

THE SILENT REVOLUTION HERE

THE TESTS THAT MALAYSIA FACED

On the occasion of Tun Razak's visit to Australia in April 1967 he spoke at the International House, Melbourne on his country's steady but sure path to fruitful independence despite the struggles and obstacles brought about by militant Communism and difficult domestic conditions. He attributes this success in the following speech to a competent and fair policy by the party in power,

Malaysia and Australia have many things in common and we also face common problems in this turbulent region of Southeast Asia. We believe in Parliamentary democracy and a free enterprise system of economy. We have a common desire for peace and international co-operation. We support strongly the principle that each country should be free to pursue its own way of life.

Malaysia has been independent for almost 10 years—half the time in the name of Malaya and the other half in the name of Malaysia when the states of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak decided to join and form this new federation. Of course now Singapore is separated from Malaysia.

Ten years is perhaps but a breath in the human scheme of things but in the anxious and turbulent times in which we live in this region of Asia no nation is allowed the comfort of a sheltered childhood or the luxury of an easy going and irresponsible adolescence. From the moment of our birth when our flags were hoisted as the midnight hour chimed on the 31st of August 1957 the facts of survival were thrust on us.

First we have to fight against communist insurrection and when we defeated this insurgence we were again faced with another threat, this time from outside the country, by the old order of Indonesia inspired and instigated by the communist party and the Peking communist party. Therefore Malaysia has had its share perhaps more than a fair share—of trials and tribulations in its brief life as an independent nation.

However our energy and resources, our faith and our unity were put to the test in the great task of defending our sovereignty and of consolidating our independence.

In retrospect we may now take comfort in the fact that having been through the fire of militant communism we have, like steel.

been tempered to a high degree of tinsel strength. We have learned to steel our nation against subversion by the communists.

During this testing and fateful years and in spite of the fact that we had to devote our resources and our energy to the full for the defence of our country, we never allowed ourselves to forget even for a moment that independence means the ability to govern the country ourselves, to give our people a change in their way of life, a new order of things, a better and higher standard of living. Without all this independence would be meaningless and empty.

It is easy to talk of revolution, it is easy to mesmerise the people with the rhetoric of revolution. It is equally easy for foreign observers to misjudge the tempo and temper of a revolution because they have often listened to what is said and then see clearly what is being performed.

We in Malaysia are not adept practitioners of the oratorical art. We believe in action and in deeds and not words. We believe that the winds of freedom must not only destroy the debris of the old order but also release the creative energies of our people to work our ploughs and our machines. We decided that we must embark on a gigantic development programme to give our people the amenities of life necessary for a decent living.

We built schools and hospitals both in urban and rural areas. We constructed roads and bridges, we opened up land for the landless in order that they could have a proper means of livelihood. We must act. we must produce results. We must find sources of industrial power, we must diversify our economy. We must revitalise our culture and our art and our music. We plan but at the same time we make certain that our plan is successfully implemented.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we merely talk. if we merely seek to enjoy the glamour of independence or we merely attempt to divert the frustrations of our people instead of meeting their expectations, then when that inevitable moment of retribution comes. we shall deserve no sympathy and no help for we shall have forfeited the faith of our own people.

Malaysia lies in the heart of Southeast Asia and has historically been the bridge of communication between East and West Asia, between Europe and Asia, between Europe and this island continent of Australia and the Pacific area beyond. Malaysia occupies a strategic position on trade as well as military defence

routes. This fact of geography is also reflected in the composition of our population which numbers about 10 million, of whom half are Malays, 40% of Chinese origin and 10% of Indian and a mixture of Kadazans, Dyaks, Ibans, Europeans, Eurasians, Arabs- indeed practically all the races of the world.

We find this diversity of races exciting and stimulating but at the same time challenging. The immediate problem of bringing together people of different races, different languages, different religions and different cultures poses challenges as well as opportunities charged with emotion. However since Independence we have been able to sit down around the table from time to time and discuss in the calm atmosphere of the conference room our various problems and have been able to find solutions. The present Government consisting of leaders representing the three major races of Malaysia, Malays, Chinese and Indians, have been able to look after the sensitivities of each racial group of our plural society.

We have solved our problems in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence, free from passion and prejudices and away from the heat of inter-party struggle in the political arena. We have solved a number of sensitive issues. In the field of education after we achieved Independence, there were different types of schools using different languages and different syllabuses. However under our national education policy we were able to bring all these different types of schools under one national system with a common content syllabus channeled towards educating our children of various races so that they become useful and loyal citizens of our country.

We have also solved the citizenship problem by providing those who regard our Malaysia as their home and object of loyalty facilities to become citizens and to cut off completely links with their country of origin.

Recently we solved the language problem by making Malay the national language and the official language, while at the same time we allow the use of English as the international and commercial language in certain fields of administration and institutions of learning while the national language is being enriched.

We also give a place to the other languages. Chinese and Tamil, and guarantee that they can be used and studied.

As I said, we **solve** these immensely complex and sensitive problems by working patiently and quietly on the ground, by

removing the **causes** of friction, by creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence, by sincerely upbringing and educating our people towards working closer together in friendship and harmony.

An important element ensuring the stability of our plural society is a healthy and expanding economy. As you know, among the developing countries of Asia and Africa, Malaysia enjoys one of the highest standards of living. However this comparative prosperity is dependent largely on two major products, rubber and tin, which are subject to the fluctuating demand in the international market. The price for our rubber has been rapidly declining in recent years due the challenge by synthetic, and as for tin, although the price decline has not been as bad as rubber, the known reserves of tin are depleting.

The downward price trend for our two main export commodities poses real problems to us—problems which you in Australia can readily understand because you too for a long time depended on a narrow based economy, the base being the back of your famous Merino sheep.

In the same way as you decided to diversify your economy years ago, we are now in the course of diversifying our economy. We are doing what we can to diversify the agricultural sector, but equally we are in earnest on industrialisation.

In this respect we find ourselves thinking and acting on your example. During the post-war era we witnessed a remarkable upward surge of your economy, and you have gone a long way in diversifying and industrialising your economy. The progress you have achieved and the development both in your cities and in your rural areas stand today as testimony to the soundness of your system and the success of your policy.

We in Malaysia look to Australia very much in the same way as you looked towards the United States after the war as a source of private investment. We are encouraged to do this for not only is Australia a friendly and understanding neighbour but she is also an important trading partner of Malaysia. In fact Australia was the first country with which we entered into a trade agreement soon after Independence and our imports from your country have increased considerably in recent years.

I feel there is no dearth of investment opportunities for Australian financiers and industrialists in Malaysia and we would like to see more Australian investment in our country for we offer

investment opportunities as good as if not better than those found in most countries in Southeast Asia.

Ladies and gentlemen: in the public sector of our economy we have been particularly successful in pushing forward development, and our people both in the rural and urban areas have been able to enjoy a measure of happiness and progress.

We have evolved our own techniques of development plan administration which have proved a success. Over the last few years we have been able to bring real and dramatic changes to both rural and urban areas. We have been able to some extent to narrow the gap between the have's and the have-nots. However there is still much to be done and we are determined to do more.

That is why we are grateful to our friends overseas, particularly Australia, for the help that they have given us in a number of ways, particularly in the field of development. I can assure you in Australia and our other friends that we have the capacity and the determination to carry out development, and moreover aid that may be given will be put to good use.

We in Malaysia believe that the first basic for economic development is the type of political leadership that can channel emotions and energies of our people towards development and progress and not waste national emotions on non-essential rabble rousing. We believe that political stability and economic stability are synonymous and inseparable. That is why in Malaysia we have been able to carry out economic progress successfully, to build our country into a self-reliant and economically viable country free to take her rightful place among the free nations of the world. We in Malaysia are determined that by our own efforts and with the assistance of our friends to continue to make progress on the road which we have successfully travelled this far to ensure the dignity and progress of our people.

We are determined to do this through our system of Parliamentary democracy which we strongly believe is the best system of Government ever devised in the long history of man.

Thus, ladies and gentlemen, you can see that Malaysia, a small country, comparatively young, is determined to channel the emotions of our people into positive action, to wield together our people of various races into a united nation to make the democratic system work and bring economic and social benefits to the life of our people. I think we can justly claim that these efforts have so far been successful and we are now well launched, but

the difficulties ahead are many and complex. I know our **efforts** are being watched with sympathy by our friends and with cold eyed calculation by communist elements in our midst and beyond our boundaries. If we make any mistake or if we stumble or slacken in our determination to move forward then our **enemies** will take immediate advantage to strike at us.

We are determined not to fail. We have a clear picture of the kind of society we want, a society where there is democracy, economic and social progress with unlimited scope for individual talents and enterprise. I hope, ladies and gentlemen. I have given you the true picture of our country', of the problems that we have to face and the way in which we intend to solve these problems. I do want you in Australia to understand our problems and our difficulties and our determination to give our people the happiness and prosperity they desire and to share in our hopes and our efforts in maintaining peace and stability in this region of Asia to which both you and we belong.

CALL TO NATION FOR UNITY

NEED TO NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN THE HAVE'S AND HAVE-NOTS

In his Hari Raya message to the nation in January 1967, Tun Razak pleaded for unity and understanding among the different racial groups living in this country as Malaysians. He said that Malaysia's future and its very existence as a strong, firm and united nation depended on our success in uniting the various races of this country and in creating a true and just society by narrowing the gap between the haves and the have-not's.

The year 1967 has been a historic year because last **August** we were able to celebrate 10 years of Merdeka and the **Malay Language** also became the sole Official and National **Language** of the country. We have celebrated Malaysia's Tenth Merdeka Anniversary in a grand manner and for a few days and **nights** the entire population observed the National Day with **joy and pride**. During the 10 years of Malaysia's independence we **have** achieved a great deal of progress in all fields and all **Malaysians** of different races and religions have derived many benefits **from**