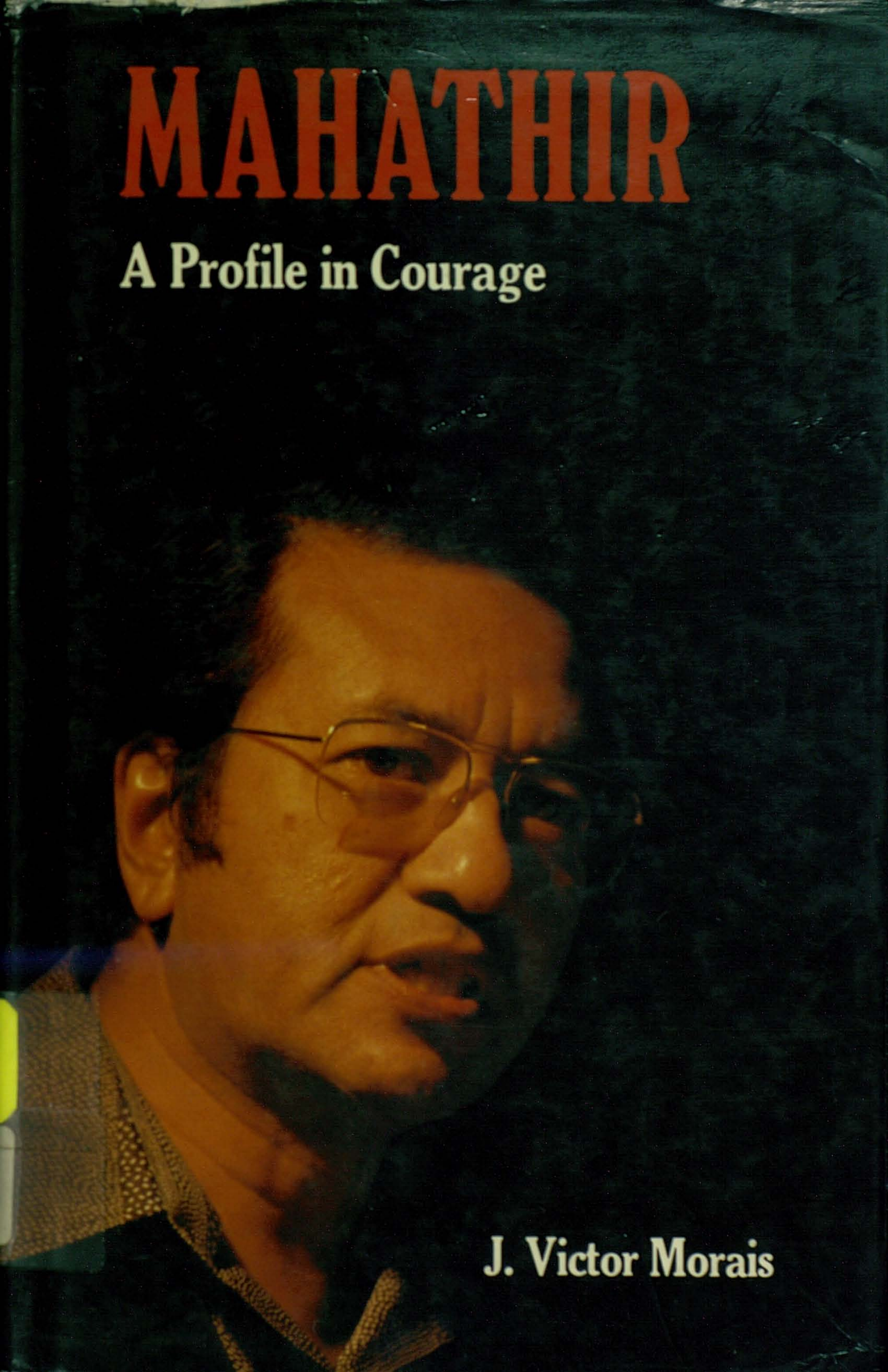
MAHATHIR

A Profile in Courage



J. Victor Morais

Dr Mahathir Mohamad represents a new generation of self-made and self-confident Malaysians. Once labeled an 'ultra' and expelled from UMNO, Dr Mahathir emerged from the political wilderness to become the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The setbacks and moments of glory are narrated in this book. More importantly, the text also gives insight to Mahathir's background and philosophy as well as his reactions to the pressing problems of the day, especially those which beset bumiputras in particular and Malaysians in general. It seeks to discover the mind of this forthright and open minded man as he engages in international relations.

It is a profile in courage.

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J. Victor Morais

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MAHATHIR

A Profile in Courage

J. Victor Morais

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MALAYSIA PERPUSTAKAAN TUN ABDUL RAZAK

MALAYSIA
A Profile in Courage

J. Victor Morais

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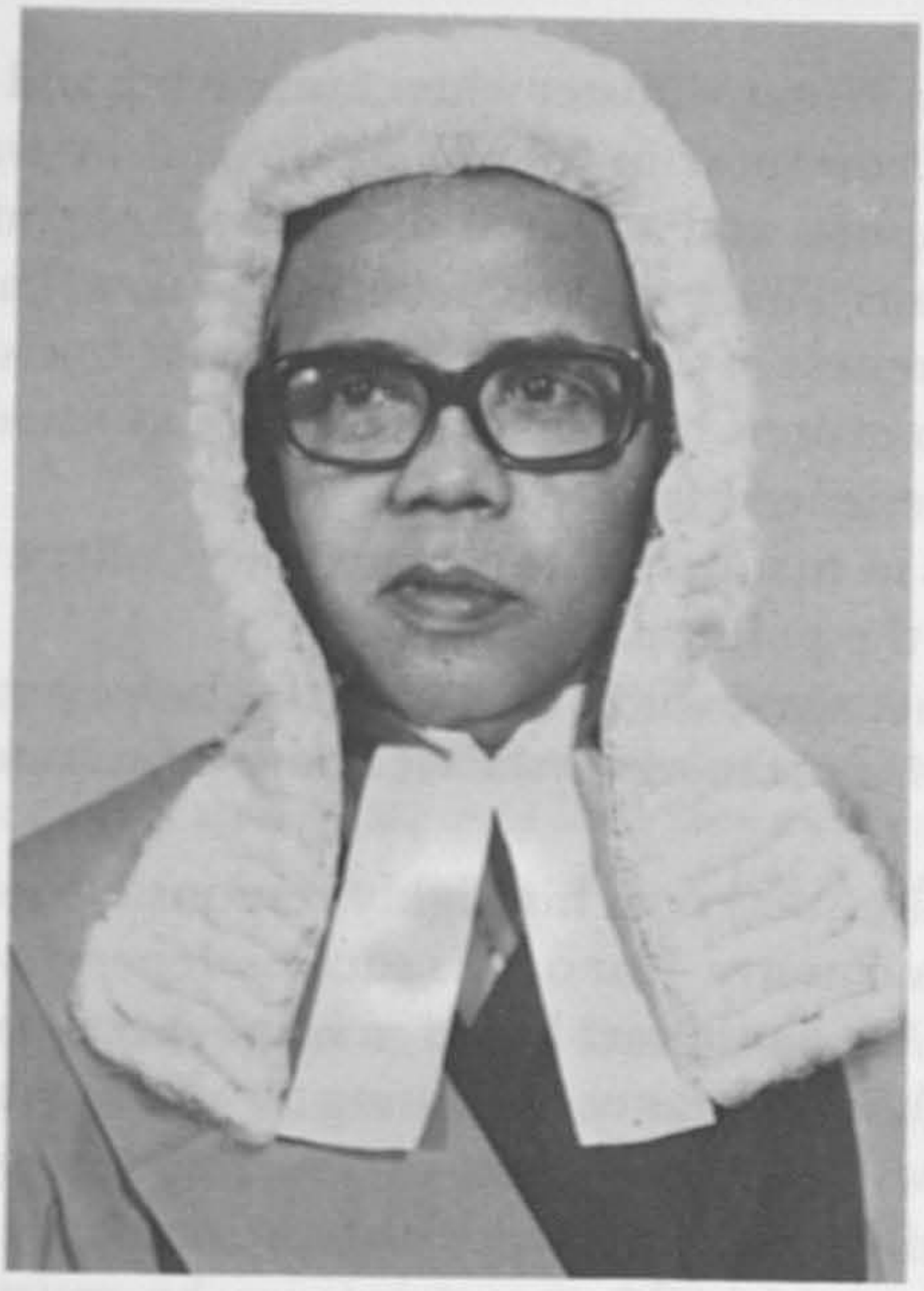
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Foreword

I am glad that Victor Morais has written another book on an important public figure into whose hands the destiny of the country has been entrusted.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir has broken the monopoly of the legal profession which has so far provided our Prime Ministers (three of them). But like them he too will be anxious to do his best for Malaysia and all Malaysians. His approach is bound to be different from that of the others. A lawyer listens to his client's side of the story and, as hard as he can, he does not get to know the full story until he gets into court and is flabbergasted by the other side's version of the facts. This is an occupational hazard of a profession engaged in contentious business. A doctor, on the other hand, examines carefully his patient's blood pressure and so on, and only after he has got a good idea of his patient's general condition, does he diagnose and then prescribe a remedy. Thereafter he steadily monitors the patient's progress until a full cure has been achieved.

No doubt the new Prime Minister will find that the same applies in efforts to improve the body politic.

I first knew the Prime Minister when I was living and working as a Deputy Public Prosecutor in Johore Bahru and he was a medical student in Singapore, and admired the many thoughtful letters he wrote to the Straits Times on problems of the day. They displayed not only an awareness of the country's problems, but also an ability to analyse and to express himself lucidly, an ability usually associated with highly experienced lawyers.

He continues to maintain this quality after College when he has openly entered the political arena.

Even if we don't agree with him it is not for lack of understanding, for he has made his meaning crystal clear and we know exactly where he stands.

We all wish him success in his highly responsible job of running the affairs of this country – for on his success depend our prosperity and happiness. We have great hopes in him – because as a medical man he knows the importance of treating the disease rather than the symptom; knows that short-term measures such as pain-killing drugs must be followed by drugs that cure, even by surgery; and know that before prescribing some drugs he must consider its probable side-effects.

The press has already shown us that the new Prime Minister is anxious to maintain, even increase the momentum that Malaysia has achieved since independence. This book will give the public a good idea of the man within the Prime Minister.

Tun Mohamed Suffian
Ketua Hakim Negara
Mahkamah Persekutuan
Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur

Introduction

The highest duty of the writer . . . . is to remain true to himself and let the chips fall where they may. . . . In serving his vision of the truth the artist serves the nation best.

– John F. Kennedy

I have written this biography of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, with the wise advice of President Kennedy in mind.

To begin with, few leaders in the world have assumed the role of Prime Minister better prepared than Dr Mahathir. He is a leader who has been involved in a wide range of activities. He was a pioneer in the Malay national movement, a leader who was once expelled from UMNO, but who rose on rejoining the Party, one who was Minister of Education and later Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry.

In addition, he has been involved in the promotion of higher education in Malaysia. He has given his services as the Chairman of the first Higher Education Council in 1968 and later as a member of the Higher Education Advisory Council. He has also served as a member of the University Court and University of Malaya Council. In 1974 he was appointed the Chairman of the Universiti Kebangsaan Council.

In all the positions he has held, Dr Mahathir has left the imprint of a dynamic and fearless leader with a passion for hard work. A doer and an innovator, he has already many achievements to his credit. His career for the welfare of Malays in particular led to his writing of that once controversial book, *The Malay Dilemma,* in 1970. Only late in July, 1981, was the ban on the book lifted. The ban had been imposed nearly ten years before. It has become a best-seller in Malaysia.

It is no overstatement to say that there is a lot to learn from, much to appreciate and quite a bit to comment on the life of this remakable

doctor-turned-statesman. It is the story of how factors and forces shaped a boy born in a remote corner of Malaysia and turned him into a politician at an early age.

Considerable interest has been aroused in Dr Mahathir since he became the Prime Minister in July, 1981. The first few months of the Mahathir era have been marked by several important events. Dr Mahathir has been hailed by the Press and the public as the most colourful of Prime Ministers of Malaysia.

This book is written with a sense of immediacy because of the rapid chain of events that have taken place since he became the Prime Minister.

The telling of the Mahathir story has been made possible by information given by Dr Mahathir's friends and associates who have known him since his undergraduate days and from the time he began medical practice in Kedah. Those who worked with him during his early years, especially during the Japanese Occupation and thereafter, have also shared their stories.

This biography contains, among other features, his reactions to the pressing problems of the day especially the problems that beset the Malays in particular and Malaysians in general.

In addition to biographical material, some of his important speeches covering a wide range of subjects of current interest have been included.

I have written this book without malice. If what I have written helps the reader to understand Dr Mahathir and his thoughts, his hopes, his fears and his dreams, then this book will not have been written in vain.

I claim responsibility for the interpretations and conclusions that I have drawn from information derived from various sources. However, if there are any shortcomings in this book, I offer my apologies.

J. Victor Morais

Acknowledgement

First and foremost I am grateful to Tun Justice Mohamed Suffian, the Lord President of the Federal Court, for writing the Foreword and for his encouragement and advice.

I must mention the valuable assistance given by my Editorial Assistant, Miss Chew Beng Peng B.A., for doing research and helping in writing some of the articles. I am also indebted to Miss Christine Chong Siew Fong for patiently typing and re-typing parts of the typescript.

I must also thank BERNAMA, the national news agency, for supplying me photographs, copies of speeches and statements of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir. Utusan Melayu, and The Star Publications also made photographs available.

I am grateful to Datuk James F. Augustine, D.S.D.K., A.M.N., P.J.K., J.P., who was the Acting Headmaster of Sultan Abdul Hamid College, Alor Star, in 1945, for granting me an interview and letting me have a copy of the editorial that Dr Mahathir wrote for his school magazine soon after the Second World War.

Finally, I wish to thank my friends who have supplied information on the life and career of Dr Mahathir and his family and also wish to thank them for their encouragement and advice.



Mahathir, the boy.

CHAPTER ONE

The Forces That Made A Boy The Man

Dr Mahathir Mohamad was born on December 20, 1925 in Alor Star, Kedah. His mother, Wan Tampawan, is Malay while his father, Encik Mohamad bin Iskandar, was the son of a man named Iskandar, who was of Indian (Kerala) Muslim descent, and Siti Hawa, a Malay lady. Mahathir's father was an English school teacher, popularly known in education circles as 'Master Mohamad Iskandar'. He had left Penang to settle in Kedah.

Mahathir was the youngest of nine children. Pak Lah, who has known Mahathir since his boyhood, remembers the family of Dr Mahathir because he was very close to Encik Mohamad Iskandar. According to Pak Lah, Mahathir's father became a teacher in the Government English School in 1908.

At the time, the name of Mohamad Iskandar was almost synonymous with development and progress of education in the State of Kedah.

Asked about his father and his family Mahathir said, 'My father was never a businessman. He was a school teacher, the first headmaster of Alor Star's first English School, now known as Maktab Sultan Abdul Samad. My father's first and only business venture was a flop. He sold his two dusuns though I told him he shouldn't. He bought two trishaws with the money and rented them out. We never saw the rent or the trishaws again.

'My father is dead now. He named me Mahathir mainly because he had a strange liking for the letter M. All my four brothers also got it — Murad, Mustaffa, Mahadi and Mashahor — but the five girls who came after us didn't.

'I grew up in a very disciplined home. My father ran it like a classroom. The sound of his cough as he approached the house was enough to send us boys flying back to our books.'

Murad became an officer in Serdang Agricultural College. He has since passed away. Mahadi was formerly a clerical officer in the Kedah State Executive Service but is now a successful businessman.



Dr Mahathir with his parents and members of his family. He is standing fifth from the left in the third row.

Mashahor was a labour officer and Mustaffa died during the Japanese Occupation.

For Mahathir the Occupation years were profitable. Refusing to work for the Japanese he ran a banana stall in Alor Star's Pekan Rabu. He sold bananas fresh and fried, and served them in the coffee shop nearby.

True to the promise he had made himself, Mahathir, who was then in his early twenties, was better off than any of his friends.

Two years with the market folk sharpened his awareness of their general dissatisfaction.



The house in which the Prime Minister was born – Alor Star, Kedah.

Among his father's pupils was Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, our first Prime Minister, who confesses that he was a playful and naughty boy beyond control.

The late Master Iskandar was a strict disciplinarian and a good teacher. He treated all students alike — be they rich or poor. No special favour was shown to pupils who were well-to-do or from the Royal family.

The Tunku recalls that he used to be carried to the school on the shoulders of an old palace attendant by the name of Pak Idris. The Tunku, as a student, used to be dressed up in gold-studded cap and



Dr Mahathir's father, the late Encik Mohamad bin Iskandar.

other decorations.

Master Iskandar objected to the Tunku wearing the gold-studded cap on the ground that if it were lost or stolen he would have to bear the responsibility. In fact the real reason was that Master Iskandar did not want any student to rank higher and look more important than the other students. He therefore ordered the Tunku not to wear the regalia of royalty in school.

The Tunku's mother agreed with Master Iskandar and substituted the Tunku's cap with an ordinary one.

On another occasion, one of the Tunku's teachers complained to Master Iskandar that the young Tunku was making too much noise and was disturbing the other pupils in his class. Master Iskandar placed the Tunku's chair near Master Hassan's table to keep him in check.

These episodes illustrate how strict Mahathir's father was as a headmaster. No wonder Mahathir has inherited some of his father's qualities as a disciplinarian.

Returning to the early education of Mahathir, he studied in the Malay School for boys at Seberang, Perak, for two years before joining the Government English School in Alor Star.

Mahathir was bespectacled at an early age. He was the librarian of his class, the perennial winner of the annual English prize. He had little time for games during his schooldays.

One of Mahathir's former teachers, Datuk J.F. Augustine, a well-known educationist who also knew Master Iskandar, said that Mahathir was above average as a student.

'He was not very interested in sports. He was often with his books. His main hobby was reading and writing. In fact he was so good in English that he was appointed the Editor of the school magazine. He wrote the editorial for the magazine himself.'

According to his former classmates Mahathir was no mere book-worm. He sold balloons for pocket money. When his education was interrupted for four years during the Second World War, rather than spend his free time idling, Mahathir got his father's permission to start a business.

His first business venture was a coffee and cake stall. His partners were two close friends, Encik Johari Mohamad Taib (Pak Jo) and Encik Noor Madar (Nana). The stall was located beside the river at Pekan Rabu; the site is now the Kota Setar Land Office car park.

According to Pak Jo, who now runs his own stall at Pekan Rabu, Mahathir was a conscientious scholar.

Darulaman

being the Magazine of

Sultan Abdul Hamid College, Alor Star.

Editor:
MAHATHIR bin MD. ISKANDAR.

Sub-Editor:
JOHN AUGUSTIN

Adviser: THE ACTING HEADMASTER (Mr. J. F. AUGUSTIN).

Vol. I. (NEW SERIES) DECEMBER, 1945. No. 1.

EDITORIAL.

Nearly four years have passed—weary years full of trials and hradships, of cruelty and evil deeds, of murder and torture: nearly four years since the last College Magazine was published. It seemed interminable, the War. It was wearisome. It wearied the soldier in the frontline, the mother at home and the schoolboy in his school. It taxed one's strength, one's endurance, one's stolidity and left one broken and shattered.

But Peace, with all that the word implies, has come. God be praised for the Peace that we have now. It could be another "Peace" in which the Powers of Evil triumph. But it is not. It is a Peace worth living through; for have not the Powers of Right and Justice won? Though in some corners of the world there is still some fiighting, yet it is only the natural aftermath of a great upheaval and by and by it too will die down. And may Almighty God prolong the Peace—till Doomsday.

Humanity is on the threshold of the greatest Age of all—the Age of Atomic Energy, and we, as members of the humnn race pray and hope that this revolutionary energy will be turned to peaceful usage. We hope that this marvellous discovery will enhance the progress of mankind, raise the standard of living and maintain Peace even as it stopped War.

The editorial Mahathir wrote as a student.

Che Det† (Mahathir) was never without a book. Whenever there was nothing to be done, he would be reading, says Pak Jo. The 65 year old Pak Jo describes Mahathir as a firm, honest and forthright man.

Che Det would bring his books to the stall and whenever he was free, he would be reading a book rather than sit around idly.

Pak Jo recalls that Encik Mohamad Khir Johari and Encik Zulkifli Haji Hashim used to patronise the stall run by Mahathir.

Subsequently, Mahathir and his two business associates set up a stall to sell fruits and handicrafts at Pekan Rabu. Mahathir was appointed manager because of his flair for business. As before, Che Det was always reading whenever there were no customers to attend to.

From his business experience with Mahathir, Pak Jo observes that Mahathir has the qualities of a shrewd businessman.

Thus, even at that early age Mahathir experienced and gave serious attention to the problems faced by Malay entrepreneurs and often gave his views on how to overcome them.

Mahathir's business ventures came to an end when the Second World War ended and Malaya returned to British rule.

Mahathir resumed his studies in the Government English School in 1945. He remained there until he obtained his Senior Cambridge Certificate.

He said goodbye to his Pekan Rabu banana-stall partner, Johari (who is still there), and went off to study medicine in Singapore.

Of the seven Malay students who enrolled, Mahathir, Ariffin Marzuki, Abdul Rahman and a girl named Hasmah binte Haji Mohamed Ali graduated.

Mahathir's first love was Law. When he was awarded a State Government Scholarship, he had hoped to go to England to study law but the Government insisted on his joining the Medical College in Singapore on the ground that there were enough lawyers but very few doctors. So, it was to King Edward VII College of Medicine that Mahathir went.

In the College Mahathir lived for a short period in one of the Nissen huts near the playing field. These huts were nicknamed 'the stables' by the senior students. And among his stable-mates were Datuk Adnan Abdullah, the Director-General of Welfare Services, Encik Ahmad Riduan, the former Deputy Director-General of Customs and Dr Mohamed Abdul Kadir who is in private practice

†Det is the family petname for Mahathir.

in Sungei Patani.

During the orientation period in the College, Dr Chong Chen Hian, the former Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, once ragged Mahathir by making him sleep the whole night under his bed.

In those days senior students often took advantage of the young newcomers and made them do all sorts of unpleasant things. Mahathir was not the only one to suffer at the hands of some Seniors.

As a student, Mahathir met Siti Hasmah often. It was then that he formed a lasting friendship with Siti Hasmah — a friendship that eventually led to their marriage.

While in College, Mahathir participated in various forums and debates. At some of the forums, one of those with whom he clashed was none other than Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khoon, the former 'Mr Opposition' of the Malaysian Parliament.

Mahathir showed leadership qualities in several fields. He had the distinction of becoming the President of the Muslim Society in the Medical College. He succeeded the author's schoolmate and friend, the late Aminuddin Baki who was the former Director-General of Education.

Among his contemporaries in College were the late Tan Sri Datuk R.P. Pillay, the former Director-General of Health; Datuk J. Eapen, the Consultant Physician at the General Hospital in Kuala Lumpur and Dr P.C. Vanisingam, the former Consultant Surgeon at the General Hospital, Penang, who is now in private practice.

Dr Tan Chee Khoon, remembers Mahathir as a quiet and serious student but rather clannish — as students from Kedah were then.

In the College he showed some interest in sports though he excelled only in rugby. He carried on his interest in writing and was the Editor of the College medical students' magazine.

He was a good student and an active unionist.

One university mate remembers him as aloof.

'He had a lot of dignity. He would join in the ragging but you could see he wasn't involved in crazy pranks. His intelligence made him a natural rallying point.

'When we got stumped with medical theories, we went to Mahathir. He read a lot and quickly, and he understood faster than any of us.'

Mahathir used to contribute articles to the Straits Times and the Sunday Times under the pen-name of Che Det. His theme was the plight of the rural people.

Even in his student days Mahathir gained a reputation as the champion of the Malays whom he described then as the economic under-dog. He had the gift of expressing his thoughts lucidly and logically and sometimes provocatively.

Mahathir obtained his medical degree M.B.B.S. in 1953 and joined the government service in 1954. He served at the Alor Star General Hospital in 1956 and later as the Medical Officer at Langkawi for six months before resuming his service at the Alor Star General Hospital.

He resigned in 1957 to go into private practice.

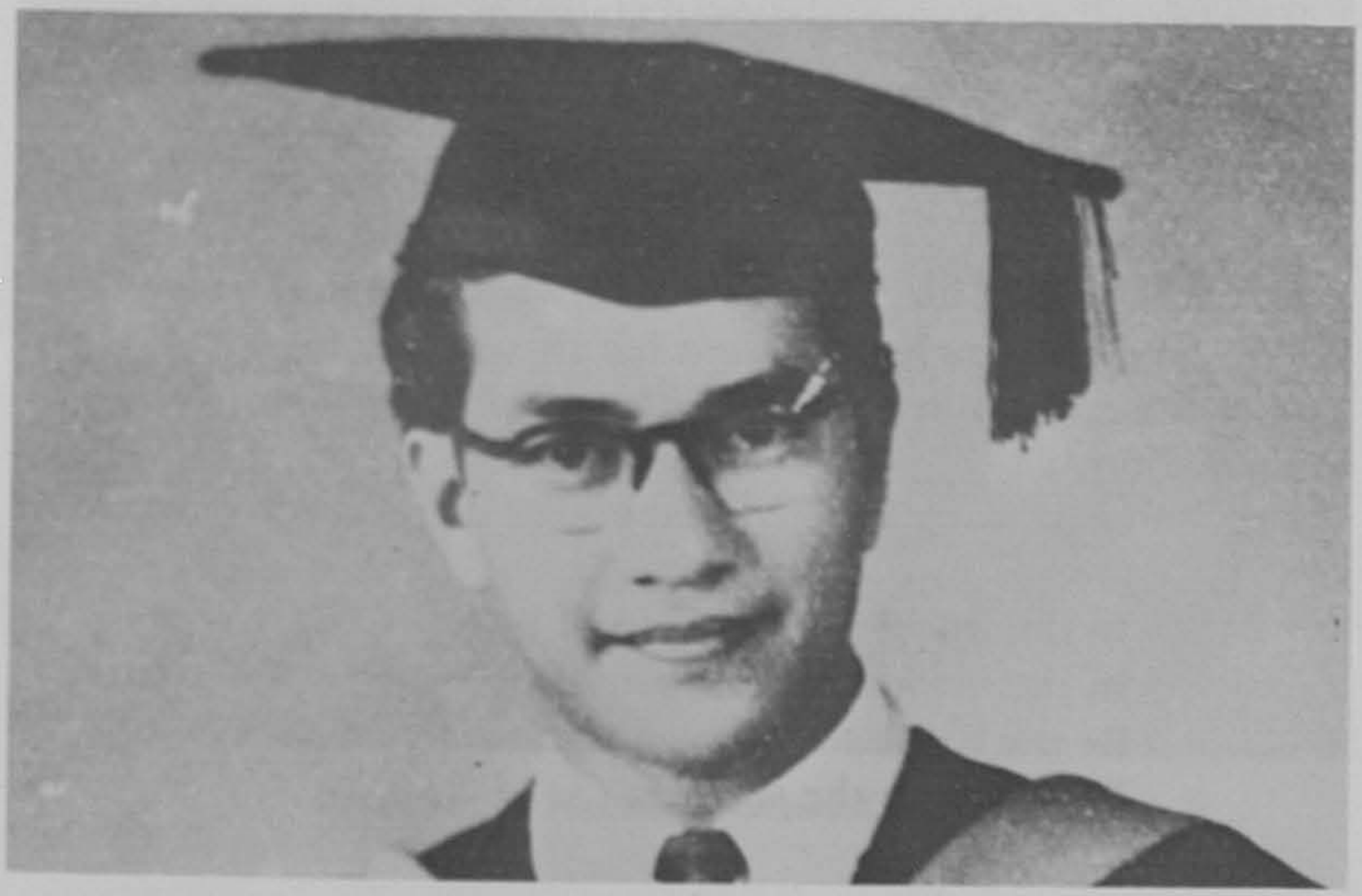
Reminiscing, Mahathir says: 'I like business. Even in primary school I was making money. I bought balloons at two cents for three and sold them at two cents each.

'I organised a tikam – using a soap-box and cheap tea-cups for prizes.'

Pak Jo recalls: 'When Mahathir was carrying out his business in Pekan Rabu, Kedah, he won the confidence of the people who elected him a member of the Town's Executive Committee.'

Mahathir still has ties with Pekan Rabu where he is Patron of the Pekan Rabu Co-operative Society.

Businessmen in Pekan Rabu are grateful to Mahathir for enabling them to enjoy bigger and modern premises in place of the old building which was burnt down.



Graduation photograph, 1953.

Pak Jo believes that Che Det will be a very able Prime Minister who will bring progress to the people and country.

'He is humble, always interested in matters of the people and the country before self,' says another of Mahathir's former business associates.

Although Mahathir holds the highest office in the country, he still devotes attention to the progress and development of Pekan Rabu.

Che Det often stops at Pekan Rabu when he is in Kedah. He remembers the people there and will not forget Pak Jo, who once sold goreng pisang, fruits and coffee with him.

Indeed, Mahathir has always reminded Malay businessmen to start from the bottom to gain experience and the know-how to succeed.

Mahathir, from an early age, has been a man of many interests. He has invested his money in various ventures.

Apart from his flourishing clinic in Alor Star, six miles south of his home, he has invested in realty and a three-storey pharmaceutical firm near his dispensary.

He has also invested in tin land — 'I lost several thousands of dollars in that one.'

He was also at one time a housing developer. 'I wanted to prove that Malays too can develop land. But after the second venture I stopped. I wasn't making much.

'I had to sell mostly to Malays and Malays are poor paymasters,' he laughed.

Since his childhood, Mahathir has displayed a character of distinction, upholding the philosophy that whatever others can do, he can do too.

Mahathir's early life reminds me of what a famous judge once said: 'The immediately possible is hardly worth living for. It is the ideal that kindles enthusiasm and gives inspiration and rigour to all human effort.'

Our Prime Minister's life is symbolic of these words of a poet:

In the world's broad field of battle
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle
Be a hero in the strife.



Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the man.



Mahathir receives his letter of appointment as Prime Minister from His Majesty the King.

CHAPTER TWO

Triumph After Trials

What manner of man is Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad Iskandar? Most of the Malaysians know him as a fearless fighter and an outspoken critic. His name spells controversy. But all who know him well agree that he is a case of the phoenix which rises from the ashes.

In writing the story of Dr Mahathir, I have drawn from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

> All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players
> They have their exits and their entrances
> And one man in his time plays many parts
> His acts being seven ages.

I have made passing references to persons and have drawn several 'pictures' but none, I hope, is disparaging. However, if it appears so, then I must say it is unintentional.

Mahathir gave some indication of his outlook on life and how he will solve the problems of the nation and of his determination to face all challenges in his first hour as Prime Minister at a Press interview.

'The job will be a great burden for me though I feel excited about it. I feel great but there will be nobody to turn to if I am in trouble.'

When the reporters questioned him as to how he felt as the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir replied in a humorous vein. I quote: 'What is there to say? If I say nothing, the press will say Mahathir feels nothing.

'I hope the country will remember me as well as Tun Hussein when I leave,' he added.

Incidently, history is being made for Mahathir is the first person without a background in law to become the Prime Minister of



The Prime Minister.

Malaysia.

Mahathir has supreme confidence in what he says and does. So it seems that no task is too difficult for him to perform. He remains calm, cool and collected — except when he is provoked!

People who have worked with and for him says that he is a rational and fair person who believes in discussions and consensus. His weakness — if it is a weakness — is his refusal to overlook inefficiency in anyone.

The doctor is not expected to make major changes in policy but in the course of implementing some policies of the New Economic Policy some changes may be expected.

It is fitting here to recall what Tun Hussein Onn said when naming the doctor from Kedah his Deputy Prime Minister. 'I have made my choice and I pray and hope that I have made the right choice. I hope the people accept him and support him.'

The people have pledged their whole-hearted co-operation to the new Prime Minister. Proof of this fact is his election, unopposed, as the President of the UMNO by which distinction Mahathir earned his position as the Prime Minister.

On his part Mahathir has said: 'I will do my best to shoulder the heavy responsibility for the benefit of the country and the nation.'

It goes without saying that he will run this country under a democratic system and create opportunities for all Malaysians to make the best of their lives.

The Malaysian constitution provides a safety valve for the Malays, and the Government has set up many statutory bodies to help Malays make a success of themselves in business with the objective of reducing the disparity and economic imbalance among the races.

A senior member of the judiciary who has known Mahathir from his early days as a politician describes him as an honest and honourable man.

It is no exaggeration to say that he has a good record as a politician and leader. I am told by an eminent Malaysian who has known him for the past 30 years that he is incorruptible.

A story, confided to me by this Malaysian, says that Mahathir was once offered a cheque for $10,000 by a leading industrialist after his election victory.

When questioned by Mahathir, the industrialist told him that the money was a gift from him for his election expenses.



Dr Mahathir on his official visit to Sarawak.
On his left is Datuk Taib bin Mahmud, the Chief Minister of Sarawak.



The Mahathirs receive PAS leader, Datuk Asri Muda, at their home on Hari Raya, 1981.



Datuk Harun Idris calls on the Prime Minister during Hari Raya.



Dr Mahathir visits the Quran Reciting Competition. Escorting him is Tan Seri Syed Nasir.

Mahathir politely refused the gift saying that he had enough money of his own. This happened when he was the Minister of Education.

There is no doubt among Malaysians that Mahathir is no more the *ultra* he used to be. He is now a moderate.

In its editorial of May 26, 1981, the Straits Times said: 'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's recent statement that UMNO must also look after the interests of non-Malays speaks for itself. Time and experience, setbacks and successes, have tempered his beliefs, though not perhaps changed their direction.

'His public statements portray a man with a deep understanding of the needs of the people and the issues at stake for the country's survival. He himself says there has been a significant change in the tone of his speeches since he became a Cabinet Minister and later Deputy Prime Minister. His plea for religious tolerance and a give-and-take attitude among communities, his non-acceptance of the call for a 51 per cent bumiputra stake in Malaysia's corporate economy, are reflective of a moderate mind.'

So be it.

Mahathir's political career began while he was in his early twenties. He helped to form the Kedah Malay Association.

As a young politician he was fearless. He is noted for his keen mind and diligence. Often, he speaks without hesitation but there are times when he has lost his temper. On those occasions he had thrown caution to the wind.

I recall his warning:

'If the illegal Vietnamese refugees continue to come in, we will shoot them on sight.'

Although it appeared to be an irrational outburst at that time, it opened the eyes of some of the western countries including the United States of America. Thereafter, more refugees were resettled from Malaysian transit camps.

Although Mahathir readily admits to a probable change of style he is not quite sure what effect it would have.

'People say I've been rather blunt. I suppose that may show in the process of conducting foreign policy. The policy will be the same. Perhaps the words used may be different.'

Mahathir seldom, if ever, apologises for what he says.

There was no response from him when both the Malaysian and



Dr Mahathir shows the way to keep fit.

foreign press splashed headlines on his 'Shoot Them On Sight' outburst.

In the introduction to his book, *The Malay Dilemma*, he wrote that 'The publication of this book was not calculated to endear the writer to any particular section of Malaysians. Indeed it was most likely to cause despondency among some and severe resentment among most others. He has claimed that what he has written was written with sincerity.'

Although his book, *The Malay Dilemma*, was banned in Malaysia, since 1970 thousands of people read it whenever they went to Singapore where it was published. In that book Mahathir criticised the Tunku and his Government for not doing enough for Malays especially for the rural folks.

Since then Mahathir has been described as an *ultra*. Incidentally, Datuk Musa Hitam was also expelled for the same reason. This happened soon after the May 13th disturbances in Kuala Lumpur in 1969.

When friends urged him to appeal to UMNO Mahathir's reply was: 'I will not crawl back.'

Mahathir has spoken out from time to time for the improvement of the lot of the rural folks. From his school-days, he has been in several social, cultural, welfare and political organisations in the State. He used to receive invitations to speak at local meetings and forums.

Among the first organisations in which he participated were the Kesatuan Melayu Kedah and the Seberkas Kesatuan Pemuda Malaysia, Kedah. In 1945 he joined UMNO as a member in the pioneering days of the Malay nationalist movement when Dato Onn bin Jaafar was its founder President. Mahathir was then only 20.

After his graduation from the Medical College, Singapore, Mahathir joined the Malayan Medical Service and held the position, first as houseman for one year and later as a Medical Officer for three years. During this period he served as a Medical Officer in Alor Star, Langkawi and Perlis.

In 1957, Mahathir resigned from Government service to open his own clinic, Maha Klinik, in Jalan Tunku Ibrahim.

According to Encik Abdullah bin Pa' Chik or Pak Lah, aged 66 years, who has been with the Maha Klinik since its establishment, Mahathir is a generous man.

Mahathir did not make his patients pay for their treatment if they were too poor.

Pak Lah says that if the patient did not have sufficient money to pay, Dr Mahathir would just accept a token payment of 10 sen, 50 sen or one ringgit.

According to Pak Lah, there were only five medical clinics in Alor Star in 1957 and Maha Klinik was the first to be set up by a Malay doctor.

Maha Klinik became the meeting place of people, particularly Malays from Alor Star and the nearby towns.

The clinic was relocated at Pekan Melayu in 1959 to meet the increasing demands made on it.

Pak Lah says since Mahathir opened his clinic, he had never handled the cash takings which were first in the hands of his brother-in-law, the late Pak Hassan, and subsequently Pak Lah himself.

'This is one of Dr Mahathir's admirable qualities. If he has faith in a person, he will trust him with anything, even money,' says Pak Lah.

During this period Mahathir kept himself busy not only with political activities but also by serving several organisations in Kedah.

Mahathir was offered a seat in the 1959 Kedah State elections but he declined.

It is surprising that he was never a State Assembly Member. Already, at the early stage of his political career, Mahathir had differences of opinion with the Tunku and the State UMNO leadership.

Since his election as a Member of Parliament for Kota Setar Selatan in 1964, he was an active and voluble back-bencher — until 1969. He spoke out against the ruling party, the Alliance's 'gentility and caution and reluctance to take drastic action.'

During Singapore's two turbulent years as part of Malaysia, Mahathir attacked what he saw as Mr Lee Kuan Yew's ambitions for himself and for Singapore in the newly-formed Federation.

Mahathir had differences of opinion with both the Tunku and Mr Lee Kuan Yew. He confesses that there were difficulties for a time.

'But, given a chance, you can always clarify what you mean,' he says.

After a brief pause the Prime Minister went on: 'Lee Kuan Yew would not regard me as an *ultra* now — although I still subscribe to the same policies. He must recognise we are doing what is fair to ourselves and to Singapore. There is no way we can accept a dominant position for Singapore in Malaysia which he was striving for at that time.

'I just made it clear what the general thinking of the people in

Malaysia was,' he says.

Mahathir admits that with the Tunku, 'who belonged to a very conservative generation', he had serious differences of opinion.

'There was nothing personal, just a matter of differences of views. You don't oppose views because of the person, but because of what he had or has not done. I gave my full support to the Tunku as party leader, although disagreeing with some of his policies.'

The first big break for Mahathir came in 1964 when he was elected a Member of Parliament for Kota Setar Selatan.

Honours came thick on him thereafter. He was selected by the Malaysian Government as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. In 1967 he attended a Harvard Seminar on International Affairs.

A major event in his political career happened after the 1969 General Elections when he was defeated by Haji Yusuf Rawa of the PAS.

Thereafter, Mahathir, the then 'Young Turk', wrote the fateful letter to the Tunku pointing out the frustration of a group in UMNO over the plight of the Malays especially the rural folks.

The events of May 13, 1969 cast a shadow over his future political career but the traumatic experience served only to strengthen his determination to create a dynamic society.

Mahathir was impatient over the delay on the part of the Government to take action to redress the national economic imbalance in favour of the Malays. He had urged the 'old guard' leadership to take swifter measures to remedy the situation.

In his letter to the Tunku, Mahathir voiced deep concern over the plight of Malays and criticised the Alliance Government. Somehow, the letter reached the Press and soon the Tunku heard about it. The result? Mahathir was expelled from UMNO.

'My struggle and my principles have not changed,' he said a day after his expulsion. He accepted the Party's decision without reservation. All along he had been critical but not hostile to the leadership.

Mahathir then remained in the wilderness. Undaunted he carried on with his other activities.

Of the critical letter which caused the apparent setback in his political career, Mahathir says: 'I still don't know how it got circulated. I only know that what Kissinger says is true: No official secret is a secret with the arrival of the Xerox machine. The only secret is the unwritten one.

'I don't regret what I did. Living in a rural constituency, I heard the rumblings long ago.

'The last warning I gave about possible racial strife was when I talked to the University of Malaya Graduates Society in April that year.

'I knew the letter would cost me my future. But I felt I could bear the Tunku's displeasure better than most. I didn't have to depend on politics for a living.

'After I was expelled, people were scared to come and see me. They felt they might be incriminated. There was a policeman watching the house.'

He paused, and then said with a smile. 'I didn't mind it at all. I wasn't planning to subvert the Government. Later I moved round with UMNO people again.

'Most of my Chinese friends didn't cut themselves off. All they told me was that the Chinese were not happy over what I said. Of course, after that there was a campaign to prevent Chinese patients from coming to my clinic.'

He had said that while he did not want to rejoin UMNO, 'I will not betray the ideals on which the UMNO was formed.'

His quarrel was not with the party but with its past. But the chapter with the Tunku was closed and Mahathir never revived it.

Meanwhile, Mahathir continued to be active. His was the voice of a section of the people yet to be satisfied with the changes envisaged for them by a new leadership. But he spoke not as a partisan but as a Malay. And as if to reassure his audience, he said that he was not thinking of joining any opposition party.

There was then a move to bring him back to the party. The UMNO special delegates conference marked the turning point.On this, Mahathir commented: 'There are encouraging signs within the party.'

Soon afterwards Mahathir said: 'There is a possibility that I might return. If I am wanted, I will return.'

He observed that the party had become more practical and that both the party and the Government were paying more attention to the views of the ra'ayat.

It was during this period that Tun Abdul Razak made a public statement on Mahathir. He said Dr Mahathir had not made any official application to rejoin the party.

Before rejoining the Party Mahathir was forthright. He emphasised that he would not rejoin UMNO until he was convinced that his

application would be accepted.

Mahathir expressed the hope that if he returned he would be allowed to express his views without hindrance and that acceptance of his application would be unconditional so that 'I can play my part to the full in the interests of the party and the nation.'

Then came the announcement that he had rejoined the Party.

Recalling the incident the Tunku said Mahathir did not see eye to eye with him and with his policies.

'Now he has come to the position of Prime Minister — he will know what I had to go through and he should be able to adjust himself to his new office.

'Being a leader of this country, I must add, is the will of God. And so like a true leader, he must honour the pledges he has made to his fellowmen and to bend himself to the will of God.'

Mahathir's return to the political limelight coincided with the growth of coalition politics in this country. How did he view the attempt to forge a National Front? This took place some years ago but it is still pertinent.

To quote what Mahathir said then: 'This is a strange thing perhaps for a politician to say, but I think politics should be downgraded in this country.

'Concentration should be in the field of development, on economic well-being rather than on politics, because whether we like it or not, politics tends to divide, and this country can accept only a certain degree of division.

'I would rather see people come together and sincerely work out plans so that everybody will have a fair share in all the good things available here.

'So if people can forget a bit of their party politics and concentrate on this, I think we would achieve more and would create greater stability in this country.'

He thinks the PAS-Alliance coalition was probably the most significant development in Malaysian party politics since Merdeka.

'I think if you look at the attitude of PAS in the past, you could never have imagined that they would ever enter into any close relationship with the Alliance.

'Their ideas on how to do things in this country are completely different from those of the UMNO or the Alliance. For example,

they have always maintained that they will not work with other races in this country.

'But now there is this view that it is important to accept what is already a fact: that other races are here, and whether you like it or not, they have political as well as economic power. So it is far better to find ways and means to work out to achieve the aims of PAS through working with others.

'This change of attitude is radical for them, something that is so radical that a big proportion of their followers have not been able to accept it yet.'

On internal politics between PAS and UMNO Mahathir says, 'the animosity between PAS and UMNO members is not political as much as just plain dislike for the other chap.'

He painted a hypothetical situation of a village where if somebody joins UMNO, the person who doesn't like him would join PAS because he wants to be in a party different from that of the man he dislikes.

'The principal motive behind joining a party is not so much politics as personal dislike. And they do not want to come together again just because the parties have come together.

'All they are doing is to utilise the party strength to back their own grievances against another chap.'

When asked how he thought the rank and file of PAS and UMNO were going to reconcile themselves to each other he said:

'This is the sort of thing that has to percolate from the top. It will be a case of the top leadership convincing the lower rungs of the leadership, and then slowly perhaps it might get down to the bottom.'

Mahathir was obviously convinced that this was not going to be an easy task.

'I have tried to bring members of the two parties together but I have invariably failed. I doubt very much whether in a single village the people who are in the warring factions will ever come together.'

When asked why he did not stand for election earlier, Mahathir said he regreted this. 'I was too idealistic then. I had insisted that all candidates should be qualified men.

'I realised afterwards you've got to be fairly well-known to be taken seriously. That was why I stood for election only in 1964.'

Mahathir won by a majority of 4,210 votes over his PMIP opponent. But he lost in the 1969 election.

Mahathir is an ambitious man. He said this some years ago: 'I

don't want to be Mentri Besar. I am interested in too many things to confine myself to Kedah. I want a bigger field. I would like to influence national policy. The actual post is irrelevant. But it must be one through which I can engender good.'

It was during the anxious period that he was out of UMNO that Mahathir wrote *The Malay Dilemma* in which he analysed the problems faced by Malays and bitterly criticised the Government especially the Tunku.

The Ministry of Home Affairs banned the book but it was sold in Singapore.

Referring to his book, Dr Mahathir says: All I was asking for was fair treatment for the Malays, for the national interest . . . . . I was asking for the have-nots to be given a chance. The bumiputras must participate, though not by ousting everybody or taking over the whole show for I don't believe the others should take over in whatever field.

'I do not believe that bumiputras should take over everything for themselves. In that way there will be no fairness. I have been consistent in asking for fair treatment — for all.

'We have to bend over backwards so that in the rebound you get the median line. You have to be extreme a little, but not completely until you break,' he explains.

Strange as it may sound the supreme irony about *The Malay Dilemma* was that it remained banned while its author served the Government as the Minister of Education, then as the Minister of Trade and Industry and finally as the Deputy Prime Minister.

It was only a few days after he became the Prime Minister in July, 1981 that the Ministry of Home Affairs, headed by Datuk Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister, ordered the lifting of the ban.

This incident constitutes a rare event in the history of any Government in any part of the world where a book written by its Deputy Prime Minister was banned.

With the retirement of the Tunku the late Tun Razak became Prime Minister and Tun Hussein Onn (then Datuk) became the Deputy Prime Minister.

Tun Razak brought Mahathir back to UMNO in which he was subsequently appointed a member of the Supreme Council in 1972 and as a Senator in 1973.

His advent in Parliament was marked by several important

speeches especially those made when he was a back-bencher. Being once an outspoken critic of the Government, he has now to live down his old reputation as an *ultra*. Having served as the Deputy Prime Minister for as many as five years he has mellowed a great deal. He has learnt to curb his temper and control the tone of his utterances to exclude angry outbursts.

Despite his setbacks he remained loyal to the Government. He took what had happened with fortitude. All the same he says what must be said which few will care or dare to say.

He shows no rancour whatsoever for his expulsion from UMNO and his period in the political wilderness until he rejoined the party — the party to which he has always been known as the vehicle for the promotion of the bumiputra interest in a multi-racial Malaysia.

During this testing period he denied rumours that he was planning to form a new political party.

'There is enough disunity among Malays without my making it worse.'

When questioned then, he said he had no plans to rejoin UMNO.

'Whether I will rejoin is for me to decide not the UMNO divisions,' he said when told that some UMNO divisions were passing resolutions nominating him as a candidate.

While maintaining his independence he spoke at a PMIP rally during the Merbok by-election in Kedah. However, he denied that he had ever planned to join the PMIP.

During this period, the UMNO Youth pleaded for his return to UMNO. Mahathir returned to the fold after receiving an assurance that he was free to express his views because, he emphasised, he wanted to make a meaningful contribution.

Once again he made it known that he had not changed any of his principles. He also stressed that he was never against the non-Malays.

It was in 1973 that he was appointed the Chairman of the Food Industries of Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. (FIMA).

In this role he distinguished himself by reorganising the mess that existed in FIMA. Mahathir believes in consultations with his officers but the decisions are his own.

A big boost to his morale was his appointment to the Razak Cabinet as the Minister of Education in 1974. It was then that he pledged that he will try to do a good job for all Malaysians.

He introduced the amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act thus making university autonomy a thing of the past.

This move was opposed by academicians and others involved in education.

A strict disciplinarian, he did not hesitate to use necessary measures to silence the critics of the education policies.

Today all centres of higher learning are managed under the guidance of the Ministry of Education.

At the UMNO General Assembly in June 1975 he was elected one of the Vice-Presidents, defeating five other candidates.

After the sudden passing away of Tun Razak in London, Tun Hussein became the Prime Minister and he caused many eyebrows to be raised when he chose Mahathir as his Deputy Prime Minister over some senior ministers.

Mahathir's elevation to Deputy Prime Minister had added to the sense of foreboding in a Malaysia already beset by ethnic tensions, campus unrest and a small but threatening Communist insurgency.

Malaysia had eagerly looked forward to the naming of a Deputy Prime Minister as an indication of the direction Hussein Onn would take once the mourning period for the late Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak was over.

Hussein Onn himself suffered a major heart attack just the previous year and at 54 was hardly in perfect health. Were he to die in office, he would be succeeded by his deputy.

The problem was that Mahathir, as Deputy Prime Minister, seemed sure to stir anxieties among the country's Chinese and Indian minorities which were 34% and 10% of the population respectively.

What worried them was that Mahathir had long been an ardent 'Malay-firster', advocating measures to bring native Malays — bumiputras, or sons of the soil — into economic equality with the more advanced ethnic group.

To those who still argue that he is sometimes anti-Chinese and anti-Indian, Mahathir has this to say: 'I have been misinterpreted and misunderstood even at the time when I was labelled an *ultra*. I felt that the labelling was a political gimmick and that image is unacceptable to a large majority of Malaysians.

'All I was saying was that the Malays should have a fair share in the country's wealth, no more than that.'

Mahathir said he was following the policy and lines set by his predecessors. He stressed that as far as he and Datuk Musa Hitam

were concerned, they are not much at variance in terms of policy with the 'old guards'.

'It is only in terms of implementation that perhaps there may be a change of style. As you know, even as a Deputy Prime Minister, I have been more concerned with the running of the Government, which means having direct contact with the implementation. Although now I am the Prime Minister I'll continue to have this kind of approach towards implementation and I am quite sure Datuk Musa Hitam, too, is very much concerned about the carrying out of the policy and not so much of our confirmation of policy. I think the policy, as far as we are concerned, is all right.

'That is the part which will make the Government, the new Government, different from the previous one. Otherwise it will be the same.'

Despite his repeated assurances to Malaysians since he became Prime Minister, doubts still persist in some circles as to the policies that he will adopt now and in the years ahead.

It is the earnest hope of all Malaysians that the new Prime Minister will always bear in mind that he has a duty to prove that his Government will be fair to all citizens irrespective of race or creed. He should prove by deeds rather than by words that both Malays and non-Malays have a future in this country.

According to one senior citizen who has known him from University days, Mahathir has mellowed a great deal in recent years especially since he became the Deputy Prime Minister.

To all appearances Mahathir has set the right mood for the continued progress of Malaysia. That his prescription for peace and progress will prove beneficial is what all Malaysians are hoping for.

In passing, let me quote what the late Tun Abdul Razak, our former Prime Minister, once said:

'Now as the Prime Minister I am no longer one of many but a public property. I have even lost any kind of monopoly over my own time. There is also no longer for me such a luxury as a private life . . . . Whatever I do anywhere and what I don't do will be of public interest. Whatever I say will be noted, recorded and published and whatever I don't say may also sometimes be said to have been said!'

Like the late Tun Razak then, Mahathir belongs to the nation today. And the only choice before him is to move carefully and cautiously to win the goodwill and support of all Malaysians and not of the Malays alone.

Those interested in the continued growth of Malaysia will welcome Mahathir's assurance that since the promulgation of the New Economic Policy and the switch in Government policy, the Malay dilemma is no longer what he spoke of in his book. He thinks it is now up to the bumiputras.

'The opportunity is there, the money is there, and there is scope for training . . . In a very competitive world, given the opportunity, success is not guaranteed. The bumiputras must be prepared for competition. We can't just put money into their pockets — although we have done so in many instances like giving out shares, but where is the money now?

'The bumiputras must learn to manage money. Again I am being very frank. Even with Malays I have always been frank.

'We live in a difficult world. Nobody owes us a living. Anything that is unfair the Government can eliminate, but the Government cannot be expected to be unfair the other way. It is up to the bumiputras really now,' he stressed.

In all that Mahathir has done so far, he has shown a capacity for hard work and the ability to tackle all problems however formidable they may be.

The Mahathir style is distinctly different from that of his predecessor, Tun Hussein Onn.

He makes quick decisions unlike Hussein Onn who is too cautious and too careful. Hussein always thought of the repercussions if he made any unpopular decisions.

Mahathir has a fine record of notable achievements — first as the Minister of Education and later as the Minister of Trade and Industry.

Judging by the guidelines he has given his fellow Ministers and secretaries-general of Ministries, Mahathir wants things done and done quickly. In this process he wants the elimination of red-tape and dilly-dallying. He is in a hurry to prove that his Cabinet is result-oriented.

He wants the many projects of the various Ministries to be implemented at the earliest possible date. Mahathir does not mind work. He has spoken out against lethargy and laziness. 'No more *tiada-apas*,' he says.

Work, work and more work appears to be the substance of his call to all the Ministers and heads of Ministries. In fact it is a message —

loud and clear — for all Government officials to heed.

In a few well-chosen words he emphasised: 'Nobody owes us a thing. I have been telling the people, especially the Malays, to work. They can't depend on the Government to give them everything.'

Mahathir has echoed effectively the stirring words of the late President John F. Kennedy:

> 'Ask not what your country can do for you —
> Ask what you can do for your country.'

He has already told his fellow Ministers and the secretaries-general of the various Ministries to implement all their projects within a year to enable him and his Cabinet to assess the work done. Mahathir has also advised his Ministers and the heads of Ministries and other senior officials to adopt more positive measures to reduce bureaucratic supervision and control.

The Prime Minister has set an example of speeding up work. He goes to his office as early as 8 a.m. This action has resulted in other Ministers and senior officials doing likewise.

A tribute was paid to Mahathir by none other than the father of the nation and first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. 'Dr Mahathir has become impartial towards all and appears to know that well-being and safety of this country inevitably depends on the goodwill and friendship among people of all races and creeds.

'There should be no uneasiness as to his ability and capability to take over the all-important post of Prime Minister of Malaysia. It will be safe for all and nobody need lose any sleep over his appointment as the Prime Minister.'

The confident assertion by the Tunku, once a critic of Mahathir, should allay the fears of non-Malays.

Mahathir, the outspoken man with a mind of his own, has taken over the reins of Government with the blessings of his predecessors Tun Hussein Onn and the Tunku.

No doubt he has begun well. He will of course face challenges in various fields but he will and must remain steadfast in his drive to give a new, and more aggressive, drive to produce results that are convincing.

The Tunku put it without any ambiguity when he said: 'In implementing the policy he must take care not to ram it down

people's throats, as one would force a square peg into a round hole, but to do it with wisdom and caution, so as not to frighten away big business enterprise from Malaysia.

'We have the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, the Rulers and Islam as the official religion. These undeniably are our credentials and stakes in the country.'

The other communities have never contested the fact that the Malays have their rights and these are written in the constitution.

In administration, the ratio in the MCS recruitment is four Malays to one other, but in the non-MCS categories the non-Malays are the majority.

'The economic power, however, has been in the hands of the non-Malays and so with the small businesses. With most democratic countries, the power that controls the economy of the country is the power that holds the reins of the Government.

'This is the case with the US and Japan. Our country, however, is different.

'The economic and political powers are in different hands and each is conscious of its own strength and has pursued it with pride and great perseverance to the extent that it has become the monopoly of each community to hold on tenaciously to its power.'

Mahathir did well to emphasise: 'I am not saying that the Malays should be given a status so superior that they will suppress others and I don't think anybody will disagree on the issue that Malays, Chinese and Indians should have their fair share in this country's wealth.'

The problems he and his Cabinet face are many — some difficult and some time-consuming. According to the new Prime Minister, with patience, tact and hard work, nothing is impossible.

The targets of the New Economic Policy are scheduled to be completed in ten years' time.

Mahathir has an important role to play in promoting the process of peace especially in Malaysia and among her neighbours. He has begun well by visiting Indonesia where he conferred with President Suharto and leaders of his Government early in August 1981.

This was followed by his meeting with the Prime Minister of China. This mission of peace and goodwill was followed by his official visit to Thailand.

Then came the visit to Singapore. His talks with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was a big success.

At home there are areas that call for his urgent attention. I refer to the uplifting of the lot of the rural people. Continued efforts should be made to eradicate poverty — for poverty still exists.

With our vast of natural resources Mahathir should be able to show an impressive record of achievements in the various fields of human endeavour within the first year of his term of office as Prime Minister.

Mahathir will do well by taking advantage of the benefits of the experience of his immediate predecessor.

In Datuk Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mahathir has a dynamic and a much younger man to assist him. Indications are that together they will achieve a lot more in the first year than any other Malaysian Cabinet in the past.

The nation will give its full backing to Mahathir and his team to achieve their lofty aims for Malaysia's peace, progress and prosperity.

A man of many interests, Mahathir is an all-rounder. He is interested in sports and music. He plays the trumpet but he doesn't blow his own trumpet as his son once jokingly told other members of the family.

Music is a leisure in which the whole family is interested. They have enough musicians to form an orchestra. Dr Hasmah plays the violin. So does Mirzan. Melinda plays the organ and Mukhriz the drums while Mahathir makes the loudest noise with his trumpet!

If music be the food of love, then play on.

Mahathir is also a craftsman of calibre. He has a workshop in the basement of his house. When time permits he works there for several hours. His main hobby is carpentry. He has built five boats. He has also tried his hand at wood carving, rubber stamping, copper work and decorative mirror framing.

That is not all his catalogue of hobbies. Interior decoration is another of his interests. He is quite meticulous about choosing the right colours for his room. The colour scheme and design of the rooms are his prerogative.

According to Datin Seri Dr Hasmah he goes to any lengths to have the painting of rooms and their design done in the way he wants.

According to Dr Hasmah, there is not a room in their house that he (Dr Mahathir) has not poked a finger in!

This includes the kitchen because another of Mahathir's hobbies is cooking! Whenever he is in the kitchen, Dr Hasmah does not

interfere. 'In fact, I don't look when he cooks!' she added. According to his wife, when the doctor cooks, he throws everything in at the same time or in the wrong order! 'But in the end whatever he cooks comes out all right and the family enjoys it,' says Dr Hasmah with a smile.

Mahathir cooks when he feels like having a dish that he is fond of.

Of all hobbies, the one which Mahathir is passionately interested in is writing. His wife also shares this pastime.

Mahathir wants to be with his family as often as possible but of late and even when he was the Deputy Prime Minister he had little time to be at home to share the company and the thoughts of his wife and children.

The children are quite a robust lot with plenty of interests of their own. But they seldom miss an opportunity to talk to their father. When he is free, they will ask him all kinds of questions.

He is patient with his children. As their mother says, 'They have probing minds and would argue with him about some issues.'

What? Politics even at home?

The Datin emphasised otherwise, 'There is no opposition member under our roof. So everything is peaceful at home whether we agree or not.'

Sometimes the children play the devil's advocate to find out his feelings on certain issues. But he knows when to adjourn the 'debate'



The Mahathirs with their children: (from left to rigth) Melinda, Mirzan, Mokhzani, Marina and Mukhriz.

sine die!

Mahathir admits with a rueful smile that he is a stickler for work. Perhaps, he says, this is due to his strict upbringing by a teacher-father who was as much a teacher at home as he was in school. He did not appreciate it much at the time, but he grew up to be grateful for that upbringing.

There were nine children and not much money to spare. He remembers walking home from school on hot tarred roads that were not very kind to his bare feet; but the firm discipline at home helped them all to make something of themselves.

A father of five, Mahathir believes in giving his children a lot of room to grow up in and encourages them to be independent. However, in things like studies and good manners he tolerates no nonsense.

Even to this day he remembers his humble beginning and the difficulties he had faced as a boy. Since his youth he has been a man of compassion. His constant concern is for the welfare of the handicapped and the poor.

For instance, when two Indian youngsters, both handicapped, decided to get married recently in Kuala Lumpur, Mahathir was there to congratulate them on their wedding day at the K.L. Hilton.

Out of the ten scholarships given to students out of his own pocket in his father's name, nine went to Chinese boys and girls.

Mahathir has also found jobs for many non-Malays. He has signed letters of guarantee for several of them who went overseas for higher studies and has also recommended many more for further studies.

Now that his Cabinet has begun work, Mahathir should be able to steer the ship of state smoothly and yet speedily to its destination.

Malaysians have witnessed the trauma and tension of the past few months and all Malaysians will wish Mahathir and his Cabinet the success that they richly deserve.

As the Tunku has put it: 'Let us hope that the new Prime Minister will lead this nation to ever greater glory. Good luck to him.'

His services to the nation in various fields have been recognised. The first to honour Dr Mahathir was H.R.H. the Sultan of Kedah with the title of Seri Setia Di Raja Kedah on the occasion of his birthday on June 8, 1977. The Yang Di Pertua Negeri, Sarawak, conferred on him the State's highest award, the Datuk Patinggi Bintang Kenyalang (D.P.) in 1980.

Dr Mahathir also headed the list of 881 people honoured by the Sabah Yang di Pertua Negeri (Governor), Tun Haji Mohamed

Adnan Robert, on his birthday on September 10, 1981. He received the State's highest award, Sri Panglima Darjah Kinabalu (SPDK) which carries the title of Datuk.

His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak conferred on him the Seri Paduka Cura Cimanja Kini (SPCM) which carries the title of Datuk Seri.

Writing about Dr Mahathir I am reminded of another doctor — the famous Dr Charlie Drew — whose pioneering work in World War II laid the foundation for today's vast blood programme of the American Red Cross.



His Majesty the King confers the SSAP decoration on Dr Mahathir.

The unforgettable Dr Drew once exhorted his medical students: 'Dream high — dream high enough and work hard enough and we will get where we want to go!'

Today, Dr Mahathir also exhorts Malaysians to work hard, hard enough to get where we want to go.

Malaysians would do well to heed and act on the timely exhortations of the Prime Minister.

I commend the stirring words and command of Allah in Surah 10 verse 109 of the Holy Quran:

'Follow thou the inspiration sent unto thee,
and be patient and constant, till God do decide:
for He is the best to decide.'

CHAPTER THREE

The Unprecedented Move – that Fateful Letter to Bapa Malaysia

I desire you would use all your skill to paint any picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay you a farthing for it.

— OLIVER CROMWELL

Having profiled Dr Mahathir, I must now mention what is up till now the most dramatic event in his political career.

I refer to the now infamous letter that the doctor wrote to the Tunku at a time of great tension in the country following the May 13, 1969 riots.

I have made a brief reference to this incident in the previous chapter but more needs to be said because it was the first critical letter that anyone had written to the Tunku, the Father of Malaysia.

To begin with, Mahathir had chosen the wrong time to criticise the Tunku and his Government. Futhermore, the letter contained 'vitally important party matters', which should have been in the first instance submitted to the Executive Council of UMNO for discussion.

What happened after the letter was received by the Tunku and the subsequent distribution of copies to University students is now part of the post-war history of Malaysia.

Some details of that letter and the events that followed, especially the decisions taken by the Executive Council of the UMNO, follow.

Political observers in Malaysia asked many questions when Mahathir's letter was made public. Was Mahathir 'a lone ranger' or did he have the tacit backing or blessing of some senior leaders of UMNO?

Whatever the answer, it must be said that the letter caused a stir in the country especially on the University campus. Wild rumours

spread throughout the country and once the late Tun Ismail, the then Minister of Home Affairs, had to warn the students to behave.

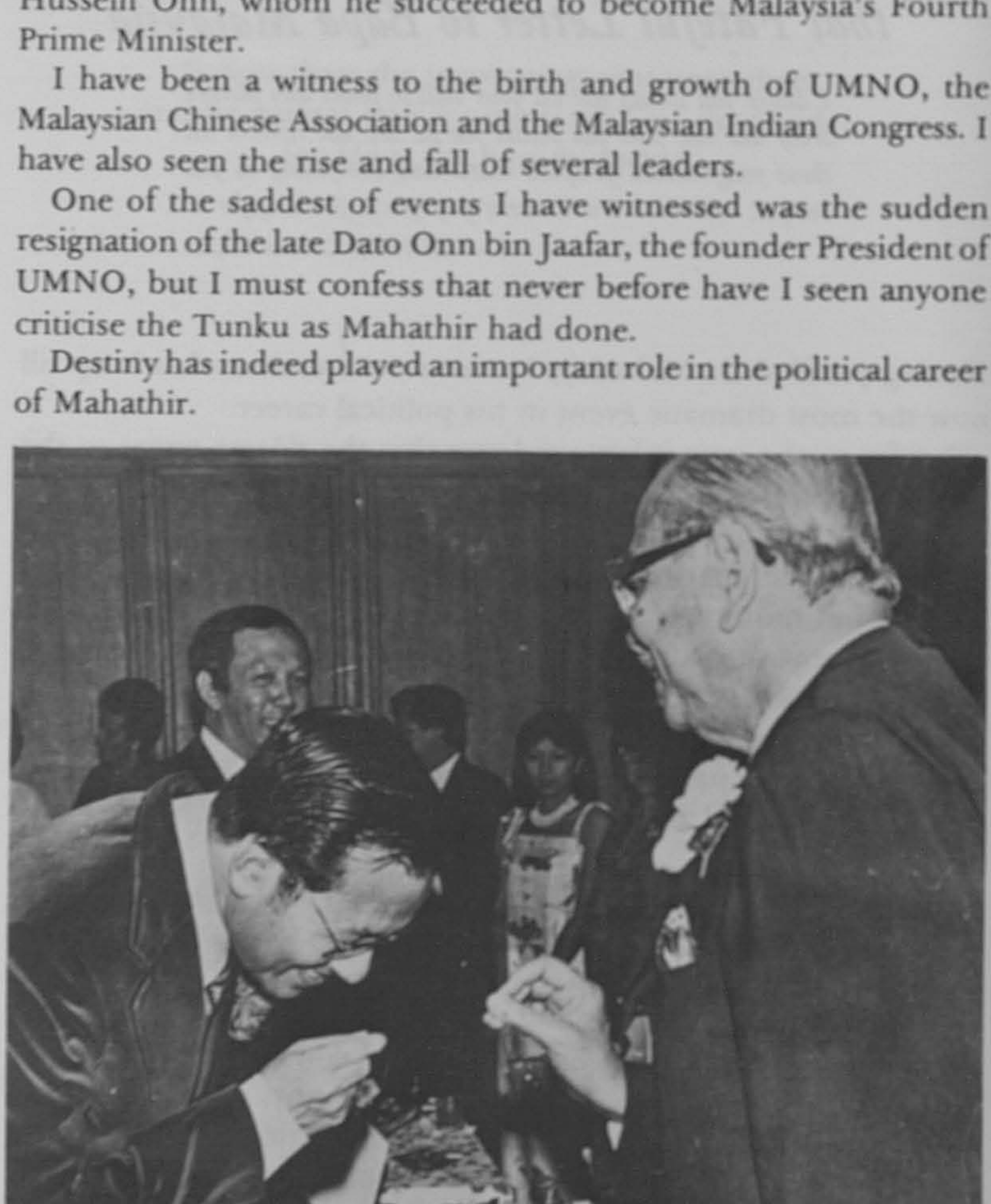
At this stage suffice it to say that despite the serious setback that he had suffered, Mahathir eventually emerged stronger than ever when he was re-admitted as a Member of the UMNO.

Tun Razak, who had 'discovered' Mahathir earlier, appointed him a Senator. From then on he had gone from strength to strength until his elevation to the position of Deputy Prime Minister by Tun Hussein Onn, whom he succeeded to become Malaysia's Fourth Prime Minister.

I have been a witness to the birth and growth of UMNO, the Malaysian Chinese Association and the Malaysian Indian Congress. I have also seen the rise and fall of several leaders.

One of the saddest of events I have witnessed was the sudden resignation of the late Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the founder President of UMNO, but I must confess that never before have I seen anyone criticise the Tunku as Mahathir had done.

Destiny has indeed played an important role in the political career of Mahathir.



Dr Mahathir greets Tunku Abdul Rahman.

The historian Toynbee compared human societies to climbers on a cliff. Some have found poor niches on the rock and are content to rest where they are; static, petrified, unwilling to venture any higher. By contrast dynamic leaders disdain the mean shelter of the rock-faces; they aspire to the heights and willingly risk the danger of a fall for the glory of the summit.

In some ways this metaphor sums up the determination of Dr Mahathir who decided to leave the beaten old paths that have proved to be dead-ends, to strive for the heights.

It was probably this philosophy that prompted him to think the unthinkable and send that fateful letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman, the then Prime Minister. This angered UMNO and Mahathir was expelled for a serious breach of Party discipline by making public copies of letters 'containing vitally important Party matters.'

The decision to drop Mahathir from the UMNO Executive Council was taken after a three-hour emergency meeting held at the residence of the late Tun Abdul Razak who was the then Deputy Prime Minister.

So serious was the situation that a tight security was thrown around Tun Razak's house. All entrances and exits were sealed off by armed policemen. Newsmen were not allowed near the area during the meeting.

At 4.05 p.m. the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Datuk Hamzah bin Dato Abu Samah, who was present at the meeting, gave newsmen a 17-line statement by the UMNO Secretary-General, Encik (now Datuk) Senu bin Abdul Rahman.

The statemen read: 'A special meeting of the UMNO Executive Council was held to consider the action that should be taken regarding the widespread distribution of copies of correspondence between Dr Mahathir, a member of the Executive Council, and Tunku Abdul Rahman, the President of the UMNO.

'The letters contained vitally important party matters and details which in view of the present situation in the country should have been first discussed by the Executive Council of UMNO.

'The meeting decided that the action of Dr Mahathir constituted a serious breach of party discipline and regulations which unchecked would destroy the unity within the party and the Government which is supported by the party.

'The Council, attended by all Cabinet Ministers and Mentris Besar who are members of the Council, decided that Dr Mahathir has ceased to be a member of the Council as from today.

'The Tunku was not present at the meeting.'

But Dr Mahathir was present.

Several dramatic events followed the expulsion of Mahathir.

The Government banned all copies of a letter purported to have been written by Dr Mahathir addressed to Tunku Abdul Rahman on June 17, 1970.

Five other documents were also banned.

An order made by the Minister of Home Affair, Tun (Dr) Ismail, under the Internal Security Act, banned the publication, sale, distribution or possession of copies of the letter and other documents entitled:

Tentera Pembela Tanah Ayer (The National Liberation Army),

Allah yang Maha Pengaseh lagi Penyayang (Allah, the most merciful and kind),

Perjuangan orang yang bukan Melayu (The struggle of the non-Malays), purported to have been written by Raja Mokhtaruddin Dain of the University of Malaya,

Letter to the Tunku, dated July 9, written by Kamabui Raayat Bersatu Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur and

Memorandum to the National Operations Council, purported to have been written by 'Petamis Miskin dan Marhaen' (The poor farmer and urban dweller).

Members of the public were advised to surrender copies of the banned documents to the nearest police station as soon as possible.

The Government ban on the letter had the support of a Pan-Malayan Islamic Party leader.

This was made clear in a statement issued by the National Vice-President of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, Encik Hassan Adli bin Haji Arshad, before the Ministry of Home Affairs announced the ban.

Encik Hassan Adli's statement posted in Teluk Anson, Perak, arrived in Kuala Lumpur by post.

Urging the Ministry to impose the ban, the statement said that in the tense atmosphere the letter could be used by extremist groups as 'a time-bomb' and could also be exploited by anti-national elements to challenge the authority of the National Operations Council.

Encik Hassan Adli said he had received a copy of the letter. Although politically the PMIP could gain from part of the contents of the letter, 'It does not want to fish in troubled waters by taking advantage of a personal crisis. It is not gentlemanly.'

CHAPTER FOUR

It Has Shattered All I Have Done For The Nation . . .

When the Tunku received 'the secret letter' from Dr Mahathir and heard that it had been made public he said that it had shattered all the good that he had done for the nation over the past 17 years.

In an exclusive interview with Utusan Zaman, the Tunku complained: 'There are groups instigating students to hate me — A drop of ink and a piece of paper have shattered my sacrifices and services to the nation over the last 17 years.'

In relating his past role and the sacrifices he has made for the people, especially the Malays, the Tunku said: 'Dr Mahathir himself knows the sacrifices I have made for the nation which has left me a pauper.'

He had little money and had to sell some of his property to pay his income tax in instalments of $2,000 a month.

Dr Mahathir was also aware of how he saved the Malays after the Japanese surrender without any care for his personal safety.

'But now all this burden seems to have been placed upon my shoulders,' he said.

The Tunku rejected the suggestion that the May 13 disturbances were the result of Government action in commuting the death sentences of the 11 Chinese youths for consorting with Indonesians during the confrontation.

'Why must the pardon for the 11 Chinese be only mentioned and not the two Malay youths who were also pardoned?' he asked.

Furthermore, 'the disturbances only happened a year after the sentence.' The Tunku said that he was now being blamed for the death of innocent people.

The situation was aggravated by the procession through the Federal Capital for a youth shot dead by the police in Kepong a few days before the general election.†

†I witnessed this procession from my office on the second floor of Chan Wing Building in Mountbatten Road (now Jalan Tun Perak). The crowd was in an ugly mood. If there had been any attempt to stop the procession by the police, something

The procession carried placards and slogans of Mao Tsetung. One said: *Blood will be paid with blood.*

'This angered the Malays,' the Tunku said.

The action taken by the Government to commute the death sentences of the condemned youths followed strong pressure from all sections of the community. Some newspapers had also campaigned to save their lives.

The Tunku felt that if their sentences were not commuted at that time, then clashes would have taken place in the country.

What he did was to save the lives of the people and the steps he took prevented any serious incidents from taking place.

The Tunku emphasised that he was determined to ensure the safety of the people and their property.

'If not, why should I work for the existence of harmony among the people of this country,' he asked.

He then referred to the student demonstrations at the University of Malaya, the MARA Institute of Technology and the Muslim College.

According to the Tunku, lecturers at the University who took part in the general election campaign were responsible for instigating the students to hate him.

'They did that by distributing copies of the letters (Dr Mahathir's) sent to me.'

Tunku believed that this was done in an attempt to oust him as the influential leader of the Alliance.

'They know that I am the symbol of the Alliance. I have to be ousted in order to topple the Alliance.

'What I regret is when youths whom we have financed to further their studies are spoilt by irresponsible people,' he said.

A slogan was found in the University Mosque which read: *Tunku's regime is the colonial and feudal regime.* 'Was this not the work of the Communist Party and Party Raayat?' he asked.

On the results of the general election, the Tunku said all citizens had a freedom of choice.

serious would have happened.

The Tunku should be congratulated for not ordering the police to check the march of the procession. At that time, discretion was indeed better than valour. However, Dr Mahathir thinks that the Tunku should not have given permission for members of the Opposition party to hold the procession to celebrate their victory as the ruling party, the Alliance, had lost a number of seats to the Opposition and the Malays were in a state of great tension.

He was confident that the Malays could maintain a two-thirds majority in Parliament if they were not divided and warned that their own deeds could destroy their political power.

The Government was doing everything to help the Malays. In fact, they were being cared for from the womb to the tomb.

The Tunku also brushed aside foreign newspaper reports that his deputy, Tun Abdul Razak, had taken over power from him. He made it clear that Tun Razak had not robbed him of power, rather he had delegated his power to him.

The state of emergency needed an active person like Tun Razak.

'I myself realise that I am not strong from the health point of view, but I still took part in the elections because of the party.

'If I did not take part, then the people could have said that I no longer cared for the party and its interests.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Mahathir's Political Philosophy

'I believe in open discussion and solving problems openly. Hiding things, being nice, does not take us very far. There is a defect in being nice because one is very likely to be taken for granted. And as far as I'm concerned I'm not going to be nice.

'As far as our foreign policy is concerned we would like to be friendly with all countries irrespective of their way of government. They may practise socialism or communism. But so long as they refrain from intruding in our internal affairs, they are our friends. I want Malaysians to be co-operative and disciplined in order to maintain progress.'

Mahathir's dream is to make Malaysia 'a productive and efficient nation but the people must be willing to sacrifice time and effort.'

He has urged Malaysians not to depend solely on political leaders and told Government employees to improve efficiency by contributing effectively.

'A productive and efficient Malaysia is a way to overcome our economic and social problems,' says Mahathir.

He stressed that speaking forcefully at times does not make him an *ultra* or extremist.

'I believe I have moderate views — I'm not an *ultra* or extremist. These are just labels politicians like to give their rivals in order to colour everything they say. If you examine all that I have said, I will admit to forthrightness and frankness but I will not admit to being extreme.'

On the occasion of his being appointed Deputy Prime Minister, one reporter asked him why some people described him as an extremist politician. Mahathir replied: 'First of all, you have to decide what is an extremist Malay politician. I would consider myself as a very frank politician who likes to speak up whenever there is something that has to be said.

'For example, during the years when I was serving as a Member of Parliament I made an attempt to correct various impressions that

were to me quite wrong in fact.

'There was, for example, an accusation that the Government departments were filled up almost entirely by Malays. Now, what I did was to go through the Federal list of office holders and I pointed out in Parliament that in actual fact in Division One, for example, only one third of the officers were Malays.

'Despite the fact that we have a lot of Malays as administrative officers in the MCS only one-third of the total number of division officers are Malays. I discovered this on checking up to find out whether there was any truth in the accusation that everything is being monopolised by the Malays. Naturally when I pointed this out those who had been using this as an excuse for attacking the Government did not like me; and so they labelled me an extremist.'

Continuing Mahathir said, 'If speaking the truth makes one an extremist I would consider myself a Malay extremist. But if I am expected to deal with facts and the truth, I don't see how else I can get about doing things without resorting to statistics and other figures. There were other things that made others accuse me of being an extremist — when I pointed out things which were not right in society and which had to be corrected.

'Was I an extremist when I pointed out that unless certain things were corrected it could lead to racial tension and it could lead to riots?' Mahathir asked.

It is significant to note that the same principles of pragmatism and fair play dominate his thoughts on national and international problems.

Indicative of this attitude is the fact that at the Third Islamic Conference in January, 1981 he took members of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) to task for their failure to establish effective economic co-operation among themselves.

He typified the amount invested in other Islamic countries by Islamic nations as mere drops in the ocean.

'Talking of Islam brotherhood alone is not enough,' he argued. 'What they needed most is the establishment of meaningful economic relations that are mutually beneficial.'

In a hard-hitting speech delivered at the 11th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, he condemned the attitudes of some developed nations for the 'blatant negativeness and the inexplicable resentment' they held against the proposal for establishing a new, fair and just international economic order.

He took developed nations to task for 'wasteful consumption'

while 'some 700 million people in the developing countries suffer from malnourishment . . . '

Mahathir argued that the developing countries are not seeking benevolence from the affluent ones, but merely a 'state of mutual survival under conditions of peace and stability.' He urged the developing countries not to 'seek a relationship of charity and dependence' and said that their focus is one that 'has long shifted from aid to trade.'

To return to matters Malaysian: after the desecration of several Hindu temples in May, 1979, Mahathir criticised the group of Muslims involved in this incident for creating alarm among Malaysians of all races and religions.

'Their actions,' Mahathir said, 'are in conflict with Islamic teachings and can spark racial enmity.

'The group has made use of twisted interpretations of Islamic teachings for the benefit of several of its leaders . . . The notion they spread is that those who destroy idols in temples will go to Heaven, even if they had earlier committed acts against Islamic teachings.

'They intend to cause racial strife in the country by propagating such false teachings . . . When racial trouble breaks out, the group's leaders will benefit politically, and move into positions of influence.'

In December, 1979, after exhorting Malaysians not to be misled by fanatical groups and extremists, he stressed that 'Islam does not preach extremism, but moderation. It is the Government's policy of moderation which has brought Malaysia through 14 years of independence and made it a land of abundance for all communities.'

In April, 1981, Mahathir blamed a group of 'so-called intellectuals' who had tried to discourage Malaysian students from continuing their studies because these were 'secular and thus not permitted in Islam.' The Prime Minister then cited with regret the cases of 16 under-graduates of local universities who gave up their studies giving this belief as the reason.

Mahathir went on to explain the true Islamic stand on the matter of acquiring knowledge — that Muslims should pursue knowledge in all fields, secular as well as religious

Race and religion are explosive issues which are favourites with some who seek power, but which many who already have power would prefer to side-step. Mahathir still faces these issues squarely.

'The Government cannot ensure that all will succeed. It is really up

to the bumiputras. Many are still debating whether they should take the opportunities or not. Some condemn the NEP as being unfair when they themselves benefit. Others say that the NEP is 'unIslamic'.

'The NEP does not promise to make millionaires of every bumiputra. It only promises to improve the standards of all bumiputras,' he added.

On educational opportunities, he says: 'You cannot give scholarships to everybody so that they can study to become lawyers, engineers and doctors. Is the NEP, therefore, unfair because only the cleverer ones benefit? On that premise, you cannot give anything at all to anybody.

'The NEP is directed at improving the bumiputra's lot within his own capacity, on the basis of his own capability which the Government will try as far as possible to improve.'

Explaining how the NEP is helping the bumiputras he quotes the example of the padi farmer who produces more and gets a better income. 'He is helped with subsidies, fertilisers, tractors etc. He is upgraded as a padi planter. He benefits from the NEP as a padi planter. Remove the NEP, he will be the padi planter of the British period . . . . working six months a year, and then doing nothing else, with children having no education whatsoever.

'Everyone has been given what is his due. We cannot promise everyone to be successful,' he tells the Malays.

Mahathir said that how much money one makes depends on how one uses the facilities which the Government has provided.

He paused for effect and pointed out: 'If a farmer does not use the road that the Government has built to go to town to sell his produce for a higher return, but waits for someone from town to come to him to buy it at a lower price, he has only himself to blame.

'If, after the Government had provided irrigation facilities, the landowner sells it because of the higher value instead of cultivating the land to get a better, recurring income, he cannot blame the Government after he had used up the money from the sale.'

Mahathir's assurance is that 'the ownership of capital will be widespread. Everybody will have a chance. Equity disbursement will be so designed that even the poorest will have a share in ownership.'

He urged the bumiputras to seize the opportunity given to them and work hard. 'They must take their chances otherwise they will miss out,' he warned.

It is Mahathir's view that an elected government must be able to maintain a certain balance between firmness and laxity. It has a duty

to protect the nation and look after its welfare and security.

Mahathir believes that there should be a limit as to how far the press or public organisations should go.

'Organisations may have objectives but very little responsibilities. If as a result of their agitation there is a riot and people are killed, it is not their responsibility to stop the killing, it is our responsibility,' he emphasised.

In this manner the passing of the Societies Act (requiring certain groups to register as political societies) is seen as a way to keep an eye on organisations that may conduct subversive activities contrary to their objectives.

When asked to comment on the protests against the passing of the Act by nearly all sections of society, Mahathir answered: 'We had legislation before that was disliked by certain people . . . . However if we think it is not good for the country, we need no pressure from anybody. We will make our own decision.'

The Bill was passed through Parliament without any difficulty. The Opposition could not even muster enough votes to oppose the passage.

One eminent group that came out in full force to oppose the passing of the Bill was the Bar Council, the people well-versed in law and justice.

If the Bill did not constitute an erosion of democratic values in the country, the Bar Council, along with other groups like the MTUC, university staff and, most of all, Datuk Senu Rahman, a former Secretary-General of UMNO, would not have opposed it.

Democracy with a firm rule is hopefully what the Mahathir Government will be giving us. The recent release of the 21 political detainees under the Internal Security Act may testify to this. Though no reason was given for the release of the detainees, it was a significant act on the part of the new government. It generated a sense of confidence amongst the people in the new Government.

Mahathir's forthright approach to this issue and his answers to the appeals by those concerned indicates that democracy will survive in this country as it must.

Being one who likes to speak the truth and is not afraid of it, Mahathir will not be a very nice man for those who would not like to face their faults.

In an interview with *Asiaweek*, Mahathir admitted that he is 'not a

very nice personality'.

'I am not a very nice personality. I like to speak my mind and I may offend people in the process,' he confesses.

'When I said the Europeans had become lazy, people got annoyed. I don't know why. I was just stating the truth. Most people wouldn't say it; they would agree with me, but they wouldn't say it. I will say it.'

When asked whether he expects to offend anyone in Malaysia, he replied that he has offended the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians. He tells the Chinese that they must accept the effect of multi-racialism. He has urged the Malays to work hard to get their share of the cake.

On Malays and Government service, he told his compatriots more than ten years ago that Government service should be regarded as a stepping stone to bigger and better things.

'Once skill has been acquired,' he went on, 'they should not hesitate to go elsewhere for better employment. In fact they should be encouraged to do so.'

As one who knows hundreds of young Malays I must say that more and more of them seem to be taking this advice and are now engaged in business. This is an encouraging sign.

Mahathir points out that 'there never was true racial harmony in Malaysia will not be accepted by the vast majority of Malaysians especially of the older generation. I, for one, was educated in an English school in Ipoh where most of the students were Malays — sons of the rich and the poor. We studied and played together as members of one big happy family.'

This is the place to recall what I read in a book written by one of my dear friends, the late Dr Thio Chan Bee. A distinguished educationist and peace-maker, he gives a brief but touching account of an example of inter-racial harmony.

Dr Thio referred to a photograph in the Straits Times showing the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur with friends at the home of the late Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar, a former UMNO leader. They were paying their last respects and offering prayers in Malay for their Muslim friend.

Among those with the Archbishop were other Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, all kneeling at prayer with a Muslim family friend, Puan Hajjah Saleha binte Haji Ali.† It was a touching tribute

†Puan Hajjah Saleha is the eldest sister of Datin Seri Dr Hasmah, the wife of Dr Mahathir. She was a pioneer in the Malay nationalist movement led by the late Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the founder of UMNO.

to the spirit of inter-racial and inter-religious goodwill and understanding in Malaysia.

This amply proves that there is inter-racial harmony in Malaysia.

Mahathir wants the Malays to be less dependent on the Government. He wants the rural economy to grow by its own dynamic development. For this to happen, Mahathir will have to make sure that the agency handling any project is filled with professional and capable staff who are able to motivate the rural people and to inculcate in them some business acumen.

Mahathir has often told the Malays that they have to work hard in order to become rich like the Chinese and the Indians.

'The Government does not owe them a living,' is the advice he gives again and again after taking over as the Prime Minister.

The Mahathir of today is a pragmatic and firm leader popular among the majority of the people of all races.

With the achievements of the New Economic Policy still far below expectations he has to increase the pace. Hence, his impatience to get things done quickly.

On the home front he is satisfied with the progress made. Those who are doing well now include those from the class who were have-nots before. All have-nots are given equal opportunity.

To achieve the 1990 target of the New Economic Policy whereby bumiputras will be given 30% equity participation in the corporate sector, Mahathir will have to move faster than his predecessors. He feels that the Malays should have a more meaningful place in this country. At the present moment, bumiputra equity participation is just above 12% against the target of 16% for 1980. To achieve the 30% target, Mahathir cannot afford to alienate the other races by word or deed.

The Prime Minister has little patience for bureaucratic red-tape inefficiency. He wants considerable changes in the methods of implementation of development projects. One measure he has advocated is the creation of a one-stop agency in the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) to facilitate investment. Other areas to be covered will be the application and approval of industrial projects.

In his criticisms of Malaysians as a whole, Mahathir does not spare the Malays. 'What is required of the Malays in particular,' he says, 'is no longer the politics of championing demands but the recapturing of honourable attitudes and values which they had relinquished as a result of the administrative policies of colonial rulers.'

Early in his life he was pro-British, but with the advent of the Malayan Union after the liberation of Malaya, he joined the anti-Malayan Union movement under the leadership of the late Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the founder of UMNO.

In the post-war years Mahathir got deeper into politics. He was a member of the Sabarkas, the party that the Tunku patronised and advised. Khir Johari and Senu Rahman were prominent party members and his close friends.

Mahathir has blamed the British for the Malay dilemma. And when a British diplomat complained about Mahathir's criticism he replied: 'We were accused one time of being lazy. The Encyclopaedia Britannica described a Malay as indolent. If they can say that and say that openly, I see no reason why we cannot say what we believe about them especially if it is correct.'

Referring to his book *The Malay Dilemma*, he says: 'All I was asking then was fair treatment for the Malays. In those days the number of Malay students in the Universities was minute.'

Of course, since then the position of the Malays has changed dramatically for the better.

To get a clear insight of his thinking one must read his book in which he has criticised the various ways that Malaysian Government functioned in 1970 and earlier.

Among other things, Mahathir said that the general feeling was that whether or not the Parliament sat, the Government would carry on. According to him, the sittings were a concession to a superfluous democratic practice and that its strength lay in the opportunity to flaunt Government strength. From time to time, the Government, he said, used its strength to change the Constitution. He felt the manner, the frequency and the trivial reasons for altering the Constitution reduced the supreme law to a useless scrap of paper.

Another strong criticism he levelled at the Government then was the lack of superior skill at the helm of the Government.

The day to day decisions taken by the Government affected the country and the people. The Ministers were vested with the decision making authority. Dr Mahathir alleged that instead of having only the most capable and experienced as the Ministers, independant Malaya chose to treat membership of the Cabinet as a reward for loyalty to party chiefs and acceptability to the Prime Minister. He also alleged that once appointed, no amount of dereliction of duty could affect the position of a Minister.

Also, even if the Minister had performed well, his failure to remain

in good terms with the Prime Minister meant his removal from the Ministry.

As one who has known nearly all the former Ministers since the advent of independence I must say there is some substance and sincerity in this allegation of Mahathir's. However he must not forget some former Ministers including the late Abdul Rahman Talib, a former Minister of Education and Aziz Ishak, a former Minister of Agriculture lost their positions in the Cabinet for various reasons.

Referring to his frequent criticism of the British, Mahathir repeats: 'I will say exactly what I think. We have more contacts with the British than with anybody else. If there is no contact, there is no reason to say anything. Over large areas I have no complaints against the British. Indeed I can get on with the ordinary Englishmen quite easily. However, when they are wrong I will criticise them.'

As for irritation caused to the British over a Malaysian attempt to take over a British company,† he says: 'What is wrong with our making such a move if they can take such steps themselves?

'There is still a colonialist mentality prevailing — and the British should get rid of it. If a company is up for grabs, then anybody should be able to go for it, whether Malaysian or British. If we have the money, we buy. We don't nationalise because it is ethically wrong. But must a British company remain one forever?'

Elaborating on his reasons for criticising the British, Mahathir says: 'Unfortunately we have to buy things from them and every time they raise wages, we have to pay for it. When they pay out dole, we also contribute.

'When they buy rubber from us, they get it very cheap. By the time it is converted into something we have to buy back, the value added

†In just three hours Permodalan Nasional Berhad seized control of the British giant, the Guthrie Corporation, the British based plantation group that has substantial interests in Malaysia. This lightning coup, the most amazing in Malaysian corporate history, took place in London.

PNB is a holding company and the investment arm of the Bumiputra Investment Foundation, which was set up to help bumiputras own 30 per cent of the country's corporate wealth by 1990.

PNB is also the parent company of Amanah Saham Nasional, whose function is to pool the resources of bumiputras to buy shares in companies, through the National Unit Trust Scheme.

In a statement issued in London, PNB said it was making the takeover because it was unhappy with what Guthrie had been doing — such as not consulting it when it sold its 73 per cent stake in Guthrie Bhd. to Multi-Purpose Holdings, and when it bought up Page Airways of the United States.

is tremendous.

'So I have a right to criticise. If they want to produce and sell within their own country, by all means let them do it. But they are selling here within Malaysia. And we have to buy and pay very high prices. For what? To support a Welfare State? Whose welfare? Not ours.'

May the blessings and guidance of God, be with our Prime Minister and grant him

> . . . . . the courage
> to change the things
> that can be changed;
> the serenity to accept the
> things that
> cannot be changed
> and the wisdom
> to know the difference.

CHAPTER SIX

First Cabinet Post

Dr Mahathir's first post in the Malaysian Cabinet was that of Education Minister. He was appointed to the post by the then Prime Minister, the late Tun Abdul Razak bin Datuk Hussein in 1974.

Since independence the education portfolio has been one of the most difficult so much so that the man holding the post may be described as wearing a crown of thorns.

I say this deliberately because I am aware of the many problems faced by the previous Education Ministers.

No wonder Mahathir himself confessed on becoming the Education Minister: 'I know something about education and I have my own ideas on the subject. But I don't imagine I know everything. I want time to listen and learn. I am not moving in to give orders.'

He also said he would hold discussions with the staff of his Ministry and students and teachers. He would look into their difficulties and dissatisfactions and give due weight to their ideas.

'By and large I would be guided by the thinking of people involved in education in the country.

'The main objective of education is to develop positive attitudes in students so that they will become useful citizens.

'While it is important for you to attain high marks in examinations, attention must also be given to self-discipline,' he once said.

It is several years since he gave up this portfolio to become the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry.

I shall therefore attempt to give a brief review of what Mahathir had attempted and achieved — and not achieved — during his tenure as Education Minister.

On the national language he believed firmly in a simple language creating a single nationality.

'So long as we are without that language in the fullest sense, so long shall we be divided. The place of the national language in the education system is not something to be debated or bargained about.'

As for the freedom to study other languages, he said: 'That too is beyond question.'

Referring to English, he emphasised its usefulness as an extra tool for acquiring knowledge and technology.

Mahathir said that young Malaysians must master this language — and for certain fields other languages as well — to hold their own in the modern world.

On the Universities and University Colleges Act, he said he was aware of the feeling of some students regarding this Act and was willing to meet them for a discussion. If they could convince him that the Act curtailed academic freedom he was prepared to move to uphold that freedom.

'Academic freedom, however, must not be confused with licence to act or to influence others to act in ways that threaten the basic ideals of Malaysian society,' he stressed.

As Minister of Education, Mahathir was once asked by a reporter whether Malaysia was producing more graduates than needed. His reply was: 'We are still in the process of finding out our exact requirements in graduates in various fields. What is obvious is that we need more specialist teachers, agriculturalists, doctors and engineers.

'We also need organisers, managers, people with very good general education who can adapt their knowledge and skills to different situations.

'Until we have filled these needs — which keep expanding with the rapid development — we should not worry about producing excess graduates or about graduate unemployment. Some graduates are choosy about jobs, but that is another matter.'

Mahathir's education policies sparked resentment on the campuses in Malaysia. More than 5,000 students of the MARA Institute of Technology overran the campus in protest of disciplinary measures imposed by the Education Ministry.

Among the actions taken by the authorities was punishment for pot-smoking and un-Moslem behaviour between men and women.

Ironically, students had branded Mahathir anti-Malay, despite his reputation as a bumiputra nationalist, because Mahathir had been openly disgusted with the failure of ethnic Malay students to take advantage of the educational opportunity.

Mahathir's reputation and the importance of his post were most worrisome to Malaysia's ethnic minorities.

'I want him to remember,' said Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khoon, 'that

there is a Malaysian dilemma and after that, a Chinese and Indian dilemma.'

The Chinese and Indian communities have long been disturbed by what they regard as blatant anti-minority measures.

In addition to accepting more Malays into the universities — admissions in the humanities now run nine to one in favour of bumiputras — 'The Government,' added Dr Tan, 'has been trying to legislate Malay equality in the economy.'

The third Five Year Plan, ending in 1980, has laid down guidelines that will require all businesses in the country to have at least 30% of their equity in the hands of Malays.

'Similarly, many Chinese and Indians feel they are discriminated against by Malay-dominated government bureaucracy in everything from services like electricity and paved roads to the granting of business licenses. In fact, preferential treatment for Malays is probably necessary to redress the imbalances between the richer and the comparatively poor Malays, some 40% of whom earn an average of less than $70 a month.

'For the Chinese and the Indians, however, inroads into their traditional domains of education, business and the professions are irksome, particularly as less qualified Malays get priority over Chinese or Indians for jobs in business and the civil service.'

After taking over the education portfolio, Mahathir brought about certain changes and some visible improvements in the education system and has won admiration not only from educationists and intellectuals but also the masses as well.

A significant development relating to the growth of the country's institutions of higher learning which took place during his term of office was the introduction and enforcement of the Universities and University Colleges Act.

The Act, among other things, sought to ban students from holding office in trade unions, political parties and student organisations, from affiliating, or from doing anything that expressed support or sympathy or opposition to any political party or trade union.

The Act, which initially met strong opposition from certain student and political organisations, soon came in for full praise and support from the people.

As Education Minister, Mahathir had, to a certain extent, successfully settled the student disturbances on the University of Malaya

and MARA Institute of Technology campuses and several other problems relating to student-government relationship.

Mahathir spoke of the need for having more sophisticated methods of teaching. In this connection he urged universities in the country to study the possibilities and potentials of audio-visual aids in education.

He said Malaysia was still lagging behind in the use of modern aids in education and big changes were needed to make it more effective and beneficial.

Opening a seminar and exhibition on audio-visual aids at the Universiti Kebangsaan, he said most of the methods of teaching in schools and universities were still traditional.

Mahathir said that though the use of communication media and education technology were still new in Malaysia, the country had enough resources to exploit them.

He said the people must be open-minded and be prepared to accept new ideas and change old methods so as to make our education system more effective.

Interviewed soon after his appointment as Education Minister he told Adibah Amin of the New Straits Times, who was also an educationist, that Malaysia should have more scientists and technologists.

While aptitudes should be considered, the decision to do arts or science cannot be left entirely to children.

'Given complete freedom to choose, most children will choose not to study at all!' he said with a smile.

'Let us face it, we do compel them to study. Since we do this, we might as well try to determine what they should study.'

Producing scientists and technologists is not just a matter of facilities but, even more vitally, of values. Values must be changed from the very start of school life. And the change must begin with the teachers, for unless the teachers are themselves convinced, they cannot convince the children.

In fact, whatever field a young Malaysian is to enter, his values must be orientated to fit him for that field in particular and for modern living in general.

'You can spend thousands of dollars giving a chap a diploma or a degree, but if his value system remains unsuited to the modern environment your money has largely been wasted.'

Mahathir gave the example of modern business. A pile of certificates in business studies cannot ensure success if the person concerned fails to place a high enough value on team work and human relations.

'Most of our failures in business can be traced to this. This is where the Japanese are so far ahead of us.'

Mahathir feels that value-orientation is one of the Government's most important roles and that it should be brought within the scope of education.

Values, he says, greatly influence the very decision to remain in school or to drop out. A community which does not place a high value on education will have a higher drop-out rate than one which does.

'But then we must ask ourselves: Is staying on in school necessarily a good thing? Aren't there, for some children, more suitable alternative than the book education provided in our schools?

'People have been successful in life with little or no formal education. For some youngsters it may be best to leave school fairly early and go into employment, thus gathering experience which is itself a form of education.

'All these things must be looked into. In dealing with the future of our children, we cannot take anything for granted.'

Once Mahathir, while addressing students of Sekolah Menengah Kampung Batu, Kuala Lumpur, at their school's prize-giving and official opening, asked the youths to prove that Bahasa Kebangsaan can be the language of knowledge.

'Only with the proof can society be fully convinced that Bahasa Kebangsaan is not only our official language but also the language of knowledge, means of communication and the *lingua franca* in this part of the world,' Mahathir said.

'There are very few Malay-medium secondary schools in the city and therefore you must prove your ability and talent when you compete with the English-medium schools.'

Mahathir said he was happy to note that about 30 per cent of the students were non-Malays.

'This shows that through our system of education a society of different races but with similar backgrounds can live together.'

Mahathir told headmasters and teachers to take action against students who played truant and encouraged them to get to know the parents and keep close liaison with them.

The Minister also asked parents to co-operate with teachers and

headmasters.

'Parents must keep close watch on their children's behaviour and movements to ensure they did not fall into bad company'

One incident that caused considerable excitement during his term as Education Minister was the theft of MCE question papers from the strong-room of an examination centre in Kemaman, Trengganu.

Swift action by the education authorities and the Police resulted in finding the culprits — six students who had confessed to the Police that they had burnt all the papers.

Mahathir said that Police investigations had revealed that the boys' sole aim in stealing the papers was to gain time to prepare for the examinations because they were not ready. They had counted on the examinations being cancelled and on papers being re-set, thus delaying the examinations.

A major problem for Mahathir when he was the Minister of Education was the teachers' salaries.

Before the implementation of the recommendations of the Aziz Commission Report, there were 500 different salary scales for teachers. These were reduced to 11 — a welcome simplification, but one that left certain groups of teachers dissatisfied, mainly over differentials.

The Ministry had received 114 separate demands from teachers for salary scale revisions.

'If we kept spending bigger and bigger percentages of the education allocation on teachers' salaries, where would the money come from for more pressing needs? Some schools, for example, badly need replacing,' he said.

Apparently alarmed by the increasing demands of teachers, he exclaimed: 'If the Government decided to meet these demands, it would have to cut down on development or raise taxes. Either way, it is the people who suffer — the poorest the most.'

In education circles his appointment was hailed as a wise move. As a member of the Higher Education Advisory Board and Chairman of the Council of Universiti Kebangsaan he had participated in this country's education progress for several years.

His contribution in an unofficial capacity had been considerable and had been for more than 15 years.

Informed sources say his ideas had gone into shaping some of the major policies in education and that he would have been Education Minister much earlier if he had won in the 1969 elections.

Exactly 18 months after taking the office of Education Minister, the then 50 year-old Mahathir was promoted to Deputy Prime Minister.

His rise to deputy premiership in so short a time is a tribute to the man and his abilities — the man who, not so long ago, was viewed only with suspicion in some quarters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Prime Minister with a Timetable Mind

A world-wide search for more investments was made by Dr Mahathir when he was the Minister of Trade and Industry.

He has been aptly described by a well-known economist as 'a Prime Minister with a timetable mind'. Dr Mahathir visited several capitals to seek investors with offers of attractive incentives in Malaysia.

Indicative of the success of his mission is the fact that today Malaysia alone accounts for nearly half of the surplus of about US$2.2 billion recorded by ASEAN in its trade with the European community in 1980. This is according to the latest statistics made available in Kuala Lumpur.

The EEC regional office reported recently that ASEAN-EEC trade resulted in a surplus of US$2,199.4 million for ASEAN compared with a surplus of US$1,458.44 million the previous year, or an increase of 50.8%.

Of the total surplus, Malaysia accounted for US$1,055.55 million while Thailand recorded a surplus of US$724.69 million, the Philippines US$317.78 million and Singapore US$191.27 million. Indonesia had a deficit balance of US$89.88 million.

Overall, ASEAN exports to the EEC in 1980 totalled US$9,801.86 million, up 34 % on the US$7,322.55 million for 1979 while imports from the community amounted to US$7,602.46 million, an increase of 30% over the amount for 1979.

For Malaysia, exports to the EEC last year came to US$2,535.63 million against US$2,264.52 million in 1979 while imports from the EEC totalled US$1,480.08 million against US$1,133.34 million of the previous year.

The figures released by the EEC office in Kuala Lumpur shows that during the past four years, exports from ASEAN to the EEC had grown by 112% from US$4,625.16 million in 1977 to US$9,801.86 million in 1980 while imports from the EEC increased by 77% from US$4,305.9 million to US$7,602.46 million.

Over the period, however, Malaysia was the only country among the five which showed a greater rate of increase in imports from the EEC.

Malaysia's exports to the EEC increased by 70% from 1971 to 1980 while imports from the community rose by 138% during the same period.

Meanwhile in Singapore, an ASEAN executive has called on the EEC to open its market a little wider to exports from the region.

The urgent task now facing the Prime Minister is to explore ways and means to improve business confidence and revive productivity and private investment.

According to Dr V. Kanapathy, the Economic Adviser to the United Malayan Banking Corporation Bhd., these are essential pre-requisites for promoting growth. He stresses that much depends on the structure, integrity and policy of the Government and its effectiveness in the implementation of its policies.

Captains of trade and industry will agree that industrialisation is the cornerstone of Malaysia's economic future as it provides unlimited opportunities for absorbing manpower.

'It holds the key to the country's economic, social and political progress and is the main hope for satisfying the rising expectations of the people,' says Dr Kanapathy who adds that industrialisation does not mean a simple transference of technological contrivances. Efficient infrastructure and other supporting facilities are also required.

It now remains for steps to be taken to improve the standards of various service agencies associated with growth and welfare.

According to experts, efforts must be made now to combat inflation. In this connection the Government is urged to re-examine its development programmes.

With its open economy, Malaysia is vulnerable to inflationary pressures from the industrialised countries of the West.

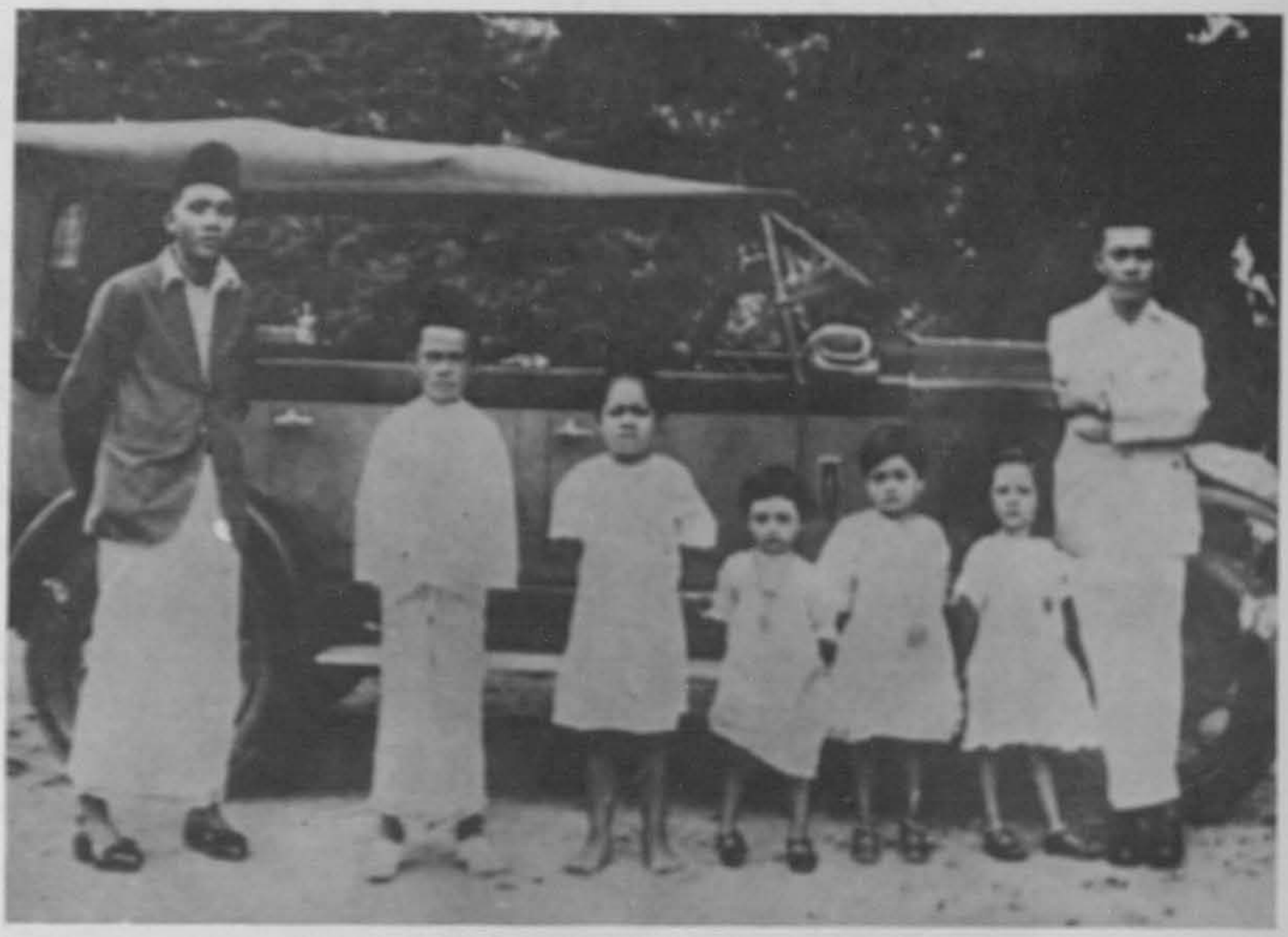
'Malaysia is not insulated from any instability that may be caused by sudden shifts in prices and international money flows.' This warning from Dr Kanapathy should be heeded.

With increasing problems relating to Malaysia's economy, the Government should consider new ways and means to improve her economy.

Dr Mahathir, during his term as Minister of Trade and Industry, kept up an incessant campaign to promote trade between Malaysia and other countries.



Dr Hasmah helping Dr Mahathir with the Royal decoration.



Datin Siti Hasmah is fourth from left. Her brother, former Bank Negara Governor, Tun Ismail Mohd. Ali is second from left. Their father, the late Encik Mohd. Ali is on the extreme right.

CHAPTER EIGHT

First Lady With Many Firsts

Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, the wife of Dr Mahathir, needs no introduction to Malaysians. Like her husband, Dr Siti Hasmah is well known in her own right as a lady who has many firsts to her credit.

She is the sixth child in a family of ten children (seven boys and three girls). The eldest is Tun Ismail, the former Governor of Bank Negara and the youngest is Zainal Abidin, an architect, now working on the Sabah National Mosque.

Dr Siti Hasmah was born in Klang. She was known as 'Deh' or 'Asmah' and at times teasingly called 'Asmah, daughter of Pak Ali Bankrupt' by her close friends and members of the family as her father, the late Haji Mohammad Ali bin Taib, was Official Assignee and Public Trustee dealing with bankruptcies.

An average student, Siti Hasmah had her early education at the Methodist Girls' School, Kuala Lumpur. She sat for her Senior Cambridge examination at St. Mary's School, Kuala Lumpur and obtained a Grade Three certificate.

Dissatisfied with her results, she sat for the examination at Pudu English School, Kuala Lumpur again and obtained a Grade One.

While in school, Siti Hasmah had wanted to be a journalist but the Japanese Occupation in Malaya changed her mind. Exposure to widespread sickness and diseases made her turn to medicine.

In 1947, she joined the King Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore. She was the only girl among the seven Malay students who were matriculated that year.

Being the only Malay girl in her year did not frighten her. Mahathir Mohamad, the young medical student from Alor Star, was always around to lend a hand.

What was the chemistry that attracted Siti Hasmah to Mahathir Mohamad? Siti Hasmah recalls: 'It was his kindness and perseverance that seemed to exert the magnetic pull.'

According to Siti Hasmah, Mahathir was not handsome and was



A rare picture of the Mahathirs.

very shy with girls. He was afraid to approach her.

'It was his friends who pushed him towards me,' she says with a smile.

Being an average student studying in a medical school was not plain sailing for her considering that the only science subject she had studied was biology. But the brilliant and fast Mahathir always assisted her. He became her tutor.

However, tutorial sessions with Mahathir would always see Siti Hasmah ending up in tears.

'We would start out very nicely. Then he would become impatient at my slowness,' she says.

It was during this period that their relationship blossomed.

Both of them had a lot in common — their ambition to become doctors, their love for writing and their common interest in music.

Siti Hasmah confessed that as a student, she had to sit for exams once every six months instead of once a year. She was always doing referrals. Up to this day, Siti Hasmah gets exam nightmares.

She looks back on her struggles as a student with the modesty that pervades her attitude towards herself and her achievements.

She says: 'Medicine is not easy, especially for an average person like me. For every rung of the ladder I climbed, I dropped back a bit until I eventually made it.'

Having spent two years in referrals, she graduated later than Dr Mahathir.

The Mahathirs were engaged in 1953. However, in compliance with her father's advice, Siti Hasmah first finished her medical studies. Marriage had to wait.

They were very much in love. But Hasmah, a determined lady, completed her housemanship at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital before the wedding after three years of being engaged.

Mahathir Mohamad and Siti Hasmah were married in August 1956. Both were dressed in full traditional Malay splendour as her mother had wished. Siti Hasmah's waist-long hair was rolled into a *sanggul lintang* and she looked every inch the perfect bride.

After their marriage the Mahathirs lived in a two-room government flat in Alor Star. It was when children started coming that they moved to a bigger house.

For three years life was predictable. They started work at eight and came home at four.

Hasmah's placidity was ruffled when Mahathir resigned to start his own practice. 'I thought our security would be shaken,' says Siti

Hasmah.

The second jolt came when he decided to run for Parliament, and the third with the letter Mahathir wrote to the Tunku.

'I dreaded for his arrest. I was shocked for he didn't tell me. But I trusted he would see himself out.'

'I have not thought of entering politics myself. I'm homely,' she said with a smile.

Mahathir had graduated two years earlier than Siti Hasmah and was doing his housemanship in Penang while she continued to struggle through her studies. Their courtship continued through the telephone and monthly visits by Mahathir.

With encouragement from members of the family and friends, Siti Hasmah finally graduated in 1955, to become Malaysia's second Malay lady doctor.

Her brother, Tun Ismail, now Chairman of Permodalan Nasional Berhad, hearing of her success joked: 'Now we have a doctor in the house.'

As one writer puts it, Siti Hasmah is a combination of determination and perseverance.

Like any young doctor, Siti Hasmah had to work hard to climb the ladder of success. She started as a doctor in the outpatient, maternity and medical wards. Later she became the Medical Officer in charge.

After this, it was a series of firsts for Dr Hasmah.

She became the acting Medical Superintendent of the Alor Star General Hospital in 1963, the first Malay woman to hold the post. After that she became the first lady Medical Officer of Health in North Kedah. From 1968–1974, she was the State Maternal and Child Health Officer as well as the head of the Rural Health Training School. In 1974, she was the head of the Maternal and Child Health Division of the Public Health Institute until January 1979.

By then, Mahathir was sworn in as the Deputy Prime Minister. Ceremonial duties as wife of the Deputy Prime Minister interrupted her work constantly. So she decided not to renew her contract when it expired.

Siti Hasmah now lectures part time at the Institute. She is an unruffled lecturer, looking more like a friend, sharing what she knows with her students in a tone slightly louder that her natural soft voice. She gestures now and then with both hands for emphasis and joins the class in laughter during lighter moments of the otherwise



Marriage after three years of engagement, August 5, 1956.



The first Mahathir baby – Marina.

serious discussions.

The Datin is also deeply involved in social-welfare work. Her concern for the welfare of fellow human beings has made her accept demanding and responsible positions as the President of the Association for the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Children, Chairperson of the Handicraft Sales Organisation (Karyanika), Vice-President of the Federation of Family Planning Association of Malaysia, a nominated member of the National Family Planning Board, Vice-President of the Malayan Association for the Blind and Patron of the Women Graduates Society.

With thirty years of medical service behind her, the Datin will be able to provide invaluable advice and guidance to the functioning of the organisations in which she is involved.

Her personal interest include working with children, meeting women of different cultures, handicraft, music and studying how other countries tackle their rural health problems and traditional practices. Siti Hasmah plays the violin and piano and, together with her sisters Saleha and Jameah, she performed over Radio Malaysia as the 'Three Ali Sisters'.

Today she admits missing the rural folk whom she served as medical health officer. Her life then involved travelling with other Government officers to kampungs unreachable except by boat or by riding pillion on a motor-cycle. There, she taught and encouraged the people to take advantage of modern medicine.

What Siti Hasmah considers more important however is that, from all these experiences, she has learned how to deal with people, even as she got to know their social and economic background.

Like Dr Mahathir, she is also interested in journalism. She is the author of several publications including: *Rural Habits, Customs and Beliefs; The Role of Traditional Birth Attendants in Family Health; The Social, Economic and Cultural Factors Associated with Pregnancy; The Effect of Islam and Adat on Health Attitudes* and *Some Aspects of Traditional Health Attitudes and Practices in Rural Health.*

She recently contributed a paper on cultural tradition in maternal and child health to the book *Kedah In Civilisation* edited by Professor Asmah Haji Omar.

Despite the now never-ending ceremonial functions and duties as the wife of the Prime Minister, she still gives top priority to her role as wife and mother.

However, there is no doubt that Siti Hasmah is able to take on the role of the Prime Minister's wife well.

She feels that the best help she could give her husband is by supporting his basic policies.

She makes sure that his schedules are not too tight so that he has time to rest and spend with the family.

If she could have her way she would want him to have at least one day in a week to relax. She feels that it is her duty to see that Dr Mahathir is well taken care of.

When asked whether she would be involved in decision making on State matters, she replied: 'He hardly talks about State matters or discusses national problems with me. If the problems are serious, he keeps silent!' At times like this, the Datin leaves him to himself.

The Mahathirs have five children: Marina (24), Mirzan (23), Melinda (22), Mokhzani (21) and Mukhriz (16).

Except for Marina, who is working with Berita Publishing in Kuala Lumpur, the other children are still in school. The children were surprised when their father was made the Education Minister. They felt that things were moving too fast.

The Mahathir children are obedient and disciplined in every respect. They don't go off without permission or information as to their destination and companions. Moreover they take religion as seriously as do Dr Mahathir and Siti Hasmah.

Perhaps the best way to get to know Siti Hasmah and her family is to be with them in their 'Pondok Maharizan', an acronym of all their names, as they fondly call their home in Alor Star.

Siti Hasmah has sought to instill a seriousness of purpose and undeviating pursuit of one's ambition not only in her students, but more so in her five children.

How are the children reacting to their father's position as head of State?

They are not completely without reservations. Mokhzani feels that his father should retire.

An excerpt from a letter he wrote to his father from England reads:

'Can't Daddy retire? I don't want him to retire as a fatigued and tired man.'

Mokhzani's letter reflects the entire family's concern for Dr Mahathir's health and the heavy responsibilities that he has to shoulder as the Prime Minister.

As for their family life, Siti Hasmah was frank. 'In our house there are occasional disagreements but they are inevitable.'

According to her, Dr Mahathir is a rational person.

'My husband hates to let disagreements drag out. Whoever is

wrong must apologise, and then it is forgotten . . . . and when he is wrong, he will admit it and apologise,' she says.

Her husband is also an affectionate father and loves to be with the children. From time to time, he shows his affection by hugging them even in public. This causes much embarrassment to the Datin because the girls are grown up and she's worried what some people might think.

The Mahthirs have a split-level house designed by Baharuddin bin Abu Kassim, the architect who did the National Mosque. The house stands on an artificial hillock, overlooking padi-land.

Whatever free time the family has, they spend it together. For



Dr Siti Hasmah lending a helping hand.



The Mahathirs' Hari Raya Open House for children.



The Mahathirs with a young visitor on Hari Raya.

relaxation, the Datin enjoys music with her musically inclined family.

The privacy and anonymity of a normal family life is what they miss most of all now. The opportunity to have a simple dinner at home with the family is something they treasure dearly.

Siti Hasmah misses simple things like eating *cendol* at a roadside stall, shopping at leisure without the tight security around her and going to the market without being recognised.

Having gone through the most momentous chapter in their life together, Siti Hasmah maintains an imperturbable composure which seems to be her dominant characteristic.

She takes her role as the wife of the Prime Minister philosophically.

'I always say that I married a doctor and ended up with a politician . . . I don't know which is more difficult – being the wife of a doctor or of a statesman.'

What is the secret of the success of their marriage? The Datin feels that it is the trust, honesty and understanding maintained between them that has been the basis of their happy married life.

'As a doctor, his work often took him away from the family. But then, I was a doctor too and my duties sometimes also took me away from the family. So we understand each other and are used to it.'

In recognition of her services to the State, she was honoured by the Sultan of Kedah when she was awarded the Setia Mahkota, Kedah (S.M.K.) in 1971, an event which she considers one of the happiest in her life.

Looking back at Dr Siti Hasmah's role as a doctor, one finds it difficult to imagine that she was the most timid of the Ali girls — afraid of the dark, easily scared of centipedes and retreating at the vaguest signs of death.

Malaysia is probably the only country whose First Lady is a doctor. This soft spoken lady, aggressive in her own manner, now helps to guide the advancement of women in Malaysian society.

Today, Siti Hasmah's prayer is that Dr Mahathir will remain healthy and that God will give him strength and courage to carry on with his new responsibilities.

'I hope that the support given to him before will now continue to be given to him so that he can achieve what we all want — a united, peaceful, and prosperous Malaysia.'

CHAPTER NINE

Today My Burden Is My Burden

'Today my burden is my burden and the burdens of others too shall be my burden.'

With these few stirring words, Dr Mahathir began his maiden speech as the new UMNO President, at the closing session of the UMNO assembly on Sunday, June 28, 1981 in Kuala Lumpur.

In the course of that memorable speech, his best ever as an UMNO leader, he paid a touching tribute to Tun Hussein Onn (then Datuk) and pledged his faith in the strength of UMNO.

'We should be thankful at our good fortune in this country. Two of our leaders have stepped down of their own free will. First it was Tunku Abdul Rahman, and now it is Datuk Hussein Onn. And neither imposed a successor of his own choice upon the nation,' said Dr Mahathir.

'Datuk Hussein could easily have acted independently of the wishes of UMNO delegates. Had he stepped down last year or next year this year's UMNO assembly would not have had the chance to choose his successor and successors to other vacated posts. Had he stepped down last year and chosen for himself the person to be Deputy Prime Minister, this would have become a *fait accompli* that UMNO would have found difficult to reject.'

The text of Dr Mahathir's speech follows:

'My joy should be unalloyed at reaching this position after being in UMNO politics for 36 years.

'But the joy cannot cast aside the sadness, because for me to step into this position, it has to be vacated first.

'In all my political experience before this, there was always someone senior to refer to, to lean on, to turn to for protection, even at times to save myself from blame. For nearly six years I have, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or otherwise, sought protection behind my chief, Datuk Hussein Onn,

the President of UMNO.

'But today, I can no longer do so: My burden is my burden, and the burdens of others too shall be my burden.

'There would be no point in my being a hypocrite and denying that I am proud to hold this post. But I am even more proud of Datuk Hussein Onn's utter selflessness in relinquishing the post of UMNO President, the nation's most vital post, one with myriad implications, one that many might covet. There is no need for me to spell out these implications. I know, you know, and Datuk Hussein knows them most of all.

'Few would easily give up such an important post. A person who holds such a post would normally strive to perpetuate his position, or at least his influence on it. Often too, an attempt would be made to establish a dynasty.

'If at all such a post is relinquished, it would normally be through pressure and compulsion from certain quarters. In many countries this is so evident that it becomes the talk of the nation and the topic of newspaper articles local and foreign before the realisation dawns that the time has come for a certain leader to step down.

'And even after he is aware of this, many a leader looks for all manner of excuses not to step down. Finally, when there is no way of avoiding it any longer, he announces his choice of a successor, a member of his family or his blue-eyed boy. This he would impose on the nation despite protests and riots. The result is frustration for all except those who stand to benefit from it.

'The late Tun Abdul Razak succeeded the Tunku because he was generally accepted both within and without UMNO as the right person to do so.

'There were others deemed closer and perhaps dearer to the Tunku, and there were those who felt one of these should succeed him when he retired, but never did the Tunku point to one of these as his choice.

'Aware that UMNO and the people regarded Tun Abdul Razak as the person most suitable to succeed him, the Tunku pointed to him as his successor.

'But Datuk Hussein did not do this. Instead he decided to withdraw from the top leadership of the party, and declined renomination before this year's assembly. This has given UMNO members a chance to exercise their right of choosing the new leadership.

'I am sure we are all proud and thankful over the sincerity and truly democratic qualities shown by Tun Hussein. I am particularly

grateful, not just because Datuk Hussein's style of stepping down gave me a chance to be President, but also because it enabled me to test the extent of my acceptance by UMNO, and you to show me the degree of your support, so that I would in all humility be always aware of it.

'The party could have staged a contest, meaningful or otherwise. If the party had wanted merely to test, an unsuitable contestant could have been forwarded just to see the number of protest votes in the party. And if the party had seriously wanted to question the suitability of a leader, the challenge would have come from a worthy candidate, resulting in a genuine contest.

'I am thankful that my nomination as President has been unopposed, whether by a serious or a "test" candidate. However, there must be those who did not support my nomination but had no opportunity to express their stand.

'I am fully aware that I could not have had 100 per cent support, and this awareness will preserve me from losing touch with reality.

'Although Datuk Hussein acted in a truly democratic way, some among us feel that to avoid unhealthy campaigning within the party,



Dr Mahathir helping to move a cake shaped like the new UMNO Headquarters.

he should have indicated who was to be the President after him and who were to fill the other posts as well.

'UMNO has often voiced the wish to dominate the Government instead of being dominated by the Government. Had the Prime Minister decided the leadership of UMNO turning his back on the wishes of the UMNO assembly, it would have meant the Government dominating the party.

'Some have said that if the Prime Minister had decided the holders of the various posts, UMNO would have gladly concurred. But let us look back.

'What would have been the feelings of those he did not choose? And what would have been the feelings of their supporters?

'It is a fact that when one course of action is chosen out of two, people will tend to see only the bad points of the chosen course and the good points of the course not chosen. Those who say that UMNO would have accepted the Prime Minister's decisions on the holders of UMNO's posts say so only because the Prime Minister did not make those decisions.

'I am certain that if the Prime Minister had done so, there would



UMNO Supreme Council Meeting in session.

have been loud protests that he had turned his back on the wishes of UMNO. Since he chose to let UMNO exercise its rights, there are naturally those who say he should not have done this, to avoid disruption within the party.

'Although it was Datuk Hussein who made that decision,I too gave my opinion supporting it. My advice, I trust, is not at variance with the practice and the tradition of UMNO.

'Although at one time the Prime Minister chose his deputy, the circumstances were different then. Today we have two equally determined and powerful candidates. The choice of one by the Prime Minister would have disappointed the other and his supporters. On the practice that when once UMNO has decided on something, the members will close ranks and continue with the common cause. I believe UMNO faced worse crises in the past.

'UMNO has achieved outstanding success as a result. I am sure that the moment the election to new posts is over, UMNO will once again close ranks and remain united.

'All the leaders contesting for all the posts are truly UMNO in spirit. None is less UMNO than another. Which particular area we come from is irrelevant. We are choosing leaders of the nation.

'At the UMNO Supreme Council meeting of June 14, 1981 all candidates pledged that, win or lose, they would remain dedicated in the service of UMNO. They also agreed to accept appointment to the Supreme Council. Where relevant, they also promised not to withdraw from the Government supported by UMNO. In short, they were not competing for posts within UMNO, but only for the opportunity to serve UMNO in certain posts.

'There is no animosity or envy in this contest. In serving the party, self-regard has no place. Win or lose, the contestants will close ranks in the UMNO leadership and give full service. This stand must also be reflected in the supporters.

'In this contest, there is no place for being overjoyed at victory or depressed and dejected at defeat. All supporters of all candidates must forget the accusations and acrid exchanges made in the heat of the campaign.

'We must all pledge to close ranks and ensure that the party's strength is not affected by our practice of democracy.

'There is a lot more we have to do in the future. Past UMNO leaders have laid a strong foundation for achieving the aspirations and objectives of UMNO. They have successfully carried out policies and projects to achieve these aims. It is a fact that some of UMNO's

objectives have been realised. But UMNO's struggle is unending.

'So long as UMNO exists, so long will there be tasks for it to carry out for the betterment of the Malays, bumiputras, religion and country.

'Today I was chosen to succeed Datuk Hussein as the President of UMNO. For me this is not only an honour bestowed by the party I have belonged to since its inception in 1946, the party to which I have given undivided loyalty, but also a great trust and responsibility.

'I am prepared to give all my energies and ideas to UMNO for as long as I am required to serve the party. At the same time, I need the support and help of my friends in the Supreme Council and other UMNO leaders and members, at all levels, each and everyone of them.

'I hope that the moment the election of party leaders is over, we will all forget the words and deeds of the election period and think of the common cause and the necessary unity.

'As a democratic party, as a democratic people, let us accept all decisions in the democratic spirit. There are no winners and no losers in an UMNO contest.

'The acceptance of decisions made through the democratic process is a victory for UMNO. And the rejection of such decisions would be a defeat for UMNO. Surely we who are truly UMNO in spirit do not want UMNO defeated.

'Malaysia and the Malays have the potential of a fine future. But to realise this potential to the full, we need a fair, strong and stable Government. UMNO has until now maintained such a fair, strong and stable Government. I hope this record will be preserved throughout my leadership as well. My service alone would certainly not be sufficient to perpetuate UMNO's strength as the Government. For this I need undivided support from all quarters in UMNO, all States, all divisions and branches.

'UMNO's success is the success of all of us, not just of one of us, although only one of us is President. Let us therefore renew our pledge of loyalty to the party and our readiness to make sacrifices for our party, our religion, our people, and our land.

'Tengku Razaleigh has pledged to continue serving UMNO. I take this to mean that he will continue to serve the Government that is supported by UMNO.

'Once again I offer my profoundest thanks to delegates from the divisions and UMNO in general for trusting me with the leadership of our party, UMNO.

'I pray for wisdom and guidance from Allah. May UMNO under my leadership do well, as it did under the leadership of Dato Onn, Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak and Datuk Hussein.

'May I, in the future, be able to hand over UMNO to its next leader as strong and united as I receive it today. This is my prayer to God, and I want you all to join me in this prayer. We will work, and work hard, besides submitting ourselves to God's will. Indeed our struggle is part of the sacred devotion we offer for the good of our religion, our people, and our country. May Allah bless our struggle.

'I wish once again to thank Datuk Hussein for facilitating the process of change of leadership in the party. In a world where leaders are loath to withdraw without compulsion, Datuk Hussein's stand is admirable. We in UMNO, in fact in the whole nation, are proud of Datuk Hussein's statesmanlike stand. History records it as a noble act.

'On behalf of UMNO and its members at all levels, allow me the honour of expressing our sense of loss at the stepping down of a beloved leader; a statesman who has contributed a lot to the nation, a leader known for his firmness, sincerity and discipline, and a President with a distinctive image in UMNO.

'We pray that Datuk Hussein and Datin Suhailah and their family will continue to receive Allah's blessings and care and will enjoy the utmost happiness. We pray to Allah that Datuk Hussein's health will continue to improve.

'To Datuk Hussein I voice the hope that he will still let me contact him and come to see him from time to time because the wealth of experience he has as a statesman will make him invaluable as adviser and elder brother to us all.

'We have just had a historic UMNO assembly. We can be proud of the history we have made together. We have shown the world how disciplined we are as a party.

'Although we faced crucial moments in the choice of party leadership, we conducted ourselves with discipline and maturity, and with courtesy and good manners, thus enabling the voting to proceed in an orderly manner. Herein lies UMNO's strength, our strength.

'We will all go home after the assembly is adjourned. Although physically we go separate ways, in spirit and direction we will remain one.

'Once again I wish you success, and more success, in our common cause.'

CHAPTER TEN

A Team with Youth and Experience

The old order changeth, yielding place to new and God
fulfils himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world

—TENNYSON

When Tun Hussein Onn made the dramatic announcement of his decision to step down as the President of the UMNO and later as the Prime Minister, it created a sensation.

Malaysians were aware that he had undergone a major coronary bypass operation in England. The operation was successful but he needed some time for recuperation. But no one thought that he would retire from office.

No doubt there was much anxiety over his health and his ability to shoulder the responsibility of being head of the nation. Dr Mahathir was already carrying on with the day-to-day administration of the country.

Tun Hussein, a man of his word, kept his promise to retire. He gladly handed over the reins of the high office of Prime Minister to Dr Mahathir whom he had personally chosen as his deputy six years earlier.

When Dr Mahathir took over Premiership he made some changes in the Hussein Cabinet. No one was dropped but the positions of some senior Ministers were changed in keeping with the needs of the time.

However Dr Mahathir had some problems to solve before he could announce his Cabinet: First and foremost was the position of Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who was defeated by Datuk Musa Hitam in his bid to become the Deputy President of UMNO.

There were rumours that Tengku Razaleigh would leave the Government as he had threatened earlier if he had failed to be

elected Deputy President.

A large section of the population waited in suspense for the next move by the Tengku. After several days of suspense, and persuasion by his friends and colleagues, he consented to serve again as the Finance Minister, as requested by Dr Mahathir.

The members of the business community in particular and the public in general who had been waiting anxiously and nervously became worried over the new situation.

Let it be said at once that both Dr Mahathir and Datuk Musa Hitam played an important role in persuading the Tengku to serve the Government again.

After accepting the invitation of the new Prime Minister, Tengku Razaleigh attributed his acceptance of the Finance Ministry in the new Federal Cabinet to 'the will of God'.

The Tengku pledged to continue serving the Government 'so long as I can play a meaningful and effective role' in the service of the country and its people.

He said that in view of his earlier undertaking to withdraw from the Government in the event of his losing the contest for the post of Deputy President of UMNO, he should rightly decline the offer by the new Prime Minister to head the Finance Ministry.

'But because of the overwhelming support and pressure from leaders and members of UMNO and others outside the party, I found it impossible to go against popular will and, even more, I did not want to sacrifice the unity of UMNO simply to satisfy my own personal feelings,' he said.

Continuing, the Tengku said that as a Muslim and a nationalist, he could not ignore the call of the country. The conflict between his personal feelings and the popular call to return to the Government placed him in a serious dilemma.

'This factor, which involves a major question of principles, had moved me to accept the offer to continue my service as the Minister of Finance under the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

'This is the will of God,' he added.

So, all's well that ends well. There is genuine rejoicing among the people of all races over the decision of Tengku Razaleigh to remain in the Cabinet as the Finance Minister, a position in which he had acquitted himself creditably under the premiership of Tun Hussein Onn.

For UMNO, his confirmation in the Cabinet proves once again

the ability of the party to close ranks and work for the benefit of all Malaysians.

The Cabinet reshuffle went generally smoothly with most of the former ministers retaining but some changing portfolios.

Heading the list of Ministers is Datuk Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, the most important portfolio in the Cabinet after the Prime Minister.

As expected, Datuk Musa has not lost any time in getting things done. He is also to look into the forthcoming elections and to ensure the progress of other Ministries.

In fact, Datuk Musa will be in charge of the day-to-day running of the Government and will be in close touch with the implementors, the civil service.

He will keep the Prime Minister informed of what is happening at the ground level and be in charge of ironing out the bugbears in the system.

He wants accurate feedback from civil servants and also wants Government officers involved in day-to-day contact with the people to keep abreast with what is happening in their respective areas.

Datuk Musa has therefore become the Number One trouble-shooter.

One of the first things the new Government has done is to give the green-light for a clock-in system in Government offices. Punch clocks have been bought and installed.

This is not a popular innovation. Already there are indications that the come-on-time system has met with some uphill resistance. It is believed that all civil servants, high ranking officials included, would be required to punch in their arrival and departure times, under the new system.

The punch clock would only be the first step in getting civil servants to be at work when they are required to be there. But plans are under way to monitor output and efficiency as well.

Exactly how the monitoring will be done has not been revealed, but disciplinary action is on the cards.

'Errant officers, for example those who habitually come in late, will be warned first,' a Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Manpower Planning Unit (MAMPU) official said. 'As in a football game, he will first be given a yellow card. If he persits in dragging his feet, it could be a red card which means he could be asked to leave.'

Civil servants are not likely to cheer the new system. But with the new Government of Datuk Seri Mahathir committed to a performance-oriented service, it seems they have no choice.

Some argue that the punch-card system would make senior Government officials look like factory workers. Others are hoping the system would be shelved. Only time will tell.

Meanwhile, all Government servants have been ordered to declare their assets. Not many will welcome this move.

Among the innovations introduced by Datuk Musa is the decision to make the Public Complaints Bureau 'truly public'.

'The bureau's present location makes it difficult for people to come personally and hand in their complaints because of the tight security at the PM's Department,' Datuk Musa said.

'By locating it at a more accessible place, more people can go to the bureau with their complaints. But this does not mean that the bureau would act as a 'complaint counter'.

Members of the public who are frustrated by incompetent and indifferent and sometimes rude civil servants will soon find it easier to seek redress.

'There are people who don't even know that the bureau exists. Publicity can help overcome this,' said Datuk Musa. Those who were in direct contact with the public should do their bit to popularise the bureau and its functions.

'Publicity would also mean that more people can go personally to the bureau with their complaints, instead of just the literate people who can write to Box 9000 – the bureau's P.O. Box number,' he said.

Datuk Musa stressed that although the number of complaints received by the bureau in 1980 (2,431) decreased from that of 1978 (2,567), this did not mean that 'the people are happy with the Government.'

'It just means that they have found different areas to channel their complaints to — like the newspapers, Members of Parliament, groups and individuals,' he said.

It was therefore important that the bureau identified the 'target-clients' who were usually illiterate and ignorant.

'The bureau has to identify these people at the grassroot level and find ways and means to solicit complaints from them,' he added.

Datuk Musa has made it clear that he would do his best in his role of 'trouble-shooter' in the new Government as well as in the related responsibilities of supervising implementation of development programmes under the Fourth Malaysia Plan (FMP).

During his recent Johore visit, Datuk Musa criticised KEJORA for its inefficient and non-viable subsidiaries — among them Johore Cattle and Johore Orchid and reprimanded Majuternak, the national livestock corporation, for non-perception of its exact role.

In the case of KEJORA, two subsidiaries were ordered to wind up and cease operations. Those given a choice between winding up and a time-limit to show improvement will quickly have to buck up. The officials subjected to roasting will have to shake-off their embarrassment in favour of better performance.

The moving of Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not surprising. He is an internationally known expert on world affairs having served in the Foreign Ministry for several years as its Secretary-General. He is said to have very close personal contacts with leaders of other ASEAN countries, in particular Indonesia and Thailand. He will no doubt give new meaning and strength to his new office.

Tan Sri Ghazali is expected to advance Malaysia's views on national, regional and international issues effectively within ASEAN and its member countries.

Dr Mahathir has made it clear that there will be no significant changes in foreign policy although there may be some change in style.

The popular Tengku Rithaudeen, who held the portfolio of Foreign Minister in the Hussein Cabient, has been entrusted with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, a position previously held by Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister is expected to continue to interest himself with the progress of this Ministry's projects.

Some observers have pointed out that several of the Ministry's projects were Dr Mahathir's brain-children. He will continue to be keenly interested in heavy industries, the one-stop agency for investment in MIDA and the promotion of foreign investment.

On his own, Tengku Rithaudeen should be able to continue the work begun by Dr Mahathir as Minister of Trade and Industry. He has the advantage of having visited the capitals of several countries as Foreign Minister and should therefore have no difficulty in promoting trade abroad in a big way.

The past seven years has seen the credibility of the nation's foreign policy elevated to international levels and this image was achieved by the Tengku with the co-operation of his staff.

The Tengku commended the new agreement signed with the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee extending the term of the Regional Centre for Commercial Arbitration here.

He described the agreement as a landmark in the promotion of stability and confidence in economic relations within the Asian and Pacific region.

'It is heartening to note that in the past three years since its establishment, the centre has made tremendous progress in promoting itself as a regional arbitral institution to serve governments,' Tengku Rithaudeen said.

He added that in view of the progress the centre has made, the Government had decided to enable it to continue functioning for another three years until it becomes an autonomous body.

The Tengku's job has been made easier by the numerous contacts that Dr Mahathir had made during his travels in search of more trade and more foreign investments.

One can therefore look forward to the expansion of trade under Tengku Rithaudeen as the Minister in charge.

There has been much criticism over the frequent changes of the Minister for the Federal Territory. There is justification for this. There has been four changes of incumbent since the portfolio was set up in 1978.

Federal Territory UMNO Youth leader, Mokhtar Haji Omar recently urged longer incumbency for the Federal Territory Minister.

One newspaper put it vividly when it reported that the Federal Territory ministry was beginning to resemble a pit-stop, where ace drivers on the political circuit may pull in momentarily for a brief respite before re-joining the race.

For some time, members of the public have been in doubt as to who is really in charge of the Federal Territory!

The good news for the Federal Territory is that top talents are usually selected for the job; the bad news is that those talents can seldom be put to their most effective use due to the short tenure of office which has hitherto been the lot of Federal Territory Ministers. The Federal Territory occupies an important position because Kuala Lumpur is the Metropolis of Malaysia. The Government should

therefore think twice before making any more changes in this important Ministry.

The new Minister in charge of Federal Territory is Datuk Pengiran Othman Haji Abdul Rauf. He said that the Ministry had outlined the priority areas which would be 'pursued vigorously' to step up development projects to improve the people's standard of living.

Speaking to newsmen after a half-day briefing at his new office, Datuk Othman said: 'The Ministry had done a lot to look after the Federal Capital, and some of these efforts are very tangible.

'. . . . in line with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's desire to speed up development programmes for the people, this Ministry will adopt a more aggressive approach when looking at the problems faced by the Federal Capital and take equally aggressive measures to overcome them.'

He continued:'There will be no major shift in emphasis, but there will be some change in the method of implementation. My officers and I will conduct more dialogue with the man-in-the-street: businessmen, associations and representatives from people from all walks of life to learn more of their problems and possibly work together to overcome them.'

As an immediate step, he announced that the Federal Territory Action Committee which was formed in 1979 but remained dormant for some time would be revived to help strengthen the overall administrative machinery.

The committee, chaired by Datuk Othman himself, will primarily help co-ordinate inter-departmental measures and thus reduce bottlenecks in some of the Ministry's projects.

Datuk Pengiran Othman did not over-rule the possibility of forming more committees if they were found necessary to improve the administrative efficiency of various departments.

The appointment of Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud of Sarawak as the new Minister of Education has caused quite a stir in education circles. This is because he is a newcomer in the difficult field of education. Dr Sulaiman Daud himself expressed surprise over his appointment. 'I never expected to hold that post one day,' he said.

He described his appointment as an honour, adding that he was grateful to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for selecting him to head the Ministry.

'I am sure I have to shoulder heavier responsibilities since the

Education Ministry is one of the biggest with the greatest number of employees. This will indeed be a mammoth task since I will be dealing with intellectuals, teachers, parents and students,' he added.

'But as a consolation, I can always seek advice from my two bosses, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Datuk Musa as both of them were former Education Ministers,' he quipped.

'Salaries, terms and conditions of service and various perks for academic staff of the country's five universities will be reviewed to attract the "best brains".

'We want to retain the best brains so that our children will get a good education.'

He said many universities were finding it hard to retain their graduates who preferred to join the government service or the private sector for better salaries.

He said he would do his best to ensure the success of the National Education Policy, adding that he hoped all concerned would give him their co-operation.

He hoped to rectify weaknesses in the implementation of Bahasa Malaysia in schools, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak. Aged 48, Dr Sulaiman, a vice-president of Parti Bumiputra Pesaka Bersatu, took an active part in politics in 1972 and the following year, won in a by-election for the Sebandi State constituency.

He was then appointed the State Minister of Land and Mines, Sarawak.

After winning the Santubong Parliamentary seat in 1974, he joined the Federal Government and was appointed the Land and Mines Deputy Minister.

After he retained his parliamentary seat in the 1978 elections, he was made the Deputy Health Minister, before being promoted to Federal Territory Minister in March 1981.

Dr Sulaiman is a dental surgeon and a graduate of Otago University, New Zealand. He did his post-graduate study in Canada.

Much interest has been aroused in the promotion of Encik Sanusi Junid as the Minister for National and Rural Development.

A young man with plenty of new ideas Sanusi Junid pledged that the Ministry of National and Rural Development would compile a report on the incidence of poverty in the country.

The Minister said the report would help in the Ministry's efforts to improve the situation.

He said the report would be made through KEMAS, the community development organisation. The aid of Members of Parliament and State Assemblymen would also be sought. Encik Sanusi Junid also intends to liaise closely with other Ministries.

Admitting incidences of poverty in the country, he urged people with information to get in touch with his Ministry.

Encik Sanusi Junid could not have foreseen his fortune in the political arena when he became an UMNO member in a State not his own in 1963.

Kedah-born Encik Sanusi, who was then a Chartered Bank trainee officer in Seremban, was encouraged to join the Seremban Timor UMNO division by a Negri Sembilan MP, Haji Redza who is a close friend of his uncle, Encik Hanafiah Hussein, a former Kedah MP.

Described as the pride of Penang UMNO, Datuk Haji Abdullah Ahmad was appointed a full minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Among the agencies in the Prime Minister's Department placed under Datuk Abdullah's jurisdiction are the Economic Planning Unit and the departments dealing with public service including the Service Commissions.

Datuk Abdullah, as the Minister responsible for these departments, is expected to liaise closely and assist in the day to day running of Government and the implementation of projects. He is also expected to contribute new ideas to clear the backlog and help speed up public service recruitment as the Government sets about implementing the Fourth Malaysia Plan.

This is the first time since independence that a Penang UMNO member has risen to Ministerial rank.

Datuk Abdullah was Deputy Federal Territory Minister before his promotion. He was awarded the Darjah Yang Mulia Pangkuan Negri, which carries the title of Datuk, by the Yang Di Pertua Negeri.

The appointment of Datuk Abdullah was described as an 'honour for the people of Penang, in particular the Malays.' Committee member of the UMNO Jelutong Division and Secretary of the Penang Malays Association, Haji Azmi Merican, said: 'This is the first time a Malay from Penang UMNO has been appointed a Minister since independence.'

The Secretary of the Kepala Batas UMNO division, Encik Mohamed Nor Ahmad, was equally happy over the appointment (if not more

so) as Datuk Abdullah is Chairman of the division. Encik Abdullah said he regarded his promotion as a 'further opportunity to serve the people at the highest level'.

'Being promoted to a Minister means that I will be able to offer my services to the people at the highest forum. This will be very challenging, what with the amount of responsibility that I have to shoulder.'

He said he is grateful to Dr Mahathir for the promotion, adding that he appreciates the confidence the Prime Minister has in him. Aged 42, Datuk Abdullah won a seat in the UMNO Supreme Council at the last party general assembly. He has served the Government for over 17 years.

He joined the civil service soon after he graduated from the University of Malaya in Islamic Studies in 1954.

In 1971, Tun Abdul Razak appointed him Director of Youth and Sports Ministry before he was made its Deputy Secretary-General for four years from 1974.

In 1978, Datuk Abdullah won the Kepala Batas seat 'hands down' and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Territory Ministry.

The Ministry of Transport under Datuk Lee San Choon, the MCA President, has undergone some major changes for the better especially in its all-important Road Transport Department.

The Minister has a new and dynamic young Deputy Minister in Datuk Abu Hassan Omar previously the Deputy Minister of Defence.

According to Datuk Abu Hassan, the Road Transport Department will have 15 temporary offices throughout the country. These offices will be used while 10 additional permanent branch headquarters and 21 sub-offices are being built.

Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said $1.7 million had been allocated to the department for the construction of the temporary offices. The department had been allocated a total of $44.2 million to carry out its various projects under the Fourth Malaysia Plan.

The department has at the present two branch headquarters, one in Raub, Pahang, and the other in Muar, Johore. The additional 10 will be built in other states. Datuk Abu Hassan said the addition of these offices — and the recruitment of workers to man them — would help ease the present workload.

He also revealed that the department would be computerised by early 1983.

Datuk Abu Hassan added that owners and operators of 62-seater buses would soon be able to apply direct to the department if they wanted to replace their old vehicles. 'They need not go through the Road Licensing Board anymore,' he said.

This is indeed good news especially to those who have a lot to do with the Road Transport Department.

However, he could not state exactly when this new system would be enforced.

Some members of the Opposition and several others have criticised the appointment of Datuk Haji Suhaimi as the Deputy Education Minister because of his strong views on Chinese and Tamil education.

Commenting on the protest by Parliamentary Opposition Leader, Mr Lim Kit Siang, against the appointment Datuk Musa said everyone was entitled to express his opinion. However, he refused to comment further on the matter, because 'it is not wise for me to do so'.

He said that choosing the Cabinet was the prerogative of the Prime Minister and it was up to him to reply to the protests.

The shifting of Datuk Najib bin Tun Razak from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Finance has also been criticised because some are of the opinion that he had not gained enough experience as Deputy Minister of Education. Previously he had served as Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts.

Too many changes too soon are bad for the individuals concerned and for the country, the critics say.

Six comparatively young men have been appointed Deputy Ministers. They are Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry; Datuk Abdul Jalal Abu Bakar, the Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government; Bujang bin Haji Ulis, the Deputy Minister of Primary Industries; Abang Abu Bakar bin Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha, the Deputy Minister of Defence; Encik Abdul Rahim bin Datuk Thamby Chik, the Deputy Minister of Home

Affairs and Encik Idris bin Abdul Rauf, the Deputy Minister of Federal Territory.

All these Deputy Ministers have excellent educational background and have been involved in politics for several years.

Datuk Shahrir served as Political Secretary to Tun Hussein Onn; Encik Bujang of Sarawak was an elected Member of Parliament in June 1978 for the constituency of Simangang while Abdul Jalal was the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Defence.

Abang Abu Bakar had served as Speaker of Dewan Undangan Sarawak and Encik Abdul Rahim bin Thamby Chik, who is only 31, served as the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Encik Idris bin Abdul Rauf is a Perak UMNO leader in the Barisan Nasional and Member of Parliament for the Parit Buntar constituency. He was Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Public Enterprises in the Hussein Onn Cabinet.

Thus Malaysia has a new breed of promising politicians who should go far in the UMNO hierarchy before long.

The Mahathir-Musa flavour is evident as one reads the list of Ministers. In the new Cabinet one sees a fine blend of the old and the new, of both youth and experience, proven ability and professionalism.

The increase in the number of youthful members in the Cabinet reflects the demographic shape of a country in which 60 per cent of the population is under 30. The number of professionals in the line-up is impressive.

Penang UMNO has achieved its long-cherished ambition of being represented at Ministerial rank. The allocation of the sensitive Education portfolio to a non-UMNO Minister and the continuation of MCA, Gerakan and MIC leaders in their ministries shows the solidarity of the National Front.

Four women are part of the Mahathir administration, one more than in Hussein Onn's time. This new member is the MP for Semerah, Puan Sharifah Dora Syed Mohamad. She was named the Parliamentary Secretary in the Land and Regional Development Ministry.

The other women are: Public Enterprises Minister, Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz; Welfare Minister, Datin Paduka Aishah Ghani and the Parliamentary Secretary in the Health Ministry, Datin Paduka Rosemary Chong.

On the whole the new set-up should enable Dr Mahathir and his

Deputy Datuk Musa to devote more time to oversee other Ministries especially the Ministry of Defence which portfolio the Prime Minister holds.

There is a plethora of talent — both youth and experience — in the new Government. This augurs well for Malaysia. The prospects for the nation are indeed bright.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

World Leaders Hail The New Premier

Dr Mahathir was sworn in as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister at 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 18, 1981 at Istana Negara.

He received his letter of appointment after taking his oath of office and pledging loyalty before His Majesty the Yang Di Pertuan Agong.

The 30 minute ceremony was witnessed by the Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tun Hussein Onn and Toh Puan Suhaila and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, the wife of the Prime Minister.

All the Cabinet Ministers — except Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithaudeen, who was abroad — and acting Lord President, Raja Tan Sri Azian Shah, the Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Hashim Aman, Dewan Negara President, Tan Sri Ismail Khan and Dewan Rakyat Speaker, Tan Sri Syed Nasir Ismail attended the ceremony.

Chief of Defence Forces, General Tan Sri Mohamed Ghazali Seth, Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Haniff Omar and other senior Government officials were also present.

The *Mufti* of Istana Negara, Haji Ahmad Shahir Daud, read the *Doa selamat* after the ceremony.

This was followed by the moving ceremony of the handing over of the office of Prime Minister by Tun Hussein Onn in the Prime Minister's Department, Jalan Dato Onn, Kuala Lumpur.

The farewell ceremony was brief, without the fanfare which usually accompanies the departure of a nation's leader. It was strictly a 'family' affair and Tun Hussein bade farewell to heads of departments and staff of the Prime Minister's Department.

Thus, Hussein Onn returned to life as a private citizen. The quiet exit was in tune with Tun Hussein's brand of leadership. He had requested that his farewell be just like any ordinary day in the Prime Minister's Department.

Prior to this event Tun Hussein chaired his last Cabinet meeting and addressed the leaders of the component parties of the Barisan Nasional at the party's Supreme Council meeting for the last time at

Sri Taman, the official residence of the Prime Minister.

When Dr Mahathir took office as the Prime Minister of Malaysia, he received messages from leaders of several foreign nations.

One of the first to congratulate him was Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister who expressed confidence that the existing friendly relations between the two countries would acquire added strength and momentum under his premiership.

The Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, sent Mahathir the following congratulatory message:

'Dear Mahathir: My warmest congratulations on your appointment as the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

'Your rise to this high office has sprung from your deep convictions and your constancy of political purpose which have led the people of Malaysia to trust your intergrity, fairness and firmness.

'I feel confident that we can work together to strengthen the traditionally close ties between our two countries.

'I send you my warmest wishes for your success.

'Yours ever, Kuan Yew.'

In an interview with the Far Eastern Economic Review some three months after Dr Mahathir became the Malaysian Premier, Mr Lee Kuan Yew described his Malaysian counterpart as a man forthright and open in his pursuit of objectives, with a mind of his own and who gave his officials the lead.

'He is a man of deep convictions,' the Singapore Premier said. Mr Lee also said that he found it 'easier to work' with Dr Mahathir when he was the Deputy Prime Minister than with Tunku Abdul Rahman. He attributed this to a similarity in background.

'Probably, it is because I am also non-U,' said Mr Lee, referring to the British establishment classification which means non-upper class. Whereas the Tunku came from Malay upper ruling class, Dr Mahathir and Datuk Musa Hitam 'represent a new generation of self-made and self-confident Malay leaders, Malay administrators, Malay professionals and Malay businessmen.'

President Reagan of the United States, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain and New Zealand Premier Robert Muldoon were among other heads of governments who extended their congratulations to Dr Mahathir. The messages were conveyed to the new Prime Minister by their respective envoys in Kuala Lumpur.

In his message, President Reagan re-emphasised the United States' determination to continue to base the relations between the two countries on mutual respect, shared values, common attachment to democratic and responsive government, and — especially in these difficult times — shared concern for their rights to pursue progress and the well-being of their citizens without interference or coercion from any quarter.

He also expressed the hope of meeting Dr Mahathir soon.

Mrs Thatcher said: 'I value the close relations between our two countries and hope that we may work together to strengthen these still further.'

Mr Muldoon the Prime Minister of New Zealand said Malaysia and New Zealand had for many years enjoyed 'particularly close and friendly relations', and he had no doubt that these would be strengthened in future.

He hoped that Dr Mahathir would visit New Zealand soon.

Other leaders who hailed Dr Mahathir's promotion were President Suharto of Indonesia and the Thai Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda.

The Indonesian dailies Merdeka, Angkatan Bersenjata, Pelita and the Indonesia Times, in their editorials, congratulated Dr Mahathir on his appointment.

Merdeka described him as a genuine nationalist who has now been entrusted with heavier tasks ahead. It said he would have new challenges to face in continuing the policies of the previous Cabinet. The daily added that Dr Mahathir would have to inspire the citizens with patriotism.

Angkatan Bersenjata, the armed forces-backed paper, said the change of leadership was smooth because Tun Hussein Onn had been preparing Dr Mahathir for the post since the beginning of his term of office in 1976.

It said Dr Mahathir was knowledgeable and experienced enough to handle the internal and external problems of the country.

Pelita, an Islamic paper, said the appointment had an important

meaning for continuity in UMNO and the Government as well as for the future of Malaysia.

It said it hoped Dr Mahathir would maintain the policies of the late Tun Razak and Tun Hussein with regard to Malaysia's relations with Indonesia and strengthen the economic, social, cultural, political and security co-operation between the two countries.

The Indonesia Times said the transfer of leadership was achieved quietly and smoothly indicating that the continuation of development in Malaysia could be guaranteed. It added that the smooth transfer of leadership reflected the maturity and far-sightedness of the Malaysian leadership.

The paper said Dr Mahathir was known to Indonesian leaders and it expressed confidence that with his leadership of Malaysia the friendly co-operation and brotherly relations between the two countries would be further strengthened.

The Chief Minister of Sabah, Datuk Harris Salleh, pledged his Government's full support for Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the new Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Front. He described Dr Mahathir as 'a good friend of Sabah'.

Datuk Harris said Malaysia was fortunate to have a worthy successor to Tun Hussein in Dr Mahathir.

'Dr Mahathir has proven himself to be eminently qualified and experienced to shoulder the heavy responsibilities and burdens of Prime Minister as he had displayed in his able performance as deputy to Tun Hussein.'

He also congratulated Datuk Musa Hitam on his elevation to deputy leader of the National Front.

'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Datuk Musa make a dependable team,' he added.

The Chief Minister, who is Berjaya President, said the party would give its full support and co-operation to the new Prime Minister.

He said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had always shown deep concern for the welfare of the poor and disadvantaged.

'Through his innovative policies and willingness to accept new ideas and technologies, he has contributed much to the stable economic conditions and healthy investment climate in Malaysia while other countries face depression.'

Mahathir's first official function after being sworn in as the Prime Minister was to visit the pavilion of the International Quran Reading Competition at the Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur.

The Prime Minister wore a brown *baju Melayu* with a *samping* made of a dark red *songket*. He was greeted on arrival by the competition's Central Committee Chairman, Tan Sri Syed Nasir Ismail.

Dr Mahathir later inspected the highly-decorated diamond-shaped pavilion where 25 Qari and 11 Qariah read verses from the Quran.

It is significant that on the occasion of his assumption of office as the leader of the nation he received the blessings of our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who expressed confidence that Dr Mahathir would be a very good leader if he followed the ways of the former Prime Ministers.

The Tunku said: 'Dr Mahathir is young, fit and well. He is well educated, quick in thinking and also a very good speaker.

'All he needs is to do what his predecessors had done and he should make this country a happy, peaceful and prosperous one.'

CHAPTER TWELVE

What The People Say

Newspaper reporters interviewed people of all walks of life after it was made known that Mahathir would become Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister.

The reports they submitted are not only illuminating but interesting. The people see Dr Mahathir as an extremely capable and popular leader.

Following are some of the comments of the people who were interviewed:

'Dr Mahathir means what he says and says what he means,' said Encik Wahab Ibrahim, a commercial photographer of Malacca.

According to Encik Ibrahim, Dr Mahathir is a firm, practical and realistic leader. *'He tells the Malays to buck up while telling the non-Malays to give the Malays a chance to catch up, thus showing that he is aware of the realities facing the nation.'*

A young lawyer, Mr Phua Jin Hoek, 35, had this to say: *'Other races should not be unduly worried about Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir being at the helm of UMNO and the nation.'*

'As a wise and sensible leader, he will implement policies in the interests of everyone. Although he was expelled from the party at one time for his radical views, the non-Malays should not be unduly concerned as he will definitely take their interests into account.'

Mr Anthony Nathan, 40, the manager of an insurance company, says: *'The new UMNO president is an experienced politician and will act in the interests of all races.'*

Encik Ahmad Mashar bin Mohamed Isa, 27, branch manager of a television firm says: *'As a Kedahan, I am proud that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also Kedah-born, will be the next Prime Minister. He has a pleasant personality which will easily impress anyone who sees him.'*

Mr J. Raman, 26, a technician: *'I like Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir because he has a great personality. I hope he will be able to lead the country to success and greater development.'*

Encik Ramli Shamsuddin, 28, a Government officer of Kuantan: *'He is an extraordinary leader who is firm and meticulous, but he is willing to compromise. It is quite difficult to say how he is going to be like as Prime Minister because previously he could not really show his true colours. But as a Prime Minister I am sure whatever he does would be for the good of the country.'*

Mr Ong Lee Hoon, 24, an executive of a fertiliser company, thinks that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir can be a good Prime Minister because of his good academic background and experience.

'Being a doctor, he can look after his own health better and serve the nation longer.'

Encik Zainuddin Sulaiman, 33, a postal clerk: *'Dr Mahathir always thinks of the ra'akyat and the country. I never miss his speeches. He is a responsible and capable leader. I'm happy to hear that he is our new Prime Minister and I have full faith in him. The country will become more prosperous under his leadership.'*

Mr Cheah Hen Leng, an executive: *'It is going to be a very tough job for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir. Perhaps, there will be some changes in certain policies. He will take lots of actions against certain things which he did not have a chance to do before.'*

Mr Ralph Diaz, a social planner of UNICEF, praised Dr Mahathir as a humble and a good leader who has reflected the aspirations of a multi-racial society.

'He is the right man to be the new Prime Minister. I think he will bring a lot of changes as his style is a bit different from that of Tun Hussein Onn. Anyhow, there will not be a lot of changes for the present, especially in achieving the targets of the New Economic Policy.'

Encik Jamal Buhari, 42, proprietor of a shop had this to say: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is a very capable leader. He is a fast moving person who makes quick decisions. I'm confident that he is the right man to take over the post of Prime Minister of Malaysia.'*

A hairstylist of Ipoh, Philippe Sum, 34, says: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir*

is dynamic; he is a dedicated leader and a well-educated person. He will be as good a Prime Minister as Tun Hussein Onn, if not much better. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is fair to all races and has a lot of new ideas regarding the progress of the country.'

Mr K. Moorthy, an airline manager: *'He is a fantastic leader. From the write-ups I've read, the editorial in the New Straits Times and the speech he has given one can see that he is all for the good of the country. I think he is going to bring in young blood. He can achieve whatever he has said in his speech at the UMNO General Assembly.'*

Cik Maiselamah binte Haji Jaafar, a 27 year old housewife, says: *'Even though Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir will be new to the post, I'm confident that with his experience, he will be able to fulfil the aims and needs of a multi-racial society. He will have a chance to prove himself in helping the people of all races.'*

Encik Redzuan Ahmad, 53, a photographer: *'The way he talks is captivating. Though soft-spoken he is firm in his decisions.'*

Junaidah Radzi, 22, a clerk: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is a good choice to take over from Tun Hussein Onn as he is still young and full of experience. Even though he will be new to the job, I am confident that with the help and guidance from the other Cabinet members, he will be able to cope with the new task.'*

Encik Mazil Mohamed, aged 26, who is an assistant manager of a hotel: *'Dr Mahathir will be a good Prime Minister. He is firm and efficient and also a well-disciplined person who never admits defeat.'*

Encik Zainal Abidin Ismail, 49, a clerk said this: *'I think he has all the essential qualities of a Prime Minister. He's a man of discipline and for me he is just as capable as our beloved Tun Hussein Onn.'*

Mr B. Chandran, 24, an insurance agent: *'Dr Mahathir is a capable leader and with his long experience in the Cabinet, he is sure to be able to handle the new task well. I don't think there will be any problems for him as he has been doing a fine job all these years.'*

Encik Wan Hindun bin Nik, 46, a businessman: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir has proved to be a good and capable Minister and is firm in his decisions. I have followed his speeches either through the newspapers or television, and I find he is open and straightforward in his statements. I believe*

he will certainly be a good Prime Minister, just like his predecessor. Being firm, he will surely be looked upon with high regard by the people.'

A businessman, Encik Hashim Abdullah, 33, a photo studio proprietor says: *'From my observation, I find that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is sincere and capable of carrying out his tasks.*

'Above all he is frank and will not tolerate any nonsense. He is known to be an honest person even long before he joined the Cabinet. I think it is good to have such a man as the country's leader. Although he is firm, he is also friendly and humble.

'My only hope is that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir maintains strict control on the prices of goods. He should not allow the prices of goods to be raised every now and then for this will bring hardship to the people, especially the lower income group.'

Cik Wan Hairun Nizah binti Abu Bakar of Kluang, 30, a restaurant owner thinks: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is a capable leader. Datuk Hussein Onn has made the right choice.*

'He has also performed well in the Ministry of Trade and Industry and is wooing foreign investment.'

An estate manager, Mr V. Sukalingam, 45, says: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir must have learnt a lot from Tun Hussein Onn and as such he will not have any difficulty in running the country.*

'He is kind-hearted and he has implemented a lot of changes — beneficial changes — for the country.'

Encik Abdul Rahman Shaik Mydin, 26, of Penang, a factory foreman, says: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is one of the good leaders the country has because as a Deputy Minister he has done his job well and has also shown that he can bring progress to the country.*

'He is a very strict man who can control the country. We need people like him to govern us. He is really fit for the post of Prime Minister because he has a good personality and I think he will be fair to all races.'

Mr Tan Ah Seng, 29, a dhoby shop worker: *'He is just as good as Tun Hussein Onn. He can be fair to all Malaysians.*

'We have seen the good job he has done while Tun Hussein Onn was overseas undergoing his heart operation. He then looked after the country well.

'I guess Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's style of leadership will be like the late Tun Razak's, which can bring much progress to the country in a short period.'

A Kota Bharu bank executive, Mr Lee Chi Keong, 41: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is a fair and practical man who is not afraid to tackle problems and to solve them. He is the most suitable man to be Prime Minister now. I am sure he was prepared to take on the responsibilities of being Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister.'*

Encik Mustapha Mahmud, 32, an assistant sales manager of a leading hotel: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir should be firm in ensuring the efficiency of the Government machinery.*

'His no-nonsense approach should ensure that the people are given better service by Government departments.

'I hope Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir will act firmly against those who deviate from national objectives.'

Encik Waheed bin Majeed, 40, an Alor Star businessman: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is the most suitable man to succeed Tun Hussein Onn as Prime Minister.*

'He is a brilliant and experienced politician. I like him very much to be our Prime Minister.'

Encik Azman Hashim, 24, of Kuala Trengganu, a boarding officer: *'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is young and energetic. He should be able to perform his duties as Prime Minister as well as Tun Hussein Onn, if not better. He has done well to reshuffle the Cabinet.*

'He will be firm in his decisions and more action-oriented. But that is not to say that Tun Hussein was not firm.'

So by now, Dr Mahathir should know what the people's expectations are. The question now is: 'Will he deliver the goods?'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Leaders With A Lot In Common

It has often been said that in any country, the Premier and his Deputy should have common beliefs and ideas in order to ensure the smooth running of the administration. In this respect, Malaysia is fortunate to have the Mahathir-Musa combination.

Indeed, Dr Mahathir's right-hand man, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa has much more in common with him than just political, social and economic viewpoints.

Both are not lawyers. This is the first time in the history of Malaysia where the Prime Minister or Deputy Minister is not a lawyer.

The two men form a heartening, if curious, symbol of Malaysian multi-racialism. Mahathir is of Indian descent while Musa is part Chinese.

The two leaders have also experienced a spell in the political wilderness. Dr Mahathir was expelled from UMNO after that very critical letter to the Tunku. Musa Hitam was also sacked as an Assistant Minister in 1969 for being too critical of the Government.

Musa pleaded innocence. His only regret was that the Tunku had dismissed him merely on the strength of an unfavourable report without calling for his explanation.

Musa followed Mahathir into the education portfolio in 1978 and also has been tagged an *ultra* on bumiputra rights. Both the leaders see Bahasa Malaysia as an essential tool to unify the country.

What are the credentials of Musa Hitam?

Born on April 18, 1934, Musa was educated at the English College, Johore Bharu and the University of Malaya where he read philosophy and history for three years.

As a student, he was deeply involved in politics. He was the head of the University Students' Union and Vice-President of the Pan-Malayan Students Federation from 1956 to 1957. His involvement in student activities took him abroad to Leiden, Holland where he

served as Associate Secretary of the International Student Conference from 1957 to 1959.

After graduating from University, he became Assistant District Officer in Kluang for three and a half years. He resigned in 1964 and took a public relations job for Jardine Waugh, an import-export agency.

It was during this period that he met the then Transport Minister, Tun Sardon Jubir. Impressed with his intellect, Tun Sardon brought him into the Government and Musa Hitam was appointed his Political Secretary.

A year later he was appointed UMNO Executive Secretary by Tunku Abdul Rahman and in 1968, he won the Segamat Utara parliamentary by-election.

In 1969 after the general elections, he was appointed Assistant Minister to Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister in Tunku Abdul Rahman's Cabinet.

His services were terminated after four months in office. He then left for Sussex University to pursue his Masters in International



Two leaders with a lot in common.

Relations. His thesis was on regional co-operation. He professes to be an ASEAN man.

'When I was doing my thesis, nobody understood what ASEAN meant. Today they come to us instead of we going to them.'

On his return, he accepted a teaching post at the University of Malaya. He soon became a senior lecturer.

In 1971, he was elected Vice-Chairman of UMNO Youth Malaysia, marking his return to active politics. In the same year, he was appointed chairman of FELDA under the premiership of the late Tun Abdul Razak.

In 1973, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry. Datuk Musa became a full Cabinet Minister and held the Primary Industries portfolio from September 1974.

At this time he was nicknamed 'Towkay Getah' (Rubber Towkay) but the job was not all plain sailing. He showed his qualities as a courageous leader during the Baling demonstration in 1974 when rubber tappers demonstrated against the tremendous fall in rubber prices.

Musa Hitam was elected a Vice-President of UMNO on September 15, 1978 together with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba.

During the recent UMNO General Assembly, Datuk Musa defeated Tengku Razaleigh by more than 200 votes to become the Deputy President of UMNO and thus secured the position of Deputy Prime Minister of the country. Musa polled 722 votes while Tengku Razaleigh had 517 votes. Had he been defeated he would still have continued serving the country as he had promised earlier.

A man of fair play, Musa sees the UMNO general elections as a process of offering one's services to the people and the country and not a process of power struggle.

After the results were announced, he thanked all those who had voted for him and those who had not. He also asked for forgiveness from all UMNO members if he had said or done anything wrong in the process of campaigning.

His varied background in business, foreign affairs (academically), primary industries and education should help him in carrying out his important task as the country's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs.

As Minister of Education, he successfully resisted the establishment of the proposed Chinese language Merdeka University. At the same time, he increased the intake of non-Malays into local

universities.

Like Dr Mahathir, Datuk Musa Hitam has also called upon the Malay students to 'buck up' and not rely on the Government to give them a free place in the local universities.

During his term in the Education Ministry, he revamped the heavy and exam-oriented primary school syllabus.

In its place came a new syllabus wherein the basic 3R's (reading, 'rithmetic and 'riting) are to be emphasised.

Both Musa and Mahathir seem to be on the same wave-length in their thoughts and ideas. Perhaps that is where the attraction lies and why Mahathir appointed Musa as the Deputy Prime Minister.

Though both are not lawyers, they respect the rule of law highly.

In a speech to lawyers at the Sixth Malaysian Law Conference, Musa stressed that though Dr Mahathir and he are not lawyers, the Rule of Law 'remains sacrosanct as it has been and neither you as practitioners of the law nor the general public have anything to fear on this score.'

'An elected government given the mandate to rule by the people has to take into consideration the views of everyone and not only one individual group, no matter what expertise it claimed,' said Musa.

He then gave an assurance that whatever proposals or criticisms that came from such an august body as the Bar Council would be considered by the Government. The Government would also safeguard the body politic and protect the people in accordance with the Constitution.

Like the Prime Minister, Musa believes in a clean and honest Government.

It is the task of the new administration to make sure that politicians understand the nature and role of the civil service.

Apart from holding the important portfolio of Home Affairs, Musa has been assigned to oversee the implementation of Government policies and proper running of agencies.

In an interview with reporters after shutting down two subsidiaries of the Johore Tenggara Development Authority (KEJORA)†, which were incurring substantial losses, he said:

†Some Malaysians accuse Datuk Musa of undoing projects that had the blessings of Tun Hussein Onn.

'Every agency has its weaknesses and it is my duty as the Deputy Prime Minister, assigned to oversee the implementation of Government policy, to find out weaknesses and initiate corrective measures.'

Musa is also sparing in giving praise as he feels that too much praise can go to one's head. He is more concerned with questions relating to failures than successes. This is the right approach for Musa to take to make sure that agencies do their work well. Personnel in Government agencies tend to become complacent when they receive too much praise.

Musa once told a press conference that he believed in making sincerity the guiding principle for his political life.

He has always kept the advice given by the late Tun Razak that he could go far if he remembered to be humble. 'If you forget yourself, you won't arrive where you should be,' Tun Razak had said.

Some journalists see Mahathir's style as rather abrasive while his deputy is something approaching the opposite, with a relaxed, controlled manner and a sense of politeness.

But Musa can also be frank and aggressive when the need arises.

It may be the difference in style of handling a situation that makes Mahathir and Musa click. For is it not true that opposite poles attract?

Together, Mahathir and Musa have what Malaysia needs in the coming years for growth and prosperity. An abrasive and tough manner to wake up the sleepy and a relaxed style to smoothen all rough edges.

Whatever the differences in style, one cannot deny that both Mahathir and Musa have a lot in common. Their thoughts, political career and background testify to that.

'The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.'

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

New Reformers At Work

The first hundred days of Mahathir's Premiership have been marked by several distinctive features. The Mahathir-Musa era has already become known as an era of reforms. Not a day has passed since the new Cabinet took over on July 18, 1981, without some important developments.

From words and deeds one can easily discern that the earlier *ultra* image of Dr Mahathir has vanished. In its stead we see a leader with a breath of vision which extends to the whole nation and not only towards the bumiputras. This has been emphasised time and time again.

Today, Mahathir understands and appreciates better the many complexities of a multi-racial society and its varied needs. Already he has been confronted with a never-ending list of unanswered questions relating to the well-being of the nation as a whole.

Dr Mahathir has made his diagnosis. He now knows what Malaysia needs and what his prescription should be.

Mahathir has shown indications that he is a man of action; not a man of words and promises.

Mahathir's first move was to give guidelines to Ministers and heads of all Ministries for a speed-up in the implementation of various projects. On July 22, 1981 he asked the nation to give him one year and then judge his administration and its achievements. In doing so, Mahathir said, 'Our style and our approach will be different. If we succeed, the people will be able to see for themselves. If not, we have failed . . . . It is up to the people to assess us after some time.'

After chairing his first Cabinet meeting in the third week of July, he told a press conference that he had briefed all Cabinet Ministers on their duties and laid down specific guidelines for them to follow.

It is hoped that his guidelines are flexible and pragmatic. They should not compromise basic national objectives.

Everything possible should be done to cut down slogan-shouting,

head-line hunting and the airing of criticism on political aims and aspirations of the different races and their parties by all the Ministers. I repeat – all the Ministers. I say this because there has been a tendency in the past for far too many people to act as spokesman for the Government and issue statements to the press. This practice has given Malaysians a distorted impression of who are authorised to make public statements affecting policy.

The Prime Minister is expected to draw the line or give directions as to who should make statements on such vital questions as religion, education and politics.

A measure of Mahathir's qualities as a leader with a no-nonsense approach was shown by the way he carried out his duties during the UMNO General Assembly.

The most urgent question related to Tengku Razaleigh's position in the Government after Musa Hitam was voted Deputy President of UMNO.

Although Datuk Musa Hitam and Tengku Razaleigh had never put their commitment to UMNO on the line, many of the members felt something must be done, and done soon to heal the wounds.

To avert any untoward reaction some members suggested that a motion from the floor should be introduced to urge Tengku Razaleigh to stay in the Cabinet despite his setback in the election.

While remaining firm Mahathir, with tact and patience, said that no such move was necessary at that stage. He felt that time would heal the wounds and that no serious damage could be done to UMNO's unity.

Mahathir explains: 'I did at first think the motion from the floor a good idea, until I found out that the motion would not get unanimous support . . . some of the supporters of Tengku Razaleigh didn't want such a motion and some who were against him also didn't want it . . . . so I thought in such circumstances better not to embarrass Tengku Razaleigh . . . .

'I felt that if the Assembly wished it . . . we should do so unanimously ... and not embarrass Tengku Razaleigh. Indeed it would have strengthened my hand rather than weakened it ... because I honestly feel that Tengku Razaleigh should stay in the Government. If there had been a debate (during the UMNO Assembly) it would not have been nice at all ....'

Mahathir had the backing of Tun Hussein Onn on his decision not

to take any risks. Thus the move did not materialise and this has turned for the continued solidarity of the party.

The Prime Minister's decision not to allow a motion from the floor is now justified because Tengku Razaleigh eventually acceded to the countrywide call by the leaders of the party and others to remain in the Government.

There was rejoicing when the Tengku finally announced his decision to accept the offer of the portfolio of Finance Minister — a position in which he had already made a mark. He is the youngest man ever to hold the Finance portfolio in Malaysia.

Under the leadership of Mahathir, Malaysians hope to see more and more leaders of Tengku Razaleigh's age group occupying positions of greater responsibility in the years ahead.

Meanwhile, the Mahathir administration is going ahead with reforms in the different spheres of activities in Malaysia — all aimed at creating a new image for this country.

Meanwhile there are Malays and non-Malays, fortunately not many, who have asked one question. Why did Mahathir go on leave after six weeks in office? Why did the Prime Minister take a holiday in Portugal and Spain so soon? Even Ronald Reagan, the President of the United States, who was seriously injured in an assasination attempt, refused to take a holiday before completing his 100 days in office.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Get Moving Fast

One of the first things that Dr Mahathir did soon after becoming Prime Minister was to urge civil servants to speed up action on the various projects they had begun.

The slogan of the new Government seems to be: 'Get moving fast and deliver the goods. Don't just talk about it.'

Apparently Dr Mahathir had noticed some slackening during the first few weeks he was in office. One source admitted that there had been a virtual standstill in some Ministries because of the change in the administration which coincided with the fasting month.

The new Prime Minister wants every member of the civil service to be punctual in reporting for work daily.

Various measures have already been taken to streamline and speed up the administration. Among the new steps are:

Implementation of a punch-card system — even for senior civil servants — to cut down on late arrivals and early departures in Government offices,

Disciplinary action, including dismissal, would be taken against civil servants who arrive late at their offices for a certain number of times a month (probably more than nine times),

Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Musa Hitam have set examples to the rest of the Cabinet and the civil service by being at their desks by 8 a.m., and

Datuk Musa Hitam who is involved in the day-to-day running of the Government will visit all the States to check on the progress of projects. He plays a key role in ensuring that the Government delivers the goods.

Sources said that at a recent briefing for senior civil servants, Dr Mahathir told the participants (including secretaries-general of all the Ministries) what he expected from the civil service.

The Prime Minister was very blunt and stated exactly what he

wanted. He told them there was to be no more going off to play golf† during working hours and that productivity must improve.

He also told them that the civil service must be more efficient and must implement the Government's policies efficiently, thoroughly and within the target date.

During the first Cabinet meeting on July 22, 1981, chaired by Dr Mahathir since he became Prime Minister, Cabinet members were told that the new administration wants 'less talk and more work'.

The Ministers were told that the people must see the changes and the benefits for themselves after a certain time, and that the Government must deliver the goods.

The Prime Minister stressed that Cabinet Ministers should get more involved in the implementation and progress of projects and not leave them entirely to the civil servants.

Dr Mahathir's message is clear.

The civil servants must brush up otherwise they may face disciplinary action. Those who fail to respond to the call for action by the Government may even lose their jobs.

†Golf diplomacy is a heritage from the British. Our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj, continued this practice followed by the late Tun Abdul Razak and to lesser extent by Tun Hussein Onn.

Dr Mahathir does not play golf while Datuk Musa plays occasionally with friends.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

New Farming Systems

Let It Be As Hot As Fire
Or As Cold As Ice
We Will Handle It

KAMPUNG SLOGAN

The spirit of *Berdikari* (self-help) now prevails among some rice-farming villages in Kedah, thanks to the timely advice by Dr Mahathir to some kampung folk when he was Deputy Prime Minister.

A pioneer project in this field of new enterprises is a kampung farm — mechanised and modern — managed by only seven Malays. It is producing higher incomes for 500 people.

Mahathir got the idea of a communal farm while on a tour of Korea and this he passed on to a delegation of five headed by Encik Yahaya bin Abu (Pak Ya, for short), 55. Pak Ya is from Kampung Assam Jawa some 20 miles southeast of the capital of the rice-bowl State of Kedah.

Credit for the success of this communal farm goes first to the team of five village folk who took the rather uncommon and courageous step of calling on Dr Mahathir for his assistance.

Pa Ya told his story to the New Straits Times:

'We were at Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's office to tell him our woes and seek his advice and help to make our padi land more profitable. He listened as we spoke of our struggles. He advised us to return to our kampung to look for some land that has not been put to good use.

'Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he would do all he could provided the land was found and that we were willing to put our heart and soul into it.

'On my return,I gathered all the farmers and told them what was required of us all. I also explained to them the advantage of grouping

all our tiny plots into one economical unit for better management.

'The people were puzzled at first by the idea of surrendering their land to be worked by others but eventually, when they were made to see the benefit of the scheme for themselves as individuals and for the kampung as a whole, they were willing partners.'

Soon Kedah witnessed a mini agricultural revolution and with it the prospects of a brighter future for the rural people.

Today there is an air of happy excitement in Assam Jawa as a result of the success of the communal farm, the first of its kind in Kedah. A source close to the Ministry of Agriculture states that communal agriculture is not an imported idea as far as the country's farmers are concerned. FELDA, FELCRA and other similar agencies are working their schemes on a communal basis. Settlers on these land schemes work them and take a share of the profits.

Since the commencement of the pilot project, a number of things have changed in Assam Jawa. The land is economically managed and the manpower saved is directed elsewhere. In this manner the farmers are able to earn more and raise their standard of living.

Machines too seem to be a common feature in Assam Jawa. Full mechanisation has been achieved in ploughing and transportation.

Pak Ya says the communal farming concept is expected to be extended to other agricultural activities in Assam Jawa. Already there are signs of this. RISDA is expected to open up 520 acres of rubber estate in the kampung. Pak Ya was not able to tell when the project would be started but, he adds, the area has been earmarked.

With the success of this pioneering project the people of Assam Jawa are better off now and they now look forward to a better and brighter future for themselves and their children.

The Government has given this pilot project its blessings and the farmers in other parts of the country are watching its progress closely.

Another innovation introduced by Dr Mahathir is the collective padi farming system which is expected to increase the income of farmers in Kedah.

Under the system, 350 owners of a total of 1,500 acres of padi land will co-operate to produce higher yields more systematically, the Chairman of the Launching Committee, Haji Saflrol bin Haji Hashim, said in Alor Star, Kedah.

The system will cover six kampungs — Kampung Paya Saga,

Kampung Paya Sena, Kampung Banggul Masjid, Kampung Batu Menunggol, Kampung Bukit Jambul and Kampung Tempoyak.

Haji Saflrol, who is also the State Assemblyman for Bukit Raya, said that the new collective system is different from the one which was successfully introduced in Assam Jawa.

He said that under the new system, transport would be provided for conveying padi to the mills. In the past it had been found that harvests were spoiled due to lack of transportation.

He added that the National Padi and Rice Board (LPN) had been requested to buy the padi from the six kampungs participating in the scheme.

Haji Saflrol also said many of the farmers in the district owned padi land of less than four *relungs* and they could not afford to introduce mechanisation.

He said the new system would enable them to obtain machinery, transportation, fertilisers and advisory services.

To ensure the success of the scheme, the Muda Agricultural Development Authority (MADA) is providing various services required by the farmers, he added.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Towards Malay Liberation

The Only Thing Necessary For the Triumph Of Evil
Is For Good Men To Do Nothing

– EDMUND BURKE

Time and time again Dr Mahathir has shown real concern for the welfare of Malays by giving them advice to improve themselves. In this respect he has stressed the urgent need for Malays to 'recapture honourable attitudes and values which they had relinquished as a result of the administrative policies of colonial rulers'.

From his youth he had been pleading with the Malays to change their attitudes and work hard to improve their lot.

When he was 21 years old, Dr Mahathir began championing the cause of the Malays. Then as now, he identified British colonialism as the 'culprit' who had enslaved the bumiputras, the sons of the soil, in their own land. Then he recognised the need for a change of attitudes on the part of the Malays and an awakening to the fact that independence cannot come through dependence on others.

Today, at 56, Dr Mahathir together with Datuk Musa Hitam reflect a truly Malaysian combination of national ideologies. With their innovative, if somewhat leftish, ideologies and viewpoints, the groundwork seems laid for a successful era in Malaysian politics and Government.

In a message delivered at the joint opening of the UMNO Youth and Wanita General Assemblies in June 1981, 'Dr UMNO', as he is also known, underlined the role of the Malays in the New Economic Policy.

This policy, he explained, was not designed to pamper the Malays. While the Government had taken all steps possible to protect, and indeed, to elevate the interests of the Malays, it could not play a lone game. The Malays would have to lend a hand in redressing economic

imbalance and in moulding the nation into the desired economy as designed by the New Economic Policy.

Bumiputras would have to work just as hard, if not harder than their Malaysian neighbours. There must be no room at all for contentment, arrogance and a false sense of achievement.

British colonialism and the influx of immigrants to the land had paved the way for the Malays' first taste of dependence on others.

The present control of the Government by the UMNO, together with the increasingly active participation in business by bumiputras, must not be permitted to create such contentment among them as to carve a second path to the same fate.

The position and status of the Malays have come a long way since Mahathir's concern for them was voiced in his book *The Malay Dilemma* in 1970.

But the doctor harbours fears that there is still a worrying percentage of the country's largest ethnic group who seek the easy life of their forebears.

Being overwhelmed by the power which their race wield over the Government and hence the nation, they are lulled by a false sense of security into dormancy and inertia.

To make the situation worse, there were some misguided Malays going around decrying education and the pursuit of knowledge, declaring that this is secular and others who question the sincerity of the faith in Islam of those Malays who deal in business and seek wealth, this being materialistic.

It is time, Dr Mahathir says, for this short-sighted percentage of Malays to realise that encouragement from others for them to be lazy and deficient in skills and knowledge will only result in dependence on them.

Over protection must be siphoned out and 'constructive protection' channelled in its place.

Flattery and pampering must cease. What is now needed is a resolve on the part of the Malays to take up the challenges open to them in every aspect of their nation's development, a resolve which must embrace the attitude that they are not here merely to rule but also to work. For it is such and similar attitudes that will pave the way toward progress and eventual liberation from outmoded ideas and practices.

Dr Mahathir left no doubt whatsoever when he emphasised, 'There must be meaningful Malay and non-bumiputra participation in all areas. Meaningful participation means bumiputra workers will

ultimately not depend on non-Malay workers for efficiency, diligence and productivity. Bumiputras will work together with non-bumiputras, with equal responsibility.'

Addressing the UMNO Youth and the Wanita General Assemblies on June 25, 1981, Dr Mahathir warned: 'We must guard against over-indulging the Malays because there is nothing more destructive than pampering. Protection by the Youth and the Wanita must be tempered with moderation. Malay workers and students must accept challenges and be prepared to face and overcome them without continuous assistance.'

In warning the Malays not to depend on others for their progress, Dr Mahathir reminded them: 'The New Economic Policy does not mean providing of wealth and property to bumiputras only. It does not mean the giving of licences, tenders and contracts . . . to bumiputras alone.

'The New Economic Policy also means work by bumiputras — work in all sectors, work that is light and work that is heavy, work that provides high returns and work that does not,' he said.

Bumiputras, for their own good, will do well to heed this advice. It will be ignored by them at their own peril!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Razak Legacy

An important legacy that the late Tun Abdul Razak left behind is the National Action Council. It has been dormant for the past several years.

The NAC, formed by Tun Abdul Razak in 1971, had previously met only occasionally. Realising the importance of this organisation, Dr Mahathir has directed the 'resurrection' of the National Action Council which will deal with troubled Government agencies.

Already instructions have been sent out for a regular fortnightly meeting of the body where 'no punches pulled, closed-door sessions' would be held.

This is as it should be. According to one reliable source close to the high-powered decision-making council, agency by agency will be called up, their programmes examined to see if they are in line with Government objectives, their performance gauged and their results questioned. The various agencies will be called up, to 'test if they are up to mark'.

'If they know what they are doing, they don't need notice well in advance,' according to one source.

The first meeting of the Council was held on August 22, 1981 when senior officials gave the briefing for their respective agencies.

The NAC is chaired by the Prime Minister and is attended by Datuk Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, the National and Rural Development Minister, Encik Sanusi Junid and the Foreign Minister, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie.

The Council will enable the country's leaders to be in closer touch with the implementation of development programmes and the New Economic Policy. These sessions of the NAC will cut red-tape in making immediate decisions to deal with problems that are brought up, said the source.

Hereafter all Government agencies should expect more of Datuk Musa's trouble-shooting visits. The Prime Minister, Datuk Musa

or Encik Sanusi will 'drop in anytime without notice', said one source close to the top leaders.

The man who will see to the implementation of the various projects of the Ministries is Datuk Musa Hitam who said not only the Ministers but the people as well must contribute more positively to the Government's efforts to develop the country. He said the people should revive the spirit of *gotong-royong*, which was widely practised in the days of Tun Abdul Razak.

He said the people should first ask themselves what they could do for certain projects before approaching the Government for assistance. 'The people should at least be prepared to contribute their labour in minor country projects on the basis of *gotong-royong*,' he added.

The Deputy Prime Minister also warned of the danger of the Government giving too much assistance to the people as it would lead to over-dependence on the part of the people.

Datuk Musa then reminded the people of the reality of the country's multi-racial society saying that no matter how much they dislike the situation they still have to accept it.

Members of the public will no doubt welcome the news that the Mahathir administration has begun to do its work in earnest. From now on all those responsible for the various agencies will be on their toes.

In this connection the Ministry of National and Rural Development has begun not only to revive but to revise the Red Book System, also introduced by the late Tun Razak in implementing development projects.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Tasks and The Problems

The new Government of Dr Mahathir faces tasks that are many and varied. According to him, the success of the New Economic Policy depends on every Minister and every civil servant putting their shoulders to the wheel to make steady progress.

Dr Mahathir and his fellow Ministers have begun well by putting forward guidelines for others to follow. But will all the projects be carried out on time and successfully?

An aggresive approach to every problem is not only necessary but important. But what is really important is the way Government policy is implemented.

With his natural drive for action, he wants the tempo of development to be maintained in order to produce results. In this respect he has the full backing of his Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam.

Dr Mahathir has sorted out some of the items on his agenda of action and there are some more that call for urgent attention.

The administration must rise to the occasion in carrying out successfully the various projects. There should be no shilly-shallying and dilly-dallying.

In order to achieve satisfactory results the Ministers must set an example in the performances of their own duties. Their work should serve to inspire their officers.

Speeches should be cut down to the minimum. Action is what is needed and needed urgently in all departments of the Government.

The country's success depends on the growth of the economy.

More and more investors, both local and foreign, should be encouraged to avail themselves of the incentives offered.

To begin with, all Government guidelines must be flexible and pragmatic for the implementors to do a good job.

Dr Mahathir himself had given the lead when he was the Minister of Trade and Industry. The new Minister, Tengku Ahmad Rithaudeen, should keep up the good work of his predecessor.

The chief engine of growth is the bureaucracy. All officers should strive for excellence in all they do. No excuses or apologies should be tolerated. The civil servants should be told to carry out all their projects on time.

Malaysia will rise or fall on the ability of our Ministers and officials to fulfil their promises made to the nation at the time of the last general election.

Now is the time to improve efficiency of the civil servants. Those who do well should be promoted or suitably rewarded.

All officers should welcome constructive criticism in order to improve their performance. The attack on corruption must be maintained. In this connection it is heartening that our new leaders have pledged to be just and fair to all races in Malaysia.

Some of the new Government's innovations have received a mixed reaction.

The introduction of the clock-in system has met with varying responses from Government employees.

The National Union of PWD employees has given a definite 'yes' to the system.

Its president, Encik Ariff Mohamed Yassin, said the system could prove to be very effective in determining the weaknesses of employees, including the officers and Ministers.

'Everybody, including Ministers, should be involved in the system so as to be fair to all,' he added.

However, the clock-in system would not be effective if it was not 'properly' used, he added.

CUEPACS has called for a discussion between the Government and the five-member National Joint Council.

Its secretary-general, Encik Jamaluddin Mohamed Isa, said it would not be fair to Government employees to be forced to follow the system, unless 'we know how it works'.

'The clock-in system, if implemented, would affect everybody in the Government service, hence there should be a meeting between the Government and the National Joint Council on its implementation,' he added.

Encik Jamaluddin said he could not say how effective the system would prove to be unless workers, who are to be included in the system, agree on its merits.

He said the present system of using attendance books is very

similar to the punch-card system in terms of effectiveness.

'Furthermore, the General Order already covers matters regarding discipline of workers. This system has proved to be good enough for this purpose,' he added.

The President of the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP), Haji Mokhtar Haji Abdul Rahim, holds a different view.

Government servants are educated people, he said, and should not be subjected to rules like factory workers.

He said that although the system was being used in other countries, it is not suitable for Asian countries.

He said the present attendance book system would be very effective if errant workers are called in and told where they have gone wrong.

The problem only arises when they are being scolded in front of other employees, he added.

He said if the system was implemented, it should cover Ministers as well.

The National Electricity Board Employees Union President, Encik Mohamed Abu Bakar, warned of the problems that might arise when clock-in machines break down.

He said the system had been introduced in the NEB and hours had been wasted each time the machine broke down.

He said the system was not fool-proof.

'You can still fool your bosses even with the use of the punch-card system. All you have to do is to ask one of your friends to punch the card for you earlier than the actual time of your arrival at the office,' he added.

'In the same way, you can ask him to do it later than the time you leave the office.'

The Senior Officers of Customs Association's secretary-general, Encik Idris Rahim, said the Union was waiting for the official clarification of the system before giving its own views.

All will agree that the erosion of the work ethic can do a lot of harm. That is the reason for the Prime Minister's call for commitment to hard work and with it punctuality.

Dr Mahathir has set the deadline for all officers to complete the projects they have launched. The nation awaits for results on or before the end of the first year of the Mahathir Government.

Meanwhile Ministers should be warned not to interfere too much with our civil service which is second to none in Asia.

There should be a limit to the directives given by the Ministers to

the secretaries-general and other senior officials of Government.

The civil servants have been and still are the backbone of our Government. Too much interference may result in an adverse effect on all, if not most, of the officers.

Dr Elyas Omar, the Deputy Director-General of the Public Services Department, said recently: 'The PSD will go all out to improve the civil service and the performance of individual civil servants.'

He said there was a lack of discipline and inefficiency in some areas of the civil service and they had to be rectified.

He attributed these weaknesses to inefficient departmental heads and mismanagement of staff.

'The standards demanded of the civil service keep on rising. What was considered efficient in the 1960s is not the case in the 80s,' he said.

Dr Elyas Omar pointed out that while it was easy to keep tabs on officers within the office, very little was done to ensure that officers on field duty were doing their jobs.

'Even the punch card system will not ensure that officers are punctual because they would get someone else to punch their cards for them.

'The system of field supervision must be tightened,' he said.

Not all senior officials are happy over the new guidelines. Indicative of this fact is the reaction of the Director-General of the Public Services Department, Tan Sri Osman Kassim.

Tan Sri Kassim hit out in August 1981 at those who made disparaging remarks against the entire civil service just because a few officers had tarnished its image.

'There are civil service officers who work their hearts out. Don't blame the whole service because of a few.

'What percentage of officers play golf? What percentage play golf during office hours? Most of us play the game only after work,' he said.

Tan Sri Osman was speaking to reporters after opening a course for PSD officers at the Institute of Public Administration in Petaling Jaya.

He added: 'If we leave early, it is usually five minutes before time to beat the traffic jam. What is five minutes compared to the eight hours of work we put in?' he asked.

He also said that disparaging remarks on the civil service only served as a morale dampener for civil service officers and gave the

public the wrong impression of the service.

To streamline administrative action and cut red-tape in the implementation of the Fourth Malaysia Plan, the Government has adopted nine recommendations of the Cabinet Committee on Implementation.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam announced this at the official opening of the Wisma Persekutuan, in Johore Bahru on August 10, 1981.

The nine-point action programme of the Government is:

(i) A return to the Red Book system, originally set-up under the late Tun Abdul Razak, to enable the Prime Minister's Department to have up-to-date data from all levels on the progress of projects;

(ii) Getting all Ministries, Government departments and agencies to list out their projects according to priorities;

(iii) All agencies involved in planning and implementation must prepare proper and streamlined work flow charts for all projects;

(iv) All agencies that need land for development projects must submit their choice of sites two years before the site is actually needed;

(v) Setting up project co-ordination committees for Federal projects in all States chaired by the respective State development officer;

(vi) Requiring all comments and recommendations from the relevant authorities to be handed in within two weeks of a project being mooted;

(vii) Delegating power to the Federal projects tenders committee in the State to approve tenders up to $5 million;

(viii) Allowing the above committee to approve any additional expenditure required for the projects of up to $1 million or 20% of the original allocation, whichever is lower and

(ix) Using an integrated approach in the implementation of priority projects to ensure co-ordination between all Government agencies.

Datuk Musa, who is also Home Minister, said that the Red Book system would simplify the Government's decision-making process and cut red-tape.

'All agencies must continuously submit the latest information on the progress of projects and programmes to the Prime Minister's Department.'

Datuk Musa also said that at State level, the priority list of projects by Government departments and agencies would be studied by the State action committees chaired by the respective Mentris Besar or Chief Minister.

Datuk Musa stressed that the new approach indicates the Government's desire to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to the people.

Meanwhile Datuk Musa Hitam has ordered that all Ministers and top civil servants would be required to fill a special form giving the details of their assets and those of their immediate relatives.

Datuk Musa explained that this move was in line with the new Government's objective of providing a smooth, efficient and clean administration.

'New brooms sweep well'. This is an old saying. The new Ministers, as new brooms, sent up a lot of dust. But the dust eventually comes down and settles on the carpet and not under it!

Ministers and others should not therefore stir up too much dust. Otherwise their actions may create bigger problems later on.

CHAPTER TWENTY

An Act of Faith

Dr Mahathir, no doubt, inherited several unsolved problems when he became the fourth Prime Minister. Foremost among them were the questions of a royal pardon for the former Selangor Mentri Besar, Datuk Harun bin Haji Idris and the release of detainees under the Internal Security Act.

On July 30, 1981, the first major decision was taken by the new Cabinet when the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam announced the release of Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, the former Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, together with 20 other Internal Security Act detainees.

Among those released were Kassim Ahmad, Chairman of Partai Rakyat, and Democratic Action Party Members of Parliament Chian Heng Kai and Chan Kok Kit.

The rest were 11 members of the underground Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabilullah (Holy Army) — or PAS — and six others, including three women.

The PAS members were detained for involvement in the padi-subsidy demonstration in Alor Star on January 23, 1981.

The Deputy Prime Minister hastened to warn that the Government's decision to release 21 Internal Security Act detainees did not mean that the 'new Government is weak or soft'.

He also warned that the Government would take a 'dim view' of any party, including newspapers and magazines, 'deliberately misinterpreting' this decision to create the impression that the Government has changed its stance to one that is less anti-communist.

The Deputy Prime Minister was speaking at a Press conference at the Prime Minister's Department, at which he announced the release of the 21 detainees.

'I would like to stress that the new administration under the leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, while upholding the policy of non-alignment in foreign affairs, is still adhering to the

policy of anti-communism and anti those upholding the elements intent on creating disturbances and chaos in the nation.

'Any attempt to incite trouble, if detected at the initial level, will be stopped without any hesitation.'

He warned again that the solidarity of the people in their struggle against communists and anti-national elements would be affected if the people, especially the newspapers and magazines, misinterpreted the Government's decision as a change to a less anti-communist stance.

'I would like to stress,' he went on, 'that the stance and strategy in efforts to crush the communists and anti-national elements are given top priority.

'The Ministry of Home Affairs will spear-head this strategy and it is up to the people to give their fullest co-operation,' he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the Government, through its various specific agencies, would always be on guard and was continually on the alert to detect and arrest anyone carrying out communist, pro-communist, subversive and anti-national activities, as well as those of proscribed bodies considered a threat to national security and public order.

'All relevant Government agencies which are responsible for keeping an eye on activities of communists, communist front organisations and anti-national elements will continue to be on the alert. These agencies have been directed to be more vigilant.

'The relevant Government agencies will continue to perform their duties and carry out their responsibilities to maintain law and order.

'Law and order is considered to be the foundation and the catalyst of national development in general and economic growth in particular.

'Continued national development and further expansion and growth of the economy will help us to attain objectives of the New Economic Policy and to enable our people to fulfil their hopes and aspirations for a better standard of living,' he added.

Continuing, the Deputy Prime Minister emphasised that the decision to release the detainees on the eve of Hari Raya *Aidilfitri* was to enable them to celebrate the occasion with their families. It was in keeping with the spirit of *Aidilfitri*.

He said that from 1978 to 1981, 726 detainees who had been rehabilitated, and were prepared to mend their ways, were freed by the Government.

With the release of the 21 detainees, there are 567 people still

under detention.

He said there was no truth in the allegations that among the detainees released were political detainees.

'None of those detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) had been taken in for their involvement in political activities,' he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the Government was continually giving the opportunity to all those detained under the ISA to return to society.

'The condition for their release is that they themselves must change their attitude and are prepared to cease being involved in activities considered a threat to national security and public order,' he said.

'Those remaining in detention camps who have yet to change will continually be given the opportunity to mend their ways.

'If they genuinely express regret over their past activities and show signs that convince the Government that their release will not be a threat to national security or be prejudicial to public order, the Government will free them.'

Datuk Musa pointed out that the Advisory Board is an independent body established under Article 151 (2) of the Federal Constitution and its members are appointed by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong.

'The Advisory Board is chaired by someone eminently qualified, such as a High Court judge. The Board is also responsible for putting up recommendations to me as Minister of Home Affairs, and it is up to me to consider these recommendations,' he said.

'The normal practice is that any person detained under the Internal Security Act will be released based on the recommendation of the Advisory Board and after I am satisfied that the person concerned will no longer be a threat to national security.'

The Deputy Prime Minister said the detainees could be divided into several categories – such as those involved in communist, pro-communist and subversive activities, as well as those involved in proscribed organisations with the avowed aim of toppling the Government by the use of force against the Constitution.

Later, replying to questions, he said that the process of reviewing an ISA detainee's position was a normal procedure carried out by the Advisory Board every six months.

Every detainee was brought before the panel and the case reviewed, and this process was a continuous one.

'As and when a detainee is found to be suitable to be released, he or she will be freed,' he said.

He also said that if conditions were attached to the release these

should not be constructed as a negative factor or a punishment.

'The aim is to help them (the detainees released with conditions), as some have problems of livelihood and the authorities would want to help them,' he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister also said that the Government was aware that the communists were still using some organisations as fronts.

'They will also continue to look for new organisations to use as fronts. We are aware of what is going on, and all organisations in the country must be careful of this tactic,' he said.

Of the 21 detainees, Datuk Musa added that no conditions were attached to their release and that they would not be required to make any statements on television.

He warned that the Government would not hesitate to re-arrest and detain those released should they be found to have resumed anti-Government activities.

The release of the detainees was welcomed by the majority of Malaysians.

According to Mr Param Cumarasamy, the Chairman of Selangor and Federal Territory Bar Committee, the release of the detainees demonstrated the Government's commitment to justice and the Rule of Law.

He said, 'I salute Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir for his gesture of compassion and the speed with which he carried out the pledge (made on the day he named his Cabinet) that he would review all cases of ISA detainees,' he added.

Mr Cumarasamy said preventive detention without trial is objectionable in a democratic country. 'Hence it should only be exercised in exceptional cases. I hope more cases – particularly those who have been detained for a long period – will be reviewed and the detainees released.

'The lawyers in Selangor and the Federal Territory and the whole country fully support the Premier and his Government in an endeavour to seek peace and happiness for all Malaysians.'

Encik Anwar Ibrahim, a former ISA detainee and President of ABIM, share similar sentiments.

'The release augurs well for the new leadership and Malaysians. We are happy about it. We hope the Government will review and release more people.'

A former leader of the now defunct Labour Party expressed

disappointment that some were left out. He hoped that the Government would not forget them.

This is the largest group of detainees released unconditionally since 1967 when the late Tun Abdul Razak freed 147 to mark the 10th National Day celebrations.

The Secretary-General of DAP, Mr Lim Kit Siang, welcoming the release of the 21 ISA detainees said, 'Dr Mahathir's Premiership had made a good start in improving the human rights record and image of the country.

'Human rights are not a luxury but a pre-condition for a functioning democracy,' he said.

Mr Lim, who is also Parliamentary Opposition Leader and MP for Petaling, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had honoured the commitment he made to review the position of ISA detainees.

'I wish to thank Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam for releasing the detainees, in particular DAP MPs Chan Kok Kit and Chian Heng Kai,' he said.

Mr Lim urged Datuk Musa Hitam, who is also Home Minister, to review the cases of all other ISA detainees and allow the Parliamentary teams of all parties to visit the Kamunting and Batu Gajah detention camps to meet every detainee and ascertain their treatment and condition.

'I would also urge the Minister of Home Affairs to review cases of every one of the detainees still being held under the ISA, with a view to releasing them or charging them in open court, for detention without trial for an indefinite period is a gross violation of basic human rights and freedom,' he added.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Crackdown on Critics

Speech is civilisation itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact, it is silence which isolates.

— THOMAS MANN, THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Freedom of speech is one of the most highly regarded principles of democracy. Constructive criticism is the lifeblood of democracy and for a democratic rule to flourish the citizens must be given a right to voice their opinions regardless of their philosophies.

On April 8, 1981, the Government amended the 1966 Societies Act whereby all societies will have to register themselves either as a political or ordinary society. Interested groups will not be able to express their political positions or criticise the Government unless they change their constitutions and are registered as political societies.

Under the new law, a society cannot seek redress from the courts. It can only appeal to the Minister of Home Affairs. The Registrar has overwhelming power. He decides whether a society should be deregistered if it makes any detrimental comments against the Government.

The passing of this Act is seen by many as an erosion of the basic right of freedom of speech. It severely restricts the ability of pressure groups to criticise the Government.

In this manner, Chinese merchant guilds and clans will no longer be able to criticise publicly the Government or any Government agencies. Chambers of Commerce, Consumers Associations, the Bar Council and Medical Association will also no longer be able to take any public action to influence Government policies that directly affect them.

When asked to give reasons why the Act was passed, the former Deputy Home Minister, Encik Sanusi Junid commented that the

strategy of the Moscow-based communist united front was to influence local organisations to cause chaos.

In a democratic nation, pressure groups play an important role in preserving democracy.

If one were to interpret the Societies Act in the proper light, then all organisations, in order to play it safe, will be better off by registering themselves as political parties.

Consumers Associations, who look after the welfare of the consumers and advise the Government against raising the prices of certain goods, and the Medical Association who tells the Government to increase the pay of doctors or amend certain laws to prevent doctors from migrating to other countries, are and will always be making comments on Government decisions, if they are to funtion effectively.

But Consumers Associations and the Medical Association are not political in nature. Will it be in order for them to be re-registered as political societies?

Before the Act was passed, much criticism was aired concerning the amendments. According to the country's former Mr Opposition, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khoon, the opposition to the Bill was the greatest that he had seen in his 25 years in politics.

I too must confess that during my career as a journalist for more than 40 years, I have not seen such strong opposition as we have seen against the Societies Act amendments.

The opposition came from the old as well as the young. The Young Christian Workers, Selangor Chambers of Commerce, National University Association, Ulamas Association of Penang, the MTUC and the Bar Council all spoke against the Bill.

The group which protested most vehemently against the passing of the Bill was the Bar Council. On April 7, 1981, they stood outside Parliament House in the rain distributing their memorandum to Members of Parliament arriving at the Dewan Rakyat for the historic debate on the Societies Act.

Their efforts were not rewarded. The Government did not heed the laywers' advice and the Bill was passed.

The Opposition party could not get enough votes to call for a division. To do that they needed 15 votes and they could only get 14 votes.

The Government claimed that much of the opposition to the Bill was due to ignorance and that some of the protesters were being led by the nose.

Dr Mahathir has assured the nation that his administration will be an open one. Proposals and criticisms will be reviewed. Let us hope that his assurance will remain.

Ministers and Members of Parliament make press statements and are protected in their speeches, whereas societies that give constructive criticisms run the risk of being deregistered.

The Government should welcome constructive criticisms from responsible organisations and the Opposition.

The fact that the Bill was passed because the Opposition just could not get enough votes shows the need for a strong and united Opposition in this country.

In a democratic nation, the Opposition plays an important role in checking what the Government does. It assists the ruling party in the running of the country, for members of the Opposition are also elected by and have close rapport with the man-in-the-street.

One refreshing feature of the whole sorry episode is the brave stand taken by Datuk Senu Rahman, the former Secretary-General of UMNO.

He spoke out for Parliamentary democracy when he made a plea for the removal of some of the more objectionable clauses in the Bill. It is a pity that his views were not heeded.

The battle for democracy goes on in this country. We look to responsible members of the public, especially the members of the legal profession to be in the vanguard of the fight for human and fundamental rights.

Their fight could only be successful if the Government is willing to listen to the woes of the people.

At the recent Sixth Malaysian Law Conference, the Government assured that it would review any proposals or criticisms that come from the august body of the Bar Council. Let us hope that the promise is kept.

Without speech there is no communication. The 'deafening' silence that ensues does no good for the nation. It isolates the Government from the people.

In the end what survives is not democracy but a situation where the ruling party plays its own tune.

Let not the cure be worse than the disease.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Rule of Law is Sacred

'The Government will never abdicate its duty to safeguard the body politic and protect the people in accordance with the Constitution.'

This firm assurance was given on behalf of the Mahathir administration by Datuk Musa Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, when declaring open the Sixth Malaysian Law Conference held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1981.

Datuk Musa did well to give this timely assurance to lawyers because of the strong criticism levelled at them by some senior Government officials of the Hussein administration for their demonstration in front of Parliament House over the amendments to the Societies Act.

Speaking on behalf of the Bar Council, its Chairman, Mr S.T.S. Sidhu said, 'The Bar Council is not against changes in the law but it wants these changes to be made only after debate.'

After hearing this eloquent plea, the Deputy Prime Minister replied:

'Certain laws which the Government introduced did not meet with the approval of lawyers, but those laws were made after assessment of political, security and social considerations in the country.

'So, until and unless you have given evidence to the contrary, do credit us with good faith in wanting to preserve the Constitution.'

Datuk Musa said that differences between the Government and lawyers may be a good thing, 'but if we disagree, let us do so with courtesy to one another, with respect for one another, and with a proper understanding of each other's purpose and good faith.

'We will consider what representations you may want to make, though of course, we cannot give any assurance or undertaking that we will accept each and every one of your representations, though they come with the stamp of such an august body as the Bar Council.'

Datuk Musa said lawyers had shown their disapproval of certain laws by writing to the Government, protesting and demonstrating.

Other countries had passed even harsher laws but in this country lawyers were allowed to make more noise. That was because the Government respected the Rule of Law and believed in the democratic process.

'I can say without hesitation that the Rule of Law remains for us as sacrosanct as it has been and neither you as practitioners of the law nor the general public have anything to fear on this score,' said Datuk Musa.

'Indeed, we cannot see how we can do otherwise,' he added.

Commenting on the present Legal Profession Practice and Etiquette Rules, Datuk Musa said the new Legal Profession Act entrusted the management and control of the conduct of members to the Bar Council.

'If you do not pretend that everything is rosy in the garden, if you are vigorous in maintaining and demanding from each and every member such a high standard of conduct as will by itself earn you the trust and confidence of the Government and the judges and the public, you will certainly do well for yourself,' he said.

Mr Sidhu appealed to the Government to give the people time to participate and debate when there were changes to be made in the law, particularly the laws which will have far-reaching consequences.

'A chance must be given to the people and the public to voice their views on the changes that are going to take place.

'After the views of the people have been given, and if the views are reasonable, they ought to be taken into consideration and the amendments modified to reflect the views.

'Amendments to the law could have many consequences which one could not see or appreciate unless pointed out by those who were directly affected.

'It is sometimes difficult even for the best of minds to envisage the consequences of a change.

'As such, a debate may make clear the consequences of the change, and result in the Government of the day not proceeding with the change,' he added.

He said that although Malaysia was still one of the few countries in the Third World where democracy and the Rule of Law prevailed, whenever there was an amendment to the Constitution, members of the Bar were 'greatly perturbed.'

Amendments which ousted the jurisdiction of the courts went against the basic structure of the Constitution relating to the separation of powers, he said.

'I feel that the powers that should be exercised under the Constitution by the judiciary are being taken away by amendments to the Constitution, and we fear that the road is being opened wide for the destruction of the principle of separation of powers . . .'

He said such amendments were slowly merging under one single authority the power to make laws and the power to judge thus 'destroying the very principle of separation of powers.'

Mr Sidhu said that while the Bar had great faith in the leaders of the country, there might be people in the future who might take advantage of these amendments to lead the country away from the democratic way of life or the Rule of Law.

He said the Bar's criticism was not made in anger or because it had no faith in the Government.

'The Bar has been punished many times for expressing its views and the greatest punishment we have suffered at the hands of the Government is to have been lumped up with the Opposition,' he said.

'But there is a constant need for vigilance and for introspection,' he added.

In view of the great interest aroused in the recent changes to certain laws it is only fitting that I refer to some comments relating to the role of lawyers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Sixth Law Conference, Mr Param Cumarasamy, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Conference and also Chairman of the Selangor and Federal Territory Bar Committee, said: 'The legal profession as a body has a wider role to play to uphold the cause of justice without regard for its own interests and uninfluenced by fear or favour.

'It will not only be a betrayal of our people but a betrayal of the profession itself if we shirk this role.

'The search for justice is a long and arduous task. The journey is often not plain sailing. But in no circumstances will the profession call off the search,' he added.

He said the Government was also in search of justice for all, and while the legal profession and the Government might have differences of opinion on the path to take, the destination was the same.

'This common cause is something very important for everyone to understand and remember. Very often our deeds and actions are misunderstood by many,' he said.

It was also this 'common cause' that led to lawyers demonstrating outside Parliament House on April 7, 1981 against the passing of the

Societies (Amendment) Act and the amendments to the Constitution.

'We had no other motive. We dreaded the path to Parliament that day. We had no choice in the circumstances,' he said.

'All other avenues to present our views at short notice to the law-makers were denied and closed to us. But we had to persevere and leave no stone unturned.

'We therefore tried the only path open to us and hope we'll never have to take that path again.'

Mr Cumarasamy hoped the Mahathir administration would review the amendments passed and submit further legislation to remove 'all the obnoxious provisions which so long as they remain in our statute book will be a threat to our cherished freedom.'

As a layman, I am glad that Lord President Tun Suffian did not think that it was wrong for lawyers to oppose and criticise certain laws.

'Sometimes,' the Lord President said, 'the Bar is regarded as an opposition group but that is not true. Practising members of the legal profession are in the best position to spot necessary changes in the law and it is their duty to draw public attention to their need for change.'

Speaking in a lighter vein Tun Suffian added that members of the Bar should develop a friendship with their lawyer friends in Parliament and the Government and treat them as they would treat people respectfully and with a 'modicum of flattery.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Malay Dilemma Explained

Not known to many Malaysians is the fact that Dr Mahathir is the author of several books, papers and articles besides his once controversial and banned book *The Malay Dilemma*.

It was only on July 30, 1981 that the ban was lifted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The book was written by Mahathir in 1969 soon after the May 13 incident, and he was subsequently dismissed from UMNO by the then Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in August 1969.

Already *The Malay Dilemma* has received good reviews from critics in Western Australia, the University of Columbia, New York and London. The book has been commended in part for its clear vision and criticised elsewhere for the emotionalism and cloudy solutions. It is now even being used as a text in schools.

In an interview with The New Nation, a Singapore newspaper, Mahathir was quoted as saying that a Cabinet Minister he had met joked about his book being the source of ideas for the country's economic planning committees.

'The Government,' he says, 'is accepting them now.'

The Malay Dilemma tells what Mahathir thinks and believes. In it he also explains the behaviour of his own race.

Mahathir writes very frankly of the inbreeding of the Malays, the plight of the Malays and the need to devise special policies to help uplift their economy from its poverty-striken state.

One of the first, if not the first, to advocate the lifting of the ban on *The Malay Dilemma* is the leader of the Opposition, Mr Lim Kit Siang. The DAP Secretary-General said: 'It is an odd situation that Malaysia was the only country in which the Prime Minister's book is banned in his own country.'

The Opposition leader pointed out that Mahathir had repeatedly said that *The Malay Dilemma* had served as the basis on which the New Economic Policy was formulated.

Now in its fifth edition, the book discusses the historical, cultural

and social factors that hindered the Malays as a whole from taking a greater role in national affairs, apart from their role in politics and administration.

No apologies are offered in the book. Dr Mahathir has stressed this in its introduction and goes on to expand his theme that hereditary and environmental factors have contributed to retard the development of the Malays. In his analysis the other factors are colonial Government policy, the effect of immigrant labour and religion.

Mahathir also describes the Chinese immigrants who arrived in colonial Malaya as 'battle-hardened' people with a will to survive under the hardiest conditions and a determination to succeed.

Commenting on the development of Malaysian society during colonial times, he says the impact of immigrants on Malay society and the colonial policy served to divide not only the Chinese and the Malays, but also the town Malays and the kampung Malays. He then goes on to point out how all these factors and others left the Malays in an inequitable position.

Mahathir also emphasises the need for protective laws in favour of the Malays to give them a place in every facet of Malaysian society, in order that they will develop the capacity to compete on equal terms.

The need for a revolution in Malay thinking and a need to break away from customs and acquire new ways and a new system of values are stressed in the book.

'I'm not anti-Chinese. I only insist that Malays be given a chance. It's like giving the have-nots what is theirs. Ideally, of course, one should forget race entirely and work in terms of haves and have-nots. Politically such a position would lose much for the party and the PMIP would benefit from it. People will always think in terms of race.'

Until the 'breach of party discipline' that led to his expulsion, Mahathir's political performance was a series of personal triumphs that he recalls with pleasure.

'There must be a conscious effort to destroy the old ways and replace them with new ideas and values. The Malays must be confronted with the realities of life and forced to adjust their thinking to conform with these realities,' he says.

Mahathir has written three other books. *A Guideline To Small Business*, published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, is expected to be reprinted soon.

Another is *Menghadapi Cabaran (Facing Challenges)* and the latest, published in 1980, is entitled *Dialogue*.

He has written essays on *Racial Politics in Malaysia*, *Democratic Nation Building* (published in a Manila monthly), *A Review of South-east Asia*, *Malay Political Systems* and *Malay Modern Attitudes Toward Socialism*.

During the two years he was mothballed, Mahathir lived the silent martyr putting profuse words on paper.

Previously, Mahathir had freelanced for the Straits Times. His pen-name was C.H.E. Det, the initials actually standing for the Malay form of address.

Most of the time his writings were critical evaluations of the country's economic and social problems.

According to a friend, Mahathir pre-empted the vision of others in pressing for a Malay middle-class. The same persistence made him one of the most prominent Members of Parliament years later.

Mahathir criticised the *padi-kuncha* system, a product of the corrupt feudalism that was strangling the life out of Kedah padi-planters and the plight of fishermen in the face of modernised fishing methods.

And what does Dr Mahathir himself think of *The Malay Dilemma*? He told Indonesian journalists during his first official visit to Jakarta early in August 1981 that the lifting of the ban on his book was to enable Malaysians to know what their Prime Minister thinks.

'I have not revised any of my views,' he told a journalist. A prolific writer who in his own words, 'writes best sitting on the pink toilet of his pink-tiled bathroom', Mahathir has put most of his thoughts into essays.

According to him, the book which he wrote in 1970 is quite harmless. All it relates is the basis of conflict among the races in Malaysia, the reasons why Malays were left behind and how they could overcome this.

Mahathir revealed that the Government, under the late Tun Abdul Razak, had used the book as the basis for reshaping Malaysia's economy.

Mahathir said the book had remained banned for a long time, in deference to Tunku Abdul Rahman (who banned the book) as a highly respected elder statesman.

The lifting of the ban was basically to enable the people to read what he had written so that they could probably 'understand me

more'.

'If they think that the ideas are good, then I can win the election, but if they don't then I may lose the election and not be the Prime Minister,' he added with a broad smile. He said this before becoming Prime Minister. Mahathir explains in *The Malay Dilemma* the causes for the infamous May 13, 1969 disturbances in Kuala Lumpur, why the Malays were economically backward and why the Malays feel they must insist upon immigrants being real Malaysians speaking in due course, nothing but Malay as immigrants in Australia speak English.

Mahathir goes on to argue that the Malays are the rightful owners of Malaya, that immigrants are guests until properly absorbed and that the immigrants are not truly absorbed until they have abandoned the language and culture of their past.

That, of course, is asking too much of non-Malays who are citizens. In due course the country will hear the verdict of historians as to whether Mahathir's thoughts contained in *The Malay Dilemma* have helped the Government to adjust its policy or improved it as recommended by the Prime Minister.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Audit Horrors

Citizens of Malaysia should salute the A ditor General, Tan Sri Ahmad Noordin,† for his annual report for 1977. In that report, the doleful tales of uncollected revenue running into millions of dollars, the missing receipts and delinquent officers are revealed.

What steps had the Government taken in the past to check this state of affairs?

The New Straits Times said: 'What is most disturbing is that the delinquencies of the past continue.'

The time has certainly come for the executive to show greater responsiveness to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor General. The reports of the latter are several years old and the latest is that of 1977.

On August 14, 1981, it was reported in the newspapers that $113 million was due to the Telecoms at the end of 1977. The amount of money due to the Telecoms was for services terminated in and before 1973. Some date as far back as 1960.

A long delay in the submission of yearly financial statements seems to be the case. The financial statement for 1977 was submitted only in their final form on March 12, 1981.

According to Press reports, the Telecoms Department continued to turn a deaf ear to the recommendations made by the Public Accounting Committee in an audit report.

'The PAC was not satisfied with the long delay in the submission of the financial statement for 1977, and it recommended steps to be taken to speed it up.'

The PAC recommended that the question of recovering the large amount of telephone arrears due from Government agencies and

†Tan Sri Dato' Haji Ahmad Noordin bin Haji Zakaria – P.S.M., D.P.S.K., J.S.M., K.M.N., P.J.K. – was Deputy Director-General of the Treasury and had previously served as the State Administrative Officer in Kelantan before joining the Malaysia Civil Service. He had also served in Penang as the State Financial Officer until 1968 when he joined the Treasury.

departments be discussed with the Treasury. It wanted a procedure to be implemented to settle these arrears and to expedite early settlement of future bills.

'Discussions with the Treasury and other agencies were held in April 1978. However the amount of arrears from Government departments and agencies are still substantial and there are still delays in settling telephone bills from them,' the Auditor General added.

The PAC viewed with serious concern the weakness in the internal control over the issue and collection of bills pertaining to recoverable works (work done for other organisations).

It recommended that a better system of controls be introduced to enable the verification of the correctness of bills and also to expedite early payment.

The PAC also suggested that invoices and disposal certificates for purchase of equipment financed by loan funds be produced for audit and proper procedures be taken to ensure that such matters do not recur.

'However, there has been no improvement in this matter,' the Auditor General says.

It is indeed amazing that this sorry state of affairs has been allowed to continue for so long.

The Defence Ministry also came under fire from the Auditor General.

There were shocking irregularities in its multi-million dollar food contracts. Surplus items were sold at one-thousandth their original cost and telephone bills exceeded $6 million a year.

Gross irregularities in the amount of money given out and spent were also detected in the Education Ministry. $84 million in Federal grants to State Education Departments could not be accounted for.

According to the Ministry's record, a total of $1080 million was given out while the State records showed receipt of only $996 million.

Another department that was given the bombshell was the Customs Department. Two patrol boats were bought but cannot be used now. $1.5 million has been spent on wrongful approval of sales, tax exemption and other matters.

The need for austerity is urgent. In this connection, the public will welcome Dr Mahathir's statement on the need for the people to know how their money has been spent and the importance of publicity for the Auditor General's report.

Indicative of his concern was the order he has issued to the various Ministries to take action on the Auditor General's report.

The Auditor General, Mahathir said, has every right to criticise.

The Prime Minister's interest emphasises, once again, his belief in openness in the Government and the accountability of the administration to the nation.

Mahathir has made it clear more than once that he will not sweep any dirt under the carpet nor will he condone any waste and inefficiency in his administration.

But what many would like to know is why no action was taken by the previous Government when he was the Deputy Prime Minister.

Some Government departments still continue with the *tidak apa* attitude. Their disrespect for the tax payers' money is the ultimate cause for the horrors the Auditor General has catalogued.

The bungling must stop. The sooner the better.

The blunders and malpractices occurred several years ago and it is likely that most of the money involved may have been squandered. The expose by the Auditor General shows only the financial statement for the year 1977. What about the deficits for the year 1978, 1979 and 1980?

The Auditor General's office should be better staffed, so that his tasks can be carried out more efficiently. With better staffing, more cases of negligence and inefficiency can be detected.

The Finance Minister, Tengku Razaleigh, has ordered the Tresury to look into all weaknesses in the control of finance and to make sure that it does not happen again.

One major problem identified was, it is alleged, that the controlling officers in the various departments were unaware of the financial goings-on in the Ministries.

All financial control officers are secretaries-general of the Ministries.

As such they may be too busy with their work and hence they may have left the financial work to their subordinates.

No co-ordination between controlling officers and heads of department?

Some controlling officers did not even know for what purpose certain sums of money were spent.

The setting up of a training centre for accounting officers may mitigate the chronic shortage of auditors in the public sector and expedite the work of the Audit Department.

The checks and control must go on relentlessly to ensure that public funds are not wasted. The Auditor General has his duty and he has done it well.

It is now up to the various departments concerned to ensure that such audit horrors of the past do not happen again.

The Federal Government has been rightly blamed by the Auditor General for the financial mismanagement and poor account control.

There was an unexplained difference of $663 million between the Auditor General's books and the departmental books.

As long as such big differences are not investigated and analysed, the possibility of fraud and misappropriation will remain undetected.

To fulfill its functions of being the last line of defence in the Government's system of financial checks and controls, the Audit Department must ensure that its reports are not mere chronicles of past financial mismanagement but spurs to timely remedical action in cases where there is wasteful and extravagant expenditure or imprudent contractual transaction.

Alas, what a series of shocks the Auditor General's report provided. It's the same old story — year in, and year out.

The Auditor General has repeatedly pointed out all these problems of bungling and corruptibility. Yet, year after year, little action, if any, seems to have been taken.

The New Straits Times in its editorial of September 3, 1981 did well to say: 'The public needs reassurance that the financial legerdemain detailed in the Auditor General's report does not perpetuate itself to the benefit of the few.'

Once again, bravo to the Auditor General for his splendid performance. He is indeed a 'true symbol of democracy in our country'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The Siddiq Ghouse Shock

One event that shook the nation was the arrest of Siddiq Ghouse† under the Internal Security Act for being a KGB agent.

This event probably disturbed Dr Mahathir more than any other person for the simple reason that it occurred only three days before he took office as the head of the Malaysian Government.

Why did Siddiq's arrest cause so much uneasiness for Dr Mahathir? The reason is not far to seek. Ghouse had served under him as his Political Secretary for more than seven years. First when Mahathir was Minister of Education and then when he became Deputy Prime Minister.

Let it at once be said, lest I am misunderstood, that in politics such events are not rare.

A courageous leader, Mahathir remained cool and calm when the startling news of the arrest of his former Political Secretary was announced over the radio, television and in the newspapers.

The Siddiq betrayal sent shock waves all over the country. And many have been asking questions since then. For the first time in the history of Malaysia three Soviet diplomats were told to leave the country within 24 hours.

It was also the first time that the Malaysian Government had explicitly identified a Malaysian as being a Soviet agent.

The Police had recovered equipment supplied to Siddiq by the Soviet KGB.

†Siddiq Ghouse, aged 43, has been described as a 'happy-go-lucky, jovial man'. He was serious at work and well-regarded by his colleagues.

A journalist by training, Siddiq served as Press Liaison Officer in the Ministry of Trade and Industry. He was the Executive Secretary of the Malaysia Association of Youth Clubs before joining the Ministry of Education when Dr Mahathir held that portfolio in 1974. He was also head of the UMNO Youth, Ampang Jaya Branch.

Twice married, Siddiq has three children by his first wife. One of them is studying in England while another in the U.S.

A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry said:

'The Government takes a serious view of the espionage activities of the three Soviet Embassy officials, V.P. Romanov, G.I. Stepanov and Z.I. Khamidouline.

'Such activities are inadmissible and constitute a grave abuse of their position as Embassy officials. Futhermore, these activities pose a direct threat to the country's security.

'The Government considers that the continued presence in Malaysia of these three officials will be a threat to Malaysia's security and prejudicial to the interest of good relations between Malaysia and the Soviet Union.

'The Ministry of Foreign Affairs called in the Soviet Charge d'Affaires and conveyed to him the Government's decision that Mr Romano, Mr Stepanov, and Mr Khamidouline are persons non grata and requested the Embassy to arrange for their departure from Malaysia within 24 hours.'

Dr Mahathir allayed the fears of the nation (especially of the Malays) when he stressed that 'the activities of Siddiq do not in any way mean that UMNO had been influenced by communist ideology.'

He said no other UMNO member was involved in Siddiq's activities.

Mahathir said: 'I am convinced that Siddiq's activities have not affected UMNO as he carried them out not because of ideology but for financial motives.'

So far so good. Let us wait and see.

The Siddiq episode – a most serious one – must serve as a warning that there are elements who, for ideological or personal reasons, are prepared to sell out their stake in Malaysia.

All these point to the need for vigilance on the part of the authorities to bring to book those who are indulging in such nefarious activities.

The public will welcome the assurance that Siddiq's activities have been under surveillance by the police since 1979. This brings to mind the arrest of two important aides of former Prime Minister, the late Tun Abdul Razak in 1976.

The former Minister of Home Affairs, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie said: 'Some of the equipment we recovered from Siddiq were cameras, bags with secret compartments and a radio with a special beeper on a special frequency which the KGB agents used to contact Siddiq.

'Our counter-intelligence organisation was quickly able to detect them. But then even if they were not careless, I believe we would still have detected them.'

He said the KGB agents always met Siddiq only at night 'in the dark' and some of the meetings were even held in Siddiq's car.

'They also behaved in strange ways like booking into hotels under different Russian names apart from their own.

'One example was when one of them checked into a hotel under a different Russian name and we quickly found out that the name registered in the hotel register belonged to the KGB agents. They must have been out of their minds supplying the equipment the way they did.'

Asked by journalists why Siddiq did not seek refuge in the Soviet Embassy here, the former Minister of Home Affairs replied: 'He probably did not know we were moving in on him.'

According to the former Minister of Home Affairs, Siddiq was paid money by the KGB agents. He did not disclose the amount paid.

Despite all these shattering revelations, Mahathir remained cool and undisturbed, going ahead with more important matters relating to his assumption of office as the Prime Minister of Malaysia. His ability to remain calm under all circumstances is a measure of his qualities as a leader.

Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie disclosed that he had kept both Tun Hussein Onn and Dr Mahathir 'fully informed of each step of the police investigations.'

What was Mahathir's reaction?

'I am very sore about it, but the spy had not done much damage to Malaysian security,' he told a foreign journalist in an interview.

Mahathir said that he had been aware of Siddiq's activities since 1979. He had kept Siddiq as his aide in order to allow the police to gather evidence against him and the Soviet agents.

Asked about the damage to the country's security, he said: 'It was nothing very much in terms of what he was doing . . . not very worthwhile to the Soviets.'

Mahathir said the fact remained that 'they (the Soviets) have been able to recruit someone who is very close to the leaders of the country. So it is something we considered very seriously.'

The Prime Minister said that although the secrets Siddiq had sold

had not put Malaysian security at stake, 'the affair shows how interested others are in trying to intrude into our country.'

He said the police had succeeded in exposing Siddiq's activities and identifying his contacts.

There was no evidence that other Malaysians or UMNO members were involved.

However, he said that certain people might exploit the situation for their own political interest. He warned these people, especially if they tried to create confusion and suspicion within UMNO, that they would be endangering themselves. Mahathir has also warned that no politician or anybody else should exploit the Siddiq Ghouse issue to further their own interests.

He advised UMNO members to be calm and not to be suspicious of each other.

'If UMNO members suspect and lose trust in each other, it will hinder our activities and development,' he said.

On July 20, 1981, in his address to more than 1,000 of his constituents at FELDA Batu Lapan settlement in Changkor, 22 miles from Alor Star, Mahathir described Siddiq as a greedy man who had chosen to sell the country's secrets for money.

He repeated that the Siddiq Ghouse affair should not be exploited to create suspicions among UMNO members. He said that Siddiq was acting as a 'Lone Ranger' and that none of his friends or UMNO colleagues were involved.

According to the former Minister of Home Affairs, 'there was no damage done to our security by Siddiq who was not exposed to any top secret documents.'

Mahathir added that there was no evidence to indicate that Siddiq's friends had been influenced by him.

He congratulated the police for their good work in detecting the espionage activities of Siddiq Ghouse.

All right-thinking people will support the call made by Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khoon in his weekly column in the Star newspaper. I quote:

'The Prime Minister must order a security check on personnel doing "sensitive" jobs starting with those in his own department. Any officer doing a "sensitive" job in the Government, especially in the Prime Minister's Department, must undergo a security check before he starts work and there must be periodic checks during his career. Only in this way can any Government ferret out the moles that have burrowed into its ranks.'

The cloak and dagger game goes on relentlessly. Therefore the Government and the general public must be on guard. The need for vigilance is never before more urgent than it is today.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Critics in the Australian Media

Dr Mahathir's decision not to attend the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments at Melbourne in September 1981† was criticised by some sections of the foreign press and especially by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

According to a statement by the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the criticism by the mass media had 'tarnished the good name of the Prime Minister.'

According to a statement issued by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry, so strong was the criticism by the Australian radio and Austrlian newspapers that the Malaysian High Commission in Canberra lodged a strong protest with the Australian Government and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The statement said the Prime Minister could not attend the meeting because of pressing duties in the country.

'The reply had been conveyed to the Australian Government.

'We have been informed that the Australian Foreign Minister has issued a statement criticising the ABC. The Australian Government has expressed regret over the incident,' the statement added.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Mr Tony Street, has described a satirical radio item on the Malaysian Prime Minister as 'stupid and offensive'.

He also described the news item as one in the worst taste and deplored it as ill-judged and an insensitive attempt at humour.

'It was stupid and offensive to Australians and Malaysians alike,' Mr Street added.

What were Dr Mahathir's reactions?

He said he was not attending the meeting because 'there is a lot more work to do here in Malaysia.'

Continuing, the Prime Minister said, 'Looking back at the whole

†Malaysia was represented at the Heads of Government meeting in Melbourne by Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the Foreign Minister.

Commonwealth grouping there has been just too much talk at the meetings and very little results.'

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters on his return from a two-week vacation in Spain and Portugal.

He then indicated that Malaysia would attach less importance to its Commonwealth ties but he assured that Malaysia was not breaking away.

'We will see if something tangible comes out of it and maybe we will reconsider our position.'

Mahathir hit out again when he said: 'We are not getting much help, particularly from certain Commonwealth countries.'

It was obvious that he was speaking in terms of economic co-operation within the Commonwealth.

Meanwhile the UMNO Youth supported Dr Mahathir's decision not to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Governments meeting. Its leader, Datuk Haji Suhaimi Kamaruddin, said some Commonwealth members did not help other member countries; instead they provided assistance to non-member countries.

'What is the use then of the Prime Minister paying serious attention to the Commonwealth conference,' he added.

Datuk Suhaimi urged the Government to turn its attention from the Commonwealth to the Islamic and ASEAN countries.

He added that it was only proper for Malaysia to give priority to its relations with these countries especially to those in the Middle East.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Grandest Ever Welcome For 'Anak Kedah'

The grandest ever welcome was given to Dr Mahathir when he made his first official visit to his home State of Kedah as Prime Minister, on Friday, August 21, 1981. He was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

After being garlanded, the guests-of-honour were entertained to cultural presentations, including a lion dance. The Prime Minister also inspected a guard-of-honour, mounted by members of the Youth Wing of the State Barisan National.

Among the highlights of the two-day programme were a 20-minute ride round the stadium track on a 50-year old Thai elephant, a tea party hosted by the Mentri Besar at his official residence in Mentalion and a State Banquet at Istana Anak Bukit hosted by HRH the Sultan in honour of the Prime Minister and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

More than 20,000 people packed the stadium as early as 7 a.m. to greet Dr Mahathir who flew in by a RMAF Nuri helicopter from Butterworth at 9.30 a.m.

On arrival, they were met by Datuk Seri Syed Nahar and other State dignitaries. Specially prepared coloured smoke canisters were fired while 5,000 balloons were released by school children.

The Prime Minister was then led to a special dais along a path with 200 *bunga manggar* bearers and girls, in beautiful costumes carrying *sirih* bowls, strewing flower petals at his feet.

Musicians playing the *gendang pribumi* then performed in concert with two lion dance teams from the MCA and the Gerakan.

A mammoth flash-card display by 2,500 school children was followed by the recital of a special poem narrating the political struggle of Dr Mahathir. More than 2,000 lower secondary pupils also staged a mass drill as part of the programme.

The Prime Minister inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by members of various political parties, voluntary organisations and school cadet corps.



The Mahathirs riding 'Chom', the Thai elephant, during their official visit to Kedah.

The surprise item for the day – the elephant ride – climaxed the programme.

The welcoming committee had arranged for 200 buses to carry members of the public to the stadium and many were left without seats and had to line the fences to have a glimpse of the Prime Minister.

Teams of St. John's Ambulance members were kept busy throughout the three-hour ceremony as they attended to victims of the sweltering heat. Dr Mahathir, who was impressed with the ceremony, later granted a one-day holiday to school children.

Addressing the large gathering, Dr Mahathir called on all Malaysians to strive for a disciplined society based on efficiency and total dedication to the needs of the nation.

He said every individual had a specific role to play in the nation's development and should thus carry out his responsibilities in the best conceivable manner.

'There is no room for inefficiency as even the slightest deviation from ideals will result in failure,' he said.

Dr Mahathir said the lack of discipline would create lethargy which would ultimately result in a complacent society without a sense of direction.

'There will be certain groups which will say we are preparing robots who do not know how to think for themselves.

'Their attitude is due to their fear that our cohesiveness and unity would only serve to disrupt their plans to retard national growth. They are envious of proven records in maintaining our pledge in bringing greater prosperity to the people irrespective of race and status,' he said.

Dr Mahathir went on to say that the Malaysian democratic practice based on distinctive political parties had succeeded in nurturing more than two decades of political stability and racial unity.

He added that despite differences in opinion among the various communities, Malaysians as a whole had managed to create their 'own brand' of unity based on mutual respect.

The present policy on national unity should be perpetuated always and should constantly be a reminder to us of the prosperity we have enjoyed since independence.

'The proven policies of the three Governments before me will also be carried forth without change but with differences in the manner of implementation.'

The Prime Minister said the nation's success in the economic and political fields had served as an example to the rest of the world.

He said Malaysia's foreign policy would continue to be based on friendship with all countries regardless of their political backgrounds.

After the two-hour welcoming ceremony and the speech by Dr Mahathir, the Prime Minister joined the people for Friday prayers at the Zahir Mosque.

Members from all the Barisan Nasional parties and thousands of school children wearing T-shirts printed with the Prime Minister's image, and people from all walks of life turned up for the rally.

It was during his visit to his constituency, Kubang Pasu, on Saturday, August 22, 1981 that the unexpected happened. He had just begun speaking and had thanked the 20,000 people for turning up when he turned pale.

He then told the large gathering: 'Excuse me. I am not feeling well.' He fell silent and appeared to be on the verge of collapse when Kedah Mentri Besar, Datuk Seri Syed Nahar Shahabuddin, Executive Councilor, Datuk Osman Ariff and Tanjung State Assemblyman Haji Hanafi Ramli rushed to his aid.

They helped him to his seat on the rostrum, where he was immediately attended to by his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah.

Dr Mahathir lay on the couch as Dr Hasmah checked his pulse. He was then taken to his car and driven home.

Security officers immediately cordoned off the area. The crowd, which had gathered to congratulate Dr Mahathir, was stunned. They reluctantly left the school after having been repeatedly advised to do so by the police.

Dr Mahathir rested in the afternoon before returning to Kuala Lumpur. The rest of the day's activities were cancelled.

When he returned to Kuala Lumpur, he appeared a little pale, but was otherwise as jovial as ever.

When asked how he felt, he told reporters: 'Wait till you get diarrhoea, then you'll know.' He said that during his visit to Kedah he had eaten *koay teow* and all sorts of other food with lots of chilli, which did not agree with him.

He said that he took some medicine in the morning after which he was supposed to rest. But he didn't want to disappoint the crowd that was waiting for him and decided to go ahead with the address.

Dr Hasmah, asked to comment on the incident, said 'It is nice to be a doctor to the Prime Minister.'

An ambulance and three doctors were standing by at the RMAF base when the Prime Minister arrived but Dr Mahathir declined any attention. Also to receive him in Kuala Lumpur was Datuk Musa

Hitam, the Deputy Prime Minister.

A source close to the Prime Minister said that the elephant ride must have been the last straw for a man suffering from diarrhoea.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The Special Kedah Honour

Dr Mahathir had very pleasant surprises when he visited the 35th Kedah UMNO Convention in Alor Star on June 7, 1981 for their annual convention. He was then the Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy President of UMNO.

The first surprise for Dr Mahathir and his wife was a big poster at the entrance to the hall emblazoned with the word: *TAHNIAH* (Congratulations).

Going inside the hall Dr Mahathir saw two huge pictures of himself among those of the then UMNO President, Tun Hussein, and former Presidents Dato Onn bin Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and the late Tun Abdul Razak.

In confident anticipation that Dr Mahathir would be the next President succeeding Tun Hussein Onn who had announced he would not be seeking re-election, the UNMO gave him a rousing welcome.

Kedah Mentri Besar, Datuk Seri Syed Nahar Shahabuddin presented Dr Mahathir with a specially struck silver kris, a symbol of power.

He also handed Dr Mahathir a cheque for $250,000 as Kedah UMNO's contribution to the UMNO headquarters building fund.

Five hundred and fifty-five eggs were distributed to the participants in the convention – denoting Dr Mahathir's age on that day: 55 years, five months and five days.

Speaking in a humorous vein Dr Mahathir, who was quite touched by the receptions said: 'Let's keep our fingers crossed. The egg has not been hatched yet.'

In his address, Dr Mahathir said the nation's rich natural resources would become worthless if the people failed to strive and turn them into wealth.

He said the willingness of the people to work hard was more important than the resources.

He then warned that the people must not become parasites. They should put in all their efforts to help develop the country so that the fruit of success could be enjoyed by all.

'We must stop relying on others. We should develop the country ourselves.'

He said the country had learned an important lesson from history, especially when Perak was leased out to foreigners for tin mining.

'The foreigners got rich, but not us. The people therefore must gather their strength and get directly involved in all development projects in the country,' he said.

Mahathir said although Malaysia's revenue had been affected by the recent escalating oil prices, the country had enough money to continue its development.

He said the Arab countries should be praised for producing more oil lately to prevent further price increases.

'It is against Islamic teachings to exploit prices of goods, such as oil, which would cause hardship to poor nations.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

The Malaysian Experience

'The Malaysian Experience' was the subject of a short address that Dr Mahathir gave when he met more than 200 foreign and local journalists in Bangkok on August 24, 1981. His talk and the answers he gave to the questions asked by the newsmen removed notions that he was a Muslim fundamentalist and nationalist zealot as made out by the Thai Press.

After the question-and-answer session one of the journalists was heard to remark: 'Everybody went away with a good sense of who Mahathir is.'

One of the points that the Malaysian Prime Minister stressed was that 'with a little bit more guidance, Malaysians will be able to achieve real racial harmony.'

Continuing Dr Mahathir said: 'There is no dramatic way of bringing about harmony among the races as this is a problem that not many people have been able to solve.'

The Prime Minister who had lunch at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand in Bangkok said that wherever there were different races living together, they had sometimes been at each other's throats, and in some countries this had been going on for years.

But Mahathir hastened to say: 'I think we have done very well indeed compared to these other countries. Race relations in Malaysia are far better than in any other country where there is that kind of mixture of races.'

He then stressed that there was a need to recognise that there was a racial problem in Malaysia, and he had striven to make this fact recognised through his earlier speeches and writings.

Referring to the New Economic Policy, he said it was based on the recognition that there was a problem of race relations in Malaysia arising from the unequal economic development between different racial groups.

However, gradually the people had come to realise that the NEP was a good thing for them. Even those who felt they were going to be

deprived of their opportunities had actually done extremely well, despite of or because of the NEP, he said.

'Many more people now are beginning to realise that the NEP is in fact what it purports to be, a policy that is trying to boost the economy while at the same time creating a more equitable society in which the races can live without fear or envy of each other,' he added.

He said the most important thing was to explain to the people that the NEP was really to stimulate growth, out of which wealth could be redistributed. This point was now well taken and of late; the Chinese community was responding very well indeed.

'I find that they are ready to listen and they have even asked me what it is they need to do,' Mahathir said.

The Chinese businessmen had also said the past policy of confrontation with the Government was over and wanted to do something positive to contribute towards the NEP, and he had taken them at their word and felt they would do something.

When referred to an article he had written in a Malaysian newspaper criticising the Press and asked whether it meant he would impose censorship and muzzle the news-media, Mahathir said: 'I have no intention of muzzling the Press but I would like to see a more responsible Press.'

He complained about detailed descriptions by some newspapers of how the authorities succeeded in countering the hijacking of an aircraft. He said such reports were counter-productive as they would only help the terrorists to better plan future hijackings.

Similarly, buying classified Government documents and publishing them could frustrate the conducting of international relations.

Mahathir said the article he wrote was mainly for the Malaysian Press, as he wanted them to understand that they were part of the nation-building process, and that they had their contribution to make.

'If we want to have a multi-racial nation that is united, then the Press must play its role. If I had wanted to censor the Press the best way would not have been to write in the Press but simply to clamp down,' he added.

Emphasising that Malaysia was not fully happy with the nature of its relation with China, Dr Mahathir said: 'Malaysia is glad to continue the kind of "very proper relationship" which exists with that country now.'

The Prime Minister said the idea that there could be Government-to-Government relations and party-to-party relations as practised by China was not really acceptable to Malaysia, and China's involvement in the communist insurgency in Malaysia was 'not very reassuring.'

Mahathir went on that what parties there were in Malaysia were Malaysia's problems and Malaysia would like foreigners not to interfere with its internal problems.

Nevertheless, Malaysia noted with some degree of satisfaction that China had ceased to permit the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) to make broadcasts from Yunan in China.

'But we also know that long before the broadcasts from China ceased, the same radio station informed everyone that there will be broadcasts by another station under another name on another wave-length,' he revealed.

Mahathir said this was really the same thing and that not much progress had been made.

On the whole relations with China had not really improved beyond the big step made when former Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak visited China in 1974, he added.

When questioned whether Malaysia had any fears about Thailand being too close to China, Mahathir said Malaysia did not want to impose its feelings and views on Thailand.

Within ASEAN, the five countries have different degrees of relationship with China, he said.

Thailand, perhaps in the view of some people, was being seen as close to China and on the other hand Indonesia had no diplomatic relations with China while Malaysia was probably half-way in between, Mahathir said.

'This does not mean that we are suspicious of one another. It is probably a good thing because to settle problems in the region we need to have contacts with the parties of influence and we feel that Thailand's ability to contact China more freely would be as useful as Malaysia's ability to contact Hanoi, in the context of solving the Kampuchean problem for example.

'So, Malaysia has no strong views about how close or how distant Thailand's relationship with China is.'

Mahathir and General Prem, the Thai Prime Minister, had an extensive exchange of views on developments in the region and expressed confidence in ASEAN's ability to promote regional co-operation.

On the Kampuchean problem, the two Premiers expressed

concern that it was still unresolved although they were encouraged by the overwhelming support the world community had shown for the recent international conference on Kampuchea.

Both the leaders felt that all parties to the conflict should extend their fullest co-operation to the ad hoc committee constituted by the conference and of which Malaysia and Thailand are members.

They stressed the urgent need for the total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and for the Kampuchean people to exercise their right of self-determination with necessary guarantees by all concerned.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Hussein is a True Statesman

On behalf of UMNO, Dr Mahathir said a big 'Thank You' to Tun Hussein Onn, his predecessor, for his services to the Party and the nation.

Dr Mahathir presided over a pleasant function at his residence on July 24, 1981 when the UMNO Supreme Council presented a pewter shield to Tun Hussein.

On behalf of the UMNO Supreme Council, the presentation was made by Dr Mahathir. Tun Hussein was also presented a gold watch.

The presentation was made after Tun Hussein, the Prime Minister and other members of the Supreme Council broke fast at Dr Mahathir's residence.

Inscribed on the shield were the words:

'The UMNO Supreme Council, with a heavy heart due to Datuk Hussein's decision to refuse the nomination to the post of President of the party due to health reasons hereby states its admiration for the decision which was made solely for the purpose of avoiding any interruption to the heavy tasks and responsibilities that he shoulders to the party, race and religion.

'His action is that of a leader of high calibre and sincerity.

'Datuk Hussein has sacrificed greatly for the independence of the nation and has taken a great part in nation building . . .'

It added that his firmness and sincerity would serve as an example to others.

The inscription said that during Tun Hussein's leadership UMNO grew in strength. This was evidenced by the decisive victory in the 1978 and other elections.

Under his leadership, the various races in the country were further united under the National Front.

Lastly, it said that the Supreme Council congratulated him on his

successes and prayed that he would be able to continue to serve the party and country.

Earlier, while speaking at a Press conference at Seri Taman after chairing his last Barisan Supreme Council meeting on July 15, 1981, Tun Hussein said: 'The Barisan Nasional will continue to be united, strong and stable under its new leadership.

'I am confident that with the support and co-operation given by all component parties to the new leadership, the Barisan will continue to be given the trust of the people to rule the country.'

He had formally stepped down from his post at the meeting and proposed that the new UMNO President, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, be the new Barisan Chairman.

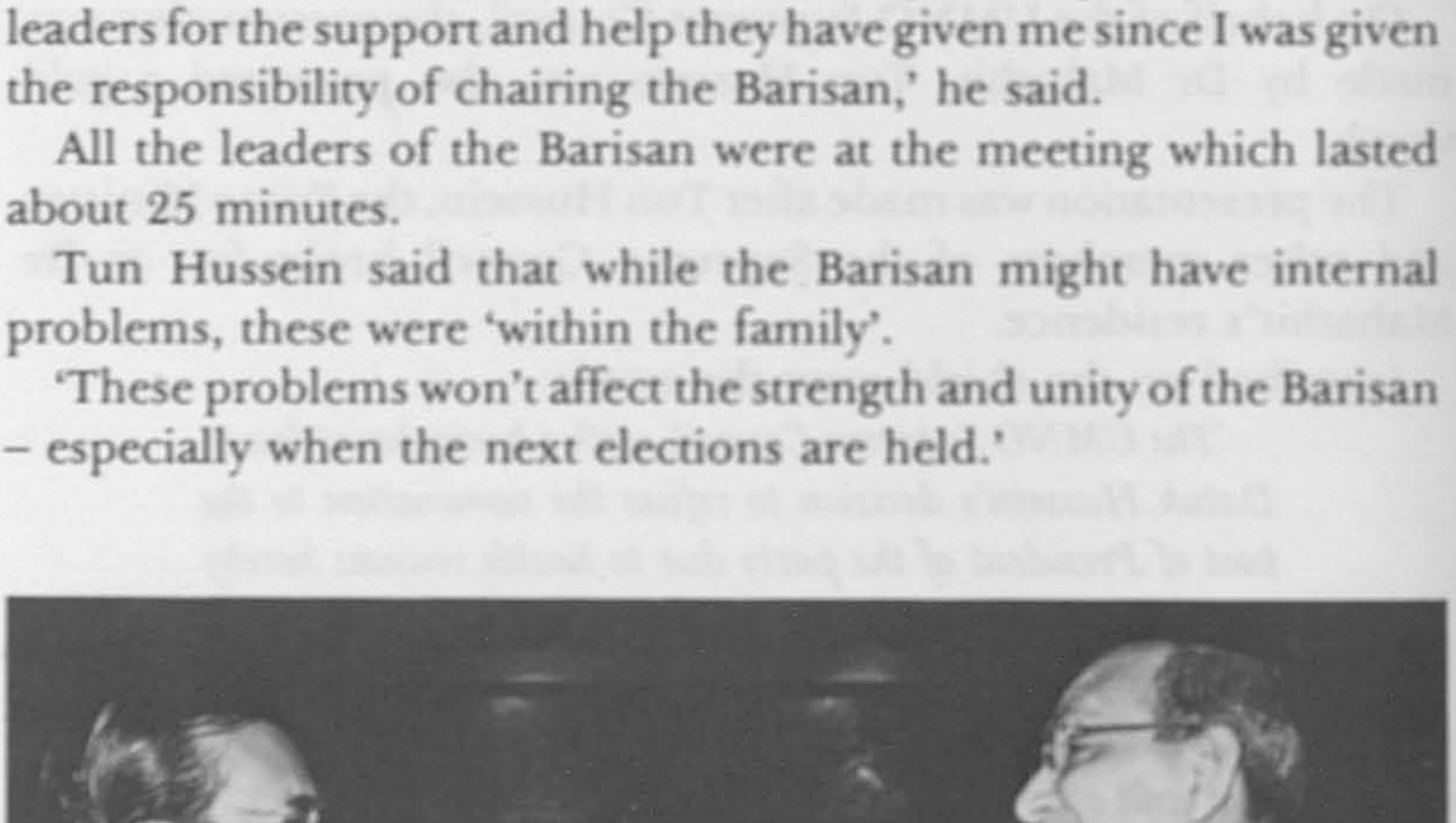
'My proposal was accepted unanimously and I congratulate Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir,' Tun Hussein continued.

'I would also like to thank all the component parties and their leaders for the support and help they have given me since I was given the responsibility of chairing the Barisan,' he said.

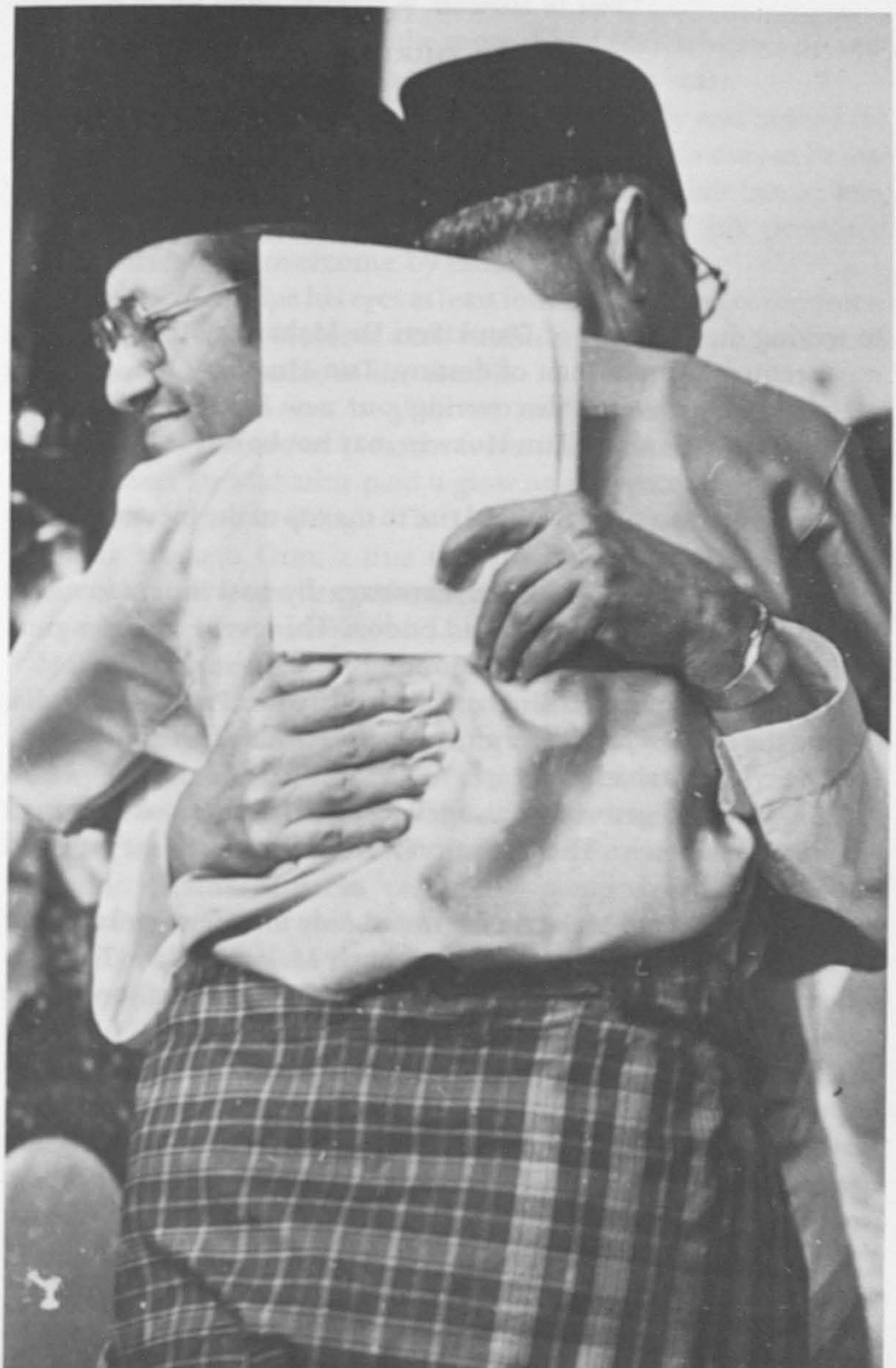
All the leaders of the Barisan were at the meeting which lasted about 25 minutes.

Tun Hussein said that while the Barisan might have internal problems, these were 'within the family'.

'These problems won't affect the strength and unity of the Barisan – especially when the next elections are held.'



Tun Hussein and Dr Mahathir enjoying a hearty laugh.



The Prime Minister delivering his speech at the International Islamic Youth Camp in Selangor, Malaysia.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

The End of An Era

In writing the life story of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, one must remember that man of destiny, Tun Hussein Onn, who was mainly responsible for 'discovering' our new Prime Minister.

So a few words about Tun Hussein may not be out of place in this book on his successor.

What brought about the rapid rise to the top of the hierarchy of Dr Mahathir?

First and foremost was the coronary by-pass operation that Hussein Onn had undergone in London. This event caused a great deal of anxiety to the whole nation.

Tun Hussein went to England with his wife, Puan Sri Suhaila, leaving the reins of the Government in the hands of his able deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir.

Thousands of get-well messages from his numerous admirers were sent to Hussein. The operation was successful and he returned home.

After returning to Malaysia, he rested only for a few weeks before he was called upon to launch the Fourth Malaysia Plan. This was followed by the epoch-making event of the inauguration of the *Amanah Saham Nasional* (National Unit Trust Fund).

The nation watched with deep concern whenever he presided over important functions as the Prime Minister. He was at the helm of the Government but he did not appear well enough to shoulder the heavy burdens of the Chief Executive of the Government. There were fears about his fast deteriorating health.

'Will Hussein continue to lead the nation much longer?' That question was on the lips of many Malaysians. The people of this country did not have to wait too long for an answer.

On May 15, 1981 – one of the most important days in his life – Tun Hussein spoke at the UMNO delegates meeting in Johore Bharu. He stunned the nation with these dramatic words:

'I do not and will not seek re-election as the President of the UMNO. I plan to

step down as the Prime Minister of Malaysia as well.'

This announcement shook the more than 1,000 delegates present at the meeting. Most of them were seen to be in tears.

It was the saddest of days for Hussein, his family and indeed for the whole nation. Here was a leader who had done his duty as he saw fit. He was a courageous man, composed and articulate but on May 15, 1981 when he made the announcement of his proposed resignation he was overcome by emotion.

Hussein had to wipe his eyes at least four times to gain composure.

In a halting tone, Hussein cited health reasons for his decision to step down as the leader of the nation.

Thereafter discussion in political circles was mainly on the impending departure of Hussein from the political scene.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir paid a glowing tribute to Hussein when he said, among other things: 'The UMNO and the nation are proud of Datuk Hussein Onn, a true statesman. As a leader he is loved because he has been firm, sincere and dedicated. We will always consider him as our adviser and an elder brother to all of us.'

Mahathir expressed the hope that Tun Hussein 'will be able to spare time to help me from time to time when I seek his help.'

Continuing, the new Prime Minister said: 'I fully support his views on why he had to step down as the Party President and allow the Party to choose its leaders instead of choosing the leaders himself.'

Malaysians of all races will endorse this view expressed by Mahathir: 'Datuk Hussein voluntarily stepped down from this important post. There are leaders elsewhere in the world who refuse to leave and even try to build a dynasty while in power but Datuk Hussein allowed UMNO, through its principles, to choose the leaders it wanted.'

Recall what Hussein Onn said in 1976 when he named Dr Mahathir as the Deputy Prime Minister over the heads of several other Ministers senior to him (Mahathir): 'I have made my choice and I pray and hope that I have made the right choice. I also hope that the people will accept him and support him.'

Referring to his appointment Mahathir had said then, ' I will try my best to shoulder the heavy responsibility for the benefit of the country and the nation.'

Today, all will agree that Hussein's prayer has been answered – his choice has proven to be the right one.

Hussein Onn has handed over the reins of the Government and that of the UMNO to Mahathir with whom he had been closely

associated for the past five years. On the whole the Mahathir–Hussein team worked well.

No one is better qualified to speak of the qualities and achievements of Hussein Onn than the first Prime Minister and Father of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj.

The Tunku said: 'Datuk Hussein Onn, in his quiet way, has done a very good job for this country. He exudes confidence in his leadership. I am sure if he had been well and able to continue as Prime Minister he would have done so. But he is a sick man and needs a little respite from hard work for heavy is the head that wears the crown.'

And then the Tunku gave this advice to the nation: 'Datuk Hussein Onn will be a happy man if the people of this country will promise their support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and other new leaders.'

The Tunku went on: 'The saying runs *Patah tumbuh hilang berganti* – when an old branch breaks a new one takes its place.'

It was gracious of the Tunku to make this moving remark: 'Datuk Hussein Onn must be remembered as a patriot and a national leader. He must not be treated as I was in those days as a has-been! I would also like to thank him for many kindnesses and consideration acceded to me by him and his colleagues during his term of office as the Prime Minister.'

On July 17, the nation bade farewell to Hussein.

Tribute after tribute was bestowed upon the country's third Prime Minister, for his tireless efforts in building 'a prosperous, united and peaceful country.'

Datuk Lee San Choon, the MCA President, described Tun Hussein as a 'pillar of strength' who succeeded in bringing the country to the pinnacle of stability where the people of various races are united.

The MIC President, Datuk S. Samy Vellu, in another accolade said that Tun Hussein had tenaciously upheld the supremacy of the law during his tenure of office.

The former Prime Minister's efforts also ensured the country's good standing in the international arena while maintaining a robust and strong economy.

The Gerakan Deputy President, Datuk Paul Leong said Tun Hussein's 'hallmark of integrity and high principles' had won him the admiration and support of people from all walks of life.

But what is most significant are tributes paid by Opposition leaders.

The former Mr Opposition, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khoon, said it could not be denied that Tun Hussein was an honest leader and it would be difficult to find anyone like him anywhere.

'When the nation's history is written in the future, Tun Hussein's name will be connected with the characteristic of honesty,' said Dr Tan.

On behalf of UMNO, its Secretary-General, Datuk Mustafa Jabar said Tun Hussein had been able to bring about economic and political stability to the country. At the same time, solidarity among the various races had been strengthened.

SNAP Secretary-General, Datuk Leo Moggie, said Tun Hussein's fair and dedicated leadership would be sadly missed.

Acting President of USNO, Datuk Haji Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid, also praised Tun Hussein. He pledged to support and co-operate with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir.

The PAS President, Datuk Haji Mohamad Asri, described Tun Hussein's voluntary handing over the power to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir as an event which has seldom occurred in history.

He said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had heavy responsibilities which he must face well and carefully.

Another Opposition leader who praised Hussein was DAP Deputy Secretary-General, Mr Lee Lam Thye. He said: 'Tun Hussein was a leader with integrity though he could not agree with the political views of the DAP.'

Dr Lim Chong Eu, the Penang Chief Minister, said Tun Hussein had served the country well and deserved a good rest.

The Negri Sembilan Mentri Besar, Datuk Rais Yatim, said the country owed a great debt to Tun Hussein for his valuable guidance.

The Kelantan Mentri Besar, Datuk Haji Mohamed Yaacob, said the people of his State prayed that Tun Hussein and his family would always be in good health.

In retrospect, although Hussein Onn had at times been slow in his deliberations and slower in taking decisions, no one can or will accuse him of being indifferent to the well-being of his fellow men. To him the peace and prosperity of Malaysia was top priority in his agenda of action.

Mahathir has pledged to follow the policy set by his predecessors.

Speaking for himself and his Deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, Mahathir said: 'We are not much at variance in terms of policy (as set

by his predecessors). It is only in terms of implementation that perhaps there may be a change of style.'

Only time will tell how far Mahathir and his fellow Ministers will continue to heed the advice of Hussein Onn in all matters relating to the country.

To the readers I commend the final words of Hussein Onn who, speaking on his role as the leader of the nation, said recently: 'We the Malaysian people who love this country must build this nation. My father's generation has passed. Now is my generation's turn to struggle. Those who follow us must continue. It may take time and I may not live to see the day. But when it comes what a day it will be.'

Today there is genuine regret throughout the country over the sudden resignation of Hussein Onn as the Prime Minister. There are many in the Cabinet including Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir who had persuaded Hussein Onn to stay on as the head of the nation. Indeed he could have continued if he wanted. The nation was behind him. But Hussein Onn is unlike other leaders. He was a doer. He did not want to be a mere spectator while others did his job.

In the final analysis, I am sure many will agree that the Hussein era will go down as one of the brightest in the history of Malaysia.

Hussein Onn's time as the Prime Minister has come to an end but his dream of a happy multi-racial Malaysia will endure. That is the hope of all true and loyal Malaysians.

In recognition of his services to the nation, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong (the King) conferred on Hussein Onn the First Class award of *Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara* (S.M.N.) which carries the title Tun, at a ceremony in Istana Negara on July 16, 1981.

It was a timely honour richly deserved by Hussein Onn.

The Yang Di Pertua Negeri, Sarawak conferred on Hussein the State's highest award – the Datuk Patinggi Bintang Kenyalan (D.P) – on the occasion of his 50th birthday on July 2, 1979. This honour carries the title Datuk Amar.

Emperor Hirohito of Japan conferred on Tun Hussein Onn one of Japan's highest decorations, the First Class Order of the Rising Sun in recognition of Tun Hussein's 'high statesmanship' and his contributions to the strengthening of relations between Malaysia and Japan. He received the decoration from Japanese Ambassador in Malaysia, Mr T. Arita on September 29, 1981.

What touched Hussein Onn deeply was the honour conferred on him by his own party – the UMNO. At a dinner hosted by its new President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and attended by old

and new members of the Supreme Council, Hussein Onn was presented a pewter shield in appreciation for the 'many sacrifices he made towards national development.'

Engraved in Jawi, the inscription on the pewter reads, 'All his services and sacrifices are now memories of the UMNO and the National Front.'

It was a moving gesture by the Supreme Council of UMNO to its former leader. Malaysia needs more and more Hussein Onns. He has carved a niche in the temple of fame. His achievement – many and varied – speak for themselves.

On Hussein Onn has fallen the honour of being a witness to the momentous events that have taken place since the beginning of the independence struggle begun by his father – the late Dato Onn bin Jaafar – more than 45 years ago.

Leaders come and go but their words and deeds will remain to inspire those who follow them. In this respect Hussein can count on his successor to hold high the torch that he has handed to him.

Mahathir in turn has a fine team of dedicated leaders in the Government to carry out that trust.

As a true and brave patriot Hussein Onn will have an important place in the history of modern Malaysia.

Lebih berharga mutiara sebutir daripada pasir sepantai.
It is more valuable to have one pearl than a whole beach of sand.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Freedom of The Press

I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.

– Attributed to VOLTAIRE

Dr Mahathir wrote an article on the freedom of the press when he was the Deputy Prime Minister. It was published on July 9, 1981 in the New Straits Times.

While stressing the important role the press can play in nation building, he expressed doubts and fears over the dangers of an irresponsible press which 'abuses its rights by unnecessarily agitating the people'.

There appears to be some misconception of the role of journalists, of what they stand for and how they get about their work.

The vast majority of journalists, in keeping with their profession, have exercised caution, integrity and responsibility in carrying out their functions. By and large they have been and still are contributing in no small measure to nation-building in various ways.

Let me hasten to mention that Malaysian pressmen have been and still are rendering yeoman service in their search for truth and presenting it courageously for the benefit of its readers.

As a former Malaysian Minister of Information has pointed out 'the press, including foreign correspondents, are powerful allies in our efforts to discover and disseminate truth.'

However, pressmen are no angels. They do make mistakes but they do a lot of good as well.

It is true that 'in the wrong hands,' as Dr Mahathir says, 'the press can destroy democracy . . .' but in Malaysia we should have no fear because our newsmen are responsible people, some of whom have won recognition both locally and internationally.

To the critics of the press, I commend these words of our former Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, who paid this tribute to the Malaysian press:

'Like all of us, the spirit of *Rukunegara* can also be the guiding principle of the Malaysian press. Personally in my 18 years of public and political service, the press has generally been good to me.'

Journalists will no doubt rejoice over such a tribute from one of our former leaders.

The journalists will disagree with Dr Mahathir when he says that 'they are journalists because of their need for jobs and their ability to write and interest readers. Their righteousness is usually a gimmick they employ for the sake of their jobs – not for democracy.'

Here Dr Mahathir generalises. It is possible that 'in the wrong hands the press can even be a weapon to destroy democracy,' but as the late President Franklin Roosevelt once said, 'Let us not fear fear.'

In Malaysia journalists know their limitations, their duties and, above all, their responsibilities.

I plead on behalf of the Malaysian press simply because as a former newspaper editor I am familiar with its workings.

Despite its shortcomings newspaper journalism is an honourable profession and on balance it has done a lot to create a well-informed and well-balanced public opinion.

In the modern society newspapers are a must; without them most societies would be thrown into chaos. With the newspapers the readers can mine out nuggets of truth and reliable information. This enables them to know what is going on in our society.

Journalists are dedicated to finding out and reporting only the truth for the benefit of the newspaper readers.

All newspapers are dedicated to finding out and reporting the truth and nothing but the truth. But as one former newspaper man put it tongue-in-cheek, 'The press is a vehicle for all sorts of things – information and misinformation, truth and falsehoods, sublime thoughts and infantile nonsense.'

I agree. The printed news media either makes you a man of great wisdom and learning or converts you into a walking encyclopedia of unadulterated drivel.

Sometimes a reporter who has a good story based on a half-truth is reluctant to seek the whole truth for fear that he might lose the story if he persisted in finding more details.

Added to this is the fact that a reporter is working against the clock for the next day's edition and he may not have the time to find out the whole truth. His curiosity about the whole truth may be further dampened by the fear of missing a scoop.

To sum up, it is not that journalists deliberately set out to present

falsehoods and thus publish sensational stories but that the way newspapers operate makes it difficult for journalists to present all the truth all the time.

As a doyen of the newsmen in this country, I am confident that journalists in Malaysia will continue to play their role to uphold the dignity of the profession at all times by writing and presenting news without malice.

Dr Mahathir's article, *Fact and Fallacy*, is reproduced below.

One of the most vaunted institutions of democracy is the free press. So important is a free press in a Western democracy that it is regarded as the fourth power after The Lords Spiritual, The Lords Temporal and The Commons.

It was once referred to as the Fourth Estate. In recent years, its power has increased to the point where the other centres of power have become almost subservient to it.

The reason for the power of the press in the modern democracy is obvious. The press is the most effective agency for determining public opinion, and public opinion determines not only the policies and values of a nation, but also the fate of the leaders of a democratic society at all levels. Consequently the press can and does make or break policies and leaders.

By and large the role of the press in ensuring good democratic practices and hence sustaining democracy itself is not only right but also truly indispensable. It is indeed a means of communication between a democratic Government and the people.

Through it not only will the people be kept informed of all that the Government and its leaders are doing, but the leaders, too, will learn of the attitudes, needs and problems of the people.

There would then be the kind of responses from both sides which would lessen conflict between and within them if not actually promote rapport and mutual efforts to overcome problems. A responsible democratic Government must accordingly regard a free press as an asset which facilitates good Government.

But in actual fact, the press does not usually play this role. The press is not an inanimate institution that mechanically follows the ideals of democracy. The press is made up of and is run by people who are moved not just by high ideals but also by base needs and feelings.

For this reason, it is subject to the weaknesses and failings that these people have. Even if they are not partisan, their objectivity must still be influenced by their personal values and interpretations. There is nothing to ensure that these values are superior to others.

Besides, journalists are journalists not because of a special selection based on

their ability to judge correctly and dispassionately. They are journalists because of their need for jobs and their ability to write and interest readers. Their righteousness is usually a gimmick they employ for the sake of their jobs – not for democracy.

To appreciate this, it is necessary firstly to understand the limitations or constraints inherent in the media itself. The press cannot possibly report everything that goes on or that is said by everyone that is relevant to the democratic life of the society.

The handicap is essentially physical. With the best will in the world it is still impossible to print everything that needs to be printed. It must therefore be selective.

This confers on pressmen at all levels from managing directors and editors to sub-editors and reporters, certain powers of manipulating the news. Merely by reporting the doings or sayings of chosen individuals, the pressmen can shape the thinking of the masses in a manner that affects the working of democracy itself as well as the fate of those individuals and others.

Of course, beyond this there is the capacity to manipulate news to achieve whatever effect the press wishes. News may be played up and watered down, excluded or included, slanted or coloured, misquoted and a thousand and one things done to it to achieve whatever effect the particular newspaper or journalist wishes.

If, for example, a particular group of pressmen or even a single individual working on a newspaper believes that there should be a more socialistic course in the affairs of the nation, he would be able to influence the achievement of the cause he has chosen by merely presenting the news that favours socialism, and cutting out news that exposes the faults of socialism.

The ability of this individual alone to influence the course of events is out of all proportion to his individual right as a member of a democratic society. Yet he is neither specially chosen for some superior democratic qualities nor elected to his post as are the leaders of a democratic nation.

Perhaps it may be argued that as a pressman he should have this right. How else is the press going to act as a communication system if a pressman cannot use the media in this manner? But in reporting only what he favours the pressman is discriminating against some individual or some groups in the society.

For these people who are discriminated against, freedom of the press does not exist. They are denied the same right of expression as is denied by a Government-controlled press. The question then is, what right has this pressman to deny a democratic right to some people while enhancing the rights of others.

If democracy means equal rights, what is the attitude of democracy towards people who are not even elected yet deliberately render the rights of other citizens unequal. All the while it has to be remembered that a pressman is a more

capable than anyone else to judge correctly. He is just another citizen who, by accident or design, has found himself in a position of power.

The current role played by the press and the publishing industries in the United States is most illuminating. Because the press is big business, its financial capacity is not less than other big businesses in the US. With vast sums of money at its disposal the press is able to literally buy information. The secrets of Governments, big and small business and individuals cannot be safeguarded from the press. They will pay large sums of money to individuals to get information.

They can with impunity disregard secrecy and refuse to accept the norms of society. With their money they can employ the best lawyers to defend all their actions in court. And the trend is for the courts to favour the press, because the courts, too, fear the press.

Because the law does not prevent discussions of matters that are sub judice in the US, the opinions of all sorts of people connected with trials can be influenced. Even if the jury is isolated, the lawyers, prosecutors, witnesses, judges and a host of other court officials can be subjected to a barrage of press propaganda as to affect their thinking and opinions.

Thus, if a case is brought against the press in the courts of law, the press would have the means of influencing the course of justice by its reporting and the articles that it publishes.

It may be argued that any group can have its own press to promote its cause. Thus the communists can have their own paper, the socialists theirs and everyone else a paper of his own choice. But the cost of running a newspaper is now so high that it is not a right that can be exercised effectively by all. Only the very rich groups can have this freedom. The poor, even if they manage to have one, would not be able to reach and influence a significant number of people.

There is yet another problem here if every group has its own newspaper and presumably reads only its own news. Then the capacity to judge and evaluate things would be faulty. Indeed, the effect of the socialists reading socialist news is no different from the effect of the whole nation being allowed to read only Government news handouts.

The essence of democracy is access to all kinds of information on which to base a citizen's judgement.

Perhaps the free availability of so many partisan newspapers would enable people to have access to all the views and so form their opinion impartially. But this is impossible for the majority of the people. Not only is it impossible to buy all the newspapers but the masses of information that come off the press are beyond the capacity of everyone to absorb, much less analyse and arrive at a set of opinions.

To overcome this, magazines are published which digest the news and spew

them out in condensed form. But again these magazines can and do have a special bias. The effect is still a one-sided piece of a particular cause espoused by the editors and reporters of the magazines.

It is obviously physically impossible for the media to be impartial or to let the citizens make their own judgement. The media necessarily interferes with the citizens' rights to think and choose anything. Basically the press is an advertising medium and the effect of advertising on the minds of people is well known.

The financial strength of the press does not come from the support of the readers. Indeed, no matter how large the readership, it can only support a small fraction of the cost of running a modern newspaper. The success of newspapers depends largely on their use as an advertising medium.

The more advertising space they sell the more viable they are. The more income they get, the stronger is their financial strength. And, of course, the stronger they are financially, the more power they wield.

The newspapers are, therefore, commercial enterprises with the same capacity to gather wealth and power as other commercial enterprises. The multi-national industrial corporations which the press claims are able to influence and even corrupt the world are actually less powerful than the newspapers. The multi-nationals cannot directly affect mass world opinion but newspapers and magazines can.

In a world that is conscious of individual, national and international opinions, the power of the press as a commercial organisation is truly frightening. It can affect not only the material wealth of individuals, groups and nations but it can even provoke and sustain a war.

In fact, a large section of the world press thrives on war and strategy. The technique of reporting is such that the readers' or viewers' interest can be sustained indefinitely. Most of the time reporters work in sleazy bars drinking huge quantities of alcohol and talk to people of their own choice.

But the amount of 'news' they spew out is phenomenal. A one-day visit to a nation of millions can result in a powerful earth-shaking report. The effect of that report on the well-being of that nation varies from a slight reduction in the number of tourists to the reversal of investment decisions worth millions of dollars or a shift in trade patterns and balances.

Politically, it can not only create discontent among the people of the nation concerned, but may even result in a break in diplomatic relations and war.

The reporters of these international magazines and newspapers are privileged people. They rub shoulders with the most powerful people everywhere. In many instances, they are feared. Kings and Presidents as well as leaders of the opposition and dissident groups solicit their support. They have access to all sorts of information and rumours or they can make up news where none exists.

The press is truly a power that can hold its own against other sources of power in national or international life.

Now power is said to corrupt. The press is no exception. It can corrupt, as is shown when it pays huge sums of money for information that is sensational and exclusive. It can be corrupted as when it receives money for promoting a particular cause or denigrating a particular group.

The second role became blatant when oil became the focus of international politics. The Western world and the oil companies, in particular, have a vested interest in projecting a picture of the oil industry in a way that will perpetuate their domination of the industry. For a long while, the fact that the West and the oil companies were exploiting the oil-producing countries was never reported by the international Western-controlled press.

It took an almost superhuman effort on the part of the Arabs to make out a case for getting a fair share of the oil extracting industry in their own countries. The fate of Mossadeg and the Iran of the 1950s could very well have fallen on the Arabs if the world press had continued to succeed in their campaign to depict the Arabs as brigands without principle. But for the October 1973 War which brought the Arabs together, the oil nations would have continued to be impoverished nations to this day.

Even then the press campaign to vilify the Arabs and as a corollary, their religion, Islam, has been continued by the international press and their backers.

Malaysia, too, had its share of hostile press coverage when it had differences with the oil companies. Knowing that Malaysia depends on foreign investments to create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth, the press allowed itself to be used by the oil companies to obstruct Malaysia's efforts to industrialise.

The oil companies were then able to apply pressure on the Malaysian Government to change the conditions of the oil production contracts. Only after the oil companies had secured terms agreeable to them was the press campaign against Malaysia stopped.

Of course, it is not only the oil companies that use the press. Other organisations, some of whom have conflicting interests, also make use of the press.

At any time there will be conflicts of interest between the East and the West or between the developed and the developing countries. As the world press is largely dominated by the West, the under-developed countries are invariably used by the press to justify and enhance the stand of the developed countries. Nothing the developing countries do is pictured as right.

The slightest crisis faced by the developing countries is blown up to create a picture of instability. Any dissatisfaction in a developing country is also espoused and supported by the Western press in order that the dissatisfaction will increase and render the country unstable.

Encouraged and fed by the Western press, even the slightest opposition to the Government soon gets fanned up and inflamed into a violent movement for the overthrow of the Government. Should the opposition succeed in gaining power in one way or another, the Western press would then find fault with it. Soon a new opposition group is encouraged to overthrow the Government. Instability would then be continuous and the Western press would thrive and prosper.

It is true that there are individuals in the newspapers who would appear to maintain a rigid honesty. But it is not possible for a newspaper with its numerous reporters, sub-editors, editors, managing directors and proprietors to ensure that every report appearing in its columns is accurate and not biased.

Somewhere in the process of getting the news into print, the subjective feelings and beliefs of some individual creep in. The result is biased and partisan news which prevents the readers from making their own judgements.

Like the authoritarian Governments, the press has the power to protect itself against attacks by other institutions of democracy or by its victims. News that put the press in a bad light can be suppressed. If at all the press permits criticisms of itself to appear, there immediately follows the press' reply to the criticisms.

Or when the press is threatened with libel action unless it corrects a wrong report, it will do so in some obscure corner of the paper which, while absolving it legally, does not entirely negate the original report. The last say on anything is always with the press.

The press as an instrument of democracy, ensuring fair reporting which enables the leaders to know the wishes of the people, and the people to know the doings of their leaders, is thus not the great institution that some interpreters of democracy make it out to be. It is just as prone to manipulation and corruption as are the other institutions of democracy. In the hands of the unscrupulous it can in fact disrupt and destroy democracy.

And so the press in itself is no more a guarantee of the proper functioning of democracy than any other institution of democracy. Indeed it is more likely to undermine democracy than to strengthen it. Certainly many countries which were fairly democratic have now become anarchic or authoritarian because the press contributed its share in bringing down the tolerably democratic Government that was in power originally.

That the press then attacks the undemocratic Governments that took over is of no consequence. The more authoritarian Government will ignore the world press and control its own press. In the process, of course, the people have to pay a high price.

A system or an institution does not serve the purpose for which it is designed merely because it is so designed. In a democracy the fact that all the systems and institutions are designed to serve democratic ideals do not mean they will all serve these high ideals.

The systems and institutions depend very much on the people who work, or service them for their proper functioning. If the people working them are dedicated to the ideals they are supposed to serve and know how to apply these ideals in their work, then the systems and the institutions would indeed fulfil the purpose for which they are created.

But if these people choose to manipulate the systems and institutions for other purposes, the structure of the systems and the institutions by themselves will not prevent such misuse.

The free press in a democracy is designed to act as one of the checks and balances that will ensure a true democracy prevails. In the hands of honest and genuine democrats the press will perform this function. But usually the press is run by people with the same weaknesses as other ordinary people.

They are not chosen by popular votes, nor are they subjected to periodical threats of losing their position if they do not serve the needs of the people as happen to the elected leaders of a democracy. There is, therefore, no need for them to pander to the wishes of the majority, which is the basis of a democracy.

Instead the press people are chosen for their ability to make the press prosper. The achievement of this objective does not depend on the promotion of democracy. Indeed, the objective requires styles and techniques that are at variance with those which promote democracy.

For example, to attract the interest of readers, the news should be sensational. Ordinary events which indicate the healthy working of democracy are not sensational or newsworthy. If the press is to serve the purpose of democracy it must report the dull news. But of its own volition, it is not willing to do this.

The conflict of interest is seemingly insoluble. The only way to resolve this is to evaluate once again the role and rights of the press. While a responsible press must be regarded as an asset to a democracy, an irresponsible sensation-seeking and biased press must be declared anti-democratic. A Government of popularly-elected representatives must have the right to control such an irresponsible press to preserve democracy.

This is not as undemocratic as it sounds. A Government of elected representatives does not get that much of a free hand to misuse its authority over an irresponsible press. This is because the representatives are not permanent but have to face elections by the people periodically to obtain the mandate to rule. If the people do not like the way Government handles the Press they can always refuse to re-elect them. The harshness of the Government in the control of the press can itself be an election issue.

This way the people will determine the level of freedom accorded the press. This is the only way because the alternative would be for the people themselves to elect the owners and editors of every newspaper and magazine in and outside the country. It is obvious the latter method is impossible.

The suggestion that an elected Government should control the press in a democracy may sound undemocratic unless the early arguments that a mischievous free press can destroy democracy is remembered.

An irresponsible press is a negation of the right of the people in a democratic society.

If the press fails to understand this then it should be made to do so by the people through their elected representatives.

The situation is analogous to the exercise of free speech in a democracy. The fact that libel and incitement to riots against law and order do not constitute a right does not make democracy less meaningful. There are obvious limitations to all the freedoms in a democracy. Freedom of the press should also have reasonable enforceable limitations.

The voluntary censorship practised by some countries worked for a time but in the face of multiple challenges has obviously broken down. Today there is no voluntary censorship to speak of anywhere. The only workable alternative is Government censorship as defined by law.

The problem, of course, is to determine the parameters of the law. No hard and fast rules nor universally applicable standards can be found. A country at war must need very strong censorship. What the level of that censorship is must be arbitrary to a certain extent. But a country that is not at war is in a more difficult situation where censorship level is concerned.

Some countries could be very liberal. Even then differing situations require differing levels of liberalism. Other countries, weaker perhaps and faced with problems of internal conflicts or economic retardation or upheavals, will require a less liberal attitude.

Again, as no distinct levels can be defined, the determination of the levels of press freedom must be arbitrary. Again it is obvious that only Parliament can determine what that level is and how the law is to be formulated. Everyone can have his say prior to the passage of the law. The journalists, the opposition parties, students, lawyers and others can all give their views. But Parliament will have the final say.

And once the law is passed, its interpretation must be left largely to the Government and the courts if a dispute arises.

If the law is truly oppressive, the only way to change it is to elect a new Government. But it must always be remembered that although the opposition may support revision of the law, their attitude would change the moment they become the Government. This is unfortunate but it is a fact of life.

The press quite clearly has a role to play in a democracy but that role is not as absolutely critical as the press makes it out to be. In the wrong hands it can even be a weapon to destroy democracy. Of late, this has been the rule rather than the exception.

In upholding a free press this potential role must always be remembered. So long as the press is conscious of itself being a potential threat of democracy and conscientiously limits the exercise of its rights, it should be allowed to function without Government interference. But when the press obviously abuses its rights by unnecessarily agitating the people, then democratic Governments should have a right to control it.

Should this control be abused by the Government itself then judgement and action must be left to the people through their exercise of the right to vote. If the Government is dictatorial and will manipulate or negate the right of the people to vote, then the free press is no longer relevant as there would be no democracy. We are concerned only with the free press in a democracy and how it should play its role.

The freedom of the press, as with the other freedoms normally associated with democracy, is a freedom that carries a burden of responsibility. Failure to appreciate this means a failure to understand what democracy is all about.

Speeches On The Malaysian Economy And Trade And Industry

Share Equity: A Reminder To Companies

Companies in Malaysia were reminded on April 20, 1981, by Dr Mahathir who was then the Deputy Prime Minister, that they had only nine years more to restructure their share equity as required under the New Economic Policy.

He said that with the launching of the National Unit Trust (ASN) scheme, these companies could no longer give the excuse that there were no bumiputras capable of taking up the shares.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the launching of the ASN scheme by Datuk Hussein Onn.

Dr Mahathir said the success of the ASN scheme depended on the co-operation from the corporate sector of the country.

'I urge those companies, especially the foreign firms, which had not made any effort to restructure their share equity as required under the NEP to do so now.

'They have only a short time to do so, that is nine years more,' he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had allocated $500 million to the Bumiputra Investment Foundation to invest in the corporate sector under the Third Malaysia Plan.

The allocation under the Fourth Malaysia Plan (FMP) had been increased by more than 200 per cent to $1,500. 97 million, he added.

He said the substantial allocation under the FMP reflected the Government's confidence in the Foundation in its efforts to achieve the bumiputra share-ownership objective in the corporate sector.

Dr Mahathir said the aim of the ASN scheme was to pool bumiputra capital resources through the sale of trust units.

He said the ASN scheme was chosen because it enabled bumiputras to invest gradually beginning on a small scale.

This way, the benefit of the New Economic Policy would be

enjoyed by everyone and not only the rich few, he said.

He added that the shares included in the ASN scheme were selected after they had fulfilled the criteria of ensuring high returns to the investors.

He said the selection was made not only on the basis of the companies' profits but also because of their strong management which would reduce investment risks.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the ASN was also being managed by a group of experts and experienced personnel who are responsible for monitoring the performance of companies in which investments have been made.

He said an important factor in the achievement of the ASN scheme's objective is the awareness of the bumiputras themselves of the efforts and share-ownership process which was being implemented.

He added that investment in shares and discussions of the profit–loss accruing from share investment were a new phenomenon among bumiputras.

Dr Mahathir said it was important for those who understood the concept and those directly involved in the scheme to disseminate the information to others.

He said the ASN scheme was introduced in the interests of the bumiputras, and it was formulated after taking into consideration the various socio-economic problems faced by them.

He also urged those running various Government corporations which had not been selected to be included in the scheme to work harder so that these corporations fulfilled the criteria for ownership transfer.

He said everyone must take an interest in their roles as their efforts were for the good of the nation.

On individual participation in the ASN scheme, Dr Mahathir said that all bumiputras eligible to participate in the scheme could do so by registering themselves and paying the principal investment of $10.

After registration, the investor would be given an investment book and ASN Bhd. would credit 100 units into his account.

However, he said, the 100 units could only be withdrawn at the end of the ninth year.

Dr Mahathir said the participation of each and every bumiputra would contribute significantly towards the achievement of the NEP as regards share-ownership.

'The ASN scheme provides the bumiputras with the opportunity to invest either for the medium or long term.

'All bumiputras, irrespective of their political views and beliefs, are eligible and should participate in the scheme.

'In this context, no matter how much money was being spent by the Government on behalf of the bumiputras, the effort would be fruitless if the bumiputras did not participate in the scheme,' added Dr Mahathir.

A Self-sufficient Country

'One of the goals of the New Economic Policy is to create a self-sufficient and self-reliant country,' said Dr Mahathir on April 14, 1981 when he launched the Exposition of Johore Bumiputra Economic Achievement.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia should stand on her own feet, building her own ships and assembling her own weapons and armoury.

The country should turn to the foreign market only for sophisticated goods.

'We must have all these to ensure that we would be free of foreign pressure,' Dr Mahathir said.

To realise this objective, he urged Malaysian students on Government scholarships to always put the country's interest above anything else.

'They must realise that the degrees or diplomas that they bring back are not for the sole purpose of becoming an executive.

'It is the knowledge and skill that they gather that is important for the country.'

Dr Mahathir continued: 'Malaysia cannot afford to be perpetually dependent on other countries.' He criticised some executives, including bumiputras, who only look forward to working in air-conditioned rooms.

'How can such people build ships or assemble locomotives from such small rooms,' he said.

'Let alone building big machinery these bumiputras cannot even build their own mosques simply because they fail to be directly involved in these projects, especially in heavy and semi-heavy industries.

'More often than not when discussing the NEP, their first impression is to go into business. They forget that the scope of the NEP is much wider,' he said.

'The Government is embarking on a project to encourage the Malays to go into the construction industry and the first major task is to let the construction of the Universiti Teknologi Kebangsaan complex in Johore Bahru be wholly handled by bumiputras.

'Malay youths from all over the country will be selected for this project. They will be given on-the-job training in various aspects of the construction industry,' he said.

He praised the State Government for holding the exposition as it would show the successes and failures of bumiputras in the last ten years.

'The exposition is timely because some successful bumiputras have started to lose their sense of direction.'

The exposition, he added, would provide some guidance for the bumiputras and dispel misconceptions in certain quarters.

Unit Trusts: Government To Plug All Loopholes

The Government would plug all loopholes. This assurance was given by Dr Mahathir when he was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry on January 12, 1981. He was giving details regarding the qualification period and other technicalities of the National Unit Trust.

Dr Mahathir explained that the payment of dividends by the National Unit Trust would be based on the length of time the shares were held.

This, he said, was to prevent people from buying the shares in anticipation of the dividends and then selling them back to the trust managers after receiving the dividends.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to newsmen after holding talks with visiting Chinese Minister of State Farms and Land Reclamation, Mr Gao Yang.

He said, in reply to a question, that the Government had never intended the dividends of the Trust be fixed at 10% per annum.

'All we did was to advise potential buyers they could expect at least a 10% dividend annually, based on the current and projected performance of the Trust companies involved,' he said.

Like any other businesses, dividends are subject to the performance of the companies and there has to be some element of uncertainty, he added.

'Investors must bear in mind that there are risks they have to face although in the case of investing in the National Unit Trust, the risk is minimal,' he said.

Dr Mahathir said companies that float shares would normally project the dividends buyers could expect to enjoy based on their capability to make profits.

'This is exactly what we are doing – assuring the bumiputra public they can expect to get at least 10% dividend per year,' he said.

However, things like dividends could never be guaranteed because adverse circumstances like an economic slump should be taken into account, he said.

As the dividend was not fixed, it did not fall into the category of *riba* (interest), which is sinful according to the Islamic *syariat*, he said, adding that the dividend would also not be stated on the Unit Trust certificate.

Detractors would, however, use this issue to confuse the people, and Dr Mahathir urged bumiputras not to allow themselves to be misled.

Dr Mahathir also disputed the argument put forth by certain quarters that the whole share transfer scheme was meaningless because there was no direct corporate ownership participation among the bumiputras involved.

He said the Government opted for the Unit Trust system to prevent 'natural abuse'.

'It is simply ridiculous, if someone gives money to a poor man but tells him, "Don't spend it, keep it". It is only natural the poor man will spend the money,' he said.

Similarly, if the Government were to transfer the shares of a company directly to bumiputras, it was only natural they would not hold on for the dividends but sell them on the market for quick capital appreciation.

Dr Mahathir said almost all the millions of shares transferred through the Trade and Industry Ministry were no longer in the hands of bumiputras.

'This is the danger and the only way to curb this natural abuse is to

transfer the shares indirectly in the form of Unit Trusts,' he said, adding that the transfer of shares through the Ministry had since been stopped.

No Dramatic Changes In Our Industrial Policies

Welcoming the delegates from the International Public Affairs Centre (IPAC), Europe in Kuala Lumpur on June 15, 1981, Dr Mahathir gave the assurance that a change in leadership in Malaysia would not involve dramatic changes in economic and industrial policies that would upset private sector calculations and their prospects for investments and profits in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir pledged that 'Malaysia will continue to maintain and improve the investment climate'.

The text of his speech follows:

'The fact that such a high level delegation of presidents and vice-presidents of European multi-nationals have seen fit to visit Malaysia for the purpose of an exchange of views with the Malaysian Government is most heartening, as it reflects the interest in Europe in the economic development of this country.

'Europe, we understand, is not a single country or even a federation, the EEC notwithstanding. The different attitudes, and the attitude with regard to investment in Malaysia certainly differ between them.

'During a recent investment mission we found one English speaking country whose banks, chambers of commerce and Government displayed not the slightest interest in sponsoring our seminar. On the other hand the Government of Finland and the Finns went all out to make our investment seminar a success.

'Naturally our attitude to trade and other economic intercourse would be coloured by these experiences.

'Some European countries, one in particular, still hold rather outlandish views of Malaysia. For instance one of their representatives in Malaysia recently claimed that the development of Malaysia is brought about by this country.

'Now that you are here you may notice from the newness of almost everything in this country that they are all the result of conscious

efforts by Malaysia after independence. We had categorically no help from the claimant. Indeed of late the help has been negative. Even their firms which made and still make so much money out of Malaysia will not spend a dollar in helping our students.

'I am making these remarks to you because I think you should know as much about our psyche and philosophy as is necessary for the progress of making your business decisions. You wouldn't want to deal with a country that is devious and unappreciative.

'Malaysia is not devious. We say what we feel. And when you come here to find out about us we want you to find out the truth. We are appreciative of those who help us. We are a substantial market but that market is for those who are willing to help us build this country.

'The affluence that is obviously found in this country is not for exploitation only. We intend to use it for the betterment of the less fortunate of this country.

'We welcome you because we think that there is a need for you to know us as much as we know you. Europe, the whole of it, is now second to Japan because Europeans were too proud to notice. We hope you will notice.

'I also wish to thank the International Public Affairs Centre and especially Mr Battaille for his initiative in organising this programme.

'Your visit to Malaysia is most timely as you have come during a period when we have just launched the Fourth Malaysia Plan – from 1981 to 1985. The Malaysian Government has programmed to the best of its ability the future direction and growth of this nation by means of various five-year plans. We have also taken a long-term view and thus in 1970 we formulated a long-term Overall Perspective Plan . . . . .

'This year (1981) marks not only the launching of the FMP but also the beginning of the second decade of the Overall Perspective Plan.

'Some of you may have heard of Malaysia's New Economic Policy which is designed not only to promote national economic growth but also national unity through a two-pronged approach, that is the eradication of poverty irrespective of race and the restructuring of the Malaysian society by eliminating the identification of race with economic functions.

'You may also have heard that all this is to be undertaken within the context of a rapidly expanding economy and that no group, either Malaysian or foreign, will feel any sense of deprivation during the restructuring. You may be excused for thinking that we are a little

over-optimistic. But if you care to examine the statistics and responsible bank reports and also if you care to look around, you will see that we are not too unrealistic.

'The macro-economic targets and strategies to be adopted during the Fourth Malaysia Plan which are designed also to meet the requirements of the New Economic Policy, take into account developments in the international economic scene and Malaysia's own resources and potentials for development.

'I have with me today some of the leading figures in our country who are involved in the planning and implementation of the various programmes. No doubt during the briefing that you will receive in a short while, you will be innundated with sufficient facts and figures that would make any such factual data that I may present to you redundant.

'What you will see, however, in the presentation that will follow are what may appear to be ambitious targets for a relatively small nation. For example, the projected growth rate of the nation's Gross Domestic Product is 7.6% in real terms of 14% at current process.

'Equally ambitious will appear to be our plans for the growth of the manufacturing sector which will be the leading growth sector during the period of the Fourth Malaysia Plan and beyond.

'This sector will grow at the rate of 11% per annum and it is expected that by 1990 the manufacturing sector will be the leading sector contributing to the Gross Domestic Product of this nation.

'I do not wish to pre-empt the briefing to be given by the Economic Planning Unit and MIDA. I only wish to say at this juncture that all these targets have been drawn with a very pragmatic understanding of Malaysia's own prospects.

'Needless to say we are dependent upon world economic activity and performance to enable us to succeed in meeting our own targets. Thus, if the world (and the countries that you represent most certainly play a very critical role in world economic activity) continue their growth and performance as has been expected, then we are confident that this nation will be able to meet targets that we have set for ourselves.

'Before I leave you to the officials I would like to give you one assurance and that is that Malaysia will continue with its policy to welcome foreign investments, for we recognize that foreign investors with their technology, know-how, management skills and most importantly, export marketing outlets, will provide the basic needs to fuel the accelerated growth of the Malaysian manufacturing

sector.

'I also wish to assure you that during this current period within Malaysia, when you may see possible changes in leadership, that this change in leadership will not involve dramatic changes in economic and industrial policies that will upset private sector calculations and their prospects for investments and profits in Malaysia.

'This Government has always maintained that the predictability of any Government is vital for the sector's own plans regarding investments and growth. I wish to assure you that there need be no fear as regards the predictability of the Malaysian Government and our commitment to the concept of a free enterprise economy.

'Our track record speaks for itself and we will continue on this basis to maintain and improve the investment climate that this nation has offered to both Malaysian and foreign investors.'

Four Reasons For More Private Sector Investments

Four reasons why the private sector should increase investments in Malaysia were outlined by Dr Mahathir when he was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry.

Opening the Conference on Business Opportunities in Malaysia, he said one of the reasons was the availability of a wide variety of natural resources.

'The opportunities for further downstream processing into manufactured goods are ample and should be grasped,' he said.

The scope of downstream processing opportunities was illustrated by the fact that only 2% of Malaysia's natural rubber production was used for downstream processing domestically, he said.

The second reason was the rising domestic demand for goods and services, which could reach a level in the 1980s to make it profitable for consumer durables to be produced locally.

'Third, the linkages in the industrial system need to be considerably strengthened through the development of the capital goods industry,' said Dr Mahathir.

He said the emphasis given under the Fourth Malaysia Plan to the development of heavy industries was to move the economy into the second phase of industrial development.

'The scope for such expansion is bright with the availability of substantial resources such as petroleum, LNG and with the increasing demand for capital inputs in the manufacturing and construction sectors,' Dr Mahathir said.

The fourth reason cited was the need for major efforts to take the industrial process from simple assembly operations to products embodying more advanced technology.

He said that under the Fourth Malaysia Plan, the private sector was expected to contribute about 72% of the total outlay and this reflected the Government's confidence in it.

'The public sector will continue to play an active role, through the implementation of policies, to influence the direction of development as well as to ensure the attainment of the New Economic Policy objectives.'

The larger role envisaged for the private sector under the Fourth Plan implied that such investment should aid and assist in the attainment of national objectives.

'The Government will continue to ensure, through appropriate policies and programmes, a reasonable rate of return on private investment,' he said.

Dr Mahathir went on, 'Malaysia had successfully blended economic theory with the political and social realities of the country in its approach to development.

'Such a flexible and pragmatic approach will continue to characterise the implementation of the Fourth Plan which represents the third phase of the NEP.'

In view of the continued low growth and inflationary tendencies worldwide, the role of the private sector during the Fourth Plan would undoubtedly be a challenging one.

'What is needed is long term structural adjustments that will insulate the Malaysian economy from the debilitating effects of unfavourable international economic trends,' he said.

Dr Mahathir also told the participants that Malaysia had reached a stage where the private sector had to devote a substantial amount of resources for manpower development.

He said that this was an investment which would result in benefits for the sector in the long run.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was studying ways to boost industrial activity.

The two-day conference was attended by local as well as foreign businessmen.

The Private Sector And The Business Code Of Conduct

The private sector should adhere strictly to the business code of conduct and avoid any malpractices in their dealings with foreign business partners.

Dr Mahathir gave this advice in a speech at the opening of the 35th general meeting of the Malaysian Chinese Chamber of Commerce on June 29, 1981.

He called on members to observe the correct business practices to enhance their opportunities to both sustain and develop further the foreign markets for their products.

During the Fourth Malaysia Plan, the manufacturing sector was expected to undergo further changes.

As the Government had achieved satisfactory progress in promoting import substituting and labour intensive industries, it was now setting the pace for the development of capital and technology intensive industries, he said.

Dr Mahathir advised the members to reorganise and modernise their operations along corporate concepts in order to achieve efficiency in terms of cost and quality.

Malaysia needs a strong and diversified group of small and medium-sized industries to serve the requirements of the large manufacturers.

'In this respect, you could become an important source of a wide array of components and intermediate goods on a sub-contracting basis with the large undertakings such as the motor vehicles, ship building and the petrol chemical industries.'

Under the Fourth Malaysia Plan, the export sector was expected to grow at a rate of 9.7% per annum and total exports were estimated at $19.8 billion by 1985 compared to $7.2 billion in 1980.

Dr Mahathir said in many cases, inquiries from the private sector regarding participation in trade missions had not been encouraging except for missions to China.

He hoped that the private sector would make full use of such opportunities in the future.

What The New Industrialisation Strategy Means

Dr Mahathir warned that there would be no room for laggards who refused to accept the dynamic nature of the industrialisation policy in which the Government would play a leading role in setting up heavy industries in the next 10 years to create massive job opportunities.

He added that such an ambitious industrial policy needed the full co-operation of the people, who should be prepared to shoulder the much heavier burden placed upon them in the future.

'The people cannot allow a situation where foreign labour has to be imported for the expressed purpose of running our industries. Such a move, if practised, will deny our very purpose of expanding industries in the country,' he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a dialogue session with MCA members at the Chung Hwa Primary School in Jitra, Kedah, on February 27, 1981.

He said the Government's investment was necessary as the private sector would find it difficult to raise the capital for participation in heavy industries.

The move was a natural step in the process of industrialisation in any developing nation, he added.

He said: 'We cannot be satisfied with the level of industrialisation achieved so far, but should strive to make the nation a leading industrial force as we have the right investment and political climate.'

Dr Mahathir added that the Government was aware that not everyone could participate in business ventures and thus industrialisation was a natural answer to the persistent need for jobs.

'A good example of our dynamic industrial strategy is the setting up of the cement factory in Langkawi at a cost of $430 million with the Government being the senior partner in the project.

'The $1,000 million steel factory planned for Trengganu and the $2,300 million liquid gas plant in Bintulu are other examples of the emphasis placed on exploiting our natural resources for the development of the country,' he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said massive industrialisation was being employed by the Government to expand the economic cake, thus giving a share of the nation's wealth to all communities.

'We have shown through the New Economic Policy that no community has been denied the right to prosper as the Government has been fair in providing the economic impetus to all.

'However, bumiputras being the poorest community have to be

specially helped. Thus the recent sale of shares under the Unit Trust Fund is a positive move towards bumiputra participation in the economy.'

He said that the Unit Trust Fund would help bumiputras to achieve 30 per cent equity participation without drawing on the Government's reserves only.

Rapid Mechanisation Has Done Harm To Malaysia

As a member of the UMNO Central Executive Committee, Dr Mahathir voiced concern over unemployment as early as July 1971, when he said, 'Rapid mechanisation has done harm to Malaysia because she is rich in manpower.'

As a result, Malaysia suffered an unemployment problem. Dr Mahathir said this in a working paper presented at an UMNO Youth Seminar.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke on 'The Effects of Automation and Unemployment', added that seen from all perspectives, the use of some machinery was not in the country's interest.

In his paper, Dr Mahathir said: 'Very often, developing countries will look upon developed nations to carry out their development programmes.

'While idolising the developed countries, economists and planners sometimes tend to believe that whatever is best for developed countries is best for the developing nations.

'For instance, the case of parking meters which were used recently in Kuala Lumpur and Penang towns. To the officials this is a symbol of progress.

'What is the result of this? First the meter was bought from the West, made by their highly paid workers.

'Apart from the meters being bought with public funds, they also caused considerable unemployment among Malaysians.

'But the officials did not realise that the meter did not have a brain. As a result, motorists cheated by putting in fake money.

'Now they have been replaced by parking attendants. The result: they are more efficient and they can tell us where there are vacancies and so on.'

Dr Mahathir stressed that the greatest benefit of using manpower was that the money which could otherwise be spent on purchasing machines could be used to create jobs for Malaysians.

He said that a machine costing $120,000 was equivalent to the salaries of 1,000 workers for one month, or that of 84 workers for one year.

This did not include the salary for the operator of the machine, the fuel cost and expenses for its repairs.

From this it could be seen that this particular machine had thrown about 150 people into unemployment.

Dr Mahathir noted that under the Second Malaysia Plan a lot of machinery would be bought from Britain, Germany, America and Japan.

'This may result in our workers being out of jobs whereas their Western counterparts enjoy life,' he said.

Dr Mahathir, however, said that he was not against the use of some machinery, 'but we must think carefully before we buy it.'

He added that history had shown that roads, dams, bridges and railway lines made by men were just as good and lasting as those made by the machines.

Ploughing machines were among the machines that Dr Mahathir was not against. This was because for double-cropping in the Muda areas, buffaloes alone could not get the padi fields ready in time for planting.

Similarly, if more workers were brought in from elsewhere to work the fields instead of using machines, then the income would not be sufficient for the local farmers.

Fourth Malaysia Plan: Strategies Outlined

The strategies and programmes of the Fourth Malaysia Plan were outlined by Dr Mahathir in support of the motion for the tabling of the Plan by the then Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn, in Dewan Rakyat (Parliament) on March 27, 1981.

Dr Mahathir emphasised that the thrust would continue to be the eradication of poverty and social redressal.

Continuing, Dr Mahathir said special emphasis would be given to

uplifting the well-being of poor small-holders, fishermen and workers living below the poverty line.

The Fourth Malaysia Plan, he said, was the biggest development plan ever drawn up by the Government in terms of investment and public sector spending.

Of the $102.6 billion to be invested, $28.5 billion will come from the public sector.

The main objective is to give greater incentive for the implementation of the New Economic Policy, now in its second decade.

'It is imperative that our strategies are aimed at strengthening the economy which still has a lot of opportunities for investment and expansion.'

Dr Mahathir said a large allocation – $9,319 million – had been set aside to achieve full employment, to improve incomes and to provide housing for the lower income group.

Efforts to redress society will be intensified with an allocation of $4,398 million, in addition to the efforts of the private sector.

Dr Mahathir also drew the attention of the House to the highest ever allocation for Defence and Security ($9,371.5 million or 23.8% of the total allocation). He stressed that Malaysia must be prepared to protect her independence and sovereignty.

He said it was necessary for Malaysia to beef up her defence capabilities and internal security in light of political uncertainties in other countries, particularly the threat of invasion and subversion faced by her neighbours.

'We have seen and read about the tragic plight of innocent people as a result of the political turbulence and the big power-race in Afghanistan, Vietnam and Kampuchea.'

On infrastructure, he said $5,639.6 million or 14.4% will be allocated for the construction of roads, ports, airports, and telecommunication and other communication systems.

Large hydro-power projects such as the ones in Trengganu, Perak, Sabah and Sarawak will also be implemented in addition to several small hydro-power projects to enhance power generation.

They will not only enable us to supply power to the rural areas, but also reduce the country's dependence on oil.

Several road projects will be undertaken by the newly established Highway Corporation.

Projects such as the Penang Bridge are in the implementation stage and parts of these projects will be completed under the FMP.

On health, the then Deputy Prime Minister said 25 district

hospitals and three general hospitals will be completed.

The Centre for Medical Science Studies to be built in Kubang Krian will take its first batch of students in the 1981/82 academic year.

The programme for water supply will benefit 73.1% of the total population by 1985.

Besides projects started under the Third Malaysia Plan, new water supply projects will include schemes in Dindings, Kuantan, Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau.

On education and training, Dr Mahathir said $2,992.8 million or 7.16% will be allocated.

The objective, he added, was to ensure enough trained workers for the industrial and construction industries.

During the period under the FMP, efforts to bring development to the less-developed States like Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, Kedah, Sabah and Sarawak will be continued.

'The development of an important partner, the private sector, will contribute towards employment generation, higher productivity and better wages, as well as securing new markets for the country's products,' he said.

For the successful implementation of the massive FMP the Government has made several changes aimed at improving the administrative machinery at all levels.

New procedures for land acquisition, which had frequently delayed the implementation of projects in the past, had been introduced.

Many job vacancies had been filled in the last two years and efforts at training officers in their respective functions had been intensified.

Dr Mahathir was confident that the various recommendations and changes made will improve the implementation of FMP projects.

He stressed that national development and uniting the country's multi-racial society were not easy.

'Solidarity cannot be achieved within a short time. We do not have the magic wand to help us in this modern world which is full of challenges.'

He added that the FMP, through the allocations for education, housing, sports, social and cultural programmes, will promote and sustain efforts towards solidarity.

What was more important, he said, was the individual's own desire to see the country progress and achieve solidarity.

A Call To The Chinese Chambers Of Commerce

The Chinese business community was urged by Dr Mahathir to participate in the New Economic Policy both in mind and in spirit. They should also rid themselves of emotions which could cloud their reasoning and discover how positive the NEP can be in helping their businesses.

Dr Mahathir said this when he addressed the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry at their annual dinner, in Kuala Lumpur in August, 1981.

Excerpts from his speech follow:

'Associations of people with common interest are an accepted phenomenon in modern society as they enable the group to strive with a greater chance of success towards a certain goal. But at times this struggle is enveloped and fuelled by emotions which obscure the realities of the situation.

'In this manner the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia is established in order to assist the Malaysian Chinese business community and not to oppose the Government or Government policies.

'The objectives of the Chamber can be achieved by carefully examining Government policies and not by opposing them.

'The NEP is not confiscatory. It is based on growth that is to be equitably shared by every community in Malaysia.

'One particular aspect of the NEP which will help every businessman is the emphasis the NEP places on growth as a means of bringing equitable distribution of wealth.

'Growth being the essence of business, businessmen should appreciate the fact that where there is growth, there will be ample opportunities for everyone.'

Continuing, Dr Mahathir stressed: 'Everyone in the context of NEP includes the Chinese business community.

'The Government is not committed just to having normal growth but to stimulating rapid economic growth. Within the context of this accelerated growth, the restructuring of society will take place.'

Dr Mahathir reminded the Chinese business community that they would benefit from the NEP if they reconciled themselves to the policy, play a proper role and take advantage of the opportunities presented.

They were also told to be less exclusive when employing staff and appointing agents and dealers just as they do not discriminate in

their search for customers.

Dr Mahathir reassured the Chinese business community that 'whatever mistakes and misinterpretations occurring during the implementations of a policy can be overcome. The Government is willing to overcome any inadequacies and make the necessary adjustments.'

Thus the Industrial Co-ordination Act was amended twice.

Dr Mahathir stressed that an open mind and a rational approach on the part of the Chinese business community in solving whatever problems that crop up will be reciprocated by the Government.

The business community was asked to reconcile themselves to the existing situation and make the best of it.

Dr Mahathir reminded them that there are things which the Government can change but there are other things which cannot be changed. 'Once we reconcile ourselves to a situation, the problem will become less formidable.'

He cited the NEP, the Petroleum Development Act and the Industrial Co-ordination Act as policies and laws which are crucial not only for the credibility of the Government but also for the prosperity and future of the nation.

'To change or undermine them would only cause instability in the country,' he warned.

According to Mahathir, Malaysia is poised on the threshold of a tremendous economic boom. The country has all the ingredients for an economic take-off: political stability, sound administration, rich raw materials, oil and gas and sufficient hydro-electric potential.

'However the country lacks one essential ingredient – good work ethics. To reach that stage of economic take-off, the country will have to develop good work ethics.

'To begin with, the Government has to ensure that the administration provides a more effective and efficient service.'

Mahathir referred to the need for punctuality which should not be confined to politicians and Government servants alone but also to proprietors of businesses, executives and workers.

'They should try to finish as much of their work as possible in one day. If necessary, they should stay back.

'In this way, the country will be more prosperous and everyone will be able to reap the harvest. It will then provide a better life for everyone including the workers. Every worker should get the benefits through his own efforts.'

He urged the Chamber to work more closely with the Malaysian

International Chamber of Commerce and Industry so that the objectives of the NEP could be achieved rapidly.

'When the objectives of the NEP are realised, there will be economic expansion. When this happens, the Chinese business community will reap a rich harvest.'

An Economic Parliament?

One of the first decisions taken by the Mahathir Cabinet was the revival of two Councils to speed up national development and to look after the economy.

The Prime Minister on July 22, 1981 announced that he would head the National Action Council. Dr Mahathir disclosed that the National Economic Council would also be revived to study 'ways and means of reacting to the pressures on the economy.'

Dr Mahathir said the National Action Council had been revived in a bid to oversee the implementation of national programmes to ensure their success.

The Council, to be headed by the Prime Minister himself, was started in August 1971 under the late Tun Razak's Cabinet.

It was then the ministerial body which co-ordinated work for the implementation of the Second Malaysia Plan, reviewed progress and sorted out problems faced by any Government agency.

It was assisted by State Action Committees with branches at district level.

Dr Mahathir said the revived Council would meet every fortnight – a schedule different from Tun Razak's time when it used to meet every Wednesday – to review the work and action taken by all Ministries in carrying out their programmes.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a Press conference after chairing his first Cabinet meeting.

Dr Mahathir said that the National Economic Council had been dormant lately because of the boom the country had been enjoying.

Replying to a question, he said that he was not 'unduly worried' about the fall in prices of rubber, cocoa and other commodities 'although it is a cause for concern'.

Dr Mahathir said that the Government was studying ways to

stabilise the rubber price, which had taken a tumble on the world market.

'We are even thinking of stockpiles like we did during the previous rubber price crisis. Rubber has a big effect on a lot of people and our budgeting is also based on the rubber price.

'Other commodities like cocoa are not that badly off. We will find some way to push up the rubber price,' he said.

He also said that he was disappointed with the United States and Japan for not signing the International Tin Agreement.

The revival of the two important councils was welcomed by the Press and the public.

Dr V. Kanapathy, the Economic Adviser of United Malayan Banking Corporation, said that the revival of the National Economic Council was 'a very good idea'.

He suggested that representatives from various sectors of the economy be recruited to serve on the Council.

Dr Kanapathy expressed the opinion that a national economic council along these lines could be viewed in some ways as an 'economic parliament'.

No One Community Will Get All It Wants

'We shall need all our qualities – every quality that Britain and its people possess: prudence in counsel, daring in action, tenacity in purpose, courage in defeat, moderation in victory, in all things faith.'

Lloyd George, the famous British statesman, said this in an appeal to the nation when he was Britain's Prime Minister during the First World War.

I was reminded of these stirring words when I read the speech that Dr Mahathir gave in Kuala Lumpur on August 29, 1981.

'Continue voicing your opinion of Government policies whether for or against – as you have always done before. Let us not be vociferous in coming out with our opinions that could upset other races as this would make it difficult for the Government in its efforts to ensure a peaceful and united nation,' he said.

That call, the like of which I have seldom heard in my 40 years of public life, shows that Mahathir is a man of moderation.

Dr Mahathir gave his assurance that he would try his best to check any show of extremism in this country.

'We do not want extremism of any kind – whether from the Malays, the Indians, the Chinese or any other race,' he said.

The feelings and rights of other races should be taken into account by any quarter when making demands from the Government, he stressed.

The Premier said if a certain race only thought of its own interests, the others would be upset.

'We need the co-operation of all in that they take into consideration the prevailing situation in the country and its multi-racial community.

'The Government cannot give in 100 per cent to the demands of any one group as this would be ill-received by others.'

He said no race should get 100 per cent of its demands.

'When one race is happy with the Government, then this will show that it has become one-sided. As long as I am in control, I will not allow the Government to be one-sided.'

He said the Government would continue to hold its principles and policies of tolerance.

'No particular community will be able to have whatever they wish and want,' he emphasised this before opening the 58th anniversary celebrations of the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.

'We will carry out the principles and policies as set by the former leaders of the country with a sense of tolerance.

'We will be more broad-minded and will not care for the interests of just one community alone.'

Dr Mahathir added that the Government intended to have more dialogue sessions with political and business associations in order to gauge public feelings.

Those who heard his speech, the best in recent months, described it as one that shows his sense of moderation and tolerance and his understanding of the situation prevailing in the country.

Speeches On Education And Educational Problems

National Language And Tertiary Education

That the national language should be used as a medium of instruction in universities was the view expressed by Dr Mahathir as the Chairman of the Higher Education Council.

He said that the English language should rank no more and no less than other foreign languages and it could be used only for postgraduate studies.

Dr Mahathir was speaking on formulating a higher education policy for Malaysia at a dinner of the University of Malaya Graduates Society in Kuala Lumpur.

He said, 'The national language should be used as the teaching medium in university education. The English language could be used for postgraduate studies abroad.'

Dr Mahathir stressed that if the national language could not be made the medium of instruction it was not because of lack of teachers or text books but because the 'will was not there'.

The national language was important for the purpose of national identity, he said.

Dr Mahathir appealed to Malaysians to submit their recommendations on higher education to the Higher Education Council.

He said that the education policy should be geared according to the needs of the nation.

Emphasis should be on science and technology, he added.

He said a university must produce graduates according to employment needs otherwise there would be too many graduates who would be forced to look for employment requiring lower qualifications.

This would mean a lowering in the value of degrees, he added.

Dr Mahathir said that the education policy should be biased in favour of the Malays in order to lessen the present disparity in the

levels of education between the Malays and non-Malays.

Warning To Students Overseas

A strict warning to Malaysian students in other countries was given by Dr Mahathir when he was the Minister of Education. He said: 'Malaysian students overseas who are involved in activities detrimental to the country will be detained when they return home.'

Addressing 1,000 teachers at the Stadium Dato Syed Omar, Alor Star, he said most of the Malaysian students in New Zealand and Australia who criticised the Malaysian Government were forced to do so by local students.

The Malaysian students were told by their counterparts in the two countries that unless they criticised the Government, they would be denied the facilities needed to further their education.

Some of the students had succumbed to this threat for fear of harassment, Dr Mahathir said.

There was also a small group of Malaysian students who were running down the Government just to get permanent residence in New Zealand and Australia.

By claiming that they would be arrested on their return to Malaysia, they hoped their host countries would grant them permanent residence, he added.

Since the warning was given, there has been an improvement in the attitude of Malaysian students overseas.

According to Dr Mahathir the Government is keeping close tabs on a group of students who hope to cause a revolution in the country.

'These students go here, there and everywhere to try and succeed in their aims. We are keeping a close watch on them,' said Dr Mahathir, who was replying to points raised during the debate at the last UMNO General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir said he was proud that the UMNO branch in London had sent five representatives, two more than in the past, for the assembly. Among the five were two Wanita UMNO members.

'The UMNO London is carrying out a difficult task. It is easy to carry out the party's struggle here where society is sympathetic to us.

But in London the situation is totally different. Even Malaysian students there, including children of UMNO members themselves, jeer and boo at students who support UMNO.

'The fact that there are five UMNO branches in Britain now is because of the hard work put in by the London UMNO students and because our Ministers who go to London, including Tun Hussein Onn, meet and explain things to our students there,' he said.

He added that there were now moves to set up UMNO branches in Pakistan and Cairo.

'This shows we have succeeded in instilling the spirit of UMNO's struggle in our children. Before our students only returned to attack UMNO and the Government,' he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the majority of Government officers were efficient and sympathetic to UMNO's struggle.

'Some are even so attracted to us that they work harder for us than UMNO members themselves,' he said.

He also said that he was aware, however, that there were weaknesses in the Government machinery and inefficient officers as well.

'Sometimes the blame should be laid on us, the Ministers, for not giving clear instructions on what we want done,' he said.

Education Critics Are Also Criticised

Dr Mahathir hit out at the few intellectuals who were criticising the secular education system despite their being educated under the very same system.

He said these people regarded secular education as no good, allegedly contrary to Islamic teachings and as such should not be pursued.

Among these people were those who had received higher education abroad and were now enjoying a comfortable life on account of their being highly educated.

The Prime Minister reminded the people that Islam teaches its followers to pursue education in all fields, not only in religion but also to improve their livelihood and to prepare for the next world.

Speaking at the laying of the foundation stone for a private school

in Alor Star, Kedah, he said what was important was that the pursuit of education was to do good not evil, or merely to prepare for after death.

Dr Mahathir disclosed that 16 students at a local university had given up studies believing that the education was of no use.

He pointed out that through education, one not only acquired knowledge but, more importantly, freedom.

He said the nation's leaders, using the education that they had acquired, managed to free the country from colonialism without spilling of blood.

Dr Mahathir praised the *Persatuan Belia Bimbingan* for sponsoring the establishment of an academy.

'Youth should pursue ideals which would contribute towards national development,' he added.

A Pledge To Check Touchy Educational Issues

An assurance that the Government would make a thorough check on all controversial educational issues was given by Dr Mahathir as the Minister of Education in September, 1974.

However, he said that there would be no deviation from the education policy. Dr Mahathir was speaking at the speech and prize-giving day of Sekolah Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

He said that everything was being done to speed up the in-take of teachers for training.

On corporal punishment, he gave an assurance that there would be no abuse of power, but added that some form of discipline must be maintained.

Dr Mahathir later told English medium teachers that they would be left behind if they were not equipped for the switch from English to Bahasa Malaysia.

'I would like to remind English medium teachers to ensure that they are prepared for the change.'

He described the switch in the medium of instruction from English to Bahasa Malaysia as an important change in the nation's education system.

Dr Mahathir said the Ministry planned to convert nine other fully-

residential schools into science secondary schools.

'Thus, this will be the last year the Sekolah Tuanku Abdul Rahman will have arts stream candidates for the MCE examination,' he said.

The Ministry, he added, had allocated a big sum every year to run fully-residential and science secondary schools.

It is estimated that the annual cost of running 20 such schools is $23.8 million – $1.2 million for each school.

'This is the people's money entrusted to us. We must see that every cent is not spent in vain,' he said.

Later it was announced that a Ministerial committee had been set up under the chairmanship of Dr Mahathir to review the country's educational system.

A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Department said that the committee would review, within the framework of the existing national educational policy, the objective and the effectiveness including the curricula of the present system.

The review is aimed at ensuring that the country's manpower needs, both short-term and long-term, are met and in particular, that the educational system served the national objective of a united, disciplined and trained population.

Factors That Should Guide Planning Of Education

In November 1974, when he was the Minister of Education, Dr Mahathir said that political, social and economic factors should be taken into consideration in the planning of education.

'This comprehensive planning in turn will usher in a society which will be more just, and hence less prone to violent clashes and upheavals,' he said.

Dr Mahathir's remarks were made in a speech read out by Deputy Education Minister, Datuk Chan Siang Sun, at the opening of a seminar on 'Development of Higher Education in Malaysia: Issues and Problems' at Genting Highlands Hotel.

The Minister said the period between 1964 and 1974 witnessed the most progress in education.

However it should not 'cloud our eyes to the various obstacles that still prevent the country from achieving the full objectives of its

educational programme,' he said.

He cited several 'grounds of concern' in the system of higher education.

Firstly while the number of students undergoing tertiary education had increased, it had not done so at the required ratio; that is, for every student in science and technology, there should have been only two in arts.

There was also a shortage of bumiputras educated in science and technology.

Dr Mahathir said that unless steps were taken to change this trend, the nation would not be able to produce the number of skilled bumiputras required in the technical and scientific fields to participate effectively in commerce and industry.

Secondly, he said, expenditure on education had increased tremendously – from $6.7 million in 1959 to $120 million in 1974.

But the rate of economic growth of the country was not proportionate to the amount spent because the prices of primary produce were unstable.

Therefore it was necessary to review the priorities in educational spending, so that it would be in line with the economic state.

There were many ways of improving the system of higher education. One of these was to intensify the education programmes.

Dr Mahathir said that an area that needed attention was political activity in the campuses.

In the past, there had been too much political activities in the universities and institutions of higher learning.

'I am concerned because such political activity will not only weaken the effectiveness of education in a university but also cause damage to life and property,' he said.

Reasons For A Review Of The Education Policy

'We are not convinced that we are producing a society which is compatible with our beliefs in the democratic process and other values. It is not a simple process of giving education to the people. The problem is whether the people who get the education will later form a society which is viable and can withstand the onslaught of so

many different cultures.'

Dr Mahathir said this when he was the Minister of Education in October 1974. He revealed that the Government was reviewing fully the way the education policy was being implemented because the country was not producing the people it needs and the society it wants.

Dr Mahathir, who was also the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Education, said the committee would need a year to finish the review.

'Four months will be set aside for the public to submit memoranda, six months will be needed to study them and another two months to compile a report,' he added.

Changes in other parts of the world and the 'very rapid communication of ideas' to this region could endanger Malaysian society, he said.

Many known values, such as the concept of religion, have changed or have been destroyed in the West, he said. Westerners, for instance, no longer cared for religion.

'This sort of thinking is seeping into Malaysian society and is something we are worried about,' he went on.

Dr Mahathir called on teachers' unions, parents' associations, political parties and others interested in education to submit memoranda.

The committee will consider all views and suggestions concerned with the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy, Dr Mahathir said.

He made it clear that the committee would not be 'studying the policy which has already been laid down.'

'By and large we will leave things open and not adopt a rigid position on anything,' he said.

'Our job is to listen to various opinions and experts' views, and only after having studied them will we make our decisions.'

The committee, he said, has 'no real priority', but 'its aim is to fulfil the needs of the nation and we feel that if the country is to prosper society must be united, disciplined and trained.'

Muslims Who Rediscovered Science And Technology

Speaking to a gathering of Muslim youths in Morib, Selangor, on August 10, 1981, Dr Mahathir stressed that 'science and technology are not the privileged possession of anyone and it was the Muslims who rediscovered science and technology and enhanced their application for the betterment of mankind.'

In the course of his speech, which was well received by the audience, Dr Mahathir urged Muslim youths to free the Muslim world from being dependent on the skills and services of others.

The Prime Minister said: 'Allah in His unfathomable wisdom had endowed the Muslim countries with untold wealth.'

This wealth was being used to improve the lives of Muslims by providing them with various amenities.

The task of constructing these amenities required tremendous manpower, he said when opening the 10-day Islamic Youth Camp.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that 50 per cent of the 900 million Muslims which comprise able-bodied youths should be able to provide the necessary manpower.

'But, alas, we find that our youths are unwilling or unproductive. And so rich Muslim countries depend on the skills and services of others.'

'This is most unfortunate,' he said, 'as it renders Muslims, despite their wealth, dependent and vulnerable.'

'It renders Muslim countries weak and subject to influence by mercenaries who do not have their interests at heart. It brings about disrespect for the Muslims and for Islam,' he went on.

While they should be interested in the political aspects of Muslim nations, Muslim youths should not neglect their more mundane duties, he said.

With the physical attributes of youth and their numbers, they

should train and discipline themselves so that they can take the place of the civil mercenaries upon whom Muslim countries depend on at present.

Dr Mahathir said this should be done not because Muslims wish to be insular but because there was a need for Muslims to be self-reliant and less dependent.

'Only by being self-reliant and independent can Muslims hope to defend the practice of Islam and to safeguard their interests and inheritance. There is really no other way. As Muslim youths, you must face this reality. Do not be carried away by visions of fame and power through youth-created upheavals in the Muslim world when what the Muslim world really needs is just skill and dedication to work,' he said.

Dr Mahathir said some Muslims profess to look down upon scientific and technological advancements and regard them as Western and, therefore, un-Islamic.

'This is a wrong perception,' he stressed.

Science and technology are not the privileged possession of anyone and it was the Muslims who rediscovered science and technology and enhanced their application for the betterment of mankind.

'If there is anything wrong with these areas of human knowledge, it is the result of their application by men,' he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was unfortunate that Muslims were backward in many fields just because they chose not to value the many things that Allah had bestowed on them.

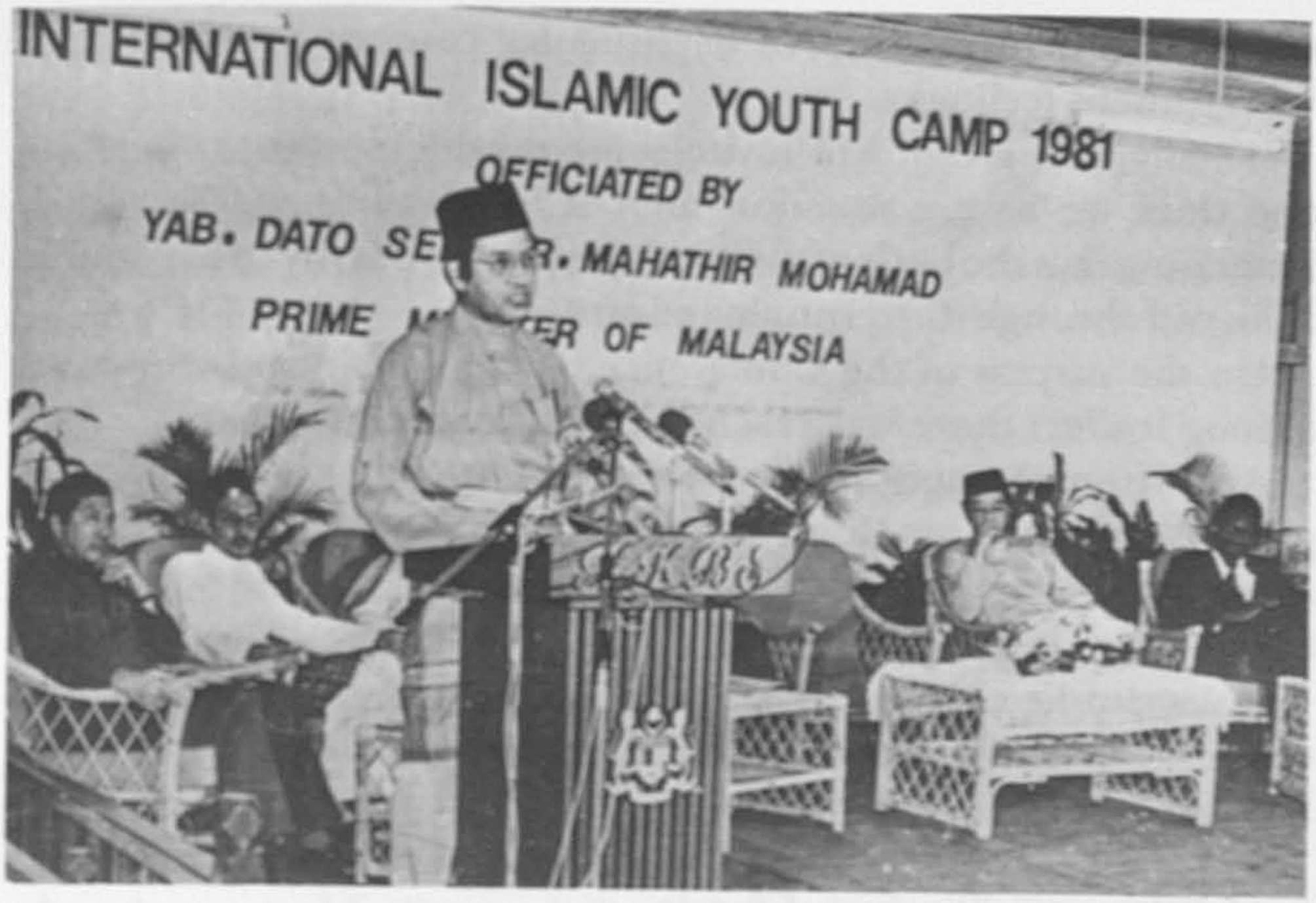
'If we truly value the gifts of Allah, we should be the ones to make use of them for the benefit and progress of our *ummah* and in the defence and spread of our religion.'

The Prime Minister said Muslims must discard the wrong notion that the present world is for non-Muslims and that only the next world is for the Muslims.

'Both this world and the hereafter are also for the Muslims,' he said.

Muslims rightly condemn the materialistic ostentation of non-Muslims because their orientation is not associated with spiritual values.

Material achievement and progress, he said, was nevertheless essential because without it, Muslims would become very dependent on the non-Muslims for so many of their needs.



The Prime Minister speaks at the International Islamic Youth Camp.

Muslim Solidarity The Key To Unity

On his return from Saudi Arabia on January 30, 1981, Dr Mahathir said in Kuala Lumpur that Muslim solidarity could only be cemented through the efforts of Muslim Governments, as demonstrated at the Third Islamic Summit Conference in Saudi Arabia.

Speaking to newsmen on his return after leading the Malaysian delegation to the three-day conference, he said that Muslim heads of Governments had demonstrated their political will to get together and co-operate.

Muslims, said Dr Mahathir, must first accept the principle that the foundation of their solidarity must be built by their Governments.

'That is why Islamic Summit Conference stressed so much the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of a country,' he said, adding that external interference was the main cause of conflict.

Events, he said, had shown how Muslim solidarity could be split

when a particular group in a particular country preached anti-Government feelings.

'Finally, this group will invite some outside powers to interfere and thus, we have a situation such as in Afghanistan,' he added, reiterating that the basis of the much needed solidarity could only be achieved through Government efforts.

On the success of the Conference, Dr Mahathir said consensus among leaders there was reached on all matters.

Apart from the non-interference policy, which he believed would greatly reduce inter-Government tension, the Conference also agreed on the formation of the Islamic Solidarity Fund with US$3 billion ($6.6 billion) as capital.

Malaysia, he added, will contribute to the fund 'within our means'. Details on the utilisation of the fund would be worked out, he said.

In Jeddah, Dr Mahathir had urged the OIC countries to develop guidelines on utilisation of funds.

In his speech on behalf of Heads of States and Governments at the close of the Summit, he said these countries should not dissipate their efforts and human resources by creating new agencies and institutions.

'We should instead focus more on consolidating and strengthening existing institutional framework to meet the tasks ahead,' he said.

Development of guidelines to govern utilisation of funds, he added, would ensure that these would be channelled towards areas that would strengthen the productive base of their economies and lessen the wide inequality prevailing among member States.

He suggested that member countries take note of prevailing diversity in resource endowments and levels of development and work together.

He said it was also necessary to delineate the time span during which objectives were expected to be achieved, and to focus systematically on short-term and long-term programmes.

'To make an initial impact, it is necessary to give priority to projects that have a relatively shorter gestation period that will lead to visible results,' he added.

How To Preserve The Future Of Islam

Opening the 15th Century Hijrah celebrations organised by the Wanita UMNO Movement in Stadium Dato Syed Omar, Alor Star, on January 16, 1981, Dr Mahathir urged Muslims to make the 15th century Hijrah a century of awareness to acquire knowledge to preserve the future of Islam.

He emphasised that every Muslim was responsible for the development and future of the religion not only in this country but also elsewhere.

He said Muslims in Malaysia were fortunate as they enjoyed freedom and well-being.

On the other hand, there were Muslims in other countries who were suppressed and could not practise their religion freely.

Dr Mahathir said that in conjunction with the celebrations, Muslims in Malaysia should resolve to change their position through education to enable them to help their less fortunate fellow Muslims in other countries.

The Minister said that one way of doing this was through knowledge because Muslims were left behind in this aspect, although they were among the wealthiest people in the world.

Without knowledge, Muslims would be unable to defend their religion and their race and they would be dependent on other people.

Dr Mahathir cited an example of the Muslims having to depend on other people, including their enemies. He said some turn to the Communists for their supply of weapons and arms because they themselves were not capable of manufacturing the weapons.

He regretted that the weapons supplied by the enemies of Islam were used to kill fellow Muslims, as was now the case in several countries.

He said the Islamic world was faced with many challenges and many Muslim countries had fallen into the hands of the Communists and the holy city of Jerusalem had not yet been liberated.

All these events, he said, should serve as a lesson to Muslims in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the fate of the Muslims in Afghanistan, Yemen, Kampuchea and Southern Russia should be in the minds of the Muslims in Malaysia so that they would not suffer the same.

Islamic Harmony: How To Avoid Misunderstanding

When he was the Minister of Education on January 12, 1975, Dr Mahathir called on the Advisory Council for Islamic Education to study seriously the syllabi for Islamic subjects in schools to avoid misunderstanding and religious disharmony among Muslims.

Differences between the teachings in schools and those practised by Muslims generally could bring miserable results, he said.

'If this happens Islamic education in schools will not only fail to convince its followers but also will disrupt Muslim brotherhood,' he added.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the opening of the Council's meeting at the Examination Syndicate building in Kuala Lumpur.

He was referring to the 'state of quandary' some people could be in on the choice of emphasis between science and Islamic knowledge.

'If science and technology are emphasised the belief of Muslim pupils in Islam may be jeopardised,' he said.

A science-biased student could end up with the idea that religion was illogical and unimportant.

'In this situation, religious experts should be able to come out with an answer so that the pupils will not be confused.'

Referring to the Council, he said its establishment was necessary to help determine the values of the next generation.

'The religious knowledge that is to be imparted to pupils should not deviate from the principles of Islamic teachings.

'It should be interpreted correctly and taught according to methods acceptable to the education authorities.'

The members were selected on their knowledge in religion and education.

The Signs Of The Road To Destruction . .

'When the Malays become conceited and arrogant because of the power in their hands, when they do not want to pursue knowledge because power can control other people's knowledge, when the Malays do not want to work or carry arms to defend themselves, these are signs that the Malays are halfway down the road to destruction.' Dr Mahathir said this when he addressed the annual assemblies of the Wanita and the UMNO Youth in Kuala Lumpur on June 25, 1981 just before he assumed the role of Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir, who was then Deputy President of the UMNO, said:

'The role of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita is not to create chaos in the community. You have to do good as required by our religion and to safeguard peace in the community and the nation. It is not the primary task of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita to look for issues to be manipulated as is being done by some in other political parties and in groups preaching false teachings.'

On power and tolerance, Dr Mahathir had this to say, 'We know that tolerance, as urged by Islam, is effective at winning the hearts of the people. But when we get just a little power, we come up with a thousand and one reasons and problems why we should not be tolerant and nice. Not only this, we defend the attitude of pride and fierceness . . . we continue our snobbery and threats that whatever power we have, we use it to force others to accept our opinions and views . . . goodness must be fought for, because the progress of the Malay race, Islam and the nation depended on the values that are good . . .'

The text of Dr Mahathir's speech follows:

'The year 1981, which coincides with the start of the 15th century Hijrah, is a historic year for Malaysia. It marks the commencement

of the second and concluding decade in the implementation of the New Economic Policy. The year 1981/1401 sees the launching of the Fourth Malaysia Plan, a mammoth plan to achieve the objectives of the New Economic Policy. This auspicious year also witnesses the launching of a special scheme to give bumiputras their share of the national economy – The National Unit Trust Scheme (ASN).

'Neither a developing nor a developed country would normally embark on so radical a programme to restructure society as has been envisaged for the New Economic Policy. There are those who are of the view that society can change only through a coup and killing, that is, through bloody revolution. But in Malaysia, we see an orderly revolution to transform a backward people into a disciplined, progressive one who uphold good old values while assimilating vital new ones.

'The New Economic Policy, the Fourth Malaysia Plan and the National Unit Trust Berhad are policies and strategies of the National Front Government, particularly the UMNO leadership past and present, to fulfil the needs of the people. A tremendous amount of money and energy is used to implement all these schemes. The Government spares no effort in this direction. Legislation, the administrative machinery and money are mobilised to safeguard the interests and aspirations of the people.

'If Government power could be the answer to all things, today Malaysia would have no more problems. Today, 50% of the poverty that existed in 1970 should have been eradicated and Malaysia's plural society no longer identified according to race and economic activity. We have to accept the reality that Government efforts alone cannot attain the objectives of the New Economic Policy. To attain this goal, all sectors must play their roles effectively. Among those that must play a big role is the political party which forms the backbone of the Government.

'UMNO does not exist merely for general elections. Winning elections is important in achieving the party's objectives. But UMNO, since its inception, has taken on the task of awakening consciousness and disseminating ideas and values for the good of the Malays and Muslims of Malaysia. Were it not for UMNO Malay society in 1946 would not have understood the threat posed by the Malayan Union. Were it not for UMNO Malay society would not have known what should be done to protect the rights of the Malays. Were it not for UMNO the Malays would not have fought for independence. Were it not for UMNO Malay society would not have

understood in depth the roles of religion, politics, economics and education. Perhaps there are those who would say that if there was no UMNO, the Malays would have formed another party for the same purpose. Perhaps this is true.

'But the reality is that UMNO plays these vital roles and to this day there has yet to be another party capable of doing so. This is not arrogance. This is a simple statement of the aspirations and achievements of the majority of the Malays who are members or, at the very least, supporters of UMNO. In view of its task of awakening consciousness and disseminating information for the good of the people, is there a special role for UMNO in 1981/1401? Or will it suffice for the Government to act since UMNO controls the Government and politically the Government is an extension of UMNO?

'Pressurising others to do this and that is easy. Bankrupt politicians, of course, make it their primary role to put "pressure" on the Government. But to do something constructive is very difficult. And it is even more difficult to do good and prevent evil as required by the religion of the Malays – Islam.

'What is required of the Malays, in particular, is no longer the politics of championing demands but the recapturing of honourable attitudes and values which they had relinquished as a result of the administrative policies of colonial rulers. From a self-reliant people fully capable of administering and defending itself as well as having its own trade, the Malays were reduced to dependence. They had to let their States be administered by colonial rulers, themselves be branded reluctant workers who deemed trade and industry lowering and to surrender in *toto* the defence of their own country to foreign soldiers and weaponry.

'Independence enabled us to redeem our political and administrative power. National defence, too, is back in our hands. But in areas which require efficiency and readiness to work hard, we are left behind. We depend on others not only to do jobs which demand brains and efficiency, but also work which is a little heavier, "dirtier" or less comfortable.

'The New Economic Policy does not merely mean the division of property and wealth among bumiputras. It is not merely the granting of licences, tenders or contracts for Government supplies and construction to bumiputras. It is not merely the posts of secretary-general and clerk guaranteed till 55 and a life-long pension afterwards. The New Economic Policy also means work for bumi-

putras – work in all fields, light and heavy, lucrative and otherwise. There must be meaningful Malay and bumiputra participation in all areas. Meaningful participation means bumiputra workers will ultimately not depend on non-Malay workers for efficiency, diligence and productivity. Bumiputras will work together with non-bumiputras, with equal responsibility.

'Historical studies show that the progress and strength of a society have always depended on willingness to work. Work in this context includes the acquiring of knowledge and efficiency. In the era of Islamic expansion, its followers were not only bold and ready to face challenges but were also prepared to work for the good of the religion besides fulfilling ritual requirements.

'When Muslims gave this up and depended on non-Muslims to do various kinds of work to the extent of making them incapable of doing such jobs themselves the decline and fall of the Islamic Empire began. If today 900 million Muslims cannot defeat three million Jews, it is because in most jobs we are in this sense, dependent; dependent on others who see no reason why they should give victory to the Muslims.

'Malaysia is rich. In the olden days, the Rajas and the territorial chiefs were aware of this wealth. They need to work. Their people did not want to work. The easy way to get revenue was to invite foreigners in to produce tin, rubber and other commodities. If this was insufficient, the foreigners could be allowed to trade in opium or collect state revenue. The Malay Government had only to collect regular payments from all these activities. They felt it was most foolish to work if they could get returns without lifting a finger. For them the administrative power was the answer to everything.

'This is no fairy tale but history. Seventy years ago this system was still in force. The Malay administrators smoked opium and received payments from those who monopolised the trade and its taxes. Any Malay who had the remotest connections with the influential aimed to be a salaried government officer, that is, to receive a regular income without having to be efficient or to do work. The British gave political pensions to the royal families so that they need not work.

'We all know the consequences – that the British, who were supposed to be mere advisers, easily took over and ruled the Malay States. The Malays accepted the British as masters as they were unable to defend their rights. The Malays had lost all dignity. We were enslaved and humiliated in our own land by all immigrant communities, colonial or otherwise.

'We might blame the foreigners and the colonial rulers, and indeed, ethically, they were wrong. But no small part of our weakness was our own fault, or rather, that of our ancestors. Had they been prepared to mine tin, tap rubber, manage their own business, big and small, and defend their own country, no foreigners would have come to do these jobs and take over the politics and economy of the Malay States. But our forefathers wanted to be rich the easy way.

'They who do not learn from their mistakes shall be punished by repeating them over and over again. Have we learnt from our mistake? Do we wish to repeat this mistake over and over again? Are we prepared to be colonised and humiliated again? Do we want to remain a dependent people who fall on others for an easy life?

'We have not answered these questions: indeed it is as if we were unaware of them. Since we hold the political power in this country as did our ancestors in the Malay States, we imagine that the easy way to live and die in luxury is to depend on others to do the work while we collect payments.

'We are the masters and we need not make any effort – that's our Utopia. Therefore we do not work hard. If this country is to be developed, we just collect revenue and ask others to do the work and be paid from the revenue. As for us, we enjoy the benefits all the time.

'There are Malays who forbid us to study anything besides Islamic rites and tenets. All other education they reject as "secular". They make this claim through loudspeakers which are the product of that very education they condemn as *haram* (forbidden). They travel around in cars and aeroplanes to spread their deviant propaganda. Their attire is made of cloth manufactured by countries using the very knowledge they deem prohibited by Islam. Yet they are unashamed to claim that the knowledge taught in our schools is secular and forbidden by Islam.

'There are others who refuse to do work which is a little heavy and "dirty" however attractive the income. These jobs can be done by foreigners. We need not soil our hands – just enjoy the fruits of other people's labour. If we do work, let's not work hard. If we can pretend to work, we should do so. Else we would be slaves to our employers, they say. That others like to see us lazy and inefficient so that we are forever dependent on them does not cross the minds of these people. Then there are those who advocate that doing business is materialistic. Therefore, do not get involved in trade and industry.

'The list of exhortations towards unworthy acts is endless. Let there be any way that can reduce the dependence of Malays on others, and there will be Malays who oppose it. The saddest part of it all is that they often pretend to be Muslims and Malays who are fighting for the good of their religion and their people.

'We know that all such propaganda is not good. Indeed it is dangerous. Such a philosophy will make us once again weak, like our ancestors who had to bow to the British. This easy way we have been urged to take will make us slaves of others in the end. We will be so dependent that we cannot oppose whatever is done to us. Ultimately our belief in ourselves and what we value, including religion, will deteriorate. The Malays will revert to their status in the colonial era where ostensibly they ruled but in fact they could not do a thing, for even if they were allowed to, they lacked the ability and were too dependent.

'As long as UMNO and its friends are in power, we can succeed to a certain extent in improving the position of the Malays. It is true that the Malays are less dependent now. But there are still many Malays who want the easy path taken by their forefathers. The question is: Are we prepared to see the Malays once again weak, like their ancestors, once again the slaves of others, and ultimately divorced from Islam, while UMNO is in power? Or should we warn these Malays who are in the clouds of the danger they are facing and show them how to avoid it, how to maintain their dignity?

'Certainly we do not wish to see the Malays weak, separated from Islam and without dignity. But a wish remains a wish if action is not taken to make it come true. Here lies the role of the Youth and the Wanita – the nation's pillars who will inherit all that are being pursued now. The Youth and the Wanita must be effective guides and spurs to awareness.

'The task of the Youth and the Wanita is not only to make demands and be a "ginger group" to the party and the Government but also to move among the Malays, particularly the young to make them aware of the danger of the attitude some of them hold. They must also be told that it is vital for them to be equipped with knowledge of the world and of the hereafter, and to use it to work hard not just for themselves but also their people, religion and country. It is the greedy who work merely for themselves.

'What is required of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita while other youth and women of the Malay community are busy finding fault, pretending to champion their self-created religion, looking for

stones and mortar to beat and make headlines and get accolades from Americans and Europeans for so-called opposition against oppression, also from the communists for creating a favourable climate for the growth of communism?

'UMNO Youth and Wanita are required to teach and guide the people towards good. Goodness is unattractive, for it requires effort and sacrifice – it is not easy, and it will not catch the attention of reporters. No international magazine will splash the pictures of a champion of goodness on its front page.

'Youth and Wanita who call on students to study hard will not be popular among them. For students, it is easier to hold demos, organise seminars to hit out, hurl abuse, twist the teachings of religion and pretend to be heroes than to sit down and read books to acquire knowledge.

'This is particularly true of those who are weak and are afraid to be known to be so. Advice to study for their people and their religion is not attractive. Pursuing knowledge is difficult, and examinations are even more difficult. But it is this unpopular advice that has to be worked at by the UMNO Youth and the Wanita. Malay youths will shy away from them fearing that they may be persuaded to do good. But the UMNO Youth and the Wanita must not lose heart. They must have the courage to come close to the youth of the Muslim Malay community and help goodness to spread.

'In employment, the call of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita is "prosaic". You have to urge the Malay youth to do honest hard work. If a Malay worker is paid so much for a certain job, he must put in at least the amount of effort he pledged when he accepted the job, and if possible, more. This is not just to get a salary but to safeguard the good name of his people and his religion so that jobless Malays will no longer find it difficult to get employment. The failure of Malay traders is to no small extent caused by Malay workers who do not do honest hard work.

'It is easy to be the champion of workers out to constantly create problems. Many groups outside UMNO are waiting to make issues out of the dissatisfaction of workers. If the UMNO Youth and the Wanita merely urged workers to work hard they will certainly not be popular.

'But if you consider honesty and hard work good and in line with the teachings of our religion, you must not be afraid to be unpopular. What is important is our triumph when we know and the world recognises that every job entrusted to the Malays will be

successfully carried out. A people known for keeping its word is a successful and respected people.

'Allah does not like trouble-makers. A Muslim society should be a peaceful society. But the reality is that Islamic societies and nations have yet to be free of trouble. This happens because we do not follow the teaching of Islam which forbids creating trouble. Worse, those who supposedly want to live the Islamic way of life are the very ones who create trouble and behave contrary to what is required by God.

'The role of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita is not to create chaos in the community. You have to do good as required by our religion and to safeguard peace in the community and the nation. It is not the primary task of the UMNO Youth and the Wanita to look for issues to be manipulated as is being done by some in other political parties and in groups preaching false teachings.

'This does not mean that the Youth and the Wanita should not fight for justice for the lower classes and oppressed groups. Defending the oppressed remains a task of those who fight for good. But before we do a song-and-dance on hearing a certain matter, we must exercise caution and make careful investigations. In your eagerness to be champions you must not let yourselves be manipulated and made to defend what should not be defended.

'If we succumb to this, the Malays will not be prepared to face even a little challenge and will become arrogant, as none dares touch them, for fear of their formidable champions, the UMNO Youth and the Wanita. Malays who are not prepared at all to face challenges will not only be weak but also unwilling to take directives and accept discipline.

'This we can see in Britain where trade unions have become so powerful that workers no longer care for anyone, not their supervisors, nor their employers, nor even their nation. As a result, British industry and economy have deteriorated to the state it is in today.

'From a nation known for the quality and extensive circulation of its goods Britain has become a nation whose manufactures and supplies cannot be depended upon.

'If Malay workers and students are over-protected, they will bring adverse consequence to their people, the nation, religion and to themselves. Assistance which they regard as salvation is actually a threat which will destroy them. This reality must be borne in mind by the Youth and the Wanita.

'We must guard against over-indulging the Malays because there is nothing more destructive than pampering. Protection by the

Youth and the Wanita must be tempered with moderation. Malay workers and students must know challenges and be prepared to face and overcome them without continuous assistance.

'None will say that asking the Malays to face and overcome challenges on their own is not good. We know that Malays who work and do business in other countries often succeed without assistance. But there is a wide gap between acknowledging the good of a certain thing and its practice. Here lies the challenge to the Youth and the Wanita in their fight for good.

'It is easy to talk of and to recognise good but its practice is another matter altogether. We know, for instance, that tolerance and living in harmony as exhorted by Islam is effective in winning people. But the moment we have a little power, we find a thousand and one problems and reasons as to why we should not be tolerant and friendly. We go so far as to defend arrogance and brutality. We see how successful missionaries of other creeds are in propagating their faith through charity work. We, on the other hand, persist in our arrogant ways and demands that whatever power we have should be used to force others to accept our views. Although the Quranic text states that there is no compulsion in Islam, there are those who say that part of the text has been rendered invalid. Do they think that Allah has forgotten?

'Because of human lack of honesty in acknowledging and doing good, the UMNO Youth and the Wanita will find the task of inculcating good values like diligence, working hard and responsibility, more arduous than its other tasks, particularly that of finding resolutions to fight for.

'It is so difficult to fight for good. But we must fight for good, because the progress of the Malays, Islam and the Malaysian nation depends on the practice of these good values.

'When the Malays become conceited and arrogant because of the power in their hands, when they do not want to pursue knowledge because power can contol other people's knowledge, when the Malays do not want to work or carry arms to defend themselves, these are signs that the Malays are half-way down the road to destruction.

'Initial symptoms of these destructive values among the Malays are discernible.

'Should the Youth and the Wanita continue to look for popularity or should they boldly face challenges and criticisms in promoting good for their people, religion and motherland? This question must

be answered in 1981, the first year of the concluding decade in the implementation of the New Economic Policy and the Fourth Malaysia Plan and the beginning of the 15th century Hijrah.

Don't Ignore Moral Values, Malaysians Urged

In his first National Day message on August 31, 1981, Dr Mahathir urged Malaysians not to ignore moral values.

He called on Malaysians to redouble their efforts at increasing productivity in all sectors of the economy.

Speaking over Radio and Television Malaysia, he appealed to the people to utilise all the available resources so that the country could develop further.

Dr Mahathir said although the Government had taken efforts to enable the people to improve their livelihood and would continue to do so, the benefits from such development efforts would not be enjoyed by those who were not willing to utilise the available resources.

He emphasized that the people should realise that all resources – energy, time, ideas and capital – should be fully utilised to push the nation to an even higher level of development.

No one could help those who did not want to work with sincerity in utilising their energy, time, ideas and capital to better themselves, he added.

The Prime Minister said the decade of the 1980s should be turned into a decade where the people should change their attitude from that of being self-centred to that of giving greater interest to religion, race and the nation.

He pointed out that economic prosperity would not bring any meaning if the people lacked high moral values and were not guided by pure principles.

'A proper balance between physical and spiritual values will not only benefit the individual but also the family and community,' he went on.

Dr Mahathir said materialistic and spiritual values could not be separated in national development. With a balance of the two, the people would become a strong community.

The significance of the National Day is not that it is a public holiday or that it is a day of celebrations.

'The significance of the National Day is that it is a day when we remember the historic struggles of the leaders in achieving independence and sovereignty for the country. It should remind us of the sacrifices and contributions of the national heroes, statesmen and leaders in maintaining and preserving sovereignty and prosperity of the people and the country,' continued Dr Mahathir.

He said that while the people realised the struggles of the past, they must also have an open mind regarding the future of the country.

Dr Mahathir said that in celebrating National Day, the people, being citizens who have an awareness and are responsible, should strengthen their determination not only to live up to the meaning of independence but also to preserve it for the future generations.

'For this purpose, we must have a spirit of love for the nation and the willingness and capability to defend it even with our lives,' he added.

He went on that the people must strive for peace, prosperity and harmony.

Each and every Malaysian has an important role to play in national development, the Prime Minister stressed.

'Everyone has a special role and important responsibility in nation-building and they must carry them out with dedication, sincerity and discipline.'

A Fair And Tolerant Attitude Towards All

In his first Hari Raya message given as the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir assured all Malaysians of a fair and tolerant attitude towards all communities.

Dr Mahathir called on Malays not to follow the bad habits and lack of manners displayed by certain people overseas who are also Muslims.

The Malays should not be confused into thinking that such bad characteristics found among some Muslim communities were based on the teachings of Islam.

He told non-Muslims that they need not fear for their safety

although experiences in other Muslim countries may show non-Muslims being suppressed. They should also not fear any vengeance by Muslims in Malaysia just because Muslims in other countries were being exploited by non-Muslims, he added.

Dr Mahathir said that Islam did not teach its followers to have bad attitudes and characteristics but required them to be courteous, fair and tolerant – qualities that were being practised by Muslims in the country.

He said the attitude of wanting revenge and determining justice by oneself was not the practice of Muslims, particularly in Malaysia.

In Malaysia where Islam is the official religion and Muslims form the majority of the people, the Government's policy was to give priority to the practice of tolerance and fairness to all.

He said Muslims in Malaysia were inclined to practise the true qualities of Islam, stressing not only a fair Government but also a life filled with good deeds, discipline and respect for one another.

The Prime Minister said that there were places where the people were Muslims, which were run by Muslims but the Muslims showed little tolerance.

They not only could not get along with non-Muslims but also killed one another, he added.

He stressed that such a situation was not the result of the teaching of Islam but was caused by deviation from the true teachings.

He said the matter, if studied carefully, was a practice of the people who were ignorant of God's words before Prophet Mohammad enlightened mankind with the Quran.

Such practice did not reflect the requirements and teachings of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said that Islam, in fact, called on the people to value and respect others regardless of their race or religion.

He said that during Hari Raya the Muslims once again had the opportunity to prove how Islam promotes peace, tolerance and goodness.

Muslims should practise and maintain good qualities because good fellowship between Muslims and non-Muslims was not against the teachings of Islam but was encouraged by the religion.

The general community would surely hold in high esteem Islam and respect its followers if they saw the good qualities, tolerance and fairness in the administration and in other aspects of life.

Dr Mahathir called on Muslims in the country to pay attention to the true practices of Islam.

He said that the practice of Malaysians calling on one another during Hari Raya would strengthen the goodwill among them and promote the spirit of brotherliness.

National Unity – A Myth Or Reality?

Speaking at a meeting of the Graduates Society of University of Malaya in October 1971, Dr Mahathir urged the Government to lay greater stress on explaining its reasons for adopting Malay as the national language in the interests of National Unity.

His theme was: National Unity – A Myth Or Reality?

He said too much feeling had been aroused against Malay as the national language. Some of the non-Malays felt this was being done because the Malay language belonged to the Malays.

It should instead be pointed out that it was the most practical language in the context of the nation's needs.

From all practical aspects, Malay was the language most suited for adoption by all Malaysians.

The English language had never been a national language here. It had been spoken by only a few Malays who were lucky enough to get into the civil service, a few Chinese who went to English medium schools, and the few Indians who became professionals.

'English never penetrated the kampungs or a vast proportion of the Chinese and Indian communities.'

Chinese or the Indian languages could not be used as the national language because both were diverse – there were several Chinese and Indian dialects and they were spoken by relatively very few.

Malay, on the other hand, was spoken even by a Tamil when talking to a Punjabi. It had been spoken by a strong community of Malacca Chinese before the British arrived on the scene and English took over as a prestige language.

Malay was most widely used in day-to-day life and in the commercial sector. It had even been adopted by the Indonesians as their national language.

Dr Mahathir said that a common language was an essential factor in the creation of national unity.

Malaysia was not a nation born out of a sense of oneness, of things

in common, between people of various races. Malaysia was, rather, a nation created to facilitate administration, to create boundaries.

Now the problem was to create national unity, which was the very basis of a nation's survival.

At present, there was no feeling of oneness among the people, and for the moment, national unity was but a myth.

National unity could be created by giving the people a common language and common culture.

Malay as the national language would have a very deep impact on Malaysia's culture, making it Malay-based but with Indian and Chinese cultural influences being very dominant.

For the successful creation of national unity, it was necessary that the non-Malays accept this fact.

This was no attempt to make one race dominant, but a very real attempt to unify the various peoples and give them a national identity and solidarity.

The principles of *Rukunegara* were not as good a basis to work on in building up national unity, said Dr Mahathir.

The principles were lofty and of tremendous worth in themselves, but certain sections of the community looked on the *Rukunegara* as an essentially Malay idea, and this had built up a barrier against its successful impact.

It could be very effective for the next generation if the teachers of the next generation dedicated themselves in all genuineness to imparting its principles to their pupils.

Constitution Changes Necessary If . . .

Saying that changes in the Constitution were necessary from time to time to meet the needs and situation of the country, Dr Mahathir told Parliament on April 22, 1981 that he could not give an assurance that the Constitution would not be amended in future.

'We are fortunate in that we have so far only made amendments and not invalidated the Constitution altogether as some countries have done,' he said.

'We hope that the future Malaysian generation will also confine themselves to making amendments only.'

He said the Government did not like to make amendments to the Constitution, which it respected, and the present amendments were decided upon after a long wait and study of developments.

The amendments were proposed not only after recommendations made by the judiciary and the Attorney-General but also for political reasons.

He added that in this respect, the Cabinet had proposed the amendments in line with the political interest.

Dr Mahathir said when replying to points raised during the debate on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, that an emergency declaration made by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong could not be questioned in a court of law or in Parliament because it has been made based on certain secret information.

'The secret information obtained by the Government cannot be revealed even in Parliament because it may give rise to certain uneasy feelings not only among citizens but also in other countries,' he said.

'The whole aim of protecting the country is lost if the information is not kept secret.'

He said the provision for emergency declarations by the King was a preventive measure and the people must give their confidence and faith to the Government they have selected to maintain peace and stability.

If the people thought the Government had abused or would misuse its powers, they could always remove it in the next general elections.

The Government, he said, has shown a clean record of non-abuse of power. After the May 13 incident in 1969, it could have continued to rule under the emergency powers, but it did not do so.

It brought back parliamentary democracy only two years after the incident and just a few years later in 1974, it bared itself to the people's will by holding general elections.

'The people could have thrown the Government out then if they thought it had abused its powers, but it didn't,' he said, adding that other nations could not match Malaysia's record of real parliamentary democracy.

He said it was not true the Dewan Negara was merely a 'rubber stamp' as alleged by some senators.

The comments and viewpoints raised by senators were always considered by the Government, even though many people believed the Dewan Negara always agreed with anything the Government proposed.

Dr Mahathir also told the House that the country's Constitution and other laws would be published in Bahasa Malaysia as soon as certain intricate legal terms in the language could be determined.

It was vital, he said, that legal terms be exact to avoid any complications in their interpretations.

The Government had no intention of side-stepping the use of Bahasa Malaysia, the official language of the country, he added.

Barisan Nasional Has Found The Correct Formula

The Government knows that it cannot be controlled by one community and will not submit to the demands of one community alone, Dr Mahathir said on August 30, 1981.

Speaking at the opening of the Federal Territory MCA Convention on the theme 'Towards a Better Future' he said: 'In another convention organised by another community, several changes were called for. But the Government turned down the requests.'

Referring to the Barisan Nasional concept of Government, he added: 'We think we have found the correct formula that works well for this country.'

'The system that we practise is the one which works well. Some of our friends have tried other types of systems but they have failed.'

Mahathir warned that Malaysians should be wary of calls for changes in the political system.

'Changes may cause destruction to the form and policies that we have been practising. Before we call for changes, let us consider whether these changes are necessary.'

'Before changing this system we should ask if it would be for the better or for the worse,' he said.

'Let us not call for changes merely for the sake of changing,' he added.

Mahathir said, 'If changes were necessary then they must be co-ordinated. This is because the various different races may want changes of their own,' he said.

To the Chinese community, Mahathir said it should bear in mind that it is not an ordinary community of Chinese but a community of Malaysian Chinese.

'The Malaysian side of you must recognise that you are living alongside other communities. Other communities are as sensitive as you are.'

In this respect, he said: 'Whatever you say would be heard by all – not only by the Malays, Chinese and Indians but also the Ibans and Kadazans and even the outside world. Therefore every word you say must be weighed carefully.

'What you say can have a serious impact on the nation,' he went on.

He said Malaysia had been able to sustain its peace, progress and stability for 24 years since independence because the system in force worked well.

In a short span of 24 years, he observed, Malaysia had achieved tremendous progress.

'We had with us a very serious racial problem, disparities and a lack of cohesion among the races. There was also a serious communist threat to overthrow the Government through violence.

'But despite all these, we have managed to run the country well. Our record is unprecedented among countries which achieved independence at the same time,' he said.

Other countries which achieved independence at the same time, he said, had deteriorated in terms of progress. Their growth had been stifled and their conditions are worse than when they were colonised.

Mahathir said if we made a comparison between what has been achieved so far and what we want for ourselves we would not be so satisfied.

'However we cannot achieve 100 per cent of what we want. This is because there are several factors which need to be considered.'

As an example, Mahathir quoted the Constitution under which certain matters cannot be questioned on sensitive grounds.

'We have succeeded because we conformed to the need to submit to certain restrictions.

'We may not like the present political system of parties based on race. But the system is the one that works well,' Mahathir emphasized.

The Barisan Nasional, he said, is unique as a coalition. 'It is a coalition that comes before the elections and is not based on the inability to govern due to a lack of majority.'

'Because the coalition is a pre-planned and a premeditated concept, it has been able to be sustained for 24 years. As such,' he added, 'we should be careful about wanting to change.'

The Important Criterion Of Citizenship

Speaking at the opening of the Second World Telegu Conference in Petaling Jaya, on April 14, 1981, Dr Mahathir who was then the Deputy Prime Minister, reminded Malaysian citizens of Telegu origin: 'Loyalty to a nation is a very important criterion of Malaysian citizenship. It implies not just pride in calling yourselves a Malaysian but it implies a willingness to go through thick and thin with other citizens of the country. It implies that we have to take the good with the bad.'

Dr Mahathir's speech is reproduced here:

'The theme is aptly chosen. The linkages that you refer to are not confined to Telegus only, not in any or a few communities, but to everyone.

'For indeed if we study it deeply enough we will find that the whole human race is linked. The great religions of the world emphasized this linkage and maintains that man belong to one family, the family of Adam or *Bani Adam*.

'Studies have shown that man originated from one part of the world, that they spread to the rest of the world and that the world subsequently broke up into the separate continents, thus isolating the different branches of the Family of Man. But man learnt how to cross the seas and the mountains in order to spread further and then to re-establish the linkages with the families they left behind.

'The process has gone on for ages, is still going on and will continue to go on. Today while man may be broken up into nationals of many nations and into many races, they have not forgotten their single past. And so we see a resurgence of the desire to trace the roots of oneself.

'It is the most natural thing to do because everyone wants to know where he comes from and where he is going to in order to recognise himself and where he is at the moment.

'Malaysia is one of those places that has been the crossroads in the commerce and travels of man. It is in between the two great civilizations, that of Central and West Asia and that of East Asia. When the Europeans finally learnt to sail longer distances, Malaysia became the crossroads of the East and the West which really means the crossroads of the world.

'It is natural therefore that Malaysia played host through the centuries to all kinds of peoples. And among them were the Indians. Malaysian history is dotted with Indian personalities. But like most

people who stayed long enough they absorbed local values and became in fact Malaysians.

'We are curious of course about this process and the history behind it. It will make fascinating study. But it should remain only a study. We have changed now.

'Ethnicity and ethnic-based culture is now secondary to a more important loyalty. We belong now to a nation – a separate nation with separate ideologies and interests.

'Nations are not biological creations. In the modern world they are not even geographical creations. Nations are political entities that stay together . . . .They may appear artificial at times, but they are nevertheless very real.

'Malaysia has chosen to be one of these political nations. Ethnicity or geographical contiguity is not as important to Malaysia as its political unity and integrity. We have decided that the people who have made Malaysia their home and who have given their loyalty to Malaysia should be nationals of Malaysia. They and they only should be accorded the privileges of citizenship.

'Loyalty to a nation is a very important criterion of Malaysian citizenship. It implies not just pride in calling yourself a Malaysian but it implies more – a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the country. It implies a willingness to go through thick and thin with other citizens of the country. It implies that we have to take the good with the bad.

'This principle that as citizens one is expected to take the good with the bad, the privileges with the responsibilities, the benefits with the sacrifices is a very important principle for a political nation.

'In any country no citizen can have everything his way. Even if the citizens are of one ethnic origin and culture, there will always be people who are less fortunate than others, whose ideas and beliefs are less accepted and practised than others. They are usually the minority for nothing can go on in a society unless the majority wills it or at least tolerates it.

'The dissenting minority, if they are true citizens, must accept what the majority wills or tolerates. Of course they may express their opposition and they may try by legal means to change things in their favour. But their test of loyalty as citizens is their willingness to accept and live with what they cannot change.

'Unfortunately, there are minorities who seek to revolt or to migrate the moment conditions within their own country are not as they wish them to be. They vociferously declare their loyalty but to

them loyalty means simply having things their way. Such people are not content to go and live in other countries, but they denigrate their own countries while away. They join foreigners in condemning their own country. And all the time they refuse to give up their citizenship.

'These are not citizens. These are opportunists whose idea of loyalty is limited to personal gains . . . . . And so they roam the earth seeking to literally pillage it for their selfish ends only.

'Malaysia has had a share of such kind of people. But we are fortunate that most Malaysians, even those of foreign origin, are not like that. They have largely accepted the need to live within the constraints that the country, like other countries, have to impose. For so long as they understand this need, this acceptance of privileges with responsibilities, they are free to think of their diverse origins, of their roots.

'This seminar which you are holding will no doubt trace the linkages of Malaysians of Telegu origin. It may arouse some nostalgia. Some Malaysians may find their roots in the process. But it is important to remember that this is largely an academic exercise. It has no political connotation.

'It will not alter one iota the fact that no one, in this country particularly, can have everything his own way. It will not alter the limits of ethnic and cultural loyalty that each group will have to accept.

'You are politically, culturally and economically Malaysians, whether you be of Telegu, Tamil, Achinese, Bugis, Hokkien or Cantonese origins. Within these limits you are free to research and look back and even indulge in nostalgia.

'I am sure the organisers and participants of this seminar are fully aware of the nature of the academic exercise they are carrying out. I would like to congratulate them and to wish you all the best and a successful meeting.

'For those of you who have come from overseas, I hope you can take time off to see the sights that we Malaysians are already familiar with. It will help us all to understand each other and the reasons why some stay home while others, originally infected with wander lust, have come to this country and have decided to stay.

MCA's Gift To UMNO

'Less communal politics and more work.'

This was the advice given by Dr Mahathir at a dinner given in his honour by the Malaysian Chinese Association on August 26, 1981.

A statement like this was long overdue and was well received.

Dr Mahathir took full advantage of the opportunity to emphasize the need for greater understanding and closer co-operation between the various races in Malaysia.

In the course of his speech the Prime Minister urged Malaysians to reduce communal politics and to concentrate on nation-building.

'I also hope to have an efficient and honest Government so that the development of the country can take place smoothly. I expect everyone to put their shoulders to the wheel and try their utmost to speed up the development of the country.'

Dr Mahathir said that the Government would continue with the policies set down by 'our founding fathers. There will be no radical changes. The political atmosphere here is calm and stable and it should remain so.'

He said that the co-operation between the MCA and UMNO which had existed since 1951, should continue to enable the country to progress and prosper further.

'I hope that the friendship between the MCA and UMNO will be permanent so as to bring about a greater Malaysia.'

Dr Mahathir termed the friendship existing between the MCA and UMNO as 'extraordinary.'

'The parties are no doubt communal in the sense that the party appeals to a certain community. But we are not envious of the success of the other party. We believe that we belong to only one party–the Barisan Nasional. And the success of the Barisan Nasional shows that the people believe in this coalition party.'

He recalled reading while he was still in the university in Singapore a report which described the coalition between the MCA and UMNO as a 'marriage of convenience.'

'But now it looks like it is going to be a permanent marriage. In fact the "marriage" has even given birth to several off-springs.

'There are now 11 political parties under the Barisan Nasional banner. It is certainly no more a marriage of convenience,' he pointed out.

He said that the coalition Government in Malaysia was different from other coalition Governments in other countries.

'The coalition Government in other countries was brought about after an election when several parties decided to band together to form the Government. But in Malaysia, the coalition party was formed before an election and continued to stay on after the general elections. So, ours, is certainly not a marriage of convenience,' he added.

He said differences, if any, could always be settled. Dr Mahathir said his new administration was working hard for a smooth and efficient Government but it needed the help of all Malaysians.

'All Malaysians,' he said, 'should fulfil their roles and responsibilities well so that their success would contribute to the overall success of the nation.'

Why Government Is Given Wide Powers

Dr Mahathir told Parliament on April 9, 1981, that it was vital for the Government to be given wide powers so that it could take measures necessary for the continued safety and harmony of the country.

He said a declaration of emergency was one action which had to be taken if there was evidence to show that if no effective step was taken, disorder would occur, resulting in loss of innocent lives and destruction of property.

Dr Mahathir told the Dewan Rakyat when tabling the Constitution (Amendments) Bill that the proposed amendment to Article 150 would empower the Yang Di Pertuan Agong to make declarations of emergency even before the actual occurrence of an event if he was satisfied there was imminent danger of it taking place.

The Yang Di Pertuan Agong could also issue different declarations of emergency under differing circumstances or on different grounds and also promulgate ordinances when both houses of Parliament were not sitting.

These ordinances would have the same force and would continue to be in effect until they were revoked, anulled or lapsed.

Both proclamations of emergency and the ordinances would also ıot be challengable in any court.

He said the amendments to the Constitution were not made

'hurriedly or casually.'

'They have been studied for a long time, both at official and executive level,' he said.

'I would like to stress that these amendments have been made in line with the evolution of time, for the interests and security of the nation, state and people.'

Government Welcomes Criticism But . . .

Dr Mahathir has shown by his speeches, and sometimes by his criticism, that he has a mind of his own. You may not like his views on some issues. All the same, he gives expression to them. He adopts the attitude of 'take it or leave it!'

Take, for example, his reaction to the criticism from several organisations and individuals on the controversial amendments to the Societies Act. He said: 'Those who want to operate politically should take on the responsibilities and obligations of a political party.'

Dr Mahathir calmed the critics when he said: 'There should be no panic. Each society's position will be adjudged separately, with no rush. Existing societies should not pre-empt the issue by converting themselves into political societies.'

As to the grounds for considering whether an organisation is political or not, Mahathir has explained: 'Criticism of the Government is not a condition for conversion into a political society. It is when, taken as a whole . . . over a period of time . . . a society campaigns and is involved intensively in political activities that a society will have to regard itself as political.'

On the status of organisations like the Consumers Association of Penang he had this to say: 'The Consumers Association of Penang,' he emphasized, 'is not a political society. If they were to urge a change in foreign policy or that the laws be amended which have nothing to do with consumer affairs . . . if they agitate for demonstrations against the Government then of course we will have to consider them as a political society.

'But if the CAP merely asks why the price of sugar is high, that does not make them "political".'

As to whether the Government would consider criticism of its action 'political' Mahathir said: 'I still wouldn't consider that as political because the Government is fully capable of answering back.'

When asked if it was not a democratic right for a citizen to criticise the Government, Mahathir said that it could be done only at the individual level.

'If you organise a body for the purpose of discrediting others in a particular field, say, the political field, then it's a different matter.

'It is not just public opinion. It is an organised attack to influence the whole nation. That is what political parties should be doing, influencing the whole nation.'

Mahathir does not like pressure groups and their activities. Let me quote: 'The system of pressure groups, the system of lobbies, is one of the worst aspects of a democracy. It ensures that a minority will have a greater say in the affairs of the country than their numbers justify.

'The lobby system in the US has got so uncontrollable that the policy decisions were being made by a few people who had access to the corridors of power. We don't want that situation here.'

It was heartening to hear that the Mahathir Administration welcomes criticism – constructive criticism. In this respect, Dr Mahathir said: 'We listen to the Press. We listen to a number of people who personally convey their views. Individuals in this country can express their opinion.

'You know, when you have an opinion leader who gathers around him a number of people then his voice becomes much stronger than his membership justifies. He can influence the Government through other means.'

Mahathir is totally against Malaysian organisations seeking the support of forces outside in order to have their own way.

The Status Quo Must Be Maintained

'The status quo laid down by our predecessors must be maintained and any attempt by the Malaysian Chinese Association to disturb the status quo will destabilize the Barisan Nasional. Responsible

political parties should know what can be fought for and what struggles are non-starters from the beginning itself.'

Dr Mahathir said this at the MCA General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur on September 19, 1981.

Apparently the Prime Minister was referring to the MCA Youth resolution passed the previous day calling on the Government to appoint a Second Deputy Prime Minister from the MCA.

Dr Mahathir went on: 'All parties in the Barisan Nasional should be careful before making any demands.

'If we are not careful, we will be faced with a situation in which, as the Malay saying goes, "what we are after eludes us and what we already have we lose".'

Dr Mahathir stressed that as Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional Chairman, he would be moderate but firm.

'I am aware of the demands made by the various races and political parties in Malaysia, some of which are extreme.

'As Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional Chairman, I have to reject the demands made by any quarter which are not acceptable to other quarters.

'I am aware of how much I can give and how much I can take. If I am not firm, the consequences could be serious not only for me but also for the country and those who make such demands.'

The Prime Minister also said that the nation's stability depends on the ability of the Government to fulfil its promises.

'We have to deliver the goods if we wish to continue as the Government of this country,' he said.

'We have agreed on various programmes to deliver the goods. We have also agreed and accepted various policies for our country.'

The Prime Minister said that attempts to disturb or delay the achievement of the objectives of any policy would only maintain the situation that caused the policy to be formulated.

He said that the New Economic Policy had been accepted by all. The New Economic Policy was not formulated for one race only. It takes into consideration the interests of every race.

'When the New Economic Policy is achieved, we need not spend so much energy, time and money to ensure the success of the programmes under the policy.

'But because of interference or unfounded feelings of anxiety, the efforts to achieve the New Economic Policy aims are met with counter efforts to reduce the effects of the earlier efforts then even more energy, time and money will have to be spent to ensure the

success of the NEP,' he said.

'Once we achieve the objectives of the New Economic Policy, we no longer need to compete against each other but instead we can link arms and work together to build a greater Malaysia.'

Dr Mahathir said that while Malaysia had great potential and all the ingredients to develop to the level of the advanced countries, what was required from every party and race was level-headedness and the will to work.

'Cheap popularity is for the opposition parties. For you and for me, there is no easy way, no cheap popularity,' he said.

'For you and I there is only the burden of responsibility and the need to work for the nation. That is why you are here today and that is also why I am here.'

The Prime Minister said that the principles and attitudes laid down in the Barisan Nasional and which have benefited all should not be threatened by demands or actions which could spoil the situation.

Briefly tracing the history of UMNO – MCA co-operation, and later the Alliance coalition of UMNO, MCA and MIC, he said that today, the Barisan had component parties of various races and political opinions which mirror the true 'unity in diversity' that has led to the nation's success.

He said that he has stressed right from the beginning that the change in Government and the reshuffling of the Cabinet would not mean any big changes in policies but only changes in style.

'I stress this because since we achieved independence, we had the opportunity to try policies that were suitable and accepted by the people.

'But there are still some sections of the people who don't accept these policies at all or part of these policies.

'In the situation that exists in Malaysia, we definitely cannot please the hearts of every race or group, what more every individual.'

Dr Mahathir said a situation where certain quarters were not entirely satisfied but not to the extent of creating chaos should be accepted as 'the best possible situation' in the context of the present situation in the country.

'Although foreign observers often forecast that Malaysia will be destroyed, we have proved that their forecasts are not accurate.

'Instead, Malaysia has continued to progress rapidly. Our country is progressing although the democratic system with elections every five years is considered by several countries as an obstacle to

stability.'

He said that with this in mind, he felt it would be better not to make any big changes in basic policies.

'We must be doing something right. How else can there be this stability and growth? So why change a tried and tested policy?' he asked.

Basic National Policies Not For Questioning

The basic principles underlying Government policies should not be questioned and what had already been agreed should be respected, said Dr Mahathir when he opened the 29th Malaysian Indian Congress General Assembly in Penang on October 3, 1981.

However, the Prime Minister assured the gathering of more than 2,400 that the Government is prepared to listen to and consider constructive criticisms.

Saying that the Government would not simply change basic policies that had been accepted and agreed upon, Dr Mahathir went on: 'Government policies, such as the New Economic Policy, National Education Policy and the National Cultural Policy, were aimed at bringing about greater unity among the people.

'All these policies which are being implemented have already been agreed by us,' he said.

'What is important now is not the formation of new policies, but the carrying out of the present ones according to the objectives laid down.'

Dr Mahathir acknowledged there were sometimes weaknesses in the implementation of policies.

He said this should be corrected, and prompt action taken the moment the need arose.

The Prime Minister however said that proposals and suggestions should only be made with regard to implementation.

The Government could improve on the interpretation and implementation of the policies.

'But the Government will not simply change basic policies which have already been accepted. Everybody, especially component party members, must accept this.'

Dr Mahathir also reminded Malaysian Indians to correct certain attitudes and weaknesses so that their identity in Malaysia would not be questioned.

'They should remember always that they are not just Indians but are Malaysian Indians, descendants of people from the Indian subcontinent who have settled here and have acknowledged Malaysia as their home and focus of loyalty,' he said.

He said this reminder was the same as that he had given to other communities, including the Malays.

He called on Malaysian Indians and Malaysian Tamils from Sri Lanka to sort out their differences among themselves.

'In the implementation of policies, the Government does not presently take allocations for the Sri Lanka descendants to give to the Indians.'

The Prime Minister reiterated that there would not be any major policy changes under his administration.

'If there is to be any change, it will be only with regard to the style and method of implementation,' he said.

He would like to emphasize this because there were still unfounded speculations that major changes would be taking place.

'This is not true,' he said. 'I want to stress that I will continue to carry out the policies formulated by our past leaders.'

Dr Mahathir urged the Barisan Nasional leaders and members alike to understand the concept behind the formation of the Barisan.

He said the present coalition was the best possible arrangement in the current political situation.

If the fundamental concept of the Barisan Nasional was not properly understood, the stability of the Government might be weakened.

He warned that Barisan Nasional leaders and members must guard against this, and must not do anything that would harm the coalition.

'In this respect, all of us, especially Barisan component parties, must be careful when making proposals and requests,' he said.

Such requests should not give rise to confusion or misunderstanding that would jeopardise the country's unity.

Dr Mahathir added that he was, however, confident that with the able leadership of the various component parties, such a situation would not come about.



Dr Mahathir calls on Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi.

Be Receptive In The 1980s

Muslims were urged to be determined in their quest for knowledge as the 1980s represented the age of change.

Dr Mahathir, who said this, was speaking at the opening of the three-day Hijrah celebrations at the Datuk Syed Omar Stadium in Alor Star on January 16, 1981, when he was Deputy Prime Minister.

He said Muslims should improve their standing in their respective communities by being receptive to new ideas and knowledge that were constantly being disseminated. The Minister called on the Muslim community to channel aspirations towards more practical and effective ways of improving their standard of living.

More than 1,000 people thronged the hall to hear lectures on the development of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said the Government hoped Muslims would be awakened to the fact that their destiny lay in self-determination – that progress was the result of constant determination and hard work.

'As long as we do not possess the will to progress, we cannot be free to help our less fortunate brethren throughout the world.

'Our struggle does not end with the achievement of our own aims but should expand to free Muslims elsewhere who are caught in the web of oppression.'

Dr Mahathir reminded Muslims that while Malaysians were enjoying peace and freedom, there were many others who were denied their basic rights under oppressive regimes.

'On our part, we should try to equip ourselves with knowledge and thereby help the oppressed instead of just calling for a stop to their struggle,' he said.

'We must expand our defence capability by trying to produce our own weapons or else we will be like other nations that are not able to determine their own future.

'It is indeed unfortunate that there are even certain Muslim countries that have fallen to pro-Marxist influences while there are others that are fighting with their fellow Muslims,' he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said if Muslim nations produced their own weapons, they would not be dependent on super powers who had ulterior motives behind providing weapons to them.

Biggest Obstacle Facing Bumiputra Businessmen

Bumiputra businessmen must be prepared to admit that low efficiency level was now the biggest obstacle to their progress, said Dr Mahathir at a dinner organised by the Malacca Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said failure to admit this would result in their concentrating on other non-existent weaknesses.

Management efficiency was now the biggest problem faced by bumiputras and not finance, licences, contracts, capital or proper trading areas, he said.

Dr Mahathir said management efficiency was still lacking and they should take steps to overcome it.

The Prime Minister suggested that the Chamber hold courses and seminars to raise the management level of bumiputras besides discussing the usual problems and making appeals for help from the Government.

He said they should get successful bumiputra and non-bumiputra entrepreneurs to speak of their experiences.

Some bumiputras felt they had wide experience in business and therefore, there was nothing more they could learn, he added.

He said that even a successful businessman still needed new input to keep abreast with the latest developments.

Large and successful companies were sending their executives for further management courses even though the fees were high as they considered this money well-spent and an investment, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the learning process should not stop just because the businessmen were successful and had wide experience.

They could still acquire new business methods which could be to their benefit, he added.

Bumiputras Will Have Only Themselves To Blame If . . .

Bumiputras will only have themselves to blame if they fail in business and do not use opportunities made available by the Government. Only through business can bumiputras progress in the development of the country and stay on equal standing with non-bumiputras.

This advise was given by Dr Mahathir on April 18, 1981 when speaking at the laying of the foundation stone for the Jitra UMNO building in Kedah.

He also called on bumiputra enterpreneurs to discard get-rich-quick attitudes as these would only hamper the Government's efforts of achieving the object of the New Economic Policy.

Bumiputras would find it hard to succeed in business if they persist in depending solely on Government aid, he said.

Dr Mahathir said bumiputras should never regard a vote for the Government as a guarantee that they would be given a share of the nation's wealth.

'Success in business for the bumiputras depends primarily on self-motivation and a change of attitude whereby they should become self-reliant and less dependent on outside help,' he said.

The Government's objective in giving bumiputras a 30% share in the nation's wealth will surely be jeopardised if there is no business initiative among the community.

Dr Mahathir said bumiputras must first realise that business acumen is not an innate skill but one that could be acquired by anyone with the right attitude.

'There have been instances where many, after obtaining permits for stalls, left their businesses to others while they lived off the profits,' he said.

'This, I wish to stress, is not the way to run a business. There is no reason for bumiputras to feel ashamed to work with their hands as business has always been honoured in any community,' he continued.

He said the Government is always willing to train bumiputras in entrepreneurial skills if they face difficulties in understanding the intricacies of business.

'It is essential for bumiputras to understand that monetary aid from the Government is insufficient for progress,' he said.

'Bumiputras will have to enter fields where they have some skill or experience to ensure their success.'

Speeches On International Relations And Energy Outlook

The Economic Colossus: Malaysia's Fears

On September 15, 1973, Dr Mahathir, a member of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, described the European Economic Committee (EEC) as 'an European Economic Colossus' and said that this 'banding together of rich and the most technologically advanced and militarily powerful nations to protect their economic interests could inflict considerable economic hardships to certain countries.'

Malaysia's trade with Britain would suffer a great blow.

It was the first day of the 12-day long conference of nearly 180 parliamentarians from 40 Commonwealth countries and they were examining the implications on Commonwealth countries of Britain's entry to the EEC.

Dr Mahathir, who was then a Senator, underlined the serious effects which Britain's membership of the European Economic Community would have on smaller developing countries, including Malaysia.

He continued, 'Members of the EEC say that by coming together, they are dismantling trade barriers between them, but the fact remains that they are also erecting new barriers against other countries, especially developing countries.'

Citing Malaysia as an example, he said prior to the formation of the enlarged EEC, Malaysian exports enjoyed duty free entry into Britain.

But since then, a trade barrier had emerged in the shape of the common external tariff.

The result was that flexibility in trade dealings with individual EEC members had been broken.

Malaysia would have little choice in bargaining with individual EEC countries because the common tariff would produce similar

price quotations from each of them.

He also instanced the difficulties that would face Malaysian canned pineapple exports to the EEC countries because of quota restrictions.

On the other hand, associated states of the EEC – like those in Africa – would be able to provide the Common Market countries with all the canned pineapple they needed because of duty exemption and other preferential treatment they would enjoy.

Said Dr Mahathir, 'While it is too late to dismantle the EEC, it seems disadvantageous that small countries like Fiji, Antigua and Western Samoa should have to deal with such a colossus individually.

'The EEC should give time to smaller countries to form themselves into organisations which would marshal strong collective bargaining power.

'Knowing full well that power corrupts, the EEC should not use its power in a manner that would be unfair to the developing world.'

British Immigration Policy – 'Racialist And Biased . .'

Dr Mahathir described the immigration policy of Britain as 'racialist and biased to colour.'

He made this point when speaking as an executive member of the Malaysian delegation during a plenary session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in London in 1972.

Dr Mahathir expressed the opinion that certain aspects of British immigration policy impaired good relations between Commonwealth countries including Malaysia and Britain. These, he urged, should be reviewed.

Dr Mahathir blamed British colonial policy for present immigration problems in Commonwealth countries and declared that Britain had a responsibility in solving these problems.

This Britain could do by admitting more freely those immigrants who held British citizenship and settled in Commonwealth countries but who now wish to emigrate to Britain.

Dr Mahathir said the immigration problems were rooted in non-integration between immigrants and the indigenous people as a result of colonial practices.

He explained, 'British colonial policy encouraged the free movement of people between countries in the British Empire and from countries outside into colonial territories.

'But the nature of British immigration policy kept the communities apart and no attempt was made to integrate the immigrants with the indigenous people.

'In Sarawak, for example, the previous policy was to leave the State administration mainly to the Malays, commerce and industry to the Chinese, with the Ibans to be left in their natural state of innocence, deprived entirely of education.

'As time went on and Commonwealth countries gained independence, the problems of non-integration continued so that immigrants who held British citizenship tried to emigrate to Britain.

'Though they were entitled to move into Britain they found, to their horror, a new policy formulated to keep Britain the way it is now, without a mixture of too many races.

'I appeal to Britain to feel responsible over the immigration problems she has created in her former territories and to devise ways and means of admitting immigrants who have settled in the colonial territories and who, because of their failure to integrate, have created problems.'

We Won't Be Pawn Of Super Powers

Opening the Conference of Chairmen of Working Committees on Local Government in Kuala Lumpur on June 8, 1981, Dr Mahathir said, 'Malaysia will not be made a proxy or a target for big powers to test their strength.

'We must not allow the big powers to interfere in our own affairs and be used to test their war policies and weapons,' he said.

Continuing he said the Eighties is a decade of tough competition among the bigger nations for control of rich raw materials producing countries.

'They are working to gain control of strategic areas through direct means or by proxy and we, a small nation, must be careful lest we fall victim,' he added.

He stressed the importance of being cautious of subtle manipu-

lation by foreign nations to gain control of the economy.

In such a competition, he added, neutral nations like Malaysia were in danger of falling prey to them.

However, it is usually countries that are cast out or do not have a firm stand who become the pawns of these big powers.

Referring to Indo-China, he said other Asian countries 'sincerely hope for her co-operation to create peace, freedom and neutrality.'

The Deputy Prime Minister criticised religious extremists who were disrespectful to others in the course of spreading their religion.

'Freedom of worship is enshrined in the Constitution and the *Rukunegara* and must be respected,' he said.

He said the extremists will even be willing to break the law to achieve their aims.

Through the use of violence and brutality, they were a threat to national security, he added.

He said it must be remembered that the freedom of worship, which reflects the country's racial diversity, was based on a strong faith that each individual truly understood his religion to become 'one who is tolerant and responsible'.

Dr Mahathir also called for the total involvement of each citizen in national defence.

He expressed regret that there were some irresponsible groups who were only too ready to smear the country's image.

He described them as having 'no patriotic spirit, empty inside, which makes them easy prey to enemy influence'.

Dr Mahathir said no one was excluded from the task of maintaining peace and stability.

A Plea To Sceptics Of Neutrality Plan

Sceptics of the concept of regional neutrality were urged by Dr Mahathir to refrain from influencing other powers on its workability.

Making this plea during the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in London, Dr Mahathir, a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive said, 'America and China or America and Russia can speak to each other on a friendly footing. I see no reason why the smaller countries cannot get together to

discuss a common approach to problems created by the big powers when they are "fighting" or "mating".'

Malaysia, he said, could no longer depend on Britain or the five power defence arrangement to protect herself adequately from invasion.

But as Malaysia's security inevitably affected the security of Southeast Asia which in turn affected the security of every country in the world, Malaysia was interested in creating 'an area free of conflict'.

Dr Mahathir added, 'This we hope to achieve, not by military pacts, but by agreement between countries on a common approach to regional neutrality.'

'If this concept is workable, it can be adopted not only by a few countries but by all countries as well.'

World insecurity will diminish further.

'I therefore wish to appeal through the CPA and to the Commonwealth countries to give the concept of regional neutrality a chance and to try to refrain from influencing other countries and big powers into believing that such a concept is unworkable.'

When The Domino Theory Becomes A Reality

During a debate in Parliament early in 1970, Dr Mahathir said when the Domino Theory becomes a reality after peace was obtained in Vietnam, Malaysia should enlist the help of the Russians to contain China's expansionist policy.

Dr Mahathir added that the American interference in Malaysia's right to buy fighter aircraft from France should convince us that there is no hope of U.S. help in the event of a Chinese bid to subjugate one by one the nations in Southeast Asia.

In the event of the Domino Theory becoming a reality our best hope lies in enlisting Russian help.

Russia has shown in the Middle East that it will not assist aggression. This the Arabs have learnt.

However Russia is less likely to let nations suffer military conquest.

Russia's feeling towards China is well known and it must be in Russia's interest to see to it that Southeast Asia does not solidify into a

Chinese dominated region threatening her rear and southern flanks.

Earlier, he said that another development in the fast changing world is the rapid emergence of communist China as a military and industrialised power – aggressive and crude.

He added that China cast a dark and menacing shadow over Southeast Asian countries.

Dr Mahathir said that if China were to succeed in Vietnam, she would turn an avaricious look at Malaysia.

Malaysia, he stressed, as a democratic country which believed in peace was aware of the growing danger of China's expansionist policy.

He said that in the turn of events in Vietnam with the military defeat of the United States of America, Malaysia would be faced with several distinct possibilities.

First, it was possible but highly improbable that victory in Vietnam would satisfy the ambition of communist China.

He said that Australia's attitude would make Malaysia dismiss her as a likely friend in need.

He added that any power in controlling Southeast Asia must eventually threaten Australia.

But the Australians think they should put as great a distance as possible between themselves and the collapsing dominoes.

Australia wants to station her troops in Singapore and vaguely threatens to leave us if we do not co-operate with Singapore.

This attitude does not seem promising and we might as well dismiss Australia as a likely friend in need.

On the American interference in Malaysia's attempt to buy the French Mirage, Dr Mahathir asked whether the U.S. was so naive to not know that if Malaysia could not procure planes from Western countries, we can get them from the East.

If anything is calculated to push us into the arms of the Russians, it certainly is this interference over the purchase of military equipment.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia must reorientate herself to the changing pattern of the time.

The soft cushy life that has characterised this nation in the earlier days following independence and the defeat of the communist insurgency is over, he added.

The changes that are taking place demand a much greater sacrifice on the part of everybody.

Money must be found to finance a whole new set of responsibilities.

A much greater effort is required to make this nation more

completely independent of financial help from abroad.

Individual selfishness and the selfishness of groups of people must be relegated to the background.

Sri Lanka Premier In Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir hosted a dinner in honour of Sri Lanka's Premier, Premadasa, and other members of the delegation at Parliament House, Kuala Lumpur on May 8, 1981.

In the course of his speech on the occasion, the Malaysia Prime Minister said:

'Your Excellency, in the international arena I am happy to note that both our countries sincerely believe in the principles of non-alignment and are prepared to uphold them. This commitment to the principles of non-alignment is most important as there is a visible tendency for some groups within the movement to veer to one side. If such a tendency is not checked, then non-alignment will become meaningless.

'Malaysia is encouraged that the recent Ministerial meeting of the Non-aligned Movement in New Delhi has helped to bring the Movement back to its original course. However, the activities of the super powers in some third world countries have tended to split the ranks of the non-aligned states.

'It is all the more important therefore that countries like Sri Lanka and Malaysia work together in upholding the principles of non-alignment and in preventing the break-up of the Movement.

'Your Excellency, the present stalemate over the question of a political settlement of the Kampuchean problem is indeed regrettable. The foreign occupation of Kampuchea continues to be a hindrance in our search for peace and stability in Southeast Asia.

'ASEAN countries cannot but hold Vietnam responsible for the impasse. In our efforts to reach a political solution to the Kampuchean conflict, Malaysia has maintained its contacts with Vietnam.

'However, Malaysia and its other ASEAN partners are convinced that a fair and firm solution could only be achieved through the convening of an international conference as called for by the United Nations.



Dr Mahathir and the Sri Lanka Prime Minister, May 9, 1981.

'In this regard, Sri Lanka's understanding and strong support of ASEAN's call for a political solution within the framework of the U.N. Resolution is most welcome.

'Your Excellency, despite the uncertainties arising from the Indo-China situation the ASEAN countries have not allowed this to undermine their effort to strengthen regional co-operation.

'We are still firmly resolved to improve the living standards of our peoples through specific national and regional socio-economic programmes. It is, therefore, essential that countries in the region should be at peace with one another and abstain from resorting to the use of force in the settlement of problems in their relationships.

'The events in Indo-China have convinced us more than ever of the validity of the concept of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality for Southeast Asia (ZOPFAN).

'ASEAN and ZOPFAN are almost synonymous in the context of Southeast Asian affairs and ZOPFAN remains the only answer for an eduring peace and stability in the region. We are therefore appreciative of support from friendly countries like Sri Lanka for this concept.

What Dr Mahathir Told Premier Of China

Dr Mahathir is his talks with the Prime Minister of China, Mr Zhao Ziyang in Kuala Lumpur on May 10, 1981, said: 'Malaysia is still dissatisfied with China's continued moral support and recognition of the Communist Party of Malaya despite China's latest explanation.'

Dr Mahathir emphasized: 'We can only be fully satisfied if they condemn the CPM.'

He said this at a Press conference following talks with his Chinese counterpart, but added that it would be expecting too much from China. As far as Malaysia is concerned we are back to square one on China's relations with the CPM.

In the 90-minute closed session, China had assured Malaysia that it was doing 'its level best to lessen its involvement with the CPM'.

'But they feel they can't help recognising . . . . the Communist Party of Malaya,' said Dr Mahathir.

Other important points emerged from the Mahathir–Zhao talks. Dr Mahathir said that 'China is no longer harbouring Malaysian Communists when it stopped broadcasting *Suara Revolusi Malaya*† from its southern Yunan base; that on the whole we find the situation to be slightly improved from the time of Deng Xiao Ping's visit in November 1978'. China had also assured ASEAN, and in particular Malaysia, that it had no ambition to create a satellite nation of Kampuchea and it is not their intention to threaten the peace and stability of ASEAN countries.

Dr Mahathir also told the visiting Chinese Prime Minister that Malaysia and China will have to work together to remove any obstacles which stand in the way of better relation's between the two countries.

Dr Mahathir, speaking at a dinner in honour of the Chinese leader, did not spell out what the obstacles are.

Excerpts from the Prime Minister's speech follow:

'It is obvious that the Chinese support, be it moral or military, for the illegal Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) is a thorn in the relations.'

Saying that the relations between the two countries had been progressively widened, Dr Mahathir added, 'In order to strengthen

†Although broadcasts by the clandestine *Suara Revolusi Malaya* from South China have ceased, a new radio station calling itself the Voice of Malayan Democracy and based in South Thailand has emerged.

This new station is also believed to be supported by China.



Dr Mahathir with the Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang, August 9, 1981.



The Chinese Premier returns home, August 11, 1981.

further these relations, we have to work together to remove any obstacles which stand in the way of better relations between us.

'Your visit provides the opportunity for us to better understand the problems we face and the stance taken by our respective countries.

'Let us hope that this will help in resolving the problems that may exist.'

The Prime Minister said Malaysia needs peace and stability, particularly in the country and in the region to achieve the objectives of development and nation-building. The Government of Malaysia is making every effort to increase the pace of the country's development to meet the expectations of our people for greater prosperity.

In this context, efforts are directed towards the eradication of poverty irrespective of race and the restructuring of society to reduce the identification of race with vocation.

The restructuring programme is intended to enhance unity and create a Malaysian nation.

This process of restructuring society will be easier achieved in a situation of rapid economic growth.

It is for this reason that the Government is giving high priority to economic development.

In the effort to create a strong and united Malaysian nation, we emphasize the development of a national attitude through a national education system and a single national culture.

'These are our aspirations and with the support of the people, we are confident that our objectives will be achieved,' said the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir said the visit to Malaysia by Chinese Senior Vice-Premier Deng Xiao Ping in 1978 was one of the events which brought the two countries closer together.

In 1979, Tun Hussein Onn, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, made a visit to China.

These visits have provided the opportunity for the leaders of the two countries to understand each other's policies, aspirations and sensitivities.

'In our discussions tomorrow, we will have the opportunity to exchange views on current issues and matters of mutual interest. I am sure that our discussions will be to the benefit of our two countries,' he told Mr Zhao.

Dr Mahathir said that towards the objectives of peace and stability

in the region, Malaysia and its partners in ASEAN are striving to make the Southeast Asian region a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

Continuing, Dr Mahathir said the members of ASEAN are also agreed that they should strengthen their resilience. Consistent with this objective, Malaysia will extend her friendship to all countries who seek friendly relations with her. Malaysia's relation with other countries are based on the principles of respect for one another's sovereignty and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

On the Kampuchean problem Dr Mahathir said the decision of the recent international conference paves the way and gives hope for a political solution to be found 'provided there is sincerity and the political will among the parties concerned.'

Dr Mahathir went on: 'It is our hope that all those concerned, particularly the big powers, will do their best to facilitate the finding of an amicable soulution.

'The countries in Indo-China have not had peace for more than three decades. Countries in this region would like to see that these countries enjoy peace so that they may be able to give greater attention to economic development. They are apprehensive that the conflict in the countries of Indo-China may spill over to the other countries in the region.

'To avoid such an eventuality,' Dr Mahathir said, 'the big powers have a responsibility to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the countries in this region.

'This is the basis of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality that has been sponsored by ASEAN.'

Mahathir Reaffirms Close Ties With Indonesia

The close and warm ties that exist between Indonesian and Malaysia were reaffirmed during the two-day official visit to Jakarta by Dr Mahathir.

The two Heads of Government exchanged views on bilateral, regional as well as international issues of common concern.

On bilateral ties, both leaders were satisfied with the present state of relations between the countries, especially in the economic, social



President Suharto greets Dr Mahathir on his arrival in Jakarta.



Dr Mahathir speaks at the Indonesian Government Banquet given in his honour.

and cultural fields.

The excellent state of co-operation in these fields contribute towards mutual benefit and common good of the people of both countries. According to the two leaders, co-operation in these fields should be further strengthened and intensified.

The question of Indonesian immigrant labour force was also brought up.

The two leaders were pleased with the state of co-operation in the sphere of security along the common border of the two countries. They felt that each country should further consolidate their national resilience to meet the political challenges facing the two nations and the region.

Dr Mahathir said that there was no pressing problem facing both countries. No delicate or sensitive issue could affect the existing good relations between Malaysia and Indonesia. If any problems were to crop up, it could be solved in the spirit of goodwill and togetherness.

Dr Mahathir pledged to maintain the good relations fostered by his predecessors.

The leaders expressed confidence in ASEAN as a vehicle for regional co-operation.

ASEAN has shown itself to be a cohesive regional grouping capable of playing an independent and positive role in its endeavour to contribute to the political stability and economic viability of the region. They feel that the ASEAN identity should be preserved and further enhanced.

Both President Suharto and Dr Mahathir expressed their concern over the unresolved Kampuchean problem. They were encouraged that the International Conference on Kampuchea recently convened by the United Nations Secretary General in New York has received overwhelming support from the international community.

Foreign forces should totally withdraw from Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people be permitted to exercise their rights in choosing the Government they want.

They urged all parties to the conflict to participate in the negotiation process and to give their fullest support and co-operation so that the Declaration and Resolution of the International Conference on Kampuchea would reach its speedy realisation.

A solution to the Kampuchean problem would benefit not only Kampuchea but all countries in this region.

It will also help in the realisation of ASEAN's proposal for a Zone

of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia.

The realisation of the concept of ZOPFAN will provide countries in this region with a chance to devote their undivided attention to their own national development without fear of foreign intervention and interference.

Unique Arrangement Between Malaysia And Thailand

The whole spectrum of Malaysia–Thailand relations touching on various areas of co-operation and approaches to national and international problems was discussed by Dr Mahathir and Tan Sri General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Prime Minister of Thailand, on the occasion of the Malaysian leader's first official visit as Prime Minister to Bangkok on August 23, 1981.

Dr Mahathir said he had come to Thailand not just because it was traditional for a new leader in ASEAN to visit his fellow ASEAN leaders but also to establish close personal contacts with General Prem.

Dr Mahathir took the opportunity to pledge that Malaysia would be willing to co-operate with Thailand in every way. He also gave the assurance that 'the Malaysian Government would not allow relations between the two countries to be soured by any quarter'.

The Malaysian Premier then said that the existing relations between the two countries were not liked by certain quarters. He named the Communists as one group that would like to see the relations go sour.

Dr Mahathir described the Muslim Separatist Movement in Thailand as an internal Thai problem and that it was not for Malaysia to interfere.

'We were not asked to do anything and Thailand does not want to internationalise the issue. Thus Malaysia does not come into the picture at all with regard to this problem,' he added.

The Prime Minister's stand was seen as a refutal of reports by the Press in Bangkok that Thailand's continued support in the fight against the Communist Party of Malaya was conditional on a *quid pro quo* with Malaysia's help in fighting the Muslim separatists.

On the General Border Committee Agreement, the Prime Minister

said the two countries would continue with the same policy and guidelines and would help each other in the fight against the common enemy.

To a question on the alleged stationing of the Voice of Malayan Democracy in South Thailand and the Thai Government's subsequent denial, Dr Mahathir said neither he nor General Prem raised the issue.

He dismissed allegations that decisions taken at the top in the joint border co-operation were not implemented at the local level.

'We didn't discuss allegations made by other quarters,' said Dr Mahathir.

On the Vietnamese boat people problem, the Prime Minister said Malaysia was allowing them to land for as long as they were accepted by other countries.

'Of course, if nobody is willing to accept them, then we have to do some re-thinking.'

Asked to clarify his statement in Jakarta that Malaysia did not consider Vietnam as a major threat, Dr Mahathir said what he meant was that 'We're not going to see the Vietnamese army marching into Malaysia tomorrow. We're very clear about the danger, but we don't think at this moment that they're bent on conquering Malaysia.'

Dr Mahathir had earlier said that he and General Prem agreed that the best way to solve problems was for the leaders to meet. 'We can't allow problems to fester until they become insoluble.'

He had pointed out to General Prem that the two countries' amicable decision to jointly explore, exploit and share the minerals found in a disputed area in the South China Sea should be 'an example of how international problems should be solved among the international leaders.'

'This is a unique arrangement. When disputes such as this create conflict between two nations this is the kind of problem-solving approach that we'd like to maintain,' he said.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that peace and stability in this region could only be achieved if 'we are free from outside interference and big power rivalries.'

Speaking at a dinner given in his honour by General Prem, he said the Kampuchean situation still remain a concern to the region.

'Malaysia would do whatever it could,' he said, 'to assist the ad-hoc committee formed at the recent International Conference on Kampuchea in New York to find an amicable solution to the

problem.

'It is our hope that all the parties concerned will adopt a positive attitude so that peace will be restored in Kampuchea and in the region,' he added.

On ASEAN, he said the regional grouping had proved that it was viable and 'capable of playing a positive role in contributing towards the peace, prosperity and stability in the region.'

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was very clear about the dangers posed by Vietnam but did not feel that Vietnam had the capacity to pose an immediate threat to Malaysia.

Replying to a question on this matter, he added: 'But we understand the capacity of the Vietnamese to create a lot of problems for the region and for Thailand. We are very clear about the dangers.'

Asked whether he considered the Vietnamese army posed a threat to Thailand now, Dr Mahathir said this was for Thailand to consider and he would not presume to say whether it was a threat or not.

He said General Prem had also not said anything on the Vietnamese army and 'so I do not know what he feels about the threat from the Vietnamese army.'

General Prem had, however, expressed concern about the presence of the Vietnamese in Kampuchea.

The Prime Minister reiterated that there was no change in Malaysia's approach towards the Kampuchean problem.

'We have always been thinking of a political solution and not a military solution,' he added.

On the position of ASEAN and China towards the solution of the Kampuchean problem, he said some common ground had been established as emerged at the international meeting on Kampuchea in New York in July.

'We all believe that it is possible to have a political solution: neither the Chinese nor ASEAN is planning any military move,' Dr Mahathir said.

'What we want to do is to have the various forces in Kampuchea come together and work out a political solution and form a Government which would be acceptable to the Kampuchean people.

'The only problem in the case of China is that they are keen to have the Khmer Rouge on the ascendancy but in our case we are not partial to any particular group.

'We want to see the group that is supported by most of the people running the country,' explained Dr Mahathir.



Dr Mahathir speaks at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, May 15, 1979.

About China's role in Southeast Asia, he said ASEAN was thinking of creating the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in which case China's role would be nil, 'provided of course that the Russians and the Americans also have no role in the same area.'

On matters relating to security along the common border, Dr Mahathir said they had reiterated that they would continue the same policy and guidelines to help each other out wherever possible against the common enemy and common threats.

At a dinner at Government House, Dr Mahathir said that the various co-operative projects by Malaysia and Thailand had been undertaken with the full realisation that each country's interests were always respected and protected.

There was also the realisation that whatever problem that might arise would be amicably resolved through friendly consultations, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was his intention to maintain the traditional good relations between the two countries and to work towards strengthening those ties.

These ties were further strengthened by co-operation through

ASEAN which had been proved to be a viable regional grouping capable of playing a positive role in contributing towards the prosperity, peace and stability of the region.

Asian And Pacific Development Centre

'Knowledge and skills must, in the interest of development, be utilised within the context of a preferred moral and ethical framework which again must not be alien to the particular society.'

Dr Mahathir said this on the occasion of the inauguration of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) in Kuala Lumpur on August 17, 1981.

The important points he had emphasized in the course of his speech were:

(a) that rapid development need not necessarily constitute an orderly change;

(b) that the Centre should give adequate attention to the needs and desire of national institutions to upgrade their capabilities;

(c) that research institutions should be manned by qualified and research-oriented institutions;

(d) that there is a need for an agenda for action and a will to act not only by each national Government but also by the world community.

Following is the text of Dr Mahathir's speech:

'I am sure a lot of effort have gone into this project. In particular, let me congratulate and extend a special word of thanks to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their collaboration in setting up the Centre. As a Malaysian I am very happy that the Centre is sited in Kuala Lumpur. Besides being a great honour for us the Centre could also play an important role with regard to our development.

'The APDC, I understand, is the result of integrating four previously existing regional institutions of development research and training. Such a reorganisation can only be expected to result in greater efficiency and effectiveness. It is my hope that the Centre will

effectively serve the region.

'The Centre should not only be an institution which provides intellectual leadership but also an institution which is pragmatic in dealing with the realities of our region with its diverse components. It must address itself to the problems confronting the countries of Asia and the Pacific, particularly the less developed ones.

'It is a fact that rapid development need not necessarily constitute orderly change and that planned change need not necessarily result in the expected.

'Development and change are a result of many interrelated factors. Some of these factors are unknown to us and some others are still beyond our adequate understanding.

'Development which is a dream of all countries, therefore, has a dimension of uncertainty and risk. Development research and training which are closely related activities relevant to development must be upgraded to meet our needs so that we can better plan and implement our development, better understand the impact of our policies and efforts, and be in a better position to correct our course of action.

'I am happy to note that a major goal of the Centre is to strengthen national development training and research institutions. The participation by national institutions in the Centre's activities can be an important programme for achieving this goal. However, adequate care must be exercised by both the Centre and the national institutions to ensure that this approach will enhance the role and impact of the national institutions in their respective countries. It is only appropriate that I mention this since it is possible that the role of national institutions could be reduced to that of mainly supporting the international institution instead of being mutually supportive.

'I believe that for such a mutually supportive role to develop the Centre must also give adequate attention to the needs and desire of the national institutions to upgrade their capabilities.

'Developing countries are indeed lacking in development oriented research. There are many reasons which contribute to this situation. The lack of development orientation on the part of national research institutions, the lack of experience and competent local researchers, and the lack of conducive research environment and incentives for local researches are some of them.

'Many developing countries, therefore, become the focus of attention of foreign researchers, mainly scholars who are researching for their Masters or doctoral degrees or otherwise having

intentions which may be questionable, as when they try to prove that developing countries are inherently incapable of development.

'It is in this light that national institutions must take greater interest in research and build their own research capability. Positive steps must also be taken to bring research institutions closer together so that research projects are better co-ordinated, duplication and wastage avoided, and research results better utilised for policy formulation and decision making.

'Greater efforts must be made to ensure that research institutions are manned by qualified, experienced and research-interested personnel and that proper and conducive research environment is provided.

'Training institutions have an important role in development. While the overall education system provides the basis for the manpower supply for development, training institutions cater for the specifics. While the overall education system provides knowledge, training institutions normally emphasize skills. However, given the fact that development is normative – in other words, preference for a better state of well-being – it is important that manpower for development is injected with appropriate moral and ethical contents.

'Knowledge and skills must, in the interest of sound development, be utilized within the context of a preferred moral and ethical framework which again must not be alien to the particular society.

'It is in the context of this moral and ethical contents that development training institutions must give adequate attention. It is also important that they must develop effective methods for imparting this important subject.

'It is my opinion that this moral and ethical component must be an integral part of knowledge and skills and we must utilize and develop the technology in order to ensure that development training institutions can effectively address themselves to the challenges of development.

'I am happy that the initial phase of the Centre's work comprises studies in the areas of energy, food security, human resources and women in development. These four areas are significant and are current to the countries in Asia and the Pacific.

'It is not my intention to dwell in detail on these subjects today. They are important topics. Seminars and conferences at the national, regional and international levels have been held and various researches have been carried out with respect to them.

'What is important now is an agenda for action and the will to act not only by each national Government but also by the world community.

'We can no longer regard many of our problems today as specific to a particular country or region. The future prosperity of a country is very dependent on the other countries as much as the problem or potential destruction of a country is dependent on the other countries.

'This inter-dependence must be viewed as an asset for the good and prosperity of all and not as an opportunity and a framework for manipulation and oppression by the stronger nations.

'The topics covered in the work-plan of the APDC describe some of the main concerns of the Government of Malaysia and presumably the Governments of the other countries in the region.

'While the solution to the specific problems should, of course, be found locally within each particular country, a sharing of expertise and experience within a framework of regional co-operation such as the ASEAN could promote more consistent approaches and more efficient policies.

'It is, however, necessary that regional and sub-regional co-operation endeavours be co-ordinated against the international perspective of equity, justice and growth, such as the one enshrined in the New International Economic Order.

'I am confident that with the necessary support the APDC would be able to contribute positively to the development policies of the countries of Asia and the Pacific. I hope that it would enjoy long years of service to the countries as well as their full support in the implementation of its activities.'

Energy Outlook For Next Two Decades Not Rosy

'The energy outlook for the next two decades does not appear to paint a rosy picture. The problems faced by developing countries will be even more acute. However the situation is not completely hopeless.'

This was the warning Dr Mahathir gave when he spoke at the opening of the second meeting of ASEAN Economic Ministers on

energy co-operation in Kuala Lumpur on April 27, 1981 when he was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry.

The text of his speech is reproduced below:

'If I may recall correctly, your first meeting in Bali towards the latter part of last year was held against the shadow of great uncertainty in the international oil market arising from the Iran-Iraq dispute.

'ASEAN's response in the wake of global insecurity in oil supplies was to strengthen its co-operation and as good neighbours come to each other's assistance when the need arises. As a regional body we have again confounded the usual prophets of doom who predicted that the bonds that have linked ASEAN together for the past 13 years will begin to strain.

'Your inaugural meeting, then, had once again demonstrated ASEAN's steadfastness towards its goals of regional economic co-operation.

'The energy situation since your first meeting last year has not changed. Energy still continues to be the most dominant and pressing item in the agendas facing most Governments.

'Governments all over the world, especially oil importing developing countries, have been painfully made aware that the energy problems of the 1970s were no passing phenomenon but will continue to exercise profound effects on every dimension of socio-economic development for the near future.

'Events of the last decade have also brought into sharp focus the harsh reality that the cheap energy era of the 1950s and 1960s is all over.

'Several recent projections on the world energy outlook have indicated that oil will still continue to be the dominant source of energy despite the substantial increase in oil prices in recent years.

'The continuing importance of oil as a source of energy largely reflects the lack of progress in the development of commercially viable non-oil sources of energy due to technological, environmental and other problems.

'In addition, the development of substitute energy resources is limited by the rate at which it is possible to introduce new technologies on a large scale. The present trends are indeed worrisome.

'The energy problems of the industrialised nations, serious though they are, pale in comparison to those facing most of the world's developing countries. While the wizards of Western tech-

nology debate the merits of oil over gas, coal versus Arabian crude, and nuclear power over them all, more than half of the world's people have never known an electric light switch.

'Developing countries support around 70% of the world's population and yet consume only 15% of the total global energy.

'This disparity in the use of energy is glaringly dramatised by the Brandt Commission Report which states that all the fuel used by Third World for all purposes is only slightly more than the amount of gasoline the North burns to move its automobiles.

'A substantial portion of the developing world's present energy requirements is met by non-commercial sources like firewood, charcoal, agricultural and animal wastes.

'Annual consumption of biomass energies in the developing world cannot be accounted for with satisfactory reliability but according to UN statistics, developing countries consume as much biomass as it does fossil fuels – that is slightly over one billion tonnes of coal equivalent.

'The World Bank has estimated that if all households in the developing countries were to switch to kerosene the demand for oil in these countries would rise by 15 to 20 per cent, a burden beyond consideration for countries with annual per capital earnings of around US$150 . . . .

'The conclusion . . . . becomes unmistakable – developing nations need a greatly expanded supply of fossil fuels and a large scale harnessing of renewable energy resources.

'Fortunately our prospects look promising; significant natural gas reserves have been identified in several developing countries, for example Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and China.

'The potential for new discoveries of crude oil in the developing world are certainly not negligible. A recent study has revealed that at least 50 – 60 developing countries have either off-shore or on-shore petroleum potential.

'Another 30 – 40 developing countries have coal potential. Besides fossil fuel resources, the developing countries are endowed with widespread solar and wind energy potential and substantial geothermal prospects. They are also fortunate in having most of the world's underdeveloped hydro-electric resources (about 1800 GW) with only a small fraction of these being utilised.

'The crucial issue here is finance. Developing countries require heavy capital expenditure and technical inputs for their growing energy demand. However, the disappointingly low levels of official

assistance from developed countries in this respect lends support to the suspicion that despite public protestation to the contrary, the developed countries are not forthcoming in alleviating the economic difficulties faced by the developing world. Obviously, the developing countries, such as those of us who are members of ASEAN, have to take steps to help ourselves.

'I have briefly traced the world's energy dilemma and the grave economic problems confronted by the developing countries. The problems that I have mentioned earlier also loom large for ASEAN. ASEAN member countries are excessively dependent on oil for their energy requirements.

'Dependence on oil ranges from 82% for Thailand to almost 100% for Singapore. The current insecurity of world oil supply and the drastic rise in crude oil prices are compelling reasons for ASEAN countries not only to lower their dependence on oil but also to diversify their energy base giving prominence to the development and utilisation of alternative energy sources. Our planning must allow for uncertainty, particularly when so much is at stake.

'The man in the street puts his eggs in more than one basket, and we must in our turn keep energy options open whenever we can so that risks can be spread over a wide front.

'The lessons of the last decade have impressed upon us the imperative of pursuing strategies that would absolve ourselves from being captive to disruptions in oil supplies so that we can continue to maintain our impressive economic growth rates despite recession among OECD countries and the growing threat of protectionism.

'This surely must be the thrust of our energy policies. Malaysia has accordingly decided to embark upon a four fuel energy economy based on oil, hydro-power, gas and coal.

'Nature has blessed ASEAN with a considerable amount of energy resources. While each of us may have widely differing energy resource endowments, all of us, with the possible exception of Singapore, have plenty of non-oil energy resources which we have not fully utilised as yet.

'In charting our energy development strategies, we must not lose sight of the enormous advantages offered by adopting a regional approach to resource utilisation and management. Regional solutions would obviously afford the advantages of economies of scale.

'The slow progress made in the utilisation of alternative sources of energy can be attributed to the massive investments required for their development which would be too great a burden to be borne by

one single member country. Such costs can be mitigated by joint co-operative endeavours. In this respect, I must congratulate the Committee on Science and Technology (COST) for pursuing vigorously along this direction in its efforts to expand research and development in alternative sources of energy.

'Another attractive proposition for regional co-operation is the ASEAN Power Grid. The technical and economic advantages of interconnection are well known. Besides contributing towards reduction of reserve capacity which would yield substantial cost savings, such interconnections would also enable more efficient operation of base load plants.

'Technology is now available for transmission of power over long distances at an economic cost permitting the feasibility of tapping sites far from centres of consumption. This means, for instance, that the excess hydro-electric potential in Sarawak besides being transmitted to Peninsular Malaysia could also perhaps be supplied to Kalimantan in Indonesia. Likewise, Indonesia's hydro-electric output from Asahan in Sumatra could be exported to Peninsular Malaysia.

'Currently, ASEAN countries are dependent on oil for almost 80% of its total electricity generation. In the face of diminishing oil resources the ASEAN Power Grid interconnections perhaps offer the best solution for the pooling of non-transportable and renewable energy resources such as hydro-electric and geothermal power among member countries. Recent studies have revealed that ASEAN electric power is projected to increase by about 30 GW between now and 1990.

'The capital investment required for this projected increase in generating capacity would be of the order of some US$20 billion. The sheer magnitude of this figure makes a regional approach to electricity supply planning imperative in order to optimise the utilisation of capital and energy resources with due consideration to the benefits that can accrue from power system interconnections.

'I am happy to note that steps have already been taken to interconnect the National Electricity Board (NEB) power system with the systems operated by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) and the Public Utilities Board of Singapore (PUB).

'I am particularly pleased to note that ASEAN Heads of Utilities in their recent meeting at Jakarta have agreed to pursue the subject of interconnection with utmost urgency. This earnestness certainly augurs well for ASEAN solidarity.

'Rising oil prices coupled with growing concern over its supply have provided the necessary impetus for the re-emergence of coal as a viable energy option. ASEAN countries with the exception of Singapore are endowed with varying amounts of coal deposits ranging from some 400 – 500 million tons in Malaysia to some 15 billion tons in Indonesia. Coal is currently being utilised to fuel power generation plants and cement industries in Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. Singapore has recently announced plans to establish coal fired power plants.

'Similar plans are also being given serious attention by the relevant authorities in Malaysia. I have been given to understand that the Experts Group Meeting on Coal which was convened recently has established the fact that coal in ASEAN, if optimally developed, will be potentially adequate to meet regional consumption as a fuel for power generation, cement industries and other applications.

'Given the common aspiration among member countries to depart from heavy dependence on oil, it is encouraging to note that the said meeting had agreed to pursue several integrated coal programmes, covering areas of infrastructure, exploration, mining, supporting facilities and institutions and joint co-operation with Third World countries.

'The utilisation of coal for electric power generation will also add new dimensions to the scope of ASEAN Power Interconnection which I have mentioned earlier.

'While focussing our attention to the development and utilisation of non-oil energy sources, we must not ignore the substantial contribution that energy conservation can provide. It is important to remember that while the life of an oilfield, a coal mine or a nuclear power station can be measured in two or three decades, that of energy conservation can be almost timeless. The lessons on how to make better use of energy once learned are with us forever.

'For developing countries, like ASEAN, energy conservation must be viewed from the perspective of elimination of waste and the efficient utilisation of energy. Developing countries cannot afford to reduce their energy consumption as such a move may jeopardise their planned development goals.

'Also, it would be preposterous to expect developing countries to restrict their energy consumption when their per capita energy consumption is one tenth or even less than that of industrialised countries.

'Rising oil prices have naturally made energy conservation an

attractive proposition. Because of the diversity in the use of energy, the potential for conservation occurs almost everywhere and at all levels. Indeed, savings achievable through active conservation measures would itself constitute an invisible energy resource in our energy economy. A recent World Bank Report has claimed that developing countries could reduce as much as 15% of their projected energy consumption in 1990 by effecting a broad programme of energy demand management.

'It further states that many of the benefits under this programme could be achieved within a short period of time and several of the measures involved required little or no investment. I know that all ASEAN member countries have already undertaken energy conservation programmes of their own though in varying degrees. We in Malaysia have just concluded a publicity campaign aimed at impressing upon the people the need for prudent actions in energy consumption. Some fiscal measures have been introduced to reinforce this theme, for example, imposition of heavier road rates for bigger capacity cars as well as higher electricity tariff rates for heavy domestic consumers.

'I am confident the opportunities for energy conservation abound if we in ASEAN could marshal our expertise together in addition to sharing of our respective experiences in this growing field. We must recognise that the continuing escalation of oil prices and the uncertainty of supply are realities beyond our sphere of control. But efforts to conserve energy are matters that we can decisively influence. This certainly must be the cornerstone of our co-operation.

'I have mentioned some of the possible areas for ASEAN co-operation in energy. Some of you here will have noted that I have not mentioned oil. I must reassure you that this is not intended to be a deliberate omission. In fact, it reinforces what I have been trying to say all along; that is, ASEAN must brace itself to a new energy regime with less dependence on oil.

'Among the ASEAN countries, Malaysia and Indonesia are the best off in petroleum resources. However, the reserve life index, that is the ratio of annual output to proven reserves, for both countries is relatively low.

'In addition, increasing domestic consumption will exert a considerable pressure on the amounts of oil that can be made available for export purposes. Having said all these, we must not forget the fact that ASEAN countries have already in existence an

emergency oil sharing scheme. In the past, both Malaysia and Indonesia have responded positively to request for oil supplies from oil deficient member countries.

'What matters most here is not the amount that is supplied but the spirit of co-operation that counts. In this respect, I wish to single out for special mention the untiring efforts by H.E. Professor Dr Subroto, the Minister of Mines and Energy of the Republic of Indonesia, in seeking avenues for assured oil supplies for Thailand and the Philippines from OPEC.

'This brotherly spirit prevailing among member countries again demonstrates to the world the resilience of ASEAN in the face of new challenges.

'The energy outlook for the next two decades does not appear to paint a rosy picture. The problems faced by developing countries will be even more acute. However, the situation is not completely hopeless. The paths towards greater utilisation of renewable sources are very clear.

'Hard choices must be made in an era fraught with uncertainties. This is indeed a new challenge for ASEAN. But considering that ASEAN has been encountering manifold challenges since its inception until today and has been successful in overcoming them, I strongly believe that God willing, inspired by our common resolve, we will be capable of meeting these new and future challenges.

'I hope your meeting here in Kuala Lumpur will be able to chart new programmes of co-operation besides enhancing existing areas of co-operation.'

The First Hundred Days: Dr Mahathir Speaks To The Press

Several problems faced by Malaysia and the innovations introduced by the Mahathir Government during his first hundred days as Prime Minister were focused by journalists at a special interview on October 23, 1981.

A wide range of subjects was covered by Dr Mahathir during the interview.

Corruption

'I will admit that I will not be able to stamp out corruption. But I will be able to limit it to a certain extent. Once we know that officers have declared their assets, then we'll be able to compute their wealth at any given time. . . . .' Mahathir said.

'The Income Tax Department will examine all his assets, his wealth, what he does, how much money he has in the bank and all that. By doing so, they are able to compute his wealth and assess how much tax he has not paid.'

The Prime Minister disclosed that the Income Tax Department had been told to instruct the NBI on how to do the wealth computation.

'So once we've got all these forms gathered, at any time at all we can zero in on a person suspected of being corrupt, or even on a random basis to check on the wealth by means of wealth computation.

'If we find that some person cannot explain why he has more wealth than he should have, some action will have to be taken against him. That's the only way.'

Malaysia-British relations

'Malaysia is not cutting off trade relations with Britain nor carrying out a general boycott of British goods.'

'All we are saying is that the Government will not buy British goods if we can help it. But we will still buy if we cannot help it,' the Prime Minister said.

He said British companies were still welcome to invest in Malaysia. British companies which had invested in Malaysia and were producing things here were not subject to the ruling that they could not qualify for Government supplies.

On the directive not to give priority to the British the Prime Minister said: 'I don't see that they have such large interests in our economy. Actually it depends on us, whether we want to buy British goods or not. They do have interests here, but we have alternative sources for whatever we wish to buy – motorcars, military equipment, etcetera. Also we have said that if there is no alternative source, we will still buy from the British, so there's no problem.

'The balance of payment now is in favour of Britain, so it's better for us to buy less from them, to ensure a balance of payment in our favour.

'We no longer get special treatment now that Britain has joined the EEC. So there is no reason why we should give them special treatment. The British claim they are the third largest investors in Malaysia, but theirs is an old investment. . . . .

'British investment is minute. Compared with those of America or Japan or Singapore, it is very little. Of course if you count their total investment from the time of independence till now, it's quite substantial, because they invested a lot in the past.

'Today, the British would invest a couple of million ringgit in a factory, and still I go to open the factory. The Japanese invest 60 million ringgit, and I haven't yet gone to open their factory.'

National Pride

'The greatest challenge has been to motivate all the people – not just the Government officers but all the people of this country – to be aware of their responsibilities and their roles in national development. This must not be merely material development. There must also be a spiritual achievement on the part of every individual, for, as the saying goes, "Man cannot live by bread alone."

'We must have a sense of accomplishment as a nation. We must be able to stand alongside other nations as an equal, so that we do not feel we are looked down upon. For me this is important.

'When I go somewhere and say I am from Malaysia, I don't want people to say, "Ah, the lazy Malays" or something like that, as they did in the past. I don't want this. Since childhood I was brought up in that atmosphere. I find this most intolerable. . . . .'

'To some extent the image of the Malays has rubbed off on the

other races living in this country. I want people to respect Malaysia.'

International relations

Dr Mahathir explained: 'Our first priority is ASEAN countries – relations with ASEAN.

'Second is with the Islamic countries, third with non-aligned nations, and only fourth with the Commonwealth.

'Though we have this list of four priorities, they are not equidistant. The Commonwealth may not only be fourth but may fall far behind the others, perhaps for the moment.

'If in the future it shows it really functions as a Commonwealth, that is, a great wealth divided equitably, we may revise our priorities.

'But so far the policies of some members of the Commonwealth do not really benefit Malaysia in particular and developing countries in general. So we don't give priority to the Commonwealth.

'I have stressed this several times, but if they still do not understand, I just can't explain further. They know the reason.

'I make a difference between the Commonwealth and a Commonwealth conference.

'The Commonwealth is important, but its conference may not be. For example, in ASEAN, sometimes we hold a Summit Meeting of Heads of Government sometimes we don't. This doesn't mean ASEAN is not important.

'What is not important at certain times is a meeting of Heads of Government, and so we don't hold one. But ASEAN remains. Thus too with the Commonwealth. Its conference may not be important, but the Commonwealth is relatively important, that is, up to the judgment of the moment.'

Overseas Assets

Dr Mahathir expressed the view that 'For as long as there are assets that we can buy we will buy. But there will come a time when all our foreign-owned assets are already brought back and we still have some money. We can buy any shares; we can even buy foreign companies and bring them here, if we find there is no law against it. If they are up for sale we will buy.

'After all, the Arabs are buying, lots of other people are buying. At one time the Japanese were buying British companies and the American companies. Now why can't the Malaysians buy? We are like anybody else.'

The Next General Elections

'Elections may be held in 1982 or 1983. In determining the date, you cannot rely on one single factor. We cannot say economic performance will determine it.

'There will be a host of factors that have to be taken into consideration before you can determine the date. If for some reason or other you find that the Opposition is in a weak position, you may do it earlier.

'On the other hand, although the economic performance may be good, the rains come and people cannot come out to vote. You have to take that into consideration.'

Common Time Zone

Dr Mahathir revealed that the Government is planning to introduce a common time zone for the whole country, instead of two different zones now used in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir said the effects and implications of the proposed move were being studied.

'It is just a matter of fixing it. Time is an artificial thing,' he said.

The Prime Minister said the difference between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak times was not only a divisive factor but that its calculation is also not very accurate.

'Time zones are normally fixed on hourly intervals. Ours is at half-hourly interval,' he said.

He said the Government might just use the Sabah-Sarawak time to ensure uniformity.

'Of course people may complain that with that they will have to wake up early. But the question is not having to wake up early but rather going to bed early.

'Waking up at 6.30, 7 or 8 a.m. is just a matter of habit,' he argued.

His Hopes for the Future

'I wish to see a progressive Malaysian nation with its cultural and spiritual values intact. We must preserve our good values in attaining an equal footing with the advanced nations. That is my dream.'

When asked if he had a dream of this country becoming an industrialised nation, Dr Mahathir stressed; 'It is not a dream. It is something that I hope to work towards. Whether it can be achieved when I am still around or while I am still the Prime Minister, that is irrelevant. Perhaps not while I am still living or while I am still the Prime Minister. But the process of accelerated development must start now.'

Epilogue: An Important Milestone

After nearly 200 days in office, what has the Mahathir Administration achieved? Since he assumed the role of Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir has made numerous calls to Malaysians to work hard, to increase productivity and to enhance the image of Malaysia as a progressive nation.

There is no denying that the country has witnessed during the past six months several significant and meaningful changes.

The dawn of 1982 saw the introduction of the Malaysian Standard Time and the adoption of the metric system – two important events in the history of Malaysia. For the first time Malaysians from Perlis to Sabah ushered in the New Year at the same time.

The Government's achievements since July, 1981 have been many and varied. The crowning glory was the agreement reached on five outstanding bilateral issues in the talks between Dr Mahathir and Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore in December, 1981 when the Malaysian Prime Minister made his first official visit to Singapore.

As one who has been a witness to the advent of independence in Malaya, the epoch-making events that followed and the roles played by the leaders who headed the Governments, I must say, without hesitation, that Dr Mahathir has achieved a great success in bringing about better understanding on several vital issues during his talks with his redoubtable counterpart, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. It is an important milestone in international relations.

The issues settled are of much significance both to Malaysia and Singapore. They are:

(1) The return of the Khatib Army Camp in Singapore now used as a store by Malaysia;

(2) Singapore's request for a Malayan Railway shed for its East Coast – Jurong Expressway at Tanjong Pagar;

(3) Malaysia's request for additional land for the Royal Malaysian Navy at the Woodlands Naval Base;

(4) The Straits of Johore boundary; and
(5) Malaysia's request for control of a major portion of the Johore airspace.
(This last issue was resolved only in principle.)
Now, what are the factors that made this meeting of minds a success?

Suffice it to quote Mr. Lee Kuan Yew who said: 'I feel our meeting was rewarding because we spoke frankly and explicitly and because we are both realists. I stated my basic position and related it to the issues in hand. Dr Mahathir responded in the same way. I felt we were at ease in dealing with each other. I hope he felt the same.

'Dr Mahathir is open and forthright by nature. He belongs to that self-made and self-confident generation that has taken over positions of great responsibility.'

I must say that while the former Malaysian leaders had made their own valuable contributions in various ways, none of them did so much and so soon as Dr Mahathir has done.

With the settlement of five important issues, Malaysia-Singapore relations have improved immensely. If what has happened recently is any criterion then one can look forward to a continuation of cordial relations between the two countries. Close co-operation between Singapore and Malaysia is not only necessary but important.

The other recent developments that have caught the imagination of the people of Malaysia and aroused the interest of other countries are Dr Mahathir's repeated calls to Malaysians to increase productivity. According to him Malaysians must do more and work harder.

It was quite a revelation when Dr Mahathir disclosed that one Japanese worker can produce 14 cars a year, an American nine, an Indonesian two and a Malaysian only 1.4.

'There must be something wrong with our way of working,' he lamented. Dr Mahathir added: 'It's a record we can't be proud of.'

All thinking Malaysians will endorse the views expressed by Dr Mahathir that Malaysians must do much better. They are capable of doing this but they may want extra benefits by way of better wages and allowances. It is a fact that wages paid to Malaysian workers are far below that paid to workers in Japan and America.

However, there is nothing today more urgent than the need to increase productivity which is crucial for Malaysia's progress.

The Prime Minister has stressed: 'Whatever work we are given we should carry it out with full interest and dedication. The reward we should cherish is respect, respect from society within the nation and

respect from the international community.'

Also worthy of mention is the warning given by Dr Mahathir. I quote: 'There are those who advise us not to work hard as they claim this would turn us into robots, as slaves to management and as people who chase materialism.

'They urge us to threaten society to get higher wages. Those from developed nations, who know that the key to success is hard work, have influenced Malaysians with various opinions aimed at stopping us from working and competing with them.

'And we have been influenced and voice their slogans.When will we realise that we are being manipulated by them, that although the country has been freed, our minds are still colonised?', he asked.

Let me hasten to add that changing of work ethics is not something that can be corrected or improved overnight. It takes time but those concerned with the supervision of our work-force should streamline and speed up their efforts to achieve better results by workers.

In this respect Dr Mahathir himself has set a good example.

'I am prepared to work hard myself. I am not asking people to do what I will not do,' he says.

Dr Mahathir has urged Malaysians to get rid of their colonial attitude and look more towards Japan and Korea for inspiration and like them they should strive for a Malaysian Miracle.

'Our future,' said Dr Mahathir in his New Year message for 1982, 'depends on our willingness to work hard not as a slave just for pay but because of a responsibility and love for freedom and integrity.'

Dr Mahathir is the continuing expression of the great awakening that is now taking place in this country. True to his profession he has performed a major 'operation'. To ensure the success of that operation he needs the co-operation and support of Malaysians of all walks of life.

The Malaysian Prime Minister's repeated calls to the people of Malaysia to work hard reminds me of what Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, said when someone praised the many achievements of this famous soldier-statesman.

'The truth is,' said Lord Mountbatten, 'I am a very ordinary person and if I have any success it is only due to hard work.'

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