

THE TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY

In a broadcast to the nation on the Twentieth Anniversary of the United Malay National Organisation, Tun Razak traced the birth and growth of the UMNO and spoke of its varied achievements. He then emphasised the main function of the Party. His speech is given below.

TOMORROW THE UNITED MALAY NATIONAL ORGANISATION, better known as UMNO, will be 20 years old. The day also marks the 15th year of Tengku's undisputed leadership of UMNO. In Asia where democracy lives perilously and is often shortlived, UMNO, a partner of the Alliance Party that has been ruling this country peacefully since 1955. is indeed quite old.

UMNO's birth can be said to be in a way accidental. In 1946 the British Government forced upon the Malays the Malayan Union which virtually meant that the Malay States instead of remaining as protected States became colonics. The various Malay associations, political and otherwise, decided to hold a Congress at the Sultan Suleiman Club in Kuala Lumpur on March, 1, 2 and 4. This Congress decided not only to oppose the Malayan Union by every constitutional means possible but also to form a permanent organisation which later become the UMNO.

Before the birth of UMNO the Malays were as divided as were the various States of Malaya. Faced with the danger to their survival the Malays found National Unity as never before in their history under the leadership of the late Dato' Onn bin Ja'afar. They fought and won the battle against the Malayan Union.

The UMNO then grew in strength and prestige. In 1948 through the initiative of UMNO, the Federation of Malaya Constitution came into being. This was the result of UMNO's victory. Dato' Onn found himself out of step with the ordinary members of UMNO and decided in 1951 to leave UMNO and form a new party to be known as the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP). It was a matter for decision at that time whether without Dato' Onn. UMNO should continue or dissolve itself.

A few leaders of UMNO at the time (I was then the leader of the UMNO Youth and a Vice-President of UMNO) were strongly

of the view that UMNO must go on as the National Party that had united the Malays.

As Dato' Onn had decided to give up the presidency of UMNO we had to look for a new man to take his place. The Tunku, who was one of the founder members of UMNO, had left the party because of differences with Dato' Onn, and was at the time working in the Legal Department in Kuala Lumpur.

I had known the Tunku during our student days in England. He is a man of deep sincerity and integrity with a great strength of character. We, therefore, decided to persuade the Tunku to take up the leadership of UMNO. The Tunku agreed to do so and immediately resigned from his Government job to become full time president of the organisation.

The change in the leadership of the organisation, the UMNO, was really the turning point in the history of this country. Under the Tunku's leadership UMNO grew into a strong and dynamic political party enjoying massive support of the Malays. The slogan of UMNO was changed from 'Hidup Melayu' which means 'Long live the Malays' to 'Merdeka' or "Independence".

As a far-sighted leader the Tunku realised soon enough that to achieve independence for Malaya, UMNO must have the support of the other races. As a result the Tunku together with the late Tun Tan Cheng Lock and other leaders formed the Alliance of UMNO, MCA and MIC. This Alliance won nearly all the elections at Town, Council and Municipal levels in **1952-1954**.

The British Government realising the strength of the Alliance Party agreed to allow the first general election at national level in Malaya as demanded by UMNO to be held in 1955.

In the 1955 General Election the Alliance won 51 out of the 52 seats. The other seat went to the PMIP. Dato Onn's Party Negara (he had changed his Independence of Malaya Party into a completely communal party. Party Negara) did not win a single seat. It was the other opposition parties, except the PMIP. With such a resounding victory by the Alliance at the national level, the British Government could not resist giving Malaya Independence, and at the independence talks in London in January, 1956, Britain agreed to grant Merdeka to Malaya in August, 1957,

Since independence the Alliance Government has not only governed the country efficiently with fairness and justice to all, but it was also able to end the Emergency in July 1960 just under two years after Independence. Also the Alliance Government was able to pursue a liberal economic policy resulting in economic growth and development not only in the towns but also in the rural areas. The Alliance also, through its policy of racial harmony and goodwill laid a strong foundation for unity among our people of various races.

In September, 1963, we decided to establish Malaysia by bringing Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak into the Federation. However, unfortunately in August, 1965, Singapore seceded. In all these epoch-making changes during the last 20 years in Malaya and Malaysia, UMNO played a leading role.

UMNO together with MCA, and MIC. formed the Alliance Party and together with other patriotic organisations, rallied the people of all races behind the Government to fight Indonesian confrontation.

The UMNO. under Tunku's leadership, has always followed a liberal and realistic policy of patriotism, goodwill and friendship and tolerance to other races who have made Malaya and Malaysia their home. It was this realistic and liberal policy that enabled our country to achieve independence and now to play our part in the affairs of this region of South-east Asia as well as international affairs. Malaysia's record since independence is one which we all can be proud of.

UMNO's main function is to mobilise Malay support, sustain it and strengthen their loyalty in support of the Alliance Government. UMNO commands considerable support of the Malays throughout the country. UMNO's other function must be, together with

its partners, the MCA and MIC. to promote and strengthen goodwill, co-operation and unity among the various races in this country.

We believe and I personally implicitly believe—that it is imperative that the various races in this country must live peacefully, with goodwill and friendship towards one another if Malaysia is to survive and grow as a strong and united country.

The various races must ultimately be integrated into a single united nation whose sole object of loyalty is to Malaysia only. We,

in the Alliance. strongly believe in this and are doing our best to fulfil this aim. We also believe that this can only be achieved gradually but we must move forward steadily step by step until we achieve our ultimate goal.

UMNO is strong today because its top leaders are loyal and dedicated people. They are not only loyal to the people, but loyal to each other. They have made a pledge to serve and make sacrifices in the interests of the people of this country of all races. It is also a truly democratic party and the leaders are always close to the people.

The tasks ahead confronting UMNO are great. UMNO has achieved much in the past but there is still much more to be done. UMNO is responsible for sustaining the unity not only of the Malays but of all bumiputras.

Its duty is to see that the bumiputras have a rightful place in this country, to see to their economic uplift and the modernisation of their outlook and attitude. Indeed it is UMNO's duty to fulfil their desire for a better and higher standard of living and for a just and equitable society.

These are the aims and immediate problems of UMNO and on this happy day we leaders of UMNO re-dedicate ourselves to work and strive even harder to achieve these objectives.

I ask members of UMNO to be loyal to the Party, to the aims and objectives and to the top leadership. To all good friends of UMNO of other races I ask them to help UMNO because it is the duty of all of us in Malaysia today to help strengthen the sensible, moderate leadership which alone can lead this country in peace, harmony and unity towards meeting the rising expectations of our people of various races for a better life and a more just society.

If this sensible and moderate leadership were to fail, then the country would veer either to the right or the left. If this happens then I am certain that misunderstanding and misfortune await all of us.

Let us therefore rally to the help of this middle-of-the-road leadership—the right road towards peace, happiness and stability of our people and our beloved country. Malaysia.