetus to the formation of the Angkatan and the larger alliance with other opposition groups including the DAP.

## CHAPTER 29

After comfortably winning the Tambatan State Assembly seat in Johor, in August 1989, it was generally expected that Dr. Mahathir would take advantage of the prevailing conditions to call for snap general elections. Economically the country enjoyed a year of unprecedented prosperity, allowing for a generous budget which provided greater incentives for further stimulation of key sectors. Fresh foreign investments also poured into the country.

The Prime Minister's sweep through the country further fuelled expectations of early elections and it was an open secret that New UMNO divisions had been told to gear up. Political observers noted that despite four politically difficult years and his coronary by-pass, Dr. Mahathir nevertheless exuded confidence in leading the National Front to yet another victory, and in the course consolidating his position as President of New UMNO for another five years. A third term in office, if completed, would also make him the longest serving Prime Minister since the country obtained its independence.

Political pundits generally felt that while it was unlikely that the National Front would repeat its spectacular victories in 1982 and 1986 — especially in 1986 when UMNO candidates won 82 of the 83 Malay-majority seats — the government would nevertheless be returned with a comfortable majority. Dr. Mahathir however had to contend with a number of uncertainties which could only be put to the acid test by going to the polls.

There was little doubt that the Spirit of '46, had demonstrated a level of public support which few believed it could have garnered in the face of Dr. Mahathir's resolute leadership and the sterling economic performance for which his government took much credit. In the six by-elections,

despite losing on four occasions the Spirit of '46 faction had mustered an average of 40% of the popular vote. Its strength in Kelantan and Trengganu remained significant, and the problems between the National Front State government of Kelantan and the Sultan did not help New UMNO.

Within New UMNO there were a crop of problems too. Enchik Ghafar expressed annoyance over remarks which suggested that he was only warming the DPM's seat and that he would not be a contender for the premiership. His unease compelled Dr. Mahathir to finally endorse Enchik Ghafar as his successor twice in December 1989. His endorsement was seen as an attempt to check in-fighting within the party and to settle the succession issue before seeking a mandate.

At a rally in Muar Dr. Mahathir urged members to uphold UMNO tradition by promoting the incumbent No. 2 to succeed as party leader. At that time however he did not mention Enchik Ghafar by name. On the second occasion he made it clear that Enchik Ghafar should take over from the leadership of the party and the government after him.

Observers read the endorsement as an obvious effort to defend his controversial decision in 1981 to leave the choice of his deputy to the party. Then the much junior Dato Musa successfully mounted the challenge against Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, a move which continues to have repercussions nine years later.

The return of Dato Musa has also been a matter of concern to a number of other New UMNO leaders, notably the ambitious Encik Anwar Ibrahim, who many say could out-manoeuvre Enchik Ghafar. Dato Musa, since named special envoy to the United Nations with Cabinet status, is known also to have his sights on the premiership — a position which slipped out of his grasp when he broke with Dr. Mahathir in 1985. Despite their differences, insiders say Dr. Mahathir considers Dato Musa most eminently qualified to lead Malaysia in the event he decides to step down. Dato Musa's decision to break with Tengku Razaleigh and return to the New UMNO fold was a major plus in Dr. Mahathir's decision to rehabilitate him.

There is speculation that at the next New UMNO Assembly elections Dato Musa might contest one of those positions of vice-president and that he will win comfortably. With Encik

Anwar equally certain to win, a possible casualty may be Datuk Abdullah Badawi, a Musa ally, but who despite being the first to return to the New UMNO has yet to be appointed to any meaningful office. Datuk Abdullah is also a rival of Encik Anwar and rumour has it that Encik Anwar would be pleased to support Dato Musa in order to assure that Datuk Abdullah is denied re-election. That of course begs the question whether Encik Anwar would make way for Dato Musa to move further up the leadership ladder.

With 1989 drawing to a close and election talk still in the air, Dr. Mahathir surprised the nation by disclosing that he had decided to hold talks with the Tunku to try and settle once and for all the feud among opposing Malay factions. The discussion took place shortly after the Spirit of '46 held its inaugural meeting in Kuala Lumpur. It was opened by the Tunku at the Federal Hotel after earlier attempts to hold it at the Sultan Sulaiman Club were frustrated by their opponents.

In a little over a year the party has claimed membership in the region of 500,000 and like New UMNO, has established divisions in every parliamentary constituency in the country. A total of 5,000 branches have also since been set-up. The inaugural meeting highlighted the growing force of the Spirit of '46, and the presence of leaders of PAS, Berjasa and the DAP left few with any doubt of the political challenge it would pose to New UMNO, and more importantly, its objective of presenting to the electorate an alternative multi-racial coalition.

On Saturday November 11th, Dr. Mahathir called on the Tunku at his residence at No. 1 Jalan Tuanku, a stone's throw away from Parliament House in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting was widely publicised, with front-page newspaper photographs showing Dr. Mahathir bowing and kissing the elder statesman's hand. But apart from the publicity the meeting achieved little else.

The Tunku was later to say that Dr. Mahathir had rejected his main request, the revival of UMNO. Instead the meeting was confined to generalities. Despite the lack of progress the Tunku generously described it as a "good beginning". He later qualified this by saying that while talks were frank and open they were purely exploratory.

What the talks achieved was to open up channels for a discussion between Tengku Razaleigh and Dr. Mahathir.



The historic meeting took place in Parliament House some weeks later, and again despite all the fanfare, it yielded little in real terms. Tengku Razaleigh revived his appeal but Dr. Mahathir stayed his ground, stating that he was unwilling to amend the Societies' Act in Parliament because this would be tantamount to usurping the powers of the judiciary. After the meeting it was clear that both sides had reached an impasse on fundamental issues.

In a discussion with editors at the year's end Dr. Mahathir ruled out the possibility of the Spirit of '46 winning the next general election, saying that the beneficiaries of the new opposition alliance would be the PAS and the DAP but not those former UMNO members who had aligned themselves with Tengku Razaleigh. He however conceded that there were marginal seats where the opposition could triumph.

Using the opportunity to reiterate his position he said that while the discussions with the Tunku and Tengku Razaleigh had been useful, and that he was willing to continue with talks, he was surprised that the public were disappointed that nothing substantial had been achieved. "I don't know what gave people that impression. Are they really expecting UMNO to dissolve itself with 1.3 million very strong supporters. Don't talk about me, I am also subject to these people — if I go my own way they will not follow me".

The 1.3 million that New UMNO claims has been challenged by its opponents. According to Tengku Razaleigh he has it on good authority that New UMNO membership does not exceed 900,000 and that much less than half of former UMNO members have actually joined the new party. New members, including those previously uncommitted, have however joined new UMNO in large numbers.

On its part, New UMNO itself has conceded that up to 400,000 members of the old UMNO, who had been originally rejected by the new party, have since joined '46. New UMNO officials describe this as "membership by default". Be that as it may, it is generally accepted that the Spirit of '46 has attracted a further 200,000 or more new members, giving it an overall membership in the vicinity of 600,000. With PAS's support, this translates into a split of 55:45 of Malay votes between New UMNO and its opponents, on the assumption that voting will be along party lines.

Depending on uncommitted voters, constituencies in areas where Malays are numerically superior will go to candidates of either faction. This would suggest that even in the event New UMNO gains sufficient seats to lead the next Government coalition, there is a real possibility of a minority of Malay MPs sitting on the Government benches. This has never happened before and to most is an unthinkable proposition.

This uncertainty could unleash strong nationalistic sentiments, with all its sinister connotations. It is probably the main reason why Dr. Mahathir, recognising the possibility, has decided not to rush into elections before being assured of a meaningful victory.

In the past few months a whole host of new factors which could influence the outcome of the next general elections have surfaced. Relations between Sabah and Kuala Lumpur, uncomfortable since the Christain-led PBS party came into power in 1985, sank to their lowest earlier this year with the arrest of Dr. Jeffrey Kittingan, younger brother of Chief Minister Joseph Pairin Kitingan. Dr. Kitingan, the head of the Sabah Foundation, has been charged on several counts of corruption. Sabahans say this is an affront to the leadership of Chief Minister Kitingan and that the action was motivated by a desire to embarrass PBS. Again, days before the Sabah Assembly was dissolved in late May 1990, to pave the way for fresh State elections, three PBS officials were detained under the ISA. However they have vowed to ensure that PBS forms the next state government.

There have been claims that PBS has had talks with '46 leaders but the same applies to other Sabah-based parties seeking to widen their electoral appeal. In the event PBS is returned to power again the PBS could become a major political force in the country.

USNO strongman Tun Mustapha, has jumped back into the fray, this time apparently with the backing of Kuala Lumpur. His return to politics after resigning the Chief Ministership almost 15 years ago is not expected to substantially bolster the party's flagging fortunes. But USNO or any other party with a handful of State or Federal seats could be an attractive proposition to opponents of the National Front.

In Sarawak the DAP has already declared its intention to challenge the ruling party in seven parliamentary seats.

Relations between Kuala Lumpur and Kuching remain correct but elements opposed to Tan Sri Pattingi Taib are known to be re-grouping, and following their good showing in the last State elections, are expected to deny the government any substantial majority at the next polls.

In Peninsular Malaysia bickering has broken out between component members of the coalition. The latest falling out came after the opposition introduced a motion to dismiss the deputy speaker, S. Vijandran, who has been at the centre of a pornographic video tape scandal. The Gerakan initially intended to support the motion and call for the government Whip to be withdrawn. This met with fierce opposition from the MIC, led by Datuk Samy Velu, a close confidante of Dr. Mahathir. Within the MCA, MIC and Gerakan too there are serious differences, and the loss of any support by any of these coalition partners will almost certainly be '46's gain.

The DAP has since made it clear that one of their priorities is to capture Penang. A recent joint rally by '46 and DAP was enthusiastically received with the DAP confidently referring to Tengku Razaleigh as "the next PM". In turn Mr. Lim Kit Siang is being widely tipped to take over the Chief Ministership in the event they are able to win control of the State Assembly.

Tengku Razaleigh had also suggested that perhaps for the first time in more than a decade Penang might have a Malay Chief Minister, a prospect that could swing quite a lot of uncommitted votes.

The '46 campaign led by Tengku Razaleigh continues to receive the unstinting support of the Tunku. Party officials marvel at his determination to play an active role despite his failing eyesight which a more recent operation failed to correct — and his increasing immobility. He has been admitted to hospital already in the first quarter of this year for minor viral infections and partly because of exhaustion.

"You cannot keep him away for long. We try and limit his public appearances to selected meetings and *cheramas* but once the Tunku gets wind of a political discussion taking place he insists on participating", says a '46 leader. "Even while he was in hospital in Kuala Lumpur in late January he asked the doctor for two hours leave to attend a *cherama*. Men or women half his age won't dream of dragging themselves out of hospital for something half as important".

In his homes in Penang and in Kuala Lumpur the Tunku continues to receive an unending stream of visitors, from Heads of States to ordinary Malaysians seeking advice and assistance. His speaking calendar is also chokerblock.

"He does not find travelling or speaking a chore", says an aide. "That is the difference between the Tunku and other leaders. He enjoys it and feels that he must be a part of what is going on in the country even if he cannot directly do anything about it. He has always described himself as the servant of the people and even now he feels an obligation to ensure that the government, or for that matter anyone else, is not able to get away with unfair policies that could be detrimental to one or another section of community. He has never compromised his principles and is unlikely he ever will."

Asked to explain the relationship between the Tunku and Tengku Razaleigh, a mutual friend says: "When Tengku Razaleigh returned to Malaya in 1960 his entry into politics was at the behest of the Tunku who knew his late father well. Tengku Razaleigh and the Tunku have a lot in common. Apart from coming from royal households they have considerable international exposure and have served the government for long periods of time. During the Tunku's tenure Tengku Razaleigh steadily moved up the UMNO ladder with the old man's support. During Tun Razak's time Tengku Razaleigh took on major economic tasks and subsequently became the country's first Malay Finance Minister. The Tunku admires his acumen in financial matters and of course he is most grateful to Tengku Razaleigh for his generous contributions of land and money to UMNO in the formative years.

"It was Tengku Razaleigh's efforts that prompted the government to provide the Tunku with a house in Kuala Lumpur. Most of all the Tunku respects Tengku Razaleigh because he too is a principled man who is prepared to eschew personal glory, even high office, in the defence of policies which he feels are imperative for the continued progress and stability of Malaysia. Neither of them is prepared to gamble with the country's future. Both of them have friends in all the communities and are viewed as being truly Malaysians unlike some leaders who perceived to be more chauvinistic. Both are devout Muslims and proud Malays but they place their love of country on an equal footing with patriotism, and loyalty to the race. They are patriots first and foremost."

## CHAPTER 30

For more than fifteen years the Tunku has been writing a much-followed column in *The Star*, an independent newspaper, which he says he helped save “from an unscrupulous politician who attempted to wrest control of the publication in 1974.”

In his column the Tunku has recounted various interesting happenings and pen-sketched outstanding leaders, both Malaysians and foreign dignitaries. Extracts from some of these personal glimpses are well worth the recounting.

First there was the visit of the King, and the Sultan of Selangor to the Philippines in 1984. The Tunku accompanied them to Manila. They were received by the Malaysian Ambassador and at short notice were to call on President Marcos. The Tunku assumed that the visit had been approved by the Foreign Ministry. Later he discovered the (the late) President Marcos had given them a rather frosty reception.

The Tunku wrote: “I must say I was disappointed with the cold reception given to them. I was told that the President never came out to meet the King but remained in his official chair and only got up to take the King’s hand when the latter extended his hand in greeting. On the other hand the Sultan of Selangor was stopped at the gate of the Palace and was told to get out of the car and walk to the Palace. The Sultan was naturally annoyed and said that if his car was not allowed to be driven in he would not go in himself. After a hurried consultation the car was finally permitted in.

“When the King was taking his leave the President’s wife, Imelda Marcos, was courteous enough to walk a few steps to see the King off; according to my informant the President called her back. He himself never took a step forward to say goodbye to the King.”

Marcos's behaviour towards the Malaysian Royal party did not surprise the Tunku who could recall similar tardy behaviour when the Tunku was Prime Minister. The Tunku recalls.

"I knew Marcos in the old days when he was eyeing for the top position. I visited the country many times, first as a guest of President Garcia. Later during President Macapagal's tenure I met Mr. Marcos during a golf match. Though he was a very good player he declined to play. He followed us around the course and talked about nothing in particular but made an impression on me. The next thing I heard was that he had been made President.

"The second occasion I met him was when he visited Malaysia with a large entourage, which included his wife and daughters. He used to come and have private talks with me at the Residency and showed a great fondness for durians."

What annoyed the Tunku though was the occasion when President Marcos was to receive a doctorate from the University of Malaya. "That morning he and his good lady had durians at my house and at 9.00 a.m. I told him that he had better get ready for the convocation at 10 o'clock. I got to the convocation hall ten minutes earlier but there was no sign of President Marcos. He finally arrived at 11.30 after having kept others waiting for one and a half hours".

Much later the Tunku discovered that while Marcos was in Malaysia an infiltration force made up of Muslim soldiers had been mounted with orders to invade Sabah, but when they refused to go they were lined up and shot. Years later, in 1975, President Marcos asked to meet with the Tunku while he was on a official visit to Malaysia. "I entered his suite at the Hilton Hotel. He was seated at the desk near the window but never budged an inch or moved a step forward to greet me".

In sharp contrast the Tunku appears to have had a special place in the heart of the King of Thailand, King Bhumibol Adulyadej. On one occasion when the Tunku was in Bangkok on an unofficial visit the King gave him a lunch. The King was gently reminded that it was not in keeping with protocol. To which he retorted "To hell with protocol. I always look upon Tunku Abdul Rahman as a friend, so if I choose to receive him as such it is nobody's business".

On another occasion the Tunku was presented with a

Honorary Doctorate of Law at Songkhla University. The King, who was the Chancellor, personally presented the degree to the Tunku. While the citation was being read the Tunku was obliged to stand up. After a while the King turned round to the orator and said: "The Tunku has stood up for far too long".

The Tunku has maintained a good relationship with Queen Elizabeth. Every year Her Majesty remembers to send the Tunku a card on his birthday and he in turn does the same. He also makes a point to send Christmas greetings to the Royal family. Last year when the Queen visited Malaysia during the Commonwealth Heads of States she granted the Tunku a private audience.

Another gem of a piece the Tunku wrote revolved around the differences between the late Robert Kennedy and Prince Sihanouk. In 1982 while the Prince was in Penang he asked to see the Tunku. It had been eighteen years since they had last met. It prompted the Tunku to recall another occasion, while he was in office, when Prince Sihanouk visited Kuala Lumpur. The visit clashed with that of Robert Kennedy, then Senator and Attorney-General of the United States. "They were not on speaking terms for according to Prince Sihanouk Robert Kennedy was offish and had suggested that Prince Sihanouk call on him. Prince Sihanouk said he was the Head of State and it was Robert Kennedy who should call on him first.

"Both of them decided to return on the same day, and almost to the hour, in their respective planes. The upshot was that they refused to occupy the same lounge at the airport. So I had to rush to attend to one, and again to the other. However it was agreed that Robert Kennedy should leave ahead of Prince Sihanouk. That was the last time I saw Sihanouk until 1982."

Royal crises inevitably attracted the Tunku's pen.

"In 1978 (the late) Tunku Ariff Bendahara declared he intended to go into politics, with the view of becoming the Menteri Besar of Pahang should he succeed. His brother the Sultan however felt that it would be wrong for him to do so despite Tunku Ariff's declared intention that his place was with the people and that he wanted to serve them. The Sultan frowned upon the idea, arguing that Tunku Ariff was a member of the Royal family of Pahang and theoretically in the line of succession to the throne. The Sultan claimed that under the

State Constitution he had the right to oppose the appointment of Mentri Besar, in other words, he had the last say."

The Tunku, in a widely-publicised article stated that the Constitution lays down that the Ruler has the power to appoint the Mentri Besar. This assumes from the outset that the person chosen must have confidence of the State Assembly. "This is so in the Constitution of every monarchical state, but it must be interpreted to work within the framework of the institution of a democratic Kingdom or Sultanate and not outside it. The Constitution does not provide that the Ruler can dismiss the Mentri Besar. This shows where the real power lies and adds to our belief that the party has a stronger say in the matter than the Head of State."

Continuing the Tunku added: "Though Malaysia is a monarchy with the King as Head of the Nation and Sultans as the Head of their representative States the Constitution provides for a democratic system. But it must be understood that the people are virtually the rulers."

He recalled the statement made to the first King of Malaysia when requested by a foreign emissary to sack the Tunku who was then Prime Minister. "Oh, I cannot, because he is appointed by the people and not by me," the King replied. "On the other hand he can sack me." The foreign emissary was astounded and thought to himself what a cock-eyed monarchy this was, where the King could not sack his Prime Minister and yet the Prime Minister had the power to dismiss the King".

In August 1987 the Tunku wrote about the King, the Sultan of Johore. He said: "There has been some talk about the attitude of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong towards the throne of Malaysia. It has been said that he liked to think of himself first and foremost as the Sultan of Johore, then as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong."

"It was for that reason that he refused to take up residence at the Istana Negara and stays instead at Istana Johore. He dresses in the Johore military uniform and refuses to accept the traditional salute (sembah) which is the homage paid to him as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"Some sportsmen complained that at last year's Malaysia Cup final between Johore and Selangor, he stood at the side of the pitch and shouted for Johore. Whatever partisanship he felt for Johore or whatever was on his mind, he should have kept



it to himself, for as the Agong he must maintain absolute neutrality.

“The king is the supreme head of the country and as such he owes it to the nation to look upon all the people as his subject.

“When Malaysia was formed, a constitutional kingship was agreed upon and the nine Rulers would take turns to be the Yang di-Pertuan Agong for a term of five years, and each would take the oath to be fair and just to all.

“A regent is appointed to take his place in his absence from the State, and as far as he is concerned he is no more the Sultan of that State. He is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the Supreme Head of Malaysia, and to him all Malaysians swear allegiance.”

“Rulers who had occupied the throne understood their duties and responsibilities and had conducted themselves in the best tradition of kingship. Except for this small irregularity, our present Yang di-Pertuan Agong has been a good Ruler himself, fulfilling his duties well.

“When Malaysia was formed, everybody was required to declare his loyalty to this nation, though he remains a subject of the Ruler of the State in which he was born or lived.

“The attachment to his State as his hometown still holds him, and on occasions which require his presence in his hometown he would return to rejoin his family and old friends.

“It was suggested to me before independence to return Province Wellesley to Kedah, but I said it was best to leave things alone, because now that Malaysia has become a nation our duty and loyalty is to Malaysia as our country and object of loyalty.

“In fact, Johore was the first State to make advances for Malay unity under the leadership of Datuk Onn, by instilling for the first time the spirit of nationalism in us all. With this unity we were able to defeat the British attempt to colonise Malaya by introducing the Malayan Union Plan. To go back now to State loyalty would be a retrogressive step.

“When I took over from Datuk Onn as president of UMNO, I went all out and pressed for complete independence, for that was the only possible solution to overcome our dilemma and setback where under the divide and rule policy of our colonial master we were disintegrated and became outcasts in our own homeland.

“Under our present system of monarchy, it is irregular for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to think of himself as the Ruler of Johore. He is the King of Malaysia and he must leave all that parochial sentiment behind him when he accepted to be installed the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

“I understand his feeling and his love for Johore, but we are no more living under colonial rule where each Ruler must give all his attention and time to his State and his own subjects.

“Time has changed, and with independence Malaysia belongs to all Malaysians. Anything contrary to this would divide the people. It is this tribal mentality that had been the curse of the Malay race in the past. It had divided us and as a result of this division we had been conquered and ruled by different powers — some big, some small, some kindly and some horrible. But we were all literally enslaved right through the period of our history until August 31, 1957.

“What has prompted me to bring up this subject was the absence of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong from Kuala Lumpur, the national capital, on Hari Raya day.

“He had gone back to Johore to spend his Hari Raya there and prayed with his Johore subjects. This he could have done on any other day but he chose to return to Johore and forget the people of Kuala Lumpur who must have felt his absence badly, because the former Yang di-Pertuan Agongs had always spent the Hari Raya with them and prayed at the Masjid Negara, our national mosque, on Eid days.

“I remember in the early days of independence and before the national mosque was completed, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong used to pray with the people in the open grounds in front of the Istana. After prayer His Majesty used to join the people for refreshments on the grounds. That friendly atmosphere had a great effect on the minds of the people who were there to enjoy the Ruler’s company. That is the spirit we would like to re-capture today.

“I hope His Majesty will forgive me for saying all this, but if I don’t say it nobody would, and I have done so for the benefit of others who will come after him, for I am a strong believer in the constitutional kingship.

“The Yang di-Pertuan Agong must help to give meaning to the throne, and he can do so much to bring all the people together. This institution has proved successful all these years of independence.”

“The Agong’s duty is to show himself as the King and the fount of justice and fair play. To him we all look to as our leader, so help lead us.

Many years ago the Tunku was told about an old man who had lived happily for the past 113 years. He invited the patriach to his home, and he came along together with his young wife.

“We were able to laugh and joke and as I put question after question to him, and we forgot all about Cambodia, Vietnam and all the wrangles that were going on between the government and the opposition”. The man, the Tunku noted, looked considerably younger than his 113 years. He practised medicine in a kampong near Taman Tun Dr. Ismail. Many foreigners have reportedly visited this venerable medicine man for various illnesses and ailments. The Tunku questioned him closely. “I asked him how long he had been in Malaysia. He said he had come to Malaya in 1898 when he was 32 years old. He had been born in Sumatra. He remembered his age very well. He was born in 1866 on a Friday. He stayed first in Kajang then Sungai Lalang, Segambut, Sungei Beloh and then Batang Kali.

“By 1927 he started up his own durian plantation in his present kampong. He has an acre with about 20 durian trees. His full name is Haji Jukir bin Pengatin.

“He was unable to recall who ruled Selangor when he first arrived there but interestingly enough did not recall seeing any Europeans around either. But he remembered bandits killing people regularly. He talked about a civil war that had broken out between two feuding Royal families and how peace returned to Selangor at the turn of the century, after which rubber growing was initiated.

“When asked whether he remembered when Malaya got its Independence he replied ‘certainly I do. I came to your house before you visited Indonesia.’ He also knew Tun Abdul Razak who he used to massage regularly.

“I asked him whether he knew who the present Prime Minister was. ‘Yes, Datuk Hussein Onn.’ Does he go to you for massage? ‘No,’ he replied. The conversation then turned when the old man asked Tunku how many races there were on earth. Before the Tunku could reply, he asserted that they were only five — Moslems, Chinese, the White man, the Indians and the Japanese. The Tunku then asked him what his philosophy of life was.

“There are three things on earth that a man must do”, he answered. “We must find happiness. We must find good food. And we must find medicine for good health. Without these three things life is not worth living. I have been a bomoh all my life. It just came to me normally.”

The bomoh claimed to specialise in helping men suffering from a lack of virility. He provided a simple prescription using pineapple, gula batu and gula pasir. Added to this was a prayer and the compound has to be taken over a period of three months during the rising of the new moon.

The old man, it transpired, had urinal problems which were beyond his ability to cure. He also smoked too much and had been advised by the doctors to cut down. His standard response was they should mind their own business as none of them has lived as long as he had.

He told the Tunku: “I’ve been married seven times. My present wife is only 41 years old and I have eight children by her. My youngest is nine years old and is schooling. Altogether I have 35 children, five of them male and the rest female. I also have grand-children, great-grand-children and great-great-grand-children. Hundreds of them so many that I have lost count.”

According to the Tunku the man was well possessed of his faculties. His speech was clear but he was deaf. He was loquacious and smoked heavily. At the end of the conversation he gave the Tunku a verse to recite. “When I could not take down what he told me he asked me for my note paper and wrote it down in Jawi. His writing was clear and legible. He said his verse would do many things for me.”

He also spoke of the symbolism represented by a person’s hand. He stated that the fingers and the thumb represent a certain order in human life. Firstly, the thumb stands for those who control; the pointer or index finger for the educator; the middle finger for the brave and the warriors; the next for the rich and the little finger for the poor. But God shows preference for the poor, the old man said, because in (the Moslem) prayer one begins the recitation of the greatness of Allah by touching first the small finger.

He then thrust forth his arm and asked the Tunku to pinch him as hard as he liked. “I gripped his flesh and pinched. He felt no pain. He urged me to pinch harder and I replied I could not.”

“See if there is no mark?”, he asked.

“When I released him from my grip there was no mark on his arm despite the fact that he had rather light brown skin which is quite smooth and not very wrinkled. Finally I asked him: “To what do you attribute your old age and good health?”. “To Allah in his infinite mercy”, he replied.

The Tunku is well on his way to being 89. The ailments which beset him are the natural consequence of a full and active life. The various aches and pains he bears stoically and despairs only when he is confined to bed and denied contact with the public he has served loyally and faithfully, and who remain his inspiration.

There are those who hint of a growing senility, arguing that his values and views are that of a by-gone generation. The Tunku concedes that much has changed in the eight decades and more that he has witnessed as a spectator, a participant and an observer.

Age and arthritis have indeed taken its toll. He is often in need of support when attending public functions and cannot see much further than the length of his hand. But none of these handicaps have impaired his sharp wit and quick turn of the mind historical hallmarks of his effusive personality. Take last year’s New UMNO Assembly. His presence, coming as it did soon after his meeting with Dr. Mahathir, lent itself to exploitation. Though the Tunku spoke briefly it was enough for some to suggest that he might have changed his mind about continuing his opposition to the successor party to UMNO.

Always a gracious guest the Tunku said nothing to upset anyone at the Assembly. The next day, when questioned over a possible change of heart, he chuckled. With a mischievous glint in his eye he said: “The only reason I went was because it meant publicity for ’46. Because I attended more people know about ’46 and I am happy to publicise my party’s activities.”

He has not lost his sense of humour either. Asked how he manages to go on year after year and enjoy relatively good health, he once explained. “I have two doctors taking care of me. My physician who repairs the damage that occurs from time to time, and then there is Dr. Mahathir. For as long as he is Prime Minister I intend to be around too. He keeps me going.”

The Tunku is many things to many people: the Rakyat remember him as the prince who took off his royal garb, rolled

up his sleeves and went to work as a district officer in the service of his constituents. To the more politicised he was the man who took on the British Raj, smashed the shackles of Colonialism, and liberated the Malay race from generations of servitude. To all Malaysians he has been a fair-minded and magnanimous leader, the Father of Independence and a tireless champion of a just and equitable Malaysia for all who swear allegiance to the country.

In his later years he has fulfilled a larger role, as a supplicant serving God's will through his missionary works. At all time he has been a model Malaysian for all to emulate. In recent years the Tunku has emerged again on the political scene reluctantly, but by choice. To him he cannot rest while the Malay race remains divided politically. Divisions and differences there will always be, but to have the Malay race divided to the extent it is, is to court disaster, he emphasises.

The octogenarian is clearly not prepared to allow a lifetime's work to go awry, or be an idle bystander. For as long as he draws breath and whatever it takes the Tunku seems determined to ensure that Malay political hegemony is not sacrificed at the altar of political adventurism. In his opinion to do so is to put the nation, and all Malaysians, at jeopardy. He will be remembered for all his achievements in the struggle for Independence but more so probably, as the keeper of the national political conscience.

# APPENDIX I

## HOW ALL RACES MADE THE MERDEKA DREAM A REALITY

When the war ended, we faced more trouble. It was rumoured that Malaya would be ceded to General Chiang Kai-shek. Another story had it that Chiang Kai-shek was a spent force and that Mao-Tse-tung was the one who would take over.

All these stories made the people of Kedah very worried and nervous.

At about the same time, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), started to take control over some Kedah districts. They were a terrible nuisance.

Although they did not harm the Malays they took their revenge on those Chinese who worked with the Japanese. Some Malays and Indians who had gone out of their way to collaborate with the Japanese were also made to pay.

The Malays in Alor Star decided to prevent a communist takeover at all cost. It was then, with great relief that we heard that the Malay Force 136 had moved to Kuala Nerang and had set up their head-quarters there. Two of my nephews who had parachuted into the area, Tunku Osman, who later became a general and Tunku Yusof Bin Tunku Kassim, were among them.

In the meantime I had visited kampungs with Haji Hussein Dol and called upon the people to be ready to defend Alor Star. The response was good. Some government servants from Perak and Kedah who came to my house to seek protection from the communists were later sent to join Force 136.

I myself later went to Kuala Nerang to meet the commander and men of Force 136. They informed me that they did not have enough men under their command and that the force had just been formed.

Colonel Hassler, the commandant, asked me to send him good, intelligent and brave young men.

I told him that as an immediate step to prevent bloodshed in Alor Star, he should advise or direct the Japanese garrison to prevent the MCP from entering Alor Star.

That same evening he sent his colleague, Major Burr, and one of my men, Syed Mansor, to meet the Japanese garrison commander. After that, the Japanese garrison took control of the town.

Meanwhile, I sent four lorry loads of young men to Kuala Nerang. They were immediately put into training and quickly showed their skills, gaining the confidence of the commander.

The only thing I regret is that I was never reimbursed for the money I spent sending them there in the lorries. It came to quite a big sum.

Once the commander got what he wanted, he forgot to even thank me.

Then the British Army moved in with their camp followers from India. These camp followers began chasing the women and making a nuisance of themselves, so our Force 136 men were ordered to deal with them.

The communists also came in and set up their headquarters in Jalan Raja. But nothing untoward happened, except that they wanted us to believe their proud boast that they would win independence for Malaya. To please the people they offered a good exchange rate for the Japanese currency and that made them rather popular with the people.

After peace was officially declared, the Japanese army officers were made to surrender their swords in Sungei Petani. I recall one incident where a vice-admiral walked towards the British military official to surrender his sword. Before he reached him, he fainted. The military police took him by ambulance to the Alor Star hospital. They noticed that the sword was lying beside him, so they decided to keep it as a souvenir.

Before this squad of military police was transferred, they realised that they could not take the sword with them and so they offered to exchange it for a kris. Murad, the prison official (who later became Tan Sri Murad, Commissioner of Prisons, Malaya) brought them and the sword to me and I gave them a Kris in exchange.

The sword is now exhibited in the Penang Museum.

After the British returned, some of the planters who had lost their properties and possessions when their bungalows



were ransacked by the labourers, came to see me and asked about their losses.

I said I had nothing to do with their losses as their belongings had been taken by their own labourers and anything they didn't take was seized by the Japanese four years ago. One man was so persistent that I gave him my own silver dish as a consolation. He went away quite happy — again without so much as nodding a thank you to me.

The administration was taken over by the British Military Administration (BMA). The first batch was headed by Mr G. Sommerville, who took to bullying me by way of revenge for what had happened in 1938 when I was the District Officer in Sungei Petani.

He had been the Conservator of Forests and he prosecuted a case before me against a man accused of felling trees in the forest reserve. I considered it hardly befitting a conservator to prosecute the case himself. He should have left it to his officials.

I resented his bullying tactics and threw the case out. He never forgot this and so when he came back to Kedah as head of the BMA he treated me rather badly. I think some of the other officers of the BMA must have brought this to the attention of the British officers in Kuala Lumpur, because not long afterwards he was replaced by Mr. E.V.G. Day, who was quite a different man and good compared with Sommerville.

The situation in Kedah became quite pleasant though in the early days of the British re-occupation I used to buy bread at \$5 a loaf on the black market. But since I had not eaten it for four years I thought it was worth the money. We also had to pay for cigarettes through our noses.

Not long before we were able to enjoy our new life, a fresh storm broke out to disturb the equilibrium of the Malays in Malaya. This was the proposal by Whitehall to change the constitution of the States of Malaya from a Protectorate to a Colony, and the Malay rulers from sovereign heads to that of grand muftis.

This plan was hatched without consulting the Malay rulers who Britain was treaty-bound to respect.

It was a shocking case of treachery against the people who had been so trusting and friendly with them. This naturally incensed the people. The rulers who should have shown some fight gave in rather meekly, so the people decided to fight the

MacMichael plan on their own.

Political parties were formed in all the states, from north to south and east to west, to fight the Malayan Union plan. Datuk Onn bin Jaafar, the chosen leader, headed the Malays call to throw out the MacMichael plan.

For the first time, a Malay revolutionary movement was started; first it went by the name Persatuan Melayu and later the name was changed to UMNO (United Malay National Organisation).

Kedah held what was perhaps the biggest demonstration against MacMichael when he visited Alor Star. The kampung people turned up in large numbers, so large that when the head of the procession arrived at the Balai Besar, the tail end had not yet started.

And so they flocked to the padang without further ado and started screaming "Down with Harold MacMichael" and "Long live the sultans."

I was the head of Serbekas but among the men who ran that political body was Senu (Datuk Abdul Rahman) and among them were those leaders who had worked with me to look after the welfare of the refugees from the Siam Death Railway.

I had only attended one general meeting of the Malay movement as representative of Serbekas in Kuala Lumpur. That meeting discussed action against the Malayan Union.

After that I fell out with the party and decided to go to England and finish my bar exams. Soon afterwards, Datuk Senu also disappeared and Serbekas existed only in name.

The Malayan Union was formed, but it did not last long in the face of strong Malay opposition under Datuk Onn's UMNO.

In July 1946, the British agreed to set up a working committee composed of representatives of the six State Governments, two UMNO representatives and four representatives of the Malay rulers.

Malcolm MacDonald, the British Commissioner-General for South-East Asia was the chairman. They were to draft an alternative constitution to the Malayan Union.

This committee eventually agreed to a new constitution which replaced the Malayan Union with a new Government called the Federation of Malaya to take effect on February 1, 1948.

UMNO, under Datuk Onn, had won a major constitutional victory and gained in prestige and strength to become the strongest Malay political party in the country.

In essence, the Federal agreement was an Anglo-Malay compromise and the views of the Chinese and others were sought only before the agreement was finalised to become law. This Government lasted until 1955.

When I took over the leadership of UMNO from Datuk Onn in 1951, UMNO, newly reformed, with dedicated leaders (among them the late Tun Dr. Ismail, Datuk Suleiman, Encik Ghafar Baba, Encik Khir Johari, Tan Sri Ghazali Jawi, the late Encik Rahman Talib, Datuk Haji Hassan Junus, Kaum Ibu leader Puan Sri Fatimah Hashim and UMNO Youth under Tun Sardon bin Jubir) decided to go all out for independence.

The call was soon taken up by the Malayan Chinese under the leadership of the late Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Col. H.S. Lee (Tun), Ong Yoke Lin (Tun Omar), Tan Sri T.H. Tan (Tahir) and Tan Sri S.M. Yong. Later on Tun Tan Siew Sin joined it.

The Alliance of UMNO and MCA was formed and the constitutional battle for independence started. Tun Abdul Razak was unable to take an active part, being a State Secretary and acting Mentri Besar of Pahang, and he could do no more than give us his moral support.

After our successes in the local council and municipal elections, the Malayan Indians Association under K.L. Devasar and later under the late Tun V. T. Sambanthan and Tan Sri Manickavasagam joined us.

The greatest victory was the coming together of these main racial groupings for the first time in Malayan history. They were united with the common purpose of creating an independent Malayan nation.

The British knew their rule in Malaya must come to an end and like good sportsmen, they took it with good grace.

“Merdeka, Merdeka, Merdeka,” rent the air the length and breadth of Malaya and so it was that with the united and dedicated effort of all races loyal to this country we got our independence.

(Tunku Abdul Rahman, *The Star*, 21 December, 1981)

## APPENDIX II

# ALLIANCE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

One of the most important episodes in the Alliance struggle for independence had not been given the proper place in our history, and the best account given on this particular subject is by Tan Sri T.H. Tan in his book *The Prince And I*. Now that we are approaching Merdeka Day, I feel it appropriate to relate incidents connected with our struggle.

It will be remembered that we had demanded for a fully-elected Legislative Assembly, failing which we would be contented with a two-third elected majority. And if that was not accepted then we would be prepared to put up with a three fifth majority against a nominated assembly based on the Federal Election Committee recommendation under the chairmanship of Attorney-General Michael Hogan, issued on January 21, 1954. The main recommendation by the committee allowed them, among other things, to cling to power and maintain the status quo in the Federal legislature with a nominated majority.

The Alliance naturally rejected this report outright. The High Commissioner and the Rulers decided to look into this matter again, and submitted their agreed proposal to the Secretary of State for the colonies.

On April 13, 1954, the reply from the Secretary of State arrived, which, to say the least, was no answer to the Alliance's demand, for he agreed with Michael Hogan's report.

An emergency meeting was called by the UMNO-MCA alliance in Malacca on April 18, 1954 and the demand for a fully-elected legislative council was approved by 61 votes to 14. Thousands of people attended the meeting held at the premises of Min Seng Charitable Association.

The Alliance decided to send a mission to London to confront the British Government with the new proposal, and

demanded for an elected unofficial majority in the Federal Legislative Council as the only possible step towards full self-government and eventual independence.

As soon as we arrived in London we held our conference with my old friend Lord Ogmores, formerly Rees Williams, Member of the House of Lords. He confessed he could not get the Colonial Secretary to see us, but I told him that even if Mr. Oliver Lyttelton did not want to see us we felt it was our earnest duty to explain our case to the Members of Parliament and to the British public through the mass media.

I made a statement in which I said we had come to London at a critical period in the history of South-East Asia, and at a crucial juncture in Malaya's approach to independence to explain to the British Government and the British people our political stand. We asked that the Legislative Council due to be held at the beginning of 1955 for substantial elected majority be delayed until we had agreed on the number to be elected.

The UMNO-MCA alliance which we represented had won 85 per cent of the seats in local elections which had taken place in the federation in the last three years.

Now we had come together with a solidarity never dreamt of before. We found that the Election Committee, overloaded with malleable tools of the Government instead of the authentic and reasonable spokesmen of the majority had turned down our demand. Their recommendation would mean that if by luck we were to win 80 per cent of the seats we could not have a working majority.

The British Government had always declared that if Malays and Chinese could work together Malaya could have self-government. That declaration had been stated time and time again by General Templer, High Commissioner, and the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lyttelton.

The government committee recommended 40 elected seats in a House of 98. This was decidedly undemocratic and contradictory to the stated claims of the British Government to give Malaya independence through democratic election. The whole report was a mockery of democracy.

In addition the High Commissioner and the Rulers had also agreed for nominated reserve seats to be placed at the disposal of the former to make sure that the Government would always have a working majority.

On April 24, Lord Ogmore informed us that Mr. Lyttelton, had agreed to meet me and T. H. Tan. The Labour Party which were sympathetic to us formed a South-East Asia Committee for Colonial Freedom, and we were invited to meet and explain our case to them.

Before the meeting with Mr. Lyttelton, we had a rude shock, for the Colonial Office had released the exchange of despatches between Mr. Lyttelton and the High Commissioner of the Federation.

We thought the Colonial Secretary should have met us first and listened to our views before the release of despatches, which in other words had indicated that the Colonial Office had agreed with the Federation Government to go ahead with its proposal for elected minority.

There was no point in having further discussions with him since he had already approved the Hogan Report. Our two representatives in Templer's Cabinet had asked us to come home as the Government was going ahead with the election on May 25. We decided to go all out and fight to the bitter end in England.

The room which we obtained in the House of Parliament came in useful to us. We used it as our headquarters from which we launched our campaign for self-determination on the basis of elected majority to the legislative council.

We worked incessantly day and night, and we met political figures, MPs, Members of the House of Lords, our Malayan students and political organisations which were sympathetic to our struggle.

We even saw John Eber and his communist crowd. The incessant fight which showed grit and determination met with success. The MPs sympathetic to us promised to question the Secretary of State in Parliament on this matter.

On May 12, four Labour MPs questioned the Secretary of State in Parliament. They were Mr. James Griffiths, Mr. Tom Proctor, Mr. Stan Awbery and Mr. W.N. Wareby.

Mr. Awbery asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies: "What answer has been given to UMNO and MCA to their request for a majority of elected representatives on the Malayan Legislative Assembly? Is the minister aware that the deputation from Malaya is acting in a constitutional way? Will the Right Honourable Gentleman deal as generously as he can with it,

for an ounce of generosity and understanding now will save us tons of trouble later on? Is the Minister aware that according to the recent report on Singapore the Rendel Committee recommended 75 per cent elected, and now he is offering a majority of only six in the Federation? Will the Right Honourable Gentleman review the matter in the light of the report on Singapore?"

Mr. Lyttelton in reply said that the Singapore matter had no particular relevance to this question. The majority of those reporting on the Federal Election in the Federation did not recommend an elected majority.

Mr. Griffiths enquired whether the Secretary of State proposed to receive the deputation which represented the major organisations of Malays and others, and if so would he make a further statement to the House?

Mr. Lyttelton said, "We had better wait and see what happens."

Mr. Proctor then asked: "Is it a fact that the original demand of the parties referred to by my Honourable Friend in his question was for 60 per cent elected representatives? Since the Right Honourable Gentleman's decision is 52 elected and 46 selected, which means that there is only a narrow difference of six, will he give some indication that on such a narrow point he will now allow these negotiations to break down?"

Mr. Wareby: "Will the Right Honourable Gentleman take into account the fact that these two organisations representing the two main communities in Malaya are both moderate in their demands and are highly representative, and that if he loses the opportunity of coming to an agreement with them he may find it difficult to achieve any reasonable political settlement in Malaya at all?"

Mr. Lyttelton: "I do not accept what the gentleman says. I think we had better wait and see what happens."

Lord Ogmores, through the good offices of Lord Alexander (Minister of Defence) saw Mr. Lyttelton on May 13, and mentioned to him that the demand by the Alliance party was only three-fifths of the future federal legislative council to be elected. He urged the Minister to accede to this request as the Alliance meant business, and meant to fight to the bitter end. In other words, if he did not reach an agreement at that time he must be prepared to face a showdown with the moderates.

Mr. Lyttelton authorised Lord Ogmore to tell me he would meet me and members of my deputation and see what he could do. We met Mr. Lyttelton on May 14, 1954, together with three of his departmental heads and experts. Tun Abdul Razak also joined us as he had arrived in London from America a day earlier.

The Minister opened up by saying that we could base our discussion on the despatches between him and the High Commissioner that had been published in the Press. I explained to Mr. Lyttelton that in view of the disclosure of the despatches I now demanded for a fully-elected Legislative Assembly in accordance with the mandate given to the delegation just before our departure from Malaya.

Mr. Lyttelton preferred to discuss the three-fifth elected majority demanded by the Alliance. If that was so I said that was our final demand, as no single party could expect to win more than 80 per cent of the seats; and as a result the party returned to power would not have a working majority in the House of 98 of whom 52 were elected.

Mr. Lyttelton, obviously briefed by the High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, argued that the party returned to power could count on some support from the five ex-officio members and some nominated members.

I refused to accept his argument based on supposition. After all the nominated and official members would naturally vote for the Government. We rejected completely the suggestion for limited voting in multiple-member constituencies for that would reduce the numerical strength of the party returned to power. The limited voting they had in mind was that in a large constituency two members at least would be returned — the one who scored the largest number of votes, and the next who escaped the loss of deposit.

We talked of the franchise whereby we explained that those born in the country would be allowed to vote, but the Secretary of State maintained that in other countries only citizens can vote based on birth.

We ended our discussion on an agreement by Mr. Lyttelton that he would give me a written reply before our departure from London on May 20. He was very glad to have had the opportunity of meeting us and discussing matters so frankly. He went further and said that in his view his proposals for



national election in the Federation represented a bold step forward. Be it so, I said, I refused to accept it as it made a mockery of democracy.

The Alliance delegation then spent the next few days meeting MPs in the House of Commons. On May 17 we were most cordially received by nearly 40 members of the Conservative party, the biggest turnout of MPs at our meetings so far.

In the chair was Mr Gilbert Longden, MP. There were quite a number of ex-Malayans in the gathering, prominent among whom were Sir Patrick McKerron and Mr. C. W. Dawson. The three of us, including Tun Abdul Razak, were there. We were entertained to an official dinner by the Conservative MPs in the House of Commons.

On May 18 we met the Labour MPs, with Mr. James Griffiths in the chair. It appeared they were very interested in our campaign, and would like to know what would be the Alliance attitude towards British and foreign investment.

I assured them that I believed in the principle of free enterprise. Furthermore, the Federation welcomed outside capital and would need foreign technical knowledge and machinery for a long, long time to come, and there was need to diversify our industries. They then declared that they would support us to the full.

We were greatly encouraged by the support we received from the British MPs and from the British public. We decided to come home and go all out in our fight for an elected majority, and we had every confidence of winning.

From London I sent a directive to Dr. Ismail and Col. H. S. Lee for all Alliance members to withdraw their co-operation from the Government, and all councillors to withdraw from all the councils to which they were returned.

The directive was immediately enforced, and all the Alliance members withdrew from the state, town and city councils, except for one or two members. The reaction was spontaneous. The people of Malaya proclaimed their support for our stand. This completely caught the federation government with an unexpected setback, and naturally it worried them.

On our return to Malaya, we were met with shouts of 'Merdeka' from a giant rally in Malacca the likes of which I had

never seen before.

It was some time before I could quieten them down, and explained to them our performance in London, and we were not prepared to give in further.

At the meeting of the Alliance which followed after my return we rejected the white paper that had been passed in the Legislative Council. In our views, the White Paper proposals were "unsatisfactory and cannot be accepted in spite of the assurance of the Secretary of State for the colonies that if these proposals cannot work satisfactorily immediate remedial steps will be taken."

The MCA at their Assembly gave full and unstinted support to our stand, and so did UMNO. The Government, therefore, was faced with a non-co-operation movement by the people on the one hand and the communist insurgency on the other.

This led to negotiations between the Federation Government and the Alliance, and it was agreed as a compromise that the High Commissioner would consult with the majority party after the election before he filled the special reserve of six nominated seats.

The compromise satisfied the Alliance, and we gave our assurance in an exchange of letters on July 7, 1954. Briefly, it reads like this: "The Alliance is prepared to extend its support to the establishment of the proposed constitutional arrangements agreed, and to co-operate and participate in the Government at all levels as before."

The High Commissioner, on his part "agreed that the status quo before the Alliance resignations will be restored as soon as possible, so that the Alliance may be able to give such support and co-operation." The Alliance members to the various councils, boards and committees returned to their posts.

(Tunku Abdul Rahman, *The Star*, August 26, 1985)

## APPENDIX III

### HOW I WAS ELECTED TO LEAD UMNO

Our Silver Jubilee of Independence is of great importance to our people, particularly to our young men and women who were too young or not yet born at about the time of Merdeka to know much about it.

I have written about our Independence struggle many times, but some facts which are equally important have been inadvertently omitted.

To recount them in sequence is not easy as I have kept no diary at any time in my life. Despite my advance in age, I can still remember them, but not the exact dates when these incidents took place.

I feel that our youth should know something about them and so I will try my best to set them out here.

One of my experiences nobody would believe has a bearing on our independence set-up. This happened in our student days in England.

The Malay students of Britain decided to form a society in 1927 and Tuanku Abdul Rahman of Negri Sembilan was elected the president while I (Tunku Abdul Rahman of Kedah) was elected the first secretary.

A strange coincidence it was that 30 years later, to be exact 1927-1957, Tuanku Abdul Rahman, as Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan was installed the first Yang di-Pertuan Agong while I became the first Prime Minister of independent Malaya.

One cannot brush this aside as being an accident or a mere coincidence of fate. As Muslims we believe in fate and everything that is going to happen in one's life is decided at one's date of birth and nothing will change it.

I remember vaguely the story I read in the Arabian Nights which emphasised this point. A soothsayer predicted to the King that his son would die by a knife at a certain age and on a certain day.

The King, who believed in this soothsayer, was visibly disturbed as this was his only son. He immediately gave orders that when the time comes, the prince should be kept in the room alone and the room was to be locked and guarded by his trusted guards and servants.

No food should be served with any knife or any sharp instrument and the room was not to be opened except for giving the young prince food.

After the specified time they opened the door and found a knife had stuck in the boy's heart. No one could make out how this could have happened as nobody had entered the room.

But as it turned out, there was a knife tucked away somewhere in the room between the ceiling and the wall and as the boy moved about the vibrations released the knife which fell on him and pierced his heart.

I recounted this to show the strange fate though it happened in a story book. As it turned out Tuanku Abdul Rahman became the yang di-Pertuan Agong and I the first Prime Minister.

In 1939 in Kulim an Indian astrologer spun brass dices to tell my fortune in front of many people and predicted that one day I would be the first Prime Minister of Malaya.

This prediction had amused so many people, including myself. Nevertheless I couldn't help having a sneaking regard for his prediction because I was a patriot at heart and who knows I might well be the Prime Minister of my country.

At the time of the Japanese occupation I faced dangers which sometimes threatened my life but because of what the astrologer had said I thought to myself: "If it were the will of God that I should be made the first Prime Minister of my country, then God would certainly preserve me for the future role I was to play."

After the war Malaya was in the melting pot of political unrest with the communist terrorist uprising and the British attempt to colonise Malaya with a Malayan Union plan in October 1945.

This plan was the turning point against British rule for it turned most of the Malays against the British. No Malay had any more trust in the British and they decided to fight against the union to the bitter end.

Some of the points worth remembering against the Union was that the whole country was to be administered by the

British through their Governor and Residents and the British civil servants.

Singapore was to have a separate government with the Christmas Island, Cocos Island and Keling Island under a Governor.

The Rulers were to be just heads of religion in the State, and Malay custom and all other powers, administrative and executive, were to be vested in the hands of the British through their State Residents.

At that time politicians were busy trying to shape their political career with Datuk Onn bin Jaafar. There was a big scramble by political leaders at the time to show themselves, by pretending to fight against the Malayan Union and set up independent Malaya.

I, too, took part in it but found the leaders were rather self-centred with their objectives rather conflicting. While they cried for "Hidup Melayu" they were prepared to accept a Colonial status. This I found was unworkable.

I found my career in the Government service had become rather intolerable and I could not fet in with the political movement. I had to do something about myself. I was not content to sit back and lick my wounds, so I went to London to try my luck at law again. I said to myself: "If I fail again I will not return home." That was 25 years after I had first joined the Inns of Court — the Inner Temple.

I got back to my second student days and this time with a determination to do or die in the attempt. That was the final plunge I made at law studies.

I had left it so many years ago and to return to it at my age of 43 was considered as too much by even the most optimistic.

Some told me to leave well alone and be content to remain at home. By the grace of Allah I got through in September, 1948, and came home with my head up.

When I returned to my State, Kedah, I said to myself now that I have redeemed my reputation the Government might look more kindly towards me.

But alas, instead of that they became more hostile. I was attached to the Legal Advisers Office without any job of work to do, and I was treated just as I was when I first started work as a cadet in the legal advisers office in 1931.

It was this that one might say was the straw that broke the

camel's back. I just took my seat at a table in a little room outside that of the legal advisers and figured out what I should do next.

The next thing I knew was the then Attorney-General, Mr. Foster Sutton turned up at my little room and offered me a job as DPP in Kuala Lumpur.

I accepted saying: "I might as well take it as otherwise I would forget whatever law I had picked up." That was February 1949 and I had never looked back ever since.

I remember one afternoon many years ago, I was sitting with a lawyer friend in my house at Kia Peng Road when I heard that Dato Onn had announced his decision to quit UMNO, and this friend asked me who would succeed him.

I told him I hadn't the faintest idea — not many can make the grade — but many will offer themselves for the all-important post. But can they enjoy the confidence of the Malay masses as Dato Onn had, for the Dato had left an indelible mark in the minds of the people, as a worthy leader?

Not many days after, offers were made to me. Among the first to approach me was Sheikh Ahmad of Perlis, then the Malay Graduate Association of Johore, among whose leaders were Dr. Ismail and Datuk Suleiman, the two brothers whose stepmother was Dato Onn's sister, but who could not see eye to eye with Dato Onn in politics.

Then came Datuk Abdul Razak, head of UMNO Youth and State Secretary of Pahang, with the offer to me to take over the leadership of UMNO.

I remember distinctly my note in reply to Razak in which I thanked him for his faith. But I told him that if "you don't play politics like a monkey up and down the pole, I would accept." To all those who saw me, I gave them almost the same answer.

The reason for this stand was that I had a nasty experience in politics, and in particular with budding politicians. In my early initiation to politics, they had used me to rally support for themselves and then pushed me to one side into oblivion in the scramble for positions and political power.

Lastly, when I returned from England, I was appointed Chairman of the Kedah division of UMNO. The same story repeated itself, but after I left the new members showed less enthusiasm for the party, for the men had used UMNO for their own ends.

In fact I was never taken into the confidence of the party but only to be used as their tool. I have had enough of it.

When Dato Onn the President came to visit Kedah, I was never told of the impending visit. I decided to give up politics, and went to Kuala Lumpur to take up my new appointment as Deputy Public Prosecutor in the Attorney-General's office. While in Kuala Lumpur I skipped politics altogether, but met Dato Onn from time to time in discussion groups.

The UMNO general meeting held on August 26, 1951, found three contestants for the leadership of the party. Encik Yusof bin Sheikh Abdul Rahman (Datuk Bendahara, Perak) and Haji Ahmad Fuad of Pary Islam (UMNO wing) were the other two contestants.

It was Datuk Bahaman bin Samsuddin representing Seremban, who introduced me and to the amusement of those present said: "I don't know much about him except that he is my friend and I believe he can fill the post as president of UMNO."

The other two candidates were introduced by leading UMNO members, including Raja Ayoub bin Raja Bot and others. Haji Rejab, representing Kedah, was given the mandate to vote for me but turned about by speaking and voting for Encik Yusof.

Those who supported Encik Yusof took two hours to eulogise Encik Yusof's great quality as the most suitable man to take over the leadership of UMNO. Many on my side were rather worried of my chances but as it turned out all those who came had made up their mind to elect me. So it was that I took over as president of UMNO.

Amongst other things, Datuk Onn's parting words was that UMNO was formed in Johore Baru on May 11, 1946, in the palace of the Raja. It was no mere coincidence therefore that the new head of UMNO was a blue-blooded descendant of a Raja.

In my reply I said I was taking over the leadership of the most important and biggest political party in this country. I added that it was an honour to undertake this work and said that Datuk Onn's name would live on forever in connection with the successful role he had played as UMNO leader.

I would try my best to play my part and pray Allah to help me succeed.

I recall that when I was elected President of UMNO the same people won their way into UMNO Exco and they gave endless trouble to me — so bad it was that we could make no headway with UMNO — so I decided to rid UMNO of them. The opportunity came on the Hari Raya Haji of 1951, when at the end of the prayers I went up the pulpit of the Pudu mosque and declared that in the name of Allah, I will rid UMNO of all our enemies.

When I left the legal service, I did not go immediately to the UMNO Headquarters in Johore but established my headquarters at Telok Ayer Tawar, Province Wellesley with one clerk to help me. He was Haji Shafie bin Haji Abdullah (now Datuk). We plodded along as best we could. It was here that I took up the appeal of those sentenced to death over the Maria Hertogh riots in Singapore and we succeeded in getting their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

UMNO became a hit and new members by the thousands flocked to the banner of UMNO. UMNO headquarters was at last cleansed of the subversive elements who worked for the opposition party. I then moved to Johore and took over the headquarters. The party was abuzz with new activities and new life, and took a change for the better.

Many new members came from the Malay Nationalist Party, such as Encik Ghafar Baba and Abdul Rahman Talib, former ministers and many others from Malay opposition parties, including Malay teachers, swelled the ranks of UMNO and helped to strengthen the party under me. Merdeka became our battle-cry.

The Alliance of UMNO-MCA was formed at the spur of the moment without official sanction of the two party leaders. Actual official formation came afterwards when Ong Yoke Lin and the late Datuk Yahaya came to me for my official blessing.

Then at the Chinese Assembly Hall the Alliance was officially blessed and confirmed in the absence of the MCA President, Datuk Tan Cheng Lock.

We went ahead without him and formed the Alliance of UMNO-MCA which went on to win victory after victory in the town, state and national elections, and with that we won Independence for Malaya.

This was a wonderful achievement for the two races of people divided under the British rule into two opposing camps



living poles apart with no common ground to come together. When I spoke of our determination to stand together and fight for Independence and to remain together in independence our enemies laughed in my face.

Whatever it is, this country has definitely a valuable and priceless cargo of goods which have to be handled with absolute care. For all those who have decided to live here and make a home of this country, so be it, but for the chosen leaders, they must be aware of their duty and responsibility towards the people.

It's not much of a problem because we have lived this way hundreds of years and more without facing any serious complications. So the future should hold good if we can give our thoughts and undivided loyalty to Malaysia.

(Tunku Abdul Rahman, *The Star*, August 16, 1982,  
August 19, 1985)

## APPENDIX IV

### THE FACTS OF FREEDOM

Each country has at least one day in the year which it regards with special honour, reverence and pride. For Malaya this day will always be August 31 — the anniversary of the date when a new birth of freedom occurred in Asia and the world — Merdeka Day, 1957 — a day to be remembered in all the years to come.

The flags and the banners have been laid away, the trumpets and the guns are silent, but the significance of this day of nationhood remains.

Most Malayans, like people everywhere, are inclined to live in the actual present, debate the immediate future and ignore the recent past, but now that Merdeka has come and gone they may well glance back to analyse the facts of freedom and assess their hopes for the future.

They will realise, if they have not already done so, that there are fundamental lessons implicit in the momentous climax of Merdeka which are too great, too vital to be considered in a routine way.

Merdeka is no longer just a slogan to be shouted, it is a realisation of many factors, old and new, giving fresh meaning to the words Malaya and Malayans.

It is the product of a national mood, springing from the hearts, the minds and the character of the people, evolving and developing a new personality for a new nation.

Like adolescence, its growth may pass unnoticed; suddenly, overnight it seems, the youth has become a man. That is what has occurred in Malaya recently and what is happening now.

Malayans now know that Merdeka Day was not the end of the road but the beginning of an era.

They realise that the whole country has been involved in

an ordered and deliberate process of events working out according to detailed plan.

Merdeka Day was the fruition of months of thought and deliberation by rulers, leaders, parties and men of goodwill in Malaya and Britain, working in a spirit of patient consideration and common purpose towards the one objective of independence for Malaya within the Commonwealth.

### *A change in destiny*

Acting on the democratic principles of co-operation and compromise this historic partnership, based on mutual trust and confidence, set out to achieve for Malaya one of the fundamental needs of mankind — the right of each nation to determine its own way of life in equality with all others in the eyes of the world.

Merdeka Day itself was the crown of events, the visible seal of a change in destiny.

If the basic nature of this process of change is now realised, is it true to say that this appreciation existed before Merdeka? Yes, with reservations. Ask any Malaysians today to pause and reflect on the course of events in 1957 and give their opinions of Merdeka. Nine out of ten will reply expressing both relief and pleasure that everything has gone so well.

Where now are the apprehensions, the rumours, even the fears of trouble, expressed in coffee-house gossip up and down the country in the months before the event of Merdeka? Where now are the voices of the scoffers, the sceptics, the doubters, the critics, the minority who lacked confidence or felt deep regret? Most have been swept away by the winds of change.

Ask any Malaysian now what he thinks of events since Merdeka and nine out of ten will reply expressing modest pride in the world wide welcome given to the new Malaya so freely by all the other members of the United Nations. They can see their own envoys going forth to give tangible expression to Malaysian independence in foreign countries and Ambassadors and High Commissioners presenting their credentials to their own constitutional ruler, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, in the Federal capital.

These are visible and concrete proofs of the new era, and the recognition of Malaysian nationhood. No longer does Malaya

have to talk through Whitehall; she can act in her own right in the councils of the world.

Already Malaya has been admitted as a member of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Malaysians can expect more developments on these lines. In future she will speak for herself on all economic matters, particularly in all the various agencies of the United Nations and in world conferences on such vital industries as rubber and tin.

Malaya is taking her place in the comity of nations. No longer need she look always inwards to her own affairs; now she must look outwards and in doing so she can be grateful for the warm reserve of friendship and goodwill she has already established.

### *The Mutual Defence Treaty*

If any further visible evidence of Malaya's new stature and personality is needed, this can be seen also in the Mutual Defence Treaty between Britain and Malaya, itself the result of many pains-taking conferences between the two nations in the months before Merdeka, which was unanimously approved by Malaya's Parliament after frank debate.

All these subsequent events and developments have followed the attainment of Merdeka. If any Malayan attending the Merdeka celebrations failed to realise the tremendous significance of transition on the last day of August this year, he can now see incontrovertible evidence of the meaning, the duty and the responsibilities of nationhood in the events which have occurred since then.

The celebrations of Merdeka were a vivid pointer of the shape of things to come. As the ceremonies unfolded one by one in the first week of September Malaysians slowly began to realise and appreciate the intrinsic meaning of the great changes taking place in the country.

None could fail to admire the broad and dignified concept of events, the meticulous planning down to the smallest details on major problems of construction, display, security and traffic.

All the patient efforts of months of invisible work behind the scenes by hundreds of devoted officials and Police sprang vividly into life. Only a few hitches due to the vagaries of weather or an occasional snarl in traffic, marred the grand design.

### *Symbol Of New Malaya*

On the whole, the success of the celebrations was due not only to forethought and planning but also to the efficiency with which they were carried out particularly by the Police and the Services.

Kuala Lumpur flared with flags and pennons by day and blazed with lights by night. Good-humoured crowds thronged to see military reviews and parades, sporting events, pageants, variety shows, fireworks and a big trade fair. These were the light relief in the celebrations, but the deeper meaning of Merdeka was more evident in the formal ceremonies.

In such historic events as the Proclamation of Independence in the Merdeka Stadium (itself a concrete symbol of the new Malaya) or in the installation of the nation's first King, Malaysians could see and sense the combination of old traditions and new ideals, a fusion of past and present designed as a pattern for the future, the creation of a Malaysian way of life taking place before their eyes.

While the ceremony for the installation of the King revived all the ancient splendour of Malay courts, the main function for the transfer of power and authority from Britain to Malaya pointed the way to the future. It was a colourful spectacle, a model of majesty, dignity and restraint. Few historic events have focussed so much meaning in a simple human action.

The Duke of Gloucester, representing Her Majesty the Queen, after a short speech handed a formal parchment to the first Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, Tengku Abdul Rahman, who then read out to all assembled the words which changed Malaya's history.

The Federation flag was raised slowly to the masthead, the band played for the first time the National Anthem of Malaya, and guns boomed in salute. It was a dramatic and moving moment; there could have been few hearts present which did not jump with pride.

But this simple act of Merdeka was more than a matter of warm emotion; the document of transfer also implied cool reason and commonsense. These were the joint moods of an historic day.

Britain, expressing all the finest traits of her political genius at its best, was bowing out with grace and dignity; Malaya was accepting with both modesty and confidence her new

authority and trust. An epoch was ending, a nation born; this was the parting of the ways.

The simplicity of the act of transfer emphasises one of the most important facts of Merdeka, one in which the peoples of Malaya and Britain can feel genuine pride.

After long years of association in tutelage and friendship, and following nine years of tribulation in asserting her own security and way of life in the face of Communist terrorism. Malaya has achieved her birthright of nationhood by the peaceful means of evolution, and not by the bloodstained course of rebellion.

Despite the handicaps, imposed by armed subversion, democracy has been maintained and independence is no longer an ideal, but a fact. Police, Servicemen and civilians who died that these things might be done did not die in vain.

### *Constitution is Unique*

Another vital fact was born with the act of transfer. For the first time in the long history of the Malay Peninsula, all the territories in the area are united under one rule.

All the peoples in the nine Malay States and the two former British settlements of Penang and Malacca now have their own King, their own constitution. Powers have been surrendered in two ways.

There is not only a new relationship between Malaya and Britain, but also a new attitude between the Sultans and their subjects. Malaya is now both a democracy and a monarchy, with a constitution unique in the modern world, as the office of Kingship is elective and not hereditary.

The fact that Malaya already has its own Constitution, in working effect from the first day of nationhood, and with a planned course of political action and development set for the next two years when general elections will be held, is one more great fact of freedom.

India did not possess her own constitution until she had been free and sovereign for three years; Indonesia, after twelve years of proclaimed independence is still without one.

Malaya has become a nation, not only blessed with proven friends, her security guaranteed and her finances sound, but also with her path through the problems of the coming years firmly set and defined.

No new nation could ask for more. The future of Malaya is now in the hands of her people; it is they who must interpret and give life to all the facts of freedom implicit in the full meaning of Merdeka.

In the words of Malaya's Prime Minister, "A new star has risen in the East"; it is for the peoples of Malaya to see that their star will always shine with a light both sure and strong.

(By Frank Sullivan, *Malay Mail*, October 18, 1957)

## APPENDIX V

# THE MAKING OF INDEPENDENT MALAYA, SINGAPORE'S STATUS

During the past few years Merdeka — “freedom” in Malay — has been the main political objective of the leaders of the Federation of Malaya. On 31 August this objective was reached when the Proclamation of the Independence of the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (Federation of Malaya) was read by the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in the course of the impressive ceremonies marking the transfer of power to the new member state of the Commonwealth.

This event is significant not only for the various communities in the Federation, but also for New Zealand and the Commonwealth as a whole. The Federation is the first country of South-East Asia to become a fully independent member of the Commonwealth. It is also the only constitutional elective monarchy within the Commonwealth. This carries one stage further the development of the Commonwealth into a multi-racial association of States with widely different social and political structures.

Independence has come to the Federation rather later than to the neighbouring countries of Asia, largely because of the disruption caused by the Japanese occupation, the subsequent outbreak of Communist terrorism, and the proclamation of a nation-wide “Emergency” in June 1948. India and Pakistan became independent in 1947. Burma and Ceylon in 1948, Indonesia in 1949, and Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in the following years.

But if the Federation of Malaya is relatively speaking, a latecomer among the Asian countries that have achieved independence, the rate at which it has attained that status is perhaps greater than in any of those countries. Furthermore, the problems that had to be solved before an adequate constitutional and political structure could be developed to



serve as the basis for independence in the Federation were in many ways more difficult than in other countries. In the first place the population comprises three distinct major communities, and many have doubted the possibility of welding them into a united nation. Secondly, the States that now form the Federation of Malaya have had widely differing forms of relationships with the British Crown. Thirdly, the Emergency has placed considerable obstacles in the way of political development.

### *Intercommunal Relations*

Of the population of 6,364,000 on 31 December 1956, 3,093,000 were Malays (including all those of Malay stock), 2,413,000 were of Chinese origin, 760,000 were of Indian-Pakistani origin, while the remaining 98,000 were Europeans, Eurasians, and others. The Malays form the indigenous inhabitants of the country, if we leave aside a few thousand aborigines, while the Chinese, Indian, and European communities have come to Malaya mainly in the last one hundred years. Although each of these communities has adapted its customs and ways of life in Malaya, there are still very substantial differences among them. Distinctions can also be made within each community, such as between the "Queen's Chinese" (e.g. those born in the Crown Colonies of Penang and Malacca and having United Kingdom citizenship) and the China-born Chinese, and even between Chinese speaking different dialects. The communities have tended to be divided not only by custom and by the historical circumstances of their immigration, but also by their present occupations; the Malays, for example, are generally speaking, the farmers, while the bulk of retail trade is carried on by the Chinese.

Tensions among the communities and, in particular, between the Chinese and the Malays increased sharply during and after the Second World War. There are some ugly incidents in late 1945 and early 1946 before the restoration of stable administration, and similar, though less violent, incidents as recently as December 1956 in Penang.

### *The Constituent States*

The eleven States of the independent Federation of Malaya comprise the two former Settlements of Malacca and Penang,

which were British colonies for over a century, the four former Federated Malay States, and the five former Unfederated Malay States. The Federated and Unfederated Malay States have never been Colonies but had the status of British protectorates. The Federated Malay States were formed from Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, and Selangor by a treaty in 1895. From 1874 onwards, agreements had been concluded between the United Kingdom Government and the various State Rulers, which provided for the appointment of British Residents in these States. Of the five Unfederated Malay States (Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, Trengganu), Johore conceded control of its foreign affairs to Great Britain by a treaty of 1885 but only in 1914 concluded an agreement whereby a British officer was appointed as Chief Adviser. The four Unfederated States in the north came under British protection and accepted British Advisers in 1909, when Thailand transferred its suzerainty over these territories to the United Kingdom.

There were thus considerable differences in the extent of British influence. Moreover, there was before the Second World War no strong central Government exercising authority throughout the Federation as a whole. British influence in the administration was effected principally through the British Residents or Advisers, whose advice was generally sought and accepted (only in some cases was acceptance of this advice obligatory) on all matters of general administration other than those relating to the Muslim religion and Malay custom. It is a credit to these Advisers, working often under extremely difficult circumstances, that such rapid progress was made and that British influence is so widespread, not only in the Constitution, but in the whole political, legal, administrative, and economic structure of the new Federation.

### *The Emergency*

The Malayan Communist Party was formed in 1927. During the war it organised and controlled a Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) which conducted guerilla operations against the Japanese, receiving assistance (in arms and technical personnel) from the Allied forces. At the Japanese surrender the MPAJA attempted to establish itself as the de facto administration of both the Federation of Malaya and Singapore. In spite of the swift imposition of the control of British Military Administration the Communists were able to

establish secret depots of arms acquired during the war and of the material taken from the surrendering Japanese forces, and to win considerable prestige.

At first the MCP attempted to concentrate on the infiltration of the administration and of the trade unions as the principal means of seizing power. They did in fact succeed in obtaining the key positions in many trade unions, and used this power to embarrass the Government, to delay the rebuilding of the economy, and to organise large numbers of union members for political ends. In 1947 there was a steady increase in the number of strikes and in cases of intimidation. In 1948 a campaign of violence began, culminating in June of that year in the shooting of three Kuomintang leaders in Johore and of three British planters in Perak. A state of Emergency was declared throughout the Federation on 18 June and in Singapore on 24 June. The Communist decision to take up armed revolt in Malaya was paralleled in other countries of South and South-East Asia such as Burma and Indonesia and it seems clear that a general order was made to Asian Communist parties at that time to adopt tactics similar to those which were proving successful in Mainland China.

The MCP hoped to spread disorder and disorganisation in industry in order that, in the ensuing unemployment, labour would flood to support the Party. The Malayan People's Anti-British Army, later renamed the Malayan Races Liberation Army, was to declare "liberated areas" and, finally, on 3 August 1948 to establish a new "People's Republic".

This optimistic programme quickly went awry. The MCP did not succeed in placing itself at the head of the nationalist movement for independence in the Federation. It has had virtually no support at any stage from the Malay community; the vast majority of its members have at all stages been Chinese. The Security Forces were able to force the terrorists to retire to the deep jungle in mid-1949, and since 1952 the terrorists have been on the defensive. Recently their main aim has been simply to conserve their strength.

The failure of the armed revolt was implicitly recognised as early as 1951 when the Central Committee of the MCP issued a new directive, which was later captured and made public. Party members were told that their primary duty was to expand and consolidate the organisation of the masses, a task which

was to take precedence over the purely military objective of destroying the "enemy". In effect, the Party called for a return to political infiltration and for a more discreet use of violence. If the terrorists have failed in their main aim they have nevertheless succeeded in causing the Federation Government to divert resources that could otherwise be used for economic and social developments towards the cost of the anti-terrorist operations.

### *Constitutional Developments*

It is with this fight against Communist terrorism in mind that we must consider the remarkable progress of events leading to Malayan independence. The United Kingdom Government before the war had helped make the Federation one of the most prosperous and advanced countries of Asia, and one of the best administered. The local population had little share in this administration, however, and, in the words of one Governor (Sir Frederick Weld, at one stage a member of the New Zealand Parliament), the Government was teaching the people to govern under British guidance but not to govern themselves. Only a few years ago there was virtually no elective element in Government and it is only since the war that there has been any significant expansion in the numbers of local personnel gaining executive rank in the public service.

The principal difficulty, however, in framing the various constitutional proposals that have been put forward over the years has been to build a central Government that would leave an acceptable measure of power in the hands of the traditional State Rulers (who have for long been Constitutional rulers, by custom, and latterly by law); and to offer to the large Chinese and Indian communities a stake in the country that would ensure their loyalty, without arousing excessive fears among the Malays. The tests of a constitution for the various communities have thus been the genuineness of its federal nature, the extent of its citizenship provisions, and the position it maintains for the Malays.

### *Malayan Union*

The first developed Constitutional proposal for the reorganisation of the Malay States after the war was a bold attempt to create a unitary State. The proposal made in 1946 for

a "Malayan Union" envisaged the creation of a strong central authority. Citizenship was to be granted to all persons born in Malaya or Singapore, to immigrants who had lived there for ten out of the preceding fifteen years, and to future immigrants after five years' residence. All citizens were to have equal rights.

This proposal aroused strong opposition among the Malay community because of the concessions it made to the Chinese and because of the weakening of the authority of the Rulers. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) which was formed about this time strongly criticised the proposal, and eventually Malay opposition was sufficient to induce the United Kingdom Government to abandon this scheme.

### *The Federation of Malaya*

In 1948, therefore, the Malayan Union was replaced by the Federation of Malaya. The former Unfederated Malay States, the Federated Malay States, and the two Settlements of Malacca and Penang formed a new Federation (Malacca and Penang remained British Colonies and Singapore was not included in the arrangement), within which they retained their individuality while conceding certain defined powers to the central Government. The Legislative Council contained no elective element although fifty out of its seventy-five members were nominated unofficial members. The High Commissioner retained the power to refuse his assent to ordinances passed by the Council and to make ordinances himself where a proposal had not passed the Council.

The citizenship provisions of the Federation of Malaya Agreement were considerably more restrictive than those proposed for the Malayan Union. A Malay born in the Malay States was automatically a Federal citizen. A Chinese was so only if both parents had been born in the Federation. In June 1949 it was estimated that of 1,953,000 Chinese resident in the Federation only 375,000 were Federal citizens by operation of law. In 1952 an amendment to the Federation Agreement was made which laid down easier, although still restrictive, conditions for the acquisition of citizenship by non-Malays.

### *Position of Singapore*

Singapore and the Federation of Malaya have never been

administered as one territory, although at one stage Singapore, Penang, and Malacca (and Labuan in Borneo) together formed a single British colony known as the "Straits Settlements". Singapore and the Federation have, however, been closely bound economically, socially, and administratively for a long time.

In August 1958 it is expected that Singapore will become completely self-governing, although responsibility for defence and external relations (except trade) will remain vested in the United Kingdom. The unification of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya, however, is an object of policy of every political party in Singapore. It is an inescapable fact that Singapore has little hope of existing as an independent state on its own or of expanding its present living standards to any marked degree if it is permanently divorced from the Federation, which is to be a considerable extent its economic hinterland. At the present time, however, the Federation Government is opposed to unification, although co-operation between the two territories will remain close.

The Governments of both territories have made it clear that they intend to consult one another on questions of common concern. Moreover, the Federation Government has agreed to designate a representative to sit, for an initial period of six months, on the Singapore Internal Security Committee, which is to be established when Singapore's new constitution comes into force in 1958. This committee will consist of two representatives of each of the United Kingdom and Singapore Governments in addition to the Federation representative.

The attitude of the Federation Government towards unification with Singapore is understandable, given the delicate population balance between Malays and Chinese in the Federation, Singapore's security problems, the more advanced organisation of labour and higher wage structures in Singapore and the complexity of the Federation's own economic, security, and racial problems. At the present time, the Malays in the Federation have a relatively small numerical advantage over the Chinese. There are, however, approximately one million Chinese in Singapore and if the Island became part of the Federation the Chinese would be in the majority throughout the combined territory.

*(External Affairs Review, August 1957)*

## APPENDIX VI

### HISTORIC MERDEKA JOY IN MALACCA, DAP HONOURS THE TUNKU

I was not able to see the parade in Malacca but what I saw on television convinced me that Malaysians are prepared to play their part for the well-being and peace of the country.

Of course, the parade was a show, and the people taking part had been taught what to do, what to say, and how to say it. But basically, what they did and what they said, were convincing proof of their loyalty to the country. They are convinced more than ever before that they have no other country to go to; so, come what may, this is their home.

It was in this spirit, and with this patriotism that we saw the 28th Merdeka anniversary celebrated in Malacca. This is the first time that it was held in Malacca, the traditional home of the Malays, and at Padang Pahlawan (Padang Hilir before), the scene of the most important event preceding Merdeka.

In fact, Malacca was the venue for the launching of the Alliance programme that led to the independence of this country.

I had first announced the possible date for Merdeka as August 31, 1957, and I later confirmed the date on my return from England on February 20, 1956. So when I was invited to go to Malacca to declare open the *Memorial Pengisytiharaan Kemerdekaan (Merdeka Memorial)*, it was with a deep feeling of excitement and appreciation that I went.

My duty was a very formal one, where all I had to do was to declare open the Memorial and unveil the plaque. Then I was wheeled into the building, an old club house, accompanied by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, the Chief Minister and others.

I was shown the pictures of all the old documents which have now become historical — at least these are the only ones they managed to obtain, but there are many other important

documents which they were not able to get — among them *Suara UMNO* and the weekly journal, *Merdeka*, in which I had a hand in its publication.

Syed Jafaar Alba and later Sheikh Annuar assisted me and helped to boost *Merdeka* until, with the money earned, we were able to buy our own machine.

There was a period when the *Merdeka* fought the pro-government papers, in particular the *Majlis* and the *Kalam*, the Singapore magazine which was bitterly opposed to *Merdeka*.

The chairman of the *Majlis*, Dato Yahaya bin Razak, was one of the founders of the Alliance. Unfortunately he had been won over by the Federation Government and made to oppose independence, and he went out of his way to attack the *Merdeka*, the UMNO publication.

We fought back and held a demonstration in Johore Baru. I stood up to condemn this pro-British paper and made a bonfire of the *Majlis* and the *Kalam*. Both journals are out of circulation.

The *Kalam* was even more vicious than the *Majlis* and other papers. It enjoyed certain patronage from among the religious element, and it went so far as to accuse me and the other leaders of UMNO for choosing the site in the then Batu Road for UMNO headquarters, which according to them, was convenient venue for procuring girls from that area for the enjoyment of the leaders.

This is absolutely scandalous because we were so dedicated to the task of winning independence for the country that such a thought had never entered our head.

The left-wing party — the DAP also decided to hold the National Day celebration, and was generous and kind enough to honour me as *Bapa Malaysia*.

They held a ceremony at Dewan Hang Tuah to mark the occasion; and their members came from all over the country to give me a roaring welcome. Greetings rent the air with the cry of *Hidup Bapa Malaysia*.

Needless to say, I was very touched. When UMNO received news of the invitation to me, they were filled with trepidation and misgivings, but I brushed aside their fears by saying the honour done me is for Malaysia and by Malaysians.

Mr. Lim Kit Siang in his welcoming address, among other things, had this to say: "The DAP is organising this National



Day function to honour the Tunku ... We believe that the National Day should be elevated into a national occasion for Malaysians to temporarily put aside their differences, whether it be of race, religion, language, cultural or even political beliefs, and promote the national spirit and national unity of our common heritage, purpose and destiny that whatever our differences we are first and last Malaysians."

According to him, if our National Day is not just a march, parade and procession, but used instead to celebrate the Malaysian national spirit where all differences are temporarily put aside for all Malaysians to get together to acknowledge their fundamental unity, to respect and honour each other as Malaysians or as Malaysian national leaders, we would be making greater headway in the task of Malaysian national building."

What Mr. Lim Kit Siang had expressed on that day was in keeping with the spirit of the celebration.

The Merdeka rallies and meetings in those early days of independence showed an absence of racial and religious differences and enmities. The minds of all men were centred on independence. With that grew the spirit of nationalism.

When the Government decided to hold this National Day in Malacca on the theme of nationalism as the core for the unity of the people of this country, it fulfilled the wishes of all the people. The atmosphere was charged with nationalism, and the people felt united in their loyalty to Malaysia.

Everybody has seen what has been happening in the world today. They saw all the disturbances in South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where destruction to human life and property was so tragic. We don't want that to happen here, so the theme of national unity must be followed with persistent effort and determination.

Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, in his message in the DAP celebration programme, had very nice things to say about me, for which I am most thankful but there is one thing which I must take up here what he said of me: "It is no secret that some of his closest friends are Chinese, but where I am concerned, it was a pity they were mainly his golfing and poker friends. As far as I am concerned, he had only one friend who is a common man ... Lee Moke Sang who was a member of the Labour Party of Malaya ..."

The truth is that Moke Sang happened to be a member of the Labour Party, and our mutual friend. But most of my friends and supporters are common men — the grass-roots of this country.

It was because of their support that we won independence and managed to stay in power all these years. As president of the Football Association, I used to attend to the players' comforts and training, and mixed freely with them, and these were common enough men. They never joined me at poker, golf or horse-racing.

We have had our difficulties. After the First World War, Chinese schools sprung up in thousands, and Chinese nationalism swept the country. Chinese were made to look only to China as their home and object of loyalty. Everything seemed to have changed. Gone were the babas, the nonyas and the straits-born with the impact, the growth and the sweeping current of the new Chinese nationalism.

I remember just before peace was declared, there was strong rumour that Malaya would be handed over to China. A man whom I knew met me and said he would be appointed Chinese Adviser for Kedah. I said: "Will you make me your cook? And he said "I could give you a better job. Why do you want to be a cook?" My reply was, "I want to be a cook just to poison you".

It was the Communists who took over China. The Chinese population in this country became confused and divided, and then became frightened when the Communist terrorists started their insurrection and spread terror in Malaya.

So it was timely and opportune indeed that we launched our freedom movement, and most Chinese turned to Malaya for safe asylum — to sink and swim with the Malaysians.

They refused to accept Communism as a form of life, so come what may, they will fight to keep Malaya safe from the Communists. I had emphasised that it would take time for them to feel completely on all fours with the Malays, so with Merdeka a beginning would be made.

At the DAP function I said we cannot change overnight the sentiments and way of life of the people here. We existed as a mixed population for hundreds of years, but we have lived together in peace under the colonial rule. A divided life no doubt, but one thing for which we must be grateful is that we

have never fought one another, but have lived at peace with one another.

And this we have done so well for so long. The trouble we had in 1969 was not the making of the Chinese, but rather that of the Communist terrorists.

We have good reason now to be happy ... the language of communication among the common people has been Malay, and the language for higher education English. Now Malay has been upgraded to the national status as Bahasa Kebangsaan, while English has been and is accepted as the medium of higher education. This policy must be followed for the good of Malaysians.

Socially we have all along been on good terms, so the concept of nationalism as the core for unity is most appropriate and has not come too soon.

(Tunku Abdul Rahman, *The Star*, September 9, 1985)

## APPENDIX VII

### SUKARNO, MALAYSIA'S TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

The 29th anniversary of Merdeka was celebrated yesterday. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since we first proclaimed our Independence and one must accept changes though some have not been too good for Malaysia.

In those early days the financial position of this country was healthy and we had no problems except for the state of Emergency brought about by the Communist insurrection which had been going on for 10 years.

The former Malayan government had to fight the Communists and were not able to crush them until after Merdeka.

Chin Peng had frankly stated his stand when I met him in Baling in 1955. According to him, the Communists would not surrender and would not co-exist with my party, the Alliance. They would continue the fight until the battle was won and they could set up a Communist state in Malaya. The people took our side and we were able to get the better of them, and they were soon on the run.

On August 26, 1956, Yuong Kuo who had always been considered the most dangerous and cunning Communist leader was shot dead. With his death Chin Peng was left to fight the battle alone.

On August 31, 1957, Independence was proclaimed and the Emergency situation in Malaya greatly improved. People were able to travel to most parts of the country without restriction.

We had to fight the enemy ourselves but the British, Australian and New Zealand forces stood by, ready to help under the Defence Agreement, when called upon.

Sukarno of Indonesia had uttered threats if the other territories of Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei were to join Malaya.

This, I thought, was a cock-eyed attitude to take because he himself had claimed all the territories ruled by the Dutch as part of Indonesia, including faraway Dutch New Guinea, inhabited by people of an entirely different race and culture from the Indonesians.

What objection then could he have against Sarawak, Borneo and Brunei joining us for we were all administered by the British government in Malaya?

On May 27, 1961, I attended a luncheon given in Singapore by the foreign correspondents of South-East Asia at the Adelphi Hotel. It was there that I mentioned the possible merger of the states of Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak with Malaya, and that maddened Sukarno. How this unity could be brought about would be divulged later, because in truth I didn't know how. I had not consulted the British government yet. These territories could be brought closer together in political and economic co-operation, I said, so let Sukarno do what he liked.

The atmosphere was electrifying and everybody suddenly took a great interest in this plan. After lunch they started crowding around me and wanted to know more. The reaction was a general approval by the people of these territories, and by the British government.

When I returned to Kuala Lumpur, the first person to greet me was the former Sultan of Brunei, Sir Muda Omar Ali Saifuddien. He was already waiting at my house and came out with outstretched arms to meet me, exclaiming how happy it would be for Brunei to join the new Malaysia.

Then Sukarno came out with a "crush Malaysia" battle-cry. No sooner had he uttered this, the Philippines came out with their claim on Sabah. According to them, the state was part of the Sultanate of Sulu and by right it belonged to them. In actual fact it was the other way round. It was the Sultan of Brunei who owned that part of the Philippines. In fact Brunei owned Sabah, Sarawak and even the southern tip of Indonesia. So the claim of the Philippines over Sabah was baseless.

Sukarno started to send his men into Borneo, Sarawak and West Malaysia and we had to deal with all these infiltrations. Our allies were tied down by the Geneva convention and were unable to help us unless there was an open declaration of war or a direct open attack on Malaysia. By the help of Allah, we had the better of them. Our security and armed forces put up a

wonderful fight and kept Sukarno's men out or took them prisoners.

We started our Independence in a hard way, first fighting against the Communists, next against Sukarno. It could be said Malaysia was born under very severe crises, but by the help of Allah, the loyalty of our people, the courage of our armed forces and the support received from our allies, we survived.

In fact it was the first time that any country faced with Communist insurrection had won a convincing victory against them.

That was 29 years ago. The first decade of Independence was the golden age for Malaysia. The economic situation gave everyone in this country a good life. Our business was booming and our rural development productive. Despite this, some were not contented with what they were getting, and so it was that we were forced to part company with Singapore in 1965.

### *Violence*

As a result of the separation I became somewhat unpopular with "the young Turks" who wanted me to take action against Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. One thing led to another. May 13, 1969, saw the outbreak of violence between the races not experienced before. This had been the work of our enemies, the Malayan Communist Party, who exploited the prevailing situation.

The care-taker government had allowed the Communists to hold a funeral procession of a dead comrade shot by the police in Kepong. But they provoked the security forces and others by the violence of the demonstration. Then the May 13 incident broke out, though I am happy to say that it had been confined to the Federal capital of Kuala Lumpur. That was a big lesson to all, and since then there had been no further violence, and pray God it would not happen again.

I left the service in September 1970. The economic situation then was good and I was able to buy my house in Penang cheaply, but within five months there was a price hike. The houses had increased five-fold in value. I was lucky to buy one or two houses with the balance of the money I received as gratuity from the government.

After that I was asked by His Majesty the late King Feisal to organise Muslim unity and I left this country to take up

residence in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where I helped form the O.I.C. (Organisation of Islamic Conference). Later I set up the Islamic Development Bank.

On my return from Jeddah the country had undergone much change. One thing I observed was that politicians had gone more for business than politics. Big political parties went in for big business. This certainly was the trend I least expected and it came as a shock to me.

Some politicians had to pay severe penalties for their indiscretion. Just recently the top leader of the MCA had been sentenced in Singapore. This should be a deterrent to other politicians who may be inclined to go for big business. Remember our duty is to serve the people.

In the early eighties, the economy looked bright and everybody started to build and build without regard to the consequences.

Now the situation has become worse than what we had ever experienced before. Development has almost come to a standstill.

The recession has also brought to the fore the weaknesses in the Malaysian economy. It had highlighted flaws which have not manifested themselves during the boom time. It has made us realise how vulnerable and beyond our control the whole economic structure can become.

Our economy is truly in a bad shape, our currency has also dropped in value and people are now feeling the effects of the slump. Politicians must now give their full attention to politics and see Malaysia return to normalcy.

Recently we had our election and the Barisan Nasional had a great victory. We hope the Barisan Nasional government will succeed in putting the affairs of the country right so that we can live the way we have always known — happy and contented.

The people of all races too must realise that Malaysia is their country and their home. They must work together to ensure peace and the well-being of all and to remember that we have no other country to go to. For better or for worse this is our country; here we live and here we die. So may God protect us all.

While celebrating this 29th anniversary of Merdeka, we must give our thoughts to those who had given their loyalty and service to the cause of Malayan Independence. There was

no knowing then what would happen to them. If we had failed, then our cause would have been lost, and the independence handed to us by the colonial masters would have been on the terms laid down by them. What those terms would have been we could not have imagined, but we could not have subscribed to them, and there would have been trouble.

Our Independence has also brought independence to other countries. Independence was given to others in the hope that Britain would win them back as friends as was the case with Malaya.

We will always remain a member of the Commonwealth I hope, and subscribe to the principle of human rights. It was in this spirit that I condemned South Africa for their apartheid policy.

South Africa banned others who were not white from visiting their country, and the massacre of Sharpeville was the last straw. The black people were gunned down by machine-gun for holding a peaceful demonstration and 71 of them were killed. It was difficult for me to keep silent, so I took the matter up in London in 1960 and this led to the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth.

In the golden decade of Independence, I boasted that I was the happiest Prime Minister. This might have appeared an exaggeration, but that was how I felt. On the whole, the people of Malaysia were happy, and conditions in the country were good. Besides my work, I was able to indulge in sports and other social activities without a care in the world.

I hope and pray that the life then might return to Malaysia one day, and we can hope to see this country live up to the promise we had made — a home for all and for all time.

(Tunku Abdul Rahman, *The Star*, September 1, 1986)



There are few accolades that have not been lavished on Malaysia's best-known statesman, and the country's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, capping a lifetime of varied achievements, from securing Independence for his country, to being part-owner of the winner of the Melbourne Cup.

Fortunately for historians the Tunku has also been a prolific writer, setting down in a number of books his inner thoughts of the events in which he was a principal participant.

Author Ranjit Gill says they provided an "invaluable source of documented information", from which he has sketched this authorised biography, adding insights provided by a number of "Tunku watchers" — both his numerous admirers and a handful of critics.

"The Tunku's continued involvement in present-day politics has brought an additional dimension to his life-long quest of helping maintain racial and religious goodwill among Malaysians", Gill notes. "No one has worked harder to improve communal relations and if there is one individual who embodies the virtues of tolerance, it surely must be him".

Mr. Gill, a veteran journalist, first met the Tunku, when he was a club reporter, in 1959. "It has always been my passion to be allowed to write the Tunku's biography," says Gill. "When he said yes, last year, I could hardly believe my ears".

Mr. Gill is a keen observer of the regional scene with a special interest in Asean affairs. His other books include:

- *The Making of Malaysia Inc. (1985)*
- *George Tan: The Carrian Saga (1986)*
- *Khoo Teck Puat : Tycoon On A Tightrope (1988)*
- *Razaleigh : An Unending Quest (1987)*
- *Asean : Coming Of Age (1988)*
- *The Umno Crisis (1989)*
- *The Origins Of The Indonesian Monetary System (1989)*