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*Critical
Awakening*

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA



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Tunku's Crest

When Sultan Abdul Hamid, Tunku's father, travelled to England in 1911 for the coronation of King George V, he was attracted to a gold curio in the shape of an ornamental button which contained a reproduction of the sphinx.

The sphinx was a monster of Greek mythology sent by Hera to ravage Thebes. It had the head of a woman, wings, and the body of a lioness. It proposed a riddle to travellers and strangled those who could not solve it. The legend says that no-one could solve the riddle until one day a prince came along and saved the kingdom by supplying the correct answer. The sphinx then threw itself from its rocky perch to its death.

Tunku adopted the button which he won at family raffle as his crest and added the word "dibebaskan". It means 'freed' and refers to the freedom which Tunku brought to Malaysia in 1957.

About the Book and the Author

Nationalist and anti-colonial movements have played a vital role in the political awakening of indigenous populations in many Third World nations. This is certainly true of multi-racial Malaysia which now boasts of one of the highest per capita incomes in Southeast Asia.

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the author of this book, was the president of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) during the crucial years leading to independence. Since then, he has worked to forge a united nation out of the varying cultural and religious traditions of the people.

In this book, the Tunku discusses the problems and difficulties faced by the party since its successful opposition to the Malayan Union proposals in 1946 and the subsequent inauguration of the Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948.

UMNO's strength, the Tunku argues, has been due to the hard work and loyalty of its members — qualities he would also like to see practised by future generations.

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia and popularly known as 'Bapa Malaysia' (Father of Independence), occupies a unique place in Malaysian history.

Although now in his eighties, he enjoys the same interests and pastimes which first attracted him more than sixty years ago. He still writes a weekly column in *The Star* newspaper. In Malaysia, the Tunku's views carry great influence, not only because of his key role in the independence struggle but also because he is one of the few public figures in the country without a vested interest in the outcome of current political controversies.

Contents

Introduction

1. The Birth of UMNO	1
2. The First Step towards the Federation	8
3. The Formation of the Women and Youth Movements	13
4. The Birth of our Citizenship Laws	17
5. A Difficult Year for the Federation	21
6. The Search for a New Leader	23
7. The Birth of the Alliance	32
8. The Long Campaign for a National Election	41
9. Victory at Last!	49
10. The Leaky Roof that brought <i>Merdeka</i> nearer	55
11. The New UMNO Headquarters and Merdeka Stadium	59
12. The Talks with Chin Peng	63
13. Crisis in the Alliance	69

14. The Birth of Malaysia	73
15. Soekarno Threatens to Crush Malaysia	77
16. The Terrorists Never Left the People Alone	82
17. A Man of the People	86
18. A Lesson for Politicians	92
19. Time to Put our House in Order	97
20. People's Faith Must Be Upheld	103
21. Let's go back to Mother Earth	107
22. When Politics Didn't Matter	112
23. UMNO must remain United to be Strong	116
24. UMNO - USNO Merger: Think Carefully	121
25. Can UMNO fare better in Sabah?	124
<i>Index</i>	127

Introduction

It was a proud day indeed for all Umno members, past and present, who were assembled at the opening in October 1985 of Umno's magnificent headquarters, the like of which the members could never have conceived or imagined. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say that it is the biggest headquarters of any political party in this part of Asia.

Umno has been the premier political party in Malaysia. Its success has not been due only to what the party has achieved for itself, but rather to a greater extent to the manifest loyalty of its members. There has never been political manoeuvre, squabble or a struggle to reach the top post, nor has there been a real contest for it.

Datuk Onn Jaafar, the founder, withdrew from Umno after six years, on his own initiative, and I succeeded him. I left after 19 years (1951-1970) of service as head of the party. Then Tun Razak succeeded me, but died in January 1976. Tun Hussein took over from Tun Razak, and relinquished it in favour of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir who was sworn in on July 16, 1981. It is truly a record of loyal service to the party by its members not enjoyed or shared by any other political party in Malaysia.

The take-over of power in such a smooth transition has been the tradition and admirable trait of Umno members in the past, and has won admiration from other political parties. Will it remain the same in the years to come? We have seen that the tendency now is to fight for position at all levels of Umno echelons, from branch to division, state to National Executive Council, and as evident, there was keen contest for the post of Deputy Prime Minister, but so far the post of Prime Minister has been kept out of the members' power

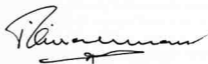
struggle.

Umno has enjoyed the confidence of the Malays and others. All these years of independence it has guided the nation towards national progress and political peace. As the senior partner of the Barisan Nasional, it thoroughly deserves the praises that have been showered upon it following the opening of the complex. Together with its partners, the MCA and MIC, they fought and won independence for Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah, and together they formed Malaysia. They have had to face communist insurrection, Indonesian confrontation, the Philippines' claim to Sabah, and other problems from which they have emerged with flying colours.

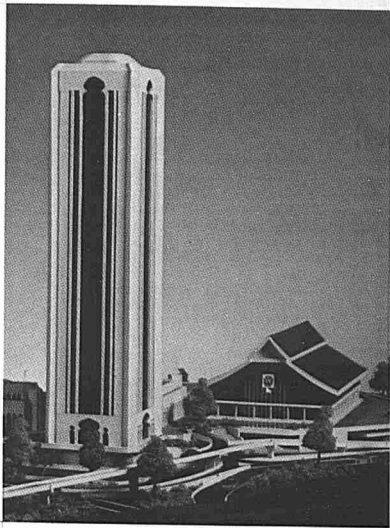
Now it has capped its achievement with a magnificent home, and with it a promise to continue to play its role for as long as it lives for the good of Malaysia and her people. With such confidence in their own strength it does seem that Umno will live for a very long time.

While we recognise and admire it, and shower upon it praises, the present members of the party know little of what it has gone through, and less still of its record of service to the country. They accept the party's success as a matter of course. But what the old members - men, women and youth of the time - had to go through is something they care little to remember. The sacrifices the old members made, the courage they showed in the fight against the colonial power, the communist terrorists, Soekarno's confrontation, and the enemy's subversive activities from within went by unsung.

I therefore feel that I should, to the best of my effort, and from what the publication *Umno Sepuluh Tahun* could give from its torn pages, write about it. The little that I can give is better than none at all.



Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj



UMNO's new headquarters.



Chapter 1

The Birth of UMNO

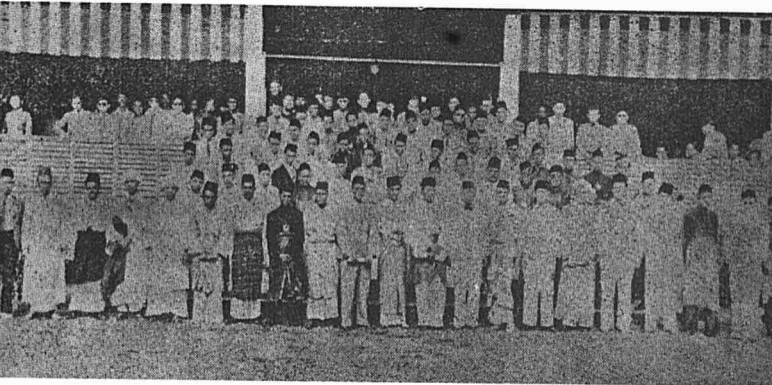
It started on March 1, 1946, when 38 Malay parties, the biggest number ever to have met, came together at the Sultan Sulaiman Club, Kuala Lumpur. This was the most comprehensive representative assembly of bumiputeras to have assembled in the country, representing organisations from Malaya and Singapore, including the Orang Darat (Sakai) Party called the Kaum Darat Selangor. The object of this congress was to oppose the new Malayan Union Government set up by the British Government, and for this purpose form a united Malay opposition.

The White Paper for its formation had just been published on Jan. 22, 1946. The Malayan Union completely made a mockery of all agreements and treaties previously made between Britain and the Rulers. This was a shame which most Malays found it hard to live down. Even the common people refused to accept it. It brought a wave of popular resentment against it throughout the length and breadth of Malaya.

The congress decided:

- to oppose the Malayan Union as being unconstitutional and void,
- that it was against the wishes of the people,
- that it would usurp the power of the Rulers, and allow the British to rule Malaya as their colony, and was against the Atlantic Charter,
- that under the Malayan Union, Malaya would become a colony of Britain, and the meeting rejected it outright.

The congress therefore opposed the Malayan Union, and demanded the return of Malaya to status quo.



The First Malay Congress held at the Sultan Sulaiman Club.



The late Datuk Onn bin Jaafar, the founder of UMNO.

This meeting was followed by a meeting of Malay leaders on March 29 and 30 1946, at the *Majlis* newspaper office where the Malayan Union was discussed in more detail. Datuk Onn presided. They decided to ask the Rulers not to attend the installation of Sir Edward Gent as the Governor of the Malayan Union, and the Malays were told to wear white bands around their caps for seven days as a protest.

On May 11 and 12, 1946, a Malay political party, Umno, was formed at Istana Besar, Johore Baru, and the charter for its formation was approved. The meeting was opened by the Tunku Mahkota of Johore, the late Sultan Ismail, and Datuk Onn was elected president. A committee was also formed to draft rules and by-laws of the congress. It was also decided to ask the Rulers to lodge their protest in England, and be accompanied by three Umno leaders, Datuk Onn, the Panglima Datuk Gantang and me.

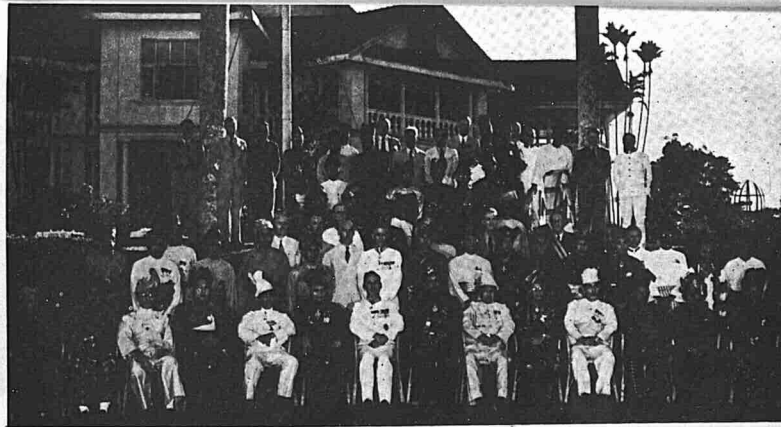
The colonial government decided that the delegation should not go, but that every effort must be made to settle the question of the Malayan Union here. On July 24, 1946, the Rulers were invited to King's House (the Governor's residence) by Sir Edward Gent, the Governor of the Malayan Union, to discuss the proposal made by the Rulers and Umno. A committee was appointed consisting of five members on behalf of the British Government, four representatives of the Rulers and two representing Umno - Datuk Onn and Datuk Abdul Rahman bin Mohamed Yasin. Mr D.C. Watherson, M.C.S., was appointed Secretary.

This committee met twice in 1946, from Aug. 6-16, 1946, and again from Sept. 6-28. It was adjourned to allow the Rulers and the Malay leaders to study the recommendations by his committee, after which they met again on Oct. 11 and adjourned for further consultation with the Rulers, and possibly the Umno members.

On Nov. 11 a proposal was put up, and signed a week later, on Nov. 18, under which each State and settlement would have its rights spelt out in the State and Settlement Constitutions. It was provided that ultimate independence was the aim of this proposal, but how and when this would be achieved was not mentioned. It was agreed to call this new government the Federation of Malaya.

It would be constituted thus:

- 1) A High Commissioner at the head of the administration,
- 2) a Federal Executive Council,
- 3) a Federal Legislative Council and the High Commis-



A group photograph of the Malay rulers taken after the signing ceremony of the Agreement of the Federation of Malaya.

sioner to be president of these councils.

The Legislative Council would have 48 members with representatives from the States and Settlements, and unofficial members; and each State would have a State Executive Council which would have authority to administer the State, and the State Assemblies for the Straits Settlements. Then there would be the Conference of Rulers who would meet among themselves and also in conference with the High Commissioner. Each State would have a constitution of its own.

On Jan. 11 and 12, 1947, a general meeting of Umno was held in Alor Setar just to tidy up the Umno organisation, and to appoint a committee to look into the New Constitution and make its recommendation. This committee met on March 1 and 2, 1947. It met again in Seremban to inform the assembly that the committee had gone through the Constitution and had made certain amendments. They were pleased to report that the British Government had accepted the amendments they made.

Umno held its first meeting after the setting up of the Federation of Malaya Government at the Istana Besar, Johore Baru, to celebrate the demise of the MacMichael set-up Malayan Union. At that meeting Datuk Onn told the members that the Rulers had affixed their signatures to the new Constitution of the Federation of Malaya Government on Jan. 21, 1948.

People went wild with joy. Umno had made an indelible mark in the minds of all Malayan people and initiated the chapter of the history of our new nation. It won credit for the defeat and dissolution of the Malayan Union Government, and had gained a great victory for the first Malay political party.



A historical conference at the Istana Besar at Johore Bahru which gave birth to UMNO.

Chapter 2

The First Step towards the Federation

On Dec. 26 and 27, 1947, the Umno executive council met (soon after the dissolution of the Malayan Union) at the Sultan Sulaiman Club. Tunku Mohamad bin Tunku Besar Burharnuddin was appointed chairman of the Assembly.

Datuk Onn, as the president, reminded the council members that when the Federation of Malaya Government was officially established it was the duty of every Umno member and every Malay to give their loyal support to the new federation government. It was set up in the first place through Malay demand, and the object was to help the Malays and to give them identity and a sense of belonging to the country of their birth. All those who would be appointed to the Federal Legislative Council must be conscious of the fact that they were there because the Government had placed them there under the new Constitution, and as such they represented the interests of the people.

What happened later was that some men were appointed by the States as members of the Legislative Council - men who had played no part at all or showed any interest in our struggle to defeat the British attempt to set up the Malayan Union Government. As an example, the Menteri Besar, Kedah, nominated his brother to represent Kedah - the man who had never mixed with his own people.

That meeting also tidied up the question of qualification for Umno membership.

The new year, 1948, saw the first general meeting of Umno which met on Jan. 24 and 25. Dr Haji Salleh bin Abdul Hamid took the chair as chairman of the assembly. Representatives of 25 Umno divisions attended that first meeting following the setting up of the

Federation of Malaya Government. Datuk Onn, as president of Umno, made a long speech in which he thanked Umno for the support they gave, which led to the demise of the shameful MacMichael colonial Government. They must stick together, he said, and from now on dedicate themselves to the people and country as a whole. He informed the meeting that the Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (Federation of Malaya) has been accepted by both the rulers and the British Government on Feb. 1, 1948.

Datuk Onn conveyed to the members that the rulers appreciated Umno's contribution towards this new Government, and they must not rest on their laurels, but be prepared to work harder and make greater efforts to serve their country.

This new Federation of Malaya was to be made up of nine States, including Penang and Malacca. The administration would consist of the High Commissioner as president, aided by a Federal Executive Council with seven official and seven unofficial members, supported further by the Federal Legislative Council with the High Commissioner as president, three ex-officio members, and 52 unofficial members appointed to represent various communal and vested interests in the country. In addition to these there were nine Menteri Besar representing each State council, and two representatives from Penang and Malacca as members of the Legislative Council. The Conference of Rulers was formed to advise the High Commissioner.

The Government tightened up the Malayan citizenship laws providing for those who were born in this country and their children to become citizens, and those who had lived 15 out of the total 20 years with knowledge of English or Malay, and were prepared to take the oath of allegiance to the country to have the legal right to obtain citizenship as well. The authority of the rulers under this new Government would return to the position they had enjoyed before, and the Menteri Besar of each state would take over some of the functions of the British Resident, and the position of the Malays would improve somewhat with their new-found political status.

The first day of February is a historic day for the people of Malaya. Umno took up the call that "Umno is Melayu, and Melayu is Umno". The relationship between Umno and the rulers gained strength.

There arose an immediate opposition to the new Government by people mostly from Singapore and in Malaya from among those who

felt uneasy with the new Government. They decided to organise an opposition party, which they called the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA), or *Majlis Bergerak Serentak Tanah Melayu*, to fight it.

This opposition was not satisfied with the new Government as they felt left out. For instance, the Chinese felt that they had not been given an appropriate share in the new set-up, and some of the Malay left-wing parties felt that the people had not been given the proper representation in the new Legislative Council. Some intellectuals felt the British had not relinquished their hold on Malaya, but rather established themselves even more firmly in the country with the help of the rulers and the right-wing Malays. The communists were naturally dissatisfied as they always had as their aim the setting up of a communist regime in this country.

The leaders of this group of opposition parties got themselves together and formed AMCJA. Those appointed as officials of this new body were Mr Tan Cheng Lock (chairman), Encik Mohamad Tahar (vice-chairman), Mr John Eber (secretary-general), and Mr. A.M. Mitra (treasurer), PPM, API and LKM, the Malay parties, and later Putra Malay Party also joined in.

This new party put up proposals for the people's constitution. The main points of difference were that the Federation of Malaya should include Singapore; that membership to the Federal Legislative Council should be elected. They demanded equal rights for all, and the Malay language should be the official language of the country; that the responsibility for the foreign affairs should be the joint responsibility of a British and a Malayan official; and that all people of Malaya should be known as *Melayu* irrespective of race or religion.

They also decided to declare a *hartal* on Oct. 10 in support of their claim. It turned out to be a flop as most loyal citizens of Malaya did not join them.

The communists mounted a country-wide rebellion, so on July 12, 1948 the new Federation Government declared a state of emergency in the country. Umno members and those loyal to the country were asked to give their full support to the Government. Many thousands of youths joined the police, army, special police and Home Guards.

On Oct. 6, 1948, Sir Henry Gurney became the High Commissioner for Malaya in place of the late Sir Edward Gent who was killed in a plane accident in London. In December 1948, Mr Malcolm Mac-

Donald was made Commissioner General for South-East Asia, and the rulers and Umno appointed Datuk Roland Braddel as their Legal Adviser. It is a sad thing to recount here that the great legal personality had family trouble and later ended his life as a pauper in a poor home in London. This was the fate of a man who once enjoyed the distinction of being a great lawyer, a knight and a Datuk.

At the end of December Datuk Onn invited 21 community leaders to discuss the problems affecting the good relationship between communities, in particular between Malays and Chinese. Somehow it did not make much headway. In January 1949 Mr Malcolm MacDonald took over and invited Chinese and Malay leaders to meet together with him as host and with better results. They formed a committee - Malays and Chinese - and called it the Communities Liaison Committee.

On Feb. 27, 1949, Tan Cheng Lock formed the MCA (Malayan Chinese Association), and was appointed president, supported by Leong Yew Koh and T.H. Tan. The MCA was looked upon by the communists as an obstacle to their effort to set up communist rule in Malaya, so one day at the MCA Assembly in Ipoh, a hand grenade was lobbed into the Assembly Hall and it severely injured Cheng Lock and four others.

Datuk Onn, president of Umno, Tan Cheng Lock, president of MCA, Dr J.S. Goonting, president of the Eurasian Association, and C.C. Tan, president of the Singapore Progressive Party, met in August 1949 and discussed many problems confronting the country.



Tan Cheng Lock

Chapter 3

The Formation of the Women and Youth Movements

Umno had a general meeting on Aug. 25 and 26, 1949, and formed the women's and the youth movements. The Raja Perempuan of Perlis officially opened the women's meeting, at which the women formed a Pergerakan Kaum Ibu, and Cik Putih Mariah binti Ibrahim Rashid was elected Ketua. From that time onwards, women for the first time in the history of Malaya took part in men's activities. They played their role extremely well; and during the struggle for independence they won the admiration of all peoples in the country.

The next day the youth had their meeting and decided to form Perikatan Pemuda Umno, with Capt. Hussein Onn as the youth leader. They appointed two to represent them at the Umno general meeting the next day. They were Tuan Haji Ahmad Badawi bin Abdullah Fahim and Maj. Ibrahim.

Now the Umno political party was formed, made up of three components – men, women and youth. Everything seems to have gone very well with the party. Umno having gained new-found strength and confidence was given complete support by most of the Malay people.

However, soon after, a serious crisis developed which led to an open clash between the rulers and Umno party. It arose as a result of the proposal by Datuk Onn to appoint as Deputy High Commissioner a man from among the ordinary Malays – not the Rulers – to take second place in the national hierarchy. This proposal was met with strong support from Umno, but violently opposed by the Sultan of Kedah, Tuanku Badlishah, who felt that to appoint an ordinary Malay Deputy High Commissioner was to elevate him to a position over and above the rulers.

It was unfortunate that Datuk Onn should have brought this matter up rather late in the day after the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya had already been agreed upon and operative. What he should have done was to have brought it up when it was first proposed by Encik Senu Abdul Rahman the representative of Saberkas at the General Assembly in Alor Setar in early 1947.

At that time Datuk Onn did not take him seriously. When Encik Senu first made the point Datuk Onn asked him who he had in mind as a candidate. Senu replied: "You," and he laughed it off. He took it up two years later, but by then circumstances had changed. All he had managed to do was to cause friction between the rulers and the people; and this was unfortunate as it weakened Malay unity.

A General Assembly was convened in Butterworth to discuss this matter in August 1949. At this meeting the Umno members gave their unstinted support to Datuk Onn, and a resolution was moved by a Kedah representative, Haji Mohamad Rejab bin Haji Darus, which read:

That this General Assembly resolves that the members of this assembly re-affirm its loyalty and full support to Datuk Onn, the leader of Umno, and is prepared to support whatever action he deems fit to take from time to time for the progress and well-being of the Malays and the country.

This resolution was unanimously agreed to. It, of course, increased the tension between the rulers and Umno. The meet also appointed the new executive council members of Umno consisting of:

- Datuk Onn as president;
 - Datuk Hamzah bin Abdullah as deputy president;
 - Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang as vice-president;
 - Encik Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas as secretary general;
 - Raja Ayub bin Raja Haji Bot as secretary of financial affairs;
 - Syed S.M. Aidid as treasurer;
 - And six committee members;
 - Encik Salleh Hakim - Selangor;
 - Y.M. Tengku Azizah - Negeri Sembilan;
 - Tuan Syed Omar Shahbuddin - Kedah;
 - Capt. Mohd. Nor bin Shahbuddin - Penang;
 - Encik Mahmood Mahiddin - Kelantan;
 - Shaik Ahmad bin Mohd. Hashim - Perlis.
- The following appointments were also made:



Datuk Senu Abdul Rahman

Cik Putih Mariah binti Ibrahim Rashid - head of Kaum Ibu;
Capt. Hussein bin Onn - representing Pemuda;
Tuan Haji Mohd. Noh bin Omar - asst. secretary general;
Tuan Syed Abdul Kadir bin Mohamad - permanent chairman
of the assembly.

It was then also decided to set up the general headquarters of Umno in Johore Baru.

Chapter 4

The Birth of our Citizenship Laws

The year 1950 was a tragic one in the history of the Federation of Malaya for a number of reasons: the communist attack on the police station at Bukit Kepong, the Maria Hertogh riots, and a bitter quarrel between Datuk Onn Jaafar and Umno.

A bitter quarrel between Datuk Onn Jaafar and Umno nearly led to the break-up of the party when he threatened to quit as Umno president. The Communities Liaison Committee had met to discuss, among other things, the question of citizenship of the Federation of Malaya and subjects of the States. Datuk Onn supported the committee members' view and at the Umno assembly held on Feb. 24 and 25, 1950, put it across for acceptance that those who were born in this country should be given citizenship; and also those British subjects in the former settlements should follow the British Citizenship Law, 1948.

It was agreed that the present laws covering the Rulers' subjects were no more consistent with the new constitutional set-up, and it was suggested that the new citizenship law applicable to subjects of the Rulers should be made applicable to:

- INDIGENOUS people of the country;
- ASIANS or Eurasians born in the State before or after the appointed date, with a proviso that one of the parents must have been born in the State;
- ANY Asian or Eurasian born in the State but whose parents were not born in that State but swears allegiance to the Ruler;
- PEOPLE whose father or mother were not born in the State but who are subjects of the Ruler even though the person was not born in the State. They can become subjects after pledg-

ing allegiance to the State; and

- EVEN minors, can also become citizens if the father is a subject of the Ruler.

There was a lot of opposition to this proposal as Umno felt that under this proposal of the Communities Liaison Committee there would be many hundreds and thousands of people who could claim automatic citizenship. The Umno Central Committee decided to have two kinds of citizenship:

- STATE citizenship for those born in the State in which one of their parents was born, or if one of the parents was also a State citizen; and
- FEDERAL citizenship by operation of law or by registration or by naturalisation.

According to Datuk Onn, the citizenship law in the federation was unsatisfactory. He felt that the law that is acceptable by the world - *jus soli*, i.e. anybody born in the country should be a subject of the country - should be adopted. The meeting felt that members had not been sufficiently briefed on the matter of citizenship, and decided to postpone discussion to enable them to make a proper study of the proposal.

On June 10 and 11, 1950, the special extraordinary general assembly in Kuala Lumpur met to discuss the citizenship laws for acceptance by the Government. At this meeting Raja Ayub proposed a motion that citizenship of a State should be open to those born in the State. This was seconded by Encik Mahmud Muhaiddin. It was agreed to meet in committee to discuss this question.

At this meeting the discussion became heated; in other words Datuk Onn was severely attacked. They rejected the proposal for automatic citizenship to the State and to the federation. This discussion went on for two days, full of vituperations and hard words. On the last day Datuk Onn took the stand. He caused a shock throughout the assembly when he suddenly announced that he would resign as president of Umno. Many in the assembly asked him to withdraw his proposal but he refused. The members of the council loyal to Datuk Onn decided to throw in their lot with him and resigned. Datuk Haji Mohd. Yusof took over after three chairmen had given up the post.

Datuk Onn rose to give his reasons for giving up his leadership of Umno. Apart from being attacked by the assembly, he said, he felt the citizenship laws as proposed were sound and the Umno

assembly should have accepted them. He had therefore no alternative but to resign. It was decided to appoint five men to look into this matter, and these were: Sardon Jubir, Salleh Osman, Abu Hassan Haji Said, Khalid Awang Osman and Sanusi Baki. All refused to accept except Khalid Awang Osman. Datuk Onn resigned, and the meeting adjourned in confusion.

On July 28, 1950, representatives from Umno divisions, branches, women, youth and Umno sympathisers, numbering 6,000 in all or more, gathered at Umno House, Johore Baru, at 8.30 a.m. and decided to hold a huge procession to persuade Datuk Onn to return to Umno. They walked in procession through the streets of Johore Baru for two hours and proceeded towards Datuk Onn's house. They stood in the compound, shouted for Datuk Onn, and erected a platform complete with loud speakers.

Datuk Onn came out to meet them accompanied by Syed Abdul Kadir, the vice-president of Johore Baru Umno. Syed Abdul Kadir thanked the crowd for the trouble they had taken to come and meet the Datuk. Then a representative from each of the divisions took the platform and addressed Datuk Onn and the big crowd. All of them pleaded with him to return to Umno as president. Altogether seven people took the stage.

In his reply Datuk Onn gave the reason he had to resign from Umno. He made it clear that he did not leave Umno on the spur of the moment, but that he had given the matter much thought. He was unhappy to see how the Malays belittled themselves through their utterances and actions which showed weakness and indecision. They were inclined thereby to look upon others with fear. No country can find itself strong unless their own people feel strong; and the Malays must have faith in their own strength, and faith in Umno.

Umno members must give their leadership to the Malay people, not only look to him alone to do that, and he therefore decided to give someone else the chance to lead Umno "if he could do better than I". Such a man may be hard to find i.e. the leader who can agree with Umno's views.

He went on to say:

People ask: What has Umno done for the country or for the Malay people? My answer to that is that Umno has united all the Malay States and the settlements. This had never happened before. With unity we have brought about a new Government of the Federation of Malaya. Umno has established the

Malay States with Malay administration. Umno has also managed to get the nine Rulers to meet in conference on matters affecting the States and the federation. The Malay Rulers have to observe the constitution, and are no more above the constitution.

He related that before the change only Johore had a Menteri Besar and a State constitution. But other States only acquired this status through Umno's effort, and this had brought about the change in the Malayan political scene.

What is Umno? If they care to study what Umno has done for the Malays and for the country they would not have asked this question. We are now asked to accept others into our fold as subjects of the State but this the Malays refused to do. We must have confidence in ourselves, and must be able to carry our weight. When the time comes we must give our thought to others before we are forced to do so. I am in charge of kampung developments, and my duty is to help the village people; and this is because I am head of Umno. And I say that without Umno there would be no other source of help for the Malays. If you can find somebody to take over from me for one year I will be more than happy. On the other hand, if you want me to continue to head Umno then you must stick to the promise you made to me to stand by me.

He said they had to defend him against the critics who made most vicious attacks on him. But if they did not support him then he did not wish to return to Umno. He also reminded them that they must also show courage and confidence in themselves. They all agreed to do as he asked and so he agreed to return as president. All's well that ends well.

Chapter 5

A Difficult Year for the Federation

Two other events in 1950 took place which brought national calamity and caused concern to the Government and the people.

The communists attacked the police station at Bukit Kepong, a Malay kampung, near Muar, Johore. The police put up a heroic stand and fought to the last man, but all the police personnel were killed, along with many women and children. The tragic event was mourned by the whole nation, and Umno was not slow in taking up the matter. At the meeting on Feb. 24 and 25, 1950, it was agreed that every Umno division and branch should hold prayers for the dead, and money was collected as an expression of sympathy.

This sad event was soon followed by another calamity. On Dec. 11, 1950, violent rioting took place in Singapore as a result of the decision of the court to nullify the marriage of Nadrah (Maria Hertogh) with Mansor Adabi. The Muslims of Singapore felt this as being the decision of the Government, which directly demeaned the Islamic religion and insulted the Islamic people. This brought men in large numbers into the streets of Singapore, first with a demonstration, which built itself into a violent demonstration.

The police were unable to curb the crowd, and soldiers were brought in. There was a clash between the Muslims and the government forces, and Europeans and Christians were attacked. For two days the riot raged, causing injuries and loss of life to many people.

At Geylang, where the Dutch soldiers were camped, those soldiers seen on the streets were attacked with stones, and a few were killed. The communists were seen on lorries distributing *changkul* handles and empty bottles to the rioters. What was surprising was that they were not stopped by the police for supplying the rioters with weapons.

The British Government in Malaya asked Datuk Onn Jaafar and Tun Razak, who were then on their way to Ceylon via Singapore, to use their good offices to persuade the Malays and the Muslim community to desist from acts of violence. The real fear was that it might spread to the rest of the country. (Datuk Onn was the Member of Home Affairs, appointed by the High Commissioner under the Federation of Malaya Agreement.) Datuk Onn did what he could. But the people were in no mood to listen to reason. In fact in one area the rioters forced Datuk Onn and Tun Razak into a quick retreat when they pelted them with stones.

It was impossible to do much, but the joint police and military action finally stopped the riots. Such an outbreak had never been seen in this country before, still less in Singapore. The Umno executive council called a meeting to discuss the situation, and they agreed to raise funds for the defence of those charged with rioting and killing.

Chapter 6

The Search for a New Leader

An UMNO general meeting was held at Istana Iskandariah, Kuala Kangsar, on Aug. 27, 28 and 29, 1950, where thousands of people held processions with banners, posters and slogans to welcome Datuk Onn Jaafar back to the party. He must have felt very proud of the spontaneous welcome he received in Perak, and it showed on his face.

The meeting discussed as its main item the debate on the Rulers' subjects which was not resolved at the last meeting, and which had led to Datuk Onn's resignation as Umno chief. The meeting declared itself in committee to allow for free discussion on the motion before the assembly. This unfortunately led to a bitter argument, and the fear was that Datuk Onn would leave Umno again.

To save the situation, Raja Ayub made a proposal, which was seconded by Hussein Onn, that the meeting should discuss in general "the subjects of the Rulers," and leave its discussion until they were able to make some agreeable amendments. It was agreed to. Datuk Onn was again appointed president, with Hussein Onn as secretary-general. The meeting decided to form a parliamentary group made up of Legislative Council and State Assembly members to discuss all political aspects of interest to Umno and to the people of Malaya, and to demand early election. Datuk Onn was appointed to lead the group.

The split between Datuk Onn and Umno appeared imminent. It came about at the general meeting of Umno which followed in Aug. 25 and 26, 1951, when Datuk Onn indicated that he would not stand as the president as he had formed a new party, the Independent Malaya Party. Umno had to find a new leader. But who among those

who were left behind in Umno could take over from Datuk Onn? They concluded after much discussion that there was only Tunku Abdul Rahman, but he had left as an active member of Umno for the last two years.

I was first approached by Datuk Sheikh Ahmad Mohamed Hashim, Menteri Besar of Perlis, the Malay Graduates' Association of Johore, Datuk (Tun) Abdul Razak and others. I wavered at first, but agreed to accept. I wrote to Tun Razak: "If you do not play politics like the monkey tied to the post" (going up and down). Then he came to see me from Pahang and promised to stand by me.

I had no choice but to resign from the judicial service. I was at the time president of the Sessions Court, Kuala Lumpur, and I had been offered the post of judge by the Chief Justice, Sir Foster-Sutton. The Chief Justice had called my wife and I and advised me to take up the judgeship. It would have been most satisfying to me who had spent so many years in the judicial and legal services to accept the post of a judge. But I told Sir Foster-Sutton that it would not be fair to the Government if I had to give it up after being appointed president of Umno.

Sir Foster-Sutton had been very kind to me. When I was attached to the Legal Adviser's office in Alor Setar, after I had been called to the Bar, Sir Foster-Sutton, who was at the time the Attorney-General, must have heard from the legal adviser, Mr Boyle, of my predicament, and he came personally and offered me a job as Deputy Public Prosecutor in his office.

I was at the time chairman of Umno, Kedah, with Haji Mohamed Rejab as secretary, and Syed Ahmad Shahbuddin (Yang di-Pertua Negeri, Malacca) as his assistant. I had to give up Umno to take up my new job, and I left for Kuala Lumpur with a promise that I would return to Umno in two years' time.

When the offer to succeed Datuk Onn was made to me I was naturally apprehensive; but with the insistence of my friends in Umno and the Johore Malay Graduates' Association, I accepted. Among those members of the Johore Graduates' Association at the time were Dr (Tun) Ismail, Datuk Abdul Rahman, Datuk Sulaiman Abdul Rahman, his brother, and Tun Datuk Dr Haji Awang Hassan (now Yang di-Pertua Negeri, Penang). Sixty-eight representatives of Umno divisions, 11 members of the Umno National Council, and members of the Umno executive council attended another meeting. The first resolution was that Umno must remain as a Malay political



Tun Abdul Razak

party to look after the interests of the Malays and Malaya. Sixty-two agreed, with 11 against. The next resolution was to thank Datuk Onn for the part he had played in the formation of Umno and the success it had achieved, and to wish him all the good luck and happiness with Allah's blessing upon him.

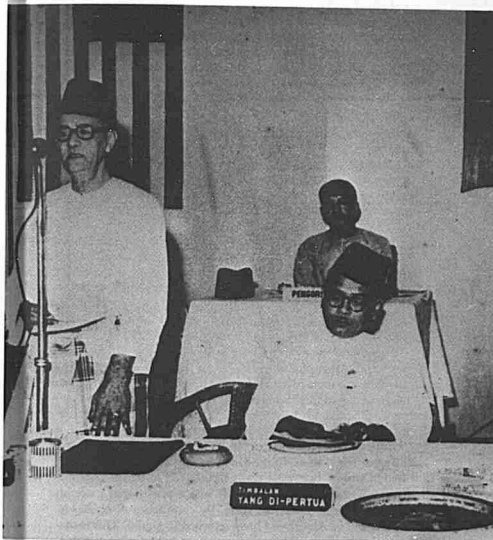
The second day was devoted to the election of the new office-bearers. Three names were proposed for president of Umno, — Tunku Abdul Rahman, Encik (Datuk) C.M. Yusof, and Tuan Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan. Tunku Abdul Rahman was returned with 57 votes, with 11 votes for Datuk Yusof, and seven for Ahmad Fuad. The deputy president was Datuk (Tun) Abdul Razak Hussein and the vice-President was Encik (Datuk) C.M. Yusof.

The members of the Executive Committee were Datuk (Tan Sri) Nik Ahmad Kamil — Kelantan, Datuk Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan — Terengganu, Datin Puteh Mariah Ibrahim Rasid, Encik Nasaruddin Rais — Perak, Encik Bahaman Shamsuddin — Negeri Sembilan and Tuan Syed (Tan Sri) Nasir Ismail — Johore. The chairman was Tuan Haji (Tan Sri) Mohamed Noah Omar.

Then Datuk Onn got up to make his farewell address, and took the floor for one hour and more. Among the things he said were that he was happy to hand over his presidency to Tunku Abdul Rahman and wished him good luck. Umno, he said, was formed in the Istana Raja (Royal Palace), and it was fitting therefore that a member of a royal family should now take over as the head. It was his privilege to lead the party all these years, and it now enjoys the prestige of being the strongest political party in the country. Umno has grown and gained strength from day to day, and today it has many members.

According to Datuk Onn, 1948 saw some changes in Umno in that associate membership was opened to men not fully Malays but Muslims:

Now I regret that when I tried to open Umno membership to others who are loyal to the country Umno rejected it. Many Malays who gave no help now started to interfere with Umno. Despite all the obstructions Umno has made success of itself. Perak, for instance, has more than doubled its membership, so has Kedah and Johore, despite the many obstacles. All other States combined could not equal the membership of any one of these States. In addition the Malay Press has not given Umno the credit it deserves. As the saying goes: the germ across the



Tunku at the UMNO General Assembly on 25 August 1951 at the Hotel Majestic, Kuala Lumpur, after being elected president. Datuk Onn making the closing speech.

river their eyes can see, but the elephant in front of them cannot see. I and the members of the Umno Executive Council have appointed some of our critics and opponent members of the State Assembly and Legislative Council. But do they appreciate what we have done for them? I hope my successor Tunku Abdul Rahman will fare better than I. I thank those members of the council who have given loyal service to me from the early days of Umno, and these include the members and staff of Umno headquarters. . . .

He informed the assembly that his object in forming the new party and opening it to others loyal to Malaya was to get independence for Malaya:

Those who wish to join the new party and opening are welcome to do so. If one refers to the Umno constitution its object is to achieve *Merdeka*, with special privileges for the Malays. IMP will work to this end.

After his farewell speech Datuk Onn left the meeting. It was indeed a sad parting from the party he had formed and nurtured through all those years, and it brought tears to many old comrades. When I took over, my promise was to serve Umno and the Malays and the loyal citizens, and I said:

I shall try to do so to the best of my ability. But first I would like to define the meaning of leadership to which I aspire and believe in. According to Mahatma Gandhi, a leader is a servant and offers himself to serve; his duty must therefore be to make sacrifices. That is the only meaning I know, and that will be my guide and inspiration as a leader. This is the privilege which God has bestowed upon me, and it is his command which I cannot disregard, but accept it with all humility.

I have not taken any part in Umno for the last two years because I had to serve the Government. I was chairman of Kedah Umno, but when I was transferred to Kuala Lumpur Umno Kedah gave me a send-off with a prayer that I would return to Umno after two years. By confidence — or was it by the will of Allah? — I have returned to Umno. This is the month and the year when the two-year period after which I promised to return to Umno was completed.

I realise that a man chosen to take over the leadership of Umno must have all the qualities of a leader — be brave, loyal, faithful and patient. I am a humble servant of God, and have



*Datuk Onn bin Jaafar with Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra
at Parliament House.*

no more than what you all have; and I realise that I have taken over from Datuk Onn, the best-known Malay leader of the century, and known inside and outside Malaya.

Through the efforts and under the leadership of Datuk Onn the Malays have become as one people under one flag. We must continue with this good work for all times.

I ask of God to give me guidance in my new responsibility as the leader of Umno, and I count on the people's support to help me shoulder the task ahead of me. I have only one mind, one head, one heart and two hands to shoulder my heavy responsibility. In order to achieve the objective of Umno and the Malay people I need thousands of heads, thousands of hearts, and thousands of hands. These must become one; and only then can we hope to achieve what we have set our hearts to do. May God grant us our wishes.

Under the Federation of Malaya Agreement, the plan to help the Malays, and in particular the implementation of the Barnes Report, has not been fulfilled. The Malays have as a result been left out in education, and very few find good jobs in the government service because of their lack of proper education and upbringing.

There are many other setbacks faced by the Malays, and these have not been taken into account by the Government and the Rulers. For this reason the Federation Government has not done what it had promised to do for the Malays. The world around us has changed so much. All neighbouring countries have obtained or are claiming independence. Therefore our aspiration toward this goal must be given first priority, and we must not rest until we get independence.

We will fight for it in a constitutional way and, pray God, it must be won without loss of blood and life. We surrendered our independence under treaty rights and obligations in a constitutional manner; and in the same way we hope to regain our independence. There is a demand that independence must be handed over to Malaysians. I now ask: who are the Malaysians they refer to? In the first place the British acquired it from the Malays; and the first thing is to return Malaya to the Malays.

We have not been able to define who the Malaysians are. Let the Malays decide for the good of all as to who are Malaysians. We cannot be too relaxed on this question. Let us not just place

our hope on *Merdeka* without giving thought to the problem involved.

We will not forget the other people for the part they have played for the prosperity of Malaya. The others will know that we are not so selfish or greedy as to disregard them or their interests. We have lived for 200 years with others, and we have lived at peace with them all. There has never been any clash between the races in Malaya. If there has been any misunderstanding it had been due to outside instigation.

One thing I can say is that when we fought against the Malayan Union the others took no part in it because they said this is purely a Malay concern, and not theirs. They also indicated that they owe their loyalty to their countries of origin, and for that reason they oppose the Barnes Report to make Malay the national language.

If we were to hand over the Malays to these so-called Malayans when their nationality has not been defined there will be a lot of problems ahead of us. The Malays welcomed them to our fold. For those who love and feel they owe undivided loyalty to this country, we will welcome them as Malayans. They must be truly Malayans, and they will have the same rights and privileges as the Malays.

It is for the colonial power to hand over this country to us and leave us to attend to all our affairs, to wit security, administration, and all other things connected with independence. Delay would cause political upheaval. The Rulers must join the people in our struggle for self-determination and independence and must not allow themselves to be used by the powers that be.

Chapter 7

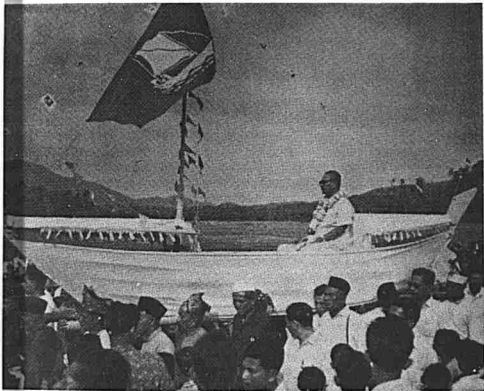
The Birth of the Alliance

The members of the Umno Executive Committee, apart from Datuk (Tun) Abdul Razak Hussein, Datuk (Tan Sri) Nik Ahmad Kamil, Encik Bahaman Shamsuddin, and Tuan Syed (Tan Sri) Nasir Ismail, were all members who had resigned with Datuk Onn Jaafar. At that general meeting they had all voted against me. Yet they were elected to the Umno Executive Committee when the members knew or should have known that they were not with us.

I naturally felt rather apprehensive of the intention behind it. Nevertheless I thought I would give it a trial, and if it didn't work then my only recourse would be to move for their expulsion from Umno. If one cared to look into the irony of it, Encik (Datuk) C.M. Yusof and Datuk Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan had stood against me for the post of president. However, whatever the motive for their election to the Umno Executive Committee, I had no second thoughts about it. I felt it was done to obstruct the progress of Umno under me to enable IMP to get a smooth passage to achieve success as a new political party.

At the first meeting of the executive committee at the Hotel Majestic Syed Nasir came to my room and told me that he had seen people laying wires, obviously to tap our meeting. So he asked me would it not be wiser to change the meeting place. I said: "No, let's have it there. I will give the British intelligence officers the satisfaction of hearing what I have to say about them." So we met in that room.

The first thing I said to the members of the committee was:
This room has been tapped, so I want you to speak what you have in your minds. We are a political party chosen by the



Tunku carried by supporters — in a sailing boat (the Alliance Party symbol).

people, and we have our legitimate aims. We should fear nobody. So say what you have to say, and shame the devil.

The first meeting did not run very smoothly because, as I had feared, those members who were not with us were obstructing us. I was determined that steps be taken to expel them. Otherwise Umno would not make much progress; and we were in no mood to sit back and wait as time was running out.

Earlier, a sad and tragic event occurred on Oct. 17, 1951. High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney was ambushed on his way to Fraser's Hill to spend a short holiday up the hill. As his car came round a bend preceded by a single open truck with some armed policemen a fusillade of shots rang out. All the policemen were wounded, as was Gurney's driver. Sir Henry got out, closed the door, and walked towards the cover of the high bank by the side of the road to see his wife but was shot dead.

The news of the High Commissioner's death plunged Malaya into gloom and despondency. The news reached London as the general election campaign was in full swing. The Labour Party lost to the Conservatives, and Mr James Griffiths, the Colonial Secretary, gave way to the new Conservative Minister for the colonies, Mr Oliver Lyttleton.

After the death of Sir Henry Gurney, Mr Del Tufo, the chief secretary, took over as officer administering the Government until a new High Commissioner was appointed. It was then announced that Mr Oliver Lyttleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, would visit Malaya in November 1951 to see for himself the situation created by the communist insurrection, and also obviously to be briefed on the political situation following my taking over of Umno from Datuk Onn.

I asked to see him, and was given permission, so I took with me in my delegation Datuk (Tun) Abdul Razak, my deputy, Encik (Datuk) C.M. Yusof, the vice-president, and Encik (Tun) Sardon Haji Jubir to meet him. We met on Dec. 2, 1951, but nothing very much came out of it because Mr Lyttleton was most guarded and evasive in his answer to my questions, i.e. whether the British would give self-determination to Malaya. Wasn't the British intention to give self-determination? Who among the people of this country would receive independence?

I told him pointedly that under the Malayan Federation Government the Malays were not getting any benefit. We were as poor as

when we were under direct British rule. Very few Malays were given MCS (Malayan Civil Service) appointments, and no Malays were appointed to senior posts in the police force. The highest they got to would be Assistant Superintendent of Police. Also, there seemed to be more expatriate officers in the Government and I understood that more expatriate officers were expected from Burma and Ceylon, and some from India.

Our objective had been to free Malaya from foreign rule. But how far had we got? And I felt that nothing would be served by talking terms because the British had set their mind on the perpetuation of colonial rule in Malaya.

The first move to form the alliance of the two, Chinese and Malay, political parties, came about as a result of the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Election, the first democratic election to be held. I was approached by Ong Yoke Lin (Tun Omar Yoke Lin) and Datuk Yahya Abdul Razak for my blessing to this alliance to fight the election in Kuala Lumpur. To this I readily agreed. In that election the Alliance won nine out of 12 seats contested. As a result of that victory I directed other States to form the Alliance to fight for town councils. In Johore, Kedah and Negeri Sembilan, and in all other elections, the new Alliance of Umno/MCA won landslide victories.

Three round-table talks were held with the MCA. The first one was held on Feb. 3, 1952 in Kuala Lumpur. Before the first talks were held, the MCA had agreed to regard the Malays as the indigenous people of Malaya, and therefore had first claim to the country. The talks then proceeded smoothly. The second round-table talk was held in Singapore on Feb. 21, 1953 and the third in Johore Baru on March 15 the same year. The Umno/MCA Alliance continued to achieve one success after another at all the elections and it had become clear to all that this Alliance had become the power to reckon with.

On Feb. 8, 1952, the new High Commissioner for Malaya, Gen. Sir Gerald Templer, was sworn in as the High Commissioner with unlimited power over civil and military administration. Under him the war against the communists was waged with greater vigour. He asked for all-out support of the people of Malaya to ensure the victory against the communist terrorists.

One of the things he did was to meet a cross-section of the people. He met the Rulers just to get their direct opinion on the situation in Malaya, and impressed upon them the need to give all the

possible help they could. He set about working tirelessly, visiting various spots, and meeting various people. He was also aware of the Umno's strength, and the meeting of minds between the Malays and the Chinese. I had already been appointed a member of the Legislative Council, and had met him several times. My impression of him was that he was upright and frank, and that he meant business.

I went around the country addressing rallies, and my criticism on colonialism was rather strong. Umno was keen, and we carried the MCA with us for self-determination; but we didn't appear to get any nearer to it. Templer called me one day and told me that I had been attacking the British very severely in my speeches. I told him of my duty as leader of the Alliance to get independence for Malaya; and if I were to praise the British my people would ask: What is the need for Independence? So I had to continue in this strain. If he didn't like it, the only way to stop me was to shut me up in detention. He turned round to me and said: "Why should I make a martyr of you?"

Soon afterwards the Government ordered that no uniform should be worn by Umno Youth. That was after I myself had dressed in the Youth uniform to inspect the Youth parade in Malacca. Somebody must have told him that we were getting too ruthless and aggressive. I told the Umno Youth to discard their uniform to put on Malay dress.

At a general meeting in Kuala Lumpur on March 29 and 30, 1952 Umno passed a resolution for the setting up of an interim government in order to give us the feel of government, and also to ask for a Malay to be appointed as the Deputy High Commissioner. This was turned down by the Government. Things began to move, and move fast; and a demand for elections at State and Federal levels was made. Then there was a rumour that the Umno Youth movement would be banned. This was rather disturbing, but we could easily get over it by assimilating them into Umno.

Coming back to the Umno/MCA round-table talks, the members present at these talks were: Tunku Abdul Rahman; Dr (Tun) Ismail Abdul Rahman, Umno vice-president; Encik (Tun) Sardon, Umno Youth Leader, Encik Bahaman Shamsuddin and (Tan Sri) Syed Nasir Ismail. For the MCA were: (Tun) Sir Cheng Lock Tan, head; Col. (Tun) H.S. Lee, vice-president; Mr Leong Yew Koh, secretary; (Tan Sri) S.M. Yong; (Tun Omar) Ong Yoke Lin and (Tan Sri) T.H. Tan,

secretary.

The Umno/MCA Alliance demanded federal elections in 1954. This worried the other political parties for they realised how strong the Alliance had become, and that in any election they stood no chance of winning even one seat.

The Menteris Besar, headed by Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang (Menteri Besar, Perak) decided to hold a congress of all political parties in Kuala Lumpur, and asked all parties to join together and form one political party.

In a letter of invitation to the Umno dated April 27, 1953, asking us to join the congress that would be held in three months' time it was stated that the object was to achieve independence through one united national party. The letter was signed by Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang on behalf of the Menteris Besar of Perak, Kelantan, Kedah, Negeri Sembilan, Johore, Terengganu and Selangor, and Datuk E.E. Thuraisingham, Datuk Hamzah, Yong Shook Lin, G. Shelly, Heah Joo Seang and P.T. Narayanan.

The Umno/MCA replied that they had no faith in the new party. They would prefer to go it alone for *Merdeka*. The letter was signed by both the president of Umno, Tunku Abdul Rahman and the president of MCA, Tan Cheng Lock. Two Menteris Besar refused to accept the invitation to join this congress. They were the Menteri Besar of Perlis, Raja Ahmad Raja Endot, and the Menteri Besar of Pahang, Tunku Mohammad, because, as they said, they were members of Umno and would stand by Umno.

Datuk Onn's party, IMP, however accepted the invitation to join them, and he attacked me for being in a hurry to have the general election and to ask for independence because there were so many problems ahead of us which we were not aware. Strange it was that Datuk Onn suddenly decided to go slow on election and independence when according to him the IMP Party was formed to fight for immediate independence.

The congress became a flop because of the absence of Umno, MCA and the Labour Party. All the parties that got together to form this new party had no support, and all those leaders who sponsored this congress were looked upon by the people as opportunists.

Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang was in fact the first secretary-general of Umno. When Umno was officially formed on May 11, 1946 he refused to accept appointment. When Datuk Onn left Umno he was the deputy president, but he showed no interest in Umno,



Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang speaking at a rally in Malacca to welcome the Merdeka mission from London in 1956.

and resigned later to fight Umno under me. The Malays in general, even in Perak, lost faith in him. Then he took over the chairmanship of Umno Perak from Datuk Nasaruddin Rais. Nobody knew how he did it.

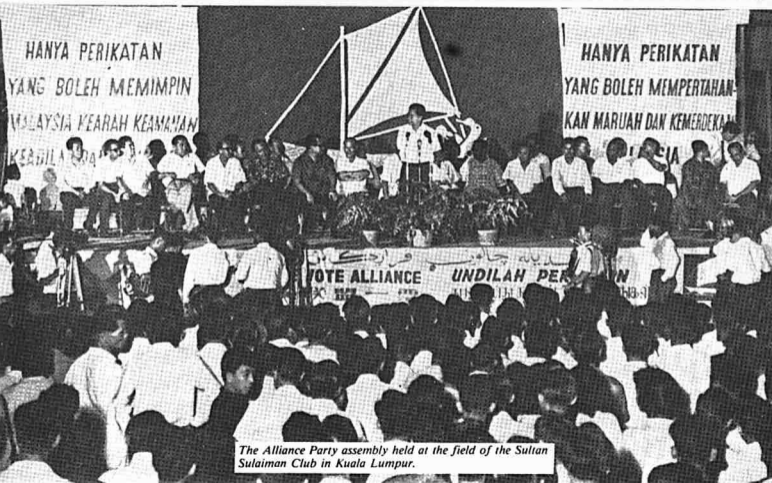
I went to Perak to inspect the Umno divisions and branches. They all could not explain how Datuk Bukit Gantang became all of a sudden State chairman of Umno Perak. None of them seemed to like it because he refused to toe the Umno party line. On some of the roads posters displayed these words: *Orang Melayu tidak mahu Bukit Gantang.*

At a big rally in front of the Polo Club, Kuala Kangsar, many thousands of people assembled to receive me and to listen to me. And Bukit Gantang, being chairman of Umno, Perak, was present and presided at the rally. It was awkward for me to say what I wanted to say. But I had to say something; and what was recorded in *Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsar Melayu* was: *Umno dahulu bergantung kepada pembesar2 tapi sekarang tidak.* (Before Umno leaned for support on big people but not now.) We decided to fight for independence on our own strength.

Many of the big people had left Umno. If they now returned to Umno with their slogan of *Hidup Melayu* instead of *Merdeka* there would be no hope for *Merdeka*; in fact we would be further away from our goal of independence because they did not want independence.

At a general meeting of Umno in Malacca on April 4 and 5, 1953, Datuk Bukit Gantang defied those in Umno who asked him to toe the party line. He stood up with those who supported him and left the meeting. But Ghazali stood by Umno; and his North Perak division, Bagan Serai and Krian, declared their support for Umno.

On return of Ghazali Jawi to Perak, Umno members welcomed him and appointed him chairman of Umno Perak, in place of Bukit Gantang. All branches and divisions pledged their loyalty to the new leader; and Umno Malaya expelled Datuk Bukit Gantang from Umno.



The Alliance Party assembly held at the field of the Sultan Sulaiman Club in Kuala Lumpur.

Chapter 8

The Long Campaign for a National Election

Sir Donald MacGillivray mentioned in the Federal Legislative Council on May 6, 1953, that the High Commissioner and their royal highnesses agreed on holding the national election as promised, but on terms to be agreed to by the Government. He proposed to set up a committee to study the proposal for election to the council, and requested any party that had any proposals to make in regard to this election to send them to this committee.

The High Commissioner and the rulers appointed 46 members to this committee. I moved that the committee must submit their report not later than Dec. 31, 1954. But Encik C.M. Yusof moved an amendment, which was carried in the council by the government benches "that no date should be fixed, but that the committee should complete their work as soon as is conveniently possible."

Umno called for a general meeting in Alor Setar in September 1953, and unanimously voted for the federal election to be held not later than the end of 1954. If the proposal was not acceptable then all Umno and MCA members in the town and state councils would give up their seats and boycott the election.

In October 1953, I received an invitation from Sir Donald MacGillivray to meet the High Commissioner, Gen. Sir Gerald Templer. I was offered an appointment as one of the Ministers, but I declined on the grounds that it would compromise my position as party leader. However, I said I would be willing to nominate some other leaders of the Alliance to join the Cabinet. I nominated (Tun) Dr Ismail and (Tun) Col. H.S. Lee to be appointed in Sir Gerald Templer's Cabinet. On Nov. 1, 1953, (Tun) Dr Ismail was appointed Minister of Lands and Mines, and Col. H.S. Lee Minister of



Tun Dr. Ismail

Communications, while I agreed to join the Cabinet as an official member and *gratis* (with no pay).

At first Umno members were opposed to these appointments. According to them, we were struggling for independence, and therefore we should not join the Government. I told them that our struggle for independence, as we had agreed, should be achieved constitutionally, and not by show of strength.

On Feb. 1, 1954, the committee appointed to study the election submitted their recommendations which consisted of a majority report and a minority report. The report of the committee accepted by the Government was for 48 members made up of speaker, ex-officio members, state representatives, vested interests, minorities, officials and eight to be further nominated by the Government, and only 44 to be elected. Naturally Umno found the report unworkable and rejected it outright; and the headquarters directed all Umno state divisions to hold demonstration in Johore Baru which I led myself. The rest of the country followed suit.

I called for a national convention in Kuala Lumpur on Feb. 14, 1954, where the Pan-Malaysian Labour Party and the Selangor Rent-payers Association joined in. The convention appealed to the High Commissioner and their highnesses to reconsider their stand on the election.

Under the Alliance proposal:

(1) The elected members must not be less than 75 per cent of the total to be elected;

(2) The Government servants should be allowed to take part in politics;

(3) All those born in the Federation of Malaya of a certain age who have lived in the country without a break for five years should be allowed to vote; and those born in Malaya but working in Singapore should be qualified to vote if they had lived in Malaya for not less than seven years before the election;

(4) The election should be held not later than November 1954;

(5) The election must be based on majority vote;

(6) Those members returned would be eligible to be appointed Ministers in the federation Cabinet.

The High Commissioner and the Rulers rejected the Alliance appeal, and instead agreed to go ahead with election on Government terms. In fact the Rulers had a conference among themselves and

secretly sent their own recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I took a strong stand against the Rulers' uncompromising attitude. The Alliance decided to send me and a representative of the MCA (T.H. Tan) to meet the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. He, however, refused to meet us.

Before we left for London we had an extraordinary conference of the Umno/MCA in Malacca on April 18, 1954. At that meeting those present gave their unstinted and unqualified support to the London mission, and gave a wonderful send-off to us. Malay ladies showered us with money and jewellery. I would like to mention in particular Tunku Puan Kursiah (the first Permaisuri Agong) who took off her bracelets and threw them from the balcony of the building.

The arrival in London created much interest. The support we received from MPs finally forced Mr Oliver Lyttleton to meet us, but he was non-committal. However, he gave me a letter to be delivered to the High Commissioner when I returned to Malaya. I had a feeling that he was asked by the Rulers not to come to terms with us. According to information, however, Gen. Templer had advised the Secretary of State to meet us. Before we returned to Malaya, Mr Lyttleton assured us that he had given in to us on many points of difference; and I told him that may be so, but the important questions were not settled. Until we were granted our request we could not accept any form of settlement.

The MPs in England were behind us, whether they were Conservative, Labour or Liberal, because according to them "It would be advantageous for Britain to have a friendly, independent Malaya; and it should not be shown that Britain is making concessions too little and too late."

Immediately on our return I asked the Government to appoint an independent commission consisting entirely of members from outside of Malaya to be sent immediately to the federation to study and suggest constitutional reform in the federation.

Fully realising its responsibilities towards the people and the country, the Alliance would continue to give its fullest cooperation to the Government in all respects. "On the other hand, if the authorities insist on the implementation of the White Paper based on the majority report the Alliance, with great regret. . . would withdraw all its members from the participation in the Government.

A delegation with me, (Tun) Dr Ismail, (Tun) Col. H.S. Lee and Mr Leong Yew Koh called on the High Commissioner on May 25 to hand over the resolution. The good Gen. Templer read the resolution and uttered his famous words: "Well, the pistol is out."

We returned to the headquarters of the Alliance in the Chinese Assembly Hall, Kuala Lumpur, and sent a reply to Mr Oliver Lyttleton. It was a long letter, excerpts of which I set out below: We could not accept the terms for a compromise as "no responsible party will willingly form a government in these circumstances." I told him that "the Alliance held a meeting at Kuala Lumpur last night and adopted its own resolution which we have handed to the High Commissioner who will no doubt communicate with you and their highnesses the Rulers, as the parties concerned."

Mr Lyttleton sent us a reply by telegram which arrived on June 10, 1954. In short he refused to accept our terms, and rejected our demand for the appointment of an independent commission. He asked us to go ahead and give the national election a trial:

"While I fully realise the feeling of the Alliance... the Government proposal meets nearly all your wishes, and I frankly consider it incumbent upon you to co-operate in making a success of them, thus demonstrating that readiness for reasonable compromise which is so essential in these matters. Moreover, it must be recognised that other important sections of opinion in the federation differ from you, and that the degree of support given by public opinion to one view rather than another cannot clearly be determined until the first federal elections have been held."

This was the last straw; and we decided to go ahead with our decision to boycott the election. According to John Cloake in the book on Templer, "Gerald in his report to the Secretary of State was, however, worried that Umno was getting more left-wing and anti-British, and that the MCA were being dragged along unwillingly by them. "He felt that one day, of course, the Alliance would disintegrate... Party Negara would like to see this disintegration as they hoped they would be able to muscle in. "On balance I believe it will probably pay us at the moment if the Alliance continues as such. We are, of course, governing the country today with a sort of caretaker executive council and legislative council. There may be trouble over resignations (of two Alliance members) when the Alliance realise they are not going to get all they ask for. This will

be a great pity, and won't do anybody any good at all. I have tried very hard, and successfully up to now, to keep the executive council together, and so far it has worked jolly well on the whole." He feared that Abdul Rahman would be the first to go, and that Lee and Ismail would then have to follow him.

I learned that Sir Gerald Templer would be leaving Malaya on May 31 and Sir Donald MacGillivray would be taking over from him. Farewell parties were given in his honour, and we attended them all to show that we had no hard feelings against him. After all he had been very frank, very outspoken, and very sincere in what he believed in though they didn't meet our wishes.

He wrote me a farewell letter in which he said,

To wish you good fortune and to tell you how much I appreciated your counsel in the executive council. You and I have not always agreed, but there is no harm in that. You politicians have tremendous responsibilities on your shoulders in the next few years. The happiness and peace of mind of millions of people will depend upon it for a long time. I think you should know how fond I am of the people of this country, and I only hope and pray that the policies eventually decided upon will turn out to be for the ultimate good of the people.

According to the author of the book on Templer, "by that letter perhaps Gerald — while still distrusting the Tunku's policies — accepted him really for the first time as the future leader of the country." The new High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray, invited me and members of the Alliance committee to a meeting at King's House on June 11 at 5.30 pm. He asked if we would allow our two representatives, Dr Ismail and H.S. Lee to continue in office until Parliament had gone through the second reading of the Bill of election. Both H.S. Lee and Dr Ismail declared that they would not continue as there was no point in proceeding with the Bill until the Alliance had agreed to it.

"Sorry," said the High Commissioner, "I have already made up my mind on that." I told him that I would give him the reply formally when I have had the chance to meet my other colleagues. H.S. Lee chipped in and said, "I will go further than that. The Alliance has passed a resolution indicating what it will do if its final bid at compromise should fail." "That's the end," remarked Sir Donald as he left us in a huff. We formally met that same evening and decided to give orders to all the Alliance members to withdraw from



Sardon Jubir at a campaign in 1955.

participation with the Government of the Federation of Malaya at all levels.

At the same time I received a message from London that some MPs in England had decided not to support us because we had defied the Government of the Federation; and their agreement to support us was based on the assumption that we would continue to fight constitutionally, but it turned out that we had taken a stand on non-co-operation. "Come what may," I said, "We will go it alone. If we fail that would be the end of our hope of independence."

If the Government of the Federation decided to go on their own they must expect non-co-operation from the people of Malaya other than those gutless and spineless elements who have no grassroots support, and it would have a serious repercussion on the Government's struggle against communist insurrection.

The communists must have been delighted, whether they were inside the jungle or out of it, as also all the left-wingers, at the thought of the trouble ahead. But we were not. We had no choice but to carry on the fight to the bitter end.

Chapter 9

Victory at Last!

The constitutional battle to back up our demand for election began very soon after the Alliance decided to "go it alone." Alliance members went round the country whipping up support from among the people; and we were encouraged to see the response, which was spontaneous and most enthusiastic.

Very soon the Government changed their attitude. They must have felt the gathering momentum, and felt that unless something was done the situation could get very serious and out of hand. We held demonstrations, and presented appeals to the Rulers to join us. Banners splashed across the length and breadth of the country making demands for self-determination and ultimate independence. Other parties who were not members of the Alliance also took part in our demonstrations, with the Umno members wearing red armbands.

On July 1, 1954, I received a call from Secretary-General (Tan Sri) T.H. Tan to say that the High Commissioner would like to see me if possible the next day, as he had an important matter to discuss with me. Unfortunately, I said I was not available as I had a rally in Mersing in the evening of July 2 but I undertook to meet him on my return from Mersing. However, a representative from the High Commissioner came to Johore Baru to see me on July 1, and I had Dr Ismail with me to meet him.

According to the representative the High Commissioner offered the nomination of five members to be approved by the leader of the winning party before appointment was made by the High Commissioner. If that offer was acceptable to me, then the High Commissioner would come to meet me that same evening. Accordingly that would give us the majority we wanted, so I naturally accepted.

I was told that the High Commissioner would come to Singapore on the frigate *The Alert* and invited me to meet him on the ship that same evening at about 11pm at the Singapore naval base. I immediately asked Dr (Tun) Ismail and Col. (Tun) H.S. Lee to accompany me at this meeting on the naval frigate, and the other Umno Exco members in Johore Baru to wait for me at my house and hear what I had to tell them after the meeting with the High Commissioner.

Then the three of us left for the Singapore naval base, and to the jetty where *The Alert* was anchored. We were given a naval welcome when we mounted the steps of the frigate. The High Commissioner and Mr Michael Hogan, the Attorney-General, were waiting for us in the ship's lounge.

After a few short preliminaries we went straight to the point. The High Commissioner told us that the party winning the election would be consulted on the five members to be nominated, whilst the two expatriate members would be nominated by the High Commissioner with our approval. This, however, would give us the barest marginal majority, provided, of course, we won at least 99 per cent of the seats. (By coincidence — or was it an act of providence? — we just got that marginal number.) When agreement had been reached we bade farewell to the High Commissioner who said that he was going straightaway to the east coast State, and that he would be back in Kuala Lumpur the next day, July 3.

We returned to my house in Johore Baru where the Exco members were waiting for us for nearly two hours. They were rather nervous and worried as they did not know what was happening to us, and there was no news about us. Had we been dumped overboard? When they were told that we had reached an agreement, and on terms we had asked for, they were all very, very relieved and very pleased. I told them they had better pack off as I was ready to go to bed after the day's excitement.

On July 3, I called an extraordinary general meeting of the Umno Exco to tell them of the new development. They all approved of the step I had taken, and the acceptable terms of agreement. A letter was sent to me from the High Commissioner confirming that the nomination of the members to be appointed would take place only after the election was over as only then would it be possible to know which party had won the election. It was agreed that these nominated members would join the winning party. I replied to say that I agreed

with the terms for the appointment, but first I must know who are the members to be nominated.

Another letter came asking for all the Alliance members who had left the various councils and the legislative council to return to their seats. On July 15, the Rulers held their conference to discuss the appointment of the independent commission from outside that we had asked for, and their Highnesses disagreed. They would only discuss the constitution after the election.

On Oct. 16 and 17, 1954, Umno called for a general meeting in Penang. The Penang meeting was held in Umno House, and I briefed the members on the latest development connected with the national election. So much had been accomplished, and the final result must be to win every seat in the forthcoming national election. Their duty was to work really hard if they valued independence.

The women and youth would be given a rightful share in the running of the party, and it was for them now to go all out to make sure of our victory. The Alliance of Umno/MCA must henceforth forget the communal role, but pool their resources to fight the election.

I called for a meeting of the Alliance and formed the pro-tem council for Umno/MCA — 15 from each party. This council was known as the council of the round table. I was elected the first chairman for the term of three months, after which the leader of the MCA, Datuk Tan Cheng Lock, would take over.

This council passed a resolution to uphold democracy, to work towards self-government and independence of Malaya, to uphold the Rulers' rights and prerogatives, to guarantee the freedom of association, etc., to work for unity of all the people of Malaya, and to provide for the social, economic and political upliftment of the people. In fact this committee was given the task of preparing the election manifesto. At the end of three months when it was the turn for Datuk Tan Cheng Lock to take over the leadership of the protem council, he refused, but instead asked me to take over as the permanent chairman of this Alliance council.

By the end of 1954, after the Umno/MCA had won sweeping victories in Johore, and in municipalities and town councils in the rest of Malaya, the Malayan Indian Congress joined the Alliance. For the first time the Chinese, Indians and Malays came together with a common aim; and swore to stand together and fight for independence of Malaya. In the Penang State elections which follow-

ed where the MIC participated for the first time, the Alliance won a resounding victory.

In all these elections to the State and town councils the Alliance met with unqualified success with landslide victories. We felt in the circumstances the chance of major victory in the federal election was bright.

The IMP failed so badly that Datuk Onn decided to change from Independence of Malaya Party to Party Negara, which was quite different from his original plan to form a non-communal party. It was a humiliating defeat for the man who had once enjoyed the distinction of being the first Malay leader brave enough to introduce non-communal politics in the country. He was opposed by the party which he had formed, Umno. The reason was not hard to gauge. In success he had forgotten the men who had given him loyal service in an all-out support for the fight against the Malayan Union Plan. At the height of success he chose to listen only to those around him who, I had said before, enjoyed no support from the people.

He had to pay the penalty for his mistake. He was the man who first stood up against 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.

His next battle was against Umno whose policy was now in line with what he advocated before. His Party Negara had gone for communal politics which I felt was a bad move. In fact, when he first left Umno and formed a non-communal party I offered to join as equal partners, but he turned us down, so I decided to fight him. I moved that federal elections should be held as soon as possible. The election commission, with Mr S.T. Smith as the supervisor of elections announced that election to the Federal Legislative Council would be held on Wednesday, July 27, 1955 and nomination day was fixed for Wednesday, June 15, 1955.

The Alliance immediately set itself the task of deciding on the distribution of seats among their members. At the time, Umno and the Malays were holding many more seats than the others; and if we worked on the proportion based on communal claim the other partners would have very few places. So I called upon the Malays to make sacrifices, which they willingly did. For the total 52 seats 35 were for Umno candidates, 15 MCA and 2 for MIC. This was accepted on all sides.

When preparations for the election reached almost the point of perfection the Alliance was confronted by a new demand from the Federation of Chinese School Teachers who asked that the Chinese language should be made one of the official languages of Malaya. Coming as it were at the last moment it was embarrassing to the Alliance, and likely to cause friction which would affect our chances at the election. This was obviously the work of the anti-Alliance movement, and we faced it squarely.

I met the representatives of the Federation at the house of Datuk Tan Cheng Lock, leader of the MCA and told them point blank that they had accepted the Alliance manifesto which made Malay and English the official languages; and in that manifesto we had agreed to back the Chinese schools and the Indian schools. They had no good reason to bring up a new issue when we were about to go all out for election. If we failed in our quest for self-determination I would hold them responsible. After two hours of argument they gave in and felt somewhat guilty.

The nomination day saw a number of candidates, totalling 129 in all, with the Alliance fielding candidates for 52 seats. Datuk Onn's Party Negara entered 30 candidates, PMIP 11 candidates, Perak National Party, three candidates, Party Progressive, Perak two candidates, and 18 Independents.

It was a time to remember. Indeed every party expected to win a few seats at least, but for the Alliance we must win every seat or at least 99 per cent or else we would die!

For the whole of the month after the naming of the candidates to the day of the election, the whole country was splashed with banners and slogans; and election rallies were held every night, from one end of the country to the other, with loudspeakers blaring in support of the contesting parties and their candidates. Party Negara had all the Government machinery behind them, and money as well. I was travelling from one end of the country to the other making speeches urging and coaxing the voters to support us, for 13 hours a day, and hardly ever returned home to see the family.

The result was declared on July 27 at midnight. It gave the Alliance a victory of 51 out of 52 contested.

I travelled all the way from my Baling/Sungai Petani constituency with T.H. Tan that night. I have described the events many times. There is no point in travelling the same ground again. But that night was a most glorious and memorable evening. I stayed with T.H. Tan

at his hotel. And indeed we had worked so hard and so thoroughly that the victory came as a real gift and a blessing to us.

The first thing I did was to pray to Allah and give him our thanks, and our thanks to our men and women who had worked with redoubtable spirit and will to do or die. They sweated day and night under the blazing sun and the torrential rain — they just worked — caring little for their personal comfort. It was this victory which eventually led to the independence of Malaya. God be praised.

Chapter 10

The Leaky Roof that brought Merdeka nearer

After the Alliance victory in the election I returned to my headquarters in Johore. On July 31, I came back to Kuala Lumpur on the invitation of High Commissioner Sir Donald MacGillivray to discuss the membership of the Cabinet, made up of the members of the winning party and government officials.

We were offered 10 chairs for the Alliance in the new Cabinet of self-governing Malaya. I asked for time to consult my colleagues in the Alliance. After the consultation I met the High Commissioner again and informed him of the members most suitable for appointment as members of the Executive Council.

The ministers were:

- MYSELF as the Chief Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs (Assistant: Encik Bahaman Shamsuddin);
- EDUCATION Minister — Datuk (Tun) Abdul Razak Husain (Assistant: Mr Tan Joon Hing);
- LAND and Mines Minister — (Tun) Dr Ismail Datuk Abdul Rahman;
- TRANSPORT Minister — (Tun) Col. H.S. Lee;
- AGRICULTURE and Fisheries Minister — Encik Abdul Aziz Ishak (Assistant: Encik Mohd. Khir Johari);
- HEALTH Minister — (Tun) Leong Yew Koh (Assistant: Encik Abdul Rahman Talib);
- LABOUR Minister — (Tun) V.T. Sambanthan (Assistant: Encik Khalid Awang Othman);
- WORKS Minister: (Tun) Sardon Jubir;
- HOUSING and Development Minister — (Datuk) Sulaiman Datuk Abdul Rahman; and

• POSTS and Telecommunications Minister — (Tun) Omar Ong Yoke Lin.

The rest of the Cabinet was made up of the High Commissioner, the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General.

But my grouse against the Federation Government was that they did not give us any house to live in or any official cars to use. When we took up our appointment we had nowhere to live, except those who were residents of Kuala Lumpur. Of course, we had our own private cars. On the other hand many high government officials such as the Menteri Besar, the judges, the Attorney-General and other important heads of department were given official cars with chauffeurs. But for the new Federal Ministers we had no homes, no cars, no welcome, and were treated like unwanted outcasts and intruders.

I was given a house at No. 1 Hose Road which had been the former residence of the Selangor Menteri Besar, (Tun) Raja Uda. But first, I was offered a clerk's quarter with two bedrooms in Federal Hill which I refused to accept. To me the house in Hose Road appeared old but habitable, with a spacious compound; in fact the only redeeming feature of the residence was the compound. The furniture was the old type fitted to government quarters. The living room was upstairs and the dining room downstairs.

When I moved in, the house appeared comfortable enough, but after I had been there for a few days we had a nasty experience. The roof leaked when it rained heavily, wetting us in bed, so my wife and I had to get up and move the bed to another corner. Unfortunately, however, the bedding got wet, and we had to remove it and sleep on the wooden plank floor. Naturally, I couldn't sleep all night, and I swore that the British must go quickly. Naturally, I complained to the Housing Officer who said he had no other quarters to offer me, so I had to make myself as comfortable as possible in that old house.

I should have moved to a hotel and stayed at the Government's expense, but I wasn't sure whether the Government would foot the bill, so I stayed on at No. 1 Hose Road until I obtained the residence of the British Adviser of Selangor, Mr F.V. Duckworth a few months later. He was kind enough to offer me the residence because he felt that being a bachelor and a sick man the place was too big for him. So according to him I might as well move in as he could get for himself Selangor government quarters anywhere any time. I then asked the Government for a loan to buy a car, an Austin A70, which

they gave, repayable by monthly instalments.

My office was in the Clock Tower building, occupying a portion of the far wing of the Clarke Street side. The staff consisted of one expatriate officer, Mr Lloyd Philips, as secretary, one assistant secretary, Encik Hussain, one stenographer and three clerks.

With the shabby treatment we received we had no option but to go all out for independence. We were lucky that about the end of August, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Right Honourable (Lord) Mr Lennox Boyd, came to visit Malaya. At my meeting with him I put forward five proposals:

- TO offer 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.

All these were fair requests in view of the status the country had gained as a result of the general election. The Secretary of State could not give an immediate reply, but agreed that Malaya deserved to be given self-determination which would lead to independence.

In my speech of welcome to the Right Honourable Alan Lennox Boyd, Secretary of State in the Legco I said (I quote excerpts):

It is our earnest hope and desire that in the course of the next year or two you will be here to witness the establishment of a full democratic self-government in this country... Your visit to Malaya has been made at a most appropriate time. Never before has the presence of a distinguished visitor been so much desired and welcomed, because this country is undergoing a change, a terrific change, which has been the result of the new urge that has found expression in the people... the urge for freedom... We are truly the party of the people. We are fully conscious of our obligations and responsibilities. We are determined to discharge our tasks in a realistic and practical manner... We shall need all the... co-operation that Her Majesty's Government and Their Highnesses the Rulers are able to give. We are entrusted with the task of building a new nation... we feel that four years to wait for independence is too long a period. In fact we had agreed to the period of four years, but after the incident of the leaking roof, I decided to cut it by half the time. I did not like to men-

tion all that in the House, but the incident was deeply embedded in my heart and mind. The only real and lasting answer... I repeat now, to our problems is to help the growth of genuine nationalism... Happily in the course of the last few years this nationalism has broadened, and it has won to its fold... the Malays... Chinese, Indians and others who look upon this country as their home and object of their undivided loyalty. Today one hears 'Merdeka' shouted by men, women and children of all races in every nook and corner of Malaya. Let their call be answered. It was this nationalism that has carried the Alliance to unparalleled victory... Her Majesty's Government and Their Highnesses the Rulers have given the assurance before that 'progress should be made towards eventual self-government in Malaya.' (In the light of this assurance we request that a special independent commission be appointed to review the Federal Constitution)

Mr Lennox Boyd, the Secretary of State, in his reply, said among other things:

I repeat to you again that Her Majesty's Government is sincere in its intention to guide and help the people of Malaya along the path to full self-government within the Commonwealth — we all hope and believe — not only in this field of constitutional development, but what changes there have been in many other parts of the world... I feel sure that he (the Chief Minister) would not expect, nor would his colleagues, that I should at this stage say, standing here in this country, much about the talks that he and his colleagues and I are now having about constitutional matters any more than I could at this stage refer to the very interesting and helpful long talk that I had with their Highnesses the Rulers... I have, and so have the British Government and the people of Malaya, confidence in the future of this great country; and I would repeat that from my talks with Ministers I have confidence also in the way in which they are approaching these vital problems.

Chapter 11

The New UMNO Headquarters and Merdeka Stadium

The next important function for Umno was the official opening of its headquarters at Batu Road — now Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. The land was State land leased to the Umno at a very modest price, so it was proper that the Sultan of Selangor be invited to open the new party headquarters.

It was a fine four-storey building built at a cost of \$135,000. That was a lot of money to spend for a new headquarters, but we felt that Umno was important enough to be given a good home, to be seen and acclaimed as the premier political party in this country. We had to borrow some of the money; but within a short time we were able to repay all our debts, and there was no dearth of good people who came forward to offer help.

His Royal Highness Sultan Hishamuddin of Selangor paid us a great tribute, and believed in all sincerity "that Umno under Tunku Abdul Rahman would go a long way," and he prayed to Allah that the people would be served, and the country would enjoy peace and prosperity for all times. At that time the Umno Headquarters was the tallest building in Kuala Lumpur until Lee Yen Lian outshone it with a more than 20-storey high building.

At the opening ceremony every successful candidate was presented to the people, who numbered 35,000 to 40,000 and who blocked all the roads and avenues to the centre of the town. As each man was presented a shout went up "Merdeka!"

When Datuk Sulaiman Abdul Rahman, the man who fought and beat Datuk Onn with the largest number of votes recorded for the whole election was introduced, the shout rent the air with deafening noise and Datuk Sulaiman, who rarely smiled, grinned broadly at



The UMNO headquarters at Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

the compliment paid to him. It was a well deserved compliment. I recall here that Datuk Onn actually challenged me to fight him in Johore, but it was Sulaiman who took up the challenge and told me to go back to Kedah; and he won a truly meritorious victory.

The next matter in which I was rather obsessed was the building of a football stadium which I brought up in the old Legislative Council. I was president of the Football Association of Malaya, and I asked for a stadium to be built because, as I pointed out to the council, football is the most popular game in this country, yet we had no official ground which we could claim as our own. When we played important Malaya Cup matches we had to borrow other clubs' grounds, and we had to build temporary benches from railway sleepers which we had to transport all the way from Gemas. This took away all the profits which could have been usefully employed to improve the standard of football in Malaya.

I was derided, but I turned round as I was leaving the Legco and said: "One day I will build it. You may laugh at me now." Sure enough as soon as I became Chief Minister, I looked around for a suitable ground and I found one on a hill which was used as a military depot, right in the centre of the town. I immediately acquired it.

At the same time I had also acquired a valley at the site of the Bungsar Hospital, in front of the railway station, for a national mosque. I had millions of tons of earth removed from the hill to the valley.

Merdeka Stadium was built by the Public Works Department's engineer, Mr Dukes, and as a result of his accomplishments his services were required by the United Nations. The Merdeka Stadium was completed in time for the declaration of Independence. I must mention here that the workmen had to work shifts 24 hours a day to get this stadium ready for *Merdeka*. It was built at a cost of \$1.5 million. Some referred to it as a white elephant. Later on the stadium had to be extended at a cost of about \$16 million and stands as the pride of this nation and a centre of football activities for Asia.

The national mosque which was built from the earth dug from the hill of the stadium has become a showpiece and takes pride of place in the Muslim world.

My attention was next drawn to the Parliament House, because the old PWD building used as our Legislative Council was hardly suitable and outdated. So almost simultaneously the Parliament

House was built. Now it stands majestically glorifying its role as champion of parliamentary democracy. God be praised.



Parliament House

Chapter 12

The Talks with Chin Peng

After the business and excitement of the election died down the most important and urgent matter we had to attend to was the ending of the Emergency. It had caused devastation to life and property, and the people had suffered so much hardship. The people were not free to live their lives, but were constantly in fear of their safety and that of their families.

How many people in this country subscribe to the communist doctrine and ideology? We have seen that many countries around us had suffered, and are still suffering, from the communist tyranny. Their way of life is entirely foreign to us; the ordinary citizens of the country rejected them. The three main races had built up Malaya and lived here for the past centuries. They felt confident that they were able to run this country themselves, and they have chosen a way of life which is most acceptable and congenial to them, a way of life that they like best. It's called democracy.

Democracy has been defined as a State having direct or representative rule, ignoring hereditary rights and class distinctions, and tolerating minority views. Malaysia's idea of democracy is consistent with the definition except that the Constitution provides for a Ruler, and protection for the indigenous people who are less progressive economically and less viable than the other immigrant races who have made a home and a success of their life in Malaysia. This is accepted and agreed to by all.

This is the only form of government that the people here would tolerate. The iron rule of communism, governed by a few chosen leaders, cannot be acceptable to the people of Malaysia.

The state of Emergency had been going on for the last eight years;

and all the British had not been able to bring an end to it. General Templer had said that "to win this war you must win the hearts and minds of the people first." The people cannot give their hearts to a cause of colonialism which they resent, so in order to win the hearts and minds of the people they must be sure that the people get something in return; and that something is Independence.

The Alliance had promised to end the Emergency, and this we had to attempt to do. I put it across to the British Government through the Secretary of State who in his reply said: "Her Majesty's Government is sincere in its intention to guide and help the people of Malaya along the path to full government." I directed the headquarters to send out circulars to all Umno levels: States, divisions and branches — No. 20/55 — in which we asked the Umno/MCA to hold demonstrations throughout the country demanding an immediate ceasefire, asking the terrorists to accept the amnesty terms, and return to their homes.

For those who accepted the amnesty, the Government's intention would be to let them free to begin life anew; but first the Government must be sure that they would give up communism. Those who failed the test would be detained for a time until the Government was certain that they presented no more danger to the society.

This offer of amnesty was issued by Lt. Gen. Bornne, Director of Operations, Federation of Malaya; but because the offer of amnesty was signed by Lt. Gen. Bornne as Director of Operations the people did not respond. According to them the offer of amnesty should have been signed by me as representative of the people. So it was that I signed the circular letter in my name.

The communists had made it known that they were not fighting against the people, but rather the colonial masters; but, as I explained, now that we were taking over the colonial masters it was for them to accept the amnesty. The demonstrations were held throughout the country, with banners and slogans demanding the end of the Emergency, and surrender of the communists.

The result of these demonstrations was good. Many people came out of the jungle; and Chin Peng made it known that he would meet me. Among the communist leaders who gave up were the Malay communists from the Pahang/Kelantan area. Ahmad Saleh, the leader, gave himself up in Kota Baru, Kelantan. He said he had been in the jungle since 1948. His father was a member of the State Assembly of Pahang.

Another Malay communist, Sulaiman Ibrahim, who had entered the jungle in 1955 with six Malays and 21 others — all high-ranking communists — also gave themselves up. They included Hassan Ali who had been in the jungle for seven years and had been in charge of the communists around Ulu Langat.

On Friday, Oct. 7, 1955, I gave a radio talk — the third of a series — on this subject of amnesty, and I informed the public that I had received a letter from the communist headquarters which indicated they were willing to meet me with one condition: end the shooting and give better terms for surrender. According to them they had faith in me, and they were willing to meet me and (Tun) Datuk Sir Cheng Lock Tan — even to come to Kuala Lumpur to meet us.

In reply to Chin Peng through a column in the Press I asked him to give the date and time for this meeting, and this he did — Baling, Kedah, on Dec. 28, 1955. I then approached the High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray, for permission to meet Chin Peng.

He, however, refused to commit himself, but promised to let me know the British Government's reaction after he had had time to consult with all the British high-ranking military officials. Soon afterwards I was asked to meet him, and he told me that the British high officials would like a meeting with me in Singapore together with the Commissioner General, the British High Commissioner, Malaya, the Governor of Singapore, the commander-in-chief, Far East, and all the generals at the Governor's office, to which I agreed.

I felt myself at a disadvantage as I was alone against these high-powered officials, so I rang up David Marshall asking him to join me at this conference. He agreed, but when I went into the conference room I found that he had arraigned himself on the side of the officials. So I was worse off than before.

They advised me against meeting Chin Peng, but I insisted, as I had organised the nation-wide demonstrations and had informed the people that I would hold talks with Chin Peng; and if they, the British officials, did not allow me, I would have to go back to the people, and this might lead to a serious clash between the people and the British Government. We must avoid this happening at all costs because this would nullify all the efforts we had made so far to offer the amnesty.

They had a discussion among themselves, and finally agreed that I could meet Chin Peng, but, first, I must not come to terms with Chin Peng, and, second, I must not shake hands with Chin Peng.

I said:

That is all right. I will accept the terms. In the first place I have not known the communists to come to terms with anybody at any of the previous peace meetings. I never expected Chin Peng to come to terms with me. And about shaking hands I don't think I missed anything; and Chin Peng might not want to shake hands with me!

I was disappointed with David Marshall who was supposed to take my side but instead joined the British officials. That evening when we took the train for Prai for the meeting with Chin Peng, David Marshall was there, so I said to him, "You needn't have come because you are not on my side." He said: "Never mind, I will come with you." I said: "But you can't influence me." So we arrived that morning in Prai. We were met by (Tun) Tan Cheng Lock who took the train from Kuala Lumpur, and from Prai we took the car to Baling.

The meeting was fixed for two days. We were supposed to start at 11am, but the communists, who were met by John Davies, were a bit late. They did not arrive until 12.35pm, so we started the meeting at 2.15pm. On our side there was (Tun) Tan Cheng Lock, David Marshall, Too Joon Hing, T.H. Tan, myself and my private secretary. On Chin Peng's side there was Chin Peng, Rashid Maidin and Chen Tien. The Press were allowed in to take pictures, and, of course, we had installed tape-recorders to record the talk.

After a few minutes the Press were asked to leave, and Chin Peng agreed that the English Language should be used as the official language for the talk. I invited Chin Peng to say what he had to say; and he mentioned that he was a communist and accepted the communist ideology. To which I said I respected his position; but what we were there for was to stop the shooting war which had taken toll of life and property, and denied the people freedom to live a happy and peaceful life. For this reason I would like Chin Peng and his party to come back into our society and take part in the politics of this country in accordance with the Constitution.

He was quite sincere in what he had to say — straight, honest and forthright. At 5.30pm we decided to adjourn for a short interval, and at 6.30pm 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 held under detention or investigated, but should be given complete freedom. At 8.05pm we adjourned for

the night.

I asked Chin Peng if he was looked after to his satisfaction. He said he had been given all the facilities and comfort. He was satisfied with his treatment. The next morning at 10.30 we met again. I asked Chin Peng and his party to accept our terms, and said we were not prepared to add anything to what we had said the previous day.

David Marshall then said that Chin Peng must surrender and lay down arms because Malaya would get its Independence, at which 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 that when Tunku has gone to London and come back to declare independence of this country we will give up our struggle.

David Marshall then wrote on a piece of paper to confirm what he said — to lay down arms — and asked Chin Peng to sign on that note, which Chin Peng refused. Then he said: "There is no point in carrying on with the talk. I will see you safely into your jungle hideout, so when you are ready to go I will accompany you."

So we set off soon after for the jungle — he in a jeep which brought him to Baling, and I in my car. I stopped as the jeep stopped. We waved good-bye to each other, and from that moment we never met again. I don't know whether he is alive or dead; but the talk with him gave my campaign to end the Emergency a real boost. I went to the people; I spoke on the radio; I used every means possible to tell the people that Chin Peng made it clear that he would not co-exist with me, and that he would set up a communist government if he won his battle.

The choice lay with the people whether to accept the communist rule or carry on with our democratic system of government. The people made their choice; and from that moment the tide of battle turned in our favour, and the communists were on the run.

As a result of the successful turn of events the British were convinced more than ever before that the Alliance was the only party in the country in whose hands Independence could be entrusted. So the future looked bright indeed for us; and I was encouraged to push ahead with our demand for talks on Malaya's Independence. As events proved, the people received their reward in good time. I must repeat what I said after my meeting with Chin Peng: That "Chin Peng must not be killed, but if he gives himself up or was captured I will give him complete freedom, and he can go anywhere he chooses except stay in Malaya."



David Marshall with Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Chapter 13

Crisis in the Alliance

With Independence we had other problems on our hands. These we had to overcome. One of them was the communist terrorist activities.

From all accounts they had little fight left in them, and it was only a question of time before the whole of Malaya would be declared a "white" area. Victory was in sight for us, but we had to be careful before we could declare the end of the Emergency.

On July 31, 1960, the end of the Emergency was declared by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Hishamuddin Alam Shah; and with all the Emergency laws and regulations affecting the war against the communists came to an end, in particular, Article 2, Section 163, of the Constitution, 1948. The victory was celebrated throughout the country, with demonstrations in the streets, for this truly was a great victory.

If one cares to look into the communist insurrections in Europe, Africa and Asia the communists had made a clean sweep of their enemies. We cannot recall any victory won by a non-communist regime except Malaya which was the only one that had stopped the communists' run of victories. So we gave thanks to God for our success, and we had apart from the demonstrations, held victory and thanksgiving prayers at the mosques, the churches and temples.

We have to thank our loyal citizens, the British, Australian, New Zealand and other Commonwealth forces who helped to defend us and stood by us right to the end of the Emergency, and our own forces — the police, the Malay regiment, the special constables and the commandos — who played their part in defence of their homeland with great courage and determination.

In 1959, before the end of the Emergency, we had a very serious

crisis in the Alliance party. It arose as a result of a change of leadership and change of heart in the MCA. A new group of young MCA leaders took over the party from (Tun) Tan Cheng Lock; and with that they also introduced a new MCA policy which was to acquire more rights for the Chinese, and to end — what they imputed — Umno control of the Alliance and the country, and to make the Chinese language one of the official languages of the country.

The party's new leader, Dr Lim Chong Eu, sent me an ultimatum in which he set out the new MCA demands. Unfortunately, however, as I received the letter it had also been published in the Press, so there was nothing I could say in reply. It had become public property — not a question between the president, MCA and me, but rather between the Chinese and the Malays. I rejected the ultimatum, and called for an extraordinary general meeting of Umno on July 12, 1959, Umno came out fully in support of me.

In the meantime the MCA, with Datuk Cheah Yoon Lock as acting president also called an extraordinary general meeting, and they too came out in support of me, and appointed (Tun) Tan Siew Sin to head a new MCA party. Actually the trouble that arose was not acquiesced to by all the MCA members, but only by a few new leaders and their supporters who were anxious to exert Chinese authority in Malaya. In fact there were more of the others who remained true to the Alliance, and wanted to see the Malays and Chinese continue to unite and work together for Malaya's good. These were (Tun) Tan Siew Sin, (Tun) Ong Yoke Lin, T.H. Tan and many of the old MCA stalwarts.

The president, Dr Lim Chong Eu, then realised the mistake he had made and saw me. According to him he had little say in it. The young leaders and the Chinese school teachers' association appeared to have swamped the MCA, and he had to swallow the bitter pill.

I made it clear that it had never been my intention to break up the Alliance. I wanted to keep the Chinese and Malays together; but the ultimatum which was sent to me was so aggressive that I had to reject it without giving it a thought. That letter must be withdrawn first before I could give a reply. I decided on a breakaway from the rebellious MCA, and declared publicly that if there were five MCA members who would stand by the Alliance I would support them.

So the first parliamentary election after Independence was held on Aug. 19, 1959; and one can say that it was the most important election to be held since the Alliance came into existence. The Alliance

entered 104 candidates. Three months before the election I retired as Prime Minister to carry out an intensive campaign. And Tun Razak took over as fully-fledged Prime Minister, and not just acting for me. I could have taken three months' leave, but in order to show the people how seriously I had taken the MCA breakaway I decided to retire. And if we won by a small majority, and the MCA under (Tun) Tan Siew Sin lost their seats to the breakaway MCA I would not come back as Prime Minister because I had declared earlier my all-out support for the MCA under Siew Sin.

The Alliance entered 104 candidates, Parti Islam (PAS) 58, Socialist Front 37, People's Progressive Party, Perak, 19, Party Negara 9, Malayan Party 2, and Independents 29. The Independents consisted mostly of the breakaway MCA men.

The campaign became so bitter between PAS and Umno that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the Rulers had to issue royal directives that they had to control their utterances as they might lead to outbreaks of violence between the parties. But curiously enough there were few hard words between the MCA new and old, except that both of them asked for the Chinese to give them support; and of course, the old MCA accused the new MCA of selling the Chinese to the Malays.

The result of the election was that the Alliance won 74 seats out of the 103 contested and one uncontested; and the old MCA won only one seat. Dr Lim Chong Eu, the old president was taken ill and went to Europe for a cure. The Malayan Chinese gave their full support to the MCA under (Tun) Tan Siew Sin. That was truly a great victory; and I was asked by the Alliance to come back and take over the reins of government. A new Cabinet was formed, and all the old Ministers returned to their portfolios; and there was appointment of a few junior Ministers to help the Government.

A big celebration was held to mark the successful occasion. I thanked the people for their support, and (Tun) Tan Siew Sin in his speech at the Umno meeting called for the occasion and said how pleased he was with the support given to him and the Umno/MCA alliance by the people. The Alliance, according to his belief, had come to stay, and would continue to control the destiny of the country and people of Malaya for the next 100 years at least; and while the Alliance was in power he was certain that there would be peace and prosperity in the country. He took over as Finance Minister from Col. Sir (Tun) H.S. Lee who joined the other group.



*From left: Tun Razak, Tunku Abdul Rahman, H.S. Lee and
T.H. Tan.*

Chapter 14

The Birth of Malaysia

The year 1959 was one of the most successful and delightful years in the history of Malaya. Everything seemed to go well for the nation. So well it was that I as leader of the party and the Government had a foreboding that something might go wrong because the year was much too good to be true. I declared myself "the happiest Prime Minister in the world." Money poured into the country, business boomed, new industries grew up, and there was complete peace and harmony in the country.

And curiously enough it was a year which we could say was almost free of serious crimes, our fame spread abroad, and we made many new friends, and enhanced our reputation, so much so that people in our neighbouring States of Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei made contacts with us with the request to join the Federation of Malaya. After all, according to them, the administration of all these States was run by the same British administration. Therefore it was easy, and only natural for these States to merge with Malaya.

On May 27, 1961, I was invited by the Foreign Press Association to a lunch in Singapore, and in the course of my speech I mentioned the need for the merger of these States — Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei — with Malaya, little thinking that what I had to say would be given worldwide publicity. On June 3, 1961, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, made a speech in support of my proposal to form the new State which would include Singapore, the Borneo States and Brunei.

In October 1961, the Malayan Parliament supported unanimously my proposal to form Malaysia. Umno at its meeting on Nov. 4, 1961 in Kuala Lumpur agreed with the formation of the new State



Tunku Abdul Rahman with Lee Kuan Yew returning from London on 9 August, 1963.

of Malaysia (Melayu Raya). This led me to London where I had a profitable discussion with the British Prime Minister who declared his support for the formation of Malaysia.

He suggested, however, that before we could make an official decision we had to ascertain the views of the people living in these territories of Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei. A commission would be appointed by both governments to ascertain the views of the people. Britain should also be allowed to continue to maintain its defence base in Singapore.

As a step towards a merger Sabah formed Usno (United Sabah National Organisation) under the leadership of Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun. Usno represented the people of all races and tribes living in Sabah. The Sultan of Brunei, Sir Omar Saifuddin, came to Kuala Lumpur to tell me how pleased he was that Malaysia was to be formed, and I could expect Brunei to be the first to join in. Mr Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore was all the time behind this move because Britain would not give Singapore freedom except with Malaysia. Sarawak on the whole was most enthusiastic, but the people had internal problems. There were many communists in Sarawak, and there were some members in the Chinese community who preferred to remain under British rule. But it was agreed that we should not rush into this new Malaysia concept without having first a referendum to ascertain the views of all the people.

In July 1961 the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held a meeting in Singapore to discuss the formation of Malaysia. At this meeting Sabah and Sarawak proposed that a solidarity consultative committee be formed immediately to discuss Malaysia. Prominent members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association consisting of the representatives of all the States of Malaya, the Borneo States, Singapore and Brunei were appointed.

This committee would take account of every point raised at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and would make sure that the Malaysia plan which had risen so suddenly would not go wrong. This committee met four times in Jesselton, Kuching, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. At all these meetings the committee submitted their report on the progress of the Malaysia plan from the respective States. In general all the States supported Malaysia, and proposed that the need for the formation of Malaysia and their support should be widely publicised.

A memorandum was put up in Singapore on Feb. 3, 1962, signed

by the chairman of this committee, (Tun) Ahmad Fuad (Donald Stephens). Brunei was represented by Datuk Setia Pengiran Ali as observer. The Sabah representative was (Tun) O.K.K. Datu Mustapha Datu Harun; Sarawak: Teo Cheng Hoe; the Federation of Malaya: Khir Johari; and Singapore: Lee Kuan Yew.

On Jan. 16, 1962 the British and the Malayan Governments agreed to appoint a commission headed by Lord Cobold to investigate the wishes of the people of Sabah and Sarawak, and prepare the constitution of Malaysia. The two States promptly issued a white paper for the benefit of the Cobold Commission so that it would understand beforehand the feeling of the people of these two States with regard to Malaysia.

The Cobold Commission took two months to carry out their work, and they received many thousands of letters from associations, from tribes, from individuals and political parties, from workers' unions, religious organisations, and members of councils/assemblies. Everybody who wished to offer their opinion either for or against Malaysia, was invited to send in their letters to this Cobold Commission. In June 1962 the commission submitted their report, favouring Malaysia. As a result of the unanimous support, a delegation of representatives from the States of Singapore, Sarawak and British North Borneo were invited to meet the British Government's representative, at a conference with Lord Landowne, the Minister for the Colonies, as the chairman, and Tun Abdul Razak as a deputy.

Chapter 15

Soekarno threatens to Crush Malaysia

On July 21, 1962, the Sultan of Brunei announced in the Assembly of Brunei that Brunei accepted the concept of Malaysia in principle, and it would be in the interests of the country to consider the plausibility of joining it. On Aug. 15, 1962, I submitted the Malaysia Agreement for the approval of Parliament and it was unanimously approved. Singapore held a referendum and Malaysia was supported by the people of Singapore, but the Parti Rakyat of Brunei under Azahari opposed it, and made a counter proposal for a separate State of Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah.

Azahari followed it up by starting an open rebellion against the Government, which was put down by the Malayan police force and the Gurkha Battalion. Azahari who had set up his headquarters in Hong Kong far from the scene of trouble, escaped to Indonesia. On Feb. 8, 1963, Brunei decided not to join Malaysia because according to them the terms for merger with Malaya were not favourable, particularly with regard to Brunei's financial contribution towards Malaysia and the order of precedence for succession to the throne. As a result the talks with Brunei broke down and Brunei remained a colony of Britain, and as they preferred it that way it was best to leave them alone.

Then President Soekarno voiced his disapproval of Malaysia and declared that he would crush Malaysia if formed, and Macapagal of the Philippines staked his claim on Sabah. On May 31, 1963 I asked President Soekarno for a meeting in Tokyo with the Foreign Ministers of Japan as hosts. President Macapagal agreed to attend with the Foreign Minister of the Philippines. It was agreed at the meeting for the Foreign Ministers of Malaya, Indonesia and the



Tunku with Soekarno.

Philippines to decide on the steps to be taken to form Malaysia that would be acceptable to Indonesia and the Philippines. Tun Abdul Razak represented Malaya, and on June 7, 1963 they met in Manila.

They decided to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations to find out the wishes of the people of these States. This was communicated to the Secretary-General who agreed to send a team to Sabah and Sarawak for the purpose. On July 9, 1963, the representatives of Malaya, Britain, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak said they would sign the agreement for the formation of Malaysia, and declare Malaysia's independence on Aug. 31, 1963. The Bill giving effect to Malaysia went through the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the Singapore Assembly and the State Assemblies of Sabah, Sarawak and the Federation with great speed.

On Aug. 16, 1963, the delegation from the United Nations agreed to ascertain the wishes of the people of the Borneo States, and they came to Sabah and Sarawak. When the report was published announcing unanimous support for Malaysia, President Soekarno declared Confrontation against Malaysia.

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. Soekarno wanted Malaya and the Philippines the Borneo States thinking that Malaya was not strong enough to resist their claim. We had anticipated this move because Soekarno had been voicing his claim long before Malaya received its independence. He had established his Fifth Columnists in Kuala Lumpur, and among them were some Malay leaders who were promised top posts when Malaysia fell to Soekarno.

He became so obsessed with his own self-importance, and had become power mad, just like Hitler and Mussolini, that the fall of these dictators had not deterred him. His acquisition of all the Dutch territories had given him the idea that he could lay claim on Malaya because we happened to be people of almost the same race. His claim on the Dutch colonies was based on political grounds because according to him what belonged to the Dutch must now belong to Indonesia. According to him we are of the same race and we must belong to the larger group of the Malay race.

In respect of the Philippines, Macapagal had the same idea, because the Philippines before the Spanish conquest was under the Sultanate of Sulu; so according to him Sabah belonged to the Philippines. He forgot, however, that Sulu exists no more as a Sultanate.

So before independence we made a defence treaty with Britain which provided for the defence of Malaya, and then Malaysia, against outside aggression but not internal trouble or violence, for this would be the responsibility of the Malaysian Government.

We were prepared therefore to meet both Indonesia and the Philippines, and we took them on with fierce determination to fight to the end. Soekarno and the Philippines were aware of this and they made no attempt to attack Malaya or the Borneo States but infiltrated their forces into Malaya and the Borneo States at different points of entry. We were well prepared to meet them, without any aid from Britain.

We were very successful in preventing such infiltration except in Kalabakan, Borneo, where we least expected it. We were convinced that they would not attack from North Borneo because of the impenetrable jungle, and sure enough after some sporadic fighting in which we lost our men, the invading forces of Soekarno themselves got lost in the jungle where finally they were rounded up and taken prisoner.

They were more dead than alive, and they lost their way and had been feeding themselves on leaves. According to these prisoners they were told in Indonesia that the kampung folk in Malaysia would welcome them and would supply them with food, clothing and anything they would desire, and as soon as they arrived in the Malaysian States they would be joined by all the people of Borneo and Malaya who were sick with the new government and would be ready to join them in overthrowing "the government run by the devil Abdul Rahman."

As it turned out, it was quite the opposite of what they were told, for the people inside the country resisted them and refused to give them help. In fact, every man and woman showed unusual valour in resisting the Indonesian infiltrators and as they came in they were rounded up and taken prisoner.

In the meantime, the Indonesian people felt frustrated with the behaviour of Soekarno who had made very close association with the communists. Things came to a head when the communists broke out in open rebellion and killed high ranking generals and others to establish their claim on Indonesia. The army fought back with Gen. Suharto at their head, and with that the communists cracked up and Soekarno was taken by the army and kept under house arrest at Istana Bogor.

The Philippines realised that they on their own would never be able to fight the Filipinos who had sought refuge in the State in order to escape religious persecution and they would never accept that government as their new ruler.

An incident which I like to relate here, connected with the Philippine aggression, was in respect of the Seato exercise which was about to take place in Australia. The British Navy was taking part in the exercise and the admiral in charge of our defence based in Singapore saw me on his way to the exercise. I said to him: "Would you do me a favour — just a small favour?" I asked him if the navy could give an aerial display when it reached Borneo waters. He said: "Yes, that would be a very good thing as that would help them in the exercise in Australia."

Sure enough when the navy reached Borneo waters, they put on an aerial display, after which they left for Australia. The Philippines protested to the United Nations to the effect that the British threatened their safety by invading their air space. However, they remained quiet after that and made no further move to stake their claim on Sabah.

The confrontation with Indonesia and the Philippines had gone on for three years but after the communist uprising, Soekarno's regime was overthrown and Lt. Gen. Suharto assumed power on March 11, 1966. The new Indonesian administration under President Suharto immediately declared Kogam (Confrontasi against Malaysia) illegal, banned all communist activities and declared the Communist Party of Indonesia enemies of the Government. Col. Suharto declared that Indonesia was willing to talk with Malaysia to resume good relations and Adam Malik was appointed the middleman to bring about the peace talks.

That was truly satisfying to us though we were not very much affected internally by Indonesian aggression and confrontation. Nevertheless we would now be able to devote ourselves to the national well-being of Malaysia.

Peace talks were held in Bangkok between Indonesia and Malaysia. Tun Razak and Adam Malik met on May 31, 1966, and at that meeting Indonesia accepted Malaysia as an independent country, and peace between the two countries was restored. Representing Malaysia in Bangkok were Tun Razak, Khaw Kai Boh, Senu Abdul Rahman, Tun Mustapha, Temenggong Jugah and Ghazali Shafie, and the result was received with great joy by the people of both countries.

Chapter 16

The Terrorists Never Left the People Alone

I have now related the history of Umno from the time of its birth to the end of Confrontation with President Soekarno of Indonesia. These were very eventful years for Umno. Readers can have an idea how much progress has been made since then, and how well the members have stood by the party.

As the result of the loyalty and patriotism of these old, tried and dedicated members we won the admiration and the friendship of the other races of Malaysia. This is something that the people did not expect to happen. And as a result we were able to overcome a very difficult period in Malaysian history.

Malaysia is a vast territory stretching from the Malay peninsula (West Malaysia) across the sea into the Borneo territories bordering Kalimantan Indonesia, to the coast of North Borneo facing the Philippines; both these countries laid claim to Malaysia. And within our borders the communists, who failed to overthrow the Government, were making preparations for a come-back.

In such a situation, and with divided loyalty, we could easily have lost confidence in ourselves and lost control. But we kept our heads clear and managed to hold our own. In this right frame of mind we were able to more than defend our country against these forces who made no secret of their intention to colonise us. Their defeat had enabled Malaysia to shape its own course, and as a result we enjoyed peace and prosperity all those years of independence.

The communists, however, never left us alone. If they couldn't carry out open aggression they at least carried out intensive and extensive acts of subversion. In 1967 we had to adjust our currency to meet our financial exigency, and so we devalued very slightly our

currency — so slightly that nobody noticed. But in Penang the Socialist Front, an Opposition party somewhat hostile to the Alliance Government, declared a *hartal*.

To us living in Malaysia we had heard of *hartal* as a hostile demonstration by the people against the British masters. According to the dictionary it means the closing of Indian shops as a mark of protest or sorrow. So when they declared the *hartal* the gangsters and thugs took it upon themselves to start trouble, and attacked the harmless Malay people whom they regarded as the favoured children of the Government. In fact these Malays were ignorant shoppers who knew nothing of valuation or devaluation of our currency, and they were taken completely by surprise.

I immediately took a plane from Kuala Lumpur to visit the scene of trouble, and to see the injured in the hospitals. Some were badly injured, and had no hope of recovery. It beats me why such acts of violence were inflicted on these innocent people for no rhyme or reason other than to throw the country into a state of chaos and disorder. We thanked God that it did not spread beyond George Town and Bukit Mertajam.

What happened was serious, and I was wary of the future if a small thing such as this could easily cause acts of violence. Though these elements were small in number they were a bad omen, and if not taken care of in the early stages their mischief could spread and cause a lot of havoc.

I impressed on the people the need to regard one another as compatriots for on their shoulders rested the well-being of all the citizens of this country who regarded Malaysia as their home and object of loyalty. Malaysia had to give us shelter, but more so for those who come after us. I impressed upon them the need to remember that we have to live together for better or worse, and there must be goodwill and tolerance towards one another. We had seen the country achieve success after success after we had won Independence, and had overcome confrontation from President Soekarno and President Macapagal.

Most of the citizens, irrespective of race or religion, played their roles admirably well, and have shown the best of goodwill and friendship for one another; in fact have lived with one another for hundreds of years. I was happy that for many years nothing more happened. Everybody was living in happiness and at peace with one another.

We had to handle the thugs, the terrorists and law-breakers. This we felt that we must do, and so the Government introduced the Emergency laws. We had to save this country, and had no choice but to go through with these laws, repugnant as they may appear to be. In 1969, 11 people were charged in Johore, and one in Perak under the ISA, the first to be charged under these laws. They were sentenced to death.

After the protests at home and abroad I asked the rulers of the two States to exercise clemency, and to commute the death sentence to life imprisonment. They were all pardoned, and their sentence commuted to life.

I thought that it would be the end, and that they would accept this as a lesson. But no, the terrorists took it as a sign of weakness, and before the election started they made more trouble. After the election they held a communist demonstration at the funeral of a communist who had been shot by the police, and started the violent riot of May 13. Many people were killed and injured. I thank God that the riot did not spread beyond Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia continued to enjoy peace and prosperity; and I pray hard that it must never happen again.

Today we are having other troubles to occupy our minds. First, the partner in the Alliance party, the MCA, had a splitting headache with two heads bashing at one another. One was knocked out and the other emerged the winner. With that it is our hope that the party clash will come to an end. It will take some time no doubt to heal the wound; but for the good of the party and the country the MCA which had been the centre of Malayan Chinese unity must get together again and work for the party's well-being.

The election is just around the corner, and the Barisan Nasional must win in order to keep the country together, and also to save Malaysia from the world's worst problem yet to come — the economic and world recession among others. The last slump we had in 1930 had provided a good lesson to the old people, but today the world's future looks even more bleak. Bank Bumiputra, the government bank, lost \$2.7 billion as a result of a loan to the Carrian Group.

If the world slump had not occurred the Carrian Group might have made a big gain, and with that our Bumiputra Malaysia Finance Berhad would have cashed in on undreamt-of millions of dollars, and those involved would have received compliments all round. But

as bad luck would have it the trade recession had brought ruination to the Carrian Group. Our bank lost the \$2.7 billion, and perhaps a bit more. Investigation has been carried out, and criminal action is being taken against those directly involved.

Now the people are demanding to know what the report contains, and the Government is withholding the information on the grounds that it might prejudice the trial in Hong Kong. All these months I have withheld my comment, but today I must ask the people to be a little more patient, for "curiosity kills the cat," so they say. When the White Paper is published the people will be given the opportunity to read the report, or what is left of it.

For the time being my advice is: abide by the government decision. As it is, the event has become, or is developing into, a national crisis, and those involved will be made to pay heavily for their sins and greed. They are all being rounded up, so give them a chance to offer a good defence for themselves.

A *Star* reader, Mr. C.K.G. Pillay of Johore Baru, brought the points to the fore in his letter to the Editor on December 20. According to him "the dispute between the two 'generals' ", the auditor and the attorney, on the question of making the BMF report public reminds me of one of the Greek dramas where tragedy culminates, not from the clash between right and wrong but as a consequence of the conflict between two rights, both of apparent equal moral weight and importance yet irreconcilable:

The crux of the problem lies in accommodation and compromise of two fundamental concepts and values. One relates to the right of the public to know the full details of the circumstances which led to a loss of national wealth, and the other generates from the anxiety of the authorities concerned not to act in haste but with caution and care so that in any exercise carried out the flow of justice is not impeded, no breach of the law occurs, and no innocent person suffers in consequence of the release.

I am inclined to agree with Mr. Pillay, so leave well alone for the time being and respect the government's wishes.

Chapter 17

A Man of the People

Abdul Ghafar Baba is or should be the full name of the man appointed Deputy Prime Minister by the Prime Minister. He is the object of attention, the man of the moment, and also the man of Umno. I give what should have been his full name for Ghafar alone is not correct. Ghafar is the attribute of Allah meaning "all forgiving". It must have the prefix "Abdul", servant, before the word "Ghafar".

When his name was first mentioned, there was a fear that he would not accept, as the appointment was considered a stop-gap, and in such a case he would find it difficult to know where he stands.

He is not the deputy president of Umno, the man normally appointed as Deputy Prime Minister is the deputy president of Umno.

As Datuk Musa Hitam chose not to continue with his job as Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister decided to appoint somebody else in his place. And actually there is nobody who is more suited to succeed him than Abdul Ghafar Baba himself.

He is the oldest serving Umno Vice-president and a senior party Supreme Council member. He is also the Barisan Secretary-General and the Federal Territory Barisan Nasional chief. He is 61 years old, and that is a sober age for such a responsible position - at which age he can be a stabilising influence in the party which is facing a crisis.

Abdul Ghafar started his political career with the Malay Nationalist Party headed by Dr. Burhanuddin as he was then disenchanted with Umno led by Datuk Onn.

When Datuk Onn left and I took over, Abdul Ghafar read what was in my mind and decided to throw in his lot with Umno. This



Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba.

made a great impact on the party. At that time many Umno leaders had decided to join Datuk Onn's party — IMP — and left UMNO.

On the other hand, many new patriots such as Dr. Ismail, Dato Suleiman and others like Abdul Ghafar came into Umno.

The most prominent among the old Umno leaders and troublemakers was Datuk Bukit Gantang who was head of Umno, Perak, which boasted of the largest number of members.

It was at the meeting of Umno in Malacca on April 4, 1953, that Datuk Bukit Gantang declared that he would leave Umno. Ghazali Jawi, head of Bagan Serai and North Perak, defied him, which was indeed a brave act as he was a small-time government servant, but the spirit at the time was high, and come what may he was prepared to face the consequences. Perak was saved.

On April 17, 1953, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang called for a meeting of Malay leaders in Kuala Lumpur. Umno/MCA refused to attend; so did the Menteri Besar of Perlis, Raja Ahmad bin Raja Endot, and the Menteri Besar of Terengganu, Datuk Kamaruddin. And if I remember right, Tengku Mohamed of Pahang too, as according to them "they are members of Umno and will stand by Umno."

The meeting in Malacca decided to call for general elections, and with it threw a challenge to the then government to hold the elections and make good their intention to give Malaya self-determination through the process of elections.

Umno began to pick up momentum, and the response came from all corners of Malaya in support of Umno. The Malacca meeting made a great impact on the minds of the people of the country; and we must thank Abdul Ghafar for organising it.

The call for people to rally round Umno/MCA was heard throughout the whole of Malaya, and every Umno organisation began to reorganise the party to meet the new challenge. From that moment on, the Umno/MCA alliance was a party to be reckoned with. The rulers and the British began to sit up and take notice of the new political awakening in the country.

Abdul Ghafar showed much grit and determination, and he went all out in support of Umno's stand on independence.

In Malacca at that time, there were many small-time leaders, but none of them were outstanding, so he stood heads and shoulders above all the local leaders. Malacca under his leadership became one of the strongest Umno States whose brave stand set a good example

which was soon taken up by other States.

Johore was the headquarters and the operational centre of Umno, but Malacca was a launching base for all our political activities. It was in Malacca that we decided to send a delegation to meet the then Secretary of State, Mr. Oliver Lyttleton, with a demand for Malaya's general election.

It was in Malacca, too, that I announced the date of our independence on my return from London after a successful negotiation with the British Government.

The sailing boat we used as the Alliance Party symbol was a Malacca sailing boat, so Malacca holds for the Alliance a very strong sentimental attachment.

Now it has produced a kampung boy who is the second top leader of the country.

Some see it as a phenomenal twist of fate behind his appointment, for this might well put him in the running for the post of Prime Minister after Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir. It may well be so for according to the superstitious, the man with the first letter "A" to his name would succeed "M".

On the basis of seniority and popularity, one might have thought that he would have been appointed the deputy to Hussein Onn, but because of his inability to show a university degree perhaps, 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 - any degree for that matter would do. But he had to support a family, and refused my offer. I saw in him the potential to become one of the top leaders of the country one day. Now he is the No.2 man.

A degree matters little, as Malay is the official language of the country, and he has a working knowledge of English, with senior Cambridge qualifications. That should be good enough for any ministerial post in this country.

And he has proved his efficiency in English by heading big business enterprises with some success. It is most sporting and noble of him to return to the Cabinet when he is already in business and has been absent from the Cabinet for a long time.

As a result of Datuk Musa's resignation, and possibly with the concurrence of his colleagues, the Prime Minister decided to call on the "old guard" to assume this very important duty as the Deputy



Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

Prime Minister.

He is a man of the people, and he will enjoy the confidence of the Barisan Nasional members as well as that of the people of Malaysia.

What the future holds for this self-made man of a humble beginning, is hard to say, but his star looks bright. And he was born on February 18 under the same star as Tun Hussein Onn and I, Aquarius - January 21 to February 19.

On Saturday, May 11, 1946, Umno was born, and this makes it 40 years old.

The resignation of Datuk Musa had caused some tension within the party, and might well have led to a severe crisis within Umno - in fact the most severe ever experienced in its 40-year history.

It was no secret that old members felt very concerned over it; so it was like a gift from above that Abdul Ghafar came on the scene as if to save the party from a split.

It came as a relief for all Umno members, Barisan members, and in fact the whole country when the news was splashed across the headlines.

From the opinions expressed by members of political parties in this country, everybody appears to welcome the appointment. Umno can celebrate its 40th Anniversary with joy and a feeling of thankfulness for the new turn of events, and a hope for a bright future for the country.

All we need to do now is to pool our resources and help to prepare this country to face the future with greater confidence.

Chapter 18

A Lesson for Politicians

My advice to our young people is never to give up hope. For this reason I am writing about my experiences, I started off badly but ended up with success as Prime Minister.

I am well, with a loving family, a good home and crowds of good friends. What else can one ask of life? I am a social worker, and I am still interested in what goes on in the country.

I am carrying on with the association I helped to form and organise. We call it *Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia* (Muslim Welfare Organisation, Malaysia), but in actual fact it is for the welfare of all those who deserve and cry for help.

It is a voluntary organisation and brings benefit to many unfortunate souls. But it has also opened up a new world for me, unlike the time when I was in politics and was Prime Minister. Nothing I did then was right.

On the other hand, the people with whom and for whom I work now are happy and appreciated the little I did for them. So I must say I am a happy social worker.

As a district officer, I took a lot of interest in the life of the kampung people – the poor and the neglected. I spent a lot of time with them. Most of the government servants at that time gave little attention to them.

As a young assistant district officer, and later district officer, I used to go for picnics in the kampung and mixed with them freely.

I went game hunting, which in those days consisted of wild boars and, in rare circumstances, a tiger when it had killed goats in the kampung. This brought me into close contact with all kinds of people from all races. Wild boars were given to the Chinese who in return



The Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Hamid.

gave us cartridges.

One of the most important episodes in my life was when I snatched my father, the late Sultan Abdul Hamid Hilim Shah, from the British convoy which was taking him to Singapore for propaganda purposes. I brought him to Kulim and hid him in Kampung Sidim.

I told the people I had entrusted the Sultan to their care as I had to return to Kulim to keep law and order in the district, and they must guard him with their lives. All the people from the surrounding kampungs watched over him day and night. When the British finally evacuated Kedah, and the Japanese came, the Sultan was safely conducted back to Alor Setar. But I can never forget the loyalty of these kampung people as long as I live.

I had made appeals to the State Government to give some comfort to the kampung folks which the Government turned down. For instance, anti-malarial work was never carried out, and no roads or paths built in Kuala Nerang until my wife was accidentally killed through the negligence of an expatriate doctor.

Her death, however, saved the lives of so many others for it was then that the Government decided to carry out anti-malarial work, or else face court action for the death of my wife.

This incident illustrated the Government's disregard for the life and well-being of the people. All the high officials could do was to sit in their offices and enjoy the comforts of their surroundings. That was why when the election was agreed upon, and when we succeeded in winning that first election in 1955, I thanked Allah for His benevolence and magnanimity which I felt would now bring about a change for the better.

It gave the people a share and a big say in the formation of the Government. Today, these small people can decide on the fate of the Government, and can make or unmake any politician.

In other words, the people are the powerful force that count today. It has brought an about-turn and a change for the good of the people. And it is a privilege for me to see all these happenings during my lifetime. I had prayed hard for it, and it came at last.

Now the people alone have the power to decide! See what happened in Sabah? All the government machineries were put in motion to help Berjaya, a Barisan Nasional member. The ministers went to help the party in power to win the elections. But the ordinary men decided otherwise, and Berjaya was toppled.

That was a lesson for politicians to learn, a very painful but useful

one. The result came in an unexpected way. The people of Sabah were politically backward, immature, and wary of the men who make promises. Yet in the end, when least expected, they became a powerful force which returned the party after their hearts to run the State.

Democratic election to the state assemblies and Parliament will continue to be held from time to time, unless a dictatorship or a military rule is established.

Countries run by dictators have never been proved successful. In the end they crumble. The people in these countries are never happy. Because of the fear of reprisal and the cruel enforcement of punishment, the people dare not rebel, or even raise their voices in protest.

We are permanently sworn to observe parliamentary democracy; and any change from the present system of government we have would raise hell in the country.

Until the elections are held, we cannot tell for sure as to which party would be returned to power. The Barisan Nasional has an edge over the others. But with all the happenings within the party, and the spread of rumours detrimental to the party's interest, the Barisan may have their majority cut down.

The Umno leaders will have to do a lot of tidying up within the party itself. The split between the Prime Minister and president of Umno, and the deputy president of Umno is more serious than meets the eye.

Both sides have their followings - the Prime Minister from the north, and the deputy president from the south. And yet another man has come into the scene - a man of the people from the centre.

I wouldn't like to predict what will happen at the Umno general assembly. This split is going to cause Umno concern. It is the concern of the whole country in fact, because Umno is the backbone of the Barisan Nasional. Much thought must be given to it now, and every effort must be made to put Umno affairs in good order.

Then we come to the other partner which is equally important - the MCA. The president is facing court action in Singapore, and the less I say about this, the better.

The other important partner is the Gerakan. Its leader, Dr. Lim Chong Eu, has established himself as the popular leader of his party. The party has maintained itself as a power in Penang.

But Dr. Lim is a sick man, and felt that he had had enough of politics, and that the time has come for him to give way to others.

When I spoke to him, he said he couldn't continue because he is in bad shape, and his health has deteriorated a lot.

In the opposition, the DAP, sensing that the retirement of Dr. Lim is likely to weaken the Gerakan, has decided to make Penang its headquarters.

PAS now realise that their narrow religious concept cannot win for them the power they are after. They realise everybody has political rights under the Constitution to participate in the government business, and any law which excludes others from enjoying this right will be *ultra vires* the Constitution.

Political power is no doubt vested in the Malays, and economic power is in the hands of others - non-Malays and non-Muslims. The political power and economic power must go hand in hand for the peace and well-being of the country.

According to reports, PAS is now wooing the Chinese. They are going out to work with others whom they had in the past condemned as non-Muslims with whom the Muslims must not work.

A new Muslim party which calls itself Angkatan Parti Islam - a small party - has also come into the scene. They are taking over where PAS left off.

What happened in Sabah is an example for all to see and learn. The final decision must rest with the people.

Chapter 19

Time to Put our House in Order

In my last article, I mentioned that political power in this country is vested in the hands of the Malays and economic power in the hands of others, and that the two powers must work hand in hand for the peace, prosperity and well-being of the country. Nobody can deny that what I have said is true.

One of my friends said that I had over-stated the fact, for according to him, the Chinese do not have the economic power stated, as the Malays have made a big inroad and taken a very big share of the economic cake.

I turned to him and said: "If every Chinese shop were to close suddenly even for a day, where would we get our rice, sugar, coffee and the various essential foodstuffs for our daily needs? Then he was stuck.

For this reason, I said the Chinese have the economic power. Even in the kampungs, the Malays depend on the Chinese sundry shops for their daily purchases. There are a few Malay sundry shops in isolated areas and these don't count as they are hard to come by. The Chinese have always maintained that Malays are their best customers.

As to the political rights, the majority of voters are Malays and so politicians depend on these voters to be returned to Parliament or State Assemblies. Many non-Malay members of the Barisan Nasional were returned on Malay votes in Malay constituencies. Therefore, the political power is, so to speak, in the hands of the Malays. The position will remain for as long as one cares to know.

When the first Malayan election was held, 70 per cent of the voters were Malays. The number may have thinned out a bit with the in-

crease in the number of voters from the other races in the rural areas, but on the whole Malay voters still outnumber the others.

When Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba spoke of what should be done for the kampung people, he showed knowledge and good understanding of the political situation in the country.

He has been long enough in politics to know what should be done for the Barisan to enjoy the confidence and support of the people at large.

It must also be remembered that under the rural development plan which started soon after Independence, for every 10 acres of land opened up or every 1,000 or 10,000 acres of land opened up for rural development earmarked for the Malays, the same size of land must be provided for non-Malays; so the voters for the rural areas increased proportionately.

For that reason it was agreed that since the non-Malays monopolise the economy, the Malays must be given a share of business opportunities. A target was fixed at 30 per cent but this was not expected to be achieved at once.

An attempt was made to fill the target without thought for the ability and the capability of attaining it. When I advised against it they condemned me as a traitor and they were helped unfortunately by some senior members of the party. They gained the day and I left the Government soon after. Some became rich overnight while others became despicable Ali Babas and the country suffered economic set-backs and a relapse we live to regret to this day.

There is a lot of planning to be done and many lessons to be learnt. Looking at our country as an independent nation, we should take plenty of time to deal with the economic situation and problem. It has to be done properly and carefully.

There is plenty of time ahead of us. God willing we expect to enjoy our Independence, not for one day or one year, but for all times. May God give us help to fulfil our obligation to our Motherland and to all who live herein, so that we may live in peace and happiness, and with the best of goodwill always.

I got interested in politics not by accident but by nature. I was born at a period when our country was in the primitive stage. Malaya was divided into three types of government. There were the British colonies or as they called it, the Straits Settlements which came under the direct rule of Britain. Then we had the Federated Malay States which had rulers but with no power to rule other than to give advice

to the British authorities on Malay custom, tradition and religion.

Then we had the Non-Federated Malay States which enjoyed certain autonomy with their own civil service and control over state administration and land matters. In other words, these States had almost absolute independence under treaties with Britain, but these treaties were slowly being eroded.

The British, on their return to Malaya after the war, decided to scrap all the former treaties and turned Malaya into one country with one government which they called the Malayan Union - but in fact Malaya was turned into a British colony.

This was the turning point in our history - die in ignominy or fight back, so we decided to fight.

Under this Malayan Union plan, the rulers were given control over religion only; all the other powers were vested in the British Crown. And so it was that the Malays carried out a silent constitutional fight for freedom.

As a first step, we demanded a national reform and the people of this country must be allowed to decide their own fate. This must be determined through democratic process.

After much wrangling and negotiations, the people were given their rights. Election was held for the first time in 1955 which gave the Alliance a great victory. The success gave self-determination to the people and with further negotiations the British Government gave Malaya its Independence.

Looking back to those days after Independence, the Alliance Government planned for a peaceful methodical takeover. The British expatriate officers in scientific and technical fields were retained.

We also introduced reforms in the administration where necessary. We never did it for the sake of change.

We knew that the Independence we fought for was intended to serve us for all time. I was happy to note that people were all responding quietly and amicably to all the changes we made for the benefit of the people and the country.

Our administration was going smoothly, our economy was viable, our ringgit was good.

Then there was a sudden attempt by the Government after 1970 to force economic reforms to which I referred earlier. This jolted every cautious men, every businessman and it gave rise to feelings of uncertainty, then panic. Capital began to leave the country; inflation reared its ugly head and became the order of the day. A house

which cost \$15,000 was suddenly inflated skyhigh. Since then we have been living in fear of what's to come.

Something must be done now to put things right again, and every attempt must be made to put our house in order. The time for elections will come, but when? Nobody knows, but it would go beyond July 1987, and it will be a very exciting one.

As I have said, the Barisan has the edge over others but if we win, it will be with a reduced majority and there will be a hard fight all round. Parties are being formed with all kinds of promises for better government. The Malays on the whole will stand by Umno. The Chinese will be divided between MCA, the Gerakan and the DAP. The Indians will in the main be for MIC.

Sabah has introduced a new law to curb the crossovers from one party to another. This, as I have described before, is a most despicable act any politician could commit. It never occurred in my time except for good reason but in Sabah this has become a habit and the switch from one party to another is based on financial profit or political favours.

This has happened all along with Berjaya, and lastly when Datuk Pairin won the majority seats in the earlier election, many of their members went over to USNO and Berjaya for large sums of money.

Now this new law should be made to take effect retrospectively, from the date of the last election, which means the two USNO members who had crossed over would be made to give up their seats.

The crossover must be stopped for the good of democracy. If this is allowed to go on, Malaysia will truly have a bad name.

Political rumblings are also heard in Sarawak with the breakaway of a few party leaders from PBB, the party in power. PBB president Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud and his colleagues are confident that they can deal with the situation and that PBB is capable of looking after itself.

With all the political squabbling and excitement that's taking place, our hope is that the enemies of the nation would not be allowed to exploit the situation as they did in 1969 and brought about political and racial violence in Kuala Lumpur.

It's the duty of every good citizen to prevent it from happening again. So any racial or religious matters must be played down. If violence breaks out because of these sensitive issues, then hell will break loose. God forbid.

Let us hope that the recession which has cast a gloom over the



Datuk Joseph Paitin Kitingan

economy of this country will improve. We have buildings and skyscrapers all over the country and only half of these are tenanted. Those that are let out have had the rent reduced by half.

So many enterprises have failed. Those who have invested money have become poor. Let's pray for good time and may it come soon.

Chapter 20

People's Faith Must Be Upheld

The election fever is on. Every party is building its hope on winning, and the Barisan Nasional much more so. They hope to repeat the performance of the last election of 1982 when they won by a two-thirds majority. The chances are that they will win but may not achieve the same margin of votes.

The situation in this country today is not so congenial to a landslide victory because of the downturn of trade and business. The weakening of the ringgit and other adverse circumstances have jagged the fortune of the BN.

According to mature politicians, the Opposition is not strong enough to topple the Barisan Nasional, as they are not yet organised and have not yet agreed to come to terms among themselves. In order to offer reasonable resistance against the Barisan Nasional, they should be more prepared than as they are now.

PAS, for instance, would not give up its concept of Islamic State, to which the DAP and others are opposed. On the other hand, if PAS was to depart from its time-honoured principle, then it would lose the support of the Muslim die-hards, and its chances of doing well at the poll would be slim. PAS had even gone to the extent of ostracising UMNO and branded the members *kafir* (infidels). How then can it ever hope to convince others that it would give up the idea of an Islamic State.

So the parties would be going their separate ways, and in cases where there is a three or four-cornered fight, they would be fighting among themselves. So what chances have they got of winning the election?

The Press report on July 25 showed that Barisan Nasional had

won 14 seats (six Parliamentary and eight State seats) without contest, and the number of seats that will be contested is 528. This is an indication that the BN can still enjoy the confidence of the people.

The DAP has improved its position and will win more seats than it has held so far. It has now come to challenge the Gerakan in Penang. Will it be able to get the better of Gerakan? The DAP may hold on to the seats it has held so far and may even win a few more seats in the city area, but outside of the city I doubt if it will be able to win. Dr. Lim Chong Eu who has held sway in Penang politics and Province Wellesley for all these years has decided to stand for election and fight the DAP. Whatever it is, it will be a very interesting contest, but I feel the people in Penang are aware of the benefits they have received under the Gerakan and I don't think they will desert the party now when their support is so vitally important.

In Kedah, the BN faces a strong PAS challenge. The sad event, in fact a tragedy, of Kampung Memali is still fresh in the people's minds and now it is being thoroughly exploited by PAS. Thousands of people still visit Memali and they come from as far away as Singapore and Sarawak. Wherever PAS campaigns or holds a *ceramah* it plays up this tragedy to its advantage. PAS even produce the children of those killed to win the support of the people. As a result it has managed to collect plenty of money and sympathies for its cause. In Kelantan at a *ceramah*, PAS collected over \$100,000 using these orphans as bait. I doubt, however, if it can undo Umno, except perhaps in some constituencies, particularly in the east coast States and some parts of Kedah. The holding of the election during the period of the *Haj* has also played into its hands, for many Muslims have expressed their disappointment that the Government should have chosen this period to hold the election, when thousands of Muslims will be in Mecca for the pilgrimage.

Too much criticism has been heaped upon the Government, but most people feel that there is no other party which can replace the Barisan Nasional, so for better or for worse they rather stick to the "Devil they know than the angel they don't".

The Government is lucky to have the two east Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak as partners, for these States will win all or at least most of the seats contested and their number will help to swell the membership of the BN in Parliament.

The general opinion is that the administration of Malaysia must continue without a break to ensure peace and well-being of the na-

tion. I don't welcome a snap election any more than those democratic-minded people, and so when the election is over I shall feel relieved. The idea of having a snap election with only a few days to enable the parties to hold campaigns is not quite in keeping with the constitution passed at the time of *Merdeka*. The fact that the law was passed to enable the Government to do so, should have given sufficient warning to the other parties to prepare so that there is no excuse for them to say they are not as yet ready.

Malaysia is a good country to live in. It is important that the party or parties entrusted with the power to rule the country should do so with absolute impartiality and should give due consideration for the well-being of the people and the nation.

This is the most difficult country to rule because of its multi-racial and multi-religious population, but one thing we can be proud of is that we have never had racial or religious trouble among the people in this country. The only trouble in 1969 had been masterminded by the communists, but all others have lived happily together all these centuries. On festive occasions the people get together, whether it is to celebrate Christmas, Deepavali, Chinese New Year or Hari Raya. Every sign that we see promises of a happy Malaysia ahead. The people here have no place to go to; for better or for worse they have to live and die here. Only the very rich can migrate elsewhere, but 99 per cent of the people will remain here.

All talk on Islamic States is just an empty dream. No man in his right sense would accept a nation which bases its political administration on religion, and in a country like Malaysia with its multi-racial and multi-religious people, there is no room for an Islamic State. After all, even without making Islam a State religion the Government, even from my time, has done all it could to favour the Muslim people. Mosques, *suraus*, religious institutions and even universities have been built for the Muslims. Nobody has as yet objected, and they are not likely to do so because they know it does not interfere or prevent them from living their lives and pursuing their own religion.

There are smatterings of religious bigots, but as has been shown in the past they got nowhere. The Muslims as a people are very friendly and fair-minded and know what is good for the country and they will be happy to have Islam only as the official religion.

Coming back to the election, the Government has many advantages which are denied to others in the opposition. They use the TV

and radio to publicise the activities and speeches of the Prime Minister and other Ministers to reach out to the people in all corners of Malaysia. They blast away at all times of the day and night extolling the Government's achievements. No time has been allotted to the other parties. Whereas, if I remember rightly in those days time was given to the opposition, but it is not so now. According to the Government all these public broadcast systems belong to them and they only have the right to use them. With all these advantages there is no question of doubt whatsoever that the Government will win the election but with a reduced majority.

Chapter 21

Let's go back to Mother Earth

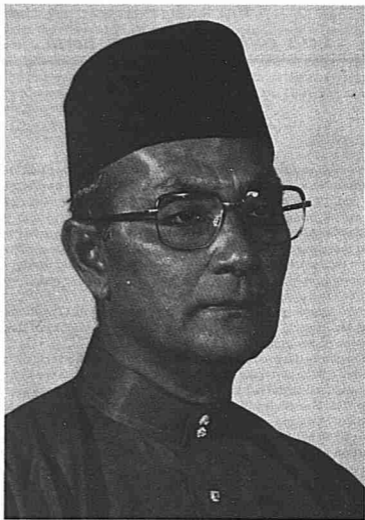
An Indian astrologer wrote to me on July 25, predicting that the Barisan Nasional would win by a big majority. In his own words he said, "I am extremely glad to inform you that the coming elections will bring the victory for the Barisan Nasional to lead in Malaysia. After the victory you will have the complete satisfaction and the strong foundation will be made. In Malaysia (rice-growing or in the husk this is called paddy) when the paddy land develops, the people in Malaysia will have a good life. If not, the people will suffer for the rice food in the future..."

Also according to him, "I have written to Mr. Razak (Tun Razak) and Mr. Hussein Onn (Tun Hussein), no one was thinking of that, for the paddy production to be developed..."

Obviously the good sage can tell the future but unfortunately he cannot tell the past quite so well. He still thinks that I am the Prime Minister and he did not know that Tun Razak had died many years ago. Tun Hussein is still alive, but he and I are both out of politics and out of the picture. What he wanted to tell the new government is to go all out for rice cultivation. I am in agreement with the production of more rice, and in this country there is plenty of scope for padi cultivation, in the Peninsula as well as East Malaysia.

I remember well in 1964 when I saw the potentiality of expanding rice cultivation in Sarawak, I directed a feasibility study to be made for this purpose. I was advised against it because of the high cost involved, so we did not proceed with the project.

In fact, the area at the foot of Mount Kinabalu could be developed for rice growing, particularly of the Japanese or Korean type, and this could earn for us Japanese or Korean currency. This economic



Dato' Hussein Onn

and trade recession may be prolonged for an indefinite period and with it the cost of living may escalate further. In fact, in these two East Malaysian States there is great potentiality for food and fruit cultivation. On Mt. Kinabalu fruits such as lychee, passion fruit and grapes can be grown as it has a temperate climate, and all these are dollar-earning products.

I was impressed with what I had seen in Taiwan. Every foot of ground is cultivated with foodstuffs as far as the eye could see, and the per capita income of the population exceeds ours by three or four times. They have plenty of foodstuffs and their peasants and farmers are well-off in comparison with ours.

I remember, too, way back in 1967 or 1968 I received a note from an astrologer in India with a chart showing the border area between Sabah and Sarawak, and according to the chart there were large deposits of gold, silver and copper buried in the ground. I did not take it seriously; in fact, I was sceptical of the truth of this story. Now I am beginning to realise that there is substance in what he had said. There may, after all, be hidden treasures underneath the ground, and I hope that one day this wealth might surface, in which case it will add to the wealth of this country.

Since the departure of the British we have found many more new resources, such as oil, gas, cocoa, cooking oil and timber. So to discover new riches in Malaysia as the astrologer had foretold would not be a surprise to me.

We have had failures in urban industrial projects, so let us go back to mother earth and see what she has to offer to add to the wealth of our country, and if it is possible we might even prospect for these potential riches. It is worth giving it a thought.

The wise man I mentioned earlier foretold of a landslide victory for Barisan Nasional. We all knew that the Barisan would win but with a reduced majority as I said. Instead, however, they won by an increasing majority.

I must compliment the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and the Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba and other leaders of the Barisan who had made this victory possible. They had worked very hard day and night and had travelled far and wide covering the whole country from one end to another, asking, demanding and exhorting the people to support the Barisan.

The Barisan got the support of the people and Umno came out best among all the political parties. This is heartening to note because

I have always said that Umno is the force behind the Barisan success, and as long as it can maintain its position the Barisan will continue to stay in power.

It is necessary for a new nation with a mixed population to have a party that can be trusted to play its role in the maintenance of peace and good order in the country. It is not perfect, and for that matter no political party in the world is perfect, but it is good enough to uphold the parliamentary democratic system, and one which has withstood the test of time.

We know it is not possible to unite all the peoples and they will always remain separate racial entities, but they are not, as has been said by some authority, polarised, for polarisation means they cannot come together. But the people of Malaysia have lived together all these years for centuries without any outward dissension.

Everyone is free to live his life and to follow his own religion, though Islam is the official religion. In this way we have lived so happily together. The best we can do is to continue following the life we like best. To do any better at this stage is not possible, because the Chinese want to be Chinese, the Indians want to be Indians, and the Malays want to keep the only country which they can call their own.

Umno is a Malay party with a broad outlook on politics and religion. We have struggled together for independence and together we won it, so we must stick together with the spirit of give and take.

I have said the PAS' narrow concept of religion is not workable in a country like Malaysia. They should have known this because the party had suffered reverses right from the start.

At the first election they only won one seat and that, too, by a narrow margin. Then they had a boom in the election which followed in 1959 when they won the east coast States, but this did not last for long except for Kelantan.

However, when Kelantan was lost to Umno they should have known that their days were numbered. Instead, they went berserk with their new ideas and the political ambition to take over this country. They boasted that they can do better than Umno and lastly, they joined up with the non-Muslim parties on the pretext and understanding that they would forego their narrow religious concept. Their new partners did not believe them but joined for the sake of convenience, and what was worse was that those who had supported them forsook them and they lost badly as a result.

My advice to PAS is to join up with the Barisan as they had done before under Datuk Haji Asri Muda and Datuk Haji Mohamed Nasir and work together with the right-wing political parties to protect and safeguard the interest of this nation. It must be remembered, too, that we still have many communists in this country, some of whom had penetrated into other parties, but their true aim has always been to take over this country by fair or foul means and establish a communist government.

The opposition parties with the exception of the DAP have fared badly. The DAP has now become the Opposition party in Parliament and the State assemblies. They should give the best display as the Opposition party and not abuse their position with tirades and damnations against the establishment.

And they should avoid any act likely to cause suspension of their members in Parliament or the State assemblies. This has happened many times in the past. They should try to uphold the principles of democracy and play their role to their best advantage so as to earn for themselves the respect of those who have put their trust in them.

Chapter 22

When Politics Didn't Matter

We have had too much politics these last few weeks and I have a mind to depart from this cheerless and serious subject and go back to those good old days when nobody cared about politics.

I was a young happy-go-lucky small-time government officer without much responsibility to burden my young life. I was a district officer in Kuala Nerang when my wife was stricken with malaria and was accidentally given an intravenous undiluted quinine injection which killed her immediately. The loss of one life had however saved thousands of others when the Government decided to carry out anti-malaria work in the small rural town of Kuala Nerang.

Before that, however, all the government officers and their families died or became dissipated through this dreadful killer disease. Then as soon as work started I was transferred to Langkawi as district officer.

I remember well the journey by government launch, *Langkawi*, to the island which normally took four hours but this time it took 10 hours. As soon as we left the mainland a storm broke out which blew the boat in all directions.

My family - my wife and I and two young children (Khadijah, now a grandmother, and Nerang) - and the servants were on deck and we had to hold on to the railings to save ourselves from being flung overboard. Finally, late at night we entered the harbour of Langkawi, and we were so relieved to cruise on smooth sea at last after the terrible 10-hour nightmare.

The boat was then tied to the wharf, and it was so nice and heavenly to feel the terra firma beneath our feet again. But we had to climb up a hill to reach the sanitorium. Without much ado we retired to

the bedrooms, too sick to take any dinner, and went straight to sleep.

The first night I slept in the sanitorium because it was too late in the night to wade through the expanse of mud bank to reach the district officer's quarters at low tide, but all my luggage had been taken to the quarters.

Next day we walked from the sanitorium on the sandy track to reach the quarters. It was a Class IV government quarters timber built, which had two bedrooms with the kitchen and servants' quarters on the same floor, and there was a long and wide closed-in verandah which served as a sitting-room. About a hundred yards away from the quarters was my office, and this building had rooms for the district officer, and there was a big hall for the staff of the district office, the land office and the sanitary board.

It must be remembered that in the old days the district officer was an administrator, a magistrate, a treasurer and chairman of the sanitary board, etc. Fortunately, Langkawi was a quiet district with only 16,000 inhabitants and there wasn't much work to do.

There were only two rows of small temporary shophouses and the only road on the island was the laterite road which ran from the town to the European-owned estate, the Sungai Raya estate. Between the district office and the shophouses was a river with a narrow wooden bridge which did not permit two persons to pass. There was one hospital run by a doctor who was also the health officer of the island. There were five Malay schools in the five mukims.

The people of Langkawi were quiet, friendly, brave and clean. There was one thing about Langkawi which was different from the previous place I had been: the compounds of the houses were very clean, and the women-folk spent their time sweeping the compounds and burning rubbish every evening. Another good thing about it was that it was not infested with malaria as in Kuala Nerang.

The next day, I began my new tour as district officer of Langkawi without any feeling of trepidation because I knew the island well as I had been there many times during my schooldays and I had enjoyed myself playing on the sandy beach of the island and picking cashew-nuts, which grew wild on the island. I remember, too, running away from a herd of wild boars which were feeding on the fruits strewn on the ground. When they saw us they came after us and we had to climb the nearest tree to escape being mauled.

I was happy to come to this undeveloped island encased in its own natural beauty. Langkawi could also boast of being perhaps the most

beautiful island on this side of Asia, with its panoramic beauty which bore no comparison with any other place I had seen before. It had its mountains, waterfalls and a lake in a disused and old volcano crater with its clear fresh water, surrounded by the sea. There was also a hot spring bubbling with salt water in the middle of padi fields, with fresh water all around.

I remember the second night I was there, the police woke me up at 3 o'clock in the morning asking me to take the dying statement of a man. I thought to myself - this is not a very good beginning for me and I hope it won't occur too often. Nevertheless I went to the hospital and wrote down what the dying man had to tell me. According to him, that evening he went to demand payment of a loan owed by a Chinese bicycle repairer. The latter got angry and violent and stabbed him repeatedly with a screw driver.

The next day the police brought the old Chinese man who, they said, wanted to make a confession. He admitted stabbing the man, and the only thing he was sorry was that the man did not die. At first his debt was only about \$100 but within a year or so it had increased to over \$300 made up of monthly compound interest. When he asked his creditor for time to repay the loan the man refused. This led to a quarrel and so he stabbed him.

The hospital doctor, Dr Lau Chin Siang, spoke Malay perfectly. He had a tennis court next to his quarters and that gave me a little diversion, playing tennis with the few men who could play. But during the dry season the ground became very sandy with the east wind tearing up the laterite court and making it unplayable. A cement court would have been better but the doctor could not afford that.

This was the picture of life on the island I had come to work as a district officer.

There were many weird happenings hard to explain or describe about Langkawi - e.g. dogs howled instead of barked. Strangely enough, I was not nervous, instead I had never felt so happy as when I set foot on this island which got its fame as the result of the Mahsuri curse.

History tells us that Mahsuri was a beautiful girl who was married to a businessman whose name was not mentioned. Her husband spent much of his time travelling between the island and mainland, like the others who were mostly fishermen and had to spend a lot of time away from home.

They had a very strong code of honour, one of which was the wives

found guilty of adultery were punished with death by *sula*, the cruellest punishment which, in effect, means that the long *keris* would be plunged through the shoulder blade to churn the entrails, and when the *keris* is pulled out the victim would bleed to death. It was a severe and dreaded punishment, and it followed that moral among wives was high.

Mahsuri was very popular and so she incurred the jealousy of many socialites, one of whom was the wife of the governor of the island, Datuk Kamajaya. The story got around that Mahsuri was having a love affair with a man from Malacca called Dramang. Datuk Kamajaya's wife insisted on Mahsuri's arrest and trial.

At the trial there were many false witnesses, particularly among those who were jealous of her. She was found guilty and sentenced to death to be carried out immediately. The trial was held at the courthouse in padang Maksirat which was then the capital of Langkawi.

Next morning she was taken to the place of execution which was not far from the courthouse, and amid her protests of innocence she was put to death by *sula*, but before she died she uttered a blood-cuddling curse to the effect that Langkawi shall be Padang Jarak, Padang Terkukur (breeding ground for wild castor trees and wild doves).

Thus, Langkawi became spellbound and bore the curse of Mahsuri for 200 years. After her death so many things happened. The most disastrous was the invasion by the Thais who devastated and burnt the island and massacred thousands of people as an act of revenge for the defeat and killing of Thai forces at Kuala Kedah by the Langkawi force under Datuk Kamajaya.

Chapter 23

UNMO Must Remain United to be Strong

Sixteen years ago, I resigned as president of Umno. It didn't seem so long ago because time has passed by quickly. I was then 67 years old but still fit and strong, and I could have gone on for a few years longer but I felt that a younger man should take over, especially when there were many who appeared so anxious to do so. Umno was all powerful and whoever took over Umno would take over the country.

Umno has had a wonderful history. It started off with Datuk Onn bin Jaafar as the leader, and it was the first political party that brought together Malays from all the States. The party was called the United Malay National Organisation and the Malay name was *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu*, but by a curious anomaly, the Malay name didn't stick and the party was known by the English initials.

Umno aroused a strong feeling of patriotism among the Malays and for the first time they felt united, for they had been a people divided and thinly spread over the length and breadth of Malaya. We had been easy prey for ambitious power-crazy people of other countries. They were the Portugese, the Dutch, and, in the north, the Siamese, and then the British took over the country until *Merdeka* in 1957, with the Japanese filling the gap during the war years.

When the British returned after the Second World War, they decided to scrap the treaties made with the Sultans and turned Malaya into their colony. This was the mistake they made. There was strong opposition from the Malays, and it led to the formation of Umno under the leadership of Datuk Onn bin Jaafar. Umno opposed and later smashed the Malayan Union Plan and set up in its place the Federation of Malaya, which was a compromise between a col-

ony and protectorate. It was seen from the start that this plan would not work - Malaya was given the status of god knows what! From what we could make out, it was a British-administered State. This, understandably, was not to the liking of the Umno who, having tasted victory in the fight against the Malayan Union, would not remain contented but would go all out for independence.

It was then that under my leadership we went all out for it, through popular election.

I took over from Sir Datuk Onn on Aug 25, 1951, and the events which followed have become history well remembered by most people. Among the most striking and important ones were the *hartal*, the breakaway of Singapore and the violent riots of May 13, 1969, and also the victory over the communists and Soekarno's confrontation.

On this day in September 1970, I tendered my resignation as Prime Minister after 20 years' service. I resolved to step down in favour of Tun Abdul Razak who had been my deputy all those years and was loosing his hair. I had already accepted the post of secretary-general of the I.O.C. (Islamic Organisation Conference) and was ready to leave for Jeddah.

At my farewell address at the Umno general assembly, I recalled having said, *inter alia*:

According to my information, there exists now in Umno the young guard and the old guard, the so-called new order and the old order. This division is unbecoming of Umno and tends to split the party which represents the Malays - a split in Umno is a split among the Malays. This is highly undesirable. Our practice has always been to speak out openly and to bring to the fore any matter which we are not satisfied with.

It must be remembered that Umno had won independence for Malaya. It cannot be that bad if it could achieve such a glorious victory for the country. If the new members have any plan to further strengthen Umno, nothing would be more welcome to me and to the old members, but don't break up the party.

My advice, therefore, is that we should not be deceived by people who are out to take over the party for themselves. This, to my mind, is a deplorable act of subversion and deceit, and I would not stand for it.

We have always been a clean party and have won acclaim from abroad and from our own people, and we have brought victory and glory to Malaysia. We have built up a very strong government with a strong economy and we have provided the people with life they have never had before. In fact, they consider themselves the luckiest people in this part of the world, with a high standard of living and with a per capita income above that of other peoples in Asia.

So, if there is any party matter which is not satisfactory to the members, bring it up at the assembly and thrash it out, and don't let it pass from mouth to mouth, to the detriment of the party.

I am leaving so I can say all these things but Tun Razak who will be taking over from me will need all the help you can give him. So, you have got to stop talking of the old and new orders. There is only one order in Umno, and that is to make it a united organisation that will truly and sincerely represent the interests of the Malays and of those others who look to us for friendship.

The success of Umno and the Alliance can be gauged from the prosperity the country enjoys, as they say in England 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' From now on, you must give the national council your full support and the party your undivided loyalty.

For the last 20 years, I have received support from all the members and undivided loyalty from everyone, for which I am truly grateful. With this support, we have been able to win the respect of all Malaysians and work together with them as one people and we have been able to face the communist insurrection and Soekarno's confrontation and emerge victorious. Our success was undoubtedly due to God's goodness and the loyal and solid support of the people of Malaya and Malaysia.

So, keep Umno united and strong! And I repeat, if there is anything which is considered unsatisfactory, bring it up at the general assembly. "*Umno menjadi harapan dan tumpuan bangsa kita Melayu*" (Umno is the hope and aspiration of the Malays).

Quoting the story of Aladin and his wonderful lamp, I said: "Beware of the merchant who offers a new lamp in return for an old (magic) one, and there are many of these merchants roaming

about, sowing seeds of hatred and dissension among our members. Beware of these imposters!"

The *Majlis Kerja Tertinggi Umno* (the party national council) then moved a resolution that the assembly take a vote of thanks and appreciation for the services rendered by me for 20 years, faithfully building up Umno to the strength it now enjoys as the people's party, the biggest and the strongest in the land.

Another resolution was moved to congratulate me on my appointment as secretary-general of the Islamic secretariat.

After this (I recall with painful memory), I left the assembly with a few old faithfuls who accompanied me to the car, but the rest of the assembly continued with their deliberations without even a break of a few minutes to bid me farewell.

Well, as I have always said, this is the way of man; they can be very fickle.

On my part, however, I prayed hard that Umno would continue to play its role in the service of our nation and enjoy the confidence of all Malaysians. The Alliance has gone and the Barisan Nasional has taken its place, but the back of it all, Umno remains as our hope and inspiration.

I had mentioned in the course of my speech that the Malays were disappointed that not much had been done for them. That was one of the grievances which they seemed to have against me, but as I have often told them, the Malays have never had it so good.

For instance, they have been given all the amenities, all the comforts of a better life. The kampungs have been developed, there are now proper roads, water and electricity supply and schools, hospitals and health clinics all over the country. But admittedly, I have not made millionaires of the money-conscious Malays and opportunists.

Our independence is not to endure for only a day but for all time, and so it is imperative that we plan properly and work closely together to give the Malays the right training, guidance and help, before giving them big business.

This is what has happened now. Many have been helped and failed, resulting in the Government losing money. I pray that in the course of time, we will all learn from our mistakes and make good.

Party meetings today are more sophisticated than what they used to be in the old days. I remember the first meeting we had in 1952, soon after I had taken over the Teluk Ayer Tawar, Province Wellesley. It was held in the classroom of the correction school.

We had to use the school chairs and tables, yet the meeting went on with great enthusiasm. After that, it was held in Alor Setar at the old Umno headquarters. It was all done on a modest scale.

Today, the assembly is held in the spacious hall of the Putra World Trade Centre in the presence of thousands of members and visitors. I was not present as I didn't receive an invitation, but nevertheless I was thrilled to see how well the general assembly turned out.

I am unable to comment on the issues raised as my article had to be sent in by Saturday. It would be interesting to know what Datuk Musa has to say about his resignation. He has assured that he will say his piece later.

It was also interesting to know the reaction on the Government's participation in the London tin market which had brought financial disaster to this country. According to the Prime Minister, the Government bought tin on the London Metal Exchange to help shore up the price of commodity and as a result suffered heavy losses because "the London Metal Exchange cheated us by changing its rules to protect its own interest."

I have always maintained that the Government must not indulge in business. This must be left to the business community. There are many losses incurred by the Government of late and this should be a good lesson to our leaders not to mix politics with business.

However, we have come to the rock-bottom of our economic ill. Our duty must be to repair all the damage and pray for better times. In the meantime, I would stress that we find livelihood for the great number of people, irrespective of race or creed, who will be thrown out of work and be a burden to society.

We must provide land for them as we did soon after *Merdeka*. We started off with our development plan for all races, and whatever land was given to Malays, an equal proportion was given to non-Malays.

Besides providing land for the unemployed and the landless, the Government must help them cultivate the land given to them. When the Japanese occupied the country, we were in a bad shape. All work stopped, all business closed down but the Japanese immediately introduced land cultivation and many were sent to work in the fields and in this way the people were provided with food.

The time has now come for us to turn our attention to this alternative. I am confident that this project will work out if we all put our shoulders to the wheel.

Chapter 24

UMNO – USNO Merger: Think Carefully

A proposal has been made for USNO to join UMNO, and the proposers are quite serious about it. At the 20th Assembly held in Sabah the Education Minister, Encik Anwar Ibrahim, represented Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad and 450 delegates from all the 49 divisions attended.

Obviously this matter has reached a climax because according to Tun Mustapha Datu Harun, he would not want to be held responsible for this merger. The defeat of USNO has been attributed to him. USNO won only 16 seats at the last election, and he was blamed for it. When he didn't contest the election the defeat of USNO was blamed on to him. So if things go wrong with the merger with UMNO he would again be blamed. So he leaves it to USNO to decide for themselves.

Whichever way they decide he will fall in line with them. He will not ask them to do one thing or the other, or prevent them from doing what they think is best for USNO. The whole decision must rest on their shoulders.

Encik Anwar Ibrahim appeared to like the idea, and as he represented the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister must have given him the mandate to take the decision. It has since been announced that USNO would throw in their lot with UMNO.

USNO was formed and financed completely by Tun Mustapha and he led them from victory to victory. In success he enjoyed the prestige and fame never shared by any executive State official. He was an example of a good leader, loyal and devoted to the party. Sabah was enjoying great prosperity, and at one time they decided to break away from Malaysia and be independent and on their own,

but Tun Mustapha as a close friend of mine would always come to me for advice, though he has never accepted it.

Tun Mustapha invited me to the Assembly and asked me to speak. I told them it would be foolish of Sabah to stay out of Malaysia because it was Malaysia that founded Sabah which was then a British colony having no status other than a British possession, but because of merger with Malaysia it made a name for itself. So it must never forget what it owed Malaysia. In fact, Tun Mustapha was one of the founders of Malaysia.

I would not support the separation of Sabah; in fact, I would be the first to condemn it. It is a different story with Singapore. Singapore had been a sore point to Malaysia while Sabah has always been a good member of Malaysia. So forget about breaking away from Malaysia.

Another matter with the Sabah politicians is that they could hardly be classified as mature or honest politicians. When Tun Mustapha lost the first election to Berjaya he lost by a small majority, but the USNO men left to join the other party Berjaya. Then at the election after that, again USNO lost, and hardly any member was left behind to serve the party. When PBS won the last election, USNO did well enough to win 16 seats, but some of the members left to join PBS.

According to Tun Mustapha he didn't want to go down in history as the one who made the decision for a merger with UMNO. In fact, the history of USNO members in defeat had been uncomplimentary to the party. They left the party like rats leaving the sinking ship.

On the other hand UMNO is a political party of great standing. It has fought through thick and thin for the country's independence and its leaders have stood firmly by the party at all times, and by the allies, the MCA and the MIC. In constituencies where the Malays outnumbered the others, the non-Malay candidates have won elections on the Malay votes.

UMNO has been looked upon as the backbone and the pillar of strength of this nation. Can they risk joining up with USNO in Sabah whose record has brought nothing but discredit to their own party?

If they lose the election UMNO Sabah would disband, so UMNO stands to lose and with that goes their good reputation. Once a tear starts in the fabric of UMNO it is only a question of time before trouble will start in UMNO.

If UMNO is going to be open to all bumiputeras, as was stated by Encik Anwar Ibrahim, it would be good because bumiputeras

are indigenous people of Malaysia and they have no proper organization to hold them together, but there is a snag.

On June 10 and 11, 1950, the UMNO Special Extraordinary General Assembly met in Kuala Lumpur. Discussion was centred on the proposal by Datuk Onn Jaafar to open UMNO to non-Malays, and this went on for two days with heated debate full of vituperations and hard words. In the end Datuk Onn caused a stir when he suddenly announced that he would resign as president of UMNO, but he was persuaded to stay on.

On August 25 and 26, 1951, the second meeting of UMNO was called, with representatives coming from all over the country. At that meeting I was elected president of UMNO as Datuk Onn had refused to continue as president and had in the meantime formed a new party, the Independence of Malaya Party.

Among the resolutions passed at that meeting was the resolution to thank Datuk Onn for the part he had played in the formation of UMNO and the success it had achieved.

It was also decided at that meeting to keep UMNO as a Malay party, and so it remained to this day. It is necessary therefore to amend this part of UMNO Constitution to allow non-Muslim bumiputeras to be full-fledged members of UMNO.

My advice to UMNO is to study the question of a merger with USNO carefully before they take a decision to join up with the party that has not distinguished itself of late and has been a source of trouble to its leader, Tun Mustapha.

A stitch in time will save a tear.

Chapter 25

Can UMNO Fare Better in Sabah?

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is going ahead with the merger of UMNO and USNO. He admitted, however, that there are many problems involved but they are not serious enough to prevent the merger.

Other members who are not in the council can come in. This is the first time the council was mentioned. Who are the members? The council has appointed Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba to be in charge of the merger and the task of explaining the project to the people of Sabah.

According to the Prime Minister, why should UMNO not join in? The DAP and PAS have gone to contest the election there. Should we compare ourselves with the opposition parties, when PBS and UMNO are in Barisan Nasional?

At least the DAP is in opposition, but PAS fared very badly in the last election and is not expected to make a mark in Sabah. PBS as a member of Barisan Nasional (BN) could deal with them without having to fight UMNO at the same time.

UMNO is the Malay people's party and flag bearer in the BN. It was formed to look after the interests of the Malays. Now I understand its door has been opened to bumiputeras.

UMNO has become so powerful that it does not have to toe the line of any particular leader. The leaders have to serve it.

This brings us to the question which I dealt with earlier. Can USNO serve UMNO? Its past record has not been too good. They let down their first leader, Tun Mustapha Datu Harun, and the Sabah Government had to introduce a law to prevent the crossing-over from one party to another, as otherwise there might not have been any

USNO members left in the Assembly.

Is it right to take a risk by hitching USNO to UMNO? It can cause harm to a party of UMNO's standing. I would suggest a referendum be taken within UMNO's rank and file throughout the country. If they agree, then go ahead by all means. If they don't, the leaders must respect the wishes of the members.

At the last election for the State Assembly in Sabah, I wrote that I was against Barisan Nasional going to Sabah to fight the election for Berjaya. All the Ministers and top leaders went there to canvass and campaign, and according to the Prime Minister himself, Barisan Nasional was prepared to "sink or swim with Berjaya".

Now Berjaya has gone and there is no hope of bringing it back to life. It has truly sunk, but Barisan Nasional is still afloat and is ready to take another gamble. Can UMNO fare any better than the BN? I can lay my bet on the results of any future elections, and I would be sorry to see UMNO's defeat and decline in Sabah when it has done so well here. PBS is also a member of the Barisan Nasional. How then can UMNO, the leader of BN, and PBS fight each other? One must give some thought before making a headlong plunge into disaster.

Apart from all this, there are problems which the Prime Minister mentioned which have to be overcome before they can decide to merge. Encik Ghafar Baba has been given the unenviable task of winning over the UMNO members to the cause of the merger. His explanation has to be really thorough, as members must be given the sole right to judge for themselves whether to enter into a merger with a weak and dying political party. Now with Tun Mustapha out of the way they won't have much money to spend on the election. Of course, UMNO can spend for them and cough-up as many millions as they like, but is it worth the time, effort and money to help a dying horse which can hardly walk, let alone run? So God help UMNO if it decides to make a pact with USNO. Let it not be a suicide pact.

I feel I am justified in saying my piece about UMNO because I spent many years in building it up. When Datuk Onn Jaafar left nobody would take it on and UMNO members refused to give up the party or allow it to disintegrate. They kept together - men, women and youth. It is by God's will that they should be the forerunners of Independence and true enough, they won the hearts of the Malays and the admiration of others, and so together they fought

and won Independence.

UMNO has served the country gloriously, and I am proud to have been associated with it. My successors changed the name Perikatan to Barisan Nasional and they changed the symbol of the *Kapal Layar* to the *Dacing*. But they cannot change the name UMNO, and by coincidence a Malay party has stuck to the English initials.

The leaders must be aware of their responsibility and duty to UMNO and serve it loyally they must. UMNO started off with its slogan *Hidup Melayu* and then *Merdeka*. Now perhaps its new slogan will be *Hidup Malaysia*.

Index

- Adam Malik 81
Alan Lennox Boyd 57,58
Alliance 43, 45, 49, 51, 53, 55,
58, 64, 67, 70, 84, 89, 99,
118
Alor Setar 120
AMCJA/All Malaya Council of
Joint Action 10
Atlantic Charter 1
- Baling 53, 65, 67
Bangkok 81
Bank Bumiputra 84
Barisan Nasional 84, 91, 95,
103, 107, 119
Barnes Report 30, 31
BMF Report 85
Borneo States 73, 79
Britain 1, 44, 80
British Government 1, 4, 6, 22,
58, 64, 65, 76
British Citizenship Law, 1948
17
British 10, 35, 36, 45, 56, 64,
65, 67, 69, 73, 75, 76, 77,
80
Brunei 73, 77
Bumiputra Malaysia Finance 84
bumiputeras 1
Bungsar Hospital 61
- Carrian Group 84,85
- ceramah* 104
Chinese 10, 11, 35, 55, 58, 70
Chin Peng 64, 65, 66, 67
Cobold Commission 76
Col. H.S. Lee 45, 46, 55, 71
Commonwealth Parliamentary
Association 75
communist insurrection 48, 118
communists 10, 21, 35, 48, 82,
111, 117
Communities Liaison Committee
17, 18
Confrontation 79, 81, 82
- Datuk Harun 75
Datuk Mustapha Datuk Harun
76
Datuk Onn Jaafar 4, 6, 8, 11,
13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23
24, 26, 30, 37, 59, 61, 86,
88
Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang
4, 14, 37, 86
Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud
100
Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir
Mohamad 109
Datuk Sulaiman Abdul Rahman
59, 61
David Marshall 65, 66
Democratic Action Party (DAP)
96, 103, 104

- Dutch 116
 Dutch colonies 79
- Emergency 63, 64, 67, 69, 84
 England 118
 Europe 59, 71
- Federal Executive Council 4, 9
 Federal Legislative Council 4, 8, 9, 10, 52
 Federated Malay States 98
 Federation of Chinese School Teachers 53
 Federation of Malaya 48, 64, 76, 116
 Federation of Malaya Government 6, 8, 9, 17, 34, 56
- Fifth Columnists 79
 Football Association of Malaya 61
 Foreign Press Association 73
 Fraser's Hill 34
 F.V. Duckworth 56
- General Suharto 80, 81
 General Templer 64
 George Town 83
 Gerakan 95, 100, 104
 Ghafar Baba, Abdul 86, 88, 91, 98
 Ghazali Shafie 81
 Gurkha Battalion 77
- haj* 104
hartal 10, 83, 117
 Her Majesty's Government 57, 58, 64
 Hitler 79
 Hong Kong 85
 House of Commons 79
 Hussein Onn 23, 89, 107
 Independence 67, 69, 98, 99
 Independent Malaya Party 23, 37, 52, 88
 Independents 71
 Indians 58
- inter alia* 117
 Islam 105
 Islamic States 105
- Johore Graduates' Association 24
 Johore Baru 16, 19, 20, 24, 35, 37, 50, 55, 85
- kafir* 103
 Kedah 14, 24, 28, 65
 Kelantan 104
keris 115
 Khir Johari 76
 Kuala Lumpur 18, 24, 35, 36, 45, 56, 65, 73, 75, 83, 88, 100
- Langkawi 112, 113, 114
 Lee Kuan Yew 73, 75
 legislative council 61
 Lim Chong Eu 70, 71, 104
 Lloyd Philips 57
 London Metal Exchange 120
 Lord Cobold 76
- Macapagal 77, 79, 83
 Mahatma Gandhi 28
 Malacca 9, 39, 88, 115
 Malaya 1, 9, 10, 17, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, 34, 35, 44, 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 61, 63, 67, 69, 73, 79, 80, 99
 Malayan Party 71
 Malayan Union 1, 4, 6, 8, 99, 116, 117
 Malays 1, 10, 11, 14, 19, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35, 51, 52, 58, 65, 69, 70, 97, 117, 118
 Malcolm Macdonald 10, 11
 Maria Hertogh riots 17
 May 13 incident 84
 MCA/Malayan Chinese Association 11, 35, 36, 41, 45, 53, 70, 71, 84
 MCS/Malayan Civil Service 35
 Memali incident 104

- Menteri Besar 20, 24, 37, 56, 88
Merdeka 28, 31, 37, 39, 55, 58,
 105, 116, 120
 Merdeka Stadium 61
 Mersing 49
 MIC/M'sian Indian Congress 52
 Mt. Kinabalu 107
 Musa Hitam 86, 89, 120
 Muslims 21, 26, 61, 96, 104, 105
 Mussolini 79
- Oliver Lyttleton 34, 44, 45, 89
 Ong Yoke Lin 35, 36
 Opposition 103
 Orang Darat (Sakai)
 Party/Kaum Darat Selangor
 1
- Party Negara 45, 46, 52, 53
 paddy 107
 Pahang 88
 Parliament 61, 62, 77
 parliamentary democracy 95
 Party Negara 71
 Party Rakyat Brunei 77
 PAS 71, 96, 104
 Penang 9, 51
 People's Progressive Party 71
 Perak 23, 71, 88
 Portuguese 116
 Province Wellesley 104
 Public Works Department
 (PWD) 61
 Putra World Trade Centre 120
- Rashid Maidin 66
 religious institutions 105
 rice cultivation 107
- Sabah 73, 76, 77, 79, 100, 104
 Saberkas 14
 Sarawak 73, 75, 76, 77, 79, 100,
 104
 Sardon Hj. Jubir 34, 36, 55
 Seato 81
 Second World War 116
 Senu Abdul Rahman 14, 81
 Siamese 116
- Singapore 1, 9, 21, 22, 35, 43,
 50, 65, 73, 75, 76, 77, 104,
 117
 Sir Donald MacGillivray 41, 46,
 55
 Sir Edward Gent 4, 10
 Sir Gerald Templar 35, 41, 44,
 46
 Sir Henry Gurney 10, 34
 Socialist Front 71
 South East Asia 11
 State Executive Council 6
 Straits Settlements 6, 98
 Soekarno 79, 80, 81, 83
sula 115
suraus 105
- Tan Cheng Lock 10, 11, 36, 37,
 51, 53, 65, 66, 70
 Tan Sri T.H. Tan 49, 66
 Teo Cheng Hoe 76
The Alert 50
The Star 85
 Tokyo 77
 Tun Abdul Razak 22, 24, 55,
 79, 107, 117
 Tun Datuk Mustapha Harun 75,
 81
 Tun Dr Ismail 45, 46, 55
 Tunku Abdul Rahman 24, 26,
 28, 36
 Tun Omar Ong Yoke Lin 56
- UMNO/United Malays National
 Organisation 4, 6, 9, 13, 16,
 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 34, 37,
 41, 51, 59, 70, 73, 82, 88,
 95
 UMNO Executive Committee 32
 UMNO Headquarters 59
 UMNO/MCA Alliance 35, 36,
 37, 64, 71, 88
 UMNO Youth 36
 United Nations 61, 79, 81
ultra vires 96
 Ulu Langat 65
 USNO 75, 100
- White Paper 44, 85

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