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# TUN RAZAK

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

# **PROFILE**

**Tun Abdul Razak  
bin Hussein**

**Toh Puan Rahah**

KEMENTERIAN PENERANGAN MSIA



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# Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein

by H'NG HUNG YONG  
DR. NOORDIN SOPIEE



**T**UN Abdul Razak bin Hussein, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, is a quiet man; but behind the air of quiet efficiency is a dynamic innovator in domestic and international affairs.

Abroad, he has made it a cardinal principle of Malaysia's foreign policy that South-east Asia should be "a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality", free of Big Power collision and collusion, yet open to the play of the legitimate interests of all nations.

In working towards the fulfilment of this vision, Tun Razak has brought to bear the practical mind of the realist.

The nations of South-east Asia may want their region to be free and neutral; they cannot have it so until the super-nations are willing. Hence Tun Razak's unremitting effort to secure Big Power readiness at the appropriate time to underwrite a neutral South-east Asia.

At home, he has set his hand to building a multi-racial society based on

*Tun Razak with  
his wife  
Toh Puan Rahah.*

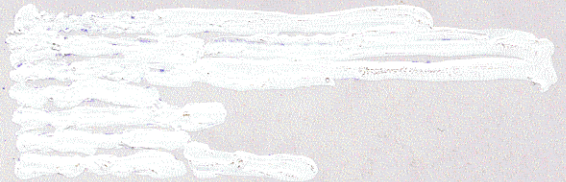
justice. In this society composed of three great communities (the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians), race is set aside, the have-notes of whatever origin will be given equal opportunity, and the economically backward communities will be brought to equal terms with the others. The economic distortions produced by the accidents of history and the designs of colonialism are to be corrected. All of this — the objectives of Tun Razak's New Economic Policy — will be sought within the protection of constitutional safeguards, without force and without expropriation.

Thus, in Malaysia and in the South-east Asia region, the Razak Administration has embarked on two great ventures.

Tun Razak well knows he cannot expect swift success. Throughout his career as administrator and politician (in politics alone a matter of nearly a quarter of a century) he has been content to work and sometimes wait, to build patiently upon modest beginnings towards a worthwhile end.

His own beginnings were modest enough — a boy in a rural town who walked barefoot to school, worked in the ricefields and tended his grandfather's buffaloes.

Today he is national leader of the Alliance, the giant multi-racial party representing the country's three great races, and by virtue of this leadership, Prime Minister of Malaysia.



*Trying out an  
earth-moving bulldozer  
at one of the new land  
development schemes.*



*On one of his  
field inspection tours.*

## The young Razak

Born in a small village in the backwoods of the federal state of Pahang, Tun Razak remembers vividly the environment he grew up in. Ask him today and he will tell you about the school which had a mud floor and a thatched roof which leaked incessantly during the rainy season.

He will tell you about fathers who could not afford to send their children to school, about mothers who had to deliver their own babies, about peasants who eked out a living with little else but sweat and hope.

The young Razak worked hard. An old friend remembers: "He was the brightest in our group. He was studious. He could read a book once and tell us all about it. He won all the prizes every year."

Razak's early promise in the classroom was recognised. In 1939 he was appointed to the Malay Administrative Service and was sent to Raffles College (now the University of Singapore) for further studies. Before he could complete his studies, however, Malaya fell to the imperial forces of Japan.

The war was a traumatic experience. To Razak and other Malaysians, the sight of British troops fleeing from Japanese soldiers shattered the myth that the British were invincible.

Razak recalls: "The thought came to me when



*BELOW*  
*Declaring open*  
*a regional conference on*  
*transport and communications.*

*FAR BELOW*  
*A moment of relaxation*  
*during the*  
*Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference*  
*in Singapore.*

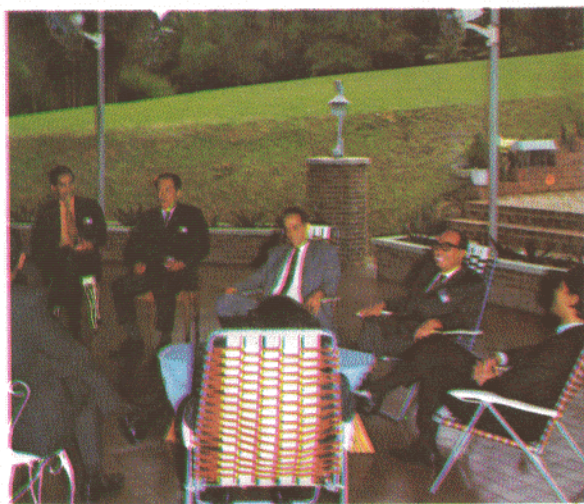
I was ten years old how badly we were treated by the British. We had the coronation of the Pahang Sultan in 1932. They built a very big hall and all the chiefs, nicely dressed, stood in the hall. The British Governor and his officers were there too. Everyone else was standing except them.

“That picture has stayed in my mind. The British put us on the stage but with no part to play. This was our country but they sat there and ruled it, and all we could do was to stand by and watch. I remember that occasion well!”

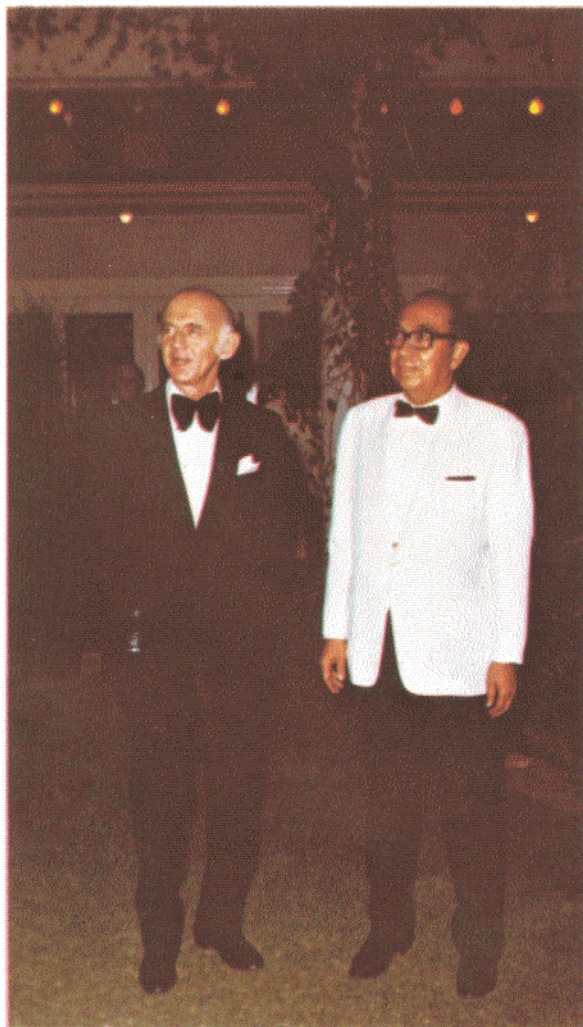
The British had to go, and the Japanese Army had proved to Razak that it could be done. “The Japanese were Asians like us; physically, they were even smaller. So we thought, ‘If they can beat the British, we should be able to do it too.’ After all, this is our country.”

The war also taught Malaysians that Asian imperialism was as bad as other types of imperialism. Razak reacted strongly against the atrocities of the Japanese Army. He made contact with Force 136, the guerilla-force parachuted by the Allies into Malaya, and formed his own guerilla company. By the war’s end, he had attained the rank of Captain.

To a large extent, it was because of his guerilla activities that in 1947 he was given a scholarship to study in Britain. If the British expected him to be grateful, however, they were to be disappointed. For Razak noted: “I was the first student from Pahang to be sent for further studies — after seventy years of British rule!”



*Entertaining the  
Australian Prime Minister.  
Mr. W. McMahon.*



His years in England were well spent. It was there that he met and developed a strong personal relationship with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the man who was to emerge as the first Prime Minister of an independent Malaya. (Malaysia came into being only in 1963, six years after Malayan independence, with the addition of two states in Borneo).

In a record eighteen months he completed his law examinations. In the same period he also made his mark as a socialist student leader. Razak reacted strongly against the Churchillian government which had come out against the granting of independence to the colonies.

He found sympathy among the British socialists in this respect and became an active member of the British Labour Party and the Fabian Society. With students of similar inclination, Razak founded the Malayan Forum, a socialist-oriented society developed to the goal of Malayan independence.

The death of his father in April 1950 interrupted Razak's post-graduate studies and forced his immediate return to Malaya. There was a large family to think of, eight brothers and seven sisters, apart from his widowed mother.

Under contract to serve the Government, he followed the footsteps of his father and joined the civil service where he made impressive progress. By 1952 Razak had become the State Secretary of Pahang. "I was then the junior-most officer in the Civil Service in the state," he recounts, "but I was given the senior-most post."

# The political beginnings

Razak's rapid advancement in the civil service was paralleled by his growing involvement in the struggle for national independence. By the time of his return from Britain in 1950, the nationalist movement spearheaded by the United Malay

National Organisation (UMNO) was rapidly gaining momentum. The young man wasted no time in joining the party; and he wasted no time in making his mark. Razak fondly remembers the nightly meetings at his house: "Our discussions centred around one objective — the fight for independence."

It was a rule at that time that no civil servant could take part in political activities without British permission. The rebellious Razak was not

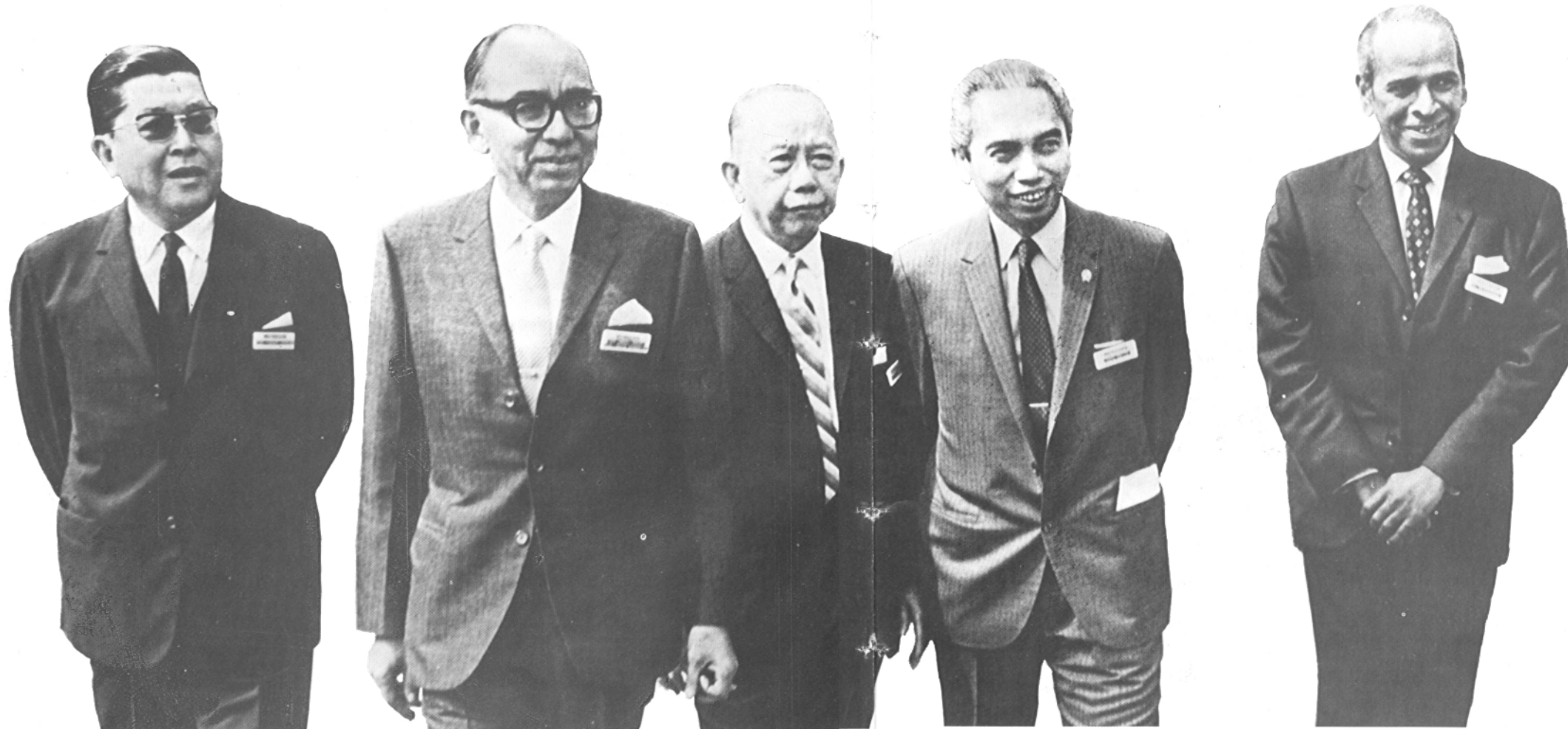
prepared to stomach this and challenged the British to discipline him. "They had this rule but I could not be bothered," he said. The British were soft."

By this time, he had built up a strong following not only in his home state but throughout the country. Within four months of joining UMNO, Razak had been elected President of its Youth Section. It became clear that he was a man to be reckoned with and in February 1951, the British

appointed him an unofficial member of the Federal Legislative Council, the main legislative body of the country.

When Tunku Abdul Rahman became President of UMNO later in the same year, the young man was swept into the office of Deputy President.

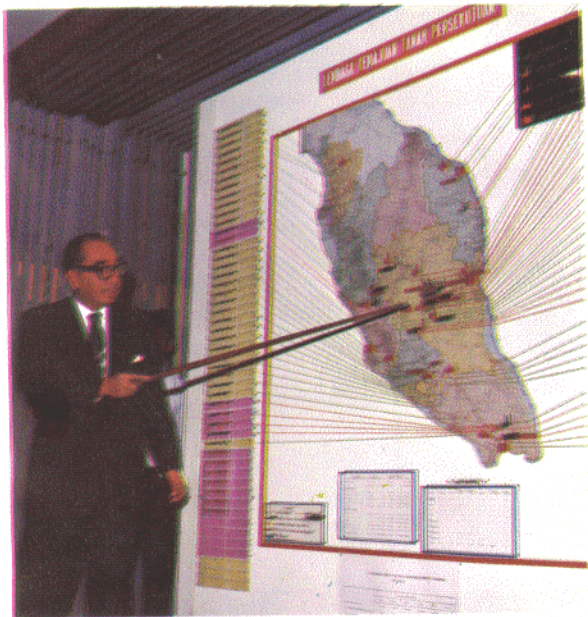
Thus began a partnership between the two men which will stand out in Malaysian history as the link between the country's struggle for independence and its fight for modernisation.



ASEAN (Association of South-east Asian Nations) — the best hope for regional co-operation in South-east Asia to ensure peace, progress and stability. With foreign ministers of member countries (1969). From left, Tun Thanat Khoman (Thai

Foreign Minister), Tun Razak, Mr. Carlos P. Romulo (Philippine Foreign Secretary), Tun Adam Malik (Indonesia Foreign Minister) and Mr. S. Rajaratnam (Singapore Foreign Minister). — (Utusan Melayu Photo).

*Personal briefing  
at the national operations room  
— the nerve centre for  
Malaysia's national development programme.*



## The fight for independence

The Rahman-Razak team worked resolutely on the immediate task of throwing the British out.

In 1952, UMNO, the dominant Malay party, and the Malayan Chinese Association, the dominant Chinese party, arrived at an electoral pact. This understanding was to evolve into a stable political party, the Alliance, which (with the addition of the Malayan Indian Congress at a later stage) welded the three major races of the country into a single political force. It was this unique, workable, indeed, efficient political combination which facilitated the movement towards independence and which was to rule the country throughout the post-independence period.

In the meantime, after the initial electoral understanding, the Alliance swept the board in the series of local elections which were held in and after 1952.

Having showed their political strength, the Alliance then mounted a campaign for an early date for popular elections at the national level. The British refused.



*Tun Razak covers thousands of miles annually — to check on progress of development throughout the country.*

*The German Foreign Minister,  
Mr. Walter Scheel  
calling on Tun Razak  
at his office.*



One commentator has observed that “up to that time no colony had advanced in one step from having a wholly nominated legislative council to having one with an elected majority.” In the face of an uncompromising campaign, however, the Colonial Office relented and surrendered to the Alliance’s demands.

On July 27, 1955, the country went to the polls. The Alliance campaign centred around the call for “Merdeka” (Independence). The people responded as one. The party won fifty-one of the fifty-two seats and captured the legislature. The British could no longer claim that the people did not want independence.

In preparation for their departure, Britain agreed to allow the leader of the Alliance, Tunku Abdul Rahman, to form a Cabinet made up largely of elected Ministers as well as a few British officials, who still held a few key posts.

Tun Razak was appointed to head the Ministry of Education, “the Ministry with the greatest headaches.”

He recalls that “there were many different types of schools and there was no educational policy.” The British had merely regarded the schools to a very large extent as the reservoir from which they could siphon off men to fill the junior positions in the administrative service.

The Ministry was also the focus of all kinds of pressures from the various racial communities who wanted a say in the formulation of a national educational policy.

If leadership can be defined as the ability to persuade others to do what you want them to do, Razak's role as Minister of Education stamped him as a leader of the highest order. Against strong resistance from many quarters, he forced through a revolutionary policy for the schools aimed at welding the country's multi-racial population into a united nation. To a large extent, that policy stands to this day.

The performance of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Cabinet gave the lie to the British suggestion that the country was not prepared for independence.

The Alliance accelerated its campaign for Merdeka. Razak was entrusted with the task of working on the details which would help to ensure a viable constitution for an independent Malaya.

Merdeka came to Malaya on August 31, 1957.

Tunku Abdul Rahman, now called "the Father of Independence", appointed Tun as his Deputy Prime Minister. For them, there were new battles to be won, and once again, the Tunku called on Razak to sort out some of the more intractable problems.

The Tun was made Minister of Defence and entrusted with the task of continuing the fight against the Peking-oriented Communist terrorists who had plagued the country for nine years. Within a year of his taking office, and as a result of the full-hearted support of the people, the revolt was brought under control. By 1960 most of the guerrillas were wiped out or had fled the country.

*BELOW*  
*Escorting the President*  
*of Gambia, Sir Dawda Jawara*  
*along the tarmac at*  
*Kuala Lumpur international airport.*



*FAR BELOW*  
*In the Cabinet room*  
*with the Laotian Premier,*  
*Prince Souvanna Phouma.*



## The struggle for modernisation

The war against the insurrectionists won, Tun Razak was now given the task of winning the peace. In addition to his portfolios of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, he was also appointed Minister of Rural Development.

Razak did not forget his roots. He took the task of rural development in both hands and threw his heart and soul into the fray. Development was conducted like a military operation. It was one war the country could not afford to lose. In the Tun's own words, "the greatest safeguard of our nation's sovereignty is not only Defence, but even more so, Development."

The bureaucracy was to be the major instrument of change. He streamlined it and got rid of the cobwebs which had accumulated after nearly a century of colonial rule. In his first directive as Minister, Razak stressed that discussions between civil servants were no substitute for planning, and that planning was no substitute for action. "Necessary correspondence will be kept to a minimum, unnecessary correspondence will not be written at all."

Today he will speak openly of the district officers



Visiting Malaysia's earth satellite station at Kuantan.

in charge of the development projects who were rendered speechless under his cross-examination, of others who were reduced to tears.

The Tun is a kind-hearted man but he has always believed that "to be kind one has to be hard." Those under him knew how hard he could be. When it came to the question of development, Razak tolerated fools badly, defeatists not at all.

Stories abound. On one of his field inspection trips, for example, village elders approached the Tun for a road to their market-place. He was sympathetic but the local engineer argued that resources were insufficient and put forward other excuses. Razak immediately and publicly ordered his transfer. His officers took note.

The Tun knew full well that development required that he moved an entire nation; the people had to be knocked out of their complacency and traditional ways.

His ruthless devotion to efficiency and short cuts saved valuable weeks here, months there. In the end, they were fully justified by the results.

In the ten years that Razak was Minister of National and Rural Development, nearly three million adults were taught to read and write. The British took nearly a century to build two thousand schools; the Tun took only ten years to build three thousand more. At the time of independence, one million children were at school; in 1970, there were two million. During Tun's tenure of office, nearly half a million acres of rice, coconut and other crops were provided with drainage and

*A keen golfer —  
Tun Razak teeing off.*



irrigation facilities, and more than 800,000 acres of virgin jungle were opened for development.

The Tun is not an orator. He prefers results to speak for themselves. The results he has achieved speak eloquently of the man who travelled tens of thousands of miles year after year to check on development and of the Minister who often brought terror into the hearts of lazy and unimaginative civil servants. The Tun had proven, many times over, his worth as a man who got down to details and who got things done.

All the while, he was very much in the shadow of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the great unifier, the great conciliator, the great father figure. The Tunku was what was needed by a country new to nationhood. He had the magic to harmonise the various races that made up Malaysia.

In 1969, disaster struck.

The Alliance had won three democratic elections in succession. Competitive democratic electioneering was to have tragic consequences in the fourth, the May 1969 elections. The politicking became very racial with some of the parties going all out to exploit the multi-racial situation (in which Malays equalled non-Malays in numbers) to their political advantage. The result was the racial violence which broke out on May 13, 1969, three days after the elections.

The riots broke the Tunku's heart. The Constitution was suspended and a State of Emergency declared and Razak was immediately summoned to take charge as the "Director of Operations"

*Lighting the cauldron at the opening of the 6th South-east Asian Peninsula Games (1971) in Kuala Lumpur.*

with dictatorial powers. He was empowered to rule by decree.

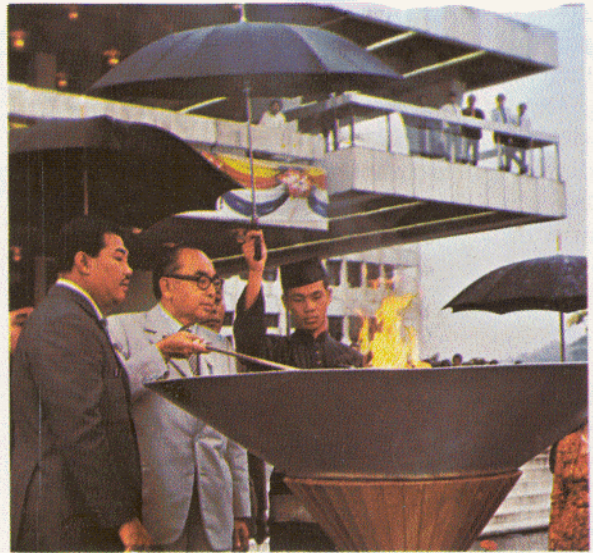
It was not a happy period for the Tun, a man who believed that "if you want to serve the people, too much power is no good. Because even if you don't intend to misuse it may do so because there is no check and balance." There is almost an air of de Tocqueville about the way the Tun says it. "You can't check everything. You may be sincere, but can you be sure that all your officers who act in your name are sincere?"

"Now with a democratic system, you've got Parliament, you've got the State Assemblies, you've got the opposition who will check for you." The philosophy is simple; the belief in democracy is deep.

Even while he ruled Malaysia by decree in the uncertain months after the 1969 riots, the reluctant dictator sought the advice of public opinion.

In place of the suspended Parliament, Razak created a National Consultative Council (here the mind of the innovator is again at work) whose members were drawn from all areas of society — leading politicians from his own party and from the opposition; representatives of all the great religious faiths, captains of commerce and industry, members of the professions, university dons, rank and file teachers, newspaper men, women's organisations, the trade unions . . .

Every member of the Consultative Council was continually urged by Razak to speak his mind; to criticise as sharply as he chose; to put forward



ideas, however radical. Over every session the Tun presided, every day, every hour. He was always there, listening, thinking, assessing.

Out of these deliberations emerged the Rukunegara, today Malaysia's national philosophy, declaring and affirming the great principles of belief in God, loyalty to King and country, belief in a democratic society, a just society, a society dedicated to concepts of morality and good behaviour.

From the National Consultative Council debates, too, came the basic ideas that have now been fleshed out in the Second Malaysia Development Plan and the New Economic Policy — the aims of which are to remove economic imbalances between the communities, to wipe out poverty among all races, to take the heat and the heart out of racial tensions.

The National Consultative Council experiment — a notably successful one in the light of later events — was one of the means by which Razak and his lieutenants paved the way for a return from rule by decree to Parliamentary democracy, the return of power to the people.

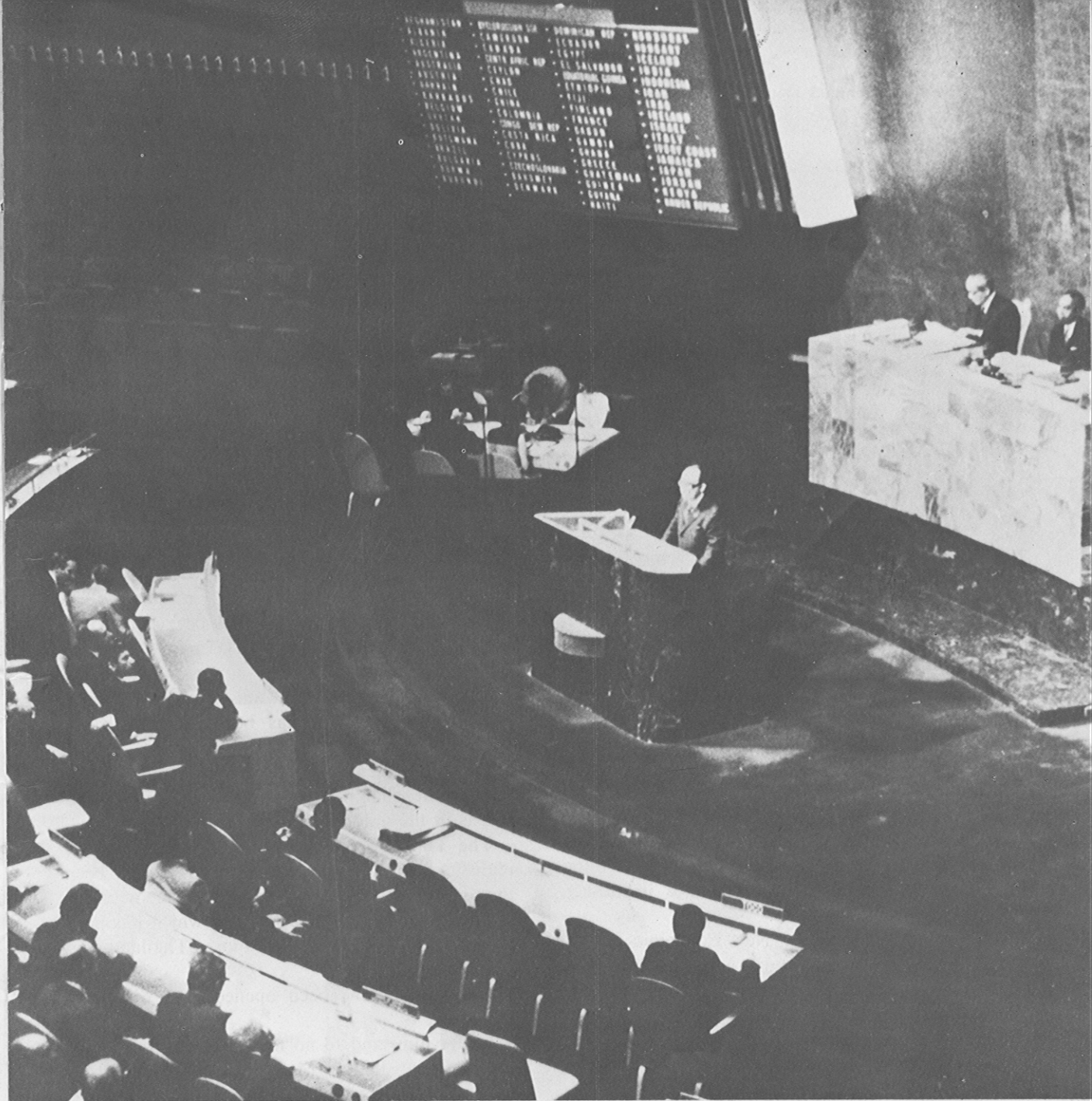
The Tun probably worked harder than any dictator in history to get rid of his dictatorial powers and to work himself out of a job.

On September 22, 1970, Tun Abdul Razak did get a new "job". He became Prime Minister after a dozen years as the Tunku's Deputy. The State of Emergency was brought to an end and parliamentary democracy restored in February 1971.

*BELOW*  
*Tun Razak and Toh Puan Rahah*  
*paying respects to*  
*Their Majesties the King and Queen.*

*FAR BELOW*  
*Signing the Kuala Lumpur Declaration*  
*which states that South-east Asia*  
*should be a zone of peace,*  
*freedom and neutrality.*





*In New York, Tun Razak addressed the 26th session of the United Nations General Assembly (1971).*

# Consolidation and reconstruction

Now on his own, the Tun blossomed as a national innovator. Critical conditions made the Tun launch Malaysia's own New Economic Policy aimed at restructuring the economic imbalance in the country.

Hand in hand with the New Economic Policy, Tun Razak embarked on an impressive programme of social engineering geared towards creating a mental revolution, a national political philosophy and a new political culture.

The Tun's innovations have not been confined to the domestic sphere alone. His actions since his Premiership have belied to a large extent the

adage that in the field of foreign relations there is no fresh new day. He has almost overnight fundamentally altered several crucial aspects of Malaysian foreign policy.

Certain important aspects have remained unchanged, of course. Malaysia remains as strongly anti-colonial as it ever was. The Tun's commitment to the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) remains immovable. He despises apartheid and regimes founded on racial supremacy. He welcomes the friendships of all states which believe in peaceful coexistence and believes that his nation can learn a great deal from other countries.

Since becoming Prime Minister, however, Malaysian foreign policy has been radically transformed in many crucial aspects. Malaysia is now set as an emergent leader of the non-aligned states and as the champion of a new (economic) emphasis in the non-aligned movement.

The Tun has also pioneered a new and more realistic policy towards China; and he has been the main proponent of the concept of the neutralisation of South-east Asia, an idea which has been accepted by Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

New paths have been opened, new directions chartered.

Under him, and to no mean extent, because of his own contribution, Malaysia can now stand up in the world, proud of its achievements and proud of its place in the comity of nations.

**BELOW**

*At a dinner party given  
in honour of the British Prime Minister,  
Mr. Edward Heath.*

**FAR BELOW**

*At a Press conference.*

**BELOW**

*Welcoming delegates to the  
preparatory meeting of the  
non-aligned countries in Kuala Lumpur.*

**FAR BELOW LEFT**

*Tun Razak with his  
Singapore counterpart  
Mr. Lee Kuan Yew.*

**FAR BELOW RIGHT**

*The President of the World Bank,  
Mr. R. McNamara  
paying a courtesy call  
on Tun Razak at "Sri Taman",  
the Prime Minister's official residence.*



# Toh Puan Rahah

by ADIBAH AMIN

**T**OH Puan Hajjah Rahah was at evening prayers when we arrived half-an-hour early, at Sri Taman (official residence).

We looked around as we waited, struck by the sense of space and serenity that pervaded the home of Malaysia's Prime Minister.

The decor, an interesting blend of the traditional and the modern, showed an unmistakably personal touch.

When Toh Puan Rahah came out to greet us, we discerned the same characteristic combination in her dress and hair-style.

Her smile was warm though touched with a little uncertainty. Later she laughingly confessed that after all these years she had not quite got over her secret dread of cameramen and reporters armed with note-books.

As the cameras flashed, her face took on a reserved, formal look. I recalled a friend's remark that Toh Puan Rahah's pictures seldom do her justice.

But her face softened when a rugged five-year old — youngest of her five boys — marched in carrying a toy-gun bigger than himself.

Cameramen find that Toh Puanh Rahah's best photographs are those taken with children.



In the conversation that followed, there was no trace of stiffness in her manner and expression. She spoke with quiet candour, spiced with humour.

She recalled a sheltered childhood as the youngest of three daughters in a tradition-loving, fairly well-to-do family.

Her father, at that time an inspector of religious schools, was known as Haji Noh Beirut, having gone to a university in Beirut. (Later he was to become a member of Parliament and a Speaker of the House noted for his gentle wit.)

Born in 1934 in Muar, a quiet little town near the west coast of West Malaysia, Rahah went to school in five different towns as the family followed her father on transfer.

She started school in Muar during the Japanese Occupation — a combination Malay-Japanese school. In the afternoon and at night she attended religious classes and learnt to read the Koran.

While adults fretted over wartime hardships, little Rahah had fun singing, dancing and acting in school concerts.

She recalls with particular pleasure the time when she was chosen to act as a queen in a Japanese play.

She was nine years old and life was perfect. She still remembers the story of the play — based on a Japanese legend — and even the title: “Momotaro San”.

When the war was over she went to an English School, in Batu Pahat, and later in Mersing, both in the State of Johore.



*Four of their five sons.  
The eldest is away in a university.*

When her father was transferred to Segamat, (Johore), Rahah was packed off to a convent boarding school in Malacca as there was no girls' school in Segamat.

She was fourteen then and her parents, like many others in those days, would not dream of sending her to a co-educational school.

As a teen-ager, more and more she was losing the blithe freedom of childhood. School and home were equally strict.

“My parents did not mind me going out to play games. I loved badminton and table tennis — still do, in fact. But picnics, parties, dances — not a hope!”

She still took part in school concerts, however. At one concert put up by the convent, Rahah and five other girls did the Irish jig.

Her next school was in Johore Bahru, also a convent. Then, in standard seven — equivalent of today's form three — she was taken out of school to be married.

Tun Abdul Razak at that time was the State Secretary of Pahang. After the seclusion of her girlhood, Rahah felt the shock of exposure to public life.

“The way I was brought up, a girl was expected to be shy and quiet, especially with older people and with men. As the wife of a senior Government official I had to learn to adjust myself.”

She had to learn to hold her own in conversation with VIPs and their wives, to plan luncheons

*President of the  
Girls Guides Association  
of Malaysia.*



and dinners for many guests, to entertain and be entertained with grace.

During those three years in Pahang, when her husband was State Secretary and later acting Menteri Besar (State Chief Minister), Rahah conquered part of the diffidence nurtured by her sheltered upbringing and convent schooling.

But she found she had a lot more to learn when her husband resigned from Government service to plunge into full-time politics.

As the wife of a politician, Rahah had to mix with people from all communities and all strata of society.

She walked miles with her husband into remote kampongs and got to know the people — their problems, their values, their sensitivities.

She also became active in the woman's wing of his party — UMNO (United Malay National Organisation). It was she who opened the branch in Petaling Jaya, the new satellite town eight miles away from the Malaysian capital.

As her husband held one important portfolio after another — Minister of Education, Minister of Defence, Minister of Rural Development, Deputy Prime Minister, then Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs — Rahah did her share of social work with voluntary organisations.

In the past two years, as wife of Malaysia's Prime Minister, her social duties have increased manifold.

Besides being president of the Girl Guides Association, patron of the Women's Institute and

*A party given  
in honour of visiting Burmese First Lady,  
Madame Ne Win.*

a number of other things, she finds herself caught in an endless round of official openings and launchings, luncheons and dinners, visits and tours.

She accompanies her husband on practically all his trips abroad.

She has to be ready to entertain guests at a moment's notice. Quite often, Sri Taman is 'invaded' by touring groups from the kampongs.

Sometimes, too, people from Tun Razak's constituency come unexpectedly with some pressing problem, and if he happens to be away for a few days, they stay at Sri Taman until his return.

As Prime Minister's wife a great deal is expected of Toh Puan Rahah, and to the best of her ability she tries to live up to those expectations.

But her priorities are clear. To the public, she is the Prime Minister's wife. But to herself, she is simply Razak's wife and mother of his children.

Like any ordinary wife, she attends personally to his food and clothes and looks after his general health.

Perhaps more than most wives, she has to spare him the burden of domestic worries and give him a home background in which he can relax and do his thinking in peace.

He leaves almost all domestic decisions to her, trusting her judgment. At home she is his Prime Minister.

Both in public and private life Tun Razak is always calm and unruffled, never loses his temper,





*Toh Puan Rahah launching "Hari Pahlawan" (Warriors' Day).*

never seems to worry. But after nearly twenty years of marriage, Toh Puan Rahah has learnt to read his innermost feelings.

She knows when to leave him alone to his long silences and when to draw him into conversation and laughter.

However busy she may be, she drops everything when she senses that he needs to speak out his thoughts aloud in her presence.

She curbs her love of the experimental in clothes and accessories to conform to his concept of what his wife should be: always infinitely feminine.

Every time he goes away without her, he never fails to bring back pieces of material for her dress. These she always wears with pride.

"Luckily he has very good taste," she remarked with a smile.

Would she wear his presents even if she did not like them?

"Oh yes indeed. It's not the gift that matters, it's the feeling behind it."

On her part, she has given up buying him shirts. He has a horror of anything remotely flamboyant or 'groovy' and wears only the most subdued colours.

Though Tun Razak and Toh Puan Rahah differ in small things, they have the same basic values and preferences.

Both are by nature quiet and home-loving, unimpressed by the glitter of parties and outside entertainment.



Every minute that they can spare from public duties they spend at home with their children. Toh Puan Rahah sees to it that as far as possible the family is together for lunch and dinner.

Their five boys — the eldest in first year university and the youngest in kindergarten — are brought up in an atmosphere of family affection and freedom.

Both Tun Razak and Toh Puan Rahah do not believe in caning or repressive discipline. But neither do they pamper their children.

"Tun never scolds the boys, but they know he will not stand any nonsense. With me they are more playful, but never really disobedient or naughty."

The boys are encouraged to have independent opinions and to express them freely.

"Many people would be surprised if they could be present at our family sessions and hear Tun arguing and joking with his sons."

Toh Puan Rahah is the one who supervises the children's school work. She is thankful that so far her boys seem very interested in their studies.

Neither she nor Tun tries to channel the boys into any particular career. They are left free to choose whatever interests them most.

Speaking of her five boys, Toh Puan Rahah confessed that she sometimes longs for a daughter.

"A girl should be a companion, especially in old age," she said wistfully.

Still she is happy that her boys, though active and adventurous, maintain a warm relationship



**BELOW**

*As a public figure,  
Toh Puan Rahah attends  
many official functions.*

**FAR BELOW**

*Attending a charity fashion show.*



with their parents.

With her, especially, they are very close. They discuss their problems freely, treating her as a friend as well as a mother.

In between her public engagements and her duties as wife and mother, Toh Puan Rahah still finds time for her own interests.

She loves gardening. For the past six years she has specialised in orchids.

“Orchids are beautiful. And the blooms last a long time.”

Planning luncheons and dinners for guests is no chore for Toh Puan Rahah. She enjoys launching new recipes and unusual combinations that she has first tried out successfully on the family.

She is also very interested in interior decoration and frequently makes effective little changes in the decor of Sri Taman.

She reads a lot, both in Bahasa Malaysia (the national language) and English, deriving most pleasure from books on religion.

Years of public prominence have not really changed Rahah. Basically she is still the quiet, cheerful, religious Malay girl that she was nineteen years ago.

