

THE NEW MALAY

Muhammad Haji Muhd Taib



VISAGE COMMUNICATION

Petaling Jaya

1996

This book is translated from *Melayu Baru* (1993)
by Zahran Razak.

English Edition First Print 1996.

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Typesetter: Mohd Amin

Printed By:
Percetakan Kum Sdn. Bhd.
Lot 3, Lorong 19/1B,
46300 Petaling Jaya.

ISBN 983 - 9326 - 7
Price: RM 16.90

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859838

111
305-89923
11/11/97
24 JUN 1997
Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

Dedicated to the Younger Generation in the Hope that They Will Forge Forward With the Utmost Determination, Scale Greater Heights and Gain the Highest Respect.

FOREWORD

I extend my heartiest congratulations to Tan Sri Muhammad bin Haji Muhd. Taib, who had conceived the catchall, *New Malay*, and, through this book, has ably given form and meaning to it.

The desire to inject the Malay society with a new paradigm shift is in itself not new. Value shifts in the Malay society, like in any other society, constitute a continuous process and have been going on for a long time: for example, the seminal conversion to Islam of the 13th and 14th centuries and the response to the changes brought about with the coming of the West in the 19th century. Today, we are still experiencing and renewing the effects of these paradigm shifts. What is new in Tan Sri Muhammad's concept of the New Malay is the recognition of the particular niche the Malays have carved for themselves in the post-independent and, one might add, the pre-global era in a world both expanding and shrinking as it approaches the next millennium.

Even looking from a detached point, the reformation of the collective Malay psyche in the 35 years of independence seems to be nothing short of a miracle. From the quagmire of an agrarian society bedevilled by poverty, ignorance and a heritage of colonial and feudal traits and traditions, the Malays have potently emerged to assert a strong sense of self-worth. This emergence is reflected in Dr Mahathir Mohamed's *The Malay Dilemma* and Senu Abdul Rahman's *Revolusi Mental*, two books which depict the past plights and future hopes of the Malays. Meanwhile, the forward looking *Vision 2020* plan captures the extraordinary optimism of the post-independence Malay leaders and thinkers. How this optimism is to be translated into concrete plans and actions is the theme behind the