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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.