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UMNO  YOUTH

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LEADERSHIP  
**AND**  
 STRUGGLE

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## FOREWORD

This book presents the development of the leadership and struggles of the Malaysian UMNO Youth Movement since its inception, and addresses the issues and challenges of the year 2000. The developments occurring in the Youth Movement during a certain period was identified through the leadership of its leaders based on his role, actions, personality and caliber.

The UMNO Youth movement was established on 2 March 1947 with its original name as UMNO Youth Department. On 26 August 1949, it was changed to UMNO Youth Alliance and since then it developed by leaps and bounds until it was declared illegal, after which it was revived and continued its activities whilst maintaining its original form and goals. During its 43 years in existence, the Youth Movement continued to move forward in line with the developments of its parent body and the nation.

These struggle and development can be divided into six different era. The first era was the struggle to invigorate the movement through its first two leaders, Capt. Hussein Onn and Dato' Abdul Razak Hussain. The second era witnessed the movement going through a strengthening process. During this era, the Youth Movement was led by Sardon Jubir and Senu Abdul Rahman. The third era saw the Youth Movement moving actively as a pressure group and overseer of the goings on in the party, government and private bodies. During this time, it was feared and respected due to its aggressive and outspoken method of action. The leaders during this era was Datuk Harun Idris followed by Syed Jaafar Albar and Datuk Suhaimi Haji Kamaruddin. In the fourth era, the Movement experienced the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim who emphasized Islamic values. The fifth

era, under the leadership of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak emphasized the concept of Firm Roots, Sophisticated Minds. This was in line with the current environment and the nations effort to achieve its aspirations of acquiring developed nation status. At the same time, this era also devoted some attention to efforts to revive the party's integrity and ensure the movement and its parent body UMNO, continued to receive the trust of the Malays. The sixth era shall emphasize on the dynamism of Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik with his globalisation idea for UMNO Youth and the realization of the concept of Vision 2020 which is the objective and aspiration of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammed. It is hoped that the birth of this book will give a clear insight to the Malays in particular, and the UMNO leaders in general, on the struggle of the Youth Movement in ensuring the supremacy of the Malays in their homeland survives in the future generations.

**Ahmad Zahid Hamidi**

## Chapter One

# UMNO YOUTH

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## Early History

### THE FORMATION OF UMNO - BACKGROUND

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The British rule in the Malay Settlement before World War Two was divided into three forms of administration i.e. Straits Settlement (Singapore, Malacca and Penang), Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan), and Unfederated Malay States (Johor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis).

The Straits Settlement was governed directly by the British Governor with the status of a British colony. The British administration in the Federated Malay States was headed by a British High Commissioner, who is based in Kuala Lumpur, and in every state, a British Resident was appointed. Whereas, in the Unfederated Malay States, the British appointed a representative known as the British Viceroy.

The return of the British to the Malay Settlement after the Second World War brought with it a new form of rule which was intended to unite all the Malay States except Singapore, under one central government administered directly by a British Governor. This new form of administration was known as the Malayan Union and it was planned before the Second World War.

To ensure the success of this plan, a committee headed by Sir Edward Gent, was commissioned by the British government to formulate policies that will be implemented in the Malay Settlement upon their return. This committee then succeeded in formulating a policy which was

subsequently approved by the British Government. Among the main points of the draft proposed by the committee are:-

- *A union called Malayan Union for the entire Malay Peninsular including Malacca and Penang*
- *A separate government for Singapore*
- *A Governor-General for both Malayan Union and Singapore*
- *Same citizenship for both Malayan Union and Singapore*

In the Malayan Union Plan, the administration of Singapore will be separated from the other Malay States. The reason for this separation, according to the British, is due to Singapore's position as a developing international business center and the majority of its citizen were Chinese. This was different from the other Malay States. Regardless of the reasoning by the British, the fact remains that Singapore had a better economic position that would benefit the British. They were convinced that joining Singapore with the other Malay States would not be beneficial.

Among the main points of the Malayan Union that invoked the anger of the Malays was related to the privileges of the Malays and the change in the status of the Malay States from that of a British protectorate to a British colony. This plan requires all members of the Council to pledge their allegiance to the Queen of England instead of the Malay Rulers.

Malayan Union is to be governed by a Governor with an Executive Council and a State Consultative Council in each state. Through this plan, the Governor will eventually possess huge irrevocable powers in administrative matters in the Malay Settlement and Singapore. This power is greater than the powers of the Malay Rulers.

As for the Citizenship, all those who were born in the Malayan Union and Singapore were given citizenship rights, including those who have been residing in these two states for a period of 10 years out of the 15 years of British rule, excluding the Japanese Occupation period.

The British Government had to obtain the approval of the Malay Rulers as an endorsement of this plan. The Federal Government, through its Colonial Secretary, appointed Sir Harold Mac Michael to complete the task of obtaining these approvals.

Through his insidious ways of deceptions and subtle threats, eventually Mac Michael succeeded in obtaining the approvals of all the Malay Rulers on 2 December 1945. Although the Malay Rulers were reluctant to endorse the agreement, they were prompted to do so in order to preserve their interest. Mac Michael had threatened to remove the Rulers who were reluctant and replace them with a member of the royalty who were in his favor.



▲ *Tun Hussein Onn enlivened the Youth Alliance as the platform on which the youth could be trained as future leaders*



▲ *Tun Hussein Onn -  
The first Youth Chief*



◀ *Dato Onn Jaafar,  
The Great Malay Leader*

## THE PLAN TO OPPOSE MALAYAN UNION

Once the Malayan Union policies were made public, the Malays began to react, particularly when it was known that their Rulers were forced by Mac Michael to endorse the plan. They turned out in huge numbers to demonstrate against to formation of Malayan Union.

In Batu Pahat, Dato' Onn Jaafar led a group of Malays from various backgrounds, who came from every nook and corner and marched towards Batu Pahat town, carrying banners announcing their objection to the British Plan. Demonstrations were also held by the Malays (including the womenfolk) in other states.

The Malay newspapers also played an active role in opposing the Malayan Union plan. These newspapers, like *Warta Negara* in Penang, *Majlis* in Kuala Lumpur and *Utusan Melayu* in Singapore, through the Editors column, reviewed and commented on the plan. These columns had succeeded in fanning the sentiments of the Malays to oppose and denounce the Malayan Union plan.

The opposition of the Malays were supported by several British Members of Parliament like Captain Gammans, Sir John Barlow, viscount Marchwood, Viscount Elibank and a few others. Several senior British officials who served in the Malay settlements like Sir Richard Winstedt, Maxwell, Alex Mac Adam and Arnold Robinson also opposed the Malayan Union plan.

The objections and opposition of the Malays were dismissed by the British, who were adamant and insisted on pursuing their plans despite the objections. This resulted in a declaration on the establishment of the Malayan Union on 1 April 1946.

## THE SOLIDARITY OF THE MALAYS THROUGH UMNO

The objection towards the Malayan Union plan at the time was carried out separately, indicating the absence of unification in the actions of the Malays. Realizing this situation, the Malay newspapers called upon the Malay leaders to unite their movements so as to create a more organized Malay Movement.

In response to this call, Dato' Onn Jaafar, the President of the All Johore Malay Movement, initiated an effort to unite all the Malay associations by sending an open letter to them urging them to organize a congress that would unite all the Malay Movements under one union. This letter was published in the 24 January 1946 issue of *"Majlis"*.

Dato' Onn's proposal received tremendous support from Malay Associations and individuals who would like to see a more united Malay movement opposing the Malayan Union. Dato Onn's

letter resulted in the culmination of a major confluence of all Malay Associations at Sultan Sulaiman Club, Kuala Lumpur.

The first All Malay Congress was held between 1 - 4 March 1946 at Sultan Sulaiman Club after the Malacca Branch of PMSJ withdrew as the initial organizer. The Congress was officiated by Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah. The Congress was attended by 107 representatives and 56 observers from 41 associations throughout the Malay Settlements. Thousands of Malays also attended to listen to their leaders speak. Dato' Onn was unanimously appointed as the Chairman. From this inaugural Malay Congress, a resolution was adopted to form the United Malay National Organization, or UMNO. A committee to formulate the organizations charter was formed, consisting of Dato' Onn as the Chairman, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang and Datuk Nik Ahmad Kamil.

On 29 and 30 March 1946, Dato' Onn called for an emergency Congress to discuss the appropriate course of action in obstructing the British Government from implementing the Malayan Union plan. This Second Congress resolved that the Malays should boycott the appointment ceremony of Governor General and requested that the Malay rulers absent themselves. The ceremony was unanimously boycotted by all concerned.

Upon the completion of the UMNO charter by the appointed committee, a third Malay Congress was held to officially announce the formation of UMNO. This third Congress was held on 11 and 12 May 1946 at the Istana Besar Johor Bahru and was officiated by Tengku Ismail, the Sultan of Johor's prince and heir apparent.

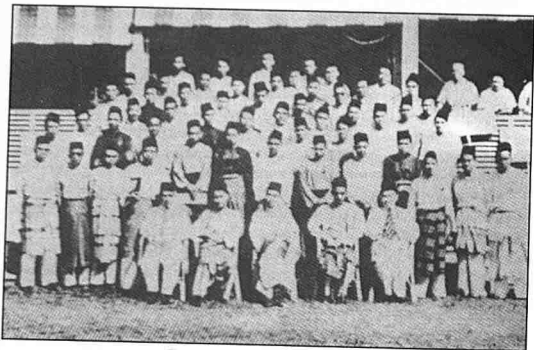
In this conference, the UMNO charter was officially approved. With this approval, UMNO was officially formed and adopted the slogan "Hidup Melayu" or "Long Live the Malays". During its first General Assembly, Dato' Onn Jaafar was unanimously elected as UMNO's first President.

Following this, UMNO and the Malay Rulers continued the struggle to end the Malayan Union in the Malay Settlements. A working committee comprising representatives from the British government, Malay Rulers and UMNO was formed. Through this working committee, Malayan Union was finally abandoned and on 21 January 1948. An agreement was signed between the Malay Rulers and representatives of the British Government at King House, Kuala Lumpur for the formation of the Federation of Malay States, which came into force on 1 February 1948.

## THE FORMATION OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

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The present UMNO Youth came into existence three years after its parent body, UMNO was formed. Initially, it was known as UMNO Youth Alliance with the main objective to attract the younger generation to join the movement.



▲ The 1950 Malaya UMNO Youth Delegation meeting. Seated in the front is the Raja Muda of Selangor (now the Sultan). Standing 2nd from left is Tun Abdul Razak

▼ A show of protest by the Malays towards the Malayan Union plan



Prior to the formation of the Youth alliance, a special department was established within UMNO to coordinate the youth activities. This department was known as Youth Department and it was headed by Capt. Hussein Onn, Dato' Onn Jaafar's son. It was formed, together with several other departments, during the 5th. UMNO General Assembly held on 2 March 1947 at the Negeri Sembilan Club, Seremban. After his appointment, Capt. Hussein travelled throughout the peninsular in an effort to woo more Malay Youths to join UMNO.

Whenever there was an official function attended by UMNO leaders, the youth members would assemble in rows and shout the slogan "Hidup Melayu" to welcome their leaders. They would adorn a special uniform to signify that the UMNO Youth were united befitting their motto of "United, Loyal and Serve" (Bersatu, Setia dan Berkhidmat). Through the Youth Department, the younger generation in UMNO were not able to move actively as there was an absence of an organized structure. Since UMNO's force would be strengthened with the recruitment of more youth in its organization, the Supreme Working Committee held a conference and invited Youth Department representatives from each divisions throughout the country. This conference was held in Province Wellesley, Penang on 26 August 1949. It was attended by Dato' Onn, as the Advisor to the Youth Department, Capt. Hussein Onn, and 25 Youth representatives from 14 divisions.

In this conference, it was agreed to form a body comprising UMNO Youths from all UMNO divisions throughout the Malay Settlement. This body would be known as UMNO Youth Alliance. The rules and regulations that would form a guideline to the Youth Alliance were also approved. Capt. Hussein Onn was appointed as the first UMNO Youth Alliance Chief. Other officials for the 1949/50 term were also appointed which included Tuan Hj. Ahmad Badawi bin Abdullah Fahmi and Shafie b. Ibrahim as the Youth representative to the UMNO Supreme Consultative Council. The formation of the Youth Alliance enabled the younger generation to coordinate their activities in a more organized manner in order to assist efforts to strengthen UMNO. Nevertheless their activities had to be governed by the Youth Alliance regulations and UMNO charter. The main objectives for the formation of UMNO Youth Alliance, as outlined in its Order were :

- *To unite the young men and women in UMNO*
- *To cultivate and encourage national spirits amongst the youth, to love each other, the nation, religion, UMNO and Youth Alliance and to inculcate the spirit of unity, cooperation, service and energetic*
- *To teach and train UMNO Youths to work, be responsible and be a good citizen*
- *To improve the Youths physique, mentality and emotions.*

## **THE PROCESS OF SELECTING YOUTH LEADERS**

The process of selecting a Youth leader during the initial stage, was done in a relatively simple manner, i.e. through appointment. The Youth Alliance conference held at Province

Wellesley on 26 August 1949 adopted a resolution that its activities are to be governed by the Youth Alliance regulations and UMNO charter. The Youth Alliance did not have their own constitution to administer their activities, but were subjected to regulations outlined by UMNO Supreme Council.

The Youth Alliance will be headed by two officers selected from amongst the members. The UMNO Secretary General was also assigned as secretary to the Youth Alliance. The UMNO Supreme Working Council also has the right to appoint additional officials should the need arise. Two Youth representatives will also be appointed at every Youth Alliance General Assembly to represent the Youth in the party's General Assembly.

The early Youth organization experienced several changes following the amendments made to the UMNO Constitution and the Youth Alliance regulations. Several new resolutions in the Youth Alliance were adopted in the 11 June 1957. The Head of the Organizing Committee at each level (central, division and branch) who were previously appointed by the UMNO Supreme Council, will be selected during its respective general meetings and will be appointed as a member in the UMNO working committee at each level. The Youth Alliance were also given the powers to formulate its own regulations and statutes but it should be forwarded to the UMNO Supreme Council for their review and approval.

The Youth Alliance shall have its assembly annually to discuss matters related to its activities, progress and problems of the party and nation. Prior to 1978, Youth Alliance officials were selected at each annual assembly, but following that, they were selected every two years. Every resolutions and motions obtained from each Youth assembly will be presented in the UMNO General Assembly to receive the approval of the delegates.

Since that year, its administrative structure was paralleled to that of UMNO's. The selection system and organizational structure at division and branch levels were the same as the system adopted at the central level. Beginning from that year, the Youth Movement at State level was formed. Its members consisted of representatives from each division in the respective state. The selection of heads and central committee members were done through secret balloting by delegates of each Youth Movement division in the General Assembly. Each division was allowed to send one representative for every 500 members and the maximum number of representatives allowed for each division is 10.

The process of selecting the Youth Leadership was made in two ways, i.e. through appointment or consultation and voting. During the early years of its development, the Youth leadership was selected by appointment or consultation. The Youth Chief will be chosen during the Youth Assembly after considering all views from the delegates and based on the candidates capability and the trust they received from the delegates. Among the leaders who held their positions through this method were Capt. Hussein Onn, Dato' Abdul Razak and Sardon Jubir.

The selection of leaders by voting was done through nomination, by those who would like to contest, on the affixed nomination date (before the General Assembly). The candidates who are contesting for this post are normally proposed by divisions who supported them. The list of candidates contesting will then be voted by secret balloting and the candidate with the highest number of votes will be appointed as Youth Chief.

The leaders who were selected by this process are Senu Abdul Rahman, Dato' Harun Idris, Syed Jaafar Albar, Datuk Hj. Suhaimi Kamaruddin, Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.

There were also instances where the post of Youth Chief was held by the Deputy Chief in an acting capacity. Such a situation arose due to the resignation or demise of the Youth Head. Datuk Ali Hj. Ahmad assumed the post of Youth Head for almost a year when Senu Abdul Rahman vacated his post due to his appointment as UMNO Secretary-General in 1969. Likewise, Datuk Haji Suhaimi Kamaruddin assumed the post for one year upon the demise of Syed Jaafar Albar in January 1977.

## THE YOUTH ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY DAYS

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### ■ Capt. Hussein Onn

As explained earlier, the first Youth Chief to lead the Alliance was Capt. Hussein Onn. His first assignment was to strengthen the Youth organization by increasing its membership. The Youth Alliance membership comprised UMNO members within the age of 16 to 40 years age group. Capt. Hussein Onn's efforts were proved successful when, within a short period, the Youth Alliances' membership had increased to more than 200,000 members despite stiff competition from other youth organizations.

During his leadership, Capt. Hussein Onn never made open remarks or conflicted the opinions of its parent body. This was due to the fact that UMNO was the most active and aggressive organization in championing the cause of the Malays. He realized that a difference of opinion with UMNO would only benefit the British who were anxious to see the Malays divided.

The Youth Alliance always supported any decisions made by Dato' Onn and the UMNO leadership then, like the citizenship issue, 1948 Constitution and the question of forming UMNO as a political party. The family ties between father and son resulted in Capt. Hussein Onn having to abide by his fathers' decisions in UMNO. Should Capt. Hussein Onn oppose or questioned Dato' Onn's decisions, then Dato' Onn's leadership would be questioned by the public. These are the things that resulted in the Youth Alliance, led by Capt. Hussein Onn, being supportive of UMNO's actions.

It is said that the leadership style of Capt. Hussein Onn in leading the Youth Alliance strongly resembled his father's style. He adopted his father's struggle as the basis for his struggle. Both strongly subscribe to the slogan 'Long Live Malays' or 'Hidup Melayu' and it was for this reason that the Youth Alliance continued to struggle for this ideology. His actions were appropriate owing to his military background where undivided loyalty was the order of the day.

This was admitted by Capt. Hussein Onn himself that :

".....his resolutions and ambitions are my resolutions and ambitions. My fathers politics have influenced my politics. In politics, family cannot be separated."

The extremely close relationship between UMNO Youth Alliance and its parent body reflects an absence of freedom of expression by the Youth Alliance that could be used as a guide by the UMNO leadership in its efforts to face threats by its enemies. As a result of this situation, Capt. Hussein Onn was not able to demonstrate a clear function of the youth movement at that time and as such, the Youth Alliance was overshadowed by its parent body. UMNO's political situation then had obstructed the Youth Alliance to act ahead of its parent body.

Capt. Hussein Onn's leadership in the Youth alliance ended when he was appointed UMNO Secretary-General in August 1950. During his tenure at the helm of UMNO Youth, Capt. Hussein ONN acquired a great deal of knowledge and experience on leadership and UMNO matters, especially from his father. This helped him to carry out his duties as Secretary-General, replacing Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang, with ease. While heading the Youth Alliance, he succeeded in vivifying the movement into a platform for Malay youths to be trained as 'back-up leaders', and creating a solid foundation for the future youth.

#### ■ Dato' Abdul Razak bin Dato' Hussein

The vacancy created by the departure of Capt. Hussein Onn was filled by Dato' Abdul Razak bin Dato' Hussein. His appointment to the helm of the Youth Alliance happened quite by coincidence and was not expected even by himself. He attended the Youth Alliance conference which was held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1950 as an observer to fill his spare time, since he happened to be in Kuala Lumpur on other business.

Although his appointment happened by coincidence, a study of his background will show that it was a right choice. Even though he was not active in the Youth Alliance at Central level, he was an UMNO Kuala Lipis member.

Dato' Abdul Razak's leadership qualities was first demonstrated while he was a student in London, when he was chosen to represent The Malay Settlements in the World Youth Organization

*A pantomime depicting the opposition to the Malayan Union Plan staged by Malay Youths*



◀ *UMNO Youth under Tun Abdul Razak successfully replaced the 'Long Live Malays' slogan to 'Independence'*

*Tun Abdul Razak b Dato' Hussein was appointed Youth Alliance Chief*  
▼ *in August 1950*



Conference held in Brussels. While studying in London, he joined the Labour Party, a left-wing political party in England.

He was also a senior officer in the Pahang State Administration and came from an aristocratic family; his father was a member of the Pahang royalty. These factors contributed to him being unanimously appointed as the Youth Alliance Chief in the assembly.

In heading the Youth Alliance, Dato' Abdul Razak was not able to fully concentrate on its activities as he was still holding the post of senior officer in the Pahang State Administration. He was not very keen to activate the Youth Alliance as a tool for the Malay struggle as he felt that it would be more effective to serve from within the party hierarchy. Although he was appointed as Chief of the Youth Alliance, there were several issues highlighted by the members that did not receive much of his attention.

Regardless of the reaction by Dato' Abdul Razak towards the Youth Alliance, his appointment as its Chief was instrumental in charting his political career. By virtue of his appointment, he also held the post of UMNO Vice-President (Youth). This position enabled him to be close to the party leadership at central level. In 1951, he was chosen as the Deputy President of UMNO when Tunku Abdul Rahman became the President replacing Dato' Onn Jaafar, who resigned from UMNO. Dato' Abdul Razak was then appointed as the third UMNO President replacing Tunku Abdul Rahman during the 22nd. UMNO General Assembly in 1972.

During Dato' Abdul Razak's tenure As Chief of the Youth Alliance, its members began to show a more progressive attitude towards its parent body. This was different from Capt. Hussein Onn's time. During that time, the members were always loyal and abiding towards the UMNO leadership. The Youth movement under Dato' Abdul Razak were more outspoken and were bold enough to present their opinions for the betterment of their organization.

The Malay political atmosphere at that time was striving to free the Malay Settlement from British rule and this inspired the Youth to react more aggressively.

### THE SLOGAN 'INDEPENDENCE' REPLACES 'LONG LIVE MALAYS'

During the Malay Congress held from 1 to 4 March 1946, the slogan 'Long Live Malays' was adopted as an inspiration and guide to the struggle of the Malays. It was with this slogan that the Malays succeeded in restoring the sovereignty of the Malay Rulers and avoided them from becoming a 'puppet' of the British government in the Malayan Union plan. This spirit, which was imbued in the Malays, successfully ended the Malayan Union government and replaced it with the Federation Of Malay Settlements on 1 April 1948. The slogan was maintained for a period of

approximately five years, after which the younger generation in UMNO felt that it needed to be changed to a more patriotic slogan reflecting the struggle to free the country from British rule.

The initial proposal to change the slogan was forwarded by Samad Idris of UMNO Kuala Pilah branch during the Youth Alliance meeting on 14 February 1951 held in Kuala Lumpur. The new slogan proposed by Samad Idris was 'Merdeka' or 'Independence' and it was unanimously approved by the delegates. In that meeting, Gharieb b. Raof from the State of Johore was chosen to present the motion to change the slogan at the next UMNO General Assembly which was to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 24 to 25 March 1951. During this assembly, the motion received objections from the delegates and was heatedly debated. Among the UMNO leaders who opposed the motion were Raja Ayub b. Raja Haji Bot and C.M. Yusof.

Dato' Onn Jaafar, as the UMNO President then, joined in opposing the motion and in his speech he tried to influence the delegates to reject the motion. The firmness with which Gharieb presented the grounds for the Youth Alliance's proposal of this motion finally succeeded in gaining the approval of the delegates and the slogan was officially accepted after a secret balloting process. From the 69 delegates who attended the General Assembly, 39 voted to approve the resolution, 23 rejected and 2 abstained.

These developments had changed the course of the Malay struggle from protecting the rights of their race, to demanding independence. The spirit of independence in the Malays was so strong that many members of the Malay Nationalist Party, who opposed UMNO, quit and joined UMNO instead. Among them were Abdul Ghafar Baba, Mustafa Hussein, Ibrahim Fikri and Abdul Rahman Talib. The success of the Youth Alliance in changing the slogan to 'Independence' was their greatest contribution towards the uprising of the Malays, especially UMNO members to fight for independence from British rule.

This success was also the turning point in the Youth movements' efforts to convince the public that they are as formidable a force as UMNO. The firmness of the youth under Dato' Abdul Razak demonstrated a change in the attitude of the youth towards the party leadership. However, this aggressiveness was pacified when the leadership was transferred to Sardon Jubir.

## Chapter Two

### UMNO YOUTH Independence Era

This era emphasizes on the developments of the Youth movement from the early 1950's to late 1960's. During this period, it was led by two leaders, who were both involved in the struggle to form UMNO. They are Sardon Jubir and Senu Abdul Rahman. This period, in retrospect, witnessed the efforts of these two leaders in propelling the Youth movement to overcome the challenges faced by UMNO and the Alliance Party in seeking independence. The Youth in this era was the moving force in UMNO and acted as its main bastion in facing its political foes.

Contrary to its early days until late 1950's whereby the Youth movement was almost non-functional and strictly adhered to the wishes and commands of the party leadership, the Youth of this era was more vocal and critical of the party leadership and the government, albeit in a more tacit way. However, this incessant valor among the Youth, which at times was ahead of its parent body in championing specific issues, was successfully pacified by Sardon and Senu. They also succeeded in avoiding an open confrontation between UMNO Youth and its parent body owing to their closeness to the party leadership especially Tunku Abdul Rahman. Under Sardon, the Youth continued its struggle in various aspects particularly political matters. The prevailing political climate compelled the movement to get actively involved in the nation's political development.

While under the leadership of Senu Abdul Rahman, the Youth movement tackled new issues that saw it expanding its functions and involvement in facing several crises such as the Malaysia - Singapore separation and the 13 May 1969 ethnic clash. He was also instrumental in setting up the UMNO Youths' 'Tough Regime' to face political foes. UMNO Youth had also involved

themselves in various issues such as social, sports, economy, etc. Senu had also established the 'Mental Revolution' movement to assist the Youths in facing the increasing demands of the developing times.

Throughout their careers, these two leaders had successfully implemented the UMNO Youths philosophy of defending UMNO and acting as UMNO's backbone in facing its political foes. In addition, they were also successful in instilling a spirit of loyalty to the party leadership amongst its members. This made them very popular amongst the members and they were successfully retained as Youth Chief for a long time without much opposition from the members.

## **THE UMNO YOUTH UNDER SARDON JUBIR'S LEADERSHIP**

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### **The early stages**

Dato' Onn's decision to leave UMNO and form Malaya Independence Party in mid - 1951 had resulted in UMNO and its right wing Youth Alliance being left in an extremely difficult position. Tunku Abdul Rahman was finally elected as its President after a period of uncertainty over UMNO's future. Tunku defeated Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan and C.M. Yusof in the party's General Assembly held at Hotel Majestic, Kuala Lumpur on 26 August 1951. Tunku obtained 57 votes as opposed to C.M. Yusof's 11 and Haji Ahmad Fuad Hassan's 7 votes.

In that Assembly, Dato' Abdul Razak, who was still heading the Youth Alliance, was elected Deputy President without any contest from other leaders. His appointment left the Youth Alliance Chief post vacant. Sardon Jubir was then appointed as the third Youth Alliance Chief replacing Dato' Abdul Razak. The post was offered to him by Dato' Abdul Razak in a meeting during which Sardon accepted the offer on condition that the Youth Alliance pledge their loyalty to him. His reason for doing so was due to the aggressiveness of the Youth Movement at the time, which will, to a certain extent, obstruct him from carrying out his responsibilities.

Sardon was an ex-founder of the Malay National Party and the President of Singapore Malay Union from 1947 to 1951. He was also a lawyer by profession and was 34 years old when he assumed the post of UMNO Youth Alliance Chief. Although young, he was not new in UMNO. In fact he was one of the founders of the party. When the Youth leadership changed hands from Dato' Abdul Razak to Sardon, the movement was facing several problems. Among them was the unfavorable relationship with the parent body. This was due to the aggressive approach taken by the youth members in handling certain issues. At the same time, the relations between UMNO and the Association of Muslim Clergyman were on the rocks. When Sardon inherited the Youth leadership, he was faced with huge challenges that could cause a split in the movement. In order to revive and restore the good relation with the party leadership, he began his duties by travelling



◀ *Tan Sri Senu Abdul Rahman, Youth Movement Chief (1964 - 1970)*



▲ *Tan Sri Senu introduced the concept of 'Study Youth' and 'Mental Revolution'*

▶ *Tan Sri Senu with Tunku Abdul Rahman at the launching of the working camp organized by UMNO Youth*



throughout the Peninsula, urging Youth members to cast aside their differences with the UMNO leadership. He also urged them to pledge their undivided loyalty to the party in order to face the enemies and achieve independence.

His cordial relationship with Tunku Abdul Rahman was an asset in assisting him to control the vigorous demands made by the Youths then. He also possessed the caliber and personality required to ignite the Youth's forces and strengthen the party machinery. Sardon also successfully introduced various developments in the Alliance to ensure its continued progress.

The early developments to UMNO Youth occurred when the name UMNO Youth Alliance was changed to UMNO Youth Movement in December 1955 through an amendment to the UMNO constitution. With this change, the Youth Movement not only possessed an organization but could actively involve itself in new pursuits for the benefit of the party and the Malay race.

To ensure continuity of the good relations between the Youth and its parent body at central level as well as state levels, Sardon headed a series of meetings between the movement and the party leadership. These meetings were successful in bridging their relationship and securing the movements' administration.

## THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE MALAY SETTLEMENT

The change of slogan to "Merdeka" ('Independence') which was initiated by the Youth resulted in a corresponding change in the direction of UMNO's struggle from protecting the rights of the Malays to seeking independence of the Malay Settlement from British rule. The vigorous and enthusiastic show of spirit by the Youth had opened the eyes of the British. The British government then voiced their intention to declare the movement unlawful and disband the movement as it had proved a threat to their interests in the Malay Settlement. But Tunku, as the President of UMNO, defended the Youth and challenged the British to proceed with their intentions. He felt that to outlaw the Youth would weaken the party. During the Youth Conference held in Seberang Prai on 12 September 1952, Tunku tried to convince the Youth that the Youth movement would not be outlawed. He stressed that UMNO consisted of a combination of members representing various groups such as Mothers, Youths and Fathers. As such, dissolving one of these would mean the entire party would be dissolved. In his speech, Tunku stated that the Youth was the backbone of UMNO. He said,

"..... UMNO depends on the Youth on many matters. If the Youth is strong, UMNO will be strong, but if the Youth is weak, UMNO will eventually become weak."

Tunku's interference and challenge to the British coupled with the solidity of spirit displayed by the Youth at the time, forced the British to cancel their intentions to outlaw the Youth movement.

Instead, they prohibited the use of uniforms by its members. This decision had, to a certain extent, diminished the spirit of the Youth members in their struggle for Independence. This adverse development was noticed by Tunku and, in his opening speech during the Youth Conference held in Alor Setar in 1953, he criticized the attitude of the Youths, who gave up too easily.

Tunku's admonitions were taken seriously by Sardon and he travelled throughout the country in an effort to urge the Youth members to continue their support of UMNO. He also strove to restore the spirit of solidarity amongst the members. His efforts were successful in uplifting the morale of its members and the movement continued to play its role as the party's right wing.

The Youth movement under the able leadership of Sardon Jubir became the main moving force to ensure victory for UMNO candidates in all the elections. As an initial move to achieve independence, UMNO forged a partnership with the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) to face the local council elections held at municipal level.

This understanding was fruitful, when the UMNO-MCA Alliance emerged victorious in all the municipal elections held. This victory convinced the British that the population of the Malay Settlement lived harmoniously together and there was no reason to deny them their independence. In the following elections, the Youth continued to be the moving force in ensuring the Alliance candidates' victory.

These victories revived the spirit of the young generation in UMNO. The Youth then urged the government to hold the first General Elections in 1954 to gauge the opinions and aspirations of the public with regards to independence. This received support from the UMNO and MCA leadership. However, the British government delayed in declaring the Election date. In response to the stand taken by the British, the UMNO Youth in its assembly held at Alor Setar in September 1953, passed a resolution urging UMNO members sitting in the Federal Legislative Council to resign from their seats should the British government disagree to hold the General Elections in 1954.

UMNO Youth began to react when there were indications that the British will refuse to hold elections in the Malay Settlement. Haji Ahmad Badawi, the vice chief of UMNO Youth was assigned the task of preparing an outline for an armed struggle. He formed an action squad known as the "33rd. Front" and in order to arm themselves, they devised a plan to seize weapons from police stations in the villages, for their use.

This plan was concealed from the central UMNO and British governments' knowledge. However, the plan was uncovered and the British became aware of it. Upon discovering this, the British became wary of the actions by the Youth as it could jeopardize their interests in the Malay Settlement. Eventually they declared that the first General Elections will be held on 27 July 1955.

The UMNO - MCA Alliance was strengthened further with the inclusion of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) in late 1954. The general election of 1955 witnessed a resounding victory for the Alliance Party when it successfully captured 51 of the 52 seats contested.

The Youth movement was the prime mover of UMNOs' and the Alliance Partys' election machinery. They joined the party stalwarts in campaigns throughout the country to face their political foes, especially PAS and the National Party led by Dato' Onn. During the 1955 Elections, there were one million eligible Malay voters out of which 60 percent consisted of the younger generations. This is where the Youth was needed to win the confidence of the younger generation in voting for the candidates from the Alliance Party.

The first cabinet comprising elected representatives from the Alliance Party was then formed. Tunku Abdul Rahman was appointed first Chief Minister. Sardon was appointed Minister of Works after he won the Segamat Utara seat in the election. His appointment as a Minister was a testimony that the Youths struggle in strengthening UMNO received the attention and recognition of the party leadership.

The role of UMNO Youth as a pressure group in the party was further augmented when it successfully pressured the party leadership to declare 31 August 1957 as the Independence date for the Malay Settlement. Owing to the landslide victory in the 1955 Elections, during the UMNO Youth committee Meeting, Sardon proposed that 31 August 1957 be chosen as the date for the independence of the Malay Settlement. This proposal was unanimously approved by the committee, and was forwarded to the UMNO General Assembly held on 26 and 27 December 1955.

In that General Assembly, Sardon presented the motion and it was unanimously accepted by the delegates. He also proposed to add the words 'no compromise' to the resolution, implying that the independence date is irrevocable and final, that is two years after the first general elections. On the basis of this resolution, in early 1956, Tunku Abdul Rahman headed a delegation from the Alliance Party to London for the purpose of negotiations with the British government to obtain independence for the Malay Settlement.

Upon the departure of Tunku and his delegation to London, UMNO Youth adopted a resolution that should Tunku's delegation fail, the UMNO flag will be flown upside down for a period of 40 days and demonstrations will be held throughout the country.

Apart from this, in Singapore a daring move was taken by a group of UMNO Youth members serving in the Royal Artillery Corps at Belakang Mati, Singapore. Sergeant Major Hasan bin Nordin secretly led a group of 800 members and planned a coup d'état should Tunku's delegation fail. Although the plan never materialized, it demonstrated the willingness of the youth's in UMNO to fight by whatever means possible in order to achieve independence for their motherland, even if

it means bloodshed. This move taken by the Youth was in line with the slogan "Front-line Youth" which it adopted at the time.

The success of Tunku's delegation to convince the British to award independence to the Malay settlements was a realization of the aspirations of the Youth in declaring 31 August 1957 as Independence Day. Tunku Abdul Rahman was appointed to head the first Federation of Independent Malay States cabinet. Once again, Sardon was appointed a Minister in the new government and this time his portfolio was Energy, Telecommunications and Posts.

Apart from struggling for independence, UMNO Youth in this era also experienced progress in its administration. During the 11th. UMNO Conference held on 29 and 30 June 1957, the Supreme Council accorded the Youth freedom to organize its own activities. Prior to this, the Youth at all levels had to obtain the approval from UMNO headquarters before they could carry out any activities. The Conference also endorsed a resolution to amend the UMNO Youth constitution to allow the Youth Committee to choose its own officers and handle its own affairs.

In August 1959, UMNO Youth joined the party leadership in their efforts to assist the Alliance Party candidates face their challengers in the first General Election held after independence. Apart from the threats posed by Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) and the Nationalist Party, UMNO was also confronted with a crisis in its relations with Malay schools and religious schools teachers. The Malay school teachers left UMNO as they felt that the UMNO led government was not concerned about education policies. A majority of these teachers were from the younger generation involved in UMNO Youth movement. Their services were needed by UMNO to win over the Malay voters, especially in the villages.

Sardon's leadership as Youth Chief and a cabinet minister successfully transformed the movement into a formidable force able to penetrate and destroy the opposition party's defenses. He also succeeded in influencing the Malay voters, especially the younger generation to support the Alliance Party.

The Alliance Party achieved great success again in the Parliamentary elections when it won 74 of the 104 seats contested. In the new cabinet line-up, apart from Sardon being retained as a minister, there were several prominent young leaders who were appointed ministers to act as a back up to the prevalent UMNO leadership.

As a measure to face the on-coming challenges, UMNO Youth organized a Youth Congress in Kuala Lumpur on 1 and 2 October 1960. This congress was attended by the Youth Exco and 38 Youth representatives from every state. Deficiencies and weaknesses in the movement were explored and rectified with the endorsement of various policies as a guideline to confront ensuing challenges.

## THE FORMATION OF MALAYSIA & MALAYSIA - INDONESIA CONFRONTATION

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Tunku Abdul Rahman, in a press conference held on 27 May 1961, announced the plan to form a confederation called Malaysia comprising the Malay settlements, Singapore and Borneo Islands. This announcement received encouraging response from Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak.

All the states proposed by Tunku expressed their agreement on the formation of Malaysia with the exception of Brunei. The neighboring countries such as Philippines and Indonesia also reacted to this announcement.

Indonesia, which was then under the Sukarno Regime rule, aspired to expand its territorial hold to include the entire South East Asia. However, due to internal conflicts, he was unable to continue with his plans. The plan to form Malaysia was felt by Sukarno as a threat to realizing his dreams.

Sukarno utilized his embassies in the Malay Settlements and Singapore as well as Indonesian nationals in Kuala Lumpur, to inject subversive elements into the plan with a view to impede the plan. Sukarno recruited left wing Malay leaders such as Ahmad Boestamam and Ibrahim Yaakub as well as left wing associations like the Malaya Peoples Party, PAS and the Peninsula Malays Association as a tool to achieve his objectives.

In February 1963, Subandrio (Indonesian's Foreign Minister) announced to the world that Indonesia must declare a confrontational policy against Malaysia as it believed Malaysia subscribe to Neocolonialism. The stand taken by Indonesia received support from the Philippines government led by Diosdado Macapagal who claimed that Sabah was its territory.

As a retaliatory move to counter the challenge posed by Indonesia, UMNO Youth instructed all divisions and branches to form a special committee. This committee then forwarded a memorandum to the Indonesian government expressing its concern and hope that the confrontation be ended since the two countries share a common background in terms of language, religion and origin. The UMNO Youth leaders replied and refuted all allegations and accusations made by the Indonesian leaders, particularly those that were targeted at UMNO leaders. A campaign to muster public strength was successfully launched and this resulted in a more unified action by the people to counter the threats from abroad.

Demonstrations were held by UMNO Youth members and university students in Kuala Lumpur to condemn the actions of the Indonesian government. The anger of the youths in UMNO intensified when the Indonesian leaders vociferously hurled allegations after allegations. At one point, Sardon Jubir, in a rage of fury spontaneously challenged D.N. Aidit to a duel.

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Tunku's diligence, coupled with the consolidated and unified support displayed by the other leaders and UMNO Youth, proved fruitful when the Federation of Malaysia was officially declared on 16 September 1963.

The term of office held by Sardon and his deputy, Haji Ahmad Badawi in the Youth Movement was deemed extensive by certain quarters. The UMNO Supreme Council felt that there was a need to pass a resolution concerning the age limit of its (Youth) leaders. This is to avoid certain leaders from using the positions in the Movement as a platform to spread their influence.

The Youth regulations were then amended to set the age limit for those contesting any posts in the movement. Anyone above 40 years of age were not allowed to contest. However, this ruling was waived for the post of Youth Chief. As a result of this ruling, Haji Ahmad Badawi was forced to resign as he had exceeded the age limit. Sardon's term as Youth Chief ended when he was defeated by his close friend, Senu Abdul Rahman, in the contest for the post of Youth Chief. Sardons leadership of UMNO Youth succeeded in contriving the movement into a formidable force and a solid front to ward of threats by enemies within and without the country.

### SENU CONTINUES THE STRUGGLE

For the first time in the history of the Youth movement, there was a contest for the post of Youth Chief. The Youth members displayed their maturity in selecting a leader who was capable and competent to ensure their movement continues to prosper in line with the development and progress of the nation.

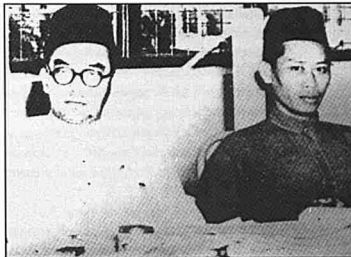
In the contest for the post of Youth Chief for the 1964/65 term, Sardon, who was 47 years old at the time, was defeated by Senu Abdul Rahman. According to Sardon, the contest was a political manoeuvre executed by his supporters. He had intended to step down, but on the insistence of his supporters, he was forced to contest against Senu.

During the initial stages in Senu's leadership of UMNO Youth, he merely continued the activities and role set by his predecessor. He also concentrated on efforts to further strengthen the movement. Throughout his leadership, Senu continued the tradition set by the leaders before him. He emphasized the concept of loyalty to the party and the need to cultivate the spirit of unity amongst the members and their leaders. Nevertheless, the loyalty displayed by the members towards their leaders were not impetuous but hinged on the circumstances and interest of the party. This was contrary to the actions of the Youth during the Hussein Onn era which saw the Youth acting in accordance to the instructions of the party leadership without questions.



▲ *UMNO Youth under Tan Sri Sardon Jubir, was the prime mover in ensuring the victory of the UMNO candidates in every elections*

*Tan Sri Sardon Jubir (right) as the Chief of the Youth Alliance. Seated next to him is Tan Abdul Razak, the then UMNO President* ▶



◀ *The removal of the 'Union Jack' to be replaced with the Federation of Malay States flag symbolized a great victory for the Malay race*

## THE SEPARATION OF SINGAPORE FROM MALAYSIA

Singapore's entry into the Federation of Malaysia was due to Tunku's concern over the possibility of Singapore being captured and controlled by communists. The uprising of the pro communist leftist group as a result of a split in the People's Action Party (PAP), was cause for concern in Singapore then.

Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, raised several issues that enraged the Malay's, especially UMNO supporters. He formulated the Malaysian - Malaysia concept which was aimed at creating a Malaysian society with equal stature regardless of ethnic origin.

The difference of opinion between UMNO and Singapore leaders reached its peak when Lee Kuan Yew proposed a motion for Singapore to be separated from Malaysia. Senu and members of UMNO Youth vehemently opposed the idea. However, the Youth members concurred that this crisis should be resolved by way of consultation. In arriving at this consensus, UMNO Youth considered the future of the Malays and the effect of this separation on the Malays.

UMNO leaders, particularly the younger ones, was enraged when Lee Kuan Yew openly challenged the Malays. According to him, it was not appropriate for the Malays to demand special status because most Malays then were immigrants themselves. His statement in the 'Straits Times' on 6 May 1965 clearly provoked the sentiments of the Malays :

"... the 39 percent Malays in Malaysia today, about one third of them are comparatively new immigrants like the Secretary - General of UMNO, Syed Jaafar Albar, who came to Malaya from Indonesia just before the war at the age of more than 30. Therefore it is wrong and illogical for the particular racial group to think that they are more justified to be called Malaysian and that the others can become Malaysians only through their favour."

As a reaction to this statement, UMNO Youth, in its General Assembly held on 14 May 1965, passed a resolution urging the government to take action against Lee Kuan Yew for his offending statement. This resolution was presented during the UMNO General Assembly held on 15 May 1965.

UMNO members from the Singapore branch held a demonstration in front of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka building prior to the commencement of the UMNO General Assembly. This demonstration was held to protest against Lee Kuan Yew's actions and statements. In his opening speech at the Assembly, Tunku Abdul Rahman advised the Youth to remain calm over the matter.

Senu, speaking on behalf of the Youth, voiced his dissatisfaction over Tunku's reply. UMNO Youth continued to insist that the delegates approve their motion to take action against Lee Kuan

Yew. The delegates finally accepted the motion but stressed that it should be done diplomatically.

In August 1965, Tunku announced the separation of Singapore from Malaysia when all efforts to reconcile failed. Despite UMNO Youths' aggressive and outspoken approach, which prompted Lee to brand it an extremist group, it acknowledged the wishes of the party leadership. Senu succeeded in advising the Youth members to accept the decisions of the party leadership and pledge their loyalty in accordance with the slogan "Youth - Hope of The Nation". Judging from these events, it can be said that the Youth movement always maintained party unity as its main priority.

In order to restore the good relations between the party leadership and Youth members, which was adversely effected due to the Singapore issue, a working camp was organized in Selangor from 5 to 10 December 1966. A total of 164 participants from all divisions attended the camp. During the six day camp, matters relating to politics, education, economy and current affairs were discussed. Based on the outcome of this camp, Senu and his committee formulated programmes relating to the Movements' progress and its role in nation building.

## STURDY YOUTH AND MENTAL REVOLUTION

Under Senu's leadership, UMNO Youth achieved success especially in areas which were previously neglected by the movement. Youth ventured into new areas such as economy, education, culture and sports, in line with the nations' development. Political, economic and educational courses were held at all stages to bring the movement closer to the general public.

The Youths administration were reorganized to face new challenges. During the UMNO Supreme Council meeting on 2 March 1965, it was resolved that the divisional secretaries will also act as the Youth secretary of its respective division. An assistant secretary was appointed to administer youth matters.

The Supreme Council also approved the Movement to collect fees at branch level (apart from the normal UMNO membership fees) to finance its activities.

Work camps were also organized throughout the peninsula to train Youth members to react in any eventualities. Following these work camps, a team known as 'The Sturdy Youth Team' (Pemuda Tahan Lasak) was established. The operations of this team was administered by a central committee formed by the central Youth Exco. At state, divisional and branch levels, the committee was appointed by its respective Heads. Each Youth division were also instructed to select able and qualified members to join this team.

With a minimum of 100 team members at each division, UMNO possessed a strong and solid

base on which to carry out its activities. The members of this team were well trained and are always on the alert to implement any instructions given by the party leadership. This team played an active role in assisting UMNO and Alliance Party candidates to win in the 1969 elections.

UMNO Youth continued to record outstanding achievements when it established a company called Talasco Bhd. which was operated entirely by its members. This company was established on the insistence of some of its members who felt that there was a need for the movement to establish a strong economic source that would generate income to finance its activities. The success in forming Talasco Bhd. was, for the Sturdy Youth Team, its second major achievement after it successfully played its role as the moving force in the 1969 General Elections.

Syarikat Talasco Bhd. became the platform for Malay youths in general, and UMNO Youth in particular, to involve themselves in various business activities. The required capital was collected from UMNO divisions, Supreme Council and Youth Committee. The profits obtained from its activities were channelled back to the divisions to finance their activities.

Other areas were also ventured into by Youth under Senu's leadership to expand its activities and role. An orchestra comprising Youth members were formed to provide music accompanying every cultural events. Apart from this, the UMNO Youth of the 60's formed its own football team and kompong team. Youth members were also encouraged to take up Seni Silat, a traditional Malay art of self-defence. A 'Guard-of-honour' team to welcome UMNO leaders during official functions were also formed. According to Senu, the main objective for UMNO Youth to broaden its activities in these areas was to instill a high degree of 'esprit de corps' amongst its members.

Another important development in this era was the implementation of the 'Mental Revolution' movement. This movement was aimed at creating a sense of awareness among the Malays and transforming their mentality in line with the developing time. In order to spread the ideas of this movement, it was published as a book. A sub-committee, comprising Datuk Ali bin Haji Ahmad, the then Deputy UMNO Youth Chief as its chairman, Haji Hamzah Awang and Haji Ahmad Badawi, was formed in 1968 to collate materials on economic, educational and religious matters to be compiled in this book. It was published and distributed towards the end of 1970.

According to Wan Mohd. Mahyuddin (UMNO Research Officer), who was also involved in its publication, this 473 pages thick book should be read by every Malay. It is intellectual by nature and touches on the identity of the Malay race. It was the only publication of its kind then. He considered the publication of this book a huge success for UMNO Youth.

The Mental Revolution book was, however, only completed after Senu left UMNO Youth to assume the post of UMNO Secretary-General. Several political observers disputed the success

of this book. Subky Latif and Chamil Wariya in their book 'UMNO Youth Dilemma' expressed their reservations on the success of this book. According to them, the book was not widely read by the Malay people, including party members and in many ways, it exposed the weaknesses of the Malay race.

Nevertheless, judging from the development and progress of the Youth Movement, it can be said that this book was a worthy step towards encouraging the Malays to compete with the other races in the quest for progress. It also depicted the realization on the part of UMNO Youth on the problems that led to their race being backward.

The tragedy of 13 May 1969, which occurred following the General Election that year, marked a new development in the UMNO Youth Movement. During that Election, UMNO and the Alliance Party suffered a major setback, especially at the State Assembly level. In addition UMNO Youth was dealt a severe blow when its Chief, Senu Abdul Rahman was defeated by the Pas candidate, Abu Bakar Umar in that election. Penang fell to the Gerakan Party, whereas in Perak and Selangor, the Alliance Party and the opposition obtained an equal number of seats.

In this unfortunate incident, the Malay youths, including UMNO Youth members were involved in an ethnic clash with Chinese youths from the opposition party. The Malay youth could not contain their anger when the Chinese made remarks that were unacceptable to them. A state of emergency was declared throughout the country and the nation's administration came under the jurisdiction of a special committee called The National Action Council. This council was headed by Tun Abdul Razak, then the Deputy Prime Minister. All political movements including UMNO and its right wing Youth Movement was banned.

This incident created an awareness among the UMNO leaders. The inequality in wealth distribution and economic gap between the various races could lead to a revolt by one race demanding equal share. As a result of this incident, a study was conducted and radical political changes were made, apart from restructuring the economic policies in line with the renewed inspirations of the people.

The 13 May incident resulted in the cessation of the UMNO Youth Movement's activities until late 1970. After that incident, there were changes in the UMNO Youth leadership. Dato' Senu who lost in the 1969 General Elections, was appointed UMNO Secretary-General by the party leadership. Datuk Ali Haji Ahmad was appointed acting Youth Chief pending fresh elections.

Dato' Ali's tenure was uneventful as the country then was still under the control of the National Action Council, which prohibits any political activities.

After the 13 May tragedy, there was a period of open confrontation between Youth members

and UMNO stalwarts. Several Youth leaders openly criticized Tunku Abdul Rahman's leadership in the party and government. They accused him of being too lenient with the Chinese. Some of these leaders were branded as ultra or extremists by Tunku due to their extremely aggressive actions.

The barrage of criticisms and accusations hurled at Tunku by these leaders forced him to resign as Prime Minister and UMNO President on 22 September 1970. A change in the UMNO Youth leadership then occurred when Datuk Harun Idris was elected as its new Chief. This change in leadership resulted in a more aggressive method of action being adopted and it marked the beginning of a new era in the history of UMNO Youth Movement.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this era covering 20 years of its existence, UMNO Youth Movement experienced a great deal of progress particularly in its actions and activities. It successfully played its role as the party vanguard in facing its political opponents. In this era, UMNO Youth Movement, formerly known as Youth Alliance, succeeded to expand its activities in line with the nation's progress.

Under Sardon Jubir's leadership, UMNO Youth, with its slogan 'Frontline Youth', played an important role in assisting UMNO to achieve independence for the nation. Under Senu Abdul Rahman, the Movement was involved in economic, social and sports activities, apart from its main political activities. In short, these two leaders were successful in strengthening the movement.

The fact that these two leaders practiced an identical style of leadership is an interesting point to note. Throughout their leadership, differences in opinions between UMNO Youth and its parent body were settled in a relatively distinct way.

## Chapter Three

# UMNO YOUTH

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## Era Of Changes

In analysing the development of the Youth Movement in this era, economy is inseparable from the discussion. After the 13th May 1969 bloodshed, UMNO and its right wing leaders have thrown their attention towards upgrading the economy of the Malays, which was far behind, compared to that of the other races. Through the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced by Tun Abdul Razak to ensure at least 30 percent of economic activities are owned by Bumiputras, relentless efforts must be carried out. UMNO, a party having the majority of the Malays as its members, had endeavored relentlessly to ensure that the objective so aimed, will be achieved.

This chapter will attempt to discuss on how the Youth led by three figures, Datuk Harun Idris, Syed Jaafar Albar and Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin had played an important role in upholding the NEP. Also to be discussed in this chapter is how the Youth had transformed its pattern of action from a movement which was obedient to the directions and wishes of the party's leadership, to that of a vocal pressure group which almost appeared to have been a party within a party. Within this period, it has become a strong Movement feared by the opposition and other quarters in the government, private sector or within UMNO itself, especially when the Youth was under the leadership of Datuk Harun. Any attempt to frustrate the implementation of NEP will be responded with criticism and action by the Youth.

The second event which occurred in this era which became history in the national politics, was when Datuk Harun who was the UMNO Youth Chief was expelled from UMNO and was charged in court for corruption. In fact, for a period of 12 years in this era under discussion, almost

half of it is focussed on this problem. The success of Datuk Harun in leading the Youth coupled with the charisma that he possessed, resulted in Syed Jaafar Albar and Datuk Suhaimi, who led the Youth Movement after his departure, to face the problems left by him.

## THE NEW GENERATION LEADS THE YOUTH

### **Datuk Harun with the youth's new era**

When Datuk Senu was appointed the Secretary General of UMNO after the 1969 general elections, the post of the Youth Movement Chief was held by Datuk Ali Hj. Ahmad, the then Deputy Chief, in an acting capacity. Before the election of the new Youth Movement Committee, a question arose among the Youth members as to whom among them is the most eligible for the post. Looking at the political situation then, with the just ended racial riot, the person to be appointed to the post of Youth Chief had to be someone who was truly capable and charismatic. Two candidates who were said to be eligible were Datuk Ali Hj. Ahmad and Datuk Musa Hitam.

Datuk Ali had an advantage over Datuk Musa, since he had held the post in an acting capacity for almost a year and this gave him an opportunity to approach Youth Members with ease. He was also acceptable by the elderly members in UMNO, such as Syed Jaafar Albar, Syed Nasir Ismail and Senu himself. On the other hand, Datuk Musa had received support from the intellectuals in UMNO and UMNO Youth at that time. They felt that Datuk Musa possessed the ability to bring about changes in the Movement. However, Datuk Musa is said to be less acceptable to the elderly members in UMNO because of his aggressive attitude and also because he had been expelled from his Junior Minister's post by Tunku Abdul Rahman. His expulsion was due to of his attitude which was said to be extremely vocal in criticising Tunku's leadership.

Another candidate considered as having the potentials to wrest the post was Datuk Samad Idris. He was an active member of the Youth Movement since the time of Sardon Jubir and he was also responsible for proposing the change in the slogan "Hidup Melayu" (Long Live Malays) to "Merdeka" (Independence). He had also held the post of Kuala Pilah Division's Youth head.

During the final moments before the Youth Chief's election, the name of Datuk Harun Idris was nominated by Kelantan's Kota Bahru UMNO Youth division. The decision by Datuk Harun to accept the nomination caused Datuk Samad Idris to state his support for Datuk Harun. Datuk Musa realised that Datuk Harun's entry would result in the splitting of votes between them and this would only benefit Datuk Ali Hj. Ahmad. He therefore withdrew from the race and stated his support for Datuk Harun. Datuk Musa then offered to stand for the post of Deputy Youth Chief challenging Shariff Ahmad. This action by Datuk Musa reflected as if there was a cooperation in the election for the leadership of the Youth Movement at that time.

On 21 January 1971, during the Youth Movement's General Assembly held at Balai Budaya, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Datuk Harun Idris was elected to be the fifth Youth Movement Chief. He defeated Datuk Ali with a huge majority while Datuk Musa Hitam successfully defeated Shariff Ahmad for the Deputy Youth Chief post. The victory of these two personalities showed that a transition of leadership had taken place in the movement. The old group who had led the movement before this, had changed to a new generation which was more aggressive and radical in their actions. In several matters, Datuk Harun and Datuk Musa Hitam had the same opinions and views especially in their efforts to make the movement a respected movement. Both of them were of the view that the strength of the movement did not lie in the huge membership but it depended on the effectiveness of the role played by the members of the Movement as UMNO's right wing. They spared no efforts to make the Youth Movement a critical and dynamic body in tackling problems within the country especially in political and economic matters.

The initial step taken by Datuk Harun early in his leadership was to set up a Leaders' Chamber. This Chamber consisted of five Youth Committee Members including himself and Datuk Musa. The other members were Ikhwan Nasir, Mohammed Rahmat and Kamarul Ariffin. The purpose of setting up the Council was to smoothen and further strengthen the Movement. This Harun - Musa team had voiced the desire to have a more dynamic and progressive political shift to be in line with the changing demands of the times. For that purpose, the slogan "Pemuda Harapan Bangsa" (Youth - Hope of the Nation) used during the era of Senu Abdul Rahman was changed to "Pemuda Pelopor Pembangunan" (Youth - the Pioneer of Development) by holding firmly to the concept of sincerity, firmness and cleanliness. During his early leadership, Datuk Harun also introduced the bureau system or the membership system in the administration of the Youth at the central level. Through this bureau system, each UMNO Youth committee member was given the task to head the various bureaus established. Each bureau head could appoint his own committee members from Youth members at the divisional and branch level. The purpose of having this bureau system was to give specialised functions to its committee members according to the specified areas. The establishment of Leaders Council and the bureau system further strengthened Datuk Harun's leadership. Through this two systems, he could channel all his directives and ideas more effectively to the members of the Youth Movement. His action in creating this specific duty structure showed that he practised a kind of leadership which was duty orientated. Through this two systems also, Datuk Harun had launched his action programs in line with the nations prevailing political situation then.

The early success achieved by the Youth under this team of two leaders was to bring Dr. Mahathir Mohamad back into UMNO after he had been expelled from the party. Dr. Mahathir was expelled by UMNO's Supreme Council for being outspoken in criticising Tunku Abdul Rahman during the 13 May 1969 crisis. Datuk Harun and the Youth Excocs spared no effort to convince UMNO Supreme Council to re-accept the membership of Dr. Mahathir. Datuk Harun and the Youth were of the view that a person like Dr. Mahathir was most needed for the development of the party

and the nation. Although initially Dr. Mahathir himself appeared to be reluctant to return to UMNO, but after Datuk Harun and the Youth Movement's persuasion, Dr. Mahathir eventually agreed to reapply for UMNO membership. Dr. Mahathir's re-entry into UMNO appeared to be of little significance then, but judging from the developments in his political career until he became Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1982, it was evidently an important event for UMNO and the nation. That success had become the turning point in Dr. Mahathir's political career.

Under Datuk Harun's stewardship, the Youth Movement amended its constitution. This was done in order to provide a broader base for the leaders at divisional levels to be more recognized. These amendments had, in effect, disallowed Youth Central Committee Members from holding posts at divisional and branch levels. This was aimed at creating an avenue for leaders at these levels to highlight their capabilities and leadership qualities, especially when holding the State and Divisional Chief posts.

In accordance with the wishes of the Youth members who clamored for a change in the Movement, the Harun-Musa team placed the Movement as a pressure group towards the party and Government. This was in line with Datuk Harun's wishes as stated by him when interviewed by Subky Latif and published in the March 1971 issue of 'Mastika'. He said:

".....I welcome the youth to criticize the leaders. I hope the youth's honest and constructive critical nature will not result in them being branded a traitor!"

Under the leadership of the Harun - Musa team, the Youth began to be bold in criticising UMNO leaders and the government openly, especially in matters of mismanagement which had taken place.

The outspokenness and the aggressive pattern of action demonstrated by the Youth Movement were in line with the development of the then political situation, especially in their efforts to upgrade the economy of the Malays after the 13 May 1969 tragedy. To fulfil this responsibility, Dato' Harun and the UMNO Youth Exco members had travelled the length and breadth of the country to explain the concepts and the policies of the government under the leadership of Tun Abdul Razak. The Youth were determined and spared no efforts to achieve the maximum objectives in their struggle to restructure the Malay community.

In order to achieve this objective, the involvement of all parties, especially the young generation including youths inside and outside the country and undergraduates in local universities were greatly needed. Meetings and dialogues with these parties were often held by Youth leaders. In addition, Youth leaders often held meetings with Cabinet Ministers and companies in the private sector to state their views on matters which they felt should be rectified.

Criticism made by the Youth Movement especially by Datuk Harun and Datuk Musa towards the party, government and bodies in the private sector always received the attention of Malaysians. The name of Pemuda and Datuk Harun appeared to be inseparable. It had become a new image for the Youth Movement to the extent that it was feared by several quarters. According to Chamil Wariya in his book "Siapa Kuasai UMNO" (Who Controls UMNO), the aggressive pattern of action of Datuk Harun and the Youth Movement caused a rift between the Movement and its parent body. The UMNO leaders began to show their reactions towards the actions of the Movement. For instance, Tun Dr. Ismail while declaring open the Youth Movement's Annual Assembly on 23 June 1972 had criticised the young turks not to act in contrast to the party's wishes :

"...As a party that supports the government, you should realise our responsibilities in facing the people and, therefore your consideration and approach should be directed towards giving the actual perceptions in respect of the government's efforts. The behaviour of magnifying the failures of the party's and government's effort should be reduced"

He also advised the UMNO Youth members not to become a party within a party which gives pressure to the leaders. According to him, the pressure towards the party should come from the opposition party and not within the party itself. According to him :

"The Youth Movement should not be a pressure group openly because in a democracy, the pressure comes from the opposition."

There were also UMNO leaders who were not at ease with the political strength of Datuk Harun in UMNO through the Youth Movement which he led. Gradually, attempts were made to separate Datuk Harun from Tun Abdul Razak by the President's men. This was the turning point culminating in the expulsion of Datuk Harun from UMNO in 1976 at a time when UMNO was led by Datuk Hussein Onn.

The pattern of action in the Youth Movement under the leadership of Datuk Harun was different from the Youth Movement under the leadership of Sardon Jubir. Although during the era of Sardon the Movement had acted as a pressure group towards the party leadership and the Government, all the final decisions made by the party was complied by the Youth Movement at that time. The situation differed with the Youth Movement under the leadership of Datuk Harun and his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam. In several matters it appears as if the party leadership were forced to concur with the decisions and pressures of the Movement.

In actual fact, all actions taken by the Movement during this era were in line with the development of the NEP launched by the Government with the intention of upgrading the economic standards of the 'Bumiputras'. The period of the policy covering a span of 20 years, was a long term and the success or failure of this policy rests on the shoulders of the young generation in

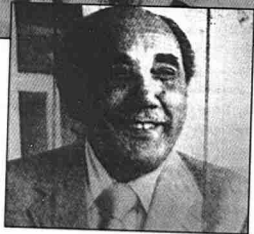


◀ *Datuk Harun Haji Idris, Youth Movement Chief (1971 - 1976). The Youth in this era held to the concept of honest, firm and clean*



▲ *The Youth Movement under Tan Sri Jaafar Albar succeeded in exposing the activities of the several UMNO leaders and government servants who were involved in the spread of communism*

*Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar (Lion of UMNO), Youth Movement Chief (1976 - 1977)* ▶



UMNO. Realising this, the Movement felt that they had not only to act as a overseer but they must also be responsible in forging all available resources to make it a success.

## THE MOVEMENT'S ROLE IN THE NEP

The situation experienced by Datuk Harun when taking over the leadership of the UMNO Youth Movement was a totally new situation. The early 70's showed that the economy of the Malays were backward when compared to the Chinese in Malaysia. Therefore, Datuk Harun and the UMNO Youth felt the necessity of restructuring the inter-community economy in Malaysia. The climate during his leadership caused the Malays to demand a change in the socio-economic development of the community. Using the slogan "Pemuda Pelopor Pembangunan" (Youth - Pioneer of Development) Datuk Harun began his actions by pressuring the Government so that a radical action should be taken to improve the economic position of the Malay community, which was far behind that of other groups.

In line with the implementation of the NEP carried out by the Government, Datuk Harun and the Youth Movement resolved to frustrate every mismanagement in the course of its implementation. The Movement was worried that the failure to improve the economy of the Malays through this policy would cause the Malays to rise and demand their rights. To ensure that this situation did not happen, Datuk Harun turned the Movement's role as an overseer and advisor to the party, Government and the public sector and made it the platform for the Movement's struggle under his leadership.

Throughout 1971-72, the struggle of the Youth Movement was centred mainly on matters in ensuring the success of the NEP. The Movement was hopeful of achieving success. As a measure to achieve this objective, the Youth Movement held a three day National Seminar from 25 to 27 July at Morib, Selangor. Every Youth division in the country sent three representatives to attend the seminar themed "The Youth's Role in the Development of the Nation." A total of four working-papers were presented during the seminar. The seminar produced 53 resolutions and most of them were related to matters pertaining to land and its relationship to the economy of the Malays. The Youth Movement resolved to implement fully the recommendations made at that seminar and all proceedings and resolutions had since been compiled into a book.

Apart from this, Datuk Harun headed a Youth Committee to hold a dialogue and a meeting between the Government and statutory bodies. The Youth Movement made efforts to produce 1000 Malay executives each year before the end of 1990. The Movement urged the Government to nationalize foreign Companies which did not comply to the equity distribution requirement of 30% to the Bumiputras, especially the Malays. This demand was made because at that time there was an imbalance in the ownership of shares in the cooperatives in peninsular Malaysia. Only 1.2 per cent was owned by the Malays whereas 23 per cent were owned by the Chinese and another

62 percent were owned by the foreign companies. Among the private bodies which received early criticism from Datuk Harun were the newspapers. UMNO Youth urged the Government to ensure that these newspapers be owned by Malaysians and all principle staffs, including those who held managerial posts, editors and reporters should be the citizens of Malaysia. Foreign newspapers were urged not to publish news containing issues which were against the interests of the nation. In this respect the Straits Times became the main target. A memorandum was sent by the Movement to Tun Abd. Razak urging him to take actions against the newspaper. Among the contents of the memorandum were :

- *From the publication aspect, this newspaper showed an unsympathetic attitude towards the struggle of the Malays and its publication policy was not in line with the Government's policy of uniting the people of this country.*
- *There was favouritism between the Malay Officers and the non-Malay Officers.*
- *Urged that certain officers in this newspaper group be dismissed.*

As a result of this pressure, on 28 August 1972, The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd was founded to replace the original Straits Times and the majority of its shares were held by Malaysian investors. The success achieved by the Youth Movement further enhanced the image of Datuk Harun and the Movement in the eyes of Malaysians.

Datuk Harun continued his leadership of UMNO members to uphold their role as a watchdog of the implementations of Government's policies and private sector to ensure that the objectives of the NEP is achieved. Between 1972-1974, the Movement took action against defects in the recruitment of manpower in the private sector especially at the management and professional levels. Considering the fact that in 1969, the ratio of officers in the Government services was only 1:2 between Bumiputras and non-Bumiputras, the Movement urged that the recruitment of Bumiputra employees be increased.

For that purpose, Datuk Harun criticised openly several Government agencies; among them Malaysian Airlines System (MAS), Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and SIRIM for not reflecting a racial balance in the recruitment of their employees. The Movement had carried out a detailed research on the manpower at SIRIM. The result showed that most of the foreign officers especially the Chinese, outnumbered the Bumiputras. The outcome of the research was given to the Government for further action.

The actions of Datuk Harun and the Youth Movement in disclosing the said defects resulted in the ratio of Bumiputra manpower to increase in 1974 from 1:2 in 1969 to 2:3 in that year (see Schedule 3.1).

### Schedule 3.1

Recruitment of manpower in the public sector, ratio between Bumiputra and Non-Bumiputra for the years 1969 - 1974

Year	Bumiputra	Non-Bumiputra	Total	Ratio
1969	1392 (36%)	2447 (64%)	3839	1:2
1974	3393 (40%)	4869 (59%)	8292	2:3

Source : Aziz Fariza Ahmad, *UMNO's philosophy and struggle*, Knight Publication, Kuala Lumpur, 1979

The Youth Movement under the leadership of Datuk Harun did not confine itself to criticising and advising on economic matters alone. Attention was also given to education which was the basic element for the development of the Malays. Through the Movement's Education Bureau, a detailed report on the causes for the drop-out of Malay students were prepared. The outcome of the study showed that the main causes were due to the system of teaching and text books and not because of the poverty factor suffered by the Malays. Datuk Harun also sent a memorandum to Dr. Mahathir Mohamad asking that the administration of schools be streamlined under one body and suggesting that more technical and vocational schools be built in the country.

Apart from that, the Youth Movement also questioned the proposed setting up of Genting College. They felt that the setting up of the college would further widen the gap between Bumiputras and Non-Bumiputras as the fees to be charged would be too high, i.e. about RM3,000 a year. The setting up of this college would be more beneficial to the elite and the aristocrat group only and would be less beneficial to the common people as a whole.

The success and the new image portrayed by the Youth Movement under Datuk Harun's leadership increased the confidence of the young generation and society in the Movement. Wherever there was a feeling of dissatisfaction of the people towards mismanagement, they would immediately contact the Movement which would not hesitate to carry out its investigation and take the appropriate action. The new development which took place in the role and mode of action of the Movement greatly assisted UMNO and the Government in ensuring that the NEP was implemented according to plan. This effort was also successful in attracting more Malay Youths to join in the Movement's struggle.

Datuk Harun was successful in bringing back the image of the Movement and its parent body which has suffered as a result of the 13 May 1969 incident. From the early 1970's up to the middle of the decade, the strength and power of the Youth Movement began to be felt in the nation's political arena. At that time Malaysians could see the actual role played by the Movement in its activities because prior to this it was said that the Movement existed only to complement the

activities of UMNO. However, the successes achieved by Datuk Harun and the Movement gave rise to uneasiness among the Government bodies and the private sector. In fact, there were some UMNO leaders themselves who felt uneasy with the outspokenness and the firmness of Datuk Harun and members of the Movement in solving an issue. The calibre of Datuk Harun was so overwhelming then that Datuk Senu (UMNO Youth Chief 1964 - 1971) once commented that based on his political strength and achievement, Datuk Harun was capable of becoming the Prime Minister in the future.

### THE EXPULSION OF DATUK HARUN : THE YOUTHS REACTION

The role which had never been played by the Youth movement before this was that of a trouble-shooter for its parent body. This role was made as the platform by the movement in this era to strengthen UMNO's position as the ruling party. The awareness to advise UMNO on its operations in Malaysia's ever challenging political development was vital in ensuring that UMNO remained as a dominant political party. The Movement advised UMNO leaders to associate themselves closer to the people. According to them, this was the only way for the leaders to see for themselves the problems faced by the people. Datuk Harun stressed that the reason for his and the Movement's intention of reminding the leaders on this aspect was because he did not want to see a recurrence of the 13 May 1969 incident as it would threaten UMNO's strength.

The open advice to the party leadership caused a misunderstanding among the UMNO leadership. This action resulted in a rift between the party and the Movements' leadership, more so with Datuk Harun. The existence of this rift between the Movement and its parent body was a new phenomenon to the Movement. This differed from the Youth Movement prior to this which forged a close relationship and always complied with all the resolutions and wishes of the party leadership. The relationship became more tense when the Movement at that time appeared to be boycotted by the UMNO leadership.

In response to this situation, during the UMNO Youth election for the 1974/76 term which was held on 28 June 1974, Datuk Harun Idris was challenged by Datuk Samad Idris. Datuk Samad Idris was said to be a candidate put up by the leadership who opposed Datuk Harun. Although Datuk Harun was able to retain his post by defeating Datuk Samad Idris with a majority of 138 votes, the interesting point to note is that there was an attempt to topple Datuk Harun from his position. In this respect, Datuk Harun did not regard what happened as a crisis of confidence towards his leadership.

The turbidness and the rift that happened was not only known within the UMNO party alone, but it began to spread widely and this opportunity was capitalised by Datuk Harun's foes to tarnish his image and that of the Movement in the eyes of the people. Beginning with the allegations by the National University Of Malaysia (UKM) undergraduates on abuse of power, favoritism and

several other irregularities in the distribution of timber concession in Bangi, the main site of UKM, attempts were then made to expose Datuk Harun's misdeeds, one after another. Datuk Harun was also accused of owning assets worth an estimated RM60.0 million. Consequently, in 1974 Tun Abdul Razak directed the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct an investigation into allegations made against Datuk Harun.

In an effort to save Datuk Harun from the allegations thrown at him, Tun Abdul Razak offered him the post of ambassador to the United Nations in November 1975. Datuk Harun rejected this offer citing an excuse that he wish to clear his name which had been brought into disrepute. Datuk Harun's rejection of this offer received the support of the UMNO Youth members. On 24 November 1975 Datuk Harun was charged in court for the alleged misappropriation of Bank Rakyat's stock and share funds, totalling nearly RM8.0 million. Datuk Harun was alleged to have used the money belonging to Bank Rakyat to finance the World Heavyweight Boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Bugner in Kuala Lumpur. Although Datuk Harun's action in bringing the boxing match here was intended to enhance Malaysia in the eyes of the world, his actions in misusing his powers to cover-up the losses suffered by Syarikat Tinju Dunia was an offence under the law. Assuming that the sponsored match did not suffer a loss and that Datuk Harun had not used Bank Rakyat's funds for the said purpose his name would surely continue to shine in UMNO's politics.

Before the Bank Rakyat's case was concluded, Datuk Harun was again charged in Court for an offence of receiving bribes amounting to RM250,000 from HongKong & Shanghai Banking Corporation. He was subsequently found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment after being convicted of all charges against him.

The Movement held a Special General Assembly to discuss Datuk Harun's problems. In the assembly held on 29 November 1975, members of the Movement passed a resolution giving full confidence to Datuk Harun to continue to lead the Movement. Prior to that, a special fund called Datuk Harun's Defence Fund had been launched to finance his defence.

The sudden demise of Tun Abdul Razak on 14 January 1976 in London of acute leukemia elevated Datuk Hussein Onn as the Third Prime Minister of Malaysia and acting President of UMNO. Datuk Hussein Onn adopted a firm attitude regarding Datuk Harun's problems although there were pressures from the Movement that a pardon be granted to Datuk Harun. The UMNO Supreme Council at its meeting on 18 March 1976 made a decision to advise Datuk Harun to resign from all posts held by him in UMNO, the Government and the Barisan Nasional. Datuk Harun refused to accept the advice of the UMNO Supreme Council on the grounds that he had not committed any offence towards the party.

Datuk Harun's decision caused the UMNO Supreme Council to strip him of his membership in UMNO in accordance to Article II clause 13 of the UMNO Constitution. Consequently, Datuk

Harun was forced to give up his posts as the Youth Movement's Chief, Head of Selangor State UMNO Liaison Committee, Chairman of the Selangor Barisan Nasional and the Menteri Besar of Selangor.

The expulsion of Datuk Harun Idris from UMNO was met with opposition from members of the Youth Movement especially the Selangor UMNO Youth. Various efforts were made by the Movement including urging the UMNO Supreme Council to accept Datuk Harun back into UMNO. Dato' Mohamed Rahmat, in his capacity as the Movement's Deputy Chief, led the Movement's Excos to meet Datuk Hussein Onn and Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as acting President and Vice President of UMNO respectively, to reconsider Datuk Harun's membership in UMNO. However, Datuk Hussein Onn was firm in his stand and refused to reverse the decision which had been made by the Supreme Council. The Movement continued with its efforts and in the Youth Assembly which was held in June 1976, made a unanimous decision to urge the UMNO Supreme Council to reaccept Datuk Harun into the UMNO fold.

With the support of the Youth Movement and UMNO old guards, such as Syed Jaafar Albar and Tunku Abdul Rahman, Datuk Harun was finally reaccepted as an UMNO member on 23 October 1976.

#### SYED JAAFAR ALBAR (THE LION OF UMNO)

Datuk Harun's expulsion from UMNO in March 1976 caused the post of the Youth Chief, which he had held since 1971, to be vacant. Dato' Mohamed Rahmat who was then the Deputy Youth Chief should actually have acted in that post but he decided not to do so. He continued to hold the post of Deputy Chief until the Movement's General Assembly held in July 1976. A period of 3 months (March-July) after the expulsion of Datuk Harun witnessed the turbulence in UMNO's politics and whatever happened within the Movement received the attention of politicians in particular, and the people in general.

During this period, the Youth Movement which, prior to this, seemed very strong in its actions, appeared to have become an organisation with no directions in its struggle. This situation showed that the influence and role of a leader in the Youth Movement influenced the effectiveness of the Movement. In the run-up to the elections for Youth Chief for the term 1976/78, Datuk Musa Hitam who had held the post of Deputy Chief for 4 years (1971-74) was the candidate thought most suitable to restore the Movement's role as a pressure group and to re-project the image of the Movement in the eyes of the masses. Datuk Musa Hitam's style of leadership and pattern of action when he was with the Movement strengthen the confidence of the members of the Movement that Datuk Musa Hitam was capable of restoring the glory of the Movement.

Datuk Musa Hitam rejected his nomination to contest as the Movement's Chief. His

reasoning was that the Youth Movement should be led by a Chief under 40 years of age. Indeed Datuk Musa had, since he assumed the post of the Youth Chief, often voiced that the Youth Chief should be selected from among those who were under 40 years of age. Although the Movement's rules had stipulated that the Youth Chief was exempted from the age limit, Datuk Musa nonetheless held firm to this principle. According to him :

"I have always voiced my opinion that those who are young should lead the young and represent the wishes of the young because only the young truly understand the current spirit of the young at any one time".

Datuk Musa also stated that his rejection of the nomination was also because he did not agree with what was happening in UMNO's politics at that time. According to him UMNO members had started to be involved in money politics in order to obtain positions in the party.

Past incidents had shown that the post of the Movement's Chief had often been held by some unexpected leaders. This trend continued with the victory of Tan Sri Jaafar Albar, better known among the UMNO members as the Lion of UMNO, who defeated Datuk Mohammed Rahmat. Syed Jaafar Albar was nominated by the Beruas division of UMNO Youth in Perak. Although he was reluctant to accept the nomination initially, the refusal of Datuk Musa Hitam to stand and the remarks by some quarters that he was too old (62 years old) to lead the Movement, caused him to accept the nomination. His acceptance was also because of the support from the Movement's divisions throughout the country who had nominated him.

His willingness to contest caused Datuk Mansur Othman, Datuk Syed Nahar Shahbuddin and Tengku Ahmad Rithaudeen to withdraw from the contest. Only Datuk Mohamed Rahmat expressed his readiness to contest against Syed Jaafar Albar. Datuk Mohamed Rahmat was the then Deputy Chief.

The victory of Syed Jaafar Albar who was then already 62 years old showed that the members of the Movement wished to have a leader who would be bold to act in an outspoken and firm manner. The outspokenness and firmness of Syed Jaafar in tackling any issue that arose during his struggle in UMNO more or less assisted him in winning the post. Some quarters in UMNO had expected the Movement to continue to act as the pressure group in their actions.

This concept however was denied by Syed Jaafar Albar in his speech at the UMNO General Assembly held on 26 July 1976, one day after the Movement's elections. He stated that the Youth Movement would be the Ginger Group, as, according to him, although ginger was hot, it contained special properties. In its actions the Movement would not become a pressure group but would maintain a close relationship with the party leadership.

Although Syed Jaafar Albar had stated that the Movement would not be the pressure group to the party, but after holding the Youth Chief post for one year, the Youth Movement still continued with its role of pressuring and criticising the party and the government. The only difference was the Movement under the leadership of the Lion of UMNO made its criticism in a refined and polite manner and this was acceptable to the party leadership.

When Syed Jaafar Albar took over the leadership, the Movement was in a state of disorder following the expulsion of Datuk Harun and the death of Tun Abdul Razak. There also existed at that time a glaring rift between the Movement and its parent body. Through his sponsored Ginger Group, Syed Jaafar Albar and members of the Youth Movement initiated efforts to end the rift.

His style coupled with the solid support given to him by the members of the Movement assisted him in achieving the original aims of the Movement's struggle under his leadership, i.e. to bridge the gap that existed. Syed Jaafar Albar had succeeded in bringing back the Movement to life as the right wing of UMNO after being crippled for almost three months following the forced resignation of Datuk Harun as the Youth Chief.

#### GINGER GROUP AS THE BRIDGE OF THE PARTY

When taking over duties as the Youth Movement's Chief, Syed Jaafar Albar had to shoulder a heavy burden. He had to face not only the problem over the expulsion of Datuk Harun but was also forced to face a group of young blood as compared to his age at that time. His personality and excellent political background in UMNO enabled him to address the wishes of this young group and he was always well liked and respected by both the members of the movement and the party leadership.

The primary duty that had to be carried out by the Youth Movement during this era was to bring back their former head Datuk Harun Idris into the UMNO fold as Syed Jaafar was one of the old leaders in UMNO who was not satisfied with the expulsion and the way Datuk Harun's case was being dealt with. Syed Jaafar Albar himself was of the view that the rift that existed between the Movement and its parent body was due to the expulsion of Datuk Harun which had caused uneasiness among the members of the party.

In the Movement's assembly held on 1 July 1976, a resolution was passed by the Youth Movement to urge the party leadership to reaccept Datuk Harun. The pressure from the Movement opened the eyes of UMNO leaders. The Supreme Council meeting in Penang discussed Datuk Harun's re-entry. Datuk Harun was officially re-accepted as an UMNO member on 23 October 1976. With this decision the tense situation in the Youth Movement was diminished. The success of bringing Datuk Harun back into UMNO was the movement's major success during this era.



▲ *Datuk Suhaimi being congratulated on his victory  
by UMNO Youth delegates* ▼



Under the leadership of Syed Jaafar Albar, the Movement continued to practice the tradition thus far carried out by their Movements predecessors, of holding meetings with UMNO leaders at the national level and also with leaders of the Movement at branch, division and state levels with a view to forging a closer relationship. These meetings were used by the Movement's Excos to discuss and to deliver the programmes planned by the Youth Movement. A major success achieved by the Youth Movement during this era under Syed Jaafar Albar's leadership was the exposure of the activities of certain UMNO leaders and government servants in spreading communism especially in UMNO. The Movement, through its chief who had often acted in a frank and open manner, named several UMNO leaders who had been in contact with persons professing the communist ideology. Among those who came under the Movement's attack were Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, Datuk Abdullah Majid and Khalil Akasah. As a result of the Movement's exposure on 2 November 1976, all the three leaders named by the Movement were arrested under the Internal Security Act for allegedly spreading communism. Several persons outside UMNO were also arrested. Among them were Samad Ismail, Kassim Ahmad, Samani Mohd Amir, Chian Heng Kai, Chiu Kok Kit and Tan Kien Sew.

The determined efforts by the Movement that resulted in the exposure of communist activities within UMNO and the government successfully regained the confidence of the party leadership and UMNO members in that Movement. The two Deputy Ministers arrested, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad and Abdullah Majid were senior aides to Tun Abdul Razak during his lifetime. These two played a role in toppling Datuk Harun because of their jealousy of the political strength and success of Datuk Harun in the Youth Movement.

Even so, the Youth Movement paid less attention to economic matters during this era. There were no work plans or activities carried out to assist the successful implementation of the NEP. The Movement could not play its role in the economic field because special attention were always given to secure a pardon for Datuk Harun and the problems of the communist threat. However, Syed Jaafar Albar was able to voice his concern about the success of the NEP in improving the economic lot of the Malays. According to him:

"At that time (1976) there was no New Economic Policy to create the various government agencies which, in the eyes of the majority of our people, only a small fraction of the people who included, or were close to, the ruling circle were able to enjoy the benefit".

Syed Jaafar Albar's leadership of the Youth Movement was short-lived, only for about six months: he died on 14 January 1977 after delivering a speech at a party function in Kuala Lumpur. Although he led the Movement for only six months, nonetheless the role played by him successfully narrowed the rift between the Movement and the leadership and also successfully exposed communist activities within UMNO. These two successes were a great contribution to the party and the nation; his actions during these six months succeeded in restoring UMNO to an influential party.

## DATUK HAJI SUHAIMI KAMARUDDIN

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Datuk Haji Suhaimi bin Datuk Kamaruddin began to lead the Youth Movement in early 1977, upon the sudden demise of Syed Jaafar Albar on 14 January 1977. He was then the Deputy Youth Chief and he held the Youth Chief's post in an acting capacity until fresh elections were held in 1978.

While acting as the Youth Chief, Datuk Suhaimi made a clarification on the role to be played by the Youth Movement at that time. According to him, the movement would continue with the efforts made by Syed Jaafar Albar to turn the Movement as a bridge in forging closer relationship between the Movement and its parent body. He would also continue with the efforts made earlier by the Movement to get a pardon for Datuk Harun. Actions to be taken would also be based on the slogan of the Ginger Group as envisaged by Syed Jaafar Albar.

However, looking at Datuk Suhaimi's background, many expected him to steer the Movement more towards religious activities, especially when considering that Datuk Suhaimi was one of the founders of the Islamic Youth Front of Malaysia (ABIM) and that he had also acted as its legal adviser before taking over as the head of the 4B Youth Movement of Malaysia. In carrying out his duties, Datuk Suhaimi held firm to his principle "Islam Benteng Kepada Masalah" (Islam is the Defensive Wall to All Problems). This expectation was further strengthened when, during the initial period of his leadership, the Movement started to fight for the acceptance of the concept that Islam as a way of life be truly understood by the Malaysian society especially by members of the Movement. The Movement had also urged the government to change the weekly public holiday from Sunday to Friday for those States which had yet to make Friday as a weekly public holiday.

The post of the acting Youth Chief which he held was truly a test of his capabilities as a leader because the political situation then especially Datuk Harun's issue and his age factor, considered as still young to lead the Youth Movement would make him the focus of attention of the Movement's members and nation's politicians.

During the initial leadership of Datuk Suhaimi as the Acting Youth Chief, a crisis occurred between him and several of his Exco members. In the Movement's General Assembly held on 30 June 1977, a motion was moved by the Setapak Youths calling for the simultaneous resignation of two thirds of the Movement's Exco members to enable a Special General Assembly be held to restore Datuk Harun as the Movement's Chief. However, the motion was rejected with only 84 delegates voting in favour. In the same assembly, a motion was passed to the effect that the case of Datuk Harun's pardon be left to the UMNO Supreme Council to decide. The success of Datuk Suhaimi in handing over the duties of Datuk Harun's pardon to the party leadership saved him from further facing the problem. The strong pressure from members of the Movement resulting in some tension being created within the Movement was therefore reduced.

Under the leadership of Datuk Suhaimi as the Movement's acting Chief, the Movement continued to play its role as the eyes and ears of the party and the government especially in the economic field. The Movement often questioned the actions of certain bodies regarding the implementation of the NEP. As an example, the Movement raised the question of the imbalance of the Bumiputra manpower in the emporium business. The Movement was doubtful as to whether the Bumiputra manpower in this sector had achieved the quota of 30% as required by the government under the NEP.

The Movement also urged the government to control the prices of houses intended to be built so that Bumiputras could afford to own them. The aim of the Youth Movement in raising the question of the prices of houses was to ensure that the government's objective that at least 30% of the houses constructed by housing developers be owned by Malays would be achieved. If this matter was not given attention, it would hinder the government's efforts in restructuring the society. The position of the Malays living in the kampungs would then remain unchanged while the non-Malays who are stronger in their economic standing would continue to live in the towns.

Apart from that, the Youth Movement had shown its firmness in opposing the setting up of University Merdeka which some Chinese guilds and associations had proposed to build. Various efforts had been made by the DAP (Democratic Action Party) in connection with this issue to attract the influence of the Chinese to support their actions. This issue was also used by the DAP to provoke racial spint and it was made the party's political capital in order to gain the sympathy of the Chinese. The Movement worked extremely hard on this issue and held a meeting with Daatuk Musa Hitam to discuss the said problem. At the 29th UMNO General Assembly in September 1978, Datuk Musa Hitam in his capacity as the Minister of Education rejected the proposed setting up of the Merdeka University giving several reasons. The rejection of the proposal angered the Chinese, especially the DAP supporters and they accused the government of not being fair to the Chinese. However, the rejection by Datuk Musa was a victory to the Malays especially to the members of the Movement.

In the span of one and a half years that Datuk Suhaimi had acted as the acting Chief, he was successful in dealing with several issues be they inside the Movement itself or those that affected the interest of the Malays. His stout - heartedness and patience in dealing with Datuk Harun's issue after the death of Syed Jaafar Albar helped him a great deal in securing the post in the election held for the term 1978/80.

## **THE MOVEMENT'S ERA OF ACTIONS**

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The success of Datuk Suhaimi in wresting the post of the UMNO Youth Chief by defeating Datuk Seri Nahar Syed Shahabuddin at the 27th Youth General Assembly held on 14 September 1978 afforded him with an opportunity to lead the Movement in his own way and style. Prior to this,

while acting in the post, he merely continued with the style of leadership left by Syed Jaafar Albar.

His victory also created history when he became the first Deputy Youth Chief to successfully graduate to the Youth Chief. All the previous Deputy Chiefs ended their political career in the Movement without being able to occupy the highest post in the Movement. Apart from that, Datuk Suhaimi was also among those to hold the post while below the age of 40. When he held the Chief's post, he was only 34 years old and was still a bachelor.

Datuk Suhaimi changed the 'Ginger Group' slogan which had been the platform used to launch all actions previously, to the slogan "Era Bertindak" ( Era of Action). With this slogan the Youth under his leadership acted as the right wing of UMNO. Just as during the eras of Datuk Harun and Syed Jaafar Albar, Datuk Suhaimi continued the role of the Movement as the prime mover in ensuring that the implementation of the NEP would achieve its objectives. The members of the Movement realised that the economic future of the Malays depended upon whether the NEP achieved its objectives or otherwise. In fact, the failure to achieve its objectives would not only be felt by the Malays but also by all Malaysians as a whole. Therefore, the Movement during this era were watchful of matters such as shares, the position of Bumiputra executives in the private sector, the utilization of Malay Reserve lands and matters affecting man-power in specific bodies or organisations.

The Youth Movement during this era was not only good at criticising or of being a watchdog in ensuring the successful implementation of the NEP. The Movement under the leadership of Datuk Suhaimi took the initiative to ensure that the NEP would successfully achieve its objectives. Realising the fact that they would have to shoulder the burden should the NEP, which was being implemented, failed to achieve its objectives, a two day economic seminar was held on 17 & 18 May 1980 at the International Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The Seminar, called the Economic Discussion was attended by 200 participants from the Movement's divisions. It was declared open by Encik Ghafar Baba, one of the Vice Presidents of UMNO then. At this seminar a total of 66 resolutions were approved and would be used as a guide for the Movement to act on economic matters.

Before the economic discussion seminar was held, the Movement held a seminar on the National Youth Policy. This seminar was held on 16 March 1980 in Kuala Lumpur and was officially declared open by UMNO's Deputy President, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The purpose of the seminar was to obtain the views of the Movement's members regarding the problems faced by the youths. The views and proposals would be made the basis for drawing up of the National Youth Policy. This seminar was attended by 106 participants from the Movements' divisions and it successfully drafted a National Youth Policy containing 3 main objectives aimed at strengthening the nation:

- *To produce youths who are religious and with moral qualities.*
- *To build youth endurance and a sense of love for the nation.*
- *To create a progressive youth community for the economic development of the nation.*

The Movement felt that the above 3 principles had a wide definition and covered all aspects relating to the youths and the nation. The focus on the youths was due to the the lack of skills among youths especially among Bumiputras, to fill the numerous job vacancies in the various fields of the NEP. The fear towards this problem was voiced by Datuk Mohd Najib Tun Razak, one of the Movement's Exco Members. According to him:

"...Rightfully, the lack of skilled and semi-skilled workers should not arise now. Similarly, the private sector should not be faced with any problems in getting trained workers in the structuring of the private sector to fulfill the requirements of the NEP."

The problem of national security also caught the attention of the Youth Movement during this era. The influx of the illegal immigrants from Vietnam to Malaysia was described by their chief as "a modern style of invasion" which threatened national stability. The Movement's Exco led by their Deputy Chief, Datuk Mokhtar Hashim, had studied the situation in Trengganu. Pursuant to its findings, on 6 July 1979 a delegation of the Movement's Exco Members led by Datuk Suhaimi met the Ambassadors of the United States and Vietnam to present the Movement's memorandum of protest on the influx of the Vietnamese illegal immigrants estimated to be more than 76,000 in Malaysia. On the issue of the illegal immigrants, the Youth Movement was the first to express fears on their presence.

A major success achieved under the leadership of Datuk Suhaimi was the confidence gained from the party leadership and government, of the Movement's capability to shoulder the responsibilities of the government if afforded the opportunity. Towards the end of the nineteen seventies and early nineteen eighties, many young leaders were given the opportunities to hold important posts in the government following their victories in the 1978 and 1982 general elections. Some of the Movement's leaders were given the posts of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries at the national level, and Mentris Besar and State Exco Members at state level. In fact Datuk Suhaimi himself was appointed the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and later as Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department. Apart from that, four of the Movement's Exco Members were given the confidence to be the Mentri Besar in their respective states. The confidence shown by the leadership and the government signify that the Youth Movement's struggles had caught the attention and gained the recognition of the UMNO leaders.

On careful study of the style of action and the position of the Movement under the leadership of Datuk Suhaimi, it could be noticed that the Movement adopted a low profile course of action unlike the style of action of the Movement under the leadership of Datuk Harun and Syed Jaafar

Albar. When dealing with every issue that arose, the Era of Action Youths acted in a more rational manner and did not 'lose their heads' easily when put under pressure. Datuk Suhaimi would always lead the Movement's Excos in their meeting with leaders and heads of departments with a view to discuss the problems at hand rather than make open criticisms in speeches or through the mass media.

This course of action adopted by the Movement could probably be due to the fact that many of the Movement's Exco members held important posts in the government. This situation differed from what happened to the Movement during the eras of Datuk Harun and Syed Jaafar Albar. Both of them did not hold any post in the Cabinet and were therefore free to advise and criticise openly. By virtue of their positions in the Cabinet, Datuk Suhaimi, his Deputy Chief Datuk Mokhtar Hashim and several other members of his Exco found it hard to advise and criticise the running of the government openly.

However, this line of approach by Datuk Suhaimi was not well received by members of the Movement especially his actions in dealing with Datuk Harun's problem. Members of the Movement felt that he had been too gentle with the party leadership in his attempt to settle the issue. His failure in this issue resulted in him being challenged by Datuk Harun in the contest for the Youth Chief in 1980. Through his son Mazlan, who was also an Exco Member, Datuk Harun announced that he would contest. Datuk Harun gave two reasons for contesting against Datuk Suhaimi who was his former defence counsel and also his nephew. Firstly, it was to save the dignity of the Youth Movement and secondly, to test how far the Youth Members were prepared to make a political defence for him.

In the Movement's General Assembly held in 1980, Datuk Suhaimi successfully retained his post as the Youth Chief, but from the number of votes secured by Datuk Harun it was evident that Datuk Suhaimi was beginning to get opposition from members of the Youth Movement. In fact, after that Datuk Suhaimi often received criticisms from many quarters. For example, Rosnah Majid in *Mingguan Malaysia (Malaysian Weekly)* on 29 July 1980 wrote :

"...After being under the leadership of Haji Suhaimi for three years, the Youth Movement had acted on a silent platform .... to some, this is interpreted as Haji Suhaimi's failure".

The situation faced by Datuk Suhaimi was because of the presence of inside politics of the Movement itself among other causes. The expulsion of Datuk Harun had caused a rift in relationship between the leadership and the Movement at the time when he first took over the leadership of the Movement. Apart from that, Datuk Suhaimi's personality was not up to the level of that of Datuk Harun or Syed Jaafar Albar. Further, his failure to make the Youth Movement as a vocal pressure group was also a contributing factor which caused him to be drowned in the Movement's political development. In the contest for the leadership of the Youth Movement for the

1982/84 term, Datuk Suhaimi was defeated by Anwar Ibrahim, his friend when they were both active in ABIM.

## CONCLUSION

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Throughout the nineteen seventies, the Youth Movement led by Datuk Harun, Syed Jaafar Albar and Datuk Suhaimi achieved several progresses and successes. The new development that happened to the Movement during this era was the role played by it. If before this, it had only acted as a defensive wall to the parent body but beginning from the leadership of Datuk Harun, the Movement had emerged as a vocal pressure group to the government, the private sector and to its parent body itself. The change in role and the style of action that had taken place during this era were because of the situation prevailing then which required the question of the Malay economy to be addressed. The Movement was successful in becoming the defender of the people especially the Malays in ensuring that the implementation of the NEP would achieve its objectives.

Apart from that, on the question of national security, the Movement under the leadership of Syed Jaafar Albar had succeeded in exposing the activities of several UMNO leaders who had been involved in communism. The group that had succeeded in making Datuk Harun unpopular in the eyes of the party leadership was finally arrested. This success had saved UMNO from becoming a tool for the spreading of communist ideologies and had saved the nation from being crushed.

Beginning from this era, the younger set in UMNO gained the confidence of the party leadership and they were given several important posts in the government. This development showed that the Movement's leaders had succeeded in playing their roles and functions as the second echelon leaders to the party leadership and the government. The Movement had succeeded in displaying its true role in the fields of politics, economy and to the Society while at the same time ensuring that UMNO would remain strong and superior as a party and a protector of the Malays.

## Chapter Four

# ERA OF PROGRESSIVE YOUTH

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## Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

The post of the Youth Movement Chief experiences changes whenever there is a contest for the post.

This democratic process practiced by UMNO and its youth wing is a healthy development since it ensures that the body is headed by those who are truly capable and qualified. Anwar Ibrahim succeeded to the post of Youth Chief upon defeating Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin.

This chapter will attempt to explore how Anwar, who was known as an outspoken critic against the government, carried out his responsibilities. And how he took the Youth under his leadership to face the course of time, as well as his inclination towards Islamic values.

The rise of Islam during the early 1980's in Malaysia somewhat influenced the Youth members in their selection of Anwar to lead the movement. His victory was also influenced by the change in leadership and a government which desired to instill Islamic values in its administration.

This era witnessed how the Youth implemented various programmes for the benefit of the poor and emphasized this as the basis of their struggle in raising the living standards of the Malays especially those in the rural areas.

Anwar's leadership era was the last in the struggle of the Youth Movement which was formed in 1949. For, in 1987, UMNO and its right wing was declared illegal by the Malaysian High



▲ *Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim - Youth  
Movement Chief (1982 - 1987)*

Court. This event, which saddened the Malays was never expected especially at a time when the nation achieved a remarkable level of development. However, this event remained a part of the race and the nation's history which the future generation could ponder upon.

## ANWAR IBRAHIM: THE MAN WHO BROUGHT CHANGES

### **The struggle to instill Islamic values.**

Anwar's decision to be active in UMNO in March 1982 came as a surprise decision to many, especially among the politicians. This situation was due to the fact that, while at the helm of the Malaysian Islamic Youth Front (ABIM) he was a strong critic of UMNO and the Government's leadership. According to him, his entry into UMNO was due to the open and honest attitude of the government under Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. In fact, prior to this, Anwar was once offered by Tun Abdul Razak to join his cabinet in 1974 while he was the Prime Minister. Datuk Harun Idris had also invited Anwar Ibrahim to join the Youth Movement while the former was the Youth Movement Chief but these invitations were rejected by Anwar.

The good relationship between Anwar and Dr. Mahathir since they were together in criticizing the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman after the May 13 incident in 1969, was also one of the factors which influenced his decision to be active in UMNO.

His entry into UMNO received support not only from UMNO members but also from leaders of other National Front (BN) component parties. For example, MIC President, Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu regarded Anwar's entry as a catalyst to assist UMNO and the government in implementing its policies. The support and attention given by the people especially UMNO members and other BN component parties were proven when he won the Permatang Pauh Parliamentary seat after defeating PAS's candidate Zabidi Hj. Ali with a majority of 14,352 votes during the general election of 1982. That victory surprised many quarters, since he had just been active in UMNO. He was even appointed by Dr. Mahathir as the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in the new Cabinet line-up following the general elections. Before being active in UMNO politics, Anwar had led ABIM for ten years. Under his leadership, ABIM received a great deal of attention from the public, especially among educated Muslim youths. The organization concentrated its activities in efforts to instill Islamic values through activities such as group discussions, lectures, forums, symposiums and publications specifically aimed at enhancing the awareness and involvement of the community towards Islam.

The inclination of ABIM in championing Islamic values and Anwar's actions which emphasized on the Islamisation concept resulted in many having the view that should he decide to be active in the political arena, he would choose PAS as a platform for his struggle. His decision to be active in UMNO disappointed several PAS leaders and his associates in ABIM. According

to J.V Morais, ABIM council members were very reluctant to release Anwar for active involvement in UMNO.

During the contest for the Youth Movement Chief for the term 1982/84, Datuk Suhaimi who was Youth Chief then, was considered incompatible with the style of administration of Dr. Mahathir and his Deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam. According to Saidin Thamby, former Executive Secretary of UMNO Youth from Datuk Harun Idris' time until Datuk Suhaimi's period, if the Youth did not change their style of action, the Movement would fall behind and its image as UMNO's right wing would be affected. In such a situation, the Youth had to look for a figure who was more dynamic to ensure that the Movement could move forward more splendidly.

Among the new renowned figures considered suitable to take over the post were Datuk Rais Yatim and Abdul Rahim Bakar. Another candidate who was considered capable and qualified to lead the Youth was Anwar Ibrahim. He was popular among the UMNO members because of his outspoken and aggressive actions while leading ABIM. According to a press report in 'Berita Harian' dated 17 June 1982, three months before the UMNO General Assembly, Anwar had received nominations from six Youth divisions. These divisions were Ipoh, Jelutong, Kuala Selangor, Nibong Tebal, Temerloh and Tanjung. In the heat of the election campaigns, Datuk Rais withdrew from the contest and threw his support behind Anwar.

In the midst of the competition between Anwar and Datuk Suhaimi to obtain support from Youth Divisions, Hang Tuah Arshad, another UMNO Youth figure stated his willingness to contest. Therefore, the contest for the post of Youth Chief on 9 September 1982 was a three cornered fight between Anwar, Datuk Suhaimi and Hang Tuah Arshad.

During the campaigns, Anwar stressed that his reason for accepting the nominations to contest was to bring changes both within the party and in its struggle. The changes he referred to were in terms of instilling Islamic values in the society, efficiency in the administration, addressing Islamic issues in a firm and clear manner, defending the fate of the Malay race and an uncompromising approach to the fight against corruption. He strived hard to ensure his success and traveled throughout the country to meet with more than 70 Youth divisions to declare his stand. While campaigning, he advised his supporters to conciliate and avoid degrading or tarnishing the personality of the opponent. The slogan adopted by him during his campaigning was "Vote for a Change" with the theme "New Era" emphasizing on being refined.

For Datuk Suhaimi, his reasons for contesting to retain the Youth Chief post which he held was to offer his services to the Youth. To counter Anwar's outstanding Islamic characteristics in his efforts to lead the Youth, Datuk Suhaimi too stated he would increase efforts to inculcate Islamic values in the administration. Datuk Suhaimi's advantage in his campaigns was that he was the incumbent Chief; thus he could easily approach the Youth members before the start of the



◀ *Datuk Seri Anwar aspires to uplift the integrity of the Malays through his struggle*

*Datuk Seri Najib and Datuk Seri Anwar. Two leaders of Youth Movement who are united in their stand* ▶



◀ *Datuk Seri Anwar discussing with foreign participants in the international conference on 'Unity of the Muslim Community - Prospective Outlook' held at PWTC on 4 May 1991*

Assembly. Hang Tuah Arshad, meanwhile stated that his reason for contesting was to bring about a non-aligned leadership, neither from the Youth organisation nor from other organisations. He made this statement because both Datuk Suhaimi and Anwar each represented ABIM and youth organisations.

During the Youth Assembly held at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in September 1982, Anwar managed to win the post of Youth Chief. He obtained 183 votes defeating Datuk Suhaimi who garnered 173 votes while Hang Tuah Arshad only managed a total of 3 votes. The ten votes majority obtained by Anwar Ibrahim over Datuk Suhaimi showed that he had yet to gather solid support from the Youth members. However, his victory did surprise UMNO members. This was because he was barely six months (March - September) active in UMNO. For the Deputy Chief's post, Datuk Najib Tun Abdul Razak won unopposed.

With the narrow victory he achieved, Anwar had taken steps to fulfill the promises he made before the election. He promised to bring changes in the Youth particularly in its struggle and administration. He worked towards inculcating Islamic values in the Youth and making the Movement more dynamic in line with the policies of UMNO and the government. A day after his victory, he repeated his guarantee that the Youth would instill Islamic values in an efficient manner and would develop an understanding with BN members.

In the attempt to instill Islamic values in its struggle and style of work, the Youth under his leadership activated efforts to increase Islamic-based programmes and increased dissemination of information to the Muslim and non-Muslim society through a continuous education process. He stressed that, although efforts to instill Islamic values was one of the main priorities of the Youth Movement's activities, its objectives would not be met if there was no spiritual strength, solid foundation and strong belief among the Youth members. For this purpose, UMNO Youth formed the Dakwah Bureau to smoothen the implementation of these programmes. The bureau was chaired by Hj. Awang Jabar and its committee members consists of representatives of the Youth Dakwah Bureau from each state. Among the activities carried out through this bureau were leadership and dakwah conferences at state and national levels, seminars and the publication of a dakwah journal. 'Jurnal Dakwah' published in August 1983 was the sole journal published by the Youth since its formation.

Anwar did not face any major problems in mobilizing the Youth under his leadership in an effort to instill Islamic values. This was owing to the fact that before he became the Youth Chief, he was involved in Islamic movements such as the National Society of Muslim Students (PKPM), World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) and ASIM. While at the helm of ASIM he often gave lectures to Muslim youths whether within or outside the country. As leader of a Muslim movement, he often met leaders of the Muslim world such as President Ghaddafi of Libya and Iran leader Ayatollah Khomeini. He also once received a special invitation from the Islamic government of Iran.

Anwar's efforts to instill Islamic values in his administration did not receive much opposition since this effort was in line with Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's desire and ambition. When Dr. Mahathir took over the nation's leadership, the question of instilling Islamic values was also given serious emphasis by him. He had introduced this policy in his administration. Therefore, the efforts made by Anwar proved to be a "filler" of the policies launched by the Prime Minister.

Anwar's entry into UMNO and the government, to a certain extent, assisted the government in implementing its policies. This was evident when the task of establishing the Islamic Bank and International Islamic University was handed to him. The success in establishing both these institutions proved that the efforts to instill Islamic values in the administration was seriously carried out by UMNO and the government.

The emphasis on noble values introduced by Anwar in UMNO Youth's administration and actions succeeded in producing and projecting a set of second echelon leaders who were inclined towards Islamic concepts and work ethics. This proved to be a major success since the winds of change and awareness towards Islam that was sweeping the country, forced future party and national leaders to possess a strong and in depth knowledge of Islam.

The Islamic factor in Malaysian politics is one of the factors that could unite the population particularly the Malays. Other than the question of calibre, knowledge and experience which Anwar possessed, the resurgence of Islam in the country assisted him in his efforts to instill Islamic values in the Youth. His style and approach began to be accepted by the Youth members. A proof of this was when he retained his post for the term 1984/86 after defeating Datuk Suhaimi with a bigger majority in the 1982 election.

## **The Progressive Generation**

Under Anwar's leadership, the Youth Movement gave priority to the spirit of struggle which encompasses strength of perseverance, purity of the soul and improved character in all its activities. The Youth's style and pattern of action in this era bore a striking resemblance to the style of action of Senu Abd. Rahman and Sardon Jubir which supported and upheld party and government policies. Similarly, the Youth during Anwar's era maintained a policy and struggle which was in line and in harmony with the struggle of the party and the government.

Anwar did not turn the Youth into a "Pressure Group" since at that time UMNO leaders had an open attitude and were willing to listen to any criticism or views from the UMNO Youth Members. All criticism could be channelled through meetings with the party leadership. Due to this, there was no reason why the Youth should openly make statements which could hurt the feelings of the party leadership and bring about conflict between the Youth and its main body.

The Youth during this era concentrated more on carrying out its responsibilities to raise the morale of the people and efforts to defend the dignity of the race and the nation. According to Anwar the Youth's success at that time was not measured on its outspoken ability but rather on its wisdom and actions in fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to it and in ensuring that the guarantees and policies promised can be effectively implemented. In fact Anwar openly declared the Youth's and his stand whenever degrading views suggests that the Youth in this era have lost their sting. According to him;

"..... don't ask me to attack the party President since I feel that UMNO Youth's struggle should be in line with the leadership and if there is any criticism, it should be made through proper channels either during Cabinet Meetings or Supreme Council Meetings ....."

Though the Youth under Anwar's leadership always upheld and acted in line with the main body, this does not mean that the Youth simply agreed to whatever occurred before them.

Corruption, misuse of power, poverty of the people, freedom of speech and unity issues often attracts his attention or criticism. All criticisms and suggestions from the Youth were discussed and settled by consultations with UMNO and the government. Sometimes dialogue and discussions held would result in a tense situation but calmness always prevailed once a decision is taken.

In the middle of the 80s, the Youth made the issue of eradicating poverty as a policy of its main struggle. According to the figures of a research by the Socio-economic Research Unit (SERU) of the PM's Department; the poverty rate for the year 1982 was 42.8 percent. These were mainly farmers, fishermen and smallholders. The research also revealed that twenty poorest districts in the Peninsular were villages occupied by the Malays. As an early measure, the Youth formed the Special Bureau for Poverty in July 1983. Anwar chaired the committee himself. The main reason for such a formation was to assist the government in the eradication of poverty in line with the objective of NEP.

Through this Special Committee on Poverty, a 'Poverty and Role of the Youth' Workshop was held at the main campus of UKM, Bangi, from 16 - 18 December 1983. This workshop was attended by 280 participants representing 76 Youth divisions. As a result of the workshop, a resolution was adopted to establish a Special Council on Poverty in every division of the Youth Movement. Meetings and discussions were held with government bodies involved in poverty problems such as SERU, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health. Various suggestions and criticisms were made at these meets.

Acting on the basis of the workshop's resolution, the Youth chose two villages as their adopted villages under the programme. The villages involved were Kg. Tengkek, Ulu Jempol,

Kuala Pilah and Kg. Air Deras, Sg. Manik, Perak. The whole administration of the adopted villages were managed by the Special Committee on Poverty. Every required assistance and needs were given.

To smoothen the movement of the Special Committee on Poverty, on 1 May 1984, **Yayasan Gerak Bakti** acting as a funding body to the Committee was formed. Monies received from the foundation were used by the Committee Members in carrying out studies and research programmes and to raise the living standards of the poor in this country. The programmes and efforts carried out by the committee succeeded in fostering close relationship between the Youth and villagers which were in need of help to raise their level of income and improve their living condition.

The struggle to eradicate poverty is not new, as even from the time of Datuk Harun, the Youth had raised these issues but the approach adopted by Anwar was different.

While championing the economic issues of the Malays, Datuk Harun concentrated more on their involvement in business and economy. Whereas, under Anwar's leadership the Youth paid more attention to raising the economic standards of the Malays in rural areas which were mainly farmers, fishermen and smallholders. The question of poverty was also a policy matter struggled for by the Youth and was used as a yardstick to measure the abilities and successes of the 'progressive generation' under Anwar's leadership.

The compromising and cooperative attitude of the Youth with the leadership of the party in this era did not prevent them from playing a role in fighting corruption and money politics which swept UMNO during the mid-80s. During the 34th General Assembly on 26 September 1985, Anwar revealed the existence of political figures in UMNO who bought votes, cheated, threatened and lived in pretence. They had used government machinery to protect sectional interest and were willing to engage in corrupt practices to ensure their victory.

Therefore, the Youth urged that the government, through its Anti Corruption Agency, carry out investigations on those involved in committing such acts. According to Anwar, action should be taken against them regardless of their status, whether they were political leaders, government officers, entrepreneurs or persons holding senior government positions. Together with the Youth members, he worked towards eliminating the influence of such groups because should this be allowed it could cause destruction to the party.

The Youth through its Chief, Anwar Ibrahim, had given attention to wasteful activities done by the government especially the state governments. A war against luxurious projects and excessive spending was declared by Anwar when he chaired the Youth Working Committee meeting on 27 May 1985. According to the Youth, the state governments had carried out luxurious projects which did not benefit the people. Anwar made open criticisms to those parties concerned,



▲ *Datuk Seri Anwar being congratulated after his announcement to contest the Deputy Presidency*



▲ *Solid support from Datuk Seri Anwar's supporters*



◀ *Datuk Seri Anwar with Selangor Chief Minister, Tan Sri Muhammad Mohd. Taib during a Dinner Function in Kuala Lumpur*

not to carry out a project which would merely benefit certain parties.

The open criticism by Anwar against the state governments received reactions from the Chief Ministers of all the states. They stressed that the luxurious projects as claimed by the Youth Chief never existed in their states. Though the criticisms were denied by all the Chief Ministers, it served as a reminder to the state governments to place more importance on projects which would benefit the public at large rather than only certain quarters of the society.

In dealing with international matters, the Youth under Anwar's leadership formed the Politics and International Affairs Bureau. Through this bureau, the Youth held visits to neighbouring countries, Islamic countries and others. The purpose of these visits were to assist the government in fostering closer ties with foreign nations. This would also expose the members to international issues. Several series of visits to foreign nations were held. Among them was the visit to Indonesia from 20 to 30 October 1983. This visit was led by Anwar himself together with other Youth Exco Members. Apart from holding discussions including with President Suharto, several understandings and cooperations were reached to foster closer ties through sports, cultural and youth exchange activities.

Meanwhile, during the visit to Libya from 19 to 23 January 1984, several understandings were reached. Among them were assistance and cooperation from the Libyan Government for the development of Islam in Malaysia, the establishment of International Islamic University, establishing propagation centres, exchange of youths and other forms of cooperation between the two countries. UMNO Youth also received visits from the Christian Democratic Union (Youth) of West Germany, Liberal Democratic Party (Youth) of Japan and a delegation headed by Dr. Abdul Ghafar, Minister for Youth and Athletics, Indonesia. Discussions and cooperations between the two countries were established.

The Youth under Anwar's leadership often sent its members to attend international seminars and forums overseas. These include the seminar to unite the Korean citizens held in Tokyo. This seminar was attended by Mohd Nazri Tan Sri Abd. Aziz Yeop. Apart from that, the Youth also sent Nazri and Abu Bakar Dewa to attend the seminar on Third World held in Prague.

To assist the struggle of the Palestinians and Afghanistan Mujahiddin, the Youth formed a donation fund to be channelled towards their struggle. Through these international activities participated by the Youth in this era, they succeeded in introducing the Movement to the outside world, apart from the exposures gained by its members.

Another major success achieved by the Youth Movement in this era was the success of having cordial relations with youths of BN. As a result of this cooperation, a Barisan Nasional Youth Supreme Committee was formed with Anwar as its Chairman. Cooperation and the spirit of unity

was seen during the anti-Russia Mass Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur and all states in Malaysia. The Mass Meeting held was a reaction to the open warning made by the Soviet Union's Deputy Foreign Minister, Mikhail Kapitsa in Singapore. In his statement he had warned Asean nations to end the confrontation with Vietnam and that if such nations failed to do so they would face destruction through the reaction from Vietnam and its allies.

The warning by Mikhail Kapitsa was a challenge to Asean nations including Malaysia and it was felt that this could affect the stable relationship between Asean nations. As an opposition to what was said by the Soviet leader, on 16 April 1983 the BN Youth sent a delegation led by Anwar to hand an objection memorandum to the Soviet Ambassador at its Embassy. Other members of the delegation were Datuk Lee Kim Sai (MCA Youth), Hj. Yahya Lampong (Berjaya Youth), Muthupalaniappan (MIC Youth), Dr. Koh Tsu Koon (Gerakan Youth) and several other BN Youth Exco Members.

The coalition of BN component party youths also held a gathering to celebrate the 29th anniversary of the formation of Malaysia on 6 September 1986 at Merdeka Hall, PWTC. The gathering was attended by BN youths from all over the country. Cooperation and high spirit of unity shown then helped the BN youths to hold discussions whenever differences of opinion arose between party components.

What's obvious is, the Youth during Anwar's era showed maturity, especially in its struggle and pattern of action in facing any issues which arose. No longer was there open criticism on any issues which arose. Such a situation did not mean that the Youth had lost its sting or played a lesser role but all problems which arose were settled in a proper manner reflecting the maturity of the Movement. Resolving problems in such a diplomatic manner reduced the tension between the Youth and its parent body.

The reduced tension between the UMNO and its youth wing assisted the former in concentrating its efforts towards progress and party strength. The Youth meanwhile concentrated its efforts in helping the party and the government to eradicate poverty and to raise the living standard of the Malays especially those in the villages. When Anwar took over the Youth leadership mantle, the nation was experiencing rapid progress and this inspired the Youth to work harder. Therefore, in the early stages of his leadership he had outlined his struggle to revive the race's dignity, raise living standard of the Malays, improve work ethics and strengthen the youth force towards achieving the nations aspirations.

## **THE YOUTH CHALLENGE AND OBSTACLE DURING ANWAR IBRAHIM'S ERA**

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The weak economy of the nation due to world economic recession had affected the efforts to restructure the society through NEP. This situation had shown that the government's objective



◀ *Datuk Seri Anwar in a press conference held on 28 August 1993 during which he announced his intention to contest the UMNO Deputy Presidency*

*Datuk Seri Anwar projected Islamic values in his efforts to lead UMNO*

▼ *Youth*



◀ *Datuk Seri Anwar, the leader responsible for the realization of the formation of Islamic Bank and International Islamic University*

of increasing the Bumiputra's share to at least 30 percent of the nation's economic activity could not be achieved. The effect of the weak economy had resulted in the crippling of the manpower restructuring exercise, in fact, it aggravated the situation. In 1985, unemployment among Bumiputra was 8.7 percent compared to 5.5 percent among the Chinese and 8.4 percent among the Indians.

Based on the achievements of NEP till 1986, it clearly showed that the objectives could not be achieved when its period expires in 1990. Therefore the Youth made a resolution to pressure that the spirit and philosophy of NEP be extended after the year 1990 to continue the struggle in defending the fate of the poor and restructuring the Malaysian society.

After the 1986 elections, there were degrading remarks from the opposition and BN component members questioning the implementation of NEP. For example, Datuk Lee Kim Sai and several other high ranking leaders of MCA blamed the implementation of the said policy as the main reason for MCA's defeat in the general election held on 3 August 1986. In reaction to these accusations made by the MCA leader, UMNO Youth, in its General Assembly, passed a resolution pressuring the government to take stern actions in implementing its efforts to eradicate poverty especially among the rural population and to provide business opportunities to the Bumiputra in line with the objectives of NEP. The resolution also heavily criticized any attempt to disrupt the NEP by any party.

The action by MCA leaders in questioning the implementation of NEP was a challenge to the Malays especially Youth members. The MCA leaders acted as if they no longer cared about their responsibility to encourage understanding among the races. The Youth also reminded the relevant party leaders not to be too passionate in search for reasons to conceal its weakness during that general election. Anwar also reminded MCA leaders not to raise the issue of Malay privileges since it would only serve to aggravate the situation.

According to him :

"..... If MCA leaders were vocal in digging up that issue, UMNO Youth also has the right to dig up again the question of nationality for the Chinese".

Though the spirit of cooperation and unity showed by the BN Youth were good, in issues pertaining to rights for the Malays, the Youth would not stay silent. At the General Assembly on 17 September 1986, Anwar stressed that the Youth were ready to face any risk in the struggle for the rights of the Malays if the dispute continues.

Apart from facing challenges from MCA leaders on the issue of NEP, UMNO Youth, towards the end of Anwar's tenure, faced a crisis at UMNO leadership level. On 16 March 1986, UMNO

received a major shock when Datuk Musa Hitam, the UMNO Deputy President and Deputy Prime Minister resigned from all party and government posts. As a result of this action by Datuk Musa Hitam, UMNO had split into the team of Dr. Mahathir - Ghafar Baba and the team of Tengku Razaleigh - Musa Hitam.

The split within UMNO influenced the Youth Movement. The crisis within the parent body threw the Youth into a dilemma. The Youth members were divided at the time, whether to support the resignation of Datuk Musa or to work in getting Datuk Musa to return to his posts. Anwar, however, clearly stated his support for Dr. Mahathir.

Following this crisis, in the fight for the post of Youth Chief for the term 1986/88, Anwar was opposed by a candidate said to be representing the team of Tengku Razaleigh - Musa Hitam which was Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar. However, according to Syed Hamid, the reason for his decision to enter the fray for the post of Youth Chief was due to the huge number of nominations he received from UMNO Youth. In the ensuing battle, Anwar Ibrahim succeeded in retaining his post as Youth Chief by defeating Syed Hamid Albar with a majority of 195 votes.

Anwar's victory in retaining the Youth Chief's post indicated that he had succeeded in convincing the Youth Members of his leadership in the Movement. In fact during his campaigns before the Youth Assembly was held, he obtained support from virtually all Youth divisions. The Youth divisions had expressed their hope that Anwar would continue to lead UMNO Youth.

Youth leaders of Kedah, Perlis and Penang while stating their support for Anwar, had stressed that Anwar had succeeded in creating a harmonious atmosphere among Youth members. The Federal Territory Youth Chief, Drs. Sulaiman Mohd said that Anwar had succeeded in bringing about a major change especially in instilling Islamic values in line with the struggle of the Youth Movement and had succeeded in implanting the spirit of nationalism and Malay fortitude in the heart of Youth Members.

Anwar's leadership in the Youth Movement came to an end when he resigned as Youth Chief and contested for the post of UMNO Vice President on 24 April 1987. His decision to contest this post was due to his believe that his influence in UMNO was stronger now than the time he first received nominations for the post of Youth Chief. During his last speech at the Youth General Assembly on 23 August 1987, he stressed to Youth members the reason behind his decision to contest the post of UMNO Vice President. According to him :

"..... This decision of mine (resigning as the UMNO Youth Chief) is taken since my colleagues had already joined the main UMNO body and I think the time is ripe for me now to follow their footsteps ....."

During the five years at the helm of the Youth Movement, Anwar had succeeded in bringing about changes to the Movement by augmenting Islamic virtues and making the Youth's struggle parallel with the struggle of its parent body.

## CONCLUSION

Anwar's entry into UMNO and proceeding to become its Youth Movement Chief raised ill feelings among several UMNO leaders. However, after leading the Youth for more than two terms and successfully making the Movement a respected Movement, Anwar Ibrahim was finally accepted by Youth members and UMNO leaders.

In this era the new development seen was the role of Islam which was inculcated in the Youth movement's actions. Programmes such as eradicating poverty, fighting corruption, money politics, excessive spending and others which were carried out during this era were done in accordance with the spirit of Islam and the process of instilling Islamic values. The calibre in Anwar Ibrahim succeeded in raising the image of the Youth in the eyes of the public after its role had been disputed during the end of Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin's leadership.

Anwar also succeeded in proving that the Youth Movement could play its role triumphantly without the need to be excessively vocal and resorting to open criticism.

## Chapter Five

# FIRMLY ROOTED, SOPHISTICATED MINDS

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## Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak

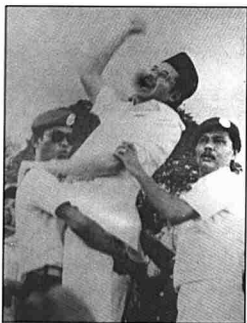
### ACTING UMNO YOUTH CHIEF

Datuk Seri Najib was appointed acting UMNO Youth Chief on April 24 1987, replacing his predecessor Anwar Ibrahim. The appointment was announced by none other than Anwar himself during the Movement's Annual General Assembly held then. Anwar has then decided to name his successor following increasing pressure received from amongst UMNO Youth stalwarts for him to contest one of the three UMNO vice president slots.

The appointment of Datuk Seri Najib as the acting UMNO Youth Chief was in itself seen then as a significant development in the Youth's history as well as in his family's history. Najib's late father, Tun Haji Abdul Razak was himself once an acting UMNO Youth Chief, a position he held in 1951.

Prior to the appointment, Najib was also the Movement's Deputy Chief for three years in a row. He held the position under the leaderships of two UMNO Youth leaders, Datuk Suhaimi Kamaruddin and under Anwar himself.

The changing of guard within the UMNO Youth from Anwar to Najib was in itself an interesting and memorable scenario. Political writer and UMNO Youth stalwart, Kamal Amir, in his book "Dilema Pemuda Melayu 'Kemelut'", had appropriately recorded the general mood felt within the Movement when Anwar decided to make the historical announcement then:



▲ *Datuk Seri Najib with fervent ardour exclaiming the slogan 'Hidup Melayu' or 'Long Live the Malays!' at the TPCA field on 17 October 1987*

*Datuk Seri Najib was a leader who was strategist and possessed political maturity*



"...I still remembered the sombre mood felt by the delegates representing the 144 UMNO Youth divisions attending the annual general assembly, following Anwar's announcement to relinquish his leadership of the Movement. One delegate, Nazri Tan Sri Aziz Yeop, who was then one of the UMNO Youth's Exco members, had even come to shedding tears."

The writer added in the book: "...in the meantime, the Seputeh Umno Youth division chief, Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, had repeatedly expressed his sadness over Anwar's announced decision."

These scenarios, as portrayed by Kamal Amir has indirectly given rise to various questions and speculations amongst the Movement's stalwarts as well as amongst UMNO members in general. Is Anwar's leadership still needed at the party's Youth wing level? Is Anwar's successor, Datuk Seri Najib capable of continuing his dynamic leadership style? As if these were not enough, there were even those who arrived at a conclusion that the party's Youth vanguard would be losing its effectiveness without Anwar at its helm.

A number of the Movement's leaders were, however, quick in correcting these negative ideas. The Seputeh UMNO Youth division chief, Datuk Tengku Adnan for example, had argued that Najib was still capable of giving his own brand of charismatic leadership. Two other UMNO Youth leaders, Dr. Samaruddin Rejab, who was formerly the UMNO Youth Lembah Pantai division chief, and Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who heads its Bagan Datoh division in Perak, had lent support for Najib by announcing their confidence over his leadership style.

Datuk Seri Najib's stewardship of the UMNO Youth was also a period which saw tumultuous changes taking place within UMNO proper. It was during this period that the party's unity was badly affected by a major split between members who supported Dr Mahathir-Ghafar, on the one hand, and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah-Datuk Musa Hitam on the other. It was during the height of conflict between these two political camps that Datuk Seri Najib's mettle as a leader could be seen. He was then seen to be a tactful and matured leader, especially in facing up to the various accusations and slander directed at him by various quarters.

Despite all these, Datuk Seri Najib had emerged unscathed and proven himself to be a leader, both in the party and in the government, who had always managed to stay clear of controversy involving his personality and style of leadership. His gentle and calm dispositions; his conservative and rather aristocratic outlooks; and an unassuming character, could not have possibly led him to take a partisan stand in the conflict between the two divided camps in UMNO then.

It was these attitudes which have led friends and foes alike to underestimate Datuk Seri Najib's leadership qualities. They have failed to realize then that it was in these qualities lay his

strength and wisdom. As a conservative and an aristocrat as well as an insider to the UMNO ruling elite, his personality had been fine-tuned towards the party's culture and tradition. Datuk Seri Najib's style of leadership oriented towards UMNO's leadership style and tradition. He was said to be well-liked by veteran figures in the party, as compared to most other younger leaders then.

UMNO secretary general and Information Minister in the Federal Cabinet, Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, for example, had on April 6 1988 said of Datuk Seri Najib:

"...to me, Najib's chances are still good owing to the fact that he still has the capabilities and looks to strive on."

When Datuk Mohamed Rahmat uttered these words at a dinner held in conjunction with the Malaysia-Libya Solidarity and Cultural Week held in Kuala Lumpur, he received an unexpected rousing applause from amongst those present, which were mostly made up of the UMNO Youth members and leaders. There were also those from amongst the audiences who gave sharp cries of "Hidup Najib!" ("Long Live Najib!").

The date May 21, 1988 can be seen as an important date in Datuk Seri Najib's political career. It was then that he was appointed to head the Youth wing of the newly-revived UMNO. The appointment was historical in that it was the first time in the party's history that the number one positions in its Youth and Wanita wings were appointed by the President and his Supreme Council. Before UMNO was de-registered in 1987, the posts were chosen from those elected in the Youth and Wanita wings biennial elections.

Soon after accepting the appointment, Datuk Seri Najib had wasted no time in working out a plan to realise his vision of turning the UMNO Youth Movement into a more dynamic vanguard of the party. He had then immediately embarked on a plan to implement his three-point programme aimed at streamlining the Movement's policy and administrative machinery.

The three-point programme is:

- *A major revamp of the UMNO Youth movement at the national, state and divisional levels.*
- *Utilising the Movement's machinery in carrying out information campaigns which are aimed at correcting negative images of the party which had been disseminated by certain quarters.*
- *To intensify the organising of special courses which would provide the Movement's stalwarts with adequate knowledge, spirit and capability to continue with their struggle for the party.*

In explaining his policy with regards to the stewardship of the UMNO Youth, Datuk Seri Najib had time and again stressed on the need for the Movement to strive towards championing a "total concept" of struggle which, among other things, would accept Islam as the foundation for its strength. The religion would also have to be accepted as an ideology in all of the Movement's endeavors.

For Najib, Islam was a religion which was capable of directing its followers in all aspects of life in this world and these include relationships between nations, relationships between one society and another, social relationships, personal relationships and in the efforts by man to fulfil his obligation towards his Creator. He also believed that Islam should never be seen as a mere ritualistic religion, but should instead be accepted as a complete way of life, even by the non-Muslims.

With regards to Malay politics, Datuk Seri Najib had always stressed on the need for solidarity among members of the country's majority race. The particular stress on solidarity, he believed, would enable the Malays to continue their contributions towards nation-building. In a press conference held in May 1988, he had expressed the anticipation that the questions of disunity and poverty would become two major threats working against the resilience of the Malays after 1990. He had then stated that the Malays could no longer afford any disunity lest they wanted to see the younger generations of today and tomorrow suffer as a result of their selfishness.

Datuk Seri Najib also wanted the UMNO Youth to shed its past image of a pressure group, "as the biggest agenda facing us is our ability to maintain stability and solidarity". He felt that with disunity, the whole race would inevitably suffer in their own country. They would gradually be relegated to a helpless submissive position by certain quarters who had always been waiting for opportunities to wrest away power from them.

These worries are not without its basis. It has been an established fact that the Malay community are still beset with poverty, especially amongst UMNO's staunch supporters in the rural areas. According to official statistics, some 160,000 Malay households can be included within the category of poor families, especially those in the rural areas whose income brackets are less than RM175 per month. It was this disturbing reality that moved Datuk Seri Najib to include the issue of poverty amongst the Malays as one of the most important issues to be championed by the UMNO Youth Movement.

On the question of serious factional split in UMNO which saw potentially disastrous politicking between the so-called 'Team A' and 'Team B', Datuk Seri Najib had always stood by the belief that all members and leaders of the party needed to be more sincere in voicing out their stands for solidarity and unity, and to avoid negative sentiments and hatred. By adopting these reasonable and sane stand in facing up to the disunity which occurred within his beloved party, Datuk Seri Najib had reinforced the notion that he still had the blood of his late father running in him.

Datuk Seri Najib had reinforced the notion that he still had the blood of his late father running in him. For it was his father, Tun Abdul Razak who had often voiced out on the need for unity amongst UMNO members, when he was the party's president.

As a leader who can be considered as sincere in his struggle, Datuk Seri Najib could be seen as trying to carry on a "mandate" from his late father in the struggle to maintain Malay unity. It was the spirit of solidarity that led him to participate in a delegation comprising of Cabinet Ministers to London to meet with former Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam asking him not to resign from his Cabinet positions. It was also Datuk Seri Najib who had, without fear or favour, voiced out his undivided support for the implementation of the now historical Johor Malays Assembly Resolution which was a political formula aimed at reviving the unity of UMNO members in Johor. Despite his support for the resolution, Datuk Seri Najib had also cautioned all quarters within the party not to neglect UMNO leaders in Johor who had been instrumental in reviving the party in the UMNO stronghold.

Datuk Seri Najib's quests for unity was not only confined to UMNO, but had instead transcended the international barrier. It was during his leadership of UMNO Youth that the Movement had initiated the Malindo Dialogue which saw regular forum between the Movement and its counterpart from Indonesia's ruling party on matters of mutual interests. The first of the series of dialogues was held from April 15 to 18, 1988 in Melaka, while the second such dialogue was held in Bogor, Indonesia for three days beginning January 17, 1990.

In his speech at the Bogor round, Najib had stressed on the need for such dialogues so as to enable youth movement activists from both countries to understand and learn more about each other. He had expressed the hope that such dialogue would eventually reduce the gap between the youth of Indonesia and Malaysia — a gap which had been occurring within the historical perspective of both countries. Najib also hoped that the relationships between Indonesia and Malaysia should not only be limited to the emotional level but should instead be extended to more tangible ones. He expressed the confidence, based on close relationships that already existed between the two political youth movements, that the youth vanguards of both countries could be a relationship based on existing realities. It is thus true that relationships between Malaysia and Indonesia should be developed in a special and mutual manner. This would in turn enable both political youth movements to interpret and gradually create a basic premise towards facilitating peace and harmony between the close neighbours and also the South-East Asian region in general.

Throughout Najib's struggle at the rein of the UMNO Youth, there were quarters who had been constantly clamoring for him to project his own identity for the Movement, as had been done by his predecessors. They claimed that all of Najib's predecessors had managed to project their own distinct identity for the Movement. For example, the charismatic former Chief Minister of the

state of Selangor, Datuk Harun Idris, had been made popular for his leadership of the UMNO Youth which was then made popular as a 'pressure group'. It was during this period that the political youth movement had been in the centre of numerous controversies.

The same goes when the late Syed Jaafar Albar led the UMNO Youth. The movement was then branded as a 'ginger group'.

In actual fact, however, the UMNO Youth under Najib's leadership did manage to project its own identity. The identity was, however, only known after a year of his appointment. It was then initially known as a 'pressure group' within the context of struggle for the Malays and Islam. Najib himself had lately admitted to this when he said:

"...since the initial stage of the struggle for the country's independence, the UMNO Youth movement had always been active as a wing of UMNO. The Pemuda was then known as a group which had its own formal structure and identity under the party. The UMNO Youth had, since its inception, been known through various slogans such 'Pressure Group', 'Resilient Youth' and 'Ginger Group'. However, the point was, no matter what image that was attributed to the movement, the meaning and essence of them all have not strayed from the objective of the continuing struggle in defence of nationalism and the interest of the Malays."

As an UMNO Youth leader who had proven himself to be a champion for the survival of the Malays and Islam, his stand on the matter can be considered as unshakeable and uncompromising. Despite his seemingly gentle disposition, Najib had at times proven himself to be a stubborn and uncompromising UMNO stalwart, especially in the midst of struggles for the survival of the Malay masses. For example, he had always insisted that the relationship between the Malays and "the national accumulated debt to the race" should be accepted as an important struggle. He had always accorded struggles to defend the honor and dignity of the Malay race its topmost priority. For him, the UMNO Youth must always cling to the philosophy which considered the Malays as a dominant race in the country's administration. And he truly believed that this concept of the dominant Malays should be consistently and seriously championed by the UMNO Youth of today by taking into account certain flexibilities in approach.

This he had stressed during one of the Youth Movement's Malindo dialogues. He had said during the dialogue:

"... in certain basic political issues, whenever we wanted to ensure Malay dominance, there should not be any compromise. This is important as history itself had identified the race (the Malay race) as the definitive race within the context of a mother race (in Malaysia). The Malays are the pribumis (son of the soil). It is thus true that Malay dominance has no room for compromise. We should instead interpret and extend this concept from its political perspective to other areas."

In other words, Najib wanted the concept of Malay dominance to be extended from its political arguments to areas of social and economic interests. He had also meant the politics of Malay dominance to be practised based on the premise of social equality. It is a fact that this latter aspect of Malay dominance has all the while been very much neglected and has a long way to go before it could be realised.

Najib's uncompromising stance in facing those who would question the dominance of the Malays in the country is evident in a number of cases throughout his struggle in UMNO and its youth wing. A case in point is his numerous conflict with leaders from the party's ruling partner, MCA, on issues which touched on the sensitivity of the Malays and their Rulers. In one seminar organised by the Chinese-based ruling partner, a party leader had urged its members to pressure the government into reviewing the country's pre-Independence formula on special privileges of the Malays, in terms of wealth distribution, to also include all people in Malaysia's multi-racial society. Among those who had treaded the highly sensitive issue on the special privileges accorded to the Malays during the seminar were then MCA deputy president, Datuk Lee Kim Sai and his vocal lieutenant, Datuk Kok Wee Kiat.

Words uttered by leaders of the Chinese community during the controversial seminar had created widespread tension in the country then, especially a call made by one of the participants that the Malay terms, Bumiputera (son of the soil) and Bangsa Asing (people from foreign races), be abolished for the Malays and non-Malays respectively. Apart from the special privilege of the Malays issue, the MCA had also then added insult to injury when its Selangor state branch questioned the special position of the Malay Sultans. The racial tension created by these issues were further aggravated by other issues such as the appointment of senior assistants and headmaster in Chinese vernacular schools and the obligatory wearing of songkoks (Malay headdress) during convocation ceremony at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The problem came to a head when, the MCA president himself, Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik made a derogatory remark on the UMNO Youth by saying that the movement could be compared "to a dog barking at a hill." The UMNO Youth had then accepted such irresponsible and high-sensitive remark as uncalled for and had decided to call for a mammoth rally in Kuala Lumpur to demonstrate the dissatisfaction of the Malay community over the insensitive attitudes of Chinese community leaders. The aim of the rally was also to urge the government not to appease those involved in attempts to create a situation of racial disharmony and chaos in the country.

The rally, which was eventually held on October 17 1987, saw some 20,000 Malays from all over the country gathered at Kuala Lumpur's TPCA Stadium to demonstrate their anger over the insensitive attitude of the non-Malay towards them. It was during the thick of this historic rally that Najib was immediately transformed from a gentle person that he normally was into an uncompromising and fiery leader. The rally had succeeded in putting across a message to

*Datuk Seri Najib courageously reaffirms the resolutions adopted in the Johor Malay Assembly held in January 1981 in Johor*



*Datuk Seri Najib accompanying the Prime Minister during the Lima '91 Exhibition*



*Datuk Seri Najib, Tan Sri Khalil and Datuk Sabaruddin Chik singing the UMNO song with enthusiasm*



Malaysian non-Malay communities that they ought to be more careful whenever touching on the sensitive issue of the special positions of the Malays in the country.

However, as it turned out later, the racial tension created by the public debate on the special privileges of the Malays and the UMNO rally had led the government to carry out a massive swoop to prevent the internal security and public order situations in the country from deteriorating towards racial riots. A total of 111 people from all racial communities were detained under the pre-dawn swoop code-named 'Operasi Lallang'. Apart from a series of arrests, a national English tabloid, *The Star* and a Malay bi-weekly tabloid, *Watan*, had their publications licenses conditionally revoked. A major Chinese daily, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* had also faced the same fate then. The reason given by the government in suspending the publication of the three newspapers were that these newspapers had been capitalising on racial sentiments of Malaysians. The series of events following 'Operasi Lallang' had also caused the Sultan of Selangor to drop a datukship honorary title awarded to MCA deputy president, Lee Kim Sai.

#### **"UMNO YOUTH: FIRMLY-ROOTED, SOPHISTICATED MINDS"**

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This slogan was unveiled by Najib on November 7 1992 at the movement's annual general assembly held at Kuala Lumpur's Putra World Trade Centre. In introducing the slogan, he explained that the words would be adopted by the UMNO Youth as its basic philosophy or guideline in efforts to help the country attain the aspirations of Vision 2020, to develop Malaysia into a fully-developed industrialised country by the year 2020, as laid out by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Najib and other UMNO Youth leaders had also meant the slogan to be the basic requirement for every member of the movement in their efforts to further consolidate the strength of the party as a whole. Looking at the circumstances that the UMNO Youth was in then, the introduction of its guiding philosophy based on such slogan can only be described as appropriate and timely. Without firm roots, a tree could easily fall; without sophisticated minds, man could not possibly create changes or introduce new things.

Nevertheless, Najib had his own arguments as to why he had chosen the slogan. He explained that what was meant by a 'firm root' was a great sense of awareness of ones 'Malayness.' And secondly, Najib had also compared the 'firm root' to one's unswerving faith towards his Creator. He was of the firm belief that the Malays needed to cling to a string combination of 'adat' (Malay tradition) and religion (Islam) in order for them to survive and continue their existence. Adat here does not necessarily mean those of the superstitious or blasphemous kinds; or those which only served to further segregate the Malays in terms of economic and social standings; or even which prevents them from striving for development. What Najib meant by adat here was a cultural tradition which were inclined towards the positive aspects of life and were guided by the Islamic *syari'a* and the holy *Koran*.

As to the second part of the slogan, what he meant by "sophisticated minds" were the ability to think rationally, along the lines of modern requirements and needs; the love for knowledge; and the mastery of science and technology. Najib had always been of the opinion that in efforts to realise the aspirations of Vision 2020, every UMNO Youth member and also the people in general, had to be able to think in a sophisticated manner. History has shown that the Malays have, for too long, been living in the dark and were left behind in almost all areas of human endeavours. It was only through sheer political power at the hands of their leaders which has managed to emancipate them, to a certain degree, from being continuously oppressed and left behind in their own land.

In line with the need to develop the Malays into a sophisticated lot, much stress has been laid by UMNO towards the field of education. Leaders from the party have always been aware of the fact that efforts to develop Malaysia into a fully-developed nation by the turn of the present century are bound to be futile without proper and advanced educational system. It is such argument that motivated the UMNO Youth under Najib's leadership to put extra efforts in seeing to it that quality education would be accessible to all Malays, especially those living in the rural areas. The UMNO Youth under his stewardship, had been relentlessly working towards providing more vocational and technical training facilities in the rural areas of the country.

Najib's UMNO Youth had also been giving serious attention towards the widespread usage of the Malay language as Malaysia's national lingua franca. It was in this aspect that the political youth vanguard during Najib's leadership had declared that it would defend at all costs the status of the Malay language as the national language of the country. The willingness of the UMNO Youth to defend the Malay language as Malaysia's national language had been clearly described by Najib during a speech at the 1992 UMNO annual general assembly. In the speech he warned those who were out to derogate the national language that they would have to deal with the UMNO Youth, "who would force these people to bow (dehumiliate themselves) before all Malays."

## PREPARATION FOR SUCCESSION

History has proven that UMNO had been able to continuously rule Malaysia since it gained its independence from the British colonial power in 1957, because it has a ready line of successors for the country's leadership provided by its dynamic youth wing. As a right arm and heir to the party's and government's leaderships, members of the UMNO Youth had always been nurtured with the awareness on their responsibility to maintain continuity in the country's leaderships. The youth wing under Najib is no exception in this and in fact it has initiated various programmes to expose members to the problems and issues facing UMNO and the government.

The youth movement has also been undertaking steps to introduce a series of leadership courses known as 'Wira Waja' (literally meaning warrior of steel). These series of courses is now being accepted as a regular activity by the UMNO Youth and held in all the states in the peninsula

as well as at the Outward Bound facility in the seaside resort of Port Dickson.

During the era of Dr Mahathir's leadership of UMNO, the party had successfully spread its wings to Sabah and were later instrumental in wresting the rein of power in the state from the hands of opposition PBS. The expansion and the eventual capture of power from the PBS were part of a master plan by UMNO to revive the Borneo Island state from its vicious cycle of political instability which had badly affected development for the people there. The UMNO Youth had not been left behind in the plan and it had in fact played a crucial role, hand-in-hand with the party proper, to revive the political scenario in Sabah for the sake of unity and economic development. In this context, the movement under Najib's leadership was responsible for initiating various political, social and economic activities and programmes to win over mass support in the state.

Amongst these activities include a historical mammoth rally held in the Sabah's east coast town of Tawau on September 16 1992. The event, which was organised with the cooperation of the other ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional's youth wings, was held in conjunction with the anniversary of Sabah's entry into the Malaysian federation. Just like his empathy for the plights of the rural poors in the peninsula, Najib had shown great concern over the disturbing rate of poverty in 'the land below the wind'(Sabah). Realising that the state's economic performance had been markedly deteriorated since the PBS took over power from the Barisan Nasional, he had been consistently championing a cause to upgrade the living standards of Sabahans at par with Malaysians in the peninsula and the state of Sarawak.

Apart from strengthening and expanding the UMNO empire in Sabah, Datuk Seri Najib deserves credit for his careful and respectable approach in playing his role as a young leader who respected and obliged the elders with particular reference to Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun. His assurance that the young and the old will continue to be fostered somewhat pacified the veterans in Sabah.

Datuk Seri Najib, in his speech during a dinner function held in Tawau, succeeded in enticing the veterans to assist the UMNO Youth in Sabah. Among others, he said:

"... whenever I see Tun Datu Mustapha, I am instantly reminded of my student days in England. Every time I meet Tun, I would receive pocket money from him. This gave me a great sense of satisfaction...". He continued ".....now that we have matured and are independant, we shall not burden Tun anymore. However we still need him to lead and inspire us..."

It is imperative that the younger generation maintains a cordial and mutually respectable relationship with the old guards in UMNO. The young turks should abstain from offending the veterans in all their actions. In keeping with the UMNO traditions, the contributions of the older generations such as Tun Datu Mustapha and Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai should be acknowledged



▲ *Datuk Seri Najib, his wife Puan Seri Rosmah and Tan Sri Khalid lifting their hands in silent prayer after Najib announced his intention to vie for a Vice President's post on 11 July 1993.*



▲ *Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak - a popular combination in the UMNO Youth Movement*



▲ *UMNO Youth signed an agreement for the distribution of Proton cars in Indonesia*

and appreciated.

Datuk Seri Najib's leadership of UMNO Youth accorded the youths with opportunities to enhance and realize their leadership qualities through the assignments entrusted to them. Many of them were appointed Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, State Excos and senior Government officers. It would be a purely wasted effort if the youths do not capitalize on these opportunities to gain knowledge and experience, as the party leadership had begun to display confidence and trust in the Youth.

In their zest to conceive the second echelon leaders, UMNO stalwarts should take on a cautious approach. An oversight would prove disastrous with leaders who will only create problems for the party and the nation. Rightfully, the selection of these leaders should be based on their understanding of the party's struggle and visions and not those with specific interests in the party. Leaders with ulterior motives and personal interest should not be allowed to set base in the party as this would only serve to frustrate the nations efforts to progress further towards achieving developed nation status. This should be reason enough for the party stalwarts to ensure selection of second echelon leaders be based on honesty, trustworthy and efficiency, apart from their total commitment towards party unity. These leaders together with the UMNO Youth members who will provide continuity in the party leadership, should strive not only to ensure the materialization of Vision 2020 but beyond that as well.

Datuk Seri Najib's leadership succeeded in producing potentially capable leaders for the future of the Movement. Names such as Senator Nazri Tan Sri Aziz, Senator Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Dr. Jamaluddin Dato' Mohd. Jarjis, Senator Saad Haji Man and Kamaruddin Jaafar were not unknown in the UMNO Youth political scenario. Most of these leaders had been exposed to challenging responsibilities such as Members of the House of Senate, Chairmens of Government bodies and various other duties. These opportunities should not be taken for granted. On the contrary, it should serve as a platform for the accumulation of knowledge and experience as it is without doubt that on these leaders hinges the future of the youths, especially Malay youths.

## CONCLUSION

The early stages of Datuk Seri Najib's leadership in UMNO Youth seemed to project a likeness to his father's stewardship of the Movement. However, within the first six months, he proved his critics wrong. This was evident from the Movement's involvement in national and international issues, his appointment as a Cabinet Minister and the appointment of several of his Excos in Governmental bodies. The strength of his leadership was also proven when he was not challenged in the Movements assemblies.

Datuk Seri Najib's leadership era also witnessed a great deal of turmoil within the party and

issues related to the privilege of the Malays brought up by the non-Malays. In tackling these two issues, Datuk Seri Najib proved his mettle as an able and energetic leader.

Datuk Seri Najib announced his intention to leave the Movement and vie for one of the three UMNO Vice-President slots in Temerloh, Pahang on 11 July 1993. His departure from UMNO Youth marked the beginning of a new era in the ever progressing Youth Movement when Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik ascended the throne amidst much fanfare but not without its share of controversies, which is very much a characteristic of the Movement each time there was a contest for the top post.

## Chapter Six

# WISDOM LEADS THE YOUTH

Tan Sri A. Rahim Tamby Chik

### THE INITIAL REACTION

The period immediately before and after the UMNO Youth movement's November 1993 elections was the most trying for Malacca Chief Minister, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik. It was during this period that his popularity, as amongst the UMNO's younger stalwarts, at the national level, was severely put to test for the first time in his 20 years in the party's politics. He had, however, emerged unscathed from the keenly-contested UMNO Youth presidential race.

Up to the time this book was written, Rahim's qualities as a leader in UMNO have not been really put to a test. Nevertheless, his proven track record as the number one man put in charge of the physically diminutive but historical Malacca has earned him a reputation of being a 'vibrant' leader. Although it is rather premature at the present stage to judge on Rahim's leadership of the UMNO Youth wing, there are glowing signs which indicate he has the capabilities to lead the youth Movement through the threshold of Malaysia's aspiration to be a fully-industrialized nation by the year 2020.

The most glaring indication of his leadership qualities is his achievement at transforming the sleepy hollow that Malacca was into a vibrant city state. Such achievement attributed to Rahim's leadership of the state has been described by observers as remarkable, owing to the fact that it was attained within a relatively short period of his 10-year Chief Ministership. Under his leadership, Malacca was confident of achieving the aspirations of the national Vision 2020 10 years



◀ *Tan Sri Rahim: Youth must strive to preserve the UMNO tradition of continuity in leadership and struggle*



▲ *The line-up of UMNO Youth Exco with Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad during the latter's launching of the 'Gerak Kerja Perdana' of UMNO Youth Movement*

earlier. This expectation was based on the state's present annual growth rate which hovers between 8 to 9 per cent which is at times higher than the average annual growth rate.

In an interview with the local media prior to the 1993 UMNO Youth elections, Rahim was quoted as having said that if such outstanding economic performance could be maintained, if not increased, Malacca could well achieve a fully-industrialized state status by the year 2010. In addition to that, the current general improvement in the global economy was expected to markedly boost both domestic and foreign investments in the country, including Malacca. In addition to that, its consistent political stability had also augured well for an increased flow of investments into the state. Despite being a state with minimal natural resources as compared with the other states in Malaysia, Malacca under Rahim's leadership had successfully resorted to exploiting the state's rich historical heritage in developing a reliable and efficient revenue-spinning tourism industry. In marketing its vast tourism potential, the state's administration had ingeniously come up with the catch words: 'Malacca — Where it all Began'.

Despite having not a single oil field or exploited gas reserve to boast of, the Malacca state administration under Rahim's dynamic leadership had managed to attract a major oil and gas corporation to invest in a multi-million ringgit refinery. The refinery complex, which will be equipped with its own harbour facilities, was expected to be one of the country's major refinery upon its full operation.

In anticipation of the increased flow of capitals into Malacca, the state government had embarked on a massive programme to upgrade the infrastructures in the state. Extra emphasis had been put by the state government in developing the tourism infrastructures as well as in providing the necessary incentives for domestic and foreign investors. At the present stage, investors planning to invest in Rahim's Malacca could be rest assured of getting the best returns from their investments.

Such inclination towards vibrancy in a politico-administrative leadership, if translated into the context of the UMNO Youth stewardship, could well transport the political youth vanguard into a new and vibrant era — an era in which the Youth Movement and the party in general could be put on an irreversible headlong thrust to attain the aspiration of Malaysia's Vision 2020.

Less than a year after wresting the UMNO Youth leadership in a two-cornered contest against his counterpart from the state of Negeri Sembilan, Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad, Rahim has already managed to put the Youth wing into full gear in terms of activities meant to prepare a pool of young leader to take over the helm of the party's leaderships.

On May 1994, he announced that the Youth Movement had already drawn up numerous leadership programmes for its members throughout the year. These programmes include special

cadre trainings and the initiating of a nationwide campaign against poverty. And throughout the first half of 1994 right up to June the same year, the UMNO Youth under Rahim's then relatively infantile leadership had already held a number of special leadership courses known as 'Kursus Gerak Kerja'. During such period the state UMNO Youth in Johor, Negri Sembilan and Penang had already organised such courses, which climaxed with the launching of the national level course in Subang Jaya at the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur recently.

It was during this course that Rahim ingeniously outlined a five-point tenet that is to be adopted by UMNO Youth members as their basic principle :

- *Genuine upholder of Malay solidarity*
- *Defender of the Malay strategic interests*
- *Prime mover of Malay excellence*
- *Attacker of social inadequacies*
- *Absorb virtuous values founded upon knowledge and Islamic beliefs*

## AGO AND CAF

As is quite normal in any newly-elected political leaderships, the new victor would be open to all sorts of accusations and slanderous remarks from either the vanquished or their supporters, who are either genuinely dissatisfied with the outcome or merely manifesting 'sour grape' mentality. Rahim's entry into the UMNO Youth number one leadership was not without its share of problems caused by such dissatisfied quarters. There were quarters within and without the party youth movement who had accused the new leader as having problems getting along with his vice head, Datuk Nazri Tan Sri Aziz. And there were also those who claimed that Rahim had been practising favouritism in appointing the movement's state leaderships and the extra line-up of its Exco members. They claimed that he had chosen these state and central level leaders from amongst those who had been actively responsible for his victory. What was worse was the accusations that he had been involved in buying of votes or money politics.

To clear his name and win back the confidence of not only the UMNO Youth's stalwarts, but also the party's central leaderships, Rahim had decided to resort to, and wasted no time in, conducting meetings with members and leaders of the movement and the party proper at the central, state and divisional level. It was during such series of meeting that Rahim had put to practise his declared intention to implement a 'face-to-face' approach in dealing with members of the Youth wing. He has learnt, rather timely, from the UMNO Youth's past history, the most effective ways in winning over the hearts and minds of the membership, in most situations, is through such face-to-face liaison. Experiences by Rahim's predecessors had shown him that such approach was particularly effective in winning over members or supporters who were not personally known by the leaders concerned.



◀ *Rahim: UMNO Youth should graduate into the international political arena*

*Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak congratulating Tan Sri Rahim on the latter's victory as UMNO Youth Chief*



*Ex-UMNO Youth Chief, Najib Tun Razak and the new Chief, Tan Sri Rahim - together in the struggle to champion the position of UMNO Youth in the top echelon of the nation's leadership*



In most of these cases the youth movement's leaders had not only managed to win over their hearts and minds but had also managed to successfully convert them from a bunch of hopeless skeptics to a disciplined group of faithful and dedicated party stalwarts. By achieving the positive result from the pre-election declaration to undertake the face-to-face leadership approach, Rahim had also earned enough self-confidence to go ahead forcefully with his own distinct CAF approach (meaning Consider All Factors) towards UMNO Youth's decision-making process.

For it was the strict adherence to the CAF philosophy that had led him to rise through the party's ranks throughout his 20-year involvement in it. Rahim had managed to lead the Kota Melaka UMNO Youth Division, and later as the state's Youth chief and, before being elected to the movement's number one position, its Exco member for three-terms. Everytime after having arrived at the most definite and positive CAF, he would then start to ponder his AGO (Aims, Goals and Objectives). In fact this very 'safety mechanism' in Rahim's decision-making had enabled him to successfully manage the number of issues confronting his entry into the UMNO Youth chairmanship. And this is especially true in his dealings with members and leaders who were dissatisfied with his appointment of the movement's state leaders and the extra line-up of its Exco memberships.

The presence of disgruntled members and leaders in a democratic political institution like UMNO can be considered as unavoidable. It is hard to please everyone. It was with such belief in mind, plus the strict adherence to the CAF and the AGO mechanisms of action, that enabled Rahim to act calmly and positively in the face of issues threatening his leadership. He similarly wanted all members and leaders in the UMNO Youth ranks to adopt such principles in their actions.

## RAHIM'S GLOBALIZATION POLICY

Whenever one speaks of the UMNO Youth, it is unavoidable to identify the movement within its three-tiered roles: its role in UMNO; its responsibility to the nation; and its global obligation. And since taking over the helm of the youth movement from his immediate predecessor, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Rahim had identified the three-tiered roles as the following:

- Within UMNO, the Youth movement, as the party's right wing, should really be strong and always be aware of its responsibility in consolidating the strength of the party proper. UMNO Youth could be manipulated by UMNO as an important bridge towards realizing the party's struggle to champion the cause of the Malay community. In this context, Rahim has the vision of turning the movement into an important contributor towards ensuring the unity and stability of the Malay masses.

- As for the responsibility of the UMNO Youth to Malaysia as a nation, it was Rahim's objective to see to it that the movement could act as an effective catalyst of change for the Malay community in all areas, including the economy, education and their religious faith. He also wanted of the youth movement to act as an effective motivator in the long term efforts to build a Malay community of the

future which would not only be respected by the other racial communities in the country but also the other races worldwide.

● As a continuance to the UMNO Youth responsibility at the international level, Rahim intended to develop the movement into a vocal institution, alongside the leaders of UMNO proper, in championing for international justice and fair play. This is especially true in cases of nations, especially the stronger ones, usurping the rights and sovereignty of others. Or of unfair trade practices adopted and implemented by industrialized nations of the North.

Rahim's aspiration was that these visions could be adopted and assimilated into the activities of all levels of the Youth movement, be it at the branch, divisional, state or national levels. And the most crucial challenge facing his leadership in implementing these visions is on how to effectively disseminate them to all levels of the UMNO Youth leaderships. It is at this juncture that Rahim's face-to-face leadership could again prove its effectiveness.

Within the context of UMNO Youth's global obligation, Rahim and his team of able leaders wasted no time in realizing this obligation. The visit by Philippine President, Fidel Ramos to Kuala Lumpur in January 1993, and the subsequent return visit by Dr. Mahathir to the Philippines in February of this year induced UMNO Youth to pioneer steps to establish contacts with their Philippine counterpart. As a result of these visits, a Ministerial Joint Committee was formed to improve and promote economic and cultural relationship between the two countries, apart from bolstering inter-boundary passage whilst a solution to the Sabah conflict, protracted since 1963, is reached.

As a follow through to the visits by the heads of nations of these two countries, Rahim led his Exco members on a 'friendship mission' to the Philippines to establish formal contacts with the leaders of this nation. Of particular significance of this mission is the collaboration of understanding and cooperation in fields of mutual interests between the second echelon leaders of both countries. Rahim met with President Fidel Ramos at Malacanang Palace and had a lengthy discussion with him on efforts to improve bilateral relations and other forms of cooperations. He also had the honour of meeting veteran leader, Raoul Manglapus; House of Senate President, Senator Edgardo Angara and a dialogue with Philippine Senators apart from a meeting with young Congress leaders headed by Leondro B. Verobies.

Rahim voiced his confidence that such visits could enhance Malaysia-Philippines relations, in accordance with the efforts pioneered by Dr. Mahathir. According to him:

*"...we are confident that our relations can be further strengthened and improved with the increased cognition amongst the leaders of both countries including the young leaders. We are hopeful of establishing relations not only amongst the top leaders, which is politically based, but also amongst the industries, businesses and businessmen as well as the people at large in areas involving*



▲ *UMNO Youth leaders led by their Chief, Tun Sri Rahim, in full attention singing the UMNO song*



▲ *UMNO Youth Chief, Tun Sri Rahim handing over a copy of the memorandum of objection against the UN's indifference towards the plight of the Muslims in Bosnia Herzegovina to Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad*



▲ *Rahim and Najib at the official handing over of leadership ceremony during the 1983 UMNO General Assembly*



◀ *Tun Sri Rahim at the announcement of the UMNO Youth line-up*

economic, commerce, cultural and the arts. In the initial stage we will establish personal relations and then we will follow-up with suitable programmes after this visit."

Rahim held steadfastly to the belief that UMNO should have a 'regional vision', as Malaysia should not survive in a politically unstable region. UMNO Youth is committed to contribute towards the stability and prosperity of this region with a view to ensure the safety of the nation in the future.

The second echelon leaders of ASEAN member countries should foster a mutually respectable relationship and encourage a 'give and take' attitude in resolving common disputes. In so far as the region is concerned, the struggle to realize the vision of transforming ASEAN into an economically powerful and stable force can only be achieved with the combined efforts and streamlining of strategies amongst the member countries.

Political friction and trivial issues between member countries should not be encouraged as this would only serve to hinder economic growth in the region. The Asia-Pacific and East-Asian region is increasingly flourishing as the future economic giants of the world and this should serve as a catalyst for the nations involved to realize the importance of economic cooperation.

Rahim's UMNO Youth is also active in political relations with its counterparts in the ruling party of ASEAN member countries. For instance, their relations with Golkar Youth, the youth wing of the ruling party in Indonesia, is not only confined to its Malay archipelago roots but extends to mutually beneficial economic cooperations. The formation of PT Citra Muda Persada, a joint venture between Yayasan Gerakbakti Kebangsaan (the economic arm of UMNO Youth) and Yayasan Tiara Indonesia to explore commerce, construction and manufacturing sectors is a classic example of this form of cooperation which should be emulated by other ASEAN nations' young leaders.

Meanwhile, across the causeway, the close relations between UMNO Youth and the Youth wing of the Peoples Action Party (PAP) of Singapore is historical, in effect. This was acknowledged by the PAP Youth Executive Committee Chairman, Brig. Gen. George Yeo. He went further to admit that the current relations have opened a new chapter that is even more effective in bilateral relations and it is, without doubt, a refreshing and meaningful change.

For the young leaders of this region, it is only appropriate that an effective mechanism be formed in order to disseminate information and act as a forum for the formulation of policies and programmes of mutual benefits. Economic solidarity must surpass all other agendas, with particular reference to military or territorial claims. This sound cooperation between the second echelon leaders of today is the key to a harmonious economic, social and political stability in this region.

## THE CHALLENGE TO REALIZE UMNO'S VISIONS

Within the context of *Political Science*, the UMNO Youth is presently being led by a combination of three distinct leadership models, and these are: the agitator, the administrator and the theorist. The first group of leaders gives extra emphasis on reactions by the members in determining the courses of actions to be taken in fulfilling their leadership roles. The administrators are more inclined towards coordinating the activities of the members, while the theorists are merely interested in projecting their leadership attributes to whoever cares to admire them. But in the case of Rahim's leadership, he had taken the trouble to identify these three category of leaders with a view to eventually combine these differing attributes into an effective and consolidated leaderships at both the Youth Exco as well as at the state level. Such consolidated leaderships could well enhance the UMNO Youth's role in creating a truly Malaysian nation and society which has the economic, social and political strength to be respected by the global community.

In a voluntary organization like the UMNO Youth, the power wielded by its leaders should be more of a persuasive kind. The effectiveness of a leader in such an organization is dependent on his ability to influence its followers or members. Leaders in such organizations should therefore base their efforts to consolidate their leadership on the degree or quality of their relationships with the followers. In other words, if the degree of trust shown by the follower is lacking, the leaders could be rest assured that their own power is weak and vice versa.

Within the context of Rahim's leadership of the UMNO Youth, success or failure hinges a lot on whether he is capable of influencing its members and leaders, or in making them understand and agree with the Movement's various agendas. As far as his track record hitherto is concerned, Rahim has not been, and is not, an agitator or, to be exact, a leader who aspires to revert the Movement back to its past identity as a pressure group. Rahim is also well aware of the notion that a leader does not necessarily have to capitalize on major issues to project his or her charisma. In fact many of his predecessors have succeeded well in propping up their leadership qualities without being an agitator. All that is required of a quality leadership are:

- *Position track records*
- *Proven integrity*
- *Vision*

It is not wrong if one were to say that Rahim has fulfilled all these requirements, and many more. Throughout his more than two decades of active participation in UMNO politics, what remains to be seen is whether the young son of Malaya would be able to maintain such remarkable track record in the face of the increasingly competitive race for positions in the party's national leadership.

The UMNO Youth Chief at a rally  
against the UN's indifferent  
attitude in handling the atrocities in  
Bosnia - Herzegovina



Tan Sri Rahim at the launching ceremony of  
the Election Machinery and formation of

▼ UMNO Youths Family Brigade in July 1994



◀ UMNO President,  
Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir joins the  
UMNO Youth leadership line-up in  
singing the UMNO song

The keenly-contested UMNO 1993 elections for the party's central leadership slots is the most recent indication of what Rahim has to expect if and when he decides to climb the higher echelons of the party's hierarchy. What had happened to popular and seasoned UMNO veteran, Ghafar Baba, should serve as an important reminder for Rahim not to rest on his laurel. For, despite a strong appeal among the party's grassroots and a vast and admirable track record in the party, Ghafar had to be eliminated in the final result of the election as a result of the now-historical challenge posed by the much younger and less experienced Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

If Rahim were to keep up his popularity in the UMNO Youth as well as within the party proper, he should play his games well along the lines of a resilient leader who has managed to acquire an admirable sense of humility and unselfishness, while at the same time capable of being firm and confident in facing up to all challenges facing his leadership. He should also have a steady flow of ideas on how to lead the party in line with mutually established and accepted agendas. Any decision which strays from the accepted agendas or expectations of the members would only serve to weaken the foundation to his already established power base. For a politician who genuinely aspires to climb up the highest possible political ladder in UMNO, there is no problem too trivial nor dissatisfactions to be swept under the rug, lest he is prepared to end up in political oblivion.

If his initial stewardship of the UMNO Youth is to be taken into account, Rahim seems well aware of the danger of complacency to his future political career. Soon after having emerged as the victor in the UMNO Youth's November 1993 presidential election, he had responded well to a reminder by the Prime Minister and party president, Dr Mahathir on the need for all those involved in the party elections to close ranks and work together towards achieving the more important objectives of the party, such as realizing the aspirations of the Vision 2020.

As a follow-up to the presidential reminder, Rahim and his Exco line-up underwent a second round of their face-to-face meeting with UMNO Youth leaders at the divisional and state levels nationwide as well as with the party's liaison chiefs of the states concerned. The hectic tour was also organised to gather feedback from members and leaders at both levels over the then controversial and touchy question of the appointments of state UMNO Youth's chairmanships and deputy chairmanships. During the series of meeting, Rahim and his deputy, Senator Datuk Nazri as well as the line-up of Exco members had heart-to-heart talks with members and leaders on his proposed appointment of the movement's leaderships in the states.

The outcome of the meeting, which was held in an amicable spirit of Islamic 'musyawarah', can be considered successful owing to the fact that it had succeeded in gathering enough feedback for Rahim and his ExcOs to come up with the most suitable line up for the movement's leaderships at the

state level. In other words, the meeting had given enough confidence for Rahim to announce his final list of appointees to the UMNO Youth's top state leadership. Except for some initial bickerings which was speedily resolved, the appointment of the 13 state UMNO Youth chiefs — 11 of which comprised of new faces — for their 1993-1996 term had gone down well amongst members and leaders of the Youth wing as well as within UMNO in general.

## CONCLUSION

Rahim and his UMNO Youth's close and workable relationship with the party's number one and number two bosses, if maintained at its present degree, can also prove to be a boon to his future chances at the party's national leaderships. In fact his well-proven vibrant and development-oriented leadership of Malacca were widely said to have earned the special attention of the Prime Minister and his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. This special relationship with the national UMNO leadership was made even closer when Rahim and his Exco line up held a hear-to-hear meeting with Dr. Mahathir at the latter's office on December 17, 1993 — less than a month after being declared as the newly elected UMNO Youth Chief. During the meeting, members and leaders of the movement who were present had taken the opportunity to declare their undivided support for the Prime Minister's leaderships of the country and the party. Those visitors present had also then seek guidance from the party president on how the Youth wing could multiply the continuous efforts of maintaining and enhancing the dignity of Islam, the Malay community and the nation.

On the part of Dr. Mahathir, a decision he made during the meeting, to be present whenever possible, at all of the series of leadership and cadre trainings, campaigns and dialogues initiated by the UMNO Youth had proved that the Movement under Rahim's leadership had, an is having, his special attention. Dr. Mahathir had even offered to extend the facilities and cooperation of the Prime Minister's Department and other government agencies, such as the Biro Tatanegara (Civics Bureau), Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (the Malaysia Institute for Islamic Understanding) and Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), to the UMNO Youth delegation. The offer was to enable the Youth Movement to initiate and organize more activities such as leadership courses and campaigns of positive social, economic and political significances.

## Chapter Seven

# UMNO YOUTH AND VISION 2020

### UMNO YOUTH: ITS PHILOSOPHY AND LEADERSHIPS

Malaysia's Vision 2020 which aspires to turn Malaysia into a fully-industrialized and developed nation by the year 2020 is not a new national movement. Efforts to realize the national aspiration is only being intensified in recent years because of the need to awaken the country's majority Malay community from a nostalgic slumber of their past glories during the Malacca Sultanate. Such vision demanded of all Malaysians to instill a spirit of excellence in all their endeavors. This is necessary to facilitate the attainment of industrialized society status — a society which is based on the proficient mastery of high technology.

The question that arise now is that whether all the noble ideals, as envisaged by the Vision 2020, could be realized. Such question can only be answered if the national leaderships could introduce and effectively implement strategies which are all-encompassing, especially in politics, and the socio-economy. In the meantime, the people would also have to play their roles by readily assimilating the spirit of the Vision which are based on the need to develop a truly Malaysian race which are respected by the world. All questions as to whether the Vision could be realized thus hinges on actions undertaken by the leaders with the necessary power to execute such mammoth task. Apart from the need to be more creative and innovative, all leaders in the country should also be able to give priority to policies adopted by the national leaderships.

To date, there have been numerous seminars and dialogues to examine the achievements

reached by the Vision 2020 agendas. Efforts in initiating such seminars and dialogues augur well in exposing Malaysians at large on the need for an integrated understanding of the complex national vision. And what is more important is that, with proper understanding, all levels of leaderships in the country and the masses could readily adapt themselves to more positive attitudes towards work such as disciplined, hardworking and ready to sacrifice for the sake of higher national objectives.

The history on how Japan and its people succeeded in overcoming all odds in their efforts to develop their society into what it is presently should be emulated by all Malaysians. The Japanese, armed only with a true sense of discipline and honor, has already begun to make their presence felt in the world since the earlier part of the present century. Today all members of the world's community knows and are well aware of what Japan is all about. We are all being awed by the superior ability of the Japanese to turn their nation from a feudalistic peasant society into a well-developed and highly industrialized one, while at the same time maintaining their rich traditional eastern way of life.

Malaysia has presently reached its 37 years of independence from its British colonial master and UMNO, which has already been in existence for 48 years, should continue to provide leaderships of excellence which are capable of enhancing political, economic and social stability in the country. It is thus pertinent for aspiring leaders in the UMNO Youth, who are being slotted to succeed the present party and national leaderships, to be able to carry out their future leadership roles in a most serious and responsible manner. Any aspiration to become a leader based solely on negative motivations such as hunger for power, wealth and social status, are bound to lead into futility. Furthermore, such negative leadership motivation would not be able to turn one into a leader in the true sense of the word.

Leaders who are motivated by such worldly objectives would in the end find themselves totally alien to UMNO's philosophy on good leaderships. In fact any negative motivations or thoughts amongst leaders and stalwarts in the party should be nipped in the bud before they could become malignant and affect its stability. If these negative thoughts are not checked, the whole Malay community would eventually be frustrated in their aspiration to be at par with the other societies.

The nation that is being dreamt of by the Prime Minister and UMNO President, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed, is not merely based on the achievement of material wealth but rather a nation where material and spiritual wealth goes hand in hand. His particular stress on the need for UMNO leaders to have both the religious faith and adequate knowledge in all areas is appropriate. Such combinations is necessary in efforts to build a moralistic society — a society in which one does not stab a friend in the back, where there is no hidden enemies detrimental to the survival of the Malay race.

*A nation would not be able to prosper and develop if it is being run by frail-hearted leaders and are without any dynamic and clear vision to develop the nation for the sake of the people from all walks of life. To project a Malay race which could be admired and respected by the other communities in the country is also a responsibility of the younger leaders in UMNO. It is thus important for UMNO Youth members to prepare themselves to take over the party's and the national leaderships from their predecessors, in a most admirable manner. These younger leaders in the party should be able to hone their leadership skills to become leaders of integrity who are well respected and honored. To introduce such leaders, it is important for the UMNO Youth to come up with the best among the best from amongst its pool of aspiring leaders.*

The nation and generations to come would be left in anarchy if leaders of the future are not well-equipped with the necessary ideas, religious faith, knowledge, sense of justice and courage to lead the multi-racial and multi-cultural country. This is especially true in the political arena where one is required to be ambitious, unshakable in their beliefs and skillful in all areas. It is thus important for Malay leaders of the next century to be equipped with the art of politics, so as to enable them to skillfully dance to the tune of the country's ever demanding leaderships. UMNO Youth leaders should have a firm and unshakable disposition, both in the theoretical and practical sense of the words, to enable them to withstand the numerous problems caused by political backstabbers, liars and unprincipled members and leaders.

Efforts to build up a fast developing nation like Malaysia is not an easy task. UMNO's image and dignity could only be maintained if it could face all issues, currently and in the future, with calm and wisdom. Malaysia which is built by people of various races, cultures and faith, is bound to face bigger challenges in the future. Therefore the country has a dire need for leaders who would be able to maintain harmony and stability in the face of such challenges. And if by then, the country's leaderships are still controlled by greedy and selfish people, one could be rest assured that efforts to realize the aspirations of Vision 2020 would be in vain.

It is, therefore, very important for every leaders in UMNO to understand and closely practice the following guidelines which would assure of success in achieving the government's vision:

- The leaderships philosophy which should be adhered to is one which would ensure unity and solidarity amongst leaders in all levels of UMNO. It is therefore considered the responsibility of all the party's youth wing members and leaders to take whatever steps necessary to ensure that the serious disunity, which eventually led the party to be de-registered in 1987, should never be allowed to reoccur. Special attention should be given to develop righteous leadership qualities, such as sincerity and trustworthiness, amongst leaders of the future. It is therefore, necessary for UMNO leaders at the national level to always be aware of the need to nurture strong moral senses amongst the successive leaderships. It is especially important for any approaches adopted in

the process of selecting future leaders to be in accordance with Islamic principles. This is appropriate as the teachings and spirit of Islam have been accepted by the party as basic foundations for its future unity and stability.

- Secondly, all UMNO Youth leaders and ordinary members of the party should make an effort to instill in themselves a sense of faithfulness and sincerity in their struggle towards the process of nation-building. Without such qualities, UMNO would imminently be weakened. The prophet of Islam, Muhammad himself had been stressing on the need for all men to have in them a string sense of sincerity. It is, therefore, only true if one were to say that an untrustworthy leader would not only be rejected by his own community but also by his religious faith. In Islam such a leader is definitely unqualified to act as a "khalifah" (Allah's chosen leader) in this world.
- Thirdly, a political party could not possibly be developed in a secure and smooth manner if its membership has not been oriented or nurtured towards discipline. Failure to put stress on discipline would inevitably lead to the downfall of any political party. History itself has proven that major empires of the world, such as the Chinese, Indian and the Malay Sultanate, had crumbled because their leaders had failed to practice discipline in their leaderships. The absence of discipline in any political party would lead to widespread political decadence within the party's ranks and these include back-stabbing among members and leaders, party-hopping and slandering. Capitalizing on politics as a mere stepping-stone to achieve one's selfish interests is a distinct sign of an unfaithful leader. As unfaithful leaders are bound to be frustrated whenever their selfish interests are not achieved, such frustration would make them susceptible to insidious influences of the enemy. This is so because it is much more convenient for the enemy to sow their seeds of hatred for the UMNO leaderships on frustrated and desperate leaders and members of the party. It is thus important for UMNO to carefully eliminate unfaithful and selfish individuals from its ranks of future leaders.

Leaders of the party's youth wing should always be well disciplined, especially in executing their responsibilities. This is especially important because, the success or failure of all life's endeavors hinges a lot in one's sense of discipline in rising up to the challenges of the endeavors. Look at the example of Japan and South Korea which are now considered the pride of the Orient. These fully-industrialized nations from the emerging East had developed themselves from an obscure and isolated past, within a relatively short period of time, to become amongst the world's greatest industrial power. Such exemplary successes are due to their highly disciplined leaders and people. The Japanese and the Koreans are not only hardworking by nature, but are always voracious in their quests for knowledge. What is most exemplary is that their hungry quests for knowledge and their positive attitudes towards work are not merely

*motivated by selfish interests but are more inclined towards the betterment of their whole society and nation.*

*Similarly, from the example of the Japanese and the Koreans, efforts to build a new and dynamic Malay community require the active participation of honest and sincere leaders and not the greedy, selfish and untrustworthy ones. The qualities required of future UMNO leadership, amongst other things, include courteousness, respectful to the elders and patience in facing challenges. In other words, leaders in the party's youth wing should be selected from among those who manifest strong, positive, clean and firm personalities. It is also important for leaders in the UMNO Youth to have a clean past as this would secure them from slanderous attacks and accusations which would prove detrimental to their image and future political career.*

- *Fourthly, in order to achieve the aspirations of Vision 2020, it is necessary for leaders and members of the UMNO Youth to adopt a positive sense of time. A youth leader who values time is not a useless procrastinator and is a potentially efficient national leader of the future, especially in planning and implementing activities related to national development and the economy. It is now time for leaders in UMNO to show seriousness in their leadership undertakings for the Malays and the nation at large so as not to be the laughing stock of the people. It is not that difficult for Malaysia to achieve a fully-industrialized nation status, as aspired by the government's Vision 2020. Japan which had only launched its programme for heavy industrialization in the 1890s had managed to reach the objectives of the programme within the relatively short 20 years period, that was during the early 1910s. It is important to reiterate here that the success of the Japanese is mainly attributed to their exemplary and remarkable sense of time.*

*Time passes fast and UMNO members should stop wasting the valuable and irrecoverable passages of time, by harping on issues which are counter-productive to the survival and development of their community and nation. It is thus important for the members to stay away from activities which are only a waste of their time, money and energy. It is rather disturbing to realize the fact that there are still a large number of Malays who are yet to be aware of the value of time. This is despite the fact that Islam, which is their common divine faith, has always espouse punctuality and a good sense of time amongst its followers.*

*In order to rid the Malay community of their numerous unproductive attitudes, leaders in UMNO should always lead by example and continue to strive on in facing challenges to their leaderships, and with malice towards none.*

- The fifth and final factor that should be adhered to by UMNO leaders in keeping up with the aspirations of Vision 2020 is the need to have a critical, open, and creative mind, as well as a strong sense of tolerance. In the process of maturity, which UMNO is going through, leaders who wish to carry on the struggle for the party, the Malay community and the nation should first ensure that they are capable of carrying out the struggle in a most effective manner and with sincerity. They should be prepared to accept constructive criticisms merely for the goods that such criticisms could bring. As a leader who will succeed the national leaderships, an UMNO Youth member should at all times act as a defender of the people and a bridge spanning the people to the country's leaderships. The need to practice such open leadership culture is considered a basic challenge facing leaders in the party's youth vanguard.

All the five factors stated above would, however, not mean anything if the younger members of UMNO are still not mentally prepared to accept them. Nevertheless, if UMNO are to continue leading the country, these factors must be sincerely adhered to by all concerned. It has been said that a leader is also a 'teacher', and if the 'teacher' teaches the truth, the whole country will be blessed with peace and prosperity.

## CHALLENGE TO VISION 2020

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Malaysia in general and the Malays in particular are facing major challenges in efforts to modernize the country. One of these challenges is the question of the backwardness of the majority Malay community, especially in the field of economy. The major questions that has probably been playing in the mind of the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, is why have the Malays been left behind in the modern capitalistic lives of the country. Ongoing efforts to see the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community have not really bear their fruit. In the meantime, the non-Malay communities of the country continued to reach higher grounds in their commercial and industrial activities. This is despite the fact that the government is still providing special help and support to the Malays, with the hope of increasing their participation in the national economy.

This economic problem facing the Malay community is the main challenge being posed to the nation in its aspiration to reach the Vision 2020 era. The nation is well aware of the fact that if the Malays still failed to play a more important role in the national economy, they will be left to the mercy of the other communities in their own traditional lands. Dr. Mahathir himself had on many occasions expressed his disappointment over the large number of Malay entrepreneurs who had to disgracefully beg for help from the non-Malays, after failing badly in their businesses.

Based on all these shameful failures, it is therefore deemed necessary for the Malays to sacrifice, in terms of shedding traditional values which are counter productive to their economic development. In the place of their old and obsolete values, the Malays should try to adopt a more

practical and pragmatic approach that would help in speeding up the attainment of national economic objectives. Although the Vision 2020 has been widely talked about by the people, there are still a large number of Malays who are yet to really understand its real objectives. They have been conveniently leaving the task of achieving such noble objectives to their leaders. If the Malay are to continue with such negative attitude, they would soon be identified as a frustrated and desperate community with deep hatred for the other communities which made it in the struggle for economic supremacy.

With such bleak scenario in store for the Malays in the not too distant future, there is a need for each and every members of the community to support the aspiration by UMNO and its leader, Dr. Mahathir, to create a New Malay — a new social concept which is aimed at creating quality and cultured people from amongst the Malay masses who would be able to live up to the time. A New Malay is ever prepared to face any challenges; able to compete effectively in all endeavors without waiting for help and support; knowledgeable, sophisticated, honest, disciplined, trustworthy and efficient.

To realize such a crucial social concept, all members of the Malay community, especially their leaders at the national level, should be prepared to change their attitude and mentality. Young Malay leaders in the UMNO Youth movement is not exempted from this and they should execute this major obligation to the community without any further delays. For the heavy task of building a new Malay community, which excels in all areas of human endeavors, lies on the shoulders of both the leaders and members of UMNO.

In striving towards such end, the Malays should always maintain their unity. And in this context, UMNO leaders and members alike should work closely together in a spirit of tolerance and with a positive sense of cooperation and efforts.

The leaders of the New Malay should be selected from amongst those with good leadership qualities, adopting the right and clear policies in their struggle, well-educated, sincere, capable of receiving and taking criticisms, a strong sense of nationalism and has no vested interests in the struggle. If none of the members in UMNO Youth are having these qualities, then the Malays would not only fail to compete with all the races in the world, but would also lose out to the other Malaysian racial communities.

## CONCLUSION

UMNO which has just celebrated its 48th anniversary had to date proven to its some 1.9 million members that the future of the country under its leaderships are bright and secure. This has been made possible due to the fact that the party has been implementing policies which are development-oriented and has been proven to be effective in the process of nation building. Such

achievement is also due to the fact that UMNO has the capability to undertake comprehensive and careful researches on all areas of proper nationhood. UMNO has now earned the worldwide reputation of being one of the two democratic political party in the world which had managed to consistently stay in power for a long period of time. The other such party being the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party.

The party has also proven itself capable of keeping up with the times and is able to come up with capable and dynamic leaders who are well respected even at the international level. All these are possible because UMNO has an inexhaustible pool of second echelon leaders (the party's younger sets) who have been systematically trained and exposed to take on higher leadership roles. The policy of open-mindedness and pragmatism practiced by UMNO has made it possible for the party to continuously maintain its stability and harmony. UMNO is not a party which are shackled by unnecessarily stringent doctrines.

It has been well proven that all the achievements by UMNO can be partly credited to its youth wing, which has made smooth and peaceful succession of political power a reality in Malaysia, rather than just a dream in most other countries.

UMNO YOUTH LEADERSHIPS  
**Brief Biographies**

## Brief Biography

Tun Hussein Onn was born on 12 February 1923 in Johor Bahru, Johor. This eldest son of Dato' Onn Jaafar received his early education in Singapore and English College, Johor Bahru. In 1940, he enrolled in the Johore Military as a cadet and was sent to the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun for training. He joined the Indian armed forces in 1942. Later, he served in the Military Headquarters New Delhi and was attached to the Malayan Civil Affairs Department. He was then seconded to the Enrollment and Training Center as a Malayan Police Trainer. Upon his return to Malaya in 1949 he served in The Malayan Administrative Services.

**Tun Hussein  
Onn -**



Tun Hussein was the first UMNO Youth Alliance Chief and third UMNO Secretary General. He also served as a Federal Legislative Council member, Johore State Legislative Assembly member and Johore State Government Consultative Council member. He resigned as UMNO Secretary General in 1953 when he followed his father out of UMNO. After that, Tun Hussein continued his studies in Law at the Lincolns Inn, England. He graduated in 1958 in legal studies.

In 1968, he rejoined UMNO, contested and won the East Johore Parliamentary seat during the 1969 General Elections. Tun Hussein became a member of UMNO Supreme Council from 1969 to 1972. He was appointed Minister of Education in 1970 and held this portfolio until 1973. Tun Hussein won a Vice President's seat in the 1972 UMNO General Assembly. A year later, he was elected UMNO Deputy President. In the Cabinet reshuffle that year Tun Hussein was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and held the post of minister of Trade and Industry. On January 14 1976, upon the demise of Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Hussein became the acting President. The next day, he was appointed third Prime Minister of Malaysia. During the UMNO General Assembly held on 15 September 1978, he defeated Haji Sulaiman Palestin in the contest for the post of UMNO president. He held the Prime Minister's office until his retirement on 16 July, 1981. In recognition of his contributions to the nation, he was awarded the Darjah Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara (SMN) Kelas Pertama which carries the title 'Tun' by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong on 16 July, 1981. He passed away on 29 May, 1990.

## Brief Biography

Tun Haji Abdul Razak was the second Prime Minister of Malaysia. He was born on 11 March 1922 at Pulau Keladi, Pekan in the state of Pahang. The son of Dato' Hussain bin Mohd. Taib, a Pahang aristocrat, Tun Abdul Razak received his education at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, Perak and continued his studies at Raffles College, Singapore in 1940. During the Second World War, He served as a captain in Force 136 of the Wataniah Movement. In 1947, he was offered a scholarship to study law in England and graduated a lawyer in 1950.

In 1952, Tun Razak was appointed Pahang State Secretary and later the Pahang Chief Minister in 1955. His involvement in UMNO began in 1950 when he was chosen as Chief of UMNO Youth Alliance and by virtue of this appointment, he was also a Vice-President of UMNO. In 1951, he was appointed Chairman of the Youth Alliance. A year later, he became the UMNO Deputy President and held this position until 1971. In February 1951, he was appointed as an unofficial member of the Federal Legislative Council.

During the first National Elections in 1955, Tun Abdul Razak was elected a Member of Parliament and continued to win in every elections. He joined the Independence Delegation to London in 1956 as he was the Minister of Education in Tunku Abdul Rahman's cabinet. In September 1957, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and held the Defence portfolio. After the 13 May 1969 incident, he was appointed Director of the National Action Council.

He was known as 'Father of Development' due to his valuable contributions towards development, especially in the rural areas. Tun Abdul Razak was also instrumental in the reconciliation process with Indonesia during the Confrontation. In view of this, he was also known as 'Father of Peace'. In 1970, he was appointed the second Prime Minister of Malaysia following Tunku Abdul Rahman's resignation. Tun Abdul Razak passed away in 1976.

**Tun Abdul  
Razak -**



## Brief Biography

Tun Haji Sardon Haji Jubir was born in Batu Pahat, Johore on 19 March 1917. He received his early education at Sungai Bagan Malay School and later continued his studies at Victoria English Primary School and Raffles Institution, Singapore. In 1937, Tun Sardon pursued a degree in law at Middle Temple, London and was called to the Bar in 1941. In 1942, he was appointed Deputy Public Prosecutor at the Johor Bahru High Court.

Tun Haji Sardon was a founder member of the Singapore Malays Union and was its President from 1947 to 1948. The Singapore Malays Union merged with UMNO in 1948 and Tun Sardon was appointed to the Supreme Council. In 1951, he was appointed UMNO Youth Chief, when the post was vacated by Tun Abdul Razak, and held the post until 1964. In May 1958, he was President of the Malaya Youth Council. He was chosen to represent Malaysia at the Third World Assembly of Youth conference held at New Delhi.

In the 1955 elections, he contested in the Segamat Utara Parliamentary constituency and won. After his victory in the elections, Tun Sardon, who was then the UMNO Youth Chief was appointed Minister of Works. In 1956, he was transferred to the Ministry of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts. During the 1959 elections, Tun Haji Sardon won the Pontian Utara Parliamentary seat and was appointed Minister of Transport. He managed to retain this seat in the 1964 elections and continued to hold the Minister of Transport portfolio in Tunku Abdul Rahman's cabinet. He was also appointed Minister of Health (1969-1971) and Minister of Information (1972-1974).

Tun Sardon was appointed President of the Malaysian National Scouts Movement. He also represented Malaysia in the Way Asian Highway Co-ordinating Committee and Ministerial Conferences held at Bangkok in August 1964. He was Malaysia's representative to the 23rd. WHO Conference in Geneva, Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in Karachi and World Scouts Conference in Mexico. Then, in 1974, he was Malaysia's Permanent Representative to United Nations in New York for five months. Upon his return from New York, he was appointed as the Yang Di-Pertua Negeri Pulau Pinang on 5 February 1975 and served two full terms. He passed away in December 1985.

**Tun Haji  
Sardon Haji Jubir**

