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THE KADAZANS

AND SABAH POLITICS

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A B S T R A C T

The Kadazans — the indigenous non-Muslim tribal people of what was North Borneo under Chartered Company rule and is now Sabah, a state of Malaysia — have for the most part throughout their history been governed by others than themselves. Before European contact Muslim overlords from Brunei or the Sulu archipelago exercised a tenuous sovereignty; the London-based Chartered Company was concerned to extract wealth for shareholders and to keep the indigenes quiescent; and since the formation of Malaysia, with the covert or overt support of the federal government in Kuala Lumpur, for the greater part of the time Muslim rule has prevailed.

This thesis is a detailed examination of the last quarter-of-a-century's political life in Sabah, with particular reference to the role of the Kadazan community therein. The growth of Kadazan consciousness or "nationalism" is traced, and the evolution of their political parties and fortunes. Political and socio-economic developments within the state are linked always to the federal framework within which they take place and must be understood.

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CHAPTER 1

THE KADAZANS

Sabah is a multi-racial State. Broadly speaking, the races making up the population of Sabah can be classified under three main headings, namely: (i) non-Muslim indigenes forming about 38 percent of the population, (ii) Muslim indigenes forming another 38 percent of the population, and (iii) Chinese and others, forming the remaining 24 percent of the population.¹

The non-Muslim indigenous peoples, namely the Kadazans and the Muruts are the original inhabitants of Sabah. Using Dr Mahathir's definition of the Malays in West Malaysia, the Kadazans are truly the "definitive people" of Sabah, the real and original owners of Sabah.²

The Muslim indigenes on the other hand can be subdivided into two sub-headings, namely (i) the Islamised indigenous people and (ii) the immigrant Muslims. The Islamised indigenous people formerly belonged to the Kadazan ethnic group. They too were therefore in Mahathir's terms part of the "definitive" race of Sabah. In embracing the Islamic faith and its requirements however, they separated themselves from their original Kadazan ethnic identity. The Islamised indigenous peoples are the Idahans, the Bisaya, the Tidongs, the Kedayans and most of the Orang Sungeis of the East Coast. The main immigrant Muslim groups are the Suluks and Bajaus (see Table 2).

The advent of Islam to Sabah therefore divided the original "definitive race", the Kadazans, into those who became Muslim and those who remained animists. They were actually the same people ethnically, and remained part of a similar speech community, but the Islamic religion gave them a separate identity. The Islamised Kadazans began to assert a separate identity for themselves and to see themselves as a distinct ethnic group. In time, they started to call themselves "Malays" (as did indigenous converts to Islam in Sarawak to the south) as the term "Malay"

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1. Supriya Bhar, "The 'Malays' in Sabah, 1970: A Problem of Community Classification", *Manusia dan Masyarakat*, 2 (1981), pp. 35-41. See also the *Population Census*, 1970. Full publication details of all works cited are given in the bibliography.
 2. Mahathir bin Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, pp. 126-127.

became synonymous with the word Islam or Muslim. With this divorcing of themselves from the Kadazan ethnic group mainstream after embracing Islam, therefore, the Kadazan dilemma had started.

Among the first indigenous group to embrace Islam were the Idahans. According to Tom Harrisson these people embraced Islam on or about the year 1408. He wrote:³

These Idahan regard themselves as long ago converts from animism to Islam. Their somewhat vague background affinities are with the Orang Sungei (Dusun) up the coast rivers.

The Kedayans too are considered as originally belonging to the Kadazans ethnically. According to Staal, the original name of the Kadazans could be "Kadayan". Some of these Kadayans became Muslim and the Islamised Kadayans separated themselves from their original Kadazan communities. The Kadayans became a distinct group, as they identified themselves more and more with the Malays and their new religion.⁴

Amongst the non-Muslim indigenous population, the Kadazan community are the single most numerous group. They form about 35 percent of the total population of Sabah. However, although the Kadazans are the "definitive" race of Sabah, and hence in the belief of many of them the rightful owners of Sabah, they are not now in control of the State, nor even their own destiny. They are the governed, not the governors. There are many historical reasons for this, which will be elaborated further in the following chapters.

At this point it is sufficient to note that Sabah's joining the new Federation of Malaysia in 1963 did not change the pattern or help matters for the Kadazan people. Like the Malays in West Malaysia, the stated aim of the Kadazans was to establish their paramountcy in government, politics and administration, areas where their control would have enabled them to assert the country's identity as Kadazan.⁵

The high expectation of the Kadazan leaders in the early 1960s, therefore, that they (the Kadazans) could become the governors and not

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3. Tom Harrisson, "The Advent of Islam to West and North Borneo", *JMBRAS*, 45:1 (1973), pp. 10-20. See also Tom & Barbara Harrisson, "Bridges from Prehistory: The Idahan Story", *Sabah Society Journal*, II (1969-1970), pp. 229-237.
 4. J. Staal (Rev.), "The Dusuns of North Borneo: Their Social Life", *Anthropos*, 20 (1926), pp. 182-191.
 5. R.K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, p. 61.

the governed did not effectively materialise and, in the view of this writer, may never materialise. For a brief period of time, though, between August 1963 and December 1964, the Kadazans found themselves in power as the Chief Minister of Sabah during this period was a Kadazan Christian, namely, Tun Stephens.⁶ However, various factors made it not possible for the Kadazans to hold on to power or continue to be the governors of their own country. After the fall of the Kadazan Chief Minister in 1964 and the demise of the Kadazan political party in 1967, the Kadazans once more occupied secondary roles in the government of Sabah. For most, if not all Kadazans since 1967, they have felt themselves to be second class citizens in their own country.

In the first part of this chapter, we shall discuss the origins of the Kadazans, their relationships with other groups, their socio-economic characteristics, and debates concerning the very label "Kadazan". In the second part of the chapter we shall discuss the Kadazans under British rule, followed by a brief discussion of the formal erosion of Kadazan paramountcy.

Origin

There is no doubt that the earliest men to inhabit prehistoric Sabah were Kadazans. A social scientist and former Company administrator wrote:⁷

It would seem that the Dusuns are the original inhabitants of the country, and that the Bajaus and Illanuns are later arrivals...who have driven the first named inland....

He continued:

What the Dusuns would seem to be is a primitive Indonesian people, with some strain of Mongolian (not modern Chinese) blood. The up-country Dusun is generally short, sturdy and light in colour with a face which is often broad and flat, showing great development of the angle of the lower jaw....I suspect a part of the Dusun stock of having come in prehistoric times from Indo-China and of having amalgamated with some people already settled in what is now British North Borneo.

A colonial administrator wrote:⁸

The principal inhabitants of these districts consist of

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6. Tun Stephens was then known as Donald A. Stephens. He embraced the Islamic faith in 1971 and became Tun Fuad Stephens. He was awarded 3 titles, Datuk, Tan Sri and Tun. The last title of 'Tun' was awarded to him in 1974 shortly after he became the Head of State of Sabah.
 7. I.H.N. Evans, *The Religion of the Tampasuk Dusuns of North Borneo*, p. 11.
 8. Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, p. 374.

the Idaan and Dusun, the aboriginal population....
These men have civilised appearance wearing jackets
and trousers.

Another social scientist believed that the Kadazans originated from mainland Asia. He believed that there was a series of migrations from mainland Asia and these migrants were referred to as 'Indonesians', 'proto-Malays' and sometimes 'Indo-Malayans'.⁹ The Kadazans are related to these early migrants from mainland Asia. The scientific consensus regarding the origin of the Kadazan people therefore seems to be as follows: that between 1500 and 1000 B.C. a migration of what is known as Indo-Malayan people took place from South China through to North Vietnam, on to Formosa to the Philippines and to North Borneo and the Celebes.¹⁰

The above, however, while merely a hypothesis, is nevertheless supported by the excavation and findings of skeletons in the Niah caves in Sarawak. Furthermore, advances in archaeology, physical anthropology and comparative linguistics, mainly over the past three decades have made it possible to make fresh assessments of the situation with regard to the inter-relationships of the human population in the area.¹¹ There are similarities found in the physical features amongst the indigenous populations of North Vietnam, Formosa (Taiwan), the Philippines and the Kadazan people of Sabah. Blood types have also been tested and found to be of the same type group.¹² The language of the Bisaya group in the Philippines and that of the Kadazans of Sabah area is also very close and it is believed by linguists to be of the same origin.¹³

Lebar in his book *Ethnic Groups in Insular Southeast Asia* also commented that the importance of an alleged Chinese influence on Kadazan culture

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9. G.L. Harris, *North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak*, p. 7.
 10. For a detailed discussion of various theories of the origins of the North Borneo people see Thomas Rhys Williams, *The Dusuns: A North Borneo Society*.
 11. For an excellent account of the peopling of the Pacific region, see P.S. Bellwood, "The Peopling of the Pacific", *Scientific American*, 243:5 (Nov. 1980). On the classification of the various ethnic groups in Borneo, see Frank M. Lebar (ed.), *Ethnic Groups of Insular South East Asia*, 1 (Human Relations Area Files, Press, New Haven).
 12. T.R. Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 5.
 13. The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Malaysia branch, is currently undertaking a comprehensive study of the various languages and dialects of Sabah natives. A pre-publication copy of a "Compendium of Articles in Relation to the Survey of Sabah Languages" submitted to *Pacific Linguistics*, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, has been kindly made available to the author.

has frequently been mentioned and said:¹⁴

...but it would seem that more basic ethnolinguistic affiliations may lie to the North, in the direction of the Batan-Botel-Tobago area, and ultimately aboriginal Formosa.

Furthermore, there are certain similarities in the religious beliefs of the Kadazans and of some of the indigenous people of Indo-China and the Philippines. According to Evans,¹⁵ the jar worship amongst the Kadazans is found also amongst the Bulnors, Sedangs and Turais of Indo-China. Just as these people regarded old jars as a form of wealth, Kadazans in the past also kept jars as heirlooms. The same religious belief in the worship of jars is also found amongst some indigenous people in the Philippines.

Some garments worn by Kadazan priestesses also bear strong similarities to those worn by some tribes in the Philippines.¹⁶ Indeed, beads and bangles worn by Kadazan priestesses are also found amongst the Igorots of the Philippines. Burying in jars, which was the prevalent custom amongst the Kadazans in days gone by, is another custom found in the Philippines.¹⁷

The Kadazans have their own myths or legends regarding their origin, however.¹⁸ Briefly, the Kadazans believe that they are the descendants of "Kinoingan" and "Suminundu" (both supernatural beings or gods) who once lived under a tree known as "Nunuk Ragang". Nunuk Ragang is in Tampias, between Telupid and Ranau. These two supreme beings, it was believed, begot children who are now the direct ancestors of various Kadazan tribes in Sabah.

The Ranau variation¹⁹ of the Kadazan origin myth is also from "Nunuk Ragang". The difference, however, is that the early ancestors (Kinoingan and Suminundu accompanied by others) rowed their dug-out canoes from the direction of Sandakan via the Great Kinabatangan river. They encamped at "Nunuk Ragang" and stayed there to inhabit the place. This Ranau variation of the Kadazan origin myth is closer to the anthropological theory

14. Frank Lebar, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

15. I.H.N. Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

18. *Ibid.* See also his work on *Studies in Religion and Folklore among Primitive People*. For an account of the Penampang district's version of the origin of the Kadazans, see Sinidol and Benggan, "The Creation", *Sabah Society Journal*, 1 (Sept. 1961), p. 42.

19. Interview with Native Chief Sepikit from Ranau. He is considered to be an authority on Kadazan custom and origin.

that the early Kadazan ancestors originated from South China, and through migration via Formosa and the Philippines, came to northern Borneo. The most probable and likely place for these early people to land from the Philippines was Sandakan and the Kudat areas in the north east.

The legends about Kadazan origins vary from place to place, but the "Nunuk Ragang" connection is common. The various Kadazan tribes today share a common heritage. They are of the same genetic stock. They differ only in dialects, but the explanation for this is that they have been isolated from each other and lacked contact or communication. As Rutter observed:²⁰

The nature of the country, especially in the interior, tends to isolate the inhabitants and consequently the development of individual traits in small communities becomes inevitable.

The Terms 'Kadazan' and 'Dusun'

The term Kadazan refers to a group of non-Muslim indigenous tribes found in Sabah. These tribes speak the same language with variation in dialects. The major tribes who are the same speech community are the Rungus (Kudat area), the Mirangang (Ranau), the Tivan (Tambunan), Kwuijau (Keningau), Idaan (Kota Belud and also Lahad Datu districts), Orang Sungei (Kinabatangan), the Lotud (Tuaran) and the Tangaah (Penampang and Papar districts). There are also many sub-tribes who are known by other sub-tribal names.

The term 'Dusun' was first used by the Brunei overlords, who ruled Sabah before the Chartered Company, to refer to the above-named various non-Muslim indigenous tribes. The word Dusun means orchard or farm. The Malay word 'Dusun' was so used to describe the various farmers growing both wet and hill paddy (rice). 'Dusun' therefore means 'the people of the farm' or farmers. This term Dusun was adopted by the British who took over the rule of Sabah from the Brunei Sultanate.

According to some academics, the term Kadazan is of recent origin.²¹ They maintain that the term was first used by the Penampang and Papar non-Muslim indigenous groups to label themselves and was later extended to cover all the same speech non-Muslim ethnic groups. This assumption is only partly correct.

20. Owen Rutter, *British North Borneo*, p. 53.

21. K.G. Tregonning, *North Borneo*, pp. 82-83. See also, Margaret Roff, "Rise and Demise of Kadazan Nationalism", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (1967) and *Politics of Belonging*; and Stanley Bedlington, *Malaysia and Singapore*.

It is correct that the Penampang people, otherwise known as the Tangaah tribe, were the first to popularise the word "Kadazan". The name was first used widely and consistently in the early 1950s, and a cultural association was set up known as the 'Society of Kadazans'. Soon after this, many other Kadazan cultural associations were formed throughout Sabah, in places as widely scattered as Kudat, Sandakan, Lahad Datu, Tawau and in Seria, Brunei. A consequence of the formation of these Kadazan associations was the eventual formation of the first Kadazan political party known as the United Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO).

What is not correct, however, is that the word Kadazan is new. The word "Kadazan" was chosen because to the organisers and leaders of these various Kadazan associations, the term Kadazan was already the established name for all the indigenous people belonging to the same speech community. They maintained that in fact the word Kadazan had always and consistently been used by the Kadazans themselves. What was new in fact was the term 'Dusun' employed first by Brunei and then Britain in ignorance. The Kadazans of Penampang maintained consistently that before the coming of Brunei and then British rule in Sabah the word Kadazan had always been in use amongst the Kadazans themselves, especially those in the lower plains of the West Coast of Sabah. When talking amongst themselves in the Kadazan language they always referred to themselves as Kadazans adding the place-names from where they came. Only when they were addressed in the Malay language would they reply to or accept the description of themselves as 'Dusuns'.

That the term 'Dusun' was indeed a recent introduction is attested by several observers and commentators and Spenser St. John, one of the very first white men to make an expedition to climb Mount Kinabalu, observed that the principal inhabitants of the districts (Tamparuli and Tuaran) were the Idaan or Dusun, the aboriginal population. He said that the term Dusun was given to them by the Bruneis and coastal Muslims.²²

I.H.N. Evans, another early white administrator wrote:²³

'Orang Dusun' which literally translated means 'people of the orchards' is a name given which was originally used by the Malays to denote larger sections of the Indonesian population of British North Borneo, which they considered to be of similar beliefs and culture. The term is loose, but useful and has consequently been adopted by Europeans and for this reason, I also retain it.

22. Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, 2, p. 374.

23. I.H.N. Evans, *Studies in Malayan Folklore and Customs in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*, p. 2.

Staal, another early observer on the Sabah scene who travelled extensively in the country wrote:²⁴

The name Dusun is Malay and means farm, and these people are called 'Orang Dusun', 'farmers' by the Malays, and this name is now universally used. Some older travellers called them 'Idaan', but this is the Illanun word, meaning the same as the Malay 'Dusun'. But the Dusuns do not call themselves by this name. Those of the interior generally call themselves according to the regions they inhabit. Those living among the hills are called 'Tagahas' and 'Tidongs', whilst those near the coast name themselves 'Kadazans or Kedayans'....

Staal also believed that the Kadazans or Dusuns and the Kedayans belonged to the same tribe of Kadazans or Dusuns. He believed that at one time the Kadazans were known as Kedayans. Some of these Kedayans became Muslims and others remained heathens. He argued that the Islamic religion separated the Kedayans from those who did not embrace the religion. These latter moved away from the Muslim Kedayans and occupied the interior and north west coast of Sabah. In time and due to lack of communication and contact with one another the Kedayans who remained heathens became a separate type of people. The Islamised Kedayans, however, became more identified with the Malays and Islamic culture.

It is also believed by many commentators that the terms Kadazan and Kedayan are actually one and the same. The people of Penampang and Papar districts, who had always referred to themselves as Kadazans, have no 'Y' in their dialect. The word 'Kedayan' was therefore corrupted to 'Kadazan'.

A reason, therefore, why the word Kadazan is extensively used in the Papar-Kimanis-Penampang districts may be because of the proximity of the Kedayans in the south-west of Brunei. The interior people who were also once all Kedayans but had moved inland had, over a passage of time, forgotten their original name and decided instead to call themselves by the place-names they were living in. Thus the Tiong tribe was so called because they came from Tiong and lived in Tiong.

Anthropologists also agree with historians that the term 'Dusun' is a recent introduction by outsiders. G.N. Appell for instance, noted:²⁵

The term Dusun is an axonym originally applied to groups of swidden wet rice agriculturalists by coastal Muslims from the western section of the Malayan archipelago. Later, officers of the British North Borneo Chartered Company continued to use the term 'Dusun' but added a

24. J. Staal (Rev.), *op.cit.*, pp. 182-191.

25. G.N. Appell, *The Rungus Dusun*, p. 144.

geographical modifier to indicate the location of such people in terms of the newly-established district boundaries. Therefore, terms such as Tuaran Dusun, Ranau Dusun, Penampang Dusun arose. Each of these categories included a variety of Dusunic people.

He also described the Kadazans or Dusuns as "People who speak closely related communilects or form a similar speech community."

The terms Kadazan and Dusun have become a controversial political issue. In Sabah, even today, the similar speech community are divided over the use of either Kadazan or Dusun to refer to themselves. Advocates for the use of the name Kadazan are generally those from the Penampang-Papar-Kimanis groups of people, whilst people of the Kudat and interior areas, including Tuaran, prefer to call themselves Dusun.

The name Kadazan first came into official prominence when a cultural association called 'The Society of Kadazans' was formed and registered in 1953. The main object of the association was to look after the advancement of Kadazan culture, language and customs. This first Kadazan association was formed by some Penampang leaders. Soon, however, other Kadazan associations were formed and registered in other areas of Sabah. Spear-heading the formation of these other Kadazan associations in the various centres in Sabah were Penampang and Papar groups of people who were working in these other areas. At that time there was no opposition to the use of the name Kadazan and other Kadazans from say Tambunan, Keningau, Tuaran etc. also joined in the newly formed Kadazan cultural associations.

However, controversy soon came to the fore when the first political party in Sabah was formed and the name Kadazan was used. The political party formed in 1961 was called the United Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO). Opposition to the use of the term Kadazan came very strongly from the Tuaran Lotud people and at first also from the Kuijau group of Keningau. At the same time, however, the formation of the first Kadazan political party and the use of the term Kadazan aroused positive political passions. The term fired the imagination of many young Kadazans and this was the beginning of the rise of Kadazan nationalism and consciousness.

Kadazan leaders such as Tun Stephens believed that the 'similar speech community' could be united under the name Kadazan and that the Kadazan political party, UNKO, could look after and further their interests. The formation of UNKO soon overshadowed the importance of the various Kadazan associations and they became less active for a while. However, by 1965 a new Kadazan cultural association known as the Sabah Kadazan

Cultural Association was formed and registered. Its object was to continue the work of the now defunct Society of Kadazans. The new Kadazan cultural association was Sabah-wide as its membership covered the whole 'similar speech community' throughout Sabah. The Kadazan cultural association then was the non-political arm of UNKO whose aim was to unite the Kadazans both culturally and politically.

The formation of UNKO and the aim of the Kadazan leaders like Tun Stephens to unite the Kadazans as a people and to espouse their political paramountcy was not missed by other non-Kadazan leaders, however. These latter leaders did not want to see the Kadazans united and becoming a strong force in the political arena in the State. They saw and feared that the aim of Tun Stephens in uniting the Kadazans under one name was to make them assertive and strong so that their Kadazan political party could be the Sabah counterpart of the United Malay National Organisation in West Malaysia.

However, the Malay leaders in the other native party, the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO) led by Tun Mustapha also saw themselves as the counterpart of the UMNO in West Malaysia. For this reason they felt that the rise in Kadazan consciousness must be curbed and the instruments they used to try to curb Kadazan passion and consciousness were those Kadazans who opposed the use of the name Kadazan for their people.

It was not long after the formation of UNKO therefore that a Dusun-Lotud Association was formed. And shortly after this, the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA) was also formed. It is generally believed that the Tuaran Kadazan leaders were behind the formation of these two associations and that they were financially backed by non-Kadazan leaders who did not want to see the Kadazans strong and united politically.

Tun Stephens and his Kadazan political party fell from power in 1967 and with the dissolution of the Kadazan political party in December 1967, Kadazan nationalism also died. However, the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association survived and so did the United Sabah Dusun Association. Both these associations claim to represent the 'similar speech community' for both claim to speak on behalf of these people. The controversy regarding the terms Kadazan and Dusun has therefore continued and the search for a common label and identity is still not resolved.

It seems apparent, that the Kadazan or Dusun community must eventually realise that they come from the same origin, but they are not evenly

distributed in Sabah. They are concentrated mainly in the Kudat and interior areas and are sparsely found elsewhere. This in itself contributed to the Kadazan's political weakness. When the country was demarcated into different constituencies, the Kadazans, who were and are the most populous single race in the State, did not command a majority of the constituencies. Let us therefore turn now and discuss the geographic location of the Kadazans.

The Location of the Kadazans

For administrative purposes Sabah is divided into five Residencies, namely: (i) Tawau Residency; (ii) Sandakan or East Coast Residency; (iii) West Coast Residency; (iv) Interior Residency, and (v) Kudat Residency. The Kudat Residency was made a separate Residency only in 1973. Before that Kudat was one of the districts in the West Coast Residency.

The present-day Kadazans are found mainly in the West Coast, Kudat, and Interior Residencies (see Map 1). There are also Kadazans in the Sandakan and Tawau Residencies but the number is small. This is how E.A. Cense, *et al.*,²⁶ described the geographical location of the Kadazan community:

Partly to the north but mostly to the west coast of the North Borneo Murut area Dusun is spoken. Dialects of this language are found along the rivers which debauch into the South China Sea from the Klias river in the south up to the Tampasuk river in the north, on the peninsulas of Kudat and Motobong and further into the interior of south west of Marudu Bay into the region of the headwaters of the rivers Labuk, Sugud and Kinabatangan. Perhaps, the language spoken by part of the inhabitants of Banggi island will have to be considered as Dusun dialect.

Map 1 shows the population of Sabah by Residency distribution. The population distribution shown in this map is based on the 1970 census of population and therefore Kudat was still within the West Coast Residency. The map does not show any appreciable presence of Kadazans in the Sandakan and Tawau Residencies.²⁷

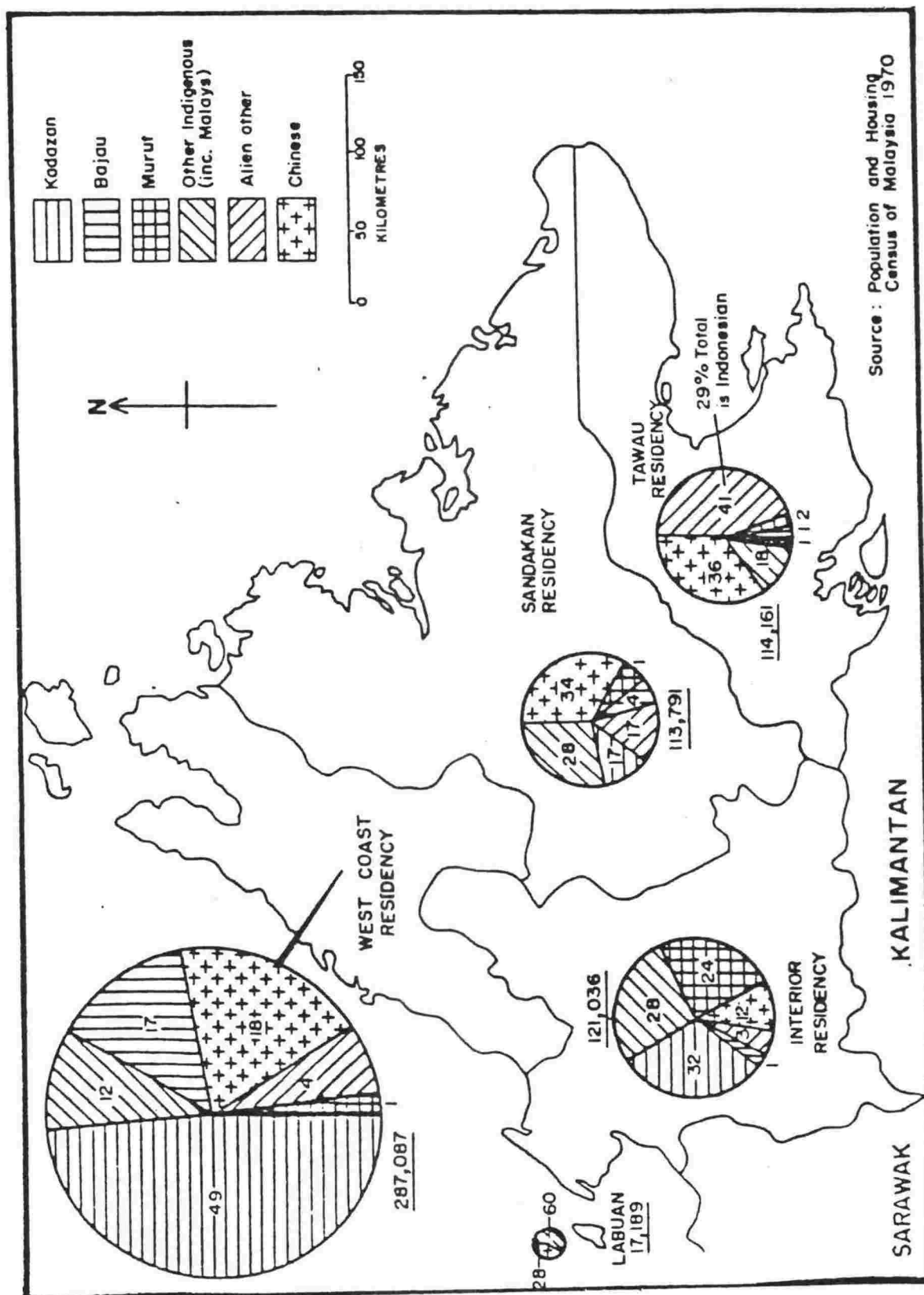
Bhar, however, has made a re-classification of the community structure.²⁸ This re-classification is based on the 1970 population

26. A.A. Cense & E. Uhlenbeck, *Critical Survey of Studies on the Languages of Borneo*.

27. P.A. Burrough & J. Boenisch Burrough, "Sabah: 1963-1973, Ten Years of Independence", *Review of Indonesian Affairs*, VIII:2 (Dec. 1974), p. 31.

28. Supriya Bhar, "The Community Structure of Sabah: An Appraisal of the 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaya", *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 9:1 (1977), pp. 23-35.

MAP 1. POPULATION BY RESIDENCY AND ETHNIC GROUP 1970



census. Table 1 shows the community structure of Sabah as shown in the 1970 population census.

TABLE 1
COMMUNITY STRUCTURE OF SABAH 1970

<i>Community Groups</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
TOTAL	653,264	100.0
KADAZAN	184,512	28.2
Kadazan	184,448	
Kwijau	64	
MURUT	31,299	4.8
BAJAU	77,271	11.8
Bajau	72,323	
Illanun	4,948	
MALAYS	18,365	2.8
OTHER INDIGENOUS	125,631	19.2
Lotud	20	
Rungus	10,881	
Tambunuo	4,339	
Dumpas	1,150	
Marangang	541	
Paitan	332	
Idahan	2,089	
Minokok	878	
Ramanau	509	
Mangka'ak	969	
Sulu	10,864	
Orang Sungai	17,687	
Brunei	27,452	
Kadayan	10,490	
Bisaya	13,998	
Tidong	7,720	
Sino-Native	10,345	
Others	5,367	
CHINESE	139,509	21.4
Hakka	79,574	
Cantonese	20,723	
Hokkien	17,418	
Teochew	7,687	
Hainanese	6,419	
Others	7,688	
INDONESIANS	39,526	6.1
OTHERS	37,151	5.7
Sarawak	3,234	
Filipina	20,367	
Europeans	862	
Eurasians	872	
Indians	7,103	
Cocos	2,731	
Others	1,982	

Source: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 1970.*

Table 2 is Bhar's attempt to re-classify the community structure. Bhar's

TABLE 2
COMMUNITY STRUCTURE OF SABAH, 1970
A RE-CLASSIFICATION

<i>Community Groups</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
TOTAL	653,264	100.0
NON-ISLAMIC INDIGENES	245,443	37.6
Kadazan	203,799	31.2
<u>West Coast:</u>		
Kadazan	184,448	
Rungus	10,881	
Dumpas	1,150	
Maragang	541	
Kwijau	64	
<u>East Coast:</u>		
Tambunuo	4,339	
Minokok	878	
Ramanau	509	
Mangka'ak	969	
Lotud	20	
Murut	31,299	4.8
Sino-Native	10,345	1.6
MUSLIM PEOPLES	254,259	38.9
Muslim Indigenous	191,635	29.3
<u>Coastal Peoples:</u>		
Bajau	77,271	11.8
Bajau	72,323	
Illanun	4,948	
Malays	18,365	2.8
Brunei	27,452	4.2
Kadayan	10,490	1.6
Sulu	10,864	1.7
<u>Islamised Indigenous:</u>		
Orang Sungai	17,687	2.7
Bisaya	13,998	2.1
Tidong	7,720	1.2
Idahan	2,089	0.3
Paitan	332	0.1
Others	5,367	0.8
Others	62,624	9.6
Indonesians	39,526	6.1
Filipina	20,367	3.1
Cocos	2,731	0.4
CHINESE	139,509	21.4
Hakka	79,574	
Cantonese	20,723	
Hokkien	17,418	
Teochew	7,687	
Hainanese	6,419	
Others	7,688	

reclassification is broadly under three main headings, namely: non-Muslim Indigenous, Muslim Indigenous and Chinese. She correctly pointed out the anomalies in the community classification in the 1970 population census. In the 1970 population census as shown in Table 1, the Lotud, Rungus, Tambunuo, Dumpas, Maragang, Minokok, Ramanu and Mangka'ak are simply classified under 'Other Indigenous' putting them together with other Muslim groups such as the Suluks, Bisaya etc. As Bhar points out it is ridiculous to suggest that there are only 20 Lotuds in all of Sabah. The Lotuds are found in the Tuaran District and there are a few thousands of them and the majority of them have categorised themselves as Kadazans.

My criticism of Bhar's re-classification, however, is the separation of Sino-Native as a separate entity by themselves under the general heading Non-Islamic indigenes. The Sino-Natives of Sabah are mostly the offspring of inter-marriage between the Kadazans and the Chinese.²⁹ Nearly all of them prefer to be called Kadazans. They should therefore be categorised as Kadazans and not as a separate race or entity. A minor mistake made by Bhar in her re-classification concerns the Lotud group. They should be placed under the West Coast non-Islamic indigenes as Lotuds come from the Tuaran district in the West Coast Residency. Bhar also categorises the Idahan under Islamised Indigenous. This is not entirely correct. It is true that the Idahans found in Lahad were at one time belonging to the Kadazan community but since embracing Islam as long ago as the late fourteenth century these former Kadazans now consider themselves to be Malays. Indeed in Hose and McDougall's map of the community distribution of Sabah they included Lahad Datu district as an area where Kadazans are found. They are of course referring to the Idahans of Lahad Datu.³⁰ However, the Kadazans of Tampasuk, in Kota Belud district in the West Coast Residency also refer to themselves as Idahan or Idaan. This is their tribal name. These people are still mainly animists although some are now Christians and they generally consider themselves to be Kadazans as they speak the same language as the other Kadazan groups. The Idahan shown in the 1970 population census (Table 1) could indeed be the Idahan of Tampasuk and not the Idahan of Lahad Datu or Islamised Indigenous as re-classified by Bhar. Furthermore, the Orang Sungei of the East Coast Residency — such as those in the Labuk, Sugud and Kinabatangan areas are

29. Y.L. Lee, "The Chinese in Sabah (North Borneo)", *Erdkunde*, 19:4 (1965), p. 310.

30. Hose & McDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (2 vols).

generally considered as belonging to the Kadazan community.³¹ It is true that many Orang Sungei embraced the Islamic religion a long time ago, but many are still animists and some have converted to Christianity. These non-Islamised Orang Sungei generally call themselves Kadazans still whilst those who became Muslim now call themselves Malay. Bhar re-classified all the Orang Sungei as Islamised Indigenous. In my opinion the 17,687 Orang Sungeis should be classified under the Kadazan category as it is very likely that the Islamised Orang Sungei would have identified themselves as Malays in the census forms. Bhar herself in another article entitled, "The 'Malays' in Sabah, 1970 - A Problem of Community Classification",³² has correctly pointed out that there are no real Malays in Sabah. Most Islamised indigenous races such as the Orang Sungei, the Tidongs, the Idahans refer to themselves as Malays but are ethnically quite distinct from the Malays of the Peninsula. Evans gave the distribution of the Kadazans as follows:³³

One might, I think, say that the Dusuns occupy the whole of the interior to as far as Tambunan, including the headwaters of the Labuk, Sugud and Kinabatangan rivers. Around Keningau are the Kwijaus, who, I am told claim to be of Dusun stock.

The Kadazans in general are scattered in various pockets of villages. As a result and over time the development of distinctive and different traits became inevitable.³⁴

The Kadazans, however, have always maintained good relations with the other ethnic groups — the immigrant races of Sabah. Intermarriages were common. In the East Coast Residency intermarriages between Kadazans and the Muslim races were common. In the West Coast and Kuala Penyu district in the interior, the intermarriages were more commonly between the animist Kadazans and the Chinese immigrants. These intermarriages, particularly between the Kadazans and immigrant Muslims further eroded Kadazan paramountcy in Sabah.

The Kadazans and Other Ethnic Races

As we have seen in our discussion of the origins of the Kadazan community,

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31. Tom Harrisson, *op.cit.* See also, J. Staal, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-191.
 32. Supriya Bhar, "The 'Malays' in Sabah, 1970: A Problem of Community Classification", *op.cit.*
 33. I.H.N. Evans, *op.cit.*
 34. Owen Rutter, *op.cit.*

the Kadazans are indubitably the original inhabitants of Sabah. At one time the Kadazan ethnic race was very big and included a large number of tribes. However, some of these tribes embraced Islam. The Idahans of Lahad Datu were amongst the first to embrace the new religion. Inter-marriages with the immigrant Suluks from the Southern Philippines were also common. In time, practically all of the Idahans of Lahad Datu had embraced Islam. Other former tribes belonging to the Kadazan ethnic race in the East Coast residency, such as the Orang Sungei, and Tidongs also converted to Islam through intermarriage with the Suluks, immigrant Muslims from the Southern Philippines. These Islamised indigenous people gradually became a distinct community as they assimilated the Muslim way of life and customs.

Since the advent of Islam in Sabah, therefore, many tribes belonging to the Kadazan group have become assimilated into the Islamic culture and no longer consider themselves as Kadazans. Indeed, the assimilative effect of the Islamic culture on the Kadazan community has not stopped and is continuing in many parts of Sabah today. It does not matter whether the Kadazan is a male or female who marries a Muslim person. Both normally change their way of life as soon as they are married to a Muslim. He or she adopts the Muslim way of life and divorces himself or herself entirely from the former Kadazan way of life and even from the Kadazan immediate family. The children of the marriage are taught to consider themselves Malays and not Kadazans. The reason for this is the very rigid requirements the Muslim religion makes on its adherents. Most non-Muslims who embrace Islam are referred to as 'Masok Melayu' or 'Saudara Baru'. The children of the marriage must be brought up as Muslims. On the other hand the animist Kadazans as well as those who became Christians continue to live as Kadazans and indeed refer to themselves as Kadazans. Christianity does not culturally absorb or assimilate the Christian Kadazans. In fact, there is a tendency amongst Christian Kadazans to become more rather than less aware of their Kadazan origins and culture. Kadazan contact with Christianity and Westernisation through education seems to make the Kadazans more conscious of their own culture, and indeed the formation of the first Society of Kadazans was facilitated by Christian educated Kadazans.

Furthermore, Kadazans marrying a Chinese do not usually lose their identity either. In fact the majority of Sino-Kadazans in Sabah, particularly those in the Penampang district, consider themselves to be and indeed categorise themselves as Kadazans. When the first Kadazan

political party was formed — the United Kadazan National Organisation — some 50 percent of the first committee members were Sino-Kadazans or persons with Chinese forebears. Many in the committee of UNKO had Chinese surnames. It was no wonder, therefore, that the membership clause of UNKO's constitution stipulated that membership "shall be opened to all Kadazans and those with Kadazan forebearance whose age is above 16...."³⁵ The wording of this membership clause of UNKO was similar to the membership criteria of the 'Society of Kadazans' formed in 1953, and indeed the same as the membership clause for the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association. Of the more than 10,000 Sino-Kadazans in Sabah most live in the Penampang district, often termed 'The Kadazan Heartland'.³⁶

It is generally believed that Chinese contact with Borneo goes as far back as the seventh century (A.D. 618).³⁷ A colony of Chinese was established in the Kinabatangan district (Sandakan Residency) in the fourteenth century and in the fifteenth century (around 1417) the Sultanate of Brunei was a vassal of Imperial China.³⁸ However, apart from the Kinabatangan Chinese settlement there is no other record of early Chinese settlements in Sabah.

The records show that it was not until the late 1880s that Chinese immigrants came to Sabah. Beginning from 1883 there was a flow of Chinese immigrant labour into the country encouraged and financed by the Chartered Company government. These people came as indentured labourers to work in the rubber and tobacco plantations of the British.

These early Chinese immigrant workers were mostly males and the absence of Chinese females made it inevitable that these Chinese immigrants married indigenous women, mostly Kadazans. The evidence of this intermarriage between Chinese and Kadazans is seen in the more than 10,000 Sino-Kadazans enumerated in the 1970 population census. The pattern of marriage with Kadazan women in the early 1880s did not persist long, for by the turn of the century Chinese women too came in numbers. As Y.L. Lee said:³⁹

With this improving sex ratio intermarriages became infrequent and by the 1930s had virtually ceased altogether.

35. See the Constitution of the United National Kadazan Organisation.

36. Y.L. Lee, *op.cit.*

37. Tom Harrisson, *op.cit.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. Y.L. Lee, *op.cit.*

In contrast with the easy intermarriages of the early 1880s, the new Chinese arrivals tended to keep very much to themselves and did not assimilate with the other races. As Y.L. Lee pointed out:

Today, there is a Chinese settlement in every district. Except for those in the Penampang district, the Chinese do not assimilate well, keeping to their own customs and language to a marked extent. The latter is symbolised by the ubiquitous Chinese schools.

The Sino-Natives do not constitute a discrete socio-cultural group. A few of them are integrated within the Chinese ethnic group, but the majority are integrated within the Kadazan ethnic group. According to Fortier:⁴⁰

There is a tendency for sons of mixed marriages to be reared and educated as Chinese. Since wealth rather than birth determined status, well-to-do 'peranakans' operate within Chinese society with little handicap, quite frequently marrying 'pure' Chinese. Their offspring in such cases are then considered to be 'pure' Chinese, a significant fact in terms of the perpetuation of distinct ethnic entities.

This observation is today only partly true, however. Whilst it is true that during British rule in Sabah many children of marriages between a Chinese father and a Kadazan mother had wanted to be considered Chinese and be reared as a Chinese, the fact is that not many were accepted by the Chinese community. Indeed, amongst the many Hakka Chinese men who married Kadazan women in the Penampang district, the Chinese were the ones who became totally integrated into the Kadazan way of life rather than the Kadazan woman to the Chinese way of life. The Chinese man spoke Kadazan, ate like a Kadazan and even dressed like a Kadazan. The children too were brought up as Kadazans and very few learned to speak their father's language. The only observable indicator that they were children of Chinese fathers was their surnames.

One explanation given for why the Chinese men became integrated into the Kadazan way of life was that it was to their practical economic advantage. They wanted to be accepted by the Kadazans. However, a more cogent explanation is perhaps that these Chinese males who married native wives were considered outcasts by their own community. The Chinese in general looked down on the native population and they considered them as inferior to themselves. A Chinese male marrying a native was therefore considered an outcast, a pariah. No wonder, therefore, that those who

40. David H. Fortier, "The Chinese in North Borneo", *Colloquium on Overseas Chinese* (December 1957), p. 17.

married Kadazan women did not look back to their own race again but instead became integrated into the life and culture of their wives. (During the British era, a Kadazan or any other indigenous male marrying a Chinese woman was unheard of.)

Today, however, the attitude of the Chinese towards the natives, particularly the Kadazans has changed. The Chinese parents would still prefer to see their sons and daughters marrying their own race, but in general they are not as strict as they used to be in the old colonial era. Today, therefore, it is common to see both Kadazan males or females marrying Chinese and the offspring continuing to identify as Kadazan for the most part.

To summarise, contact with Christianity, Western education and even Chinese culture has not lessened but enhanced Kadazan awareness of their own cultural heritage and identity as Kadazans. The Kadazans, however, remain the least developed ethnic group both economically and educationally. The majority of Sabah's Kadazans are still practising subsistence agriculture even today. The number of educated Kadazans is also very low and for this reason most Kadazans, both young men and women, seem destined to remain in the life-style of their parents before them; living on subsistence agriculture.

The Socio-Economic Position of the Various Ethnic Races

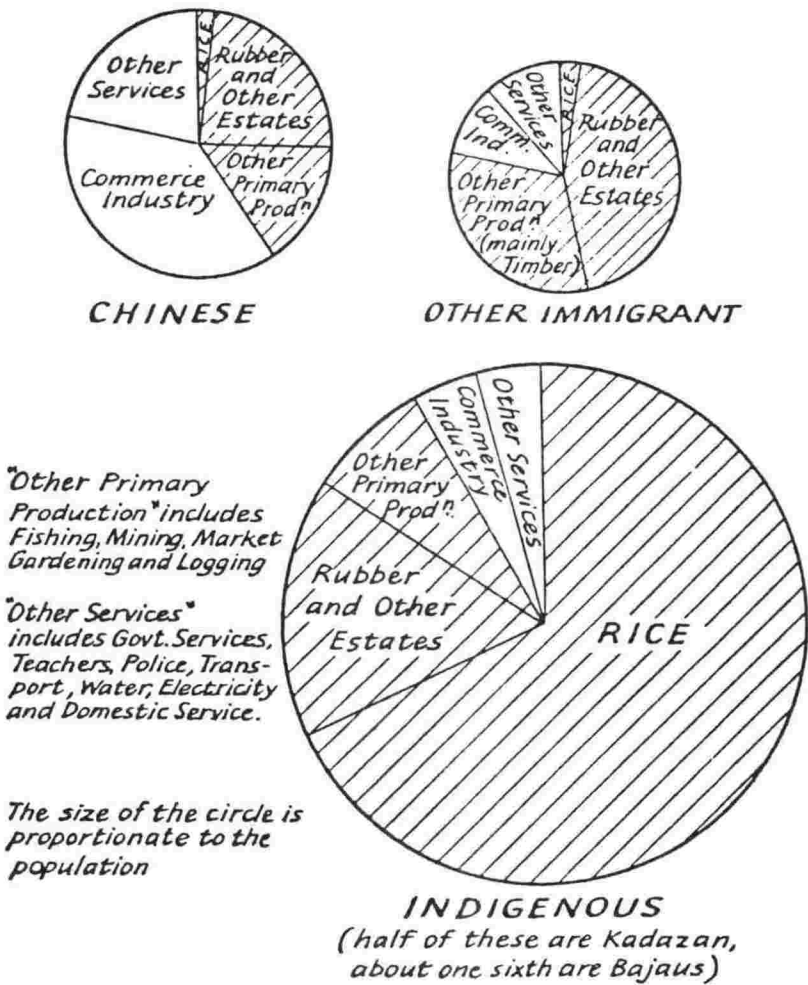
Sabah's three main population groups are the non-Muslim indigenous, namely the Kadazans and Muruts, the Muslim-indigenous and the Chinese. The broad categorisation of the occupation of these three groups of people is shown in Figure 1 and Tables 3 and 4.

These figures and tables are drawn from the 1960 census of population, but the general picture regarding the occupation of the various ethnic races in Sabah has remained virtually the same since then. Despite the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the federal Malaysian Government in 1970, the indigenous population are still engaged in agriculture — mainly subsistence agriculture — with only a small percentage of them in industry and commerce. The estimate of the number of indigenous people (Muslims or non-Muslims) engaged in commerce in the 1980s is only about 2 percent.⁴¹

41. Interview with an official of the Bumiputra Chamber of Commerce who does not want to be identified.

FIGURE 1

OCCUPATIONS OF THE MAIN COMMUNITIES OF SABAH,
BASED ON THE 1960 CENSUS



Source: Reproduced from G.A. Chatfield, *Sabah: A General Geography*, p. 59.

TABLE 3

OCCUPATIONS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

(Males only)

	<u>Percentage</u>			
	<i>Indigenous</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>All Communities</i>
Agriculture, forestry workers, fishermen	87.8	29.7	63.6	72.1
Craftsmen, production workers, labourers	6.0	27.1	20.1	12.5
Sales workers	0.6	16.6	1.5	4.0
Service workers	1.7	7.9	3.4	3.2
Transport communication workers	2.0	5.5	4.7	3.2
Clerical workers	0.8	7.8	3.0	2.6
Technical etc. workers	0.9	4.0	2.7	1.8
Others	0.2	1.4	1.1	0.6
ALL OCCUPATIONS	100	100	100	100

Source: *Census Report*, 1960, p. 111.

TABLE 4

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION-DISTRIBUTION BY COMMUNITY WITHIN INDUSTRIES

Community	All Industrial Groups	All Agriculture	Rice or mainly rice	Rubber Cultivation	Logging	Coconuts and Copra	Fishing	Other Agriculture
(Total Number)	176,626	142,113	77,681	24,878	9,301	7,499	6,175	16,579
Indigenous	69.3	79.3	98.5	62.5	37.3	53.6	81.1	49.0
Chinese	18.5	9.0	0.6	18.5	14.2	27.5	6.2	24.1
Others	12.2	11.7	0.9	19.0	48.5	18.9	12.7	26.9
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Community	Services	Commerce	Manufacturing	Transport Communications	Building Construction	Other Industries
(Total Number)	10,077	7,734	6,737	4,657	4,488	820
Indigenous	32.8	10.9	33.5	37.5	29.3	39.5
Chinese	50.6	81.6	55.7	41.7	52.3	29.6
Others	16.6	7.5	10.8	20.8	18.4	30.9
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Census Report, 1960, p. 114.*

Perhaps the major changes today in the socio-economic position of the various ethnic races is in the nature of land-holdings held by each ethnic race. Figure 1 and Tables 3 and 4 show that nearly nine out of ten indigenous men are occupied in agriculture and only three out of ten Chinese. This suggests that most land holdings must therefore be in the hands of the indigenous population. Before the advent of Malaysia, this was so. The estimated land area under permanent cultivation was only 2 percent in 1960. Most of these acres were rice farms owned by the indigenous races. Each family owned an average of 3 to 4 acres each. The indigenous population also owned small rubber holdings, again on the average of 4 to 5 acres per family. The rest of the land before the formation of Malaysia were plantation estates and most of these were in the hands of immigrant planters, either the British or the Chinese. By 1980, however, due to heavy logging of the forested area, large tracts of lands had been excised for the plantation of cocoa, oil palm and rubber. The owners of these large tracts of new plantation lands are the immigrant races, the Chinese and others. These people own some 90 percent of these newly excised land and have developed them into large agricultural plantations.⁴² These newly opened lands are mostly in the Tawau, Sandakan and Kudat residencies. The owners of these plantations employ mainly new arrivals from Indonesia and the Southern Philippines as labourers.

In Figure 1, the big circle represents the indigenous population. Half of this indigenous population are Kadazans, and the other half are divided into Bajaus, Suluks, Bisaya etc. As we have pointed out earlier, the rice fields in the hands of the indigenous population are small, about 3 to 4 acres per household on average.⁴³ The indigenous population's ownership of rubber and other estates are also mostly small-holdings on an average of about 4 to 5 acres per family. Under other primary production the indigenous population would be found in fishing, logging and market gardening. The fishermen are mostly the coastal Muslims, such as the Suluks, Bajaus and Illanuns. Market gardening is on a small-scale basis and most of the produce such as vegetables and fruits are sold to Chinese intermediaries in adjacent towns. The indigenous population engaged in the logging business are mostly from the East Coast, Tawau and Interior Residencies. They work at timber camps owned by the Chinese. Members of the indigenous races engaged in commerce and industry are not usually employers or owners of industrial plants. They are mainly crafts-

42. *Ibid.*

43. Godfrey A. Chatfield, *Sabah - A General Geography*, pp. 59-76.

men, labourers or production workers and they work mostly for non-indigenous races.

The next circle in Figure 1 represents the Chinese population. As the circle shows the Chinese are found in commerce and industry and other services. Since the 1970s, however, Chinese too have become landowners as they now own large plantations. The smaller circle represents other immigrants. These people are for the most part Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, Indonesians and Eurasians. They are often the owners of large estates — mostly rubber.

The indigenous population also lags behind the Chinese in educational development. Tables 5 and 6 show the differences in the number of educated persons from primary school leavers to university level before the advent of Malaysia.

TABLE 5
EDUCATED PERSONS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN SABAH
(in percent)

<i>Community</i>	<i>Less than full Primary</i>	<i>Primary 6 to Secondary 2</i>	<i>Secondary 3</i>	<i>Full Secondary</i>
Dusun	15.6	8.7	2.8	1.6
Murut	2.8	0.6	0	0.1
Bajau	4.4	2.1	0.1	0.4
Other Indigenous	14.3	8.4	2.5	1.9
Chinese	50.2	65.1	69.2	50.8
European and Others	12.7	15.1	25.4	45.2
	100	100	100	100

Source: *Census Report*, 1960, p. 93.

TABLE 6
EDUCATED PERSONS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN SABAH

<i>Community</i>	<i>Completed full Secondary</i>			<i>Completed University or Technical College</i>		
	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Dusun	37	32	5	2	2	-
Murut	1	1	-	-	-	-
Bajau	10	9	1	-	-	-
Other Indigenous	44	39	5	-	-	-
Chinese	1,178	951	227	115	101	14
European & Others	1,048	745	303	187	162	25
ALL COMMUNITIES	2,318	1,777	541	304	265	39

Source: *Census Report*, 1960, p. 93.

Since Sabah joined Malaysia, however, the number of indigenous children in schools has increased, especially in primary education which is free for most indigenous children. Scholarships are awarded to those going to secondary and university levels but numbers are still not great.

Indeed, the disparity in the number of qualified indigenous people and Chinese is still very wide. There are now many indigenous people especially amongst the Kadazans, who are holders of a general arts degree, but there are still very few qualified as scientists or professionals. At the present time, the estimated number of lawyers amongst the Kadazans in Sabah for instance is not more than 25, and the number of engineers, architects, doctors and others with technical training is even less. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Chinese are found to be occupying all technical positions in the Sabah Civil Service, particularly in the Public Works Department and Land Office.

The main reason for the relatively low number of highly qualified Kadazans and for that matter, other indigenous groups, is because of the accidents of history. Both the Chartered Company Government and the Colonial administrators did not encourage education for the native population. The native leaders repeatedly asked the Chartered Company government to open more government funded schools with English as the medium of instruction. This was the government's reply to their request:⁴⁴

The object of the vernacular schools is not to train government clerks...the great majority of the boys will go back to the land as cultivators; and it is to train them for this and to teach them to be good citizens that the education at the vernacular schools is intended....

This policy of the Chartered Company government to education for the natives was followed closely by the colonial government which took over the administration of Sabah from 1946 until the establishment of Malaysia in 1963.

The Chinese, meanwhile, had their own community funded schools to which they send their children. They also had easy access to the mission schools which were opened in the various townships. The Chinese were and still are town dwellers, valuing education for their children and it is not surprising, therefore, that the mission schools opened in the various townships had 95 percent Chinese students. English was always the medium of instruction in these mission schools.

44. D.S. Ranjit Singh, "The Native Chiefs' Advisory Council of Sabah 1915-1941". A mimeographed copy with the writer.

The Chinese traditional strength in commerce and industry as well as their long established superiority in education was definitely to their advantage when competing with the indigenous ethnic race. Despite the present espoused aim of the government in trying to close the gap between the Chinese and the indigenous races in education and trade and industry, the disparity is still very wide and shows few signs of lessening.

The Kadazans and British Rule

Before the coming of British rule, the indigenous people of Sabah, especially the Kadazans, were paramount and were effectively independent. The local political systems then prevalent amongst the indigenous population, can be categorised into three types, namely, (i) tribal political systems, (ii) an extended Sultanate system and (iii) independent chiefdoms.⁴⁵ This third political system — independent chiefdoms — was more closely associated with the Muslim community, however, than the Kadazans. An independent chiefdom of note, was that formed by Mat Salleh, a Suluk-Bajau chief from Inanam (West Coast) and later of the East Coast. The other notable chief was Sharif Osman, another Sabah Chief who originated from the Southern Philippines. He made his settlement in Maruda Bay in Kudat. The population in Sharif Osman's chiefdom was estimated by Spenser St. John to be around 50,000.

The primary political system, for the Kadazans, was known as the tribal institution. The Kadazans were organised on a tribal basis. "Adat" (traditional law or custom) governed or controlled the behaviour of the community. Although "adat" varied from one tribe to another, it formed a common universal base for all the Kadazan tribes.⁴⁶ Kadazan society therefore revolved around "adat" as adat was deemed to be truth. Anyone flouting "adat" was severely punished. The reason for the severe punishment was the belief that if the adat was flouted, divine punishment would take place, such as plagues, pestilence and crop failure. Incest was considered to be one of the most serious offences. A sexual relationship between father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister

45. D.S. Ranjit Singh, "The Development of Native Administration in Sabah: 1877-1946", Sullivan & Leong (eds), *Commemorative History of Sabah*.

46. G.C. Woolley, "The Dusun Adat: Some Customs of Dusun of Tambunan and Ranau - West Coast Residency, North Borneo", *Native Affairs Bulletin*, 5 and "Tuaran Adat", *Native Affairs Bulletin*, 2.

were considered to be incest of the first degree. The punishment was death or sometimes banishment from the tribal community. This last punishment was considered even worse than death because anyone banished from a community was branded a criminal and no other tribe or community would have anything to do with the outcasts. The punishment of death was by tying the offender to a log and the log was then thrown into the river. The offender met death slowly through drowning. Even marriages between first cousins were considered to be incest and the punishment for this was equally severe. The offenders were banished from the community after they had given compensation to the community in the form of buffaloes and pigs. These latter were killed near the river bank and the blood sprinkled into the water to appease the river spirits and the universal spirit so that they would not cause any erosion to the river banks or cause crop failure.

There were four major institutions of authority governing the Kadazan villagers or tribes. The first was the "orang tuas" (village headmen). The other three institutions of authority were the village council, the religious group and the descent group chief or Huguan Siou (brave leader).

Traditionally, security was a major consideration amongst the Kadazans. This was because the various tribes were often at enmity with one another, and raids by "pangazous" (warriors — also known in today's parlance as "headhunters") were very frequent. It was therefore necessary to choose one amongst the village community as head or "orang tua". He was selected for his prowess and organisational know-how to protect the village against "pangazous" raids. He was also responsible for maintaining law and order in the village. As "adat" was the concern of the whole village, the village headman had also to possess a deep knowledge of "adat", as well as the qualities of wisdom and impartiality. The selection of the village headman was done at a village gathering attended by most of the senior male members of the community. Selection was made through discussion and consensus of opinion.⁴⁷

The village headman must belong to the same descent group, that is to say, he must belong to the same village group. There was no knowledge of writing amongst the Kadazans so "adat" was known orally and passed from generation to generation verbally. The village headman was bestowed with the powers of judicature and enforcement when "adat" was flouted.

47. Monica Glyn-Jones, "The Dusun of Penampang Plains", Canterbury University M.A. thesis (1953), pp. 107-112. Also O. Rutter, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*.

He thus acted as the judge, the investigator and the evaluator. For example, he was the adjudicator when a marriage was proposed and was a witness to the "brian" (dowry) agreement. The village headman was not paid for his work. His reward was the command of high social position in society and he enjoyed certain services performed for him. As Rutter comments:⁴⁸

The duties a headman owes to his people are compensated by the dues he may reasonably expect them to provide in return: not in the form of tax or title, but in service....His rice-field is tilled and planted; he is a welcome guest at any celebration, and in many small ways he reaps the harvest of his position.

Next to the institution of the village headman was the village council. This village council was composed of the body of elders who chose the village headman and who also advised him in all important matters concerning the village. They were the repositories of lore and tradition. According to Rutter:⁴⁹

From the earliest times the village witenagemot must have been at once the judiciary and the council which decided the policy and affairs of the community.

The village headman therefore depended on the village council to help him decide in matters of grave importance — especially when a major crime had been committed in the village council. He would arrange for a hearing before the village council.⁵⁰ Before the imposition of British rule, the village council was a vital force in the village but under the Chartered Company the village council institution disappeared altogether.

Another group which exercised authority and influence in a Kadazan society was the religious group known as the "Bobohizans" (priestesses). "Adat" formed the basis of commerce and individual behaviour and non-adherence to "adat" it was believed would bring disease, sickness and natural disasters. To restore harmony, proper rituals had to be conducted. This was done by the "Bobohizans". These religious groups were specialists in rituals and they could avert disaster. They were considered to have a special relationship with the divine as the first "Bobohizan" was actually believed to have been taught the "Bobohizan" prayers and incantations by a holy man specially sent to earth by "Kinoingan" (God). The "Bobohizans" were not only considered to be ritual specialists, but

48. O. Rutter, *ibid.*, p. 69.

49. *Ibid.*

50. T.R. Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

medical specialists as well. Most "Bobohizans" were women and they also had special knowledge in midwifery. The "Bobohizans" therefore exercised a central and important influence in village life.

All important events in traditional Kadazan life had their attendant ceremonies: ceremonies were held when a child was born, when a wedding was held, when a new house was built, when rice planting commenced, when harvesting was over and when a person died. Thus, the "Bobohizans" played an important role not only for the community as a whole but also for the individual. The religious group, however, do not occupy a major importance in Kadazan life today. Again, the advent of Islam and later, the introduction of Christianity have eroded this particular institution and today, though they continue to exist, they are not very significant.

The last purely indigenous institution I wish to discuss was the paramount tribal chief or the Huguan Siou (brave leader). Williams has referred to him as the descent group chief. The Huguan Siou represented a higher authority. He was the leader of the tribes and was superior to the village headman in all important questions of justice, ceremony or war. The Kadazans had no kingship system, and the "Huguan Siou" was not a king, but he was regarded as the most important personage in the tribal villages. He was the chief "warrior" — the number one "pangazou" of the community. His importance, therefore, was not as the arbitrator or judge in a village dispute (as this was the work of the village headman and the village council) but his importance lay in his prowess in war and in the defence of the community. The "Huguan Siou" also became the chief diplomat of the community as in some instances he was the man who arranged for a truce or alliance with another tribal "Huguan Siou". According to Williams, these "ad hoc" alliances formed to face common external threats seem to have been the highest form of political organisation ever evolved by the Kadazan community.⁵¹

An externally imposed form of political institution was the extended sultanate system, namely the extension of Brunei and Sulu political structures into Sabah. As we pointed out earlier, the people of Sabah, especially those in the interior, were left virtually to themselves with very little control from either the Brunei or Sulu Sultans. It was not so much because the Kadazans were rebelling against the Brunei or Sulu

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-51 and pp. 62-67.

overlordships. It was simply because both sultanates by the eighteenth century were on the wane in power and influence. When white men arrived in Brunei looking for adventures and business opportunities, Brunei and the Sulu Sultans were more than ready to part with possession of the territory now comprising the state of Sabah.

According to Tarling,⁵² the British government of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not particularly interested in Sabah as a colony. The British government had already obtained the island of Labuan as a staging post for ships and as a colony. It was considered that this island, lying at the entrance of Brunei Bay, was placed strategically and was sufficient to cater for British interests in the area. However, the British government did not want Sabah to fall into the hands of other European powers such as the Dutch and the Spanish. It was therefore with this in mind that the British government agreed to give a charter to the North Borneo Company to govern Sabah.

On the eve of the Chartered Company's take-over, Sabah was under the control of the two sultanates of Brunei and Sulu. Their claims to suzerainty overlapped in some areas. However, broadly speaking, Brunei's claim was in the West Coast of Sabah and in the Kota Belud region in the north, while Sulu's claim was concentrated in the East Coast, the Sandakan-Lahad Datu district.

Black has pointed out that Brunei's authority in Sabah in the mid-nineteenth century was little more than token.⁵³ He believes Brunei's suzerainty was acknowledged as far as north of the Tampasuk region (Kota Belud) but it was merely invoked when convenient by the people themselves rather than applied by the Bruneis.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the authority of the Sulu Sultanate in the entire East Coast and far up the east coast rivers was respected and feared, if also regularly flouted. Both in real terms and in terms of abstract but decision-determining loyalties the Sulu Sultanate wielded influence. This influence, however, declined in the 1880s and 1890s and much because of the Spanish drive against Sulu and the political chaos within the Sultanate as because of the coming of the Chartered Company rule in Sabah.

52. Nicholas Tarling, *Sulu and Sabah: A Study of British Policy Towards the Philippines and North Borneo from the Late Eighteenth Century*.

53. I.D. Black, *A Gambling Style of Government*.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

In Brunei, meanwhile, the central structure of the royal court in the nineteenth century had the Sultan as reigning monarch, four 'great Ministers or Wazirs, eight Cheteria and sixteen Menteris.'⁵⁵ These were the nobles who formed the inner circle and had influence in nineteenth century Brunei. They were the virtual owners of the rivers and therefore the people who inhabited the river valleys in different parts of Sabah.

Broadly speaking there were three categories of people who "owned" the rivers in various parts of Sabah. These were: the Sultan himself, the Wazirs or Ministers and the Pengirans. The Sultan's possession of the rivers was known as "Sungei Kerajaan". The Sultan collected revenues from the people living along the rivers he owned. The Wazirs or Ministers' possessions were known as "Sungei Kuripan" and these 'great Ministers' also collected revenues directly from the people inhabiting the river valleys they owned. The third category and probably the most numerous in Sabah were the Pengirans. The Pengirans had inherited the rivers and the people living in the river valleys from their forefathers and these possessions were known as "Sungei Tulin" or "Hamba Tulin".

The Pengirans themselves rarely collected revenues directly from the people but had representatives in Sabah to collect the revenues for them. When the Pengirans died the Sungei Tulin which was sometimes known as 'Pesaka' was handed to their heirs. Strictly speaking, it was not the land or the river that was owned by the Pengirans but the right to tax the people living along the river valleys. If the people living in one river valley moved to another which was owned by another Pengiran, the Pengiran of the first river might send his tax collectors to try to continue to collect taxes from them.

To illustrate how rivers were controlled by the Pengirans and revenue collected from the people, we may take the Putatan river (Penampang district) as an example. This river and the people living in the district were the inheritance of one Pengiran Muda, an absentee owner living in Brunei.⁵⁶ Pengiran Muda, however, had representatives in the Putatan river district and these were Bajaus or Brunei Malays. These representatives collected revenues on behalf of the Pengiran in

55. Peter Leys, "Observation on the Brunei Political System 1883-1885", *JMBRAS*, 41:2 (1968).

56. C.O. 874/236, "Report from Governor Treacher to Chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company".

Brunei. The representatives of the Pengirans, however, did not themselves collect the revenues directly from the people but in turn collected taxes from the people through Kadazan leaders in the district. The Kadazan leaders were specially selected and awarded titles of Datuk or Maharajah Leilah.

In the Putatan district (now Penampang district) for example, a Kadazan Dato Pengiran was appointed in Terawie, another Dato Maharajah Leilah for Penampang proper, and a Dato Penglima for the village of Babaig. These titles were honorary and not hereditary. In a letter dated 10th August 1884 from Governor Treacher to the Chairman of the North Borneo Chartered Company in London, the Governor advised the Chairman that the over-all owner of the Putatan river was Pengiran Muda. He said Pengiran Muda had four representatives in Sabah who were also smaller claimants to the river. These were:⁵⁷

Pengiran Temonggong who controlled the villages of Sugud, Hubah, Tombovoh etc., Pengiran Bandahara who had control of the villages of Kolopis, Kianau, Babaig etc., Pengiran Shabandar Bakar who had control of the villages of Guunsing Trewei, Kandazon etc., and Pengiran Tajuddin who had control of the villages of Ramayah Tagad etc.

The award of the datukship to some of the Kadazan leaders in the Penampang district was the result of revolts and clashes between the Pengirans' tax collectors and the people in the various villages.⁵⁸ An incident known as the 'Kulintangan buis revolt' depicted a clash between the Pengirans' tax collectors and the people. In his account of this incident Native Chief Tan Ping Hing said:⁵⁹

Normally, the collecting of the 'buis' (tax) was done once a year. The Kadazans had no grudge and no grounds to complain. However, Bruneis now became very frequent visitors and every time they came, the kampong people (villagers) were compelled to part with some of their belongings to the collectors. The people soon became exasperated...and so they went to battle. There were about 50 of them (Bruneis)...the whole lot were slain. The Sultan did not punish the kampong people of Putatan. Instead he sent a "select committee" to Penampang to choose a chief amongst the Kadazans who would rule the people in his name. Thus some Kadazans were chosen and given datukships and amongst their many functions was to collect taxes for the Pengirans.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Interview with Datuk Fred Sinidol, former President of the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association.

59. N.C. (Native Chief) Tan Ping Hing, "The Kulintangan Buis Revolt", *Sabah Society Journal*, 3 (September 1963), pp. 13-14.

Native Chief Tan Ping Hing's account of the clashes between the Bruneis and the Kadazan people as a result of the frequent demand for taxes was indeed corroborated by Leys. He wrote:⁶⁰

As all the rulers in Brunei are always impecunious, and many heavily in debt and urgently requiring funds, more through their own utterly improvident habits, the large-scale households they keep up and the numerous retainers they support than the smallness of their revenues, it will be readily seen that their power to punish the delinquencies of their own people by the imposition of a pecuniary fine is very apt to be abused.

The Sultan's authority in Sabah, particularly over the Kadazan people on the eve of the Chartered Company rule, was on the wane. Indeed the Kadazans of the interior of Keningau, Tenom, Tambunan and Ranau were virtually independent and on their own, with no one having any real suzerainty or authority over them. According to Black, the people in the interior led a virtually autonomous existence as socio-political units before the coming of the Chartered Company rule. This did not mean, however, that the people of the interior existed in total isolation and out of touch with the outside world. However, before the coming of white men, they were in effect masters of their own destiny. If they admitted any one of the people of the plains or coastal areas they were admitted largely on their own terms. This defensive capacity was soon upset and collapsed by the coming of the white men.⁶¹

In the coastal area of the West Coast, including Kudat, populated mostly by non-Muslim Kadazans, the inhabitants also led virtually independent lives before the coming of Chartered Company rule. In the period immediately prior to the coming of the European, the Kadazans effectively managed to contain the Muslim people. According to Black, their apparent self-determination was due to their capabilities as growers of wet rice and their strong desire to be independent. The situation in Sabah in the mid-nineteenth century then was that although the major rivers were the "tulins" or "pesakas" of the Pengirans or Brunei nobles living in Brunei, the people led lives of virtual independence. It was precisely because the authority of the Brunei nobles was already on the wane in Sabah that white men came to take over Sabah, the Brunei nobles were only too ready and willing to part with their possessions in Sabah.

60. Peter Leys, *op.cit.*

61. I.D. Black, "The Political Situation in Sabah on the Eve of Chartered Company Rule", *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 3 (1971), pp. 62-65.

The Cessions and Leases

The first European adventurers to establish a colony in Sabah were American businessmen. It started with an American consul in Hong Kong by the name of Charles Lee Moses. He went to Brunei and secured the cession for ten years of a large tract of Brunei territory in the north-Kimanis area. Lee then sold this cession to two other American businessmen in Hong Kong, namely Joseph W. Torney and Thomas B. Harris. Two Chinese businessmen joined them and together they formed the "American Trading Company of Borneo".⁶² They established a settlement with a view to planting tobacco along the Kimanis river, but this venture soon collapsed and was abandoned.

The next to arrive was an Austrian diplomat in Hong Kong, one Baron Overbeck. He obtained two deeds of cession, one from the Sultan of Brunei and the other from the Sultan of Sulu.⁶³ The rights granted in these two cessions overlapped and were supposed to cover the whole of what is Sabah today. However, when the Chartered Company government got established in Sabah, after taking over the two cessions from Baron Overbeck, they found that many rivers were independently owned by Pengirans or Wazirs. It was therefore found necessary by the Chartered Company to enter into separate agreements with these owners. Thus one by one the Pengirans signed 'leases' in perpetuity with the Chartered Company to give the company the right to govern and rule the people and the land.⁶⁴

The two cessions granted by the Brunei Sultan and the Sulu Sultan were supposed to:

Grant and cede...for ever and in perpetuity all the rights and powers belonging to me over all the territories and lands being tributary to us on the mainland of the island of Borneo....

However, most of the rivers in the country particularly those in the West Coast were individually owned by nobles or Pengirans as 'Sungei

62. For an account of the first American colony in Sabah, see K.G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Sabah 1881-1963*, pp. 4-12. See also, by the same author, "Steps in the Acquisition of North Borneo", *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 5:19 (1957), pp. 236-243.

63. K.G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Sabah, 1881-1963*.

64. On the cession of lease agreement of all the territories and rivers in Sabah see C.O. 874/17-23; 36-40; 43-55. On the Putatan River lease agreement copy and letters pertaining to the lease agreement, see: C.O. 374/236, pp. 156-165.

Tulins'. These 'Tulins' confirmed on the Pengirans the right over the rivers and its people and despite the cession treaties signed between the Sultans and the Chartered Company rulers it was still found necessary by the new rulers to sign separate agreements with the Pengirans. These 'river leases' as they were also called were also granted to the Chartered Company "for ever and in perpetuity."⁶⁵ Further, the leases also granted to the Chartered Company the "power of life and death over the inhabitants with all the absolute rights of property vested...."

For the people in the interior such as in Ranau, Tambunan or Keningau where the suzerainty of the Sultan had not affected the people and no 'Sungei Tulins' were held by Pengirans, the Chartered Company rulers had the people take oaths of allegiance. "Stone planting ceremonies" were common in the villages in the interior visited by Company officials and it was during these stone planting ceremonies that the inhabitants of the villages took their oath of allegiance to the white men.⁶⁶

Of the two cessions originally granted to Baron Overbeck, the most controversial has become the one granted by the Sulu Sultan. This cession was questioned by the Philippines government at the time of the formation of Malaysia. They charged that the Sulu Sultan did not grant a session but merely a lease. The Philippines government, as the successor of the Sulu Sultan's domain in Sabah made a claim therefore over the State of Sabah. This claim by the Philippines led to a diplomatic severance between the Philippines and Malaysia.⁶⁷ It is, however, interesting to note that the Philippines government made its claim to Sabah only after the Malaysian Prime Minister announced his proposal for the formation of Malaysia which included Sabah.

When the Chartered Company took over from the Brunei the governing of Sabah, the inhabitants, particularly the Kadazans, were not unduly

65. F.O. 12/67, Lease of the Putatan River to the British North Borneo Company. See also F.O. 12/67, Brunei and Sulu Cession Agreements of 1878.

66. See Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, 2 vols.

67. There are quite a number of articles on the Philippines' Claim to Sabah. Notable amongst them is K.G. Tregonning, "The Philippine Claim to Sabah", *JMBRAS*, 43 (1970), pp. 160-170. The writer was fortunate to be one of the Sabah representatives to the Bangkok talks on the Philippines' Claim to Sabah in 1972. The Philippines government had prepared well for the talks and produced a book (two volumes) entitled *Philippine Claim to Sabah* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1963).

perturbed. Except for the Mat Salleh rebellion in the late 1890s, there was no general uprising against Chartered Company rule. One minor incident in Penampang district, however, is worthy of mention as it illustrates the relative independence of the people of Sabah from the Brunei overlords prior to the European take-over of Sabah. Soon after obtaining the lease of the Putatan river, Governor Treacher visited the district. He was met by all the dignitaries of the district, including the Kadazan Datuks and was accorded full respect which was his due as the new ruler and owner of the river. In a despatch to the Chairman of the Chartered Company in London, Treacher reported thus:⁶⁸

A Kadazan came to see me by the name of Sipanggol and expressed his opinion freely. He asked what we wanted in the country and said that he would prefer paying the Brunei Rajahs a Pikul (say \$25) a year per head to allowing whitemen to come and settle down in his country, he apparently preferring the Brunei Rajahs because they live at a distance and do not interfere in local affairs. He also said he had heard dreadful accounts of the white man's government, that the police interfere in everything and that men were shut up in prison and revenue required in cash instead of in kind.

The amount payable annually by the Company depended on the length of the river, size of population and the importance of the river as a whole. The Putatan river owner, however, was only paid one thousand pounds as the river was very short. This was despite the fact that it was described favourably by Governor Treacher as the best plain he had ever seen in Sabah:⁶⁹

On the right and left is seen a vast expanse of cultivated, jungle cleared padi lands extending for miles North and South and bounded on the East by the mountain range running parallel to the Coast. The natives had just commenced ploughing the land with their wooden ploughs...and where the plough had not yet passed, the whole country was covered with emerald green grass, such as one would expect to see in an English meadow, while the absence of lalang was also a pleasing feature....

Kadazan Rebels and Chiefs

Rutter was of the opinion that the various uprisings or manifestations of unrest in Sabah, including the best known, that of Mat Salleh, were

68. C.O. 874/230, Letter from Governor to Chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company, p. 556.

69. C.O. 874/236, Letter from Governor to Chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company, p. 553.

due to "bad hats or fugitives from justice." He said:⁷⁰

Prior to 1915 all the North Borneo expeditions, great or small, can be traced back to the "bad hats" or fugitives from justice. No rising that the country has ever seen could be justified, there has never been a general rebellion with the object of throwing off the yoke of the Company's rule; minor risings have been confined to a limited area, and today, there is not a tribe in the territory that has not sworn allegiance to the Government and does not live at peace.

Rutter's observation here is apt and correct in so far as the object of the uprisings were concerned: that they did not aspire to throw off the yoke of the Company's rule. Rutter, however, did not explain fully the background of the uprisings. He simply called those who rebelled against the Company's rule "bad hats" and "fugitives from justice", and in his book the expeditions mounted to quell those uprisings were called "punitive expeditions". Rutter's attitude towards the uprisings are understandable, for after all, he was one of the officials of the Chartered Company government at the time and his views and opinion regarding matters of the time must necessarily reflect the Company's attitude and policy.

But Tregonning, a historian and a later writer about Sabah was no more subtle than Rutter in his treatment of the various uprisings in Sabah. He included a small chapter entitled "Rebels" in his book but like Rutter, he too did not give any real background to each of the uprisings. Concerning the massacre of some 200 people, men, women and children in 1891 in the interior of Tawau Residency, by a police force, for example, he simply reported as follows:⁷¹

In 1891 there took place in the far interior a most bloody massacre, apparently a private revenge, now decently obscured by time. Raffles Flint, another of the small group of pioneers who lived in North Borneo for thirty years or more, led a band of Dyak police after the natives who had killed his brother. They lay in wait outside a longhouse on the Kalabakan river near or over the Dutch border. As the morning mist rose they killed between 110 and 130 people, men, women and children without loss to themselves. Flint, who was described by a fellow officer as a most generous and benevolent host and who figures in the Governor's reports as both pompous and inefficient, here seems to have been panicked into the role of murderer.

Tregonning did not mention that before the massacre took place, Flint had blocked all exits of the house so that no one could escape. Neither

70. Owen Rutter, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

71. K.G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Sabah, 1881-1963*.

did he explain why Flint's brother was killed in the first place. The older Flint was killed by his "father-in-law" as a result of religious provocation. Apparently, Flint had flouted local custom and "adat" and this had provoked Kumpel, the father of the girl whom C.W. Flint was supposed to have abducted.

News of the massacre was spread to the outside world and a leak to a Hong Kong newspaper praised the incident as "this magnificent feat of arms." Black, a younger historian, explained the massacre thus:⁷²

The massacre was not, in fact, typical of the methods employed by the Government against suspected wrong-doers, but rather a peculiarly bloody extension of them. Armed expeditions in the ten years of the Company's rule, had been the sole method employed to settle problems in the interior, and it had only been a matter of time before an expedition produced results that shocked. It was in fact ironic that one of the smallest expeditions mounted (two Europeans and twelve Ibans) should have been responsible for the goriest incident. Moreover, while the incident provoked concern, it was concern of a somewhat superficial nature. Humanitarian feeling was distressed by the thought of a houseful of corpses, but the wider implication of recent expeditions into the interior were only just beginning to be understood. Most officials of the Company still saw the interior peoples as savages who had to be tamed.

Black is clearly a little more understanding of the indigenous population's situation and concerns under the white man's rule. He saw the Company's rule over the natives in the interior — Kadazans or Muruts — as upsetting their normal way of life and the political and economic balance maintained among the interior peoples themselves and between them and the people in the coastal areas. He said:⁷³

Formerly, the interior peoples had been able to defend themselves against depredations of intruders from the coast, but now the latter enjoyed, legitimately or illegitimately, the authority and power of the "orang puteh". Formerly even serious feuds had been conducted with decorum, but now they were liable to be elevated into unrestrained warfare. The Europeans on the coast, talked of the need to "open up the interior" by suppressing its apparent lawlessness. They were scarcely yet aware that the interior had already been assaulted and opened up, and that the lawlessness was a consequence of this process.

Black has called the various uprisings and unrest as "reactions to Company rule" and he devoted a detailed chapter of his book to this

72. I.D. Black, *A Gambling Style of Government*, p. 106.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

subject. He explained that the uprisings were largely as a result of misunderstanding and in some cases, downright incompetence on the part of the Company's officials. He put the blame on the Iban police recruited from Sarawak and Iban appointed chiefs as the main cause of the problems which in turn caused the various uprisings and incidents.⁷⁴ Iban traders in the interior too caused misunderstanding which unsettled many interior peoples. Black wrote:

The disruption took a variety of forms. In some cases societies were reduced from moderate prosperity to abject servitude. In others there was violent resistance to the intruders, which brought violent retribution from the Company. The "Murut" areas experienced severe culture shock, issuing in millenarian revolts, in 1891-2 in the areas around the head of the Padas Gorge, and in 1915-7 in the "Southern Murut areas".

Of the Coastal people, especially in the West Coast, he wrote:⁷⁵

The Coastal peoples were no more closely administered than the interior peoples, until 1900, but also they required few of the police actions which deposited in the Company's records much information about the interior. The Company's early system of government...was less of a novelty to the Coastal peoples than those of the interior, and...the Coastal peoples were in any case more sophisticated in dealing with novelty. They were therefore better able to avoid conflicts which would attract European attention.

Unlike Rutter and Tregonning before him, Black is not simply an apologist for the Chartered Company rule. He at least tried to explain and understand the various uprisings, especially of the indigenous population against the white man's rule. He did not condemn the uprisings as due to "bad hats" and "fugitives from justice". He did not attempt to portray these indigenous leaders as "nationalists" or "freedom fighters" in the true sense of the word, but he did acknowledge that what they had done was to make the Company's administrators more aware of the various problems of the indigenous population under the Company's rule:⁷⁶

Though quickly relegated to a minor place in the Company's consciousness it was they who in effect had most powerfully asserted the government in Sabah to display some understanding of, and sympathy towards, the territory's diverse

74. I.D. Black, "Dayaks in North Borneo: The Chartered Company and the Sea Dayaks of Sarawak", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 17 (1969), pp. 34-45 and pp. 245-272. This is an excellent article on the Company's recruiting of Iban policemen and how these Iban policemen and Iban traders caused disruptions amongst the indigenous population in the interior areas of Sabah.

75. I.D. Black, "The Political Situation in Sabah on the Eve of Chartered Company Rule", *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 3 (1971), p. 63.

76. I.D. Black, *A Gambling Style of Government*, p. 234.

population, socio-economic structures, customs and values. Immigrant and imported peoples could not be set against the indigenous population; Muslims could not be set against non-Muslims; the coastal dwellers could not be set against those living in the interior; the supposedly sophisticated communities could not be set against supposedly primitive; alien assumptions could not be set against local wisdom. For these lessons in how Sabah might be a peaceful country the rebels - who came from all major indigenous ethnic groups of the territory - deserve a respected place in Sabahan and Malaysian history.

The notable uprisings are about twelve in number, and they started in 1883, shortly after the grant of the Royal Charter, and they ended around the 1915-17 period with the Rundum rebellion. Two of the best known uprisings are the Mat Salleh rebellion and the Rundum Rebellion.

As Black pointed out, all the major indigenous ethnic groups of Sabah took part in the uprisings — and the Kadazans therefore were no exception. The uprisings in which Kadazans seem to have taken the initiative and leadership include the "1885 expedition" against Kandurong, a Kadazan (Tagas) chief of Tambunan. Then there was the Kadazan (Rungus) in Maruda Bay led by one Sigunting who rebelled against Company rule in 1894. In 1896, the Kwijau Kadazans of Keningau also rebelled. According to Rutter, there was no reason for the rising, but then he failed to understand that the rising was due to their being forced by the Company's administrators to carry heavy materials from Kimanis to Keningau for the use of telegraph lines. Then in 1902, Sigunting, with Kamanta and Lengap, all Kadazan leaders, rose against the Company at Ambong. They were captured, and except for Sigunting, they were shot in public. The last Kadazan direct leadership of an uprising against the company rule was in 1904, when Bantah, a Kadazan leader in Kawang led an uprising. He too was caught and killed.

Kadazans were also involved in the Mat Salleh rebellion — but the Kadazans in this incident were more the followers and "fighters" for Mat Salleh than the leaders. According to Black, Mat Salleh's main force in the sacking of Gaya town was composed mainly of the Bajaus and the Kadazans of Inanam. The Kadazans, however, may have been forcibly conscripted, but nevertheless they shared in the spoils from the sacked town. When Mat Salleh retreated to the interior in Ranau, he collected a few Kadazans to join him — amongst them were Kadazans from Bundu Tuhan. Mat Salleh's own Muslim followers did not number very many. At the first meeting with Cowie at Menggatal in the house of Pengiran Kaha, his own Muslim followers

only numbered about 20, but there were also about 200 Tambunan Kadazans (Tagas) with him.⁷⁷

That he managed to get Kadazan support from Tambunan seemed to be due to continuing feuds between the two tribes in the area: the Tiawans (Tuhauan according to Black) and the Tagas a "hill tribe" of Tambunan:⁷⁸

Mat Salleh had no difficulty in taking up residence amongst the Tagaas and organising them to build the fort. In turn, the Tagaas had gained a powerful ally in their feuds with the Tuhauans (Tiawans) who were raided and robbed with increasing severity during 1898. By the year's end, the Tuhauans had had enough, and were prepared to seek the assistance of the Company, thus ending their long cherished independence.

Indeed, the Tiawans were amongst the last of the Kadazans to submit to Company rule. They were the last to take the oath of allegiance.

For supporting Mat Salleh, the Tagaas were severely punished:⁷⁹

On the same day, February 4th I had an interview with the chiefs of the Tagahas and Tiawan tribes who had been called into camp by Mr Fraser on my instructions. I explained to the Tagahas chiefs that I could not suffer their recent hostile action to pass unpunished, that I was unable to regard their excuse that Mat Salleh had been too strong for them as in any way sufficient extenuation of their conduct since when over-awed by him they should have sought the protection of the Government and not have acted as Mat Salleh's allies; and that I should therefore fine the tribe as a mark of the Government's displeasure and as a punishment for the misbehaviour of the tribesmen. I fixed the fine at 25 head of buffaloes and a money fine of \$250, the latter to be paid in jars, the only currency of the valley. These jars can subsequently be converted into cash. I further ordered the Tagahas tribesmen to pull down and level with the ground all existing fortifications; to build a block-house at Mat Tator's fort for the Government free of charge under Fraser's supervision; and to bring in all their fire-arms.

Kadazan involvement in the various uprisings against the Company's rule was not general, and those who took the initiative and were leaders in the uprisings were not generally considered to be "heroes" by their fellow Kadazans. None were given the title of "Huguan Siou" (brave leader) as a consequence and there are no well-known Kadazan tales or legends depicting them as "heroes". This is unlike the legendary

77. W.K.C. Wookey, "The Mat Salleh Rebellion", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 7:8 (1956), pp. 193-201.

78. I.D. Black, *A Gambling Style of Government*, pp. 162-163.

79. C.O. 876/265, Letter from Governor Clifford to Chairman of North Borneo Chartered Company.

"Huguan Siou" (brave leader) of the Penampang district, who was reputed to be a brave man who championed the cause of the Kadazans against the Brunei Pengirans during the Brunei overlordship.

Modern Echoes

Tun Stephens who became the Kadazan leader in the 1960s and 1970s was however accorded the title of "Huguan Siou" after the legendary "Huguan Siou" of the Brunei overlordship era. The conferment of the title Huguan Siou on Tun Stephens was made by the Kadazan elders of the Penampang district. The first time it was conferred was in 1960 by the committee members of the Society of Kadazans of which Tun Stephens was the president. The title was also officially conferred on him by Kadazan leaders in the UNKO party at the Annual General Meeting of UNKO on 6th April 1964. The minutes of the meeting read:

Be it resolved that in recognition of the fact that Dato Donald Stephens organised and formed the first political party in Sabah, the UNKO, of which he is the first president, the fact that he played the leading role in achieving independence for Sabah, and the fact of his leadership in the Sabah Alliance, that he be conferred the title "Huguan Siou", meaning great leader and the government and other political parties be advised so.

It is to be noted that when this title was officially conferred on Tun Stephens in April 1964, Tun Stephens and his Kadazan party UNKO were experiencing stiff opposition from leaders of other ethnic groups. The conferment of the title must therefore be seen as a Kadazan expression of continued support and appreciation of Tun Stephens as their leader.

We have seen that during the Brunei overlordship in Sabah, the Kadazans were virtually independent with very little interference from their Brunei masters. This sense of independence which the Kadazans guarded fiercely continued even during British rule. Western education and the introduction of Christianity to the Kadazans seems not to have eroded their sense of a special identity but instead to have brought about a greater sense of awareness amongst them of the need to cultivate and develop their own cultural heritage, such as their language and their old beliefs. Educated Kadazans of the Penampang and Papar districts who embraced Christianity as their religion were notably amongst the first Kadazan leaders to realise the need to preserve Kadazan identity and culture. In short, Christianity and Westernisation did not absorb or kill Kadazan identity and culture: instead both encouraged the growth of Kadazan consciousness and awareness.

With the advent of Malaysia, however, things became different for the Kadazans. The perceived need for nation building and national integration meant to the federal government that there should be a national cultural policy for the nation. This national cultural policy was agreed to be necessarily based on Malay culture, which in turn meant Islam. To the Kadazans, who were just a small section of the overall population of 13 million in Malaysia, there was a felt danger that they would lose their identity altogether through the process of assimilation. This aspect of Malaysia — the eventual cultural assimilation of the Kadazans — was probably not foreseen by the Kadazan leaders who decided to join Malaysia in 1963. At the inter-governmental committee meetings, which will be considered and discussed in detail in the next chapter, Tun Stephens was clearly of the opinion that Sabah was joining in the new federation as an equal partner with the other states. He believed that the Kadazans would always have a place in Malaysia, as an equal partner of the other major races — particularly the Malays. He was alas wrong.

The Erosion of Kadazan Paramountcy

As we saw in the first section of this chapter, the coming of Islam, coupled with Brunei overlordship, transformed the Kadazan ethnic group and saw the beginning of the erosion of Kadazan paramountcy. The Tidongs, the Idahans, the Bisayas became Muslim and the new religion separated them from the predominantly animistic Kadazans. These people became a separate community, as they slowly acquired a distinct identity for themselves. They became absorbed or assimilated into the new dominant culture — Islam.⁸⁰

A large influx of Muslim indigenous from the Southern Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya, and Brunei eroded further the Kadazan's paramountcy in Sabah. Further, new immigrant races, such as the Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis came to Sabah with the establishment of company rule, so that by the mid-twentieth century, the Kadazans had become a minority group in their own country. By the time of the 1970 census Kadazans formed only 35 percent of the overall population of Sabah.

While Brunei suzerainty began the erosion of Kadazan paramountcy, it was the coming of white rule which accelerated the process. When white rule came to Sabah, the village councils disappeared. The position

80. I.H.N. Evans, *Studies in Malayan Folklore and Customs in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*.

of the descent group chiefs — the Huguan Siou became anomalous as a "chief warrior" was no longer necessary. "Warrior raids" or head-hunting was banned by the Company government and Kadazans were made subservient to the new masters and their new rules and regulations. The role of the village headman, the orang tua, too, became less important. He no longer had the high position he had held in the community; he became the white man's tool to collect poll tax etc.

The coming of Christianity and Western medicine also eroded the importance of the "Bobohizans". The "Bobohizans" and their rituals were pagan, and anything connected with them was considered to be animalistic and barbaric. This writer as a young boy once witnessed a Christian priest denouncing Kadazans for taking part in a "magavau" (harvest festival) ceremony. The priest, in a Sunday sermon denounced the "magavau" as the work of the devil and mammon, and anyone participating in the rituals were deemed to be committing grievous sins.

As more and more Kadazans became Christians, therefore, the importance of the "Bobohizans" became even less. Today the "Bobohizans" are very few in number and there are even fewer young girls wanting to learn or be initiated into the various intricacies of the "Bobohizans" prayers and incantations. "Bobohizans" today are only used on ceremonial occasions, not to placate the evil spirits or to avert disaster as in days gone by, but for mere show by the Kadazan Cultural Association. Girls (not necessarily a Kadazan) are therefore seen parading in "Bobohizan" attire, all for the benefit of the tourists and sometimes dignitaries from the Malay overlords in Kuala Lumpur!

The white men replaced the indigenous Kadazan political institutions with their own political institutions. A Legislative Council was formed first by the Chartered Company government and later refined and expanded to include many other races by the colonial government. However, when the first Advisory Council was formed, no Kadazan leader was included. Neither did the colonial government include any Kadazan leader in the colonial Legislative Council at the outset. In the first colonial Legislative Council formed after 1946, only a Malay and a Chinese were included together with some European planters and businessmen. It was not until the mid-1950s, that a Kadazan was nominated to become a member of the colonial Legislative Council. The first was Sundang of Keningau, a name which we shall see many times in the following chapters, and he was joined by Tun Stephens, the Kadazan leader from Penampang.

When C.W.C. Parr became Governor of Sabah in 1915, he established the first Native Advisory Council.⁸⁶ We have already noted that the first nine native chiefs (O.K.K.s) nominated to this new body were mostly Malays. The NCAC met for three successive years, but after 1917, for some reason which is not clear, the annual meeting of the NCAC stopped. D.J. Jardine then became Governor in 1935. He was a white colonial officer from Tanganyika and he had experience of native affairs in that part of the world. He was, therefore, instrumental in reactivating the NCAC. He enlarged the memberships of the NCAC to include second and lower grade native chiefs so that at the meetings of 1935, 1936 and 1937, the Grade 1 native chiefs were actually in a minority.

However, some two-thirds of the chiefs in the enlarged NCAC were Malays or Muslims. Indeed as the Malay chiefs were more numerous in the NCAC it became necessary to have two sections of the agenda for discussions: section A was for general discussion by all chiefs present and section B was for discussion by the Muslim chiefs only. As far as can be ascertained, section B pertained specially to matters relating to the Islamic religion.

From the very beginning of white rule in Sabah, therefore, a greater emphasis was made on the need to respect the customs and traditions of the native population, but those customs and traditions of the native population envisaged to warrant respect were not the Kadazan cultural heritage but the Malays'. The white rulers tended to consider the definitive races as savages, primitive people.

When Clifford became governor of Sabah in 1900 he described Muruts as:⁸⁷

the lowest types of human beings...who love meat which has been kept in a bamboo until it is in a state of liquifaction....

Clifford had just arrived from Malaya where he served as a colonial officer. His first act as the governor of Sabah was to bring about the final defeat of Mat Salleh in Tambunan. Clifford's report to his bosses in London was the result of information he gathered in the interior after three days' stay there. His insensitive description of the Muruts and the food they eat was of course typical of the white men's views at that time. The meat he described was known to the Kadazans as "nonsom", a type of pickled or preserved meat. In the old days there was no such

86. Governor to Chairman, 6th April 1915, in Sabah State Archives, No. 01968.

87. Governor to Chairman, C.O. 874/265, p. 359.

thing as refrigeration and one way to keep meat was to preserve it. "Nonsom", even today is in fact considered a delicacy.

Right from the very beginning, the white rulers consciously or unconsciously practised a form of divide and rule on the Kadazans. The introduction of Iban policemen from Sarawak and the creation of Iban native chiefs to control large sections of Kadazan areas was one example of white rulers insensitivity to local feelings and served to erode the fabric of Kadazan political institutions and Kadazan pride.

It is significant too that the white rulers adopted the Malay language as the lingua franca of the country, and that the whole educational system was structured around the Malay language and culture. This was obviously aimed at damping any rise or attempted rise of Kadazan consciousness amongst the "definitive" race. When the white rulers, therefore, opened schools for the so-called "native community", the instruction was entirely in the Malay language, and furthermore, these schools were found in predominantly Malay areas only. Understandably, therefore, very few young Kadazans attended these schools.

The native chiefs, through the Native Consultative Advisory Council asked for the introduction of English as the medium of instruction but the white rulers refused as they did not agree that the native population should be given an advanced education. Here lies the basic policy of the white rulers in regard to education: that the natives were to receive only a rudimentary level of education, enough just to make them read and write in the Malay language.

Happily, however, for most Kadazans, the missionaries soon opened up schools in predominantly Kadazan areas. The first to be started was in the Penampang district, followed by a school in the Limbahau-Papar district. Soon many other Kadazan areas in the Kudat district and the interior had mission schools. The medium of instruction in these schools was English, but in the lower primary levels, the Kadazan language was taught or used as the medium of instruction.

The Penampang and Papar Kadazans, therefore, were amongst the first to receive a Western education. It is therefore not surprising that it was the Penampang and Papar Kadazans who started the first Kadazan cultural associations, and in the history of the rise of Kadazan nationalism the Kadazans of Penampang and Papar were always in the forefront.

The colonial government who took over from the Chartered Company government in 1946 continued this education policy. Emphasis was on

Malay, and it became apparent that the colonial administrators were making the Muslim indigenous population more and more important in Sabah. They recognised the Muslim custom and religion by granting them a special Muslim Court to try cases; they recognised the Muslim holidays of Hari Raya; and they re-emphasised the need to be able to speak Malay as a condition of entering the Civil Service. When the colonial Legislative Council and the Executive Council was enlarged in 1950 to include more native participation, more Malays were nominated than Kadazans. It was not until the mid-1950s that a Kadazan was included at all, and it was not until the end of the 1950s that Tun Stephens, an avowedly Kadazan leader from Penampang was nominated to join this all-powerful body.

The general picture then was that the British tended to favour the Muslim population more than the original inhabitants, the Kadazans. The white rulers formalised the gradual erosion of Kadazan paramountcy in Sabah replacing them with the Muslim community. The educated Kadazans of Penampang and Papar slowly realised this, so that by the early 1950s they had organised Kadazan associations throughout the State with a view to nurturing and looking after Kadazan interests and culture. By 1960, just before the advent of Malaysia the Kadazans avowed aim was to make the Kadazans paramount again in their own country just as the Malays avowed aim in Malaya in the 1950s had been to be paramount in their own country in all fields of endeavour — in politics, administration and business. The formation of Malaysia was to end Kadazan hopes.

CHAPTER 2

SABAH JOINS MALAYSIA

The general view as to why Sabah joined Malaysia is that basically it had no choice. It had to join in the new federation for at least two reasons. First, the British were dismantling their empire everywhere as a result of strong pressures from anti-colonialist nations at the United Nations. Second, Indonesia was posing a threat as, under Sukarno, it was believed to be pursuing an expansionist policy. Sukarno was showing an interest in including Sabah and Sarawak in his dream of a greater Indonesian nation. For both security reasons and in order to maintain British interests in Borneo, Britain wanted Sabah to join in the new Federation of Malaysia.¹

Besides, the British were also pulling out from Singapore. In 1959 the island of Singapore had been granted internal self-government by the British Government. However Lee Kuan Yew's Peoples' Action Party (PAP) government was increasingly under internal communist pressure and the Singapore leader himself was of the opinion that Singapore's future was best assured by joining Malaya. Singapore's educated and energetic largely Chinese population, however, posed a serious threat to Malay paramountcy in Malaya, and it was for this reason — to maintain Malay paramountcy — that Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malayan leader wanted Sabah and Sarawak to be included in the new Federation of Malaysia. For a racial balance, therefore, it is thought that Tunku Abdul Rahman made it a condition to the British government that he would accept Singapore's entry into Malaysia only if the British Borneo territories — Sabah and Sarawak — were included in the new federation. A Malay academic, however,

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1. I am indebted to former colonial administrators, especially to Sir William Goode, the former Governor of Sabah, and Datuk R.N. Turner, the former State Secretary of Sabah. Datuk Richard Yap helped me considerably through his recollection of the various events during the Inter-Governmental Committee meetings. Datuk Yap was then Secretary-General of UNKO and a close aide and confidante of Tun Stephens. My own close association with Tun Stephens from 1958 to 1975 (especially during the days of UPKO and Kadazanism in the early 1960s) also helped me in this account. I also have a collection of the minutes of the plenary session of the I.G.C. and of the various sub-committees, together with other documents prepared by the Secretariat and the different political parties.

has suggested that inclusion of Singapore into the new Federation of Malaysia was merely a ploy from the beginning and the real interest of Kuala Lumpur Malay leaders was always the absorption of the Borneo territories.² This thesis cannot be proved but the implication of the suggestion would be that some Malay leaders in Kuala Lumpur had territorial ambitions quite as much as President Sukarno of Indonesia.

The last British governor of Sabah, Sir William Goode, suggested to this writer that the people of Sabah did have a choice whether or not to join the new federation. He said the people of Sabah were given a chance to make their intentions clear on the matter, first through the Cobbold Commission, and later through the United Nations Survey team which came to ascertain the views of Sabahans about whether they wanted to join Malaysia.³ This view is the personal opinion of Sir William Goode and not necessarily that of the British government in London.

The question of whether the British government would have granted independence to Sabah on its own if the Sabahans had not wanted to join in the new federation is now purely conjectural. This writer, however, gained the impression after talks with former colonial administrators that Whitehall was very much in favour of a quick pull-out from Sabah and eager for the country to join in the new federation, but the white colonial administrators themselves in Sabah, on the other hand, were more inclined for the British to stay longer as they were more sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of Sabah's leaders and people. They thought that these people wanted and deserved independence on their own.

The colonial administrators in Sabah showed this feeling clearly, for example, during the inter-governmental committee meeting. Tun Stephens, Sabah's main spokesman at the meeting, was given every possible assistance by the British staff of the Sabah State Secretariat with background materials to use in his negotiations with the Malayan officials. Tun Stephens was given background materials on the advantages and disadvantages of Sabah joining Malaysia, and indeed in the financial papers prepared for Tun Stephens, it was shown that Sabah would not gain any real economic or financial advantages from joining Malaysia. The main idea behind the production of meticulous and well prepared background papers for Tun Stephens seemed to be that the colonial administrators

2. Mohammad Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*.

3. Interview with Sir William Goode, 12 August 1983, London.

hoped that Tun Stephens might be persuaded not to join in the new federation.⁴

Indeed, this writer was once told by Richard Yap, one of Tun Stephens' right-hand men and a close confidante, that at the end of the Malaysia Consultative Solidarity Meeting, one of the senior British colonial administrators asked Tun Stephens whether he (Tun Stephens) had made up his mind to join in the new federation. When Tun Stephens replied in the affirmative, the colonial administrator told him that the dye was cast and Sabah's future was therefore his responsibility.⁵

Tun Stephens was the major determining factor in the success of the proposed federation as he became the main spokesman for the Sabahans. The Malayan leaders realised that it was Tun Stephens who could make the difference at the conference table, for without his concurrence and agreement, the negotiations on the Malaysia plan would fail. On the part of the British officials, particularly the colonial administrators, they too saw that Tun Stephens was the main force behind the whole Malaysian plan for Sabah. He was therefore given all possible assistance with excellent background materials to use in the negotiation.

The Malaysian plan was not debated in the Sabah Legislative Council, and nor for that matter in the Sarawak Council Negeri when the proposal for its formation was first announced by the Malayan Prime Minister. The Malayan and Singapore parliaments debated the issue extensively in their respective legislatures however. According to Sir William Goode, there was no need to discuss the plan in the Legislative Council as the British government had agreed to a commission of inquiry under Lord Cobbold to seek the opinion of the populace whether or not they favoured joining the new federation.⁶ Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, however, was of the opinion that the nature and composition of the Sabah Legislative Council was used as an excuse by the British for not placing the matter before it.⁷ The excuse made was that the unofficial members of the Council were appointed

4. This impression was confirmed in interviews with several "old Sabah hands", formerly in the colonial civil service.

5. This writer was also told by Datuk Richard Yap in an interview with him that in his opinion Sabah did have a real choice. In fact, had Tun Stephens decided not to join Malaysia the colonial administration in Sabah would have persuaded Whitehall in London not to force Sabah to join the new Federation of Malaysia.

6. Interview with Sir William Goode, 12 August 1983.

7. Interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, 9 January 1984.

and not elected and therefore were not truly representative of the views of the people. On the other hand, if a large section of the community did not favour Malaysia, the British could have used the Legislative Council as a forum to reject the plan.

At the outset, Tun Stephens did not agree with the formation of Malaysia. His objection to the Malaysian plan was because of the manner in which the new federation was to be formed. The Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed a federation of fifteen states, with Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak to be admitted as constituent states of the existing Federation of Malaya. He said the Malayan Constitution already provided for it.⁸ This plan was however unacceptable to Tun Stephens. In a strongly worded open letter to the Tunku he wrote:⁹

If we had been asked to join Malaysia at the time Malaya achieved independence and Britain made it possible for us, the story would have been a different one. Now that Merdeka has been Malaya's for some years, and we are still struggling towards it, Malaya's proposal that we join as the 12th, 13th and 14th States savours of imperialism, of a drive to turn us into Malayan colonies....To join Malaya, while we are still colonies, only means we cease to be British colonies, and become Malayan colonies...the implication is to hand (ourselves) over to your control.

Tun Stephens then joined forces with Azahari, the chairman of Brunei's Party Rakyat, and Ong Kee Hui, the chairman of the Sarawak United Peoples' Party, to form a united front to oppose the Malaysian plan proposal. The three met in Brunei twice at the beginning of July 1961 and issued a joint statement declaring that "any plan" based on "the Tunku's pronouncements would be totally unacceptable. Constitutional advance in the three territories should be speeded up."¹⁰ Tun Stephens followed this up by writing a letter to *The Straits Times* stating:¹¹

We (i.e. the United Front) are against joining Malaysia as individual states, and want the Borneo territories to get together, so that when we talk with Malaya, it will be as equals and not as vassals...and if we join Malaya now, the people who will come and take most of the top jobs will be...Malayan...the new expatriates....

In fact, Tun Stephens was conscious that Sabah and the other Borneo territories were being used to facilitate the merger of Malaya and Singapore. Among the objections he raised in his letter to *The Straits*

8. *The Straits Times*, 28 May 1961.

9. *North Borneo News & Sabah Times*, 7 July 1961.

10. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 July 1961.

11. *The Straits Times*, 12 July 1961.

Times therefore was one in which he accused the Tunku of attempting to use the Bornean population to solve his "Singapore problem".

When the Tunku announced his Malaysian proposal, Tun Stephens' political power in Sabah was on the rise. He saw himself first, as the Kadazan leader who would bring about the espoused aim of the Kadazan people to be paramount in their own country, as the true owners and rulers of the country. As the "Huguan Siou" (brave leader) of the Kadazans, he saw himself as the guiding light and the inspiration of all Kadazan people to rise as one united race and become the governors of their country. Secondly, he also saw himself as the rightful leader of Sabah, the man who would succeed the British to govern Sabah — as its Prime Minister.¹²

However, Tun Stephens was soon to change his stand on the Malaysian issue. On 21 July 1961, he attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference held in Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew was there too, to plead the cause of Malaysia. He was obviously very persuasive.¹³ Tun Stephens, the only delegate from the Borneo territories was converted. He announced: "The people of Borneo did not reject the proposal once and for all." And when Lee Kuan Yew reinforced his persuasion for the Borneo states to join in the new federation with an offer of ten scholarships for Sabah students to study at the university in Singapore, Stephens greeted the offer "with pride and with happiness."¹⁴

After the CPA conference, the Tunku invited Stephens to Kuala Lumpur for talks and to see for himself the advancement made by Malaya since independence, particularly economically and educationally. Plane load after plane load of Kadazan leaders were brought to Kuala Lumpur to see for themselves how far Malaya had progressed since 1957. Tun Stephens himself was welcomed as a hero, and treated as a very important leader. Even the newspapers gave him wide publicity. Edwin Lee commented:¹⁵

An hour's meeting with the Tunku was arranged (for Tun Stephens) but it went on for two hours, and ended with a most astonishing result. Stephens' doubts were completely banished.

Tun Stephens told the press after the meeting:¹⁶

12. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*.

13. *The Straits Times*, 22 July 1961.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah*, p. 65.

16. *The Straits Times*, 16 August 1981.

There was no intention on the part of Malaya, for any form of colonisation of the Borneo territories....The Malaysia plan is workable and we must get down to something concrete.

Tun Stephens meanwhile formed the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) and it was evident that he was very pleased to find himself as the chairman of this committee. He was indeed happy that he was now "consulted" on the Malaysian plan proposal.¹⁷ On the MSCC sessions, Lee wrote:¹⁸

The first MSCC session held in Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu) ...was largely concerned with preliminaries. By the second meeting...in Kuching, North Bornean and Sarawak delegates pin-pointed matters which were still worrying them and inquired in detail into the attractions of the scheme. They were concerned about the position of religions other than Islam, the position of languages other than Malay, whether there would be unimpeded immigration from other Malayan states, whether the states would have sufficient control over civil service appointments. They discussed the special privileges of the Malays written into the Constitution. The Malayan delegates agreed that "there should be similar provisions to cover the indigenous peoples of the Borneo territories."

The last meeting of the MSCC was held in Singapore and a report was published.¹⁹ In the report, Tun Stephens for Sabah agreed to join the new Malaysian federation in "principle", subject to various safeguards for the Borneo territories. He also asked for the guarantee of Bornean autonomy in the new federation.

Tun Stephens had indicated during the months of May to July 1961 that he wanted Sabah to be independent first before joining Malaya in a new federation. However, he changed this stand soon after the CPA meeting in Singapore and the real reason for his change of attitude was shown in his Kadazan party's (UNKO) memorandum to the Cobbold Commission:²⁰

If North Borneo gets self-government and independence within the foreseeable future by itself, the heirs when the British leave will be the Chinese...it is only Malaysia which will guarantee that they (the indigenous people) have a chance of catching up with their so much more advanced Chinese brothers. It is Malaysia and the special privileges which will be extended to the native peoples, that will ensure that at some future time, our

17. *North Borneo News & Sabah Times*, 25 August 1961.

18. Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

19. *Report of the Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee*, 1961.

20. UNKO Memorandum to the Cobbold Commission. See also *North Borneo News & Sabah Times* editorial, 23 February 1962.

children will at least be able to reach a stage, more at par with their, at present, more advanced brothers.... Malaysia will mean more security socially for the natives, in that greater effort will be made to improve their well-being. Many now talk of the pace of development, and the money that is being poured into development in this country. But most of this development does not help improve the social lot of the natives. Malaysia, and the extension of the work on rural development which is being done with such vigour in the Federation of Malaya, would help the natives to find a new spirit ("semangat bahru") to work for themselves and their country.

The underlying reason for Tun Stephens' change of heart on the Malaysia plan proposal was that he saw the natives — particularly the "definitive" race — as the main beneficiaries of the advantages to be gained when Sabah joined Malaysia. He saw a chance for the Kadazans to become the paramount race in Sabah in all fields of endeavour.

The motives of other leaders in supporting Malaysia were somewhat different. Tun Mustapha, the Malay leader and president of the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), had favoured the Malaysia plan proposal right from the very beginning. He too saw the advantages of the Malaysia plan for the native population, but the native population he had in mind was the Malays of Sabah. On the other hand, Khoo Siak Chiew²¹ like Stephens had initially opposed the Malaysian plan but changed his view after he saw that it was a foregone conclusion. The Chinese leader realised that the British were definitely leaving and it was futile for him to continue to oppose the Malaysian proposal.

After the report of the MSCC was published and agreement in principle for the formation of Malaysia was reached amongst the various leaders, a commission of enquiry was formed to determine the wishes of the people. This was known as the Cobbold Commission. The Cobbold Commission visited Sabah and Sarawak between February and April 1962 and on 1 August published its report as CMNO 1794. The Commission unanimously agreed that a Federation of Malaysia was in the best interests of Sabah and Sarawak and that an early decision on the matter should be reached. The report was considered in detail in a series of meetings between the British and Malayan Ministers in London and they agreed in principle that a proposed Federation of Malaysia should be brought into being by 31 August 1963. A joint communique was issued to this effect on 1 August 1962.

21. Datuk Khoo Siak Chiew - a prominent Sandakan businessman - was amongst the first Chinese leaders nominated to the colonial Legislative Council.

The Inter-Governmental Committee and the Bargaining

The five governments also agreed to form an inter-governmental committee on which the British, Malayan, Sabah and Sarawak governments would be represented. Its task was to work out future constitutional arrangements, including safeguards for the special interests of Sabah and Sarawak, to cover such matters as religious freedom, education, representation in Parliament, the position of the indigenous races, control of immigration, citizenship, and the states' constitutions.

The preparatory meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee (I.G.C.) was held in the Legislative Council Chamber at Kota Kinabalu (then Jesselton) on 30 August 1962. The United Kingdom delegation was led by Lord Landsdowne. The Federation of Malaya delegation was led by Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaya. The Sarawak delegation was led by the Officer Administering the Government of Sarawak, Mr F. Jakeway. Amongst the local Sarawak delegates were Datu Bandar Haji Mustapha, Pengarah Montegrai, Temmenggong Jugah, Chia Chin Shim and Ling Beng Siew. The Sabah delegation was led by the Governor, Sir William Goode, with the Chief Secretary, R.N. Turner, together with the Attorney General, the Financial Secretary, and the Secretary for Local Government. The local Sabah representatives were the unofficial members of the Legislative Council, namely, Tun Stephens, Tun Mustapha, Datuk Yassin, Datuk Pang Tet Tshung, Datuk Khoo Siak Chiew and Datuk G.S. Sundang.

The meeting decided that the headquarters of the I.G.C. would be in Kota Kinabalu. Other decisions were that Tun Abdul Razak was to be the Deputy Chairman to Lord Landsdowne; that the governments of Sabah and Sarawak would nominate their own representatives to the I.G.C.; and that each member country would have a joint secretary of the meeting. The Chairman of the I.G.C. would also be the Chairman of the sub-committees. Five sub-committees were formed, namely: a constitutional sub-committee, a fiscal sub-committee, a public service sub-committee, a legal and judicial sub-committee and a departmental organisation sub-committee.

The main speakers at the preliminary meetings were Lord Landsdowne and Tun Abdul Razak. Lord Landsdowne in his opening address expressed the hope that all members of the I.G.C. would work closely together to bring about a successful completion of the task before them. If Malaysia was to be established it must be created with conditions acceptable to all parties. There must be safeguards not only for the various parties to Malaysia but also for the Federation of Malaysia itself. Tun Razak

on his part said that there should be a balance between state and federal powers. Both state and federal governments must work closely together, and when Malaysia was formed the federal government must have sufficient powers to enable it to carry out its tasks as a sovereign nation in the free world. He appreciated the fears and apprehensions of the people of Sabah and Sarawak and was anxious to meet them.

The Governor of Sabah raised the question of membership of the sub-committees and whether this would be left to the respective state governments. It was agreed that the membership of both the Inter-Governmental Committee and the sub-committees should be left to the governments concerned to decide. It was also decided to allow flexibility in the membership of the I.G.C. and the sub-committees so that alternate members could be appointed when necessary and specialist advisors varied to suit the nature of the subject under discussion.

Tun Stephens enquired whether it was intended to obtain similar terms for Sarawak and Sabah inside the Federation of Malaysia. Tun Razak thought that it would be better if there was uniformity of the terms for both Sabah and Sarawak. A press statement was issued the same day which mentioned the formation of the five sub-committees and that plenary sessions would be held in the middle of October to consider the work of the various sub-committees.²²

By September 1962, practically all the ethnic leaders of Sabah had agreed to the formation of Malaysia. Only Sundang of Keningau had not agreed. However, he did not raise any objection at the Sabah Legislative Council meeting on 12 September 1962 called to discuss the matter.²³ There was therefore no real debate on the issue. The Council unanimously adopted the following motion:²⁴

Be it resolved that this Council do welcome the decision in principle of the British and Malayan governments to establish Malaysia by the 31st August 1963 provided that the terms of participation and the constitutional arrangements will safeguard the special interests of North Borneo

22. *North Borneo News & Sabah Times*, 31 August 1962.

23. Interview with Datuk G.S. Sundang, 17 April 1983. He said there was no point in continuing to argue or object as he was the lone objector to the plan. He was also a government nominated official in the colonial Legislative Council and was expected to toe the government line.

24. *Legislative Council Record*, 12 September 1962. On 26 September 1962, the Sarawak Council Negri also passed a similar motion and made selection of its representatives to the I.G.C.

(Sabah) and do accordingly authorise the following members of this council to represent North Borneo on the proposed Inter-Governmental Committee to prepare detailed constitutional arrangements which will be laid before this Council:

Signed:

The Hon. the Chief Secretary
 The Hon. the Attorney General
 The Hon. the Financial Secretary
 The Hon. OKK Datu Mustapha bin Datu Harun
 The Hon. Khoo Siak Chiew
 The Hon. D.A. Stephens.

The prominent appointed members selected to represent Sabah were Tun Stephens, Tun Mustapha and Khoo Siak Chiew. Tun Mustapha was selected as he was the most senior of the Malay appointed members and also was known for his strong commitment to the formation of Malaysia from the outset. He was also the acknowledged leader of the Malay community.

Tun Stephens was selected in preference to the Keningau Chief, Datu G.S. Sundang, because as we pointed out earlier, he was the major determining factor in the Malaysian plan in so far as Sabah was concerned. He was leader of Sabah's most populous "bumiputra" ethnic group, the Kadazans, and he had been won over to Malaysia after his visits to Kuala Lumpur. He was seen to be very important in winning the support of the various Kadazan leaders who were still not committed to the Malaysian plan. (Sundang, in any case, was still unhappy about the Malaysian proposal and his party, the Pasok Momogun, had submitted a memorandum to the Cobbold Commission strongly opposing the plan. Sundang's opinion was that Sabah should be given independence first by the British before joining Malaysia. He wanted Sabah, and especially the "definitive" race, to participate in the negotiations for the Malaysian Federation as an equal partner.)

Khoo Siak Chiew was selected from amongst the Chinese leaders because he was the most senior of the Chinese appointed members of the Legislative Council. He was also, by September 1962, the acknowledged spokesman for the Chinese community.

When the first plenary session was held on 22 October 1962, Tun Stephens was joint leader with Datuk R.N. Turner (Chief Secretary) of the Sabah representatives.²⁵ Tun Stephens was to continue to hold this leadership position until the sessions were over and until the Malaysia

25. A list of meetings and members of the plenary session and of the sub-committees of the Inter-Governmental Committee are in *Report of the I.G.C.*, 1962.

agreement was signed. He played an important part in the conferences and he became the spokesman for the Sabah representatives as a whole. This probably explained his vituperation in 1965-1967 at the Kuala Lumpur leaders when he felt that the spirit and the letter of the I.G.C. and the 20 points safeguarding the indigenous people of Sabah were being unfairly whittled away by the Malay leaders in the central government. No one knew and appreciated more about the 20 points than Tun Stephens himself as he was indeed the chief negotiator for Sabah and its people.²⁶

At the start of the first plenary session on 22 October, Tun Stephens raised two important points, namely: that the political parties in Sabah were in some difficulty because separate negotiations about Malaysia were taking place between the Malayan and Brunei governments and the Singapore governments. He said the broad terms of the Singapore merger had been published, but Sabah had no knowledge of the likely outcome of the negotiations with Brunei. He therefore made it clear that any terms agreed for Sabah must be subject to the proviso that they would not be less favourable than those agreed for Brunei. The second point raised was about language. He said Sabah had agreed that the national language should be Malay, and that was a considerable concession on Sabah's part. However, he explained that the acceptance of this point was conditional on the committee's acceptance of Sabah's requests about the continuing use of the English language.

The five Sabah political parties had decided earlier to agree amongst themselves to meet Lord Landsdowne as one body and to present to him an agreed minimum of safeguards required by Sabah. The five political parties were:

1. The United National Kadazan Organisation.
2. The United Sabah National Organisation.
3. The United Party.
4. The Democratic Party.
5. The National Pasok Momogun Organisation.

When the Lord Landsdowne committee met at the preliminary meeting on 30 August 1962, the Sabah Alliance was not yet formed, although the UNKO and USNO parties had met on several occasions in August to consider the formation of a Sabah Alliance party. The Sabah Alliance was finally

26. Tun Mustapha told this writer that he was criticised by his USNO colleagues for keeping quiet at the I.G.C. meetings. He said he preferred to keep quiet and left all the talking to Tun Stephens as he did not want to jeopardise the formation of the Malaysia plan. Everyone knew that he was in favour of Malaysia.

registered on 13 November 1962.

The memorandum submitted by the five political parties to the I.G.C. was of crucial importance. The various points (later known as the 20 points safeguards) represented the areas the various leaders considered most crucial to Sabah and to the people of Sabah. For this reason, the full text of the 20 point memorandum is given below:

1. Religion

While there was no objection to Islam being the national religion of Malaysia there should be no State religion in North Borneo, and the provisions relating to Islam in the present Constitution of Malaya should not apply to North Borneo.

2. Language

(a) Malay should be the official language of the Federation.

(b) English should continue to be used for a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day.

(c) English should be an official language of North Borneo for all purposes, State or Federal, without limitation of time.

3. Constitution

Whilst accepting that the present Constitution of the Federation of Malaya should form the basis of the Constitution of Malaysia, the Constitution of Malaysia should be a completely new document drafted and agreed in the light of a free association of states and should not be a series of amendments to a Constitution drafted and agreed by different states in totally different circumstances. A new Constitution for North Borneo (Sabah) was of course essential.

4. Head of the Federation

The Head of State in North Borneo should not be eligible for election as Head of the Federation.

5. Name of Federation

"Malaysia" but not "Melayu Raya".

6. Immigration

Control over immigration into any part of Malaysia from outside should rest with the Central Government but entry into North Borneo should also require the approval of the State Government. The Federal Government should not be able to veto the entry of persons into North Borneo for State Government purposes except on strictly security grounds. North Borneo should have unfettered control over the movement of persons other than those in Federal Government employ from other parts of Malaysia into North Borneo.

7. Right of Secession

There should be no right to secede from the Federation.

8. *Borneanisation*

Borneanisation of the public service should proceed as quickly as possible.

9. *British Officers*

Every effort should be made to encourage British officers to remain in the public service until their places can be taken by suitably qualified people from North Borneo.

10. *Citizenship*

The recommendations in paragraph 148(k) of the Report of the Cobbold Commission should govern the citizenship rights in the Federation of North Borneo subject to the following amendments:

- (a) sub-paragraph (i) should not contain the proviso as to five years residence;
- (b) in order to tie up with our law, sub-paragraph (ii)(a) should read "7 out of 10 years" instead of "8 out of the 12 years";
- (c) sub-paragraph (iii) should not contain any restriction tied to the citizenship of parents - a person born in North Borneo after Malaysia must be a federal citizen.

11. *Tariffs and Finance*

North Borneo should retain control of its own finance, development and tariff, and should have the right to work up its own taxation and to raise loans on its own credit.

For the loss of C.D. & W. grants the Federal Government should guarantee to compensate North Borneo and to extend to it a full share of such other grants or aid as may be given to the Federation.

12. *Special Position of Indigenous Races*

In principle, the indigenous races of North Borneo should enjoy special rights analogous to those enjoyed by Malays in Malaya, but the present Malays' formula in this regard is not necessarily applicable in North Borneo.

13. *State Government*

- (a) The Prime Minister should be elected by unofficial members of Legislative Council.
- (b) There should be a proper Ministerial system in North Borneo.

14. *Transitional Period*

This should be seven years and during such period legislative power must be left with the State of North Borneo by the Constitution and not be merely delegated to the State Government by the Federal Government.

15. *Education*

The existing educational system of North Borneo should be maintained and for this reason it should be under state control.

16. Constitutional Safeguards

No amendment modification or withdrawal of any special safeguard granted to North Borneo should be made by the Central Government without the positive concurrence of the Government of the State of North Borneo.

The power of amending the Constitution of the State of North Borneo should belong exclusively to the people in the State. (Note: The United Party, the Democratic Party and the Pasok Momogun Party considered that a three-fourths majority would be required in order to effect any amendment to the Federal and State Constitutions whereas the UNKO and the USNO considered a two-thirds majority would be sufficient.)

17. Representation in Federal Parliament

This should take account not only of the population of North Borneo but also of its size and potentialities and in any case should not be less than that of Singapore.

18. Name of Head of State

Yang di-Pertua Negara.

19. Name of State

Sabah.

20. Land, Forests, Local Government, etc.

The provisions in the Constitution of the Federation in respect of the powers of the National Land Council should not apply in North Borneo. Likewise, the National Council for Local Government should not apply in North Borneo.

Many of these points were modified at subsequent meetings of the I.G.C., either at the constitutional sub-committee or at the plenary sessions. The modifications and their background will be discussed at a later stage.

Meanwhile, Sarawak too presented a paper for the I.G.C. containing 18 points as the basis for discussion by the I.G.C. To a considerable extent, the Sarawak 18 points were similar to the Sabah's 20 points. There are, however, a number of differences, and some of these differences were very important.

The significant differences between the two papers were :

1. Language

The Sarawak paper contained no request corresponding to that of the USNO party's request that Malay should be an official language together with English.

2. *Head of State*

Sarawak requested that the Head of State be chosen from any of the indigenous ethnic groups in Sarawak, but the method of choice would be discussed further. The Sabah paper did not mention this which now seems strange. The Sabah paper only stipulated that the name of Sabah's Head of State should be the Yang di Pertua Negara.

3. *Immigration*

The Sabah paper explicitly asked that Sabah should have unfettered control over the movement of persons, other than those in Federal Government employ, from other parts of Malaysia into Sabah. This requirement was not included in the Sarawak paper, which explicitly refers only to immigration from outside Malaysia. The Sabah paper on immigration control seemed better thought through.

4. *Borneanisation*

The Sarawak paper was explicit in its reservation that federal posts in Sarawak should be filled by Sarawak-born citizens.

5. *Citizenship*

Both Sabah and Sarawak requested that the period of residence for registration as a citizen of Malaysia during the first eight years after Malaysia shall be reduced from eight years out of twelve to seven years out of ten. The Sabah paper added two further points, namely the deletion of the requirement of five years' residence immediately before Malaysia for a citizen of the United Kingdom and colonies, born or naturalised, to become a citizen of Malaysia, and deletion of the requirement that after the formation of Malaysia persons in both Sabah and Sarawak should only be citizens by operation of law if one of their parents was a citizen or a permanent resident.

6. *Finance*

The Sabah paper asked for control of its own finances, development and tariff. The Sarawak paper only asked for three assurances: a development fund, a formula ensuring adequate revenue to the State, and gradual increase of taxation to Malayan levels.

7. *Representation in the Federal Parliament*

The Sarawak paper accepted that the term of the 13th schedule of the Constitution of Malaya should govern the assessment of representation in the Federal Parliament. The Sabah paper, however, avoided any reference to the provisions of the Malayan constitution and asked

explicitly that the size and potentiality of Sabah should be taken into account and that in any case Sabah's representation should not be less than Singapore's. The Sarawak paper added the requirement for adequate ministerial representation at both the higher and lower levels to provide for Sarawak's interests in the Federal Government.

8. *State Government*

The Sarawak paper requested a Chief Minister and a membership system. The Sabah paper asked for a Prime Minister and a proper ministerial system.

9. *Transitional Period*

The Sarawak paper asked that this should be from three to five years and during this period federal powers should be delegated to Sarawak as a State by agreement. The Sabah paper asked for a seven year transitional period, and that during such period legislative power should be left with the State by the constitution and not merely delegated by the Federal government.

10. *Education*

The Sarawak paper asked that provisions should be made to safeguard the Sarawak National Education policy for the future. The Sabah paper asked that the existing educational system of Sabah should be maintained, and for this reason it should be under State control.

The Sabah paper contained two additional points not included in the Sarawak paper, namely that the Head of State should have the title Yang di Pertua Negara and that the name of the state should be Sabah. The Sabah paper was presented to the I.G.C. on 29 August 1962, just one day before the preparatory meeting of the I.G.C.

Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaya and leader of the Malayan delegation mentioned at the very first plenary session of the I.G.C. on 22 October 1962 that there should be no bargaining between representatives on the committee but that all should endeavour together to work out a system of government which would be strong and stable and capable of ensuring happiness for the people of Malaysia. He said the new central government of Malaysia would be the government of all the peoples concerned, not an alien government imposing its will from outside. Tun Stephens, the Sabah leader, agreed, but pointed out that for Sabah the political parties had put forward a joint stand on the matter and had presented the 20 points which to them represented the minimum

safeguards acceptable to the Sabah people. He made it clear that he was not in a position to negotiate the 20 points without going back to the political parties of Sabah for a fresh mandate.

The bargaining among representatives which Tun Razak said should be avoided, nevertheless took place, and it took the Landsdowne committee (the I.G.C.) nearly four months, from August to December, before they reached a concrete agreement on the type and mode of the constitution of the new nation, Malaysia. The record shows that there were twelve plenary sessions, beginning on 30 August and ending on 20 December 1962. There were seven meetings in Sabah and the last five meetings were held in Kuala Lumpur.

The various sub-committees, namely, Constitutional, Fiscal, Public Service, Legal and Judicial, and Departmental met on several occasions before they could reach a consensus amongst themselves and forward their recommendations to the main I.G.C. body. The sub-committee's tasks were to make detailed studies on various subjects or matters presented to them. The sub-committees did not reach any decision; they merely made recommendations and submitted these recommendations to the plenary meetings of the I.G.C.

There were no serious instances of tempers rising or misunderstanding occurring amongst the various participants. There was a sense of give and take. However, there were some subjects which were considered very important to one side but not considered so important by the other side. It was during this time that difficulties arose. For example, out of the 20 point safeguards used as the basis of negotiation by the Sabah team, the Sarawak representatives had different views on ten of them. On the question of finance, for example, the Sarawak paper was very straight-forward. The Sabah paper asked for complete control of Sabah's revenue. The reason Sabah wanted complete control of its financial matters was because the country's economy was then booming and it was felt by the Sabah leaders that Sabah's own revenues from its fast expanding trade should be kept and managed by the state government itself.

The Sabah paper on finance suggested therefore that Sabah's joining Malaysia was not for economic reasons as it would not gain any economic advantage; it was joining Malaysia purely for political reasons. Sarawak, on the other hand, presented a straight-forward financial paper and did not ask to control its state's revenue. Sarawak, in 1962, was the least developed state economically, and it was probably because of this that

it welcomed Malaysia as it saw the economic advantages the state could obtain from the central government. It was obvious, therefore, that Sabah would find it more difficult to obtain concessions on financial matters or any other points which had been conceded by Sarawak or where the two states had divergent views.

Out of the 20 point safeguards asked for by Sabah, the following were considered to be the most important:

1. Religion.
2. Constitutional safeguards.
3. Immigration.
4. Special position of the indigenous people.
5. Language.
6. Education.
7. Fiscal arrangements.

When the Kadazan party, UPKO, headed by Tun Stephens, asked for a re-examination of the 20 points, first in 1965, after Singapore left Malaysia, and then in 1967, after UPKO was asked to leave the Sabah Alliance party, Tun Stephens and other Kadazan leaders emphasised that these points were the most important and had been most seriously broken and whittled away by the central government.

Let us therefore look further at these seven points and see how they were negotiated by all the political parties of Sabah.

Religion

The memorandum submitted by the Sabah political parties on this point was clear: that Sabah must not have a state religion. The Sarawak paper had a similar request on this point. However, the Sabah paper was expanded to include the request that native law and custom in Sabah should be a matter entirely for the state. The reason for the inclusion of "native law and custom" was because in Sabah the native courts were already well established and capable of deciding matters pertaining to native law and custom. There was no equivalent of Sabah's native courts in Malaya. The native courts had the power to decide on offences relating to religion — either the Islamic religion or the Kadazan's customary laws on marriage, incest etc. — and Sabah wanted to retain this system.

The constitutional sub-committee which met on 8 and 9 October 1962 did not include this topic in its first list of points agreed by the

committee to be submitted to the plenary sessions of the I.G.C. This was because there was no consensus of opinion on the matter. The Malayan representatives had placed a reservation on the points raised by the Sabah team. It may have been that they were of the opinion that the Muslims in Sabah were more numerous than they in fact were. The Muslim population, including both the Islamised indigenous population and the Muslim immigrants together, represented some 37.9 percent of the overall population, whereas the Christian population was only 16.6 percent and other religions were 45.5 percent.²⁷ It may also have been that the Malayan representatives were thinking that the "sharia" court system of Malaya should be introduced in Sabah to try cases pertaining to offences against the Islamic religion. The Malayan representatives were not sure whether the native courts in Sabah were adequate to try cases on Islamic matters. The sub-committee, therefore, merely noted that consideration of this item should be deferred and the matter should be discussed in the first instance by a plenary meeting of the I.G.C.

The item on religion, although the first of the 20 points, however, was not discussed at the plenary sessions until the seventh meeting on 26 November 1962. The Sabah paper on religion raised the following points: that the Malayan Constitution refers to Islam in several different ways. First, the Article of the constitution which related to the special position of the Malays (Article 153) depended upon the definition of the word "Malay", including *inter alia* that such a person must profess the Muslim religion. Second, there were provisos which related to Islam as a religion. Third, there were provisos which related to Islamic law. Finally, it was necessary for Sabah to consider whether in the exercise of any of the powers under the Federal or concurrent lists, the Federal government was empowered to legislate in the interests of the advancement of the Muslim religion in the State of Sabah.

The Sabah view, and in particular Tun Stephens' view on specific articles of the Malayan constitution, was that under Article 3(1), Islam is the religion of the Federation. Sabah agreed to this, but with the proviso that the State of Sabah should have no state religion. Article 3(2) says that "in every state, except Malacca and Penang, the Ruler of the state shall be the head of the Muslim religion in the state."

27. *Population Census*, 1960. The final agreement on religion is contained in *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee* (Government Printer, Sabah, 1962).

As Sabah was not a Muslim state, it argued that it should accordingly be excluded from the provisions of this clause. Article 3(3) required the constitution of the states of Malacca and Penang to provide for the conferring on the King (Yang di Pertuan Agong) the position of Head of the Muslim religion in those states. Pursuant to this provision the constitution of the two states of Penang and Malacca required the state legislation to make provisions for regulating Muslim affairs and to establish councils to advise the king in the exercise of his function as head of the Muslim religion. Clause 3(3) also established Islam as the state religion of Malacca and Penang. The Sabah view was that this clause should also not apply to Sabah as Sabah was not a Muslim state.

Article 11 provides that there would be freedom of religion. However, Article 11(4) empowered state law to control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion. The Sabah delegates felt that this clause should not be applicable to Sabah as the clause implied that Muslims in Sabah were to be specially protected from the propagation efforts of other religions. Tun Stephens felt that this was an anomaly in the constitution.

Article 22(2) of the Malayan constitution provided that no person should be compelled to pay any tax the proceeds of which are specially allocated in whole or in part for the purposes of a religion other than his own. The Sabah delegates felt that this clause was too wide. They studied the position of Penang and found that the estimates of the Religious Affairs Department showed an expenditure of \$314,503. Included in this was an expenditure of \$145,440 to provide religious instruction in Islamic religion in assisted primary schools pursuant to Section 36 of the Education Act, 1961. This expenditure was met from the ordinary revenue of the state, together with a federal grant towards the cost of religious instruction in assisted primary schools. And under part of the 10th schedule of the constitution, "Sakat", "fitrah" and "Bait-ul-mal" and similar Muslim revenue was assigned to the states. This particular revenue, however, was not used in the maintenance of the Religious Affairs Department and the payment of teachers to teach the Islamic religion, but was, under the Penang and Malacca Administration of Muslim Law Enactments, paid into an endowment fund which was used for the advancement of the Muslim religion. The cost of religious instruction in assisted secondary schools was also paid from public funds and met entirely from federal revenue. The Sabah position in this was clear: that as Sabah was not a Muslim state this clause should not be applied to them.

Article 12 of the Malayan constitution outlaws discrimination in respect of education and guarantees it to all. But it also authorised federal law to provide special financial aid for the establishment or maintenance of Muslim institutions or instruction in the Muslim religion of persons professing that religion. While this provision envisaged that the federal law concerned would provide for special financial aid from federal funds, this was not what was provided in Chapter 7 of the Education Act 1961. This Education Act purported to require the state governments to pay for instruction in the Muslim religion although it did provide for the Federal Minister to make a grant towards the cost of such amount as he may determine.

From the foregoing it appeared to the Sabah delegates that a proportion of the general revenue collected under the Federation of Malaya constitution was paid towards the advancement of the Islamic religion. Sabah was not a Muslim state and no part of its revenue went to such religious purposes. The Sabah delegates therefore did not agree that federal or state revenues raised in Sabah should be expended for the advancement of any particular religion in Sabah. Sabah's position was that Sabah's religion should be solely a State matter. States which accepted the Islamic religion as a state religion could expend monies for the advancement of their state religions, but non-Muslim states should not be required to conform to a constitution designed for states which had Islam as their state religion. The Sabah team wanted no federal funds to be used for religious purposes in Sabah.

Article 38(2) and Article 3(2) of the Malayan constitution authorised the Conference of Rulers to agree or disagree on the extension of any religious acts, observances or ceremonies to the federation as a whole. Sabah wanted these provisions excluded for Sabah as the provision implied an advancement of the Muslim religion in Sabah.

Finally, on the question of religious education as a federal matter, the Sabah team felt that if education was to be federal, then the provisions of Chapter 7 of the Education Act, 1961, should be excluded for Sabah in so far as it related to the use of public funds for the teaching of any religion in the state. The Education Act required all assisted schools having 15 or more pupils professing the Islamic religion to provide religious instruction within school hours and the cost for this would come from public funds. The Act also expressly prohibited the use of public funds for religious instruction of other religions

except the Muslim religion. The Sabah delegates did not want this provision to apply to their state.

The Sarawak paper on religious matters was short. It stated, however, that Sarawak was in general accord with the views forwarded by Sabah. Sarawak mentioned that only 23 percent of the population of the state was Muslim as compared with 37 percent in Sabah. The Sabah paper wanted the term "Native" to be clearly defined in the Constitution to include all "bumiputras" in the state. The Sarawak definition of native (Interpretation Ordinance) was that all natives, including Malays, were considered as indigenous to Sarawak. There was no stipulation in the Ordinance that a Malay in Sarawak must for legal purposes profess the Muslim religion. Article 153 of the constitution therefore needed to be amended and expanded to ensure that all natives were protected equally under the constitution. Sarawak was prepared to agree that Islam should be the federal religion of Malaysia but emphasised that this was only acceptable to them if there was a satisfactory solution to their demand that the provisions relating to Islam in the constitution of Malaya did not apply to Sarawak.

At the plenary meeting on 26 November 1962, the Sarawak and Sabah papers were discussed. Their suggestion on the use of public funds for religious instruction was adopted so that, if the federation government after Malaysia Day distributed funds out of federal revenue for Muslim religious purposes in the territories comprising the Federation of Malaya under Article 12(2) of the constitution, it would also grant to the Sabah and Sarawak governments proportionate amounts for social and welfare purposes in these two states.

In respect of Article 38, clauses (2)(b) and (6)(d) the Malayan delegation agreed that these provisions would not apply to Sabah and Sarawak. This article deals with the functions of the Conference of Rulers relating to the extension of religious acts, observances and ceremonies.

The tactical agreement on the religious point as centred on the draft report of the I.G.C. 1962 was: that no amendment was required to article 3(1) which provides: "Islam is the religion of the federation: but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the federation." As in the case of Penang and Malacca [Article 3(2)] the heads of state in Sabah and Sarawak would not be the head of the Muslim religion in the state.

It was decided however that Article 3(3) should be left unamended insofar as it provided that the king was the head of the Muslim religion in Penang and Malacca. By leaving this section unamended, the implication then was that Sabah and Sarawak would not have the king as the Head of the Muslim religion in their respective states. Article 11(4) provides: "State Law may control or restrict the propagation of any religion, doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion." In other words, no religion e.g. Christianity, would be taught or proselytised to the Bajaus of Sabah who were nearly 100 percent Muslim. The committee agreed that in respect of this article, the constitutions of Sabah and Sarawak could properly provide that a law having the effect described in Article 11(4) would have to be passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the total membership of the state Legislative Assembly. In other words, if Sabah wanted the provision of Article 11(4) to be applied to the state, it would need a two-thirds majority of the votes in the Assembly.

The I.G.C. agreed that sections 36 and 37 of the Malayan Education Act 1961 would not be applied to Sabah and Sarawak, and that federal law would not provide for special financial aid for the establishment of Muslim institutions or instruction in the Muslim religion of persons professing that religion in Sabah and Sarawak without concurrence of the state governments concerned. Federal law which provided for special financial aid for Muslim institutions or Muslim religious education pursuant to Article 12(2) of the constitution would be amended to provide for a grant to the Sabah or Sarawak governments of a proportionate amount. And any grants paid out by the federal government from the proceeds of lotteries conducted by the Social and Welfare Services Lottery Board would not be regarded as a payment made from federal revenue.²⁸

Sabah's position on the religious point was understandable. At that time, Tun Stephens was a Christian and he was also leader of a predominantly Christian Kadazan party — the UNKO party. Tun Mustapha, the Muslim leader, did not present any objection to Sabah's paper on religion. He told this writer in an interview that he had decided to keep quiet as he was more concerned for Sabah to join Malaysia. He did not want to create any misunderstanding which could cause a delay in the implementation of Malaysia. Tun Mustapha was astute in adopting this

28. I.G.C., Constitutional Sub-Committee, *The Twenty Points*. This was a resume of each of the 20 points with some advice added as a guide to Sabah members of the Committee.

attitude. He knew that the religion of the federation was Islam and for the time being this was enough. There will be time later to consider Sabah's religion. Tun Mustapha's role in making Islam the state religion in 1971 will be discussed in a later chapter.

The Constitutional Arrangement

Both the Sabah and Sarawak papers stated that the Malayan constitution was acceptable as a basis for the constitution of Malaysia. However, both also wanted to have a completely new document drafted and agreed to by the parties concerned as the constitution of Malaysia. The Sabah paper stated that while it accepted that the constitution of the federation of Malaya could form the basis of the constitution of Malaysia, a new document should be drafted and agreed to:

in the light of a free association of states and should not be a series of amendments to a constitution drafted and agreed to by different states in totally different circumstances.

It also asked for a new constitution for Sabah. The Sarawak paper had a similar request on this point. At the time of inter-governmental committee meetings, both the Sabah and Sarawak negotiating teams were of the opinion that they were joining in the new federation of Malaysia as equal partners. The new federation would consist of four equal partners, namely, Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. This was Tun Stephens' view, and that was why the Sabah paper mentioned "in light of a free association of states"

However, the request for a completely new Malaysian constitution was not granted, for two reasons:

1. that the drafting of a completely new constitution would have taken a long time to complete, and the deadline for the formation of Malaysia was agreed to be 31 August 1963, the Independence Day of Malaya;
2. that when the Sabah team saw the voluminous amount of papers as "aide memoires" presented to them (at least to Tun Stephens) on the establishment of a new constitution for Malaysia, they realised the amount of time and energy needed for the drafting of a new constitution for Malaysia.

However, with the advantage of hindsight, the Sabah and Sarawak leaders could have agreed to an interim transitional document to establish

Malaysia. A new constitution could have been drafted and presented to parliament and the elected state legislatures later for debate and agreement, but this was not done.

The memoranda and aide memoires on the constitution of Malaysia prepared for the Sabah team were both extensive and intensive. There was a study of all the articles and clauses in the Malayan constitution and how each of the articles would affect Sabah. The memoranda and "aide memoires" also contained recommendations from the officials drafting them to be used by the Sabah team at the conference table. Bargaining, horse-trading and concessions were envisaged by the memorandum and aide memoires. One of the aide memoires on federal control over state functions, for example, explained that:

this paper is to consider the extent to which the function of states of the federation of Malaya are controlled under the constitution by the central government and the extent to which these provisions should apply to Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia.

The constitutional sub-committee was told by the Malayan delegates that the complications of jettisoning the existing constitution of the Federation of Malaya and drawing up an entirely new federal constitution were such as to make this proposal impracticable. The existing constitution of Malaya contained provision for the admission of new states and modifications of the constitution in its application to the new states would be made in the form of schedules. With the admission of the two states, Sabah and Sarawak, the federation of Malaya would cease to exist as a political entity and would be succeeded by the federation of Malaysia.

The I.G.C. report therefore sets out the necessary amendments to the federation of Malaya's constitution to meet the requirements of Sabah and Sarawak. These amendments included transitional provisions. The committee also agreed to use the Malayan constitution as a basis for the new Malaysian constitution, and agreed further that the constitution of Malaya (as amended) would apply in relation to Sabah and Sarawak in the same way as it applied in relation to the states which formed the federation of Malaya.

The other important agreement reached by the committee (I.G.C.) was that in certain aspects the requirements of Sabah and Sarawak could appropriately be met by undertakings or assurances to be given by the government of the federation of Malaya rather than by constitutional provision. The committee further agreed that these undertakings and assurances could be included in a formal agreement or could be dealt

with in exchanges of letters between the governments concerned.

Immigration

Sabah and Sarawak wanted control over immigration into their respective states mainly because they feared an influx of more sophisticated people from Malaya and Singapore. There was also another underlying reason why Sabah wanted unfettered control over immigration. This was because Sabah leaders wanted to demonstrate to the Malayan leaders that Sabah was to be treated as an "equal" in the new Malaysian federation and that there was no question of vassalage.

Sabah's requests on immigration read:

Control over immigration into any part of Malaysia from outside should rest with the central government, but entry into Sabah should also require the approval of the state government. The federal government should not be able to veto the entry of persons into Sabah for state government purposes except on strictly security grounds. Sabah should have unfettered control over the movement of persons other than those in federal government employ from other parts of Malaysia into Sabah.

Sabah's stand on immigration was not very different from the Cobbold report recommendations, which were:

1. control over immigration from outside Malaysia should be federal but should also require the approval of the state government concerned but the federal government should give unrestricted entry for state government employees except on security grounds;
2. entry from other Malaysian states should be subject to the control of the respective states, but the free movement of federal officers should be guaranteed by the state government. The state government will be well aware of security aspects and will be able to take this into account in controlling entry into their states.
3. There should be a visitor's permit valid for three months to encourage exchange of visits.

The Malayan paper (I.G.C./MS/962) was considered vague and unenforceable by the Sabah and Sarawak delegates as it did not spell out how Sabah could control entry into the state. It was presumed that the intention of the Malayan paper was to provide for a federal law to authorise the

state authorities to issue or deny permits but that it was not intended to give legislative power to the state. Another point raised in connection with the Malayan paper was that the state government would require power to remove unwanted persons from Malaya or Singapore but it is not clear whether the proposed federal law would give such power to the state. With regard to immigration from outside Malaysia, the Malayan paper concerned only one aspect of immigration, namely, preventing a person from entering the state. Under the Malayan proposal the federal government would control entry from outside subject to a vague veto. The Sabah proposal was the opposite: that Sabah should have the power to admit entry from outside Malaysia unless the Federal government was able, on strictly security grounds, to say that a particular person was undesirable. The effect of the Malayan proposal was that the entry of an immigrant from outside Malaysia to develop a state resource would be a federal matter.

The constitutional sub-committee which met for the first time on 8 October 1962 considered the immigration matter and recommended that the Malayan government, after consulting the Attorney Generals of Sabah and Sarawak, should submit a paper setting out the constitutional safeguards to be provided to enable the Sarawak and Sabah governments to exercise control over entry into their countries. The agreement reached at the constitutional sub-committee was the following:

1. Control of immigration should be a federal matter but there should be certain constitutional safeguards with regard to the entry of persons into Sabah and Sarawak from other parts of Malaysia and also from outside Malaysia.
2. That with regard to entry into Sabah and Sarawak from other parts of Malaysia, the existing Malayan constitution should be amended to enable the federal parliament to legislate to empower the governments of Sabah and Sarawak to control the movements, other than on the grounds specified in article 9(2) of persons from other parts of Malaysia into Sabah and Sarawak, and to provide that any such legislation may not be repeated or amended without the concurrence of the government of the state concerned. The Malayan government should also give an undertaking to pass, as soon as possible after Sabah and Sarawak were admitted into Malaysia, a law conferring upon each of the states of Sabah and Sarawak power to control the

entry into the state of persons from other parts of Malaysia, subject to the provisions designed to secure that a person or class of persons should be admitted or refused admission into the state if the federal government considered that this was necessary or expedient in the interests of defence, internal security secrets, external affairs, or in order to enable the federal government to carry out its other constitutional and administrative responsibilities.

The Malayan delegation prepared a new paper on immigration as agreed at the constitutional sub-committee. The Malayan paper was entitled: "Federation Government Paper for the Constitutional Committee: Control of Immigration into Sabah and Sarawak". The paper had three parts. Part A contained a proposal on "Immigration into Sabah and Sarawak from outside Malaysia". Part B was a proposal on "Immigration into Sabah and Sarawak from other parts of Malaysia". And Part C was a summary of proposals and safeguards.

The Malayan paper pointed out that the Malayan constitution had given no authority to the various states on immigration. Sabah or Sarawak, however, although conceding that immigration to any part of Malaysia from outside Malaysia should rest with the central government, nevertheless said that:

- (a) the central government should guarantee unrestricted entry for state government purposes, except on grounds of security, and
- (b) entry into these states should also require the approval of the state government.

The Malayan delegation accepted (a), but had reservations with regard to (b) above. They considered that this request raised practical difficulties in that the federal government, having undertaken constitutional and administrative responsibilities in the states in respect of defence, internal security, external affairs and other matters, must be in a position to carry out these responsibilities in whatever manner it considered best in the interests of Malaysia as a whole. It was therefore thought necessary that the federal government should be free to admit any person or class of persons into the state, without having to obtain the approval of a state authority, in the interest of defence, internal security or in order to enable the federal government to carry out its other constitutional and administrative responsibilities.

The Malayan paper therefore proposed that to meet the states' request as contained in (b) above, the governments of Sabah and Sarawak respectively should be given the right to request the central government to deny admission to the state of any particular person or class of persons from outside Malaysia, other than members or officers of the government. The central government would be bound to comply with such a request unless in its opinion the admission of a person or class of persons was necessary or expedient in the interests of defence, internal security or external affairs, or in order to enable the Federal government to carry out its constitutional and administrative responsibilities.

As to immigration into Sabah and Sarawak from other parts of Malaysia, the Malayan paper said that the Federal government should agree that the two states of Sabah and Sarawak should have control over the entry of persons from other parts of Malaysia either directly or indirectly but would, for political reasons, require that this safeguard should be in such a form as not to give to any state legislative powers in relation to the movement of persons within Malaysia. The form of control would ensure that the states of Sabah and Sarawak would have executive power to control the entry of persons from other parts of Malaysia into the state subject to provisions designed to secure that a person or class of persons should be admitted or refused admission into the state if the federal government considered that this was necessary or expedient in the interest of defence, internal security etc.

The safeguards proposed by the Malayan delegation were as follows:

1. In respect of immigration into Sabah and Sarawak from outside Malaysia:
 - (i) Legislative and executive control of immigration from outside Malaysia should be federal.
 - (ii) The existing Malayan constitution should be amended so as to provide:
 - (a) That the federal government will guarantee unrestricted entry into Sabah and Sarawak for state government purposes, except in cases where the federal government considered that it is desirable on grounds of security that entry should be refused.
 - (b) That the government of Sabah and Sarawak may request the federal government to deny admission to the state to any particular person or class of persons from outside Malaysia other than members or officers of the federal government.
 - (c) That subject to the provisions of article 9(1), the federal government will comply with such a request

unless in its opinion the admission of that person or class of persons was necessary or expedient in the interest of defence, internal security etc.

- (d) That the provisions referred to in (a), (b) and (c) in the foregoing may not be modified or withdrawn without the concurrence of the government of the state concerned.
2. In respect of immigration into Sabah and Sarawak from other parts of Malaysia, it was agreed that:
- (i) Legislative control of movement within Malaysia should be federal.
 - (ii) The existing Malayan constitution should be amended:
 - (a) To enable the Federal Parliament to legislate to empower the governments of Sabah and Sarawak to control the movements, otherwise than on the grounds specified in article 9(2) of persons from other parts of Malaysia into Sabah and Sarawak.
 - (b) To validate retrospectively any such law passed by the existing Federal Parliament prior to the admission of Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia with effect from the date of their admission.
 - (c) To provide that a law passed in accordance with subparagraph (b) above may not be repealed or amended without the concurrence of the government of the state.
 - (d) To provide that the provisions referred to in (a), (b) and (c) above may not be modified or withdrawn without the concurrence of the government of the state concerned.
 - (iii) The government of Malays would undertake in the formal agreement for the formation of Malaysia, to pass a law coming into operation on the date of the admission of Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia, conferring on the two states executive power to control entry, either directly or indirectly into the states of persons from other parts of Malaysia, subject to the provisions designed to secure that a person or class of persons should be admitted or refused admission if the federal government considered that this was necessary or expedient in the interests of defence, internal security, external affairs, or in order to enable the federal government to carry out its other constitutional or administrative responsibilities.

The Sabah team reformulated the Malayan proposals as follows:

- (a) Immigration into the Federation of Malaysia should be a federal matter.
- (b) The federal constitution would be amended to enable the Federal Parliament to legislate to control movement between the Federation and a new state or between new states on any ground, i.e. not merely the grounds specified in article 9(2).

- (c) The federal government would undertake in the formal agreement for the establishment of Malaysia to pass before Malaysia Day a law coming into operation on Malaysia Day the draft of which would be scheduled to the formal agreement and an outline of which is set out in paragraph (f) below.
- (d) The federal constitution as amended to admit the new states would contain provision validating respectively this law and providing that it may not be amended or repealed without the concurrence of the governments of the states concerned.
- (e) The federal constitution as amended to admit the new states would provide that the provisions referred to in sub-paragraphs (b) and (d) above may not be amended or repealed without the concurrence of the governments of the states concerned.
- (f) The law referred to in sub-paragraph (c) above would contain provisions to secure that:
 - (i) Any person or class of persons from outside Malaysia whose entry the government of Sabah or Sarawak considered expedient for state purposes is given unrestricted entry permit except in cases where the federal government considers that it is desirable on grounds of security that entry should be refused and, subject also to the usual essential provisions for the protection of the public, in particular against the introduction of serious contagious or infectious disease.
 - (ii) Subject to article 9(1) and to sub-paragraph (iv) hereinbelow, admission to Sabah or Sarawak will not be granted to any other person or class of persons, whether from inside or outside Malaysia, without the approval of the government of the state concerned.
 - (iii) Subject to sub-paragraph (iv) hereinbelow, any person whom the government of Sabah or Sarawak wishes to be removed from the state is so removed.
 - (iv) The provisions outlined in sub-paragraphs (ii) and (iii) hereinabove do not apply to members or officers of the federal government or any other person or class of persons whose presence in the state the federal government considers is expedient for federal purposes or any person who belongs to the state, i.e. who is a permanent resident of the state or who acquired citizenship of Malaysia on account of connection with the state.

Sabah's reformulated proposal was considered and it came to form the basis of the agreement on immigration as contained in the draft Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962 and embodied in the Malaysia Agreement.

Special Position of the Indigenous Races

Sabah asked that, in principle, the indigenous races of Sabah should enjoy special rights analogous to those enjoyed by Malays in Malaya. Sarawak also made a similar request. The subject of the special position of the indigenous races was brought up for discussion at the first meeting of the constitutional sub-committee on 8 October, and the minutes of the meeting noted:

It was agreed that the Federation government (Malaya) should submit a paper outlining the existing practice in the Federation (Malaya) in relation to Article 153 of the existing federal constitution and that the Sarawak and Sabah governments should similarly submit papers on the present position of their respective indigenous races. The matter would be considered in detail by the sub-committee when the background to this question was available to them.

The Sabah members were provided with a short resume on this subject by their experts and the advice given was that the precise arrangements for special rights needed definition.

The special position of Malays is laid down in Article 153 of the Malayan constitution which provided for the Yang di Pertuan Agong to ensure the reservation for Malays of such proportions as he deems reasonable of positions in the federal public service, federal scholarships and federal licences and permits. The Yang di Pertuan Agong acts in this matter on the advice of the federal government.

The present point 12 (special position of indigenous races) could be met if the following words were added: "It is not therefore considered that in respect of Sabah the Yang di Pertuan Agong should, when exercising his functions under Article 153 of the constitution act on the advice of the Federal Cabinet. An arrangement should be devised so that, in the exercise of this function, the Agong acts on Sabah advice, possibly that of the Chief Minister or of a Board as proposed by the Cobbold report."

A Sabah paper, known as I.G.C. 30/2/nb/8 and entitled "Special Position of the Indigenous Races" was prepared for consideration by the constitutional sub-committee. The Sabah paper discussed:

- (i) Education amongst the native population;
- (ii) Natives in the Civil Service;
- (iii) Definition of Natives and the position of Sino-Natives (Sino-Kadazans); and
- (iv) "Borneanisation" of the civil service.

In respect of education for the native populations, the Sabah paper admitted that the number of natives with high qualifications was very low. This was because most natives lived in the rural areas and there were few if any secondary schools in these areas. As a result of the low number of natives with qualifications or secondary education, very few had advanced in the civil service. For example, in 1962 there were no native local officers in Division One, and only 50 native local officers out of 223 in Division Two. Of the 244 locals in Division Three only 66 were natives. The position of different ethnic segments in the civil service in 1962 is given in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Department	Div. 1	Div. 2			Div. 3			Total
	Others	N.	C.	O.	N.	C.	O.	
Administration	11	6	2	30	16	21	7	93
Acct. General	2	-	4	3	1	10	3	23
Agriculture	2	1	2	18	2	7	9	41
Audit	2	-	2	2	-	3	1	10
B'casting & Inf.	1	1	-	2	2	3	2	11
Civil Aviation	1	-	-	4	-	2	7	14
Education	5	-	3	18	11	31	16	84
Forests	2	1	-	8	3	1	11	26
Geological Survey	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	4
Inland Revenue	1	-	2	1	-	3	-	7
Judicial	1	-	1	2	-	1	-	5
Labour & Welfare	1	-	1	1	-	7	-	10
Lands & Survey	2	-	4	7	-	4	5	22
Legal	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	5
Marine	1	-	-	5	3	1	2	12
Medical	6	-	2	15	4	15	25	67
Police	4	2	2	17	19	14	5	63
Post & Telegraph	2	1	1	5	1	11	7	28
Printing	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	4
Prisons	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Public Works	5	-	4	24	2	27	30	92
Railways	1	-	2	3	-	6	3	15
Statistics	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Trade & Customs	2	-	4	4	-	7	-	17
Training	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3
	56	13	37	173	66	178	136	659

N. = Natives; C. = Chinese; O. = Others.

Source: Report compiled for constitutional sub-committee.

The Sabah paper did not recommend that a quota system as in Malaya be adopted for the indigenous races in Sabah in the field of scholarships or civil service recruitment as it was thought not practical. The

paper noted that in Sabah's circumstances it was quite impracticable as yet to adopt a quota system in favour of the indigenous people in recruitment for the public service. It would be some years before enough indigenous candidates were available to enable quotas to be applied.

On the question of a definition of "natives", the paper quoted the Interpretation (Definition of Native) Ordinance Cap 64 of the Sabah Laws. The paper said that the definition of natives was wide and included:

inter alia: any person who is ordinarily resident in the colony, is a member of a people indigenous to Indonesia, or the Sulu group of islands in the Philippines archipelago or the Federation of Malaya or colony of Singapore, has lived as and been a member of a native community for a continuous period of five years immediately preceding the date of his claim to be a native, has borne a good character throughout that period and whose stay in the colony is not limited under any of the provisions of the Immigration Ordinance.

"No claim" by any person to be native by virtue of the provisions...hereof shall be recognised as valid unless supported by an appropriate declaration made by a native court under Section 3.

This last section was much abused in the period 1966-1975 and also from 1976 to 1981. Many full blooded Chinese and other non-natives corrupted the native courts to obtain a native certificate.

The native population in Sabah also had many people of mixed blood, especially a mixture of Kadazan and Chinese through marriage. The children who had Chinese fathers adopted the Chinese surname, and in some cases, had a complete Chinese name. They were, however, brought up as Kadazan and their fathers who had married Kadazan women themselves became absorbed in the Kadazan way of life. The only "Chinese culture" they retained was the name. The Sabah paper mentioned the existence of a large number of these Sino-Kadazans in Sabah because the paper wanted to emphasise that if the Yang di Pertuan Agong was to act on the matter of a quota system for the natives of Sabah on the advice of the Federal Cabinet, he might not know who were really the indigenous races in Sabah. The paper therefore recommended that the provisions of Article 153 of the Malayan constitution be extended to Sabah but the king should be required to act upon the advice of the state government.

It should also be pointed out that Tun Stephens was a Eurasian — a mixture of European and Kadazan. During the negotiations on the Malaysian proposal, the Sino-Kadazan Association (known then as the Sabah Peranakan Association) was an active organisation. Tun Stephens was active in the promotion of this association.

It is also appropriate to mention in passing here that the fear that the Sino-Kadazans with Chinese surnames might be mistaken for Chinese was not unjustified. With the establishment of Malaysia many Sino-Kadazans with Chinese surnames decided to change their surnames by deed poll. They dropped the Chinese surnames as they found that when their children applied for native scholarships or jobs in the government service they were mistaken as Chinese children.

The Sarawak paper, known as I.G.C./30/2/5/10 Sarawak No. 22, entitled "Special Position of the Indigenous Races" was more comprehensive. It discussed the Sarawak government's policy on:

1. the public service
2. scholarships
3. land matters
4. permits and licences for trade and business.

The paper stated that the Sarawak government had already implemented a policy of giving the indigenous races a special position in their own country in a small way in the four items mentioned above. The Sarawak team proposed that:

- (a) In its application to Sarawak, Article 153 should be construed as if natives were substituted for Malay.
- (b) The term native should be defined in the new constitution by adopting the definition in the Sarawak Interpretation Ordinance.
- (c) It should be laid down in the constitution that in exercising his powers under Article 153 the king should act on the advice of the State Executive Council or a member thereof acting under the general authority of the Council. The definition of native under (b) above included "Malays".

The Malayan paper on the same subject dealt with Article 153 as it applied to the Malays in Malaya. Article 153 protects the Malays in regard to:

- (i) Appointments in the civil service.
- (ii) Award of scholarships.
- (iii) Issue of permits or licences for business or trade purposes.

This was notwithstanding the provisions of Article 8(2) which prohibits discrimination against citizens on grounds of race. The quotas as they

stood in 1962 were as follows:

- (a) Malayan Civil Service 4:1
- (b) Legal service 3:1
- (c) Police 3:1
- (d) Customs service 3:1
- (e) External Affairs service 3:1

and in respect of scholarships:

- (a) Federal bursaries in science subjects 2:1
- (b) Federal bursaries in arts subjects 3:1

The Malayan paper explained that no quotas had been fixed in the issue of licences or permits but in recent times preference had been given to Malay applicants for new licences in public transport. It also explained that Article 153 was only an enabling provision and its application was a matter for the government of the day to decide dependent on the circumstances prevailing at any given time.

The recommendations of the constitutional sub-committee as contained in its report of meetings in Kuala Lumpur on 14, 15 and 16 November 1962, were that:

- (a) In the application of Article 153 of the federal constitution into Sabah and Sarawak its terms should be construed as if "natives" were substituted for "Malays".
- (b) The term "native" should be defined in the new constitution by adopting the definition:
 - (i) in Sarawak the definition in the Sarawak Interpretation Ordinance, and
 - (ii) in Sabah the definition in the existing Sabah legislation subject to amendments which would be enacted.
- (c) In relation to federal matters the king should exercise his powers under Article 153 on the advice of the Federal Cabinet, but in relation to the application of this Article to Sabah and Sarawak such advice shall only be given after consultation with the Chief Minister concerned.
- (d) The public service sub-committee should consider further the application of Article 153 in relation to the future federal public service.
- (e) Article 89 of the federal constitution (lands matters) should not apply in Sabah and Sarawak, but there should be an amendment in the constitution to enable the state governments of Sabah and Sarawak to make provision on the lines of Article 89 in respect of their own "natives".
- (f) Article 153(10) of the federal constitution should be amended in order to make its provisions applicable to Sabah and Sarawak.

The above recommendations were agreed to by the constitutional sub-committee which met on 15 November 1962 and were subsequently adopted by the plenary session and embodied in its main report.

The lack of "bumiputras" with high qualifications had persisted in Sabah even after the 1960s. This was especially so in technical fields. The Sabah civil service therefore had a high percentage of non-"bumiputras" occupying high positions in the civil service. In 1968-1975, the Tun Mustapha regime tried to remedy this situation by imposing the Malay language as a condition for promotion. Many Malays were promoted to positions of influence despite their relatively lower educational background. Many of the top posts were also held by West Malaysian Malays on a temporary basis. Tun Mustapha's argument in favour of filling posts by Malays from West Malaysia was that at least they were "bumiputras" and that they were only there on a temporary basis. They would be replaced when there were enough Sabah "bumiputras" to fill the posts. This was a creditable argument until the question of religious affiliation was also made a determining factor for recruitment and promotion. Non-Muslim "bumiputras", especially the Kadazans, suddenly found themselves unacceptable for promotion or recruitment in the civil service unless they became Muslims. This will be discussed in the final chapter in the section dealing with religion. Obviously when Tun Stephens was presenting Sabah's views on the special position of the natives of Sabah within the new Malaysian Federation, he was thinking of all the natives, regardless of their religion. He did not foresee the events which took place after 1971 which in effect divided the Sabah "bumiputras" into two categories: the Muslim "bumiputras" and the non-Muslim "bumiputras", with the first category the favoured ones.

National Language

The Memorandum submitted by Sabah on this subject was similar to that of Sarawak, although the Sarawak paper did not have the corresponding request made by the President of USNO that Malay should be an official language together with English. The Sabah request was:

- (a) Malay should be the national language of the Federation.
- (b) English should continue to be used for a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day.
- (c) English should be an official language of Sabah for all purposes state or federal without limitation of time.

The President of the USNO party made the request that the decision of its central committee that Malay should be an official language along with English be included under this head.

The decisions reached at the constitution sub-committee on this subject were that:

- (a) Subject to Article 152(1) of the Malayan constitution, Malay should be the national language of the Federation of Malaya.
- (b) After it had been explained that the Sabah paper amendment to substitute "Malaysia Day" for "Merdeka Day" in Article 152(2), (3), (4) of the existing Malayan constitution it was agreed that the Sabah government should submit a short paper to the sub-committee amplifying the whole of the subject on National Language, with particular reference to (i) Article 152(5) of the existing Malayan Federal Constitution, and (ii) the desire of certain representatives namely USNO's Tun Mustapha that Malay should be an official language along with English.

The paper requested by the constitutional committee was prepared. It was a joint paper by Sabah and Sarawak and was a clarification of Point 2 (Language) of the 20 points. The joint paper noted that although Malay was the "lingua franca" in both Sabah and Sarawak, it was not a language which was used by a majority of the indigenous people in either country nor was it the mother tongue of any majority group. Therefore in agreeing that Malay should be the national language of the new Federation of Malaysia, considerable concession had clearly been made by Sabah and Sarawak.

With regard to Point 2(b), i.e. that English should continue to be used for a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day, this was requested for the same reasons that this provision was considered necessary when the Malayan constitution was formulated. It was considered essential that the English language should be able to be used by people from Sabah and Sarawak conducting and executing federal business for at least a period of 10 years from Malaysia Day which was what the Malayan members of the Cobbold Commission recommended. It was therefore recommended that whenever the words "Merdeka Day" appeared in Article 152 of the constitution, the words "Malaysia Day" should be substituted. Further, a rider was necessary to provide for the continuing use of English in the subordinate courts as Article 152 provided only for the use of English in the Supreme Court.

In respect of Point 2(c), i.e. that English should be the official

language of Sabah for all purposes, state and federal, without limitation of time, the intention was that English should be the official language of the state without limitation of time in Sabah but that Malay should be an official language for the purpose only of proceedings of the Legislative Council and local authorities, and similarly that the position in Sarawak should remain as it was, and also without limitation of time.

The first point, i.e. Malay as the national language, did not meet any difficulties. The second point, i.e. the use of English for at least 10 years after Malaysia Day, also did not meet any objection. It was the third point, the use of English as an official language in Sabah without limitation of time, that met reservations from the Malayan team. This third point — the use of English as an official language and Malay also as an official language only in proceedings at the Legislative Assembly and local authorities — was a compromise amongst the Sabah political leaders. Tun Mustapha had insisted that the Malay language should also be the official language for Sabah, and indeed it was included in Sabah's memorandum to the I.G.C. This request by Tun Mustapha to make Malay the official language at the very beginning of Malaysia's history was very understandable. He did not have a good command of the English language, and a reason for the compromise use of the Malay language as the official language at the Legislative Assembly and local authorities meeting was partly to accommodate Tun Mustapha's lack of knowledge of the English language.²⁹ By allowing the use of Malay in these proceedings, it was anticipated that Tun Mustapha and other Malay leaders who had little English education would be able to participate fully in the proceedings.

It was also understandable that Tun Stephens insisted on the use of the English language for at least 10 years after Malaysia Day, as this would make it easier for the many government officials to be able to continue their work in the English language. After all, Malaya had a similar provision when that country gained independence in 1957. What is not very clear, however, was the real intention of advocating English as an official language for Sabah without limitation of time. Tun Stephens

29. Tun Mustapha's education is said to be minimal - Primary Standard 2. He is very fluent in the Malay language, however. He was sent to England on a scholarship by the colonial government to study English and later, when he became the Chief Minister of Sabah he had private instruction in London. He became quite fluent in the English language.

could have been influenced by Singapore's stand on this matter, but in Singapore, the number of English speaking people was far greater than in Sabah. Indeed, the English language had become a second language, if not the mother tongue of many Singaporeans. However, an underlying reason seems to have been tied up with the point on education. The Sabah leaders, in particular Tun Stephens, had insisted that Sabah's own educational system should continue and this meant the use of the English language as the medium of instruction. The Sabah leaders seemed to be thereby placing obstacles to nation-building and the rapid integration of all the peoples of Malaysia by emphasising the use of English instead of the National Language, Malay. Indeed, Tun Stephens seemed to think that the use of the Malay language as the official language would make the Sabahans, especially the Kadazans, lose sight of their own culture and language. The use of the English language as the official and second language he felt had not done this.

Before Tun Stephens attended the plenary session on 22 October 1962, he was handed an aide memoire which said:

If Malaya is not prepared to concede the continuance of English for 10 years after Malaysia Day (para. 2 of memo.) and the point in para. 5 about the use of English as the official language of Sabah for state and federal purposes without limitation of time, we should say that we must *reconsider* our concession that Malay should be the national language of the new Federation.

Tun Stephens scribbled his own note in this aide memoire with the word "Stay", meaning that he was going to use it at the conference.³⁰ At the plenary session Tun Stephens spoke on the language issue. He explained that Sabah had in fact only given provisional agreement to Malay being the national language of the Federation of Malaysia. This agreement was conditional, he asserted, on satisfactory arrangements being agreed over the future position of English, both in Malaysia and in Sabah itself. The matter would need to be discussed further in the constitutional sub-committee. In more general terms, Tun Stephens explained that it would be very difficult for the political parties in Sabah to commit themselves to any agreements while they were unable to discover what terms were being agreed over Brunei's entry into Malaysia or how the Malayan-Singapore Agreement of the 15 November 1961 was to be implemented in detail. Pending the outcome of the Malayan-Brunei talks, he concluded, it was necessary for Sabah to reserve her final decision on the language matter.

30. This particular aide memoire was typed on a piece of paper and found by this writer amongst the UPKO files on the I.G.C. minutes of meetings.

At the plenary session the following morning (23 October 1962) a joint paper by Sabah and Sarawak (known as I.G.C. 20/2/NB/3) was introduced. We have discussed the contents of this joint paper in the foregoing. Tun Stephens explained at the meeting that the paper amplified Point 2 of the 20 points (i.e. language). He said there had already been discussion on Point 2(a), i.e. that Malay should be the national language of the Federation of Malaysia, and he had nothing further to say on that issue. He said he was more concerned about gaining an adequate assurance on the continued use of the English language after Malaysia Day. Tun Razak replied that he was quite prepared to make concessions on this point — i.e. continued use of English after Malaysia Day — provided that they applied only in Sarawak and Sabah and not in Malaya. He said that there would be no difficulty in making provision on the schedules relating to Sabah and Sarawak that English should continue to be used for a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day. After further discussion, the committee agreed that:

- (i) In the application of Article 152 of the Malayan Federal Constitution to Sabah and Sarawak,
 - (a) for references to 'Merdeka Day' there should be substituted references to 'Malaysia Day' and
 - (b) for the reference to Parliament in clause (5) of the article there shall be substituted a reference to the State Legislature.
- (ii) English will be an official language in Sabah and Sarawak for both state and federal purposes until the State Legislature concerned otherwise provides.

Point 2(c), i.e. English as the official language in Sabah without limitation of time was amended to read "until the State Legislature concerned otherwise provides." This was a big concession to Sabah and to Tun Stephens — it was one battle won. The request by Tun Mustapha for Malay as an official language at the same time as the English language was not agreed or conceded.

The final agreement on this subject was put down in the I.G.C. paragraph 26 of the Draft Report which read:

National Language:

Malay should be the national language of the Federation of Malaysia, but Article 152 should be modified in its application to Sabah and Sarawak so as to secure that:

- (a) For a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day and *thereafter* until the State Legislature otherwise provides, the English Language may be used in the Legislative Assembly and for all other official purposes in the state, whether federal or state.

- (b) For a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day and thereafter until Parliament otherwise provides, the English language may be used by the representatives of Sabah and Sarawak in both Houses of the Federal Parliament.
- (c) For a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day and thereafter until both the state legislatures have otherwise provided, all proceedings in the Supreme Court relating to cases arising in Sarawak and Sabah and all proceedings in the High Court of Borneo shall be in the English language (subject to the proviso regarding evidence in the existing clause).

The above draft was adopted in the final report of the inter-governmental committee. It was something for Tun Stephens to be proud of, especially the concessions on the use of English as the official language for all state and federal purposes, but as we shall see later in this thesis, Tun Mustapha changed all this by passing an amendment to the Constitution Bill to make Bahasa Malaysia the only official language in Sabah in 1973.

Education

Point 15 in Sabah's memorandum to the I.G.C. stated: "The existing educational system of North Borneo should be maintained and for this reason it should be under state control." Sarawak's position on education, however, was perhaps more realistic as it only asked for "provision to be made to safeguard the Sarawak National Education policy for the future."

The constitutional sub-committee recommended that the Sabah and Sarawak governments should submit papers on education to be considered in the first instance by a plenary meeting of the I.G.C. Both Sabah and Sarawak consequently produced papers on education and presented these to the plenary session on 22 October 1962. The Sarawak paper was known as I.G.C. 20/2/9/1 dated 20 October 1962 and the Sabah paper was known as I.G.C. 20/2/NB/4 dated 15 October 1962.

The Sarawak paper was in favour of education as a federal matter but recommended that integration of federal and current state practices should take place gradually. It envisaged a common educational system throughout Malaysia as helping to forge a sense of identity between the peoples and thus strengthen the new Federation. The Sarawak delegation proposed that for the gradual integration of an educational system to take place, Sarawak must be given a considerable degree of regional control over education, if only to meet the desire of the Sarawak people that the Sarawak National Education policy be retained. The conditions

requested by Sarawak were as follows:

- (a) That the use of English as the medium in primary and secondary schools must continue. Sarawak's national education policy was as follows:

English:

- (i) English was used as the medium of instruction, from Primary 1, in practically all primary schools, except Chinese schools.
- (ii) In primary schools, not using English as the medium this language was taught as a subject.
- (iii) In secondary schools English was taught as a subject in all schools; and used as the medium in all secondary schools in Sarawak.

Malay:

- (i) Malay was taught as a subject in those primary schools where it was the mother tongue of most pupils.
 - (ii) In the new Junior secondary curriculum which was obligatory on all schools, the compulsory core subjects include one S.E. Asian language. This language could be Malay, Chinese or Iban.
- (b) There must be an assurance that a knowledge of the Malay language would not be obligatory as a qualification for any educational opportunity.
 - (c) There must be no application in Sarawak of Federal requirements about religious education. The Sarawak paper noted that federal expenditure on Islam had doubled in 1961 and stood at \$5,000,000 annually.
 - (d) There must be provision for special assistance to the Natives of Sarawak.
 - (e) The local arrangements whereby primary education was a responsibility of local authorities must be retained.
 - (f) There should be no change in the arrangements for higher education for both Colombo Plan Scholarships and scholarships from Sarawak funds.
 - (g) There should be no change made affecting any of the special provisions mentioned above except with prior approval of the Sarawak State Legislature.

The Sabah paper on the other hand pointed out that the 20 points were submitted jointly by Sabah's political parties and therefore it represented a request of the people as a whole. They requested that:

The 'existing educational system' of Sabah should be maintained and for this reason it should be under state control. The 'existing educational system' was interpreted as comprising primary, secondary and teacher training (but not university and other post-graduate education). It also included Sabah's education policy, structure, language requirements, examination and syllabuses, religious instruction, staffing and scholarships.

The Sabah paper further pointed out that the basic policy and structure of education in Sabah was similar to that in Malaya, but there was a number of important differences and Sabah's political parties wanted these differences to be maintained. The basis of Sabah's education policy was the need to teach English in all levels of schools in the state as the medium of instruction. The Chinese language too was used as a medium, and in some Chinese schools they had also started using English as the medium of instruction in the higher levels. Malay was also taught and indeed was the medium of instruction in some government schools, but there had been a large number of parents requesting the use of English as the preferred medium of instruction. They saw education in English as bettering their children's opportunities in all fields of endeavour. Other vernacular languages, such as Kadazan, were taught or used as the medium of instruction in the lower levels of primary schools in some voluntary agency schools. In respect of the education syllabus, the paper said that there was pressure for more education in English in Chinese schools, but until the standard of English in Chinese schools was higher, only a few pupils could attempt examinations in English. Examinations in Chinese must therefore continue, and any attempt to abolish them would cause frustration among the pupils and would arouse great resentment with most undesirable consequences for racial harmony, pointed out the paper.

The Sabah paper also pointed out that although the structure of the examinations was similar to those in Malaya, there were certain factors, mainly regarding syllabuses, which were of particular local importance. It was normal, at the primary stage, to give children a good grounding in the facts of their own country. Although Sabah's syllabuses also provided for the inclusion of useful background information on the other partners in Malaysia, the main emphasis had lain in Sabah. The Sabah team, like Sarawak, also objected to the use of public funds for religious instruction as was done in Malaya.

The Sabah paper on education was summarised thus:

It is accepted that in the Federation of Malaysia an integrated education policy is essential in order to develop a true national consciousness. The present education policy of North Borneo is best suited for its immediate needs which are to keep the various peoples in an integrated harmony, to bring the standard of opportunities of the indigenous peoples to levels which will give them the advantages to which they have a right and generally to promote opportunities which will enable the people of North Borneo to participate

fully in their own affairs. A policy of complete integration at this stage would however lead to a number of difficulties, particularly in language policy, syllabuses, religious instruction, staffing, training and award of scholarships. Where differences exist between current policy in North Borneo and in Malaya, these represent the policy accepted in North Borneo on the more controversial issues. The acceptance of education as a state subject in North Borneo would enable policy to be modified to meet local needs, particularly on the points upon which local feeling is strongest, and since the structure is substantially the same as that in Malaya it would not lead to any deviation from common ideals or be inconsistent with the policy building a united Malaysian nation. It is inevitable that the creation of Greater Malaysia will release widespread politico/cultural influences among the peoples of North Borneo and these influences can be expected to affect and mould public opinion. As this happens, the education policy and its development will as a state subject, be subject to constant adaptation and must move towards a national concept and render closer co-ordination not merely easier to achieve but readily acceptable and desirable provided that the concept is Malaysian and not merely an extension of existing Federation policy.

It is therefore desired that education should become a subject on the State List for North Borneo and that suitable fiscal arrangements should be made to ensure that adequate funds remain in the hands of the State Government to enable it to pursue its present policy and to keep in line with educational developments in the Federation as a whole.

Singapore, which will form part of the Federation of Malaysia, will control its own education policy, and North Borneo sees no reason why it should be treated differently.

The crux of the matter on education so far as Sabah was concerned seemed to be the fear that Sabah would be absorbed or assimilated into the Malay culture. In an aide memoire³¹ Tun Stephens was advised by one of the colonial officers thus:

Failing to obtain state control on education, Sabah must get sufficient safeguard from the federal control. Compromise would be required in obtaining agreement on this subject while securing the essential safeguards for Sabah. The following main points should be considered as safeguards for Sabah which should be written in the constitution of Malaysia, and altered only by resolution of the future Sabah State Council. Education on federal list, but with gradual integration and subject to the following:

1. Retention of Sabah Education Ordinance.
2. Retention of Board of Education.
3. Appointment of State Education Officer (the name Director of Education should be retained) by Federal Government to be subject to approval of Sabah Legislative Assembly.

31. *Notes on Education in Malay and Education - Fall Back Position.*

4. English to remain as the medium of instruction without limit of time.
5. There should be no paid religious teachers in schools for all faiths.
6. No use of Sabah state funds on religious education.
7. Equal access to scholarships without prejudice on merits in the case of external scholarship.

The notes on education provided for Tun Stephens by Sabah officials are given in the appendices. The Sabah delegates were also provided with a "fall back position" on education.³² The "fall back position" on education advised:

If the position should arise in the course of negotiation that Sabah could not retain control of sufficient finances for education...then the Board recommends that Sabah representatives in the I.G.C. should concede that education should become a federal subject, subject to the following conditions:

1. Continuation of our present policy regarding the use of English;
2. Assurance that knowledge of the Malay language will not be required as a qualification for any educational opportunity until such time as the North Borneo Government considers that sufficient provision has been made to teach Malay in all North Borneo schools;
3. No application to North Borneo of any Federal requirements about religious education;
4. State provisions for the special position of the indigenous peoples; federal provision for an equitable proportion, based upon respective population, of scholarships to and of places in universities and other places of higher education in Malaysia and also of scholarships and awards made under the Colombo Plan and other agencies. All awards to be made by the State;
5. The Director of Education, North Borneo, who would be a federal officer, should be responsible to the Federal Minister of Education through the Ministry of Education, but should otherwise carry out much the same duties as he does at present;
6. To enable local wishes to be fully consulted and taken into account as far as possible, the Director of Education, North Borneo, should be advised by the existing Board of Education and local education committees.
7. It is the advice of the Board of Education that, provided satisfactory guarantees of these conditions can be obtained and so entrenched that they cannot be altered or cancelled without the consent of the North Borneo Government, these should be the minimum safeguards and that anything else should be regarded as unacceptable.

32. This was provided for Tun Stephens in a loose type-written paper. This was found amongst UPKO files by the writer.

The plenary session on 22 October 1962 discussed the two Sabah and Sarawak papers, and it was generally accepted that the Sarawak paper was more realistic as it realised the need for a gradual integration of the educational systems to strengthen the new federation as a nation. Sabah's stand on education was that it should be under state control as a complete integration of educational systems would lead to difficulties over matters such as language policy, syllabuses, religious instruction etc. This was seen as basically unrealistic. Tun Razak said that a considerable measure of local administrative control would be needed in Sabah and Sarawak. A rigid education policy would not be possible but certain basic policies must be left to the central government. He believed it was not difficult to maintain a common control of syllabuses throughout Malaysia. Tun Stephens asked why Malaya allowed Singapore to retain education on the state list, bearing in mind that the danger of communist subversion there was far greater than it was likely to be in Sabah. Tun Razak replied that Singapore's position was complex. He reiterated, however, that there was a need for central control over educational policy in order to build up a common loyalty throughout Malaysia.

When the plenary session met on 23 October the education matter was still not resolved. Tun Stephens suggested that Tun Razak should have an informal meeting with leaders of Sabah's political parties so that he could explain to them the federal educational stance. He explained that he could not depart from the position maintained by Sabah on the matter unless he got a fresh mandate from the Sabah Alliance party. Tun Razak agreed to the meeting.

The outcome of the meeting with Sabah leaders by Tun Razak and the subsequent constitutional sub-committee meetings on education was a consensus that education would be a federal matter with certain safeguards for the states. The draft report of the I.G.C. noted that it was agreed:

- (a) That Section 105 of the Malayan Education Act of 1961 will be amended to remove the power of the Minister to require state authorities or rating authorities to make contributions towards meeting the expenses of the provision of education under the Act.
- (b) That although education will be a federal subject, the present policy and system of administration of education in Sabah and Sarawak (including their ordinances) should be undisturbed and remain under the control of the governments of Sabah and Sarawak until they are otherwise agreed to. In particular:
 - (i) the present policy in Sabah and Sarawak regarding the use of English should continue,

- (ii) knowledge of the Malay language should not be required as a qualification for any educational opportunity until such time as the state governments of Sabah and Sarawak considered that sufficient provision had been made to teach Malay in all schools in the respective states,
 - (iii) there should be no application to Sabah and Sarawak of any federal requirements regarding religious education,
 - (iv) state provisions for the special position of the indigenous peoples should continue to apply,
 - (v) the Directors of Education in Sabah and Sarawak, who would be officers in federal posts should be responsible to the Minister of Education through the Ministry of Education but should otherwise carry out much the same duties as they have done in the past,
 - (vi) to enable local wishes to be fully consulted and taken into account as far as possible, the Directors of Education of Sabah and Sarawak should continue to be advised by the respective existing Boards of Education and local education committees,
 - (vii) the respective local authorities should continue to be used as agents for primary education.
- (c) When expansion of higher education facilities was being considered by the Malaysian government, the requirements of Sabah and Sarawak should be given special consideration and the desirability of locating some of the institutions in Sabah and Sarawak should be borne in mind.

This last paragraph was included as a result of Tun Stephens raising the issue concerning higher education facilities for Sabah at the plenary session on 24 November 1962. Financial provision for education remained a state matter until January 1964, when funds for education in Sabah were voted annually from the federal parliament.

In 1965, the Sabah Education Ordinance No. 9 of 1961 was declared a federal law.³³ During Tun Mustapha's reign, as we shall see in the last chapter, he amended the constitution to make way for the use of Malay as the sole official language by 1973. When West Malaysia introduced Malay as the medium of instruction in Primary One in 1970, Tun Mustapha decided to follow suit in Sabah. By 1 January 1976, the Federal Education Act 1961 was extended to Sabah and since then, education has come completely under federal control.

33. *Education in Malaysia*, 1974, prepared by the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, p. 51. See also Sullivan and Leong (eds), *op.cit.*, pp. 490-500.

Financial (Fiscal) Provisions

Like education, the subject of tariffs and finance was another point which Sabah felt about very strongly. In fact of the 20 points requested by Sabah, Point 11 was one subject which was highly demonstrative of the real feeling of the Sabah leaders concerning Malaysia. They saw Sabah as a potential equal partner in Malaysia. Sabah's economy was booming by the turn of the 1960s with the timber industry out-stripping rubber and other agricultural products as Sabah's main export earner. The future of Sabah economically looked very bright. Its vast natural resources had not yet been fully tapped, and there were high hopes too for rich oil discoveries.

It was with this background in mind therefore that Sabah leaders requested that the state should retain control of its own finances and tariffs.

At the meeting of the Fiscal Sub-Committee on 19 October 1962, the Sabah paper which was in effect a paper from the combined Sabah political parties was rejected by the Malayan members as it asked for financial autonomy for Sabah. The Malayan members pointed out that the Sabah request was inconsistent with the arrangements advocated by Kuala Lumpur which were that the financial relationship between Sabah and Sarawak and the federal government should be analogous to that between the various Malayan states and the Malayan federal government. The agreement reached insofar as Sabah was concerned at this meeting was that the Malayan government should present a paper to be shown to Sabah's political parties and that Malayan leaders should keep in touch with Sabah's financial secretary and Tun Stephens in the preparation of the paper.

Sabah's paper which was rejected by the Malayan members (I.G.C. 40/2/NB/1) was actually prepared by the Sabah financial secretary's office for the Sabah political parties. It contained three proposals, known as Arrangement A, Arrangement B and Arrangement C.

Arrangement A envisaged a financial autonomy to be retained by Sabah as advocated in Point 11 of the 20 points.

Arrangement B was an intermediate arrangement on a number of possible intermediate arrangements, varying according to various possible divisions of functions and revenues between federal and state government. The exact form of this arrangement would depend on a final legislature list which would give the state an agreed share of major revenues as in the Singapore-Federal positions.

Arrangement C was the extreme opposite of *Arrangement A*. This arrangement envisaged Sabah as reduced to the financial status of one of the states forming the Malayan Federation.

Briefly, under the arrangement proposed, the new federal government would be entrusted only with the following subjects:

1. External affairs.
2. Defence.
3. Internal Security.
4. Currency, banking and monetary policy.
5. Foreign exchange.
6. Capital issues (outside the state).
7. Borrowing (outside the state).
8. Judicial.
9. Statistics.
10. Civil Aviation.
11. Posts.
12. Telecommunications.
13. Shipping and navigational aids.
14. Other self-supporting services.

The paper also envisaged that, within ten years a complete Malaysian customs union might be established. Nevertheless, customs revenues would be retained by the state until such time as a spontaneous desire might have been generated to hand them over to the federal government. Financial support for the functions assumed by the federal government would be provided by means of a contribution made by Sabah to the federal government on a basis to be agreed. It was possible also that for the sake of convenience the state might assign some share of its revenues to the Federation. The paper did not recommend *Arrangement C* as it was not seen as being beneficial to Sabah and its political connotation — one of vassalage — would not be acceptable to the people of Sabah.

Sabah's explanation as to why it was advocating *Arrangement A* was as follows:

1. Sabah was remote from the centre (Kuala Lumpur) and with greater differences of custom and habits of thinking it was its desire to retain responsibility for as much of its public services as was possible, at least on the establishment of Malaysia, leaving it to subsequent experience perhaps to indicate ways in which a closer association and sharing of services might develop gradually. The financial autonomy asked for was Sabah's desire, but more importantly, the arrangement was advocated as of positive advantage to the new Federation to avoid unnecessary centralisation of political responsibilities and functions, with delays and disagreements

to which such centralisation might lead, and which might impose severe strains on the cohesiveness of Malaysia as a whole.

2. Sabah's economic prospects for the future suggested that the state could afford to finance itself and be responsible for the bulk of its public services without grants from the central authority.
3. Sabah's economic strength on its own was such that Sabah's leaders had agreed to join in the Federation of Malaysia not for an economic advantage, but solely for political reasons. The paper said: "It cannot be too strongly emphasised that for Sabah the case for entering Malaysia rests solely on political grounds. It has not been demonstrated as yet that entry into Malaysia has any financial or economic advantages for Sabah. Indeed, if anything, it has possible financial and economic disadvantages and it is for the purpose of Point 11 to ensure that such disadvantages, even where they must be accepted (e.g. an obligation to contribute to the cost of Defence and External Affairs at a much earlier date than had been expected) should be kept to a minimum." The paper continued:

On the other hand, it can be argued, and Sabah must consider carefully the argument, that the new federal government needs to be strong enough to fulfill its functions as a sovereign state in the modern world, and also to command the respect and allegiance of the people of even its most remote state. How much is Sabah prepared to concede to this aim, without giving away rights and responsibilities which it considers it vital to retain.³⁴

The Sabah paper, as pointed out earlier, was prepared for the Sabah political parties and was not intended, as was the official paper to be presented at the Fiscal Sub-Committee. It was, however, presented in full, and the reference to Malaysia as not of economic advantage to Sabah raised a strong objection from the Malayan members. Once more, the Sabah leaders had it in their minds that Sabah was joining Malaysia as an equal partner to Malaya and not as a mere extension of the old Malayan nation. They did not think that Malaya was interested in

34. Memorandum for Fiscal Sub-Committee, North Borneo Public Finance under Malaysia, 16 October 1962.

territories but in a political association with Sabah as an equal partner. The Sabah leaders were advised by the Sabah colonial government officials that Sabah was economically viable on its own. Their paper stated:

The arrangements proposed in this paper will, in view of the Sabah government, after comparing the financial position and prospects of Sabah with those of the other *three* (at present) *partners* in Malaysia, give the best assurance available at present that in the state:

- (a) Present economic and social services will expand at least as fast as they would have done had there been no Malaysia;
- (b) That development expenditure will be increased and accelerated.

And the paper concluded:

It may well be the case, as experience in other Federations seems to suggest, that in the years following Malaysia Day, there will be a growing desire for closer association or share of responsibility with the centre. But it seems better, in the interests of both the new Federation and Sabah not to force the pace at the start. If the functions and resources which are handed over at the start are those which Sabah willingly concedes, goodwill and the prospects of success will be so much the greater.

The Malayan members reacted sharply to the Sabah paper and produced a commentary paper of their own.³⁵

It said, *inter alia*:

Inter governmental committee no. 40/2/NB/1 sets out three possible arrangements (i.e. arrangements to come into force at the end of any transitional period agreed upon) for the financial status of Sabah in the proposed new Federation of Malaysia, and gives reasons for the view that Arrangement A, namely financial autonomy as envisaged in Point 11 of the Sabah (political) Parties' Twenty Points, would best serve the interests of both Sabah and the new Federation. The paper maintains that the case of Malaysia is entirely a political one, and that it will bring no economic advantages at all. As the part of the new Federation most remote from the centre, with greater differences of custom and habits of thinking than other states, Sabah considers it advantageous to remain as remote as possible and to avoid centralisation of political responsibilities and functions until such time as a greater drive for closer association may emerge. The financial projection which the Sabah government has made suggests that the state will be able from its own resources to finance the recurrent costs of maintaining their isolated status.

35. Memorandum for Fiscal Sub-Committee, Commentary on North Borneo Public Finance under Malaysia, 23 October 1962. The paper is also known as I.G.C./MS/8.

The Malayan commentary paper did not accept Sabah's views on Arrangement A and suggested that the proposal by Sabah was a mere exchange of control from the colonial office in London to Kuala Lumpur.

The striking feature of the above proposals is that they appear to envisage the functions of the Malaysian federal government with respect to Sabah as being little more than furnishing a means of directly replacing the colonial tutelage of the United Kingdom and providing a few common-user facilities...

And it continued:

Although the suggestion is made in the paper that some desire for a closer association might later arise, it is implied that there is so far no desire for any wider conception of nationhood to develop other than a narrow loyalty to Sabah itself, so that there could be no advantage, other than a "political" one, in the development of any such conception. Not only is this attitude wholly opposed to the Malayan view of the matter, but, it seems not unlikely that, albeit unwittingly, it does less than justice to the real feelings of the people and political parties of Sabah on the subject of Malaysia. Complete financial autonomy coupled with state responsibility for most government functions directly affecting members of the public could hardly be expected to provide any incentive for the development of a desire for closer association....

The Malayan members did not agree that for Sabah, the new Malaysian Federation could not provide any financial and economic advantage, only a political advantage. Its reply to this point was:

1. Although the main constituent parts of the proposed new Federation each have a development potential of their own, the combined potential was greater than that of the sum of the potentials of each part taken alone.
2. As a small and somewhat remote territory surrounded by others of dubious stability Sabah could scarcely be expected to offer a very tempting bait for outside capital, the lack of which would lead to a sharp decline in the rate of development.
3. The Malayan Federation had established itself firmly in the esteem of the international organisations which were concerned with assistance to developing countries such as the International Monetary Fund, ECAFE, RAO.
4. There had already been great developments towards the creation of a more advanced money market in the Malayan Federation which was essential if the monetary resources of the economy were to be fully used. The new Federation of Malaysia could benefit from this.

The memorandum continued:

Turning now to the Sabah demand for full financial autonomy, the government of the Federation is fully aware of the justifiable pride felt by Sabah in its financial position and in its development programme. Nevertheless, as indicated

earlier in this memorandum, it is not possible for this request to be agreed to, as it cuts across the prime object behind the proposed new Federation, which is the creation of a strong and prosperous new federal community with a common loyalty and a sense of genuine nationhood, while still preserving its cherished local characteristics.

The Malayan memorandum argued for the need of a strong central power. It argued also for the economic advantages for Sabah in the new Federation, and more important still, it suggested that Sabah's proposals for financial autonomy within Malaysia "would give the state the status of a dependency of the Federation, whereas the Malayan proposal envisages Sabah as a full partner taking part in the management of the Federation."

The Sabah government gave a reply to the Malayan Commentary Paper³⁶ and stated at the outset that the Malayan Commentary Memorandum was not written from the point of view of the Malayan Federation and Sabah entering into a new partnership as equal partners but was written to suggest that Sabah would be only one of the states — and analogous to the position of the various states in the existing Malayan federation. The Sabah note reiterated that Sabah joining Malaysia was a political move and said:

It is correct that the Sabah paper maintained the case for Malaysia was entirely a political one. The suggestion put forward by the Prime Minister of Malaya in May 1961 was prompted by fears that Singapore would go communist and therefore it was necessary to bring Singapore into association with the Federation of Malaya, and to this end, the Borneo territories were required as political make-weight. The proposal by the Prime Minister of Malaya was not, it is believed, primarily inspired by considerations of economic advantages which might have occurred either to the Federation of Malaya or to the Borneo territories.

In reply to the Malayan statement that Sabah's proposal would merely furnish the "means of replacing the colonial tutelage of the United Kingdom", the Sabah paper said that under the United Kingdom's "colonial tutelage" the Sabah government in practice ordered its own finance, imposed its own taxation at its discretion, dispensed with its finance as it wished, and drew up and executed its own development plans.

The Malayan team submitted their own paper outlining their proposals on the financial arrangements.³⁷ Entitled: Fiscal Sub-Committee: Financial Arrangements (IGC/40/8/FM/3), the paper envisaged a unified

36. Notes on the commentary prepared by the Malayan Delegation on the North Borneo Memorandum on Public Finance under Malaysia.

37. I.G.C., Fiscal Sub-Committee, Financial Arrangements. (Paper by the Federation of Malaya Delegation: I.G.C./40/2/FM/3.)

financial arrangement for the whole of Malaysia. The proposal, however, was a mixture of the arrangement "A" proposed by Sabah and some of arrangement "C". It was not the same as the financial arrangements with Singapore, however.

The Sabah government financial secretary produced a personal commentary on the Malayan paper. The commentary was for Sabah's unofficial members at the I.G.C. but it was mainly meant for Tun Stephens as was indicated in a covering letter to him. The financial secretary noted:

My personal views - necessarily very hastily set down - are these: The Malayan draft is well written and there is a good deal of sound economic theory in it....It seems to me like the Malayan case in general, to be based on the assumption that the Federation (in practice virtually a unitary state) of Malaya should be expanded by taking *in other territories* into a Federation (which would also be virtually a unitary state) of Malaysia. Hence the insistence on a strong central government. Obviously the government of a unitary state is stronger than the central government of a Federation, and may well have certain economic advantages. But it has been my understanding that the political parties in Sabah (on an assessment of relative financial and economic prospects as well as on political grounds) want to enter into a true Federation, keeping some appreciable amount of sovereignty to the state. So it is basically a political problem.³⁸

The financial secretary also said that he doubted whether Sabah could retain Point 11. He also said that Sabah's modified paper in I.G.C./40/2/NB/2 - North Borneo Memorandum for Fiscal Sub-Committee³⁹ - which was presented to the Fiscal Sub-Committee to replace the first paper, was not sufficient to pacify the Malayan members. A further modification was necessary, and he suggested some concessions to be made by Sabah, to include:

1. Central government to have final say on levels of tariffs (after a transitional period of say ten years; this could be shortened by consent).
2. Central government to have over-all control of borrowing outside the state.

The modified Sabah memorandum of 27 November 1962 made major changes to Point 11 and as the financial secretary said "are very substantial concessions."

38. Comments on the Draft Fiscal Memorandum by Malayan Delegation, 23 October 1962 by the Sabah Government Financial Secretary, Mr Davidson for the use of the unofficial members at the I.G.C.

39. I.G.C., North Borneo, Memorandum for Fiscal Sub-Committee, I.G.C./40/2/NB/2.

Indeed, it was a complete change of stand, insofar as Sabah was concerned. It would appear that Sabah had to make such substantial concessions and change its earlier stand for financial autonomy, otherwise there would have been no Malaysia, or Sabah would have been left out of the new Federation. This was the implication of Tun Stephens when he met members of the Sabah Alliance National Council on 20 November 1962.

He told the Sabah Alliance leaders that the Malaysians had made it quite clear that they would not and could not accept Point 11 or Arrangement A. Sabah had made it clear, he added, that it could not accept Arrangement C and be reduced to the position of a state like the other states in Malaya. He said unless the talks were to break down altogether, it was necessary to agree to some sort of alternative, and the alternative was for Arrangement B — which was a mixture of Arrangements A and C. Tun Stephens told the meeting that Point 11 — financial autonomy for Sabah — was encountering the biggest difficulties at the I.G.C. meeting and that it could mean the end of the Malaysia talks for Sabah if Sabah insisted on its earlier stand. He suggested therefore that "it is desirable that we should not allow the fiscal talks to break down or to allow tempers to reach the stage where threats are made to end the talks. This could sour up the talks and could sour up Malaysia and give Malaysia an appearance of having been forced on us."⁴⁰

He asked for a fresh mandate from the Sabah Alliance leaders to allow him to shift Sabah's stand and accept the paper prepared by the financial secretary outlining Arrangement B. He added:

I personally think that the Malaysians are sincere when they say that they are not interested in getting at our money and are even willing, as indicated by the Malayan offer of \$10,000,000 a year for our development fund for the present development period, to make whatever contribution possible towards our development.

The Sabah Alliance National Council members were drawn twelve each from USNO, UNKO, and the Chinese party and as expected Tun Stephens' UNKO members gave him the mandate without question. So did the others, if less readily. In his concluding remarks at the Sabah Alliance meeting on 20 November 1962, he said:

I think that I can say that considering that the time given to the work of the Committee (IGC) has been so

40. Resume of I.G.C. meetings by Mr Donald Stephens, 20 November 1962. This was a prepared note by Tun Stephens as the basis of his briefing to the Sabah Alliance National Council members.

short, the IGC has in fact made quite good progress, with a standing committee appointed by the Sabah Alliance National Council to help advise the Alliance members who are in the IGC. So there they may be able to make quick decisions, the work of the Committee could move a lot faster. This paper has been prepared in a hurry and has been written off the cuff without any reference to any papers which have been used in the IGC. The intention is to give members of the National Council some idea of the more important matters relating to the work of the IGC and the points on which agreement has been reached and to have the views of the members of the National Council on subjects which are yet to be decided. I must point out that we have made it clear to the British and Malayan governments that whatever agreement arrived at now or during meetings of the IGC will be subjected to the final picture of Malaysia which will be presented when the work of the IGC is concluded.⁴¹

Tun Stephens might have discussed some pertinent points with the Sabah Alliance National Council, but the fact remained that Tun Stephens was the main person who was making the decisions for Sabah in the I.G.C. As we pointed out earlier, he was indeed a principal determining factor whether or not Malaysia could be formed including Sabah.

Tun Stephens' concept of the new federation was that it was the joining together of four countries as equal partners. Tun Stephens, and indeed other UPKO leaders' view of the Federation of Malaysia is shown in Figure 3. To the UPKO leaders, the Federation of Malaysia was a two-tier system of government with Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore joining the Federation of Malaya (which consisted of nine Sultanates and two former Straits Settlements) as the first tier. The second tier was to be the Federal Parliament.

UPKO leaders were led to this conclusion because of the following facts: The Singapore government was given greater autonomy to look after Singapore's interest. Education and labour were controlled by Singapore; its financial arrangement was also in the Singapore government's control. Even the leader of Singapore was called "Prime Minister", indicating an equal status with the Prime Minister of Malaya. UPKO leaders also could see that when the allocation of the number of federal parliamentary seats for each country was discussed, only four countries were mentioned, namely, 104 for Malaya, 24 for Sarawak, 16 for Sabah and 15 for Singapore. There was no mention of the individual 11 states forming the Federation of Malaya. Indeed, Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders mentioned that

41. On the final outcome of the I.G.C. meeting on the fiscal arrangement for Sabah, see *Report of Inter-Governmental Committee*, Sabah Government Printer, 1963.

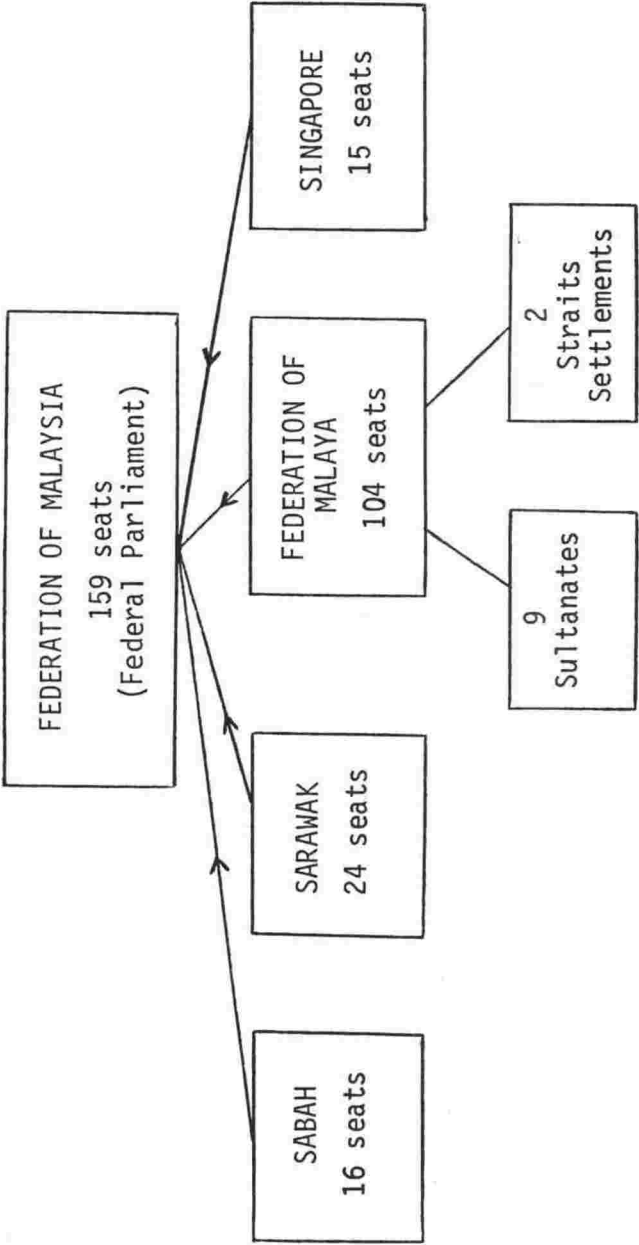


FIGURE 3. Showing the two-tier system of the Federation of Malaysia as seen and understood by UPKO leaders in 1962-1967.

Sabah joined Malaysia as one of four countries many times later. The first time the UPKO leaders came out openly to express this view was when Singapore was forced out from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965. Mojuntin, the Secretary-General of UPKO issued a press statement expressing regret "...in view of the separation of Singapore from Malaysia and the fact that Sabah was *one* of the original *four* component parts...."⁴²

Again in 1967 after UPKO was forced out from the Sabah Alliance party and became an opposition party, UPKO renewed its call for the re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry, and again asserted that Sabah was one of four states forming Malaysia. Tun Stephens in fact accused the central government of acting like colonial masters and making Sabah the vassal of the Kuala Lumpur government.

UPKO leaders, particularly Tun Stephens, were therefore very disappointed when it became obvious to them that Sabah was not *one* of *four* countries forming the Federation of Malaysia, but was in fact one of 14 states. For a detailed account of Tun Stephens and the Kadazans' growing disenchantment with the central government we have to turn to Chapters 4 and 5.

42. UPKO's Press Release, 16 August 1965.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS OF KADAZAN NATIONALISM

AND KADAZAN ORGANISATIONS

In the previous chapter we emphasised that Kadazan leader Tun Stephens' role in the I.G.C. was crucial to the formation of Malaysia. His understanding of the Kadazans' role as a whole in Malaysia was also shown: that he thought Sabah was a "nation" in itself, joining as an equal partner with Malaya, Singapore and Sarawak, and more importantly, that the Kadazans' position in Sabah was equivalent to the Malays in Peninsular Malaya. He thought the Kadazans' rightful place in Sabah was to govern the state and not merely to be governed.

Tun Stephens probably thought that he was correct in holding the above views because of the apparent surge of Kadazan nationalism taking place at the time. He saw a parallel in the rise of Kadazan nationalism to the pre-war rise of Malay nationalism in Malaya. Tun Stephens, therefore, became both a pillar of strength for Kadazan nationalism and its focus as he saw himself as the "Tunku Abdul Rahman" of Sabah. Tun Stephens was, however, sadly disappointed in this hope and assumption and, as we shall see later, just as he was the main pillar and spokesman for the rise of Kadazan nationalism, he was also the man who more than any other brought the eventual fall and demise of Kadazan consciousness.

Kadazan consciousness did not manifest itself politically until the late 1950s. This was due in part to the curbs placed on Kadazans by white rule. Kadazan political consciousness during the whole period of Chartered Company rule, and for the major part of colonial rule, was practically non-existent. The various uprisings and manifestations of unrest started or led by Kadazan leaders were isolated and concentrated in small areas only. In no case did the leaders have a wide popular following. This is understandable as the Kadazans were the least developed people politically, economically and educationally.

Economically, they remained growers of wet and hill padi. They were self-sufficient farmers, but they were never encouraged to better themselves to produce more food for sale. They were to remain farmers, hewers of wood and labourers. Such was the policy of the Company

government. The little education they provided was in the vernacular language (Malay) and the schools were not meant to produce students with a view to go on for higher learning. It must be mentioned, however, that a school for Native Chiefs' sons was organised but the students in this school were mostly drawn from the sons of Malay or Muslim native chiefs. The only notable Kadazan chief's son attending this school was the son of Gunsanad-Sundang, today known as Datuk G.S. Sundang.¹

Kadazan chiefs during Chartered Company rule were few and were appointed for their loyalty to the Chartered Company. Gunsanad of Keningau was amongst the first. People like Kandurong, Bantah, Sigunting, or even Sipanggol, who were vocal and of independent mind would never have been appointed as leader.

Indeed, even the employment of police constables amongst the Kadazans was carefully made. Kadazans from the West Coast area, especially from Penampang and Papar, were not employed as police constables. Only the Tambunan, Ranau and Keningau Kadazans were recruited as they were supposed to be more docile and subservient to the white man's rule. As Bedlington puts it:²

These (the Kadazans of the West Coast) were considered suspect, in a strange way by some British colonial administrators (especially those from the Chartered Company) for possessing that dangerous thing represented by a little knowledge of English. They were, for instance, only reluctantly accepted into the police force, whose senior officers preferred the less sophisticated natives of the interior, who could be shaped into the right mould.

When the Chartered Company formed the first advisory body in 1883, there was no indigenous member amongst the unofficial members. When an indigenous member was appointed, he was a Malay, not a Kadazan. Nor were Kadazans appointed to any of the advisory councils formed later by the Chartered Company. Malay and Chinese appointments were made, but not Kadazan. This situation persisted during the whole of the Company's rule in Sabah.

When the country became a Crown Colony in 1946 the colonial government did not appoint any Kadazans to the Legislative and Executive Councils

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1. Datuk G.S. Sundang was active in politics in the 1960s and 1970s. He was the president of the Pasok Momogun party which later merged with the United National Kadazan Organisation - UNKO.
 2. Stanley G. Bedlington, *Malaysia and Singapore: The Building of New States*, p. 135.

either. It was not until after 1957 that Kadazan leaders were appointed to this body.

The take-over of Sabah by the British government in 1946 from the Chartered Company was hardly noticed by the Kadazans. However, by the mid-1950s, Kadazan consciousness began to surface. The search for a Kadazan unity and identity had begun.

The "winds of change" were being felt everywhere in the world with former colonies and subjugated people shaking off the yoke of colonialism. Neighbouring Malaya too had gained its independence in 1957 and Singapore self-government in 1959 except for foreign affairs. The people of Sabah, particularly its bumiputra leaders, did not seem anxious to get early independence for Sabah. Many felt in fact that the country was not yet ready to be governed by its own people. By the late 1950s, however, even the British were attempting to find ways to leave the colonies of Sabah and Sarawak and proposed the merger of Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei. This proposal did not get acted upon.

However, the quiet pace of political change in Sabah was shattered when the Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, announced in May 1961 a new proposal — the formation of a Malaysian nation which would include Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Singapore and Malaya. This announcement changed many things in Sabah, and leaders like Tun Stephens soon became involved in negotiations for the formation of the new proposed Federation of Malaysia which we have described in the last chapter.

Kadazan Associations

It is generally believed that it was Tun Stephens³ who started the Kadazan Association movement. This is not correct. He was in many ways its chief inspiration and the main pillar for its growth, but his participation in the Kadazan Association began five years after its inception.

"The Society of Kadazans" was first registered with the Registrar of Societies on 24 August 1953, and its objects included the care and attention of Kadazan culture, language and the upliftment of the standard of

3. Tun Stephens was then known as Donald Stephens, and after receiving the state award of Datukship, was called Dato Donald Stephens. Later, after receiving the federal award he became Tan Sri Donald Stephens. After he embraced the Islamic religion in 1971, he became Tun Fuad Stephens. (See Chapter 6)

living of the Kadazan people. It was an association of Kadazans living in the Penampang district. The first President of the Association was Joseph Tinoi of Kampong Tuavon, with Vincent Ligunjang as his Vice-President. The Secretary was Richard E. Yap.⁴ According to the records in its first year there were only 77 up-to-date fee-paying members of the Society of Kadazans.⁵

The Society, however, had many more than the 77 members it claimed. Most Orang Tuas or Ketua Kampongs (village headmen) as they are now generally called, were members to begin with, and in the Penampang district, there are more than 50 village headmen altogether. Those recorded as fee-paying members were mostly civil servants working for the colonial government, or Kadazans working for foreign companies in Kota Kinabalu. These people were the educated Kadazans and were showing signs of interest in their culture and welfare as a whole.

The "Society of Kadazans" was believed to be an off-shoot of a sporting body, a loose organisation which met once a year to organise a sporting event at St Michael's School, Penampang district. This loose sport organisation was headed by the few prominent educated Kadazans who were working for the Chartered Company government. They included such early Kadazan leaders as Manjaji, Claudius Yap, Herman Motogol etc. These activities of the Kadazans in Penampang can be said to be the first germ of the formation of the Society of Kadazans. As more and more Kadazans became educated, the need for a cohesive association was felt. Thus by 1953, some six years after Sabah became a colony of Great Britain, the first Society of Kadazans was officially registered.

In the subsequent annual general meeting in 1954, village headman Tinoi was replaced as President by the Penampang Kadazan native chief, Tan Ping Hing. The office bearers were now mostly civil servants. By 1955, more village headmen joined in. The other Kadazan native chief, N.C. Ewan became a paying member as well and a committee member of the Society.

On 30 March 1957, Tun Stephens attended the Society's Annual General Meeting. It is said that he attended the meeting with a few of his

4. Datuk Richard E. Yap was later to play an important role in the formation of UNKO. He was among the first few well educated Kadazans and was among the first who was interested in the Kadazan movement.

5. Register of Societies, Sabah, file DIC/503/181(6) of 19/8/53.

European friends — notably Mr Spradbrow of the Government Printing Office — out of curiosity and to report on the Society's activities for his daily tabloid newspaper, the *Sabah Times*. He was invited by his employee, Mr Lee Kim Cheong, who was then elected the new President of the Society. At this his first meeting Stephens was elected Vice-President and advisor to the Society.⁶ Stephens' election as Vice-President was an indication that the Kadazan people of the area were looking for a leader, a person of some standing in the eyes of the colonial government. On 11 May 1958, Mr Lee Kim Cheong resigned as President and Tun Stephens took over as President. Since then, until its transformation as a political party, the United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO), Stephens held the Presidency of the Society with Datuk Richard Yap as his Secretary. For a brief period in 1958 this writer became the Secretary.

The Kadazans were desperate for some recognition from the colonial government. Their chief concern was land matters — native land reserves — and language. Land was becoming scarce for cattle grazing, and Kadazans had been approaching government concerning the matter, but with very little result. They had also been agitating for a Kadazan Harvest Festival holiday to be recognised by the government, but again with very little result. This was mainly due to lack of direct contact with those in the hierarchy and partly because of a general lack of interest shown by the white bureaucrats to requests made by the Kadazans. Tun Stephens was by now making a considerable name for himself through the columns of his newspaper and to the Kadazans therefore he seemed to be the answer to their problems. After all Tun Stephens spoke fluent English, was well-educated, and quite influential amongst the "orang puteh" (white-men) bureaucrats. He was also by then a nominated member of the colonial Legislative Council. At the 1958 general meeting of the Society, Tun Stephens referred to the pressing problems of native land reserves as well as to the repeated requests for a Kadazan Harvest Festival holiday. He told the meeting that he had taken action with the authorities concerned and was waiting for a reply. By 21 February 1960, at the annual general meeting, Tun Stephens reported that government had agreed and approved the Kadazan Harvest Festival as a recognised public holiday. This was his greatest triumph and his finest hour. Kadazan elders present at the meeting conferred on

6. It is said that Tun Stephens was surprised to find himself elected Vice-President of the association. But the general belief was that he was elected because he spoke Kadazan and was therefore a Kadazan.

him the title of "Huguan Siou" — the "brave leader", after the name of a legendary Kadazan leader of by-gone days.

By 1960 a network of Kadazan Associations had formed in other centres of the state. In Tawau, the Kadazans working in the timber companies as well as government servants formed the "Tawau Kadazan Welfare Society". Amongst the foremost leaders in the movement in this district were Primus Sikayun, and his brother, Bruno Sikayun. Practically all the committee members of the Association were from originally the Penampang district, however. Similarly, a Kadazan Association was formed in Sandakan. The leaders of the Association included Vincent Lojingau,⁷ Andau Tangkim, Gilbert Rajatin amongst others. Both Rajatin and Lojingau were from Penampang. Andau was from the Papar district. Lahad Datu district too formed a Kadazan Association, as did the Kudat district. The Kadazans working in the oil fields of Seria, Brunei also formed a Kadazan Association. In each of these Associations a common characteristic in the committee membership was that they were dominated by "Penampang boys". The objects of each association were the same: the advancement of the cultural heritage of the Kadazan people as a whole as well as uplifting their standards of living. How this latter was going to be implemented was never made clear nor undertaken seriously. At best, this latter objective was purely on paper.

However, the Society of Kadazans were successful in getting other concessions from the colonial government, most notably the introduction of a Kadazan programme on Radio Sabah. When Radio Sabah was first started in the mid-1950s, a Kadazan programme was included. The news in Kadazan was presented, and various talks on Kadazan customs and culture were aired. Even Kadazan legends were told over the air, Kadazan songs were recorded and a youth programme was also presented.⁸ Through the medium of Radio Sabah's Kadazan section Kadazan consciousness was aroused. Even the remotest corners of Sabah were now able to hear what was going on in other parts of the state. The radio was therefore an important

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7. Datuk Vincent Lojingau was from Penampang. He was amongst the first Kadazan "boys" who was successful in the timber business, as a contractor. He became a member of the Legislative Council and was in the forefront with Tun Stephens in the formation of UNKO and in the realisation of Malaysia.
 8. The first head of the Kadazan radio programme was Datuk Fred Sinidol, Stephens' brother-in-law. He took great pains to record Kadazan stories, and songs (old and new) and programmes on culture and customs. The youth programme was started by this writer on a part-time basis.

innovator which helped to make the Kadazans of all dialects conscious of their belonging to the same speech community. Radio Sabah's Kadazan programme used the Penampang dialect. The Penampang Kadazan dialect was not hard to follow for the majority of Kadazans. The reason is that amongst the Christian Kadazans, they learned to speak Penampang Kadazan dialect as the bible, prayer books and catechisms were translated into the Kadazan Penampang dialect. *The Sabah Times* of Tun Stephens also had a Kadazan corner in the Penampang dialect.⁹

An important point to note is that each of these associations was independent. Although there was correspondence exchanged amongst the various associations, such as between the Society of Kadazans in Penampang and the Tawau Kadazan Welfare Society, there was never any suggestion that one was an affiliate of the other. Nor was there any attempt to form a Sabah-wide Kadazan Association at this stage. Tun Stephens' leadership in the period 1958-1961 was confined to the Penampang area only.

Perhaps this absence of a Sabah-wide movement of the Kadazan ethnic group was the reason the colonial administration did not place any restrictions on the formation of the Kadazan Associations. There were no official restraints, and there was no official expression of fear that these associations might become a political movement in the future. The colonial administrators looked at these associations purely as social organisations with the objects of looking after Kadazan culture, dances and customs. The colonial administrators, however, were strict in one respect: that was the need for each association to submit an annual report to the Director of the Department of Labour and Immigration who was then in charge of the Register of Societies. The report had to include the names of the office bearers, and an account of the various activities during the year. Audited accounts as well as membership numbers had also to be submitted annually. The object was clearly to keep a tab on the activities of these associations and their leaders.

If there were any doubts about the formation of these Kadazan associations, they remained the personal views of some of the administrators, such as the Residents or District Officers. A few of these officers were

9. When working part-time for Radio Sabah, the writer never had any difficulty in communicating with other Kadazans in the interior. Later, when the writer was campaigning in the Kudat (Tandek) constituency as a candidate for USNO, the Rungus and Mirangang of the district did not have any difficulty in understanding the writer. They attributed this to the introduction of the radio Kadazan programme.

wary of Tun Stephens for they could see that he was a man of considerable standing and influence amongst the Kadazan community. They openly criticised the use of the name "Kadazan" and made it known that in their view only the people of Penampang and Papar were true Kadazans: all others they argued, especially in the interior of Keningau, Tambunan, Ranau, as well as Tuaran and Kudat were "Dusuns". Some went further and discouraged the formation of Kadazan associations in the interior areas. The influence generated by some of these "anti-Kadazan" British officials was quite effective. In later years, when the Kadazans started to unite behind a Kadazan political party many leaders in the interior disagreed with the use of the name Kadazan.

Some senior local officials also objected to the name Kadazan and saw in these Kadazan associations a purely Penampang phenomenon. They discouraged other Kadazans from joining or forming Kadazan associations.¹⁰ A further reason for there being no organised Kadazan association in the Ranau, Tambunan or Keningau areas was simply timing. The Penampang people had organised their local association only in the mid-1950s, and it did not really get going until 1958-60. By 1961 the "winds of change" were sweeping Sabah with the announcement by Tengku Abdul Rahman of the proposed Malaysia plan. Suddenly, Tun Stephens and his colleagues in the Society of Kadazans found that the days of being a purely social organisation were over: politics had set in and they had to rise to the occasion and seize their opportunities.

A gathering of Kadazan leaders, therefore, took place in Kota Kinabalu, with Tun Stephens as the chief organiser and spokesman. The Kadazans who came were mostly leaders of the various Kadazan associations from different towns of the state. There were also traditional leaders in their own right who came and attended the meeting: such Kadazan leaders were Datuk Sundang and Sodomani of Keningau, Anthony Gibon of Tambunan, Ghani Gilong of Ranau, O.K.K. Nonon of Tamparuli. Tuaran's Kadazan chief, O.K.K. Indan Kari (later known as Tun Hamdan Abdullah) did not however come. This first state-wide gathering of Kadazan leaders was therefore

10. Datuk John Dusing, a half-Indian half-Kadazan from Tuaran, was one of the first locals to become District Officer. He was District Officer of Ranau in the late 1950s and no doubt influenced the mentality of the Kadazan people in his area regarding the use of "Dusun" and "Kadazan". Tuaran Kadazans objected to the use of the term Kadazan and called themselves "Dusun Lotud". Datuk John Dusing became a focus of attention later in 1964, and was the cause of Tun Stephens' fall as Chief Minister. (See Chapter 5)

dominated by the "Kadazan faction".¹¹

The seeds of future dissension started right from the very beginning at the birth of the Kadazan political party. The disagreement focussed on the use of the term "Kadazan". The question raised was why the term "Kadazan" was to be used as a name for the first political party. Tun Stephens' reply to this was that it was a gamble they took and that the use of the term "Kadazan" was not inappropriate. He explained that the term "Kadazan" was used in order to give a "local flavour" to the name of the same speech people — the Kadazanic people. After all, "North Borneo" was also to be changed to "Sabah", the original name for North Borneo. The term "Dusun" was a Malay word and the Kadazan leaders wanted to choose a local name which would inspire the indigenous people and make them proud to belong to that race. As the majority of the meeting favoured the term "Kadazan", Kadazan was therefore used to name the first political party.¹²

Tun Stephens believed that the use of the term Kadazan would fire the imagination of many Kadazans and that it would give rise to Kadazan consciousness and nationalism. Unfortunately, despite the optimistic sentiments of Tun Stephens, the term "Kadazan" has remained controversial and has caused a split amongst the same speech community. The search for an identity for the same speech people therefore is not ended — and the controversy has continued to this day.

The first to oppose the use of the term "Kadazan" were some Tuaran leaders — notably O.K.K. Indan Kari. He was a proud man, and he was proud to be called "Dusun Lotud". His strong objection to the term "Kadazan" was probably personal. He never seemed to like the Penampang people as he regarded them as arrogant. There was believed to have been an historical feud between the Tuaran Kadazans and the Penampang Kadazans details of which are covered in the mist of time. This feud went back to the days when the Kadazans were at enmity with one another, and "raids" were organised against each other, resulting in many warriors losing their

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11. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong of Ranau. He attended the meeting. He along with Datuk Sundang objected to the calling of the first party the "United Kadazan Organisation". He also objected to the use of the term "Kadazan", but went along with others as he was "out-voted", according to him.
 12. The writer was a close confidante and friend of Tun Fuad Stephens. There were many occasions, after the dissolution of UPKO, when they met to discuss things of the past. Indeed, Datuk Ghani Gilong also told the writer the same reason for the use of the term "Kadazan" in an interview with him.

heads. Apparently, O.K.K. Indan Kari never forgot this. And his strong feeling against the term Kadazan was watched by other "bumiputras", other non-Kadazan natives of the country.¹³ USNO leaders encouraged him to oppose the use of Kadazan and supported him in the use of the term "Dusun". Tun Mustapha, during the period of confrontation between his USNO party and Tun Stephens' UPKO party was blatantly calling everyone Dusuns, including those from Penampang. He was quite oblivious or insensitive to the feelings of the majority concerning the use of the term "Dusun".¹⁴

The formation of the Tuaran-based Dusun Lotud Association in 1960 was therefore a direct challenge to the Penampang-based Society of Kadazans: it was the first major attempt to hinder the growth of Kadazan consciousness, and to stop Kadazans having an identity as one people. The Kadazans of Tuaran who started the Dusun Lotud Association did not however see it that way: for their part it was simply a genuine objection to the use of the term "Kadazan". They did not want this Penampang imported term to be used to refer to themselves — the Lotud people of Tuaran. They thought the term "Kadazan" was purely a Penampang phenomenon and there was no reason why they should be identified as "Kadazans". Happily the number who objected to being called "Kadazans" in the Tuaran district was small, but unhappily this small number of objectors to the term "Kadazan" were influential enough to cause divisiveness amongst the Kadazan community as a whole, so that even at the height of Kadazan consciousness in mid-1967, the Kadazans were never really united.

The Kadazan Youth Association

In 1959, a Penampang Kadazan Youth Association was formed. This was the youth wing of the Society of Kadazans. Membership of the Penampang Youth Association was drawn mainly from the youths of St Michael's School, Penampang, and also from the school's young Kadazan teachers. The aim of

13. It is said that the Dusun Lotud Association was organised and encouraged by N.C. Indan Kari and that he was financially backed by the USNO leadership for this. USNO leadership saw in N.C. Indan a person who could split the Kadazans. He was therefore carefully cultivated by the USNO leadership and in fact was, for a long time, until his usefulness as a Kadazan politician diminished, the Deputy President of the USNO party - next only to Tun Mustapha.

14. See Margaret Roff, "Rise and Demise of Kadazan Nationalism", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, IV:2 (September 1969).

the youth association was also cultural and to help the parent Society of Kadazans carry on its many social and cultural activities. Thus when the Society of Kadazans arranged for the celebration of the Harvest Festival, it was the Kadazan youth association committee members who were in the forefront in organising the celebration, including the organising of a Kadazan beauty queen contest.

The first president of the Kadazan youth association was Cyril Fong, a government servant. He was the son of an influential Kadazan leader, who was also a long serving civil servant under the colonial administration.¹⁵ The first secretary and the actual chief organiser of this youth wing of the Society of Kadazans was the writer himself. This youth wing of the Society of Kadazans soon became unnecessary, however, when the parent body transformed itself into Sabah's first political party, the United Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO) in 1961.

With the formation of UNKO and the consequent decline of the Society of Kadazans and the Penampang Kadazan Youth Association, a new Sabah-wide youth association was formed instead. This was the United Sabah Kadazan Youth Association or the "Sinompuuvan Komuhakan Kadazan Sabah" (SKKS) which was formed in 1963 soon after the formation of the first Kadazan political party. Its first leaders were Peter Mojuntin and Fred Tan (Jinu) amongst others. The SKKS claimed to be non-political, but its formation was acknowledged to be a direct result of the formation of the United National Kadazan Organisation. Among its aims and objects were: "To assist Kadazan youths, to develop their physical, mental, moral and spiritual capacities so that they may grow to full maturity as good, healthy and useful citizens, to undertake educational research, and to investigate programmes, activities, and possibilities of future developments."

The SKKS was active in promoting young Kadazans' awareness of their customs and heritage as Kadazans. It was especially active in helping organise the Kadazan Harvest celebrations. It also organised sports amongst the youth. However, as most of its leaders were politicians, it was also inevitable that the SKKS became very vocal as the voice of Kadazan youth in the state.

In the annual general meeting in 1966 the constitution of the SKKS was changed. Membership had hitherto been through branches. The change

15. Datuk Fong Peng Loi was a civil servant. He was nominated by Governor Turnbull as a member of the Legislative Council and held this office for two years.

meant that the separate clubs organised in various parts of Sabah would no longer be independent nor even considered merely as affiliated. They became branches of the SKKS and as such subject to much more central control and direction.¹⁶ The 1966 annual general meeting also marked the re-entry of the writer into the youth movement. He was elected the national SKKS President.

The meeting was declared open by Tun Stephens who called on youth to unite. Speakers at the meeting included Harris Salleh (then Minister of Finance)¹⁷ and Chong Thain Vun, the youth leader of the Sabah Association of Youth Clubs (SAYC). The meeting, through the influence of Tun Stephens, also agreed to open its doors to other races — i.e. to make it a multi-racial youth movement.¹⁸ It is to be noted that the UPKO party had also earlier opened its doors and became a multi-racial party briefly in 1965. However UPKO was to shut its doors again, much to the chagrin and consternation of non-Kadazans just before the 1967 elections.¹⁹ The year 1966 was also a year of intense state-wide politicking, with accusations and counter-accusations by leaders of both USNO and UPKO. The only party which was quietly watching the scene and benefitting from it was the Chinese party — the SCA. Their leaders, led by Khoo Siak Chiew watched with apparent pleasure the political squabbles between the two "bumiputra" (sons of the soil) parties. The Chinese leaders decided it served their best interests to support the Malay party of Tun Mustapha.

Tun Stephens was genuinely interested in fostering a multi-racial youth movement. He saw the formation of a multi-racial youth association as important to the future of the state. The SKKS leadership of Mojuntin and Luping were therefore encouraged by him to open the doors and to bring about the merger of the SKKS, SANYA (Sabah National Youth Association) and SYAC (Sabah Association of Youth Clubs). In his speech at the annual general meeting in 1966 Tun Stephens told the delegates that while it was necessary for the Kadazans to be united, it should not be done at the expense of erecting racial barriers. He said young Kadazans should first learn to work among themselves and then with others. Such inter-

16. *Sabah Times*, 13 December 1966.

17. Datuk Harris Salleh was amongst the early State Ministers. He was active in USNO. He is the current Chief Minister of Sabah.

18. *Sabah Times*, 12 December 1966.

19. For a full discussion on UPKO's becoming a multi-racial party see the chapter on Ethnic Politics.

20. *Sabah Times*, 12 December 1966.

mingling would make them responsible youth of today and leaders of tomorrow.²⁰

The other two youth associations which were organised at the same time as the SKKS were the Sabah Association of Youth Clubs (SAYC) and the Sabah National Youth Association (SANYA). The SAYC was a collection of youth clubs formed in the major towns of Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau and Labuan. Its leaders were mostly young Chinese professionals, newly returned from overseas studies. The youth leader of SAYC, for instance, was Chong Thain Vun, a young Chinese lawyer trained in New Zealand, and the President of the association was Yap Pak Leong, another young Chinese accountant from Sandakan recently returned from Australia.²¹ The membership of SAYC was open to all, but to all intents and purposes it was a Chinese organisation. It was not a very strong association as it did not get the full support of the powerful Chinese politicians in Peter Lo or Khoo Siak Chiew. Unlike the SKKS which was non-political and yet very much the brain-child of the UPKO President, Tun Stephens, the SAYC had nobody of substance in the political field supporting or giving it backing. The SAYC, therefore, was the weakest association of the three youth associations.

The Sabah National Youth Association (SANYA) was formed by a group of "bumiputras", with Harris Salleh as its leader. Although the leadership was a mixture of "bumiputras", the membership was largely drawn from the Malay community. SANYA, as a youth association, although non-political, was also strongly identified with the USNO party.

By 1966, and despite an increasing "war of words" amongst UPKO and USNO leaders in the newspapers, Harris Salleh seemed genuine in his desire to see the merger of all three youth bodies. He in fact attended and delivered a talk at the 1966 annual general meeting of SKKS. He also attended a reception held for the Kadazan youth delegates from all over Sabah. Harris Salleh was making an attempt to show his interest in the call for a united non-political youth movement. However, the 1967 election came to occupy the attention of all. Harris Salleh was busy in his campaign and so were the other youth leaders, Peter Mojuhtin, Chong Thain Vun, Yap Pak Leong, Herman Luping were all occupied in their own respective constituencies contesting the first state general election in 1967, so

21. Yap Pak Leong was to have the distinction of defeating the Sabah Chief Minister (Datuk Peter Lo) during the 1967 election at Sandakan.

plans for merging the three youth organisations lapsed.

By 1968, however, there was a change in the political mood of all concerned. UPKO had dissolved in December 1967 and with the demise of the Kadazan party, and the reconciliation of USNO and UPKO leaders, talks of merging the youth bodies were again raised. In July 1968²² a pro-tem committee was formed to pave the way for the merger of all three youth bodies. It was agreed that all three youth bodies would be abolished and dissolved and a new body to be called "Malaysia National Youth Association" (MANYA) be formed instead. The pro-tem committee elected at the meeting of 26 delegates from the three associations held on Tuesday 3 July 1968 at the Secretariat's operation room were: Tun Mustapha (President), Harris Salleh, Herman Luping and Chong Thain Vun (all Deputy Presidents) and six Vice Presidents including Yap Pak Leong and Peter Mojuntin.

In his address to the delegates, Harris Salleh said: "We are here today to make an important decision on the future of about 300,000 youths in Sabah." He said that the youths should be under one common leadership and should not compete with one another.²³ The meeting also agreed that SKKS, SANYA and SAYC should meet separately on 31 July 1968 and formally dissolve themselves and this would be followed by a combined meeting of all delegates at the community centre.

Both SKKS, and SAYC duly held their meetings on 31 July 1968 and dissolved themselves as previously agreed. SANYA also met but did not dissolve itself. A paper was prepared and this was to be presented to Tun Mustapha who was to decide the date of the inauguration of the Malaysian National Youth Association (MANYA) as previously agreed.

A delegation led by Harris Salleh, Chong Thain Vun and Herman Luping were sent to see Tun Mustapha. He declined to meet the delegates as he was said to be "too busy." This was the first sign that Tun Mustapha was suspicious of the move to form MANYA, and that he was not in favour of the formation of the new body. Nevertheless, Chong and Luping took their courage in their hands and went to see Tun Mustapha who was playing at the Golf Club at Tanjong Aru. When he was asked about the inauguration of MANYA, he simply said to postpone it until he had decided. The inauguration was to have taken place on the day following 31 July (as

22. *Sabah Times*, 3 July 1968.

23. *Ibid.*

most youth delegates were present in Kota Kinabalu from all over Sabah) but it was postponed indefinitely. The youth leaders Harris, Chong, Luping, Mojuntin, Yap Pak Leong, and others did not give up on the idea of MANYA, but they realised that if it were to succeed Tun Mustapha had to give it his blessing.

Indeed soon after Tun Mustapha celebrated his 50th birthday in grand style — with float processions and fireworks held in front of the State Secretariat Building. The youth leaders collected amongst themselves some money to buy him a present — the Encyclopedia Britannica. These volumes were presented to him during the birthday party celebration by Harris, Chong Thain Vun and Luping. It was meant to be a peace offering, but Tun Mustapha spurned the gift. The youth leaders were told they had made an error of judgment in not inviting two people to occupy positions in the new MANYA line up. Those people were Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid and Syed Kechik.²⁴

These two persons were close confidantes of Tun Mustapha and it was learnt later that they advised Tun Mustapha to be wary of the MANYA leaders. They apparently advised him not to accept the position of MANYA President immediately. They were probably suspicious of the motives of Harris, Luping, Chong and others. They did not apparently want these youth leaders to be too closely identified with Tun Mustapha. They were themselves very close to him as his close advisors on all matters pertaining to Sabah politics and presumably wished to retain their exclusive influence.²⁵

Syed Kechik was especially instrumental in his efforts to isolate Tun Mustapha from not only the youth leaders, but even from other members of the Sabah State Cabinet. It is also probable that insofar as Syed Kechik was concerned, the Kadazans were a spent force and should not be given any recognition and should be disunited further. Syed Kechik was not only a Malay from the Malay Peninsula, but a Malay of part-Arab descent. He probably saw MANYA as an organisation in which the Kadazans

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24. Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid was then a high government official and was in charge of promotion of all officials. He was also very close to Tun Mustapha. Datuk Syed Kechik came to Sabah as Tun Mustapha's advisor sent by Tunku Abdul Rahman before the 1967 election.
 25. In an interview with Dzulkifli on 12 April 1984 this writer was told that as long as Tun Mustapha needed his advice and that of Syed Kechik, he remained as the most powerful man in Sabah. As soon as he ignored his advice and made an enemy of him, he (Tun Mustapha) started declining in power.

could identify themselves and rise as a major force in the future. He did not want to see a strong Kadazan leader to come up after Tun Stephens who was now regarded as the vanquished Kadazan leader. In fact to many Kadazan leaders Syed Kechik seemed to look down on the Kadazan community and this saddened and irritated them considerably.²⁶

Syed Kechik's assessment of the Kadazan leadership was however probably correct. Since the dissolution of UPKO, the leaders were in disarray and did not work together any more. Each man was for himself. The demise of UPKO also spelt the doom of the SKKS. The Society of Kadazans in Penampang now existed only in name. The Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association was also just in name. The Kadazan nationalist movement by 1968 was indeed a spent force.

MANYA therefore never came into being and SANYA came under the control of Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid as Harris's replacement in SANYA's leadership. Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid had Tun Mustapha behind him. Through him, he made SANYA the most powerful single youth body in Sabah. He did not want to see any other youth body formed: he discouraged anyone from forming any more youth associations. He used his position as Tun Mustapha's closest advisor and confidante to encourage the civil servants to join SANYA. SANYA was avowedly a multi-racial youth association, but it tended always to be partial to the Malays and to Islam.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare formed a Youth Services Committee. The object was to unite all youth organisations, including the Boy Scouts, Red Cross etc. as one body to be called "Sabah Youth Council". Luping from the SKKS, Dzulkifli (but not Chong Thain Vun or Yap Pak Leong) were included in the committee. The committee recommended the formation of a "Sabah Youth Council" and a Cabinet paper was presented. However, a decision was never reached in Cabinet, and the Sabah Youth Council was never formed. It is interesting to note that Dzulkifli, now the SANYA chief never attended the Youth Services Committee. He sent in a representative. He was, however, always given a copy of the minutes of the meeting, sent directly to him to his address at the Chief Minister's Department.

In 1975, the SKKS was deregistered for lack of activities. The SAYC was not heard of again, and even its building was taken over by SANYA.

After the fall of Tun Mustapha and the USNO party in 1976, and the emergence of the Berjaya party led by Harris Salleh, SANYA once again

26. Datuk Peter Mojuntin used to call Syed Kechik "Rasputin", after the Russian monk who was adviser to the Czar of Russia.

came under the control of Harris Salleh. After taking control of the youth association Harris, who became Chief Minister of Sabah in June 1976, made the youth body into a business enterprise. Some large tracts of timberland were allocated to SANYA and with the proceeds, it embarked on business ventures. SANYA projects were numerous by 1979. It invested in shopping complex developments in direct competition with shops owned by Sabah Economic Development Corporation; it invested in a shoe-making factory, the toothbrush making industry, the gem processing industry, the petrol supply industry, and the importation and sale of meat from Australia. In short, SANYA, the youth movement was transformed into a big corporate body. The stated aim at the beginning was to give employment to the large number of unemployed youths. However, SANYA soon learned that it had over-expanded itself and many of its projects were either stopped or taken over by other quasi-government bodies.

As for the SKKS and SAYC, their former leaders are either dead or inactive in politics. None of the younger generation of Kadazans have taken over the mantle of the Kadazan youth organisation. Nor have any of the younger Chinese generation taken any interest in the youth movement of the erstwhile SAYC. For the moment therefore, it would appear that youth movements in Sabah are dead. The erstwhile powerful youth organisations which were considered to be strong pressure groups in the political life of Sabah are no more.

The Kadazan Cultural Association

As the United Sabah Kadazan Youth Association became more and more identified with the political movement of the Kadazan people as a whole, it was thought wise to form a new organisation which would look after the cultural life of the Kadazan community. Since 1959, the Kadazan youth section had organised and looked after the Kadazan Harvest Festival celebration. However, most of the Kadazan youth leaders, such as Peter Mojuntin, Fred Tan (Jinu) were also politicians and were very busy with the Kadazan political party — the United Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO), later to be called the United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO). It was therefore thought necessary that those who were not directly involved in politics should help organise a new body. This new body was called the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association (SKCA), or in Kadazan the "Sinompuuvan Koubasan" Kadazan Sabah (SKKS). This new SKKS is not to be confused with the former United Sabah Kadazan Youth Association

or the erstwhile "Sinompuuvan Komuhakan" Kadazan Sabah (also known as SKKS).

The aim of the newly formed association was purely to look after the cultural aspects of the Kadazan community and to take over the responsibility of organising the Kadazan Harvest Festival celebration from the youth association. At the same time, the formation of the new SKKS was a direct response to the formation of the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA), which was formed in 1963 with its headquarters at Tuaran. This latter organisation was an extension of the Dusun Lotud Association mentioned earlier. The SKCA was formed in 1964, but was not registered until 29 April 1966. The first chairman was Fred Sinidol. From 1966 this cultural association became responsible for the Harvest Festival celebration. But as the association had no funds of its own, Tun Stephens furnished all the celebration's expenses.

The USDA kept a low profile after the 1967 election and after the demise of the UPKO party. However, in 1979, it became active again and it is believed that some non-Kadazan leaders were behind the financing of the revival of the association to rival the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association. Through the encouragement of some non-Kadazan leaders in Berjaya, the USDA agitated for the introduction of the Dusun language in Radio Sabah — thus cutting short the Kadazan language programme. There is now a news programme in "Dusun" and also songs presented in the "Dusun" dialect; that is to say in the Tuaran-area dialect of Kadazan.

Perhaps the best example of the continuing controversy regarding the division between so-called Kadazan and Dusun ethnicity is the recent public squabble between two Kadazan leaders regarding the celebration of the Harvest Festival and the role played by the Kadazan Cultural Association in this celebration. The controversy, however, has taken a new twist. In June 1982, a Kadazan State Minister was sacked from his post as a State Cabinet Minister as a result of his strong stand for the Kadazan cause: he had held a fresh Kadazan festival in Tambunan. The background which led to his sacking was as follows. On 9 May 1982, the annual Harvest Festival celebration was held at Keningau in the Interior Residency. The celebration was declared open by the visiting Yang di Pertuan Agong (king). The celebration at Keningau was organised by members of the United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA) in conjunction with some state officials. The reception committee for the visit of the king was headed by the Deputy Chief Minister, who was also the patron of the SKCA.

The sacked Minister, Joseph Pairin, who is the President of SKCA, explained in a newspaper interview that a statewide Harvest Festival celebration was being organised by the SKCA as the one celebrated at Keningau on 9 May "was not a statewide festival."²⁷ He further explained that several districts had rung up the association expressing their disappointment as they were not able to participate in the Keningau celebration. "We have assured the Kadazans that we are holding another one and they are happy" he continued as reported in the same newspaper. The "fresh" celebration was held on 26 June and it was reported that the celebration was attended by over 20,000 Kadazans from all over the state. Shortly before the Tambunan celebration was held the Minister was sacked from his post.²⁸

Prior to the holding of the fresh celebration at Tambunan, the Deputy Chief Minister Ongkili rebuked Pairin "for making utterances while the king was still in Sabah."²⁹ Ongkili said that the celebration at Keningau was "statewide" and continued "The President of the SKCA has embarrassed his Majesty, the Yang di Pertuan Agong, who declared open the statewide Harvest Festival celebration in Keningau."³⁰

Whether the Keningau celebration of the Harvest Festival was a statewide affair is beside the point. The writer believes that there were two important reasons why leaders in the SKCA wanted to have a fresh celebration at Tambunan. First, the celebration at Keningau was organised and manned by the rival organisation, USDA. Since the Harvest Festival was declared a public holiday in the 1960s during the colonial era a Kadazan organisation had always been in the forefront in organising and funding the Harvest Festival celebrations by the Kadazan community. The funding of the celebration was through contributions and hand-outs by members of the SKCA but the chief contribution had always been from its leader, Tun Stephens. However, since the revival of USDA a rival organisation had come forward to stage and organise the celebration. Indeed, the Harvest Festival celebrations in 1977 and 1978 were celebrated twice — once by the USDA organisation and the other by the SKCA organisation. The former apparently, was given official recognition by the presence of the Yang di Pertua Negeri (Head of State) at the cele-

27. *Daily Express*, 12 May 1982.

28. Interview with Datuk Pairin Kitingan.

29. *Daily Express*, 20 May 1982.

30. *Ibid.*

bration held in Kota Belud in 1977. Later, in a statement made by the Chief Minister in Tenom he suggested that in future all Harvest Festival celebrations would be funded by the state government. He did not explain or elaborate as to which of the two rival organisations would be allocated the funds for the celebration. However, obviously, the aim was for the state government itself to take over the Harvest Festival celebration altogether.

The second reason for the Kadazans' objection to the Keningau celebration was, apparently, the inclusion of a mass conversion ceremony to the Islamic faith by some people of the Interior (including Christians) as one of the featured events in the programme. The mass conversion ceremony was witnessed by the visiting Malaysian Agong (king) whose visit to the state coincided with the Harvest Festival celebrations.

The above description of the apparent misunderstanding between the President of the SKCA and its patron is just another illustration of the many misunderstandings and squabbles among the Kadazan leadership in the recent past. This recent squabble is sadly between two persons who are from the same district (Tambunan) belonging to the same political party and the same religion, equally well educated and both members of the State Cabinet.

The latest stage in this saga of "Kadazan" versus "Dusun" controversy is the suggestion that the term "bumiputra" be abolished and all other "bumiputra" names such as Kadazan, Dusun, Murut, etc. be abolished to be replaced by the word "Pribumi". Indeed, a book is written on the virtue of "Pribumi".³¹ The book *Pribumi: Kadazan/Dusun* was written in the Malay language, and the publisher was the Sabah Foundation. In 1977 the Sabah Foundation sponsored a study of the customs and tradition of the Kadazan people (*Adat Istiadat dan Hukum Adat Orang Dusun di Sabah*). The result of the study was published in a book already referred to.

In a feature article entitled "Pribumi: as a Short Term for Bumiputra and Exploding the Ethnic Myths",³² the author blamed the colonial administrators for the collection of "some 22 'pribumi' ethnic groups" in Sabah. The author claimed that the British kept these people apart, and that "they encouraged the false belief that the combined population of the Kadazans and the Dusuns comprised the majority in the state and that Christianity was the leading religion." The author continued: "The

31. Arena Wat, *Pribumi*.

32. *Daily Express*, 28 December 1982.

Kadazans, particularly from the Penampang and Papar districts, tried to unite the Dusun, the Rungus and even the Muruts by a move to persuade them to call themselves Kadazans. An emotional debate swept the 'pribumi' communities throughout the state." The author did not give any indication of his source material on this. This article is obviously a further extension of the propaganda campaign contained in the book *Pribumi Sabah* to disparage and belittle the use of "Kadazan" as a term. The author, an official of the state government, tried to show that Kadazans, Dusun and Rungus are three separate people.

Apparently, some government leaders (i.e. Berjaya leaders, of the governing party) considered the issue of Kadazan/Dusun nomenclature in 1978 and agreed that neither the Dusun nor the Kadazan term be used, and should be replaced by the term "pribumi". The reasoning behind the use of this, according to Cabinet Minister Ongkili was to "unite" the people. Whether Ongkili is aware that this suggestion of using "Pribumi" is abhorrent to the Kadazans or Dusuns alike, no one knows. Ongkili, however, suggested at the annual general meeting of the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association held in 1981 that the Kadazan title of "Huguan Siou" be conferred on the Chief Minister, Harris Salleh. Harris is a Malay, and understandably, the delegates kept quiet on this suggestion and did not act on it.

When the book *Pribumi Sabah* first appeared and the suggestion to replace the term Kadazan was suggested, naturally there was consternation amongst the Kadazan community. But their objections were muted and lacked force. A top government official, soon after announced that as from 1 January 1983, the use of the terms Kadazan and Dusun would cease, and be replaced by the term "Pribumi". As an afterthought, the term "Pribumi" was also to include Bajau, Muruts etc. The 1980 census indeed deleted all bumiputra "ethnic" terms hitherto used and replaced them all by the term "Pribumi".³³

Since 1980 the celebration of the Kadazan Harvest Festival has been entirely taken over by the state government. Each village however was free to organise its own harvest celebration, but the state-wide celebration is now state-controlled. The Kadazan leaders do not seem to understand

33. Meanwhile, village headmen in other Kadazan areas have received a questionnaire to be filled in by all households in their village. These "questionnaires" are distributed by the District Office, but believed to have come from the Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah (MUIS). It surveys the religious connections in each kampong.

why their own celebration is controlled and financed by the state government. Some gullible Kadazan leaders however expressed great satisfaction that the state government under Harris was taking such a great interest in the Kadazan movement and culture. However, as one Kadazan leader told this writer in an interview, he was worried to see the eventual demise of the Kadazan race. He said even "Kadazan" was now considered a dirty word, and he asked why the state government did not take over the financing and control of the Hari Raya or Chinese New Year celebrations too. "Why only the Kadazan Harvest Festival?" he asked.

However, a "silent protest" amongst young Kadazan leaders seems to have surfaced against government's interference and control of Kadazan cultural development and aspirations. This "silent protest" was manifested in the hundreds of little celebrations organised in small villages. Further, and more important still, the SKCA and the USDA long the rival Kadazan organisations have finally come to terms with each other. Leaders on both sides decided to stop the in-fighting and misunderstanding and arranged and organised a joint Kadazan Harvest Festival celebration in Ranau in May 1984. This was the first time that the young stalwarts of both organisations got together to put on their own show — the Kadazan Harvest Festival. There have been talks that both associations will probably merge together eventually. Perhaps Kadazan nationalism isn't entirely dead after all.

CHAPTER 4

KADAZANS IN POWER

Gordon Means¹ described Sabah as politically the most retarded of the states in Malaysia. Political parties began to form only in 1961 and the first election, the local government elections, were only held in December 1962 while negotiations were still in progress for the terms of Sabah's entry into Malaysia.

Sabah entered the 1960s without a single organised political party. Only after Tunku Abdul Rahman's proposal for the formation of Malaysia did Sabah's leaders such as Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha realise that the British were definitely leaving and therefore bestirred themselves to form parties "both as vehicles for their own ambitions and professedly as guarantors for the interests of the communities they sought to represent."²

The parties so formed were along ethnic lines — the Kadazans forming a Kadazan party, the Malays a Malay party and the Chinese a Chinese party. Means interpreted these ethnically orientated political parties as due to the population's lack of understanding or sophistication regarding politics and therefore the people tended to fall back on old tribal loyalties and their communal leaders.³ Tun Stephens, however, argued that when Malaysia was first proposed there was no time for individual ethnic leaders such as himself, Tun Mustapha, Datuk Khoo Siak Chiew and others to sit down and work out the complexities of a multi-racial party. These leaders already knew each other as they were all appointed members of the Colonial Legislative Council. However, due apparently to the swiftness of events by which the Malaysian Federation was proposed by Malaya and agreed to by the British authorities, Sabah's leaders were put in a quandary: some, like Tun Stephens, Datuk Sundang and Datuk Khoo reacted with strong objections to the proposal while others, like Tun Mustapha and other Muslim leaders, reacted favourably to the proposal from the beginning. It was therefore mainly because of the different

1. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, p. 373.

2. Margaret C. Roff, *Politics of Belonging*, p. 53.

3. Gordon P. Means, *op.cit.*, p. 301.

initial stands taken by these leaders that the various political parties were formed. The United National Kadazan Party was initially formed to oppose Malaysia, the United Sabah National Organisation was formed to welcome Malaysia; the Pasok Momogun Party was formed to oppose Malaysia, as were the two first Chinese parties, the United Party of Khoo Siak Chiew of Sandakan and the Democratic Party of Peter Chin of Kota Kinabalu.

The other main reason why the political parties in Sabah were formed along ethnic lines was because of the model of the Malayan Alliance party which was itself formed along communal lines. The Malays in Malaya had the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) to look after their interests, the Chinese had the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Indians had the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC).

In Sabah, the three main ethnic groups were the Kadazans, the Muslims and the Chinese. As early as 1962, UNKO, the Kadazan party and USNO, the Malay party had decided to discuss the possibility of forming a pact so that the two parties could form a united front to meet the Cobbold Commission set up by the British to assess responses to the Malaysia proposal, and also the Inter-Governmental Committee under Lord Landsdowne. By 16 October 1962, the newly merged Chinese party (Borneo Utara party (BUNAP)) joined UNKO and USNO in discussing the formation of a Sabah Alliance party. At the meeting was Dr Lim Swee Aun, a senior committee member of the Malayan Chinese Association. He was sent specifically to Sabah as the Malayan Alliance party representative to address the meeting of the three component parties. He encouraged them to form the Sabah Alliance party as it would be in line with the Malayan Alliance party in Kuala Lumpur.

The first implication of the formation of the Sabah Alliance party was that each component party was meant to look after the interests of its own community: the UNKO to represent the Kadazan community, the USNO to represent the Muslim community and the BUNAP to represent the Chinese community.

However, it must also be pointed out that Tun Stephens' initial intention, and probably better judgement, was to form a multi-racial party at the outset to be known as the Sabah Action Front. He thought a multi-racial party should be formed for Sabah, but the swiftness with which the Malaysia plan took shape inhibited his intention. Instead he was moved by the events which took place and followed the wishes of the people he led: the Kadazans.

Tun Stephens claimed that he also had the choice of leading the Muslim community.⁴ He once told this writer that he had a lot of Muslim relations and supporters. He was in fact thinking of forming a "bumiputra" party, consisting of all the native population. However, as he had identified himself as the Kadazan leader since 1958 and became the acknowledged leader of the Kadazans, he decided instead to form a purely Kadazan party. Besides, Tun Mustapha, who was his close friend whom he called his "blood brother", had decided to form a "bumiputra" party with membership open to all the natives in Sabah. Tun Stephens decided not to confuse matters by starting another "bumiputra" party. The Malaysia plan proposal was more pressing and his time was pre-occupied with meetings regarding Sabah's entry into the new federation.

The Emergence of Political Parties

The first political party to be formed in May 1961 was the United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO). Tun Stephens, the President of the Society of Kadazans since 1958, led the formation of UNKO. The formation of the Kadazan party was a logical extension of the Society of Kadazans, and the Kadazans felt that they must have a political party of their own. They saw themselves as forming the most numerous part of the "bumiputra" population and felt that the country should rightly belong to them and that they should be the inheritors of British authority when they left. Tun Stephens, therefore, opposed what he first thought of as Malayan Malays' encroachment into Sabah and did not welcome the Malaysia proposal.⁵ In his editorial Tun Stephens argued that a federation with Malaya would be a kind of neo-colonialism and under a strong Islamic influence. He also thought that if independence was to come sooner rather than later it would be the Chinese who would benefit most because of their superior educational and economic advantages over the "bumiputra" peoples. Tun Stephens therefore at first favoured a continued British presence until such time as the "bumiputras" were ready for independence. The formation of the United National Kadazan Organisation was therefore primarily to oppose the formation of the newly proposed Federation of Malaysia.

By March 1961, a meeting of all Kadazan leaders drawn from the various Kadazan Associations in Sabah gathered to discuss plans for the

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4. Told to the writer by Tun Stephens in 1966 during the height of USNO-UPKO rivalries.
 5. Tun Stephens, "Open Letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman", *Sabah Times*, 7 July 1961 and *The Straits Times*, 18 July 1961.

formation of a political party.⁶ A pro-tem committee was selected to organise the calling of delegates to a conference scheduled to take place in August 1961. The Congress of delegates met for two days (6 and 7 August 1961) and it was at this two-day conference that the Kadazan leaders decided to form a purely Kadazan political party to be known as the United National Kadazan Organisation. Any earlier intention of Tun Stephens that the first political party should be a multi-racial party was forgotten. He was simply swept by the current mood of the delegates who wanted to see a closed Kadazan political party formed. The formation of UNKO was a manifestation of the Kadazans' dream and desire to have a strong political organisation to look after their interests and to make them the governors in their own country.

The name "Kadazan" was chosen in preference to the term "Dusun" or "Pasok Momogun" after a ballot was taken. According to Ghani Gilong, he did not object to the use of the term Kadazan as it was a general consensus amongst those present. Gibon⁷ of Tambunan also said he did not mind the term "Kadazan" being used. Sundang, however, objected strongly to the term. He wanted the term "Pasok Momogun" used as it would also include the Murut people and not just the Kadazans or Dusun community. However, he too went along with the term Kadazan as there was a general consensus amongst the delegates and he was anxious to see a political party formed to oppose the formation of the Federation of Malaysia.⁸

Tun Stephens informed this writer that he chose to use the term "Kadazan" in order to give a local name for the "same speech" community under which they could unite themselves and be proud to belong. The term "Dusun" was an imported Malay word and hence non-indigenous to the Kadazan community. Besides, the term "Dusun" to most people living in the low-lying areas, particularly in the Penampang and Papar districts, was a derogatory term. It was a slur term used to refer to the Kadazans as village yokels. "Dusun makan ketak" (village yokel, eater of frogs) was the common slur used by non-Kadazans about the Kadazans.⁹

6. Margaret C. Roff, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

7. Datuk Anthony Gibon was a leading member of the Kadazan community in the Tambunan district. He was a retired school teacher and was therefore one of the few educated Kadazans at the time. He was selected by Tun Stephens to attend the meeting which formed UNKO.

8. Interview with Datuk Sundang on 17 April 1983.

9. Frogs are considered the lowest form of food by the Sabah people. They are considered the food of the very poor.

The Kadazans in other districts, such as Keningau, Ranau, Tambunan, Kudat or Tuaran did not mind being called "Dusuns" as they never thought that this newly imported word was a slur. Non-Kadazans were very few in these areas and they did not "dare" to call the Kadazans there "Dusun makan ketak".

Tun Stephens admitted later, however, that the use of the term "Kadazan" was a gamble he took — a gamble he believed he could win. There was after all a definite and strong rise of a sense of unity amongst the same speech community. He thought therefore that the intention of the leaders — to form a strong political party with which they could all identify and to bring them to freedom from the British — was much greater than petty quarrels about a "name". He bemoaned the fact that he did not have the time to go around Sabah and explain why "Kadazan" as a name was used. The sudden announcement of the formation of Malaysia occupied the Kadazan leader's time.¹⁰

When UNKO was finally formed its membership was open only to Kadazans. The membership clause of the party's constitution reads:

Membership is open to:

- (1) only Kadazans or those who have a Kadazan father or mother (one Kadazan parent) male or female and over 16 years.
- (2) Members must agree and take an oath that they will abide by the rules and constitution of this organisation.

The newly formed party had six listed objects and these were almost identical to the aims and objects of the Society of Kadazans mentioned earlier. The first object was to unite all Kadazans for the betterment of all races. Another object was to seek eventual independence from Britain and lastly, to enfuse a sense of Kadazanism, or Kadazan nationalism among the Kadazan people.¹¹ However, these noble objectives were soon forgotten — especially the object of seeking independence from Britain and the anti-Malaysia stand. As we shall see Stephens and his co-leaders were soon convinced of the advantages of joining Malaysia.

10. Told to the writer by Tun Stephens shortly after the dissolution of the UPKO party.

11. See the "Constitution of the United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO)".

Pasok Momogun

Sundang, however, remained unconvinced. He supported Tun Stephens and UNKO at first and went along with the formation of UNKO as long as the party and its leaders were anti-Malaysia. As soon as Tun Stephens and UNKO changed their stand, Sundang divorced himself from UNKO and formed a rival Kadazan party — the Pasok Momogun party with its headquarters at Keningau. The formation of Pasok Momogun was also helped and encouraged by some Chinese leaders, notably Peter Chin of Kota Kinabalu, who helped finance the party. Peter Chin insisted apparently that the party should be multi-racial and anti-Malaysia. Both Sundang's brothers, Sodomon and Jaimi, were also behind the formation of Pasok Momogun. Peter Chin and the Chinese leadership of Kota Kinabalu did not immediately form their own party as they did not want to be seen to be openly anti-Malaysia at this stage. As Margaret C. Roff said:

They (the Chinese) were acute enough to realise that any purely Chinese campaign against Malaysia or independence would be suspect and unlikely to find attentive British ears.¹²

The United National Pasok Momogun party's constitution meanwhile strongly advocated a multi-racial policy for membership. This was largely the influence of the Chinese community leaders. However, Sundang himself said that it was his firm belief nevertheless that Sabah would inevitably become a colony of Malaya. It was like a big fish swallowing a small fish. Despite the fact that he and his party later joined UNKO to form the UPKO, and he became one of the State Ministers, Sundang has maintained his stand of not being happy with Malaysia even now.¹³

The main object of the party then as stipulated in the constitution was to gain independence for Sabah first. When Malaysia became an accomplished fact however, and when his Chinese supporters deserted him, Pasok Momogun itself joined the pro-Malaysia Sabah Alliance, and later merged with the UNKO to form the United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO).

United Sabah National Organisation (USNO)

Meanwhile, Tun Mustapha, the leader of the Muslim party (United Sabah

12. Margaret C. Roff, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

13. Interview with Datuk Sundang on 17 April 1983.

National Organisation (USNO)) was openly pro-Malaysia from the start. He saw the advantages for his people of joining Malaysia. After all, the Malays in UMNO were all Muslims and they were in control of the destiny of Malaya as the "sons of the soil". Just as Tun Stephens felt that the Kadazans should be the rightful heirs to the British as governors of the country when the latter left, so Tun Mustapha felt that the rightful successors and hence the "sons of the soil" should be the "Malay" Muslims. Although the constitution said that the party was open to "bumiputras" of all creeds and beliefs its membership was always heavily Muslim.

The constitution of USNO was strongly pro-Malaysia and its first stated object was to "seek independence through the formation of Malaysia." The party also sought to have Islam as the country's religion while respecting other religions. Membership of USNO was open to all "bumiputras" of Malaysian citizenship (not just Sabahans) and there was also a provision to allow non-"bumiputras" to be associate members.¹⁴

Chinese Parties

The Chinese leaders were slow to form their own political parties. The SCA (Sabah Chinese Association) did not come into being until 1965. Before this, there were two Chinese political parties, one centred in Sandakan to cater for the big timber Chinese businessmen's interests and the other at Kota Kinabalu, to cater for the Chinese wholesale and retail businessmen. The Sandakan Chinese party organised and financed by Khoo Siak Chiew and other timber men was known as the United Party. This party was nominally multi-racial, and was formed in early 1962. In general, this party was run by and acted in the interests of wealthy English-speaking Hakka and Teo Chiew businessmen. The other Chinese party, the Democratic party, tended to represent smaller businessmen and traders and was dominated by Hokkien and Hakkas who were mainly educated in Chinese.¹⁵ These two parties eventually merged in 1963 to form the Borneo Utera National Party (BUNAP) which later changed its name to the Sabah National Party (SANAP). Eventually, after a further merger with the Sabah Chinese Association which was then a cultural organisation under Hong Teck Guan, a Chinese magnate from Tawau, the SANAP party

14. See "The Constitution of the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO)".

15. Margaret C. Roff, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

became the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA).

These Chinese parties were all initially formed to oppose Malaysia. They saw the formation of Malaysia as a direct threat to their business interests in the state. By 1960 some 32 timber licences were in the hands of the Chinese and the economy of the state was 90 percent in the hands of the Chinese.¹⁶

However, the Chinese are not only good businessmen, they are also practical and pragmatic people. As soon as they saw that Malaysia was a "fait accompli", they changed their stand and actively supported Tun Mustapha's USNO. They recognised straight away that the USNO party and the Malays were where their bread was buttered! They left Sundang high and dry and combined with USNO leaders to destroy Tun Stephens and UPKO politically. The SCA held the balance of power from 1965 to 1967 — and they used this power to their best advantage in the Sabah Alliance party during this period.

The Sabah Alliance Party

The Sabah Alliance was originally made up of only the UNKO and USNO parties. Meetings of representatives of these two parties chaired by Tun Stephens were held on 12 August, 4 September, 9 October and 15 October 1962. The constitution of the Sabah Alliance was in line with the constitution of the Malayan Alliance party. On 16 October 1962, representatives of UNKO, USNO and the newly merged Chinese party BUNAP (the Borneo Utara National Party) met to consider further the formation of a Sabah Alliance. At this meeting, Dr Lim Swee Aun, a member of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), was present representing the Malayan Alliance party and he set out to persuade the Chinese of the advantages of joining a Sabah Alliance.

Further meetings of party representatives were held during November 1962, and on 13 November 1962 the Sabah Alliance was officially registered as a party comprising the United Kadazan National Organisation (UNKO), the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), and the Borneo Utara National Party (BUNAP). On 21 November 1962 a further two parties joined the Sabah Alliance — namely the United National Pasok Momogun party and the Sabah Indian Congress.¹⁷

16. Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah*.

17. UNKO Secretary-General's annual report dated 25 December 1963.

The constitution of the Sabah Alliance party lists the following as its objectives:

- (a) To establish, protect and uphold the principles of Parliamentary Democracy in Sabah;
- (b) To promote and maintain inter-racial goodwill and harmony;
- (c) To establish and maintain a united Malaysian nation;
- (d) To promote and accelerate the social, economic and political wellbeing of all the peoples of Sabah;
- (e) To maintain freedom of worship;
- (f) To preserve all that is best in the traditions, customs and culture of all the peoples of Sabah;
- (g) To pursue such other objects from time to time as will promote the interests of the peoples and the country as a whole.

By 1966, after UNKO and Pasok Momogun were merged, the members of the Alliance party were USNO, UPKO, SCA and SIC. The National Council consisted of: 12 representatives from USNO, 12 representatives from UPKO, 12 representatives from SCA, and 2 representatives from SIC.

Representation from each major component party, i.e. UPKO, USNO and SCA to the National Council was on an equal basis at the early stage of the Alliance's history. This was mainly due to uncertainty as to the strength of each component party and also due to strong representation by the Chinese leaders who saw themselves as the balance of power between the rivalry of Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha in their struggle for power.

The allocation of seats in the Legislative Assembly which was done in accordance with the numbers of seats secured at the local government elections in 1962 and 1963 was therefore not followed in the allocation of the number of representatives in the Alliance National Council.¹⁸ In the same way, the allocation of representatives in the Central Executive Committee of the Sabah Alliance was on an equal basis, namely UPKO 5, USNO 5, SCA 5 and SIC 1. The presidents of each of the major political parties (USNO, UPKO, SCA) were joint chairmen of the National Council. But each of the joint chairmen was to take a turn to preside at the National Council Meeting for one year.

At the end of 1965, Khoo Siak Chiew gave way to Tun Mustapha as the chairman. Tun Mustapha was the chairman in 1966, during the crucial period in the division of seats amongst the component parties in the

18. For the details of Legislative Council members from each party see Chapter V.

first general election. In 1967, the chairmanship should have gone to Tun Stephens, but Tun Mustapha refused to give way. Indeed chairmanship of the Sabah Alliance National Council stayed with Tun Mustapha until the party died a natural death in 1976.

During the height of the USNO-UPKO rivalries, the Sabah Alliance was used extensively by Tun Mustapha to stifle and humiliate Tun Stephens and UPKO party leaders. He had the firm backing of the SCA in this. SCA held the balance of power from 1964 to 1967 and was largely able to determine the course of events in Sabah during this period. The Chinese leaders' open bias and support for Tun Mustapha gained them many advantages, not only economically — in the timber business, but also politically. In December 1964, after the second major Alliance crisis, for example, Peter Lo, one of the SCA leaders, found himself the new Chief Minister, replacing Tun Stephens. This is how Edwin Lee puts it:¹⁹

Peter Lo became the unexpected Chief Minister. This was not the only prize won by the towkay party under its new title, one more suited to the new era, the Sabah National Party (SANAP). The cabinet reshuffles under recurrent crises had the consequence of vouchsafing the SANAP a test of such coveted fruits of office as the Ministry of Finance (with Pang Tet Tshung) in exchange for the Ministry of Social Welfare and Education, and the post of Minister without Portfolio in the Federal Cabinet (held by Peter Lo before his sudden nomination as *primus inter pares*). Khoo Siak Chiew remained in the Ministry of Communication and Works. The reward for him was a term as the Presiding Chairman of the Sabah Alliance. The SANAP's fortune was at its zenith. Yet it was at this time that the SANAP found it obligatory to take sides.

Had the SCA leaders adopted a neutral position, the various crises in the Alliance might not have occurred or at least not as acutely.

The Contending Elites

On 31 August 1963, Sabah declared its independence from the British. Tun Stephens became the first Chief Minister of the state. It was a logical consequence of events for Tun Stephens to become the first Chief Minister. To the Kadazans it was a realisation of their dreams and aspirations for at last they saw themselves in power and the governors for the first time in Sabah's history. However, this dream was not to be of long duration.

19. Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*, p. 212.

As early as April 1963 some leaders in the USNO party were expressing disquiet that a Kadazan should become the Chief Minister when the British left the country. These misgivings were shown in the minutes of the UNKO's first annual general meeting held on 29 April 1963. Tun Stephens told the meeting that the USNO party was calling for two things at once: a merger of UNKO and USNO and a direct election to be held as soon as possible. The reasons for this call seemed obvious: USNO leaders were looking for a way to reduce the UNKO's strength as a political party, and more particularly, to minimise the rising popularity of Tun Stephens as Sabah's leader.

The call for a direct election by USNO in April 1963 was seen by Tun Stephens and the other Kadazan leaders as a threat, but nevertheless the UNKO leaders also took the call seriously. An election committee to work out an election strategy was formed. Meanwhile, however, UNKO leaders did not lose sight of the impending independence day — 31 August 1963 — and it was towards this end that all their energies were spent.

The call for direct elections by USNO surfaced again in November 1963. This time, USNO actually demanded from Tun Stephens that a direct election be held. They threatened to introduce a motion calling for a direct election at the Legislative Council meeting to be held on 6 November 1963. Tun Stephens brought this matter to UNKO's Central Executive Committee meeting on 5 November 1963. He told the committee that the party and, for that matter, Sabah was not yet prepared for a direct election. He wanted USNO to withdraw the motion. He had an understanding with the Chinese leaders on this matter. The minutes recorded him as saying: "If USNO would not withdraw the motion it would be alright for us. The UNKO can continue with SANAP and the Pasok Momogun. And it would be lucky if USNO can get 5 out of the 16."²⁰

The call for direct election was consequently withdrawn by USNO. However, as an alternative, the USNO leaders then called for a merger of USNO and UNKO. With the advantage of hindsight, and with the records we have concerning this suggestion, it would appear that this merger proposal of the two "bumiputra" parties was merely a "facade", an "excuse" used by the USNO leaders to stem the tide of the rise of Kadazan nationalism. The USNO leaders were happy to see the formation of Pasok Momogun by Sundang as a splinter group from the UNKO party, but they could also see

20. Minutes of UNKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 5 November 1963.

that eventually UNKO and Pasok Momogun would merge and thus become a very strong Kadazan political party to contend with. The USNO leaders did not want this to happen.

Tun Stephens was not overly enthusiastic about the merger proposal with USNO either. He could see difficulties in the proposal as it would mean that either he or Tun Mustapha would have to step down in favour of the other as leader. Tun Stephens, however, did not want to be seen as totally unreceptive to the proposal. He therefore suggested that an UNKO 5-man committee be formed to meet USNO leaders to discuss further the merger proposal. This committee was later increased to 10, with Gilong as the leader. USNO also had a 10-member committee.

On 7 November 1963, the USNO party sent a memorandum to UNKO giving their suggestion to the proposed merger plan. The UNKO party gave their counter-proposal. This counter-proposal included:

- (1) that the present system of election be used for the Legislative Council and Parliament - (i.e. to say, no direct election to be held as yet);
- (2) that Tun Stephens remain the Chief Minister.²¹

At first, the USNO leaders agreed to UNKO's proposal and even suggested that the name of the proposed merged party be called "United Malaysia Sabah Organisation" (UMSO). However, at a subsequent meeting, the USNO leaders changed their stand, so that by 13 January 1964, Gilong reported to the UNKO Executive Committee that USNO leaders were not truly serious about the merger proposal. He also told the UNKO executive committee that USNO wanted to have a direct merger of a merged UNKO and USNO with the UMNO party in West Malaysia. Naturally, UNKO leaders rejected this proposal. At the UNKO's central executive committee meeting held in February 1964, the minutes recorded:²²

During the discussion, it had been said that if the political parties in Sabah individually merge with the UMNO of Malaya it would not be good for Sabah. We would then only have a division of UMNO here. What is best is an Alliance which would co-operate with other parties in Malaysia.

This was the last reference to the merger proposal in 1964. With the failure of the merger proposal, the UNKO leaders then formed an election committee to prepare "facts and figures on the possible seats for UNKO in the coming Legislative Council election."²³

21. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1963.

22. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1964.

23. *Ibid.*, 15 March 1964.

Meanwhile, the UNKO leaders were asked by some non-Kadazans to reconsider changing the name of the party. The first to approach Tun Stephens on this matter was Yassin.²⁴ Yassin wanted to join UNKO but as a Brunei Malay, he was excluded by the party's constitution. On 23 February 1964, UNKO's Central Executive Committee met to consider Yassin's application to join the party and also his suggestion to change the party's name. After a lengthy discussion, with various names suggested, it was agreed that UNKO change its name to Kadazan Pasok Negri. The name was chosen so that Pasok Momogun could also merge with UNKO in the new party. The committee also agreed that if Pasok Momogun did not agree to merge with UNKO, then UNKO would amend its constitution and open the party's membership to all races.

Yassin did not accept the new name Kadazan Pasok Negri. Instead he suggested a new name, Party Anak Negri Sabah. The UNKO suggested to Yassin that he form this new party with himself as leader and later, UNKO and this party could merge. USNO leaders, of course, did not miss the implication of what Tun Stephens was trying to do. USNO leaders therefore stopped Yassin from forming his party and instead invited him to join USNO. By March 1964, therefore, the UNKO Executive Committee noted in its monthly meeting of 15 March 1964, that Yassin had joined USNO.

Tun Stephens as the Chief Minister had meanwhile approved a timber licence to Yassin with the proviso that this licence be shared amongst all top leaders of UNKO, USNO and SANAP. In a statement issued on 15 June 1967, entitled "Timber is Sabah's Greatest Political Curse",²⁵ Tun Stephens noted with hindsight:

Another special licence issued during my tenure of office as Chief Minister was for an area in Sugud. Dato Mohd Yassin had approached me many times about a timber area. One of his arguments made sense. He said that if a licence was issued he would see to it that all the other Ministers who had no shares in other timber companies would get some shares. His argument was that the Ministers' salaries were small and unless they were able to get sufficient income from a "clean" source, there was danger of corruption. I saw his point and Cabinet agreed to the issue of a special licence to him for an area in Sugud. Soon after I left for Kuala Lumpur to take up the post of Minister of Sabah Affairs. I saw the list of his company's shareholders recently and found that he had brought in as shareholders USNO and SCA members of Cabinet but had left the UPKO members out.

24. He is Datuk Mohammad Yassin bin Hashim. He was a native chief from Sipitang and was amongst the first few Malays raised to the rank of district officer by the colonial government.

25. *Sabah Times*, 15 June 1967.

Unwittingly, Tun Stephens had given "ammunition" to his future political enemies, whose aim was to topple him as Chief Minister and at the same time to reduce Kadazans' power and influence in the political arena in the state. Tun Stephens, however, told this writer in 1967 that the granting of the special timber licence to Yassin was a gamble he took. He had hoped that his "kindness" in granting him a large tract of timber land and hence making him a multi-millionaire would be reciprocated politically. He was wrong. As we shall see in the following chapter, Yassin became one of his chief political foes who brought about his present downfall and the demise of the Kadazan party in 1967.

From the very beginning of the formation of the Kadazan party, the Kadazan leadership in the political arena in the country was somewhat shaky. Tun Stephens' position as the Chief Minister was being challenged from all sides, including from some sections of the Kadazan community who were not UNKO members. He was however firmly in control of his own political party and the other Kadazan leaders in UNKO were also solidly behind him. The question, however, was whether they were strong enough to give him the necessary support he needed to maintain his position as Sabah's Chief Minister. As a result of USNO's challenge to his leadership and the call for a direct election, Tun Stephens thought that the UNKO party should be strengthened further. He envisaged the opening of the UNKO party to all races. He saw this as potentially strengthening his base. Thus, at the UNKO's Central Executive Committee meeting held on 15 March 1964, the UNKO leaders resolved to open the party's membership to all races. This resolution was made soon after they turned down USNO's proposal for UNKO and USNO to merge with UMNO in Malaya. This resolution to open UNKO to all races was partly as a result of USNO's call for merger with USNO and partly because Tun Stephens was finding it difficult to get the Chinese leaders in SANAP (SCA) to support him. The latter had gravitated more and more towards the USNO party and to Tun Mustapha.

The resolution read:

Be it resolved that membership be opened to members of all races in Sabah who accept the UNKO constitution subject to 10 years' residence in Malaysia out of the past 12 years.

The resolution was proposed by Mojuntin and seconded by Manjaji. This resolution was to be introduced at the annual general meeting scheduled for 6 June 1964.²⁶

However, this resolution was withdrawn at the subsequent meeting of

26. Minutes of UNKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 15 March 1964.

UNKO's Central Executive Committee held on 4 April 1964 — two days before the annual general meeting. In withdrawing the resolution, the minutes of the meeting noted:²⁷

After a lengthy discussion which emphasised the importance of the matter, it was agreed to pursue the matter actively and it was hoped that a decision could be reached within six months or earlier.

The minutes of the annual general meeting held on 6 April 1964 duly noted this: "After a lengthy discussion the resolution...is withdrawn."²⁸

The resolution to open UNKO's door was finally withdrawn by Tun Stephens himself. He was under intense pressure from the SCA and the USNO leaders to withdraw this resolution as they saw this matter as a direct challenge to their own political parties. Besides, Tun Stephens himself vacillated over the matter: he was not sure whether he should open UNKO's door particularly when it meant the changing of the UNKO's name. Despite strong encouragement from the younger Chinese leaders who did not want to join with the SCA party, therefore, Tun Stephens was not yet ready to do away with the name "Kadazan" by the opening of his UNKO party to all races.

It was not the UNKO's door which finally opened to all races, but the newly merged parties of UNKO and Pasok Momogun which became the United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation or UPKO for short. The formation of UPKO might have been seen as a logical conclusion for the Kadazan community and hence representing one of Tun Stephens' finest hours, but unfortunately, the formation of a united Kadazan party saw also the beginning of Tun Stephens' fall from power and the demise of Kadazan nationalism. Let us therefore trace the background events which finally led to the formation of UPKO and the sequence of events which took place shortly after UPKO was inaugurated.

The Formation of UPKO

The last meeting of the UNKO Central Executive Committee was held on 26 May 1964. At this meeting it was agreed that the Pasok Momogun party and the UNKO party nominate their respective constitutional committees which would meet on 30 May 1964. Their function was to arrange and prepare

27. *Ibid.*

28. Minutes of UNKO Annual General Meeting, 6 April 1964.

for the new constitution of the merged parties — the United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation — UPKO. At this meeting also it was agreed that the UPKO party's inaugural meeting be fixed for 13 and 14 June 1964.

On 30 May 1964, the UPKO party's constitutional committee met in Tun Stephens' official residence. Both the UNKO and Pasok Momogun party representatives were present. The UNKO party was headed by Tun Stephens and the Pasok party by Sundang and his brother Jaimi. The minutes of the meeting were as follows:

1. The committee examined and discussed the UNKO and UNPMP constitutions item by item. The committee agreed to draw a new constitution based on the UNKO's and UNPMP's constitutions with special attention to the following items: (a) Flag, (b) Badge, (c) Membership...., (d) Composition of office-bearers.²⁹

The meeting then resolved that the name of the merged parties be "The United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation — UPKO", and that membership be open to all *indigenous persons* or any person born or naturalised in Sabah who had attained the age of 16 years.

There was also provision for a combined national council of 60 members. Until the general meeting was held, it was agreed that the interim UPKO party would have two presidents (one from each party), four deputy presidents, four vice-presidents, two joint secretaries-general. Altogether, the council consisted of 40 persons, 20 from each political party.³⁰

The combined national council of the new party met for the first time on the evening of 25 June 1964 at the Sabah Alliance Headquarters in Kota Kinabalu. Both Tun Stephens and Sundang were present. Tun Stephens spoke asking that everyone work together for the good of the party, the people and country. He said: "Now we are together again, the parties UNKO and PM, the UPKO was stronger, but the responsibility of all is also greater."³¹ Twenty Central Executive Committee members of UPKO were elected. Most of the elected committee members were ex-UNKO executive committee members. The merger of UNKO and PM was indeed the culmination of Tun Stephens' dream of a united Kadazan people under one umbrella.

The sequence of events leading up to the eventual merger of the two parties was as follows: On Sunday 12 April 1964, a meeting of UNKO and

29. UPKO Constitutional Committee Minutes, 30 May 1964.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Minutes of UPKO First National Council Meeting, 25 June 1964.

Pasok leaders was held in Tenom. Amongst those who represented the UNKO party were Tun Stephens, Mojuntin, Manjaji and Fred Tan. The Pasok party was represented by Sundang, his brothers Sodomon and Jaimi, OKK Koroh, Haji Asneh, OKK Angkoi and practically all the Muruts native chiefs in the area and Tingkalor.

In a press statement which was issued the following day and published in the *Sabah Times* on 13 April 1964, the UNKO party released the following:³²

A meeting was held in Tenom Rest House on Sunday 12 April which was attended by representatives of the UNKO headed by UNKO President Dato Donald Stephens and leading members of the Pasok Momogun Party led by OKK G.S. Sundang.

The meeting was called to allow both parties opportunity to discuss the merger of the UNKO and the Pasok Momogun.

Dato Donald Stephens was in the chair and with great emotion expressed happiness at seeing all leaders from the Interior present. He said that the coming together of the UNKO and the Pasok Momogun was the same as two brothers coming together again after having had misunderstanding in the past.

Dato Stephens urged all present to forget the past which was dead and buried and to think of the present and the future. Before calling on others to speak he explained the many difficulties which had to be resolved before merger could take place.

It was necessary that everyone should agree on the name of the merged party, the aims, objects and membership.

Resolutions were then proposed. The first resolution concerned the name of the party. Many proposals were put forward but it was finally agreed unanimously that the name of the amalgamated party should be the United Pasok Kadazan Organisation (UPKO).

Everyone present expressed great satisfaction and spoke in support of the name for the merged party.

The second resolution approved unanimously was that a constitutional committee should be formed comprising 12 members, six from the UNKO and six from Pasok Momogun. This committee was to draw up the new constitution of UPKO. The committee was charged with the duty to co-ordinate and use the existing constitutions of the UNKO and PM in drawing up the UPKO constitution.

It was also unanimously resolved that the inaugural meeting for UPKO will be held on the 13th and 14th of June in Jesselton.

It was unanimously resolved that membership of UPKO will accommodate all present members of UNKO and Pasok Momogun.

The last resolution which received unanimous agreement was that, as from the day of the meeting, all members

32. UPKO press release, 12 April 1964.

of UNKO and all members of Pasok Momogun should cooperate fully and work together to carry out the aims and objects of both parties in a spirit of friendship and understanding.

It was stressed by the various leaders present that leaders of both parties should do everything possible to inform their members of the merger and benefits which are to be derived by the parties from such a merger.

As a result of this meeting of Kadazan party leaders, the UNKO-Pasok merger was discussed at the UNKO's Executive Committee meeting on 26 May 1964. This meeting fixed the date of the meeting of the Constitutional Committee which was held on 30 May 1964 and the inauguration of the newly amalgamated party on 13 and 14 June 1964. All branches from each party sent two representatives to the inaugural meeting. Tun Stephens thought this was his finest hour. He was quite emotional during the meeting. In a press release made on 15 June 1964 and published on 16 June in the *Sabah Times*, the UPKO party issued the following:³³

The United Pasok-Momogun Organisation was formally inaugurated yesterday when representatives from the Pasok Momogun Party and the United National Kadazan Organisation from all over Sabah approved unanimously the resolution introduced by the Hon'ble Peter Mojuntin MLA and seconded by the Hon'ble Stanley Ho, MP that the two parties be merged under the style of The United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation (UPKO).

Never has the Jesselton Community seen such a large number of chiefs from all over the country gathered together within its walls as it did during the two-day UPKO meeting on 13 and 14 June. OKK Sodomon, OKK Koroh, OKK Tambakau, Dato OKK Angian, OKK Jaimi, Native Chiefs Madan, Sanggau and many O.T.'s from Keningau, and Tenom, OKK Mulok and other Chiefs and O.T.'s from Sipitang, OKK Bulangang and Chiefs from Kuala Penyu including Robert Bulangang, OKK Haji Asneh and others from Beaufort, OKK Ewan and N.C. Manjakon from Penampang, OKK Majimbon from Inanam, Native Chief Amit and others from Papar, OKK Nonon from Tuaran, Native Chief Belingi from Tengelan, OKK Akoï and Native Chiefs Sepikit, Saliun, and others from Ranau, Rantian and others from Kota Belud, Native Chief Jemari, O.T. Assan Gaban and others from Kudat and Bandau, scores of District Councillors from all party of the country including Councillor Angkangon from Judat and Chong Ang Khoi from Labuan were all present at the meeting. Tenom, Semporna, Lahad Datu, Sandakan, Labuk, and Kinabatangan were all represented at the meeting as well as all centres in the West Coast and Interior Residency.

Representatives from well over one hundred branches of the Pasok Momogun and the UPKO were present.

The Conference was chaired by Dato Donald Stephens with OKK the Hon'ble G.S. Sundang as co-chairman.

33. UPKO press release, 15 June 1964.

There was unanimous agreement that the parties should merge and when the crowd present had voted this by acclamation the chairman asked the question of the merged party which should be given thought. A fairly long debate ensued and a few suggestions were put forward but after everyone wanting to speak had spoken there was unanimous agreement that the party should be known as the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation with the abbreviation UPKO.

All the chiefs spoke very strongly in favour of the motion and all expressed great satisfaction that the two brother parties had come back together and were again one. All told the meeting that the past should be forgotten and that past faults and misunderstandings should be well and truly buried. All agreed with Dato Stephens that "the past is dead and buried and today we get together and together we shall plan and work for the future."

During the closing session there were warm speeches of friendship, of affection and understanding among all concerned and joy was evidenced by the exchanges of embraces after the meeting was over between one-time political rivals.

The presidents Dato Stephens and Hon'ble OKK Sundang both expressed great joy that the meeting had been such a success and called on all UNKO and Pasok Momogun members everywhere in Sabah to understand fully that now there was no longer a UNKO or a Pasok Momogun party but in their stead was UPKO. All areas where Pasok Momogun and UNKO branches are in existence were told to get together as soon as possible and form UPKO branches with UPKO committees.

OKK Sedomon suggested that in larger areas there should also be celebrations and that buffaloes should be slaughtered according to the old custom of Sabah people. He was loudly acclaimed when he made this suggestion.

The UPKO constitution was approved by the meeting but a mandate was given to the National Council of the UPKO to tidy up any part which may require to be done especially in respect of membership of the party. The National Council was also empowered to approve the design of the party badge and party flag.

Many branch officials who spoke during the session paid warm tribute to the Huguan-Siou and to OKK Sundang and other officials of the Pasok Momogun and the UNKO for their tireless efforts in bringing about a merger. All were agreed that 13 June and 14 June would be two days which would live forever in the annals of Sabah as the days when two brother parties were able to wash away all their differences and become one again.

Speaking with emotion Dato Stephens before calling for one minute silence in thanksgiving for the success of the meeting (the Dato had also called for one minute silence for prayers at the start of the meeting) said that for him it was the happiest day of his life. In the past he said he had spent endless days and nights worrying because "we were apart"; he had prayed that the Pasok Momogun and the UNKO would come back together and now that his prayers had been realised he was truly happy. He said that the merger was only possible because our leaders were willing to forget past ills, true

or imagined, to forget slights and humiliations in the interest of the country and the people. The people of Sabah he said had reason to be grateful and proud of such leaders, leaders who were willing to put the country and people before their own personal interests and ambitions.

He called on all members to foster friendship and understanding in the country and help to build the Sabah Alliance into a "fortress which no one can destroy." He thanked everyone very warmly for their support of the merger and for having taken the trouble and expense of coming to Jesselton to attend the meeting.

The Kadazan and Murut people were at last united under one political party. The problem facing the leaders however was how to remain united and strong. Non-Kadazans, especially the SCA, attacked UPKO's open-door membership. Khoo Siak Chiew especially saw in the united Kadazan party a threat to the Chinese and for this reason he encouraged other leaders to attack the UPKO party. The USNO party's Tun Mustapha and Harris also attacked the UPKO party as they wanted USNO alone to continue to represent Muslim interests.

The UPKO however remained a multi-racial party for most of 1964 and at the Executive Committee meeting on 29 December 1964 the committee decided to continue the policy of multi-racialism. The minutes of 29 December 1964 read:³⁴

The meeting noted that the agreement signed after the first Sabah Alliance crisis was broken by SANAP and USNO when they created the second crisis. The UNKO should therefore be at liberty to open its door. In any case the SANAP till now has not amended its constitution which stipulates that SANAP is multi-racial. The USNO leaders in their public statements also claimed that USNO is multi-racial which it is because according to USNO's constitution Chinese and others can become associate members.

UPKO then started opening branches, not only in all Kadazan areas and USNO areas (such as in Semporna) but also in the predominantly Chinese area of Sandakan. People such as Chong Thain Vun, Yap Pak Leong, George Chin and a few other young Chinese leaders became UPKO members and headed branches in Chinese areas. Indeed, a Sandakan divisional headquarters for UPKO was established by January 1965.

Relations between the UPKO party and its Alliance partners in the SANAP party and the USNO party consequently deteriorated and resulted in the two major crises between UPKO and the Sabah Alliance.

34. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 29 December 1964.

Crisis: Stresses and Strains in the Sabah Alliance

The UPKO party's Secretary-General, Mojuntin, listed two reasons for the two Alliance crises in 1964. He said:³⁵

During the first Sabah Alliance crisis in June 1964, when USNO wanted to have the Chief Minister portfolio, the Pasok Momogun and UNKO worked together to face the crisis....However, in December 1964, another quarrel came up over the appointment of the present State Secretary. The second Sabah Alliance crisis developed into a serious stage after the Sabah Alliance had talks with Tengku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur. The UPKO took a firm stand and the Alliance was in real danger of breaking up. The USNO and SANAP also decided to fully support Inche Peter Lo to become Chief Minister.

He continued:

After much careful discussion on the matter and because UPKO leaders wanted peace for the peoples of Sabah and Malaysia, it was decided to accept the requirements by USNO and SANAP leaders but with conditions. The conditions UPKO asked (and accepted by USNO and SANAP) were that Dato Donald Stephens be promoted from Chief Minister to Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs; that direct elections must be held as soon as possible in 1965 and that the man selected according to the constitution by Sabah's first Chief Minister Dato Donald Stephens must be appointed State Secretary of Sabah.

Actually, the causes of the Sabah Alliance crises were not just two, but many, and perhaps the most important other causes apart from the two mentioned by Peter Mojuntin were: the timber policy of Tun Stephens as Chief Minister, and UPKO's attempt to open its door to other races as members.

As pointed out earlier, the UNKO party had envisaged opening its doors in early 1964 and becoming a multi-racial party. But it decided not to proceed because of the strong objections of the Chinese party leadership. The SANAP party leaders claimed that Tun Stephens was undermining Chinese unity. When UPKO was formed with an open-door policy, therefore, Chinese leaders were again intimidated. They saw Tun Stephens' move as a renewed threat to their position as the leaders of the Chinese community. They realised that even when the two Chinese parties had merged as SANAP (Sabah National Party) most young educated Chinese had refused to join the party as it was identified as the "towkays" party.³⁶

35. *Ibid.*

36. See Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*

It must, however, be pointed out that although SANAP was a mainly Chinese party, it was technically an open party. Part 3, clause 4 of the party's constitution and rules read: "Membership of the party is open to all persons of not less than 18 years of age who accept the objects and programme of the party." This clause was never changed even when the party was changed to Sabah Chinese Association (SCA). The minutes of UPKO's Central Executive Committee dated 29 December 1964 noted this fact when it minuted thus: "...In any case the SANAP till now has not amended its constitution which stipulates that SANAP is multi-racial."

The USNO party too was against Tun Stephens' move to open its door as its leaders also saw that this was undermining USNO's membership drive amongst the Muslim community. The USNO constitution, although Muslim-based, was also open to all "bumiputras" regardless of racial affiliation or creed. However, there was a "gentleman's agreement" between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens that they were to recruit only Muslim "Malay" and Kadazans into their respective parties.³⁷ When Stephens therefore attempted to open his party's door, Tun Mustapha not surprisingly saw this as Stephens reneging on an oral agreement. Mutual distrust therefore started to set in, with each trying to out-do the other. The USNO leadership did not like to see Malays in UPKO. Majid Khan, a Malay who was appointed as Tun Stephens' political secretary, was considered a betrayer of trust. And when Othman Yusof, another Malay Muslim, became UPKO's member of the Legislative Council, the USNO leadership was even more aroused. In fact, USNO took every opportunity to criticise the UPKO party for its Malay membership.

However, perhaps the single most important factor which contributed to the deepening crisis within the Sabah Alliance was the Chinese suspicion of Tun Stephens' timber policy. When Stephens became the Chief Minister, the Chinese towkays, mostly timbermen from Sandakan, at first tried to get closer to Tun Stephens. They thought they could influence him on any future timber policy that the new Sabah government would formulate. After all, they had succeeded in influencing the colonial government to give them what they wanted, so that by the time Sabah joined Malaysia, some 12 timber concession licences were in the hands of the Chinese

37. Tun Stephens told this writer that he once toyed with the idea of forming an all-"bumiputra" party. He also thought of leading the Muslim community as he had a lot of Muslim relations and friends but decided instead to lead the Kadazans. He also told this writer that he chose the name 'USNO' for the organisation formed by Tun Mustapha.

timbermen. The Chinese timbermen saw Sabah's timber resource as their own and felt that they alone were capable of exploiting and profiting from it.³⁸ When Tun Stephens showed no sign that he could be manipulated in the direction they desired, the Chinese timbermen became alarmed. Tun Stephens had introduced a new policy which was known as the "4-K's" — (Kayu Kaya Kerja Kampong): that the timber resources of Sabah should go to the people themselves, especially to the people in the interior. He was not in favour of big area concessions being given to individuals, as had been the case during the colonial period. The Chinese leaders saw this new policy as a direct threat to themselves.

Meanwhile, some young aspiring USNO leaders had also seen a need to get a hand in the timber business. Timber prices were booming and to get even a small area was a sure way of getting rich quickly. They too started to get impatient and they were not enamoured with Tun Stephens' policy of making timber resources work for the benefit of the population as a whole. They applied for a timber concession licence, but Tun Stephens at first did not entertain these applications. They accused him of looking after his people only — especially the Kadazans. Tun Stephens had in fact granted a small area of 100 acres to Richard Lee, a Penampang Kadazan living in Tawau, and another 100 acres to Joe Manjaji — another Kadazan leader from Penampang.

Tun Stephens in fact was fairly careful about his image: he did not want to be accused of being partial to his "boys" as Chief Minister and this was why he refused most pressures from UPKO party stalwarts to grant them a timber concession. Lim Hong Ghee, Ariff Salleh, Ghani Gilong, Stephen Tibok, and a few other Kadazan leaders went to see him and asked him for a timber licence for themselves so that they would have another source of income for the party. They explained to him that the timber licence given to him by the colonial government was probably too small for the Kadazan leaders as a whole. Tun Stephens stuck to his guns and told the Kadazan leaders that he did not want the USNO and SANAP leaders to accuse him of favouritism. In any case, he said, he could look after their economic welfare.³⁹

38. On timber politics see Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*, pp. 239-245.

39. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong on 8 April 1983 and confirmed by Datuk Richard Yap in an interview on 12 April 1983. Datuk Richard Yap as the Minister of Natural Resources was approached by Lim, Ariff and others. He agreed to the suggestion to give one timber licence to the Kadazan leaders but he wanted Tun Stephens to give the final approval as the latter was the Chief Minister and also the leader of the Kadazans. Tun Stephens vetoed the application.

Tun Stephens later regretted this decision and said it was a major mistake he had made. For in 1966 and 1967, prior to the first general election in April 1967, it was made abundantly clear to him that the UPKO party lacked the necessary funds to finance the election! The USNO party, on the other hand, had ample financial resources in Tun Mustapha who had a timber licence, in Yassin, who had been granted one by Tun Stephens, and most important of all, from the Chinese leaders and towkays.

Tun Stephens himself admitted publicly that Sabah's timber was a curse in Sabah's politics.⁴⁰ In a press statement which appeared in the *Sabah Times* of 15 June 1967 entitled: "Timber is Sabah's Greatest Political Curse", Stephens gave the inside story of how he had faced pressure from all sectors regarding Sabah's timber when he was Chief Minister.

No one was in a better position to explain the problem and the "political curse" of Sabah's number one chief export earner — timber — than Tun Stephens himself. He lived to regret not offering a timber licence to any of the Kadazan leaders during his chief ministership, as he found himself pushed in 1966 and 1967 without anyone to help him finance the party and the election.

His successors had no such scruples and made full use of their position by the granting of large tracts of timber land to supporters. Tun Mustapha made use of timber as his greatest political weapon, and held most of his adversaries in check by the clever manipulation of how the timber resources were to be dispersed or issued.

Tun Stephens' jubilation and ecstasy at seeing his dream realised in the unification of the two Kadazan/Murut parties (UNKO and Pasok) in June 1964 was therefore short-lived. The Chinese and Malay leadership worked together for his downfall as the Chief Minister of Sabah.

The Chinese leaders Khoo, Pang, Lo and Yeh Pao Tsu found out that they had a powerful ally in Tun Mustapha. Indeed, they cultivated Tun Mustapha's friendship and made him the patron of the Chinese Timber Producers' Association.⁴¹ They realised that the party as a Muslim-based organisation had the strong backing by UMNO in West Malaysia and that Tun Mustapha had the ears and attention of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the federal Prime Minister. It was therefore to the political advantage of the Chinese community if they openly sided with the USNO party and Tun Mustapha.

40. See *Sabah Times*, 15 June 1967.

41. See Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*

Tun Mustapha, meanwhile, also needed the Chinese on his side in his fight with Tun Stephens for the job of governing Sabah. He realised, a bit late in the day, that the post of Yang di Pertua Negeri was purely ceremonial. Apparently, he had misunderstood the constitutional realities when he accepted the post of Head of State, and had thought that he would be taking over the role and power of the departing colonial Governor, Sir William Goode — and that Tun Stephens would be merely taking over the post of the departing Chief Secretary, Mr R.N. Turner.⁴²

It was, however, clear that he wanted from the very beginning to be consulted by the Chief Minister and his Cabinet on all aspects of the administration of the state: in short, he wanted to share in the executive function of the Cabinet. He had this condition included in the minutes of the Sabah Alliance National Council and demanded further that this be also put in writing by the Chief Minister to the Head of State.⁴³ There was also an unwritten understanding and agreement between Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha that if the Head of State was a Muslim, the Chief Minister must be a Christian.

With the connivance of the Chinese leadership, however, Tun Mustapha and his close aides worked out plans to oust Tun Stephens. This resulted in the first Alliance crisis. This was how Tun Mustapha planned to oust Stephens according to Edwin Lee:⁴⁴

Mustapha chose a different course. This consisted of a policy of attrition directed at the Chief Minister, and of keeping up a continuous state of crises in the Sabah Alliance. In prosecuting this plan he could draw on the formidable support of the Muslim counterpart to USNO in the Central Government, the UMNO and of the Tunku himself. To give Mustapha maximum prestige the Central Government conferred on him the highest Federal award for service to the realm, entitling him to be addressed as "Tun". The award was made on 26 November 1964 before the final stage of his struggle with Stephens in that year.

Lee went on:

While responsibility for the trial of strength must rest with both men, it was Mustapha who held the initiative. He decided when to step up the pressure. Twice in 1964, matters came to a head. The first clash occurred in the month Stephens combined UNKO and Pasok Momogun as the UPKO. The Sabah leaders turned to the Tunku for a

42. See for example Margaret Clark Roff's, "Rise and Demise of Kadazan Nationalism". The writer was also told the same story by Tun Stephens.

43. Told by Tun Mustapha to the writer.

44. Edwin Lee, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

solution. Under the Tunku's influence, Mustapha was mollified by a concocted concession: the appointment of a USNO Deputy Chief Minister.

The re-arranged State Cabinet was as follows:

Chief Minister:	Stephens (UPKO)
Deputy Chief Minister:	Harris Salleh (USNO)
Finance Minister:	Pang Tet Tsung (SANAP)
Local Government:	Sundang (UPKO)
Social Welfare:	Yassin (USNO)
Communications:	Khoo (SANAP)
Health:	Yap (UPKO)
Agriculture and Fisheries:	Keruak (USNO)
Natural Resources:	Thomas Jayasuria (Independent)

The UPKO leaders in the event capitulated on the removal of Richard Yap from the Natural Resources portfolio even though they agreed at the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 26 May 1964 that this post must be held by an UPKO man. This was because the Tunku did not see the reason why Tun Stephens should be removed and advised the Sabah Alliance leaders who went to see him that Tun Stephens should remain as the Chief Minister and an USNO man as the number two man.

To Tun Stephens this was one battle won against Tun Mustapha in the fight for the choicest office. Tun Stephens therefore was extremely grateful to the Tunku and heaped praises on the Tunku and prayed for him in his address at the inaugural meeting of the UPKO party held on 13 June 1964. He said in his address he was:⁴⁵

...very happy that the little difference in the Alliance has now been settled by the Tunku, but the Tunku too would have found it difficult to settle the issue if the parties concerned were not willing to work in a spirit of compromise....

He said the Tunku must be thanked "with all our hearts" for helping to settle the difference in the Alliance at a time when he was busy preparing to leave for Tokyo for talks with Indonesia over Konfrontasi.

In this first Alliance crisis, which was really a contest of strength between two contending "bumiputra" political elites, Tun Mustapha did not get what he wanted. The real winner, however, was the Chinese. Pang found himself the Minister of Finance, replacing Harris, and Khoo retained his post of Communication and Works. A further concession to the Chinese was the agreement reached regarding recruitment into the UPKO party. On his return from Kuala Lumpur for talks with Tunku Abdul Rahman concerning

45. UPKO press release, 13 June 1964.

the 1 June crisis, Khoo told the press that:

Native parties will not be allowed to recruit new Chinese members and similarly the SANAP will not take on any new native members into their ranks.

Khoo told reporters that this was agreed orally before the Tunku. He evaded a question put to him about SANAP's taking sides with the USNO party against the UPKO party.⁴⁶

The second major crisis in the Alliance during 1964 involved the appointment of John Dusing as the State Secretary replacing a retiring white man. Tun Stephens appointed John Dusing, a half-Indian half-Kadazan of Tuaran to the post of State Secretary in September 1964. The question of who would be appointed to this post had been left open for some time. It was agreed at the meeting of the Sabah Alliance leaders before Tunku Abdul Rahman in June 1964 that the post of State Secretary should be filled by a Sabahan Malaysian by September 1964.⁴⁷ Mojuntin also referred to this agreement in his press release of 4 December 1964. He said:⁴⁸

The Kuala Lumpur Agreement which followed a meeting of Sabah Alliance leaders in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year expressly provided that a Malaysian was to be appointed State Secretary before September 1964. It is clear therefore that the Chief Minister if he was to abide by the Agreement had to submit his selection for State Secretary before September this year. In fact, he publicly declared that he had made his selection, and recently announced the name of the person he had selected for appointment, Mr John Dusing.

A controversy arose because Tun Mustapha, the Head of State, refused to sign the papers sent to him by the state government for the appointment of John Dusing. This was Sabah's first crisis directly involving the constitutional head of state and the government.

Tun Stephens did not at first announce the name of the person he had appointed but waited for the Head of State to ratify the appointment. Meanwhile, the *Daily Express* owned by a SANAP leader who largely supported the USNO party and Tun Mustapha queried the Chief Minister, Tun Stephens, about why he was delaying the announcement of the name of the new State Secretary. Obviously this editorial query on the part of the *Daily Express* was "tongue in cheek".

46. *Sabah Times*, 16 June 1964.

47. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 25 June 1964.

48. UPKO press release, 4 December 1964.

The Executive Committee of the UPKO party met on 2 November 1964 and resolved that Tun Stephens announce the name of the State Secretary he had appointed. He duly did this the following day in November 1964 — a full two months after he had sent in the name of Dusing to the Head of State for ratification. However, Mustapha still refused to ratify the appointment.

Meanwhile, the UPKO party National Council met on 13 September 1964 and ratified the action of Tun Stephens in appointing Dusing as the State Secretary. The National Council resolved that the UPKO party stand strongly behind the decision made on 1 June 1964 by the Sabah Alliance National Council which called for the appointment of a Sabah-born Malaysian as State Secretary.

As Tun Mustapha persisted with his refusal to sign the confirmation of the appointment, Tun Stephens became nervous. He called for a meeting of the UPKO National Council again on 22 November 1964 and the National Council gave him unanimous backing for his selection of John Dusing as State Secretary.⁴⁹ Further, the Council also made it a matter of policy that the UPKO party approve all of the actions taken by its President as the Chief Minister of Sabah, and gave him a mandate to take whatever action was necessary to overcome this problem. So that the other side knew of this unity amongst UPKO party leaders, the UPKO party issued a press release stating that after a meeting of the UPKO party National Council which had taken six hours the National Council had given Tun Stephens full backing for all his actions and affirmed the party's complete unity.⁵⁰

On 23 November 1964, Tun Stephens declared open an UPKO branch at Gadong, Beaufort. In his speech he referred to the rivalry between the USNO party and the UPKO party and appealed for calm and understanding. He said in his address to a large crowd, who were mostly Bisaya Muslims, that differences between the parties in the Alliance, especially differences between the USNO party and the UPKO party were affecting the strength of both parties. He suggested that the solution to the inter-party rivalry was a complete merger of all parties in the Sabah Alliance.⁵¹ None of the other Alliance component members heeded this call.

49. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 22 November 1964.

50. UPKO press release, 22 November 1964.

51. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1964.

Peter Mojuntin, the Secretary-General, came out in the open to support Tun Stephens. In an interview with the *Daily Express*,⁵² he expressed his concern that the inter-rivalry of the UPKO party and the USNO party might break the Alliance. He denied that Dusing was appointed on political grounds and put the blame squarely on Tun Mustapha, the Head of State, for refusing to sign the appointment papers. He said that it was the Chief Minister's prerogative to appoint the head of the civil service and not the Head of State's responsibility. For this interview, Peter Mojuntin was rebuked by the USNO party as being discourteous to the Head of State, and there followed "a war of words" in the press between the UPKO party and the USNO party.

Tun Stephens continued to call for calm on the issue. In his address at the opening of an UPKO branch at Inanam on 6 December 1964, he called for "cool thinking" in view of the trouble which had arisen because of the appointment of the State Secretary:⁵³

The Chief Minister said a lot of nonsense has been aired about the matter and as a result there is today a feeling of crisis in the state. People are worried and uppermost in the minds of all thinking Sabahans is the question: Will the Alliance be broken and if the Alliance is broken will there be "trouble" in the country?

Obviously referring to the role played by the Chinese party leaders, Stephens said:⁵⁴

Recent differences have been blown up by certain elements whose aim is clear, to bring about a complete break between the USNO and the UPKO, a break which cannot be repaired.

The Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, became alarmed at the implications of the second Sabah Alliance crisis. He consequently called all leaders of the Sabah Alliance to see him. The UPKO party leaders met the Tunku on 8 December 1964. The UPKO party forwarded two proposals to the Tunku, namely either:

- (i) that Tun Stephens would step down and Sundang would take his place; and that Tun Stephens would take over Sundang's portfolio as Minister of Local Government.
- or: (ii) that as Tun Mustapha wanted to be Chief Minister, that Sundang be moved as the Head of State and Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister.

52. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1964.

53. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1964.

54. *Ibid.*

The USNO delegates, accompanied by Yeh Pao Tzu of the SANAP then saw the Tunku. The USNO party's proposals were apparently too drastic and the Tunku did not even mention them in his note. He simply said that the USNO party's proposals would not be acceptable to UPKO and instead forwarded his proposal as follows:

- (i) that Tun Mustapha remain as Head of State;
- (ii) that Peter Lo of SANAP take over as Chief Minister and members of Cabinet be made up of three members from each political party. Tun Stephens' position was not mentioned, but obviously he could, if he wanted to, become one of the three UPKO Cabinet Ministers.

Before leaving the Tunku's office, Gilong met Harris who told him that the USNO/SANAP proposal was the final one and that if UPKO did not accept it there was nothing left to do but to "go back to Sabah and practise democracy." The UPKO delegation understood this remark to mean that the USNO party and the SANAP party were threatening to move a vote of no confidence against Tun Stephens in the Cabinet and in the Legislative Assembly.

The result of the meeting with Tunku Abdul Rahman was brought to the full meeting of UPKO National Council on 13 December 1964. All speakers spoke strongly against the proposal to oust Tun Stephens as Chief Minister. Sundang especially called for a firm stand on the issue — that UPKO must "not step back an inch." Indeed, it was agreed that if necessary UPKO would move into the opposition. The resolution passed at this meeting was:⁵⁵

Be it resolved that although Dato Donald Stephens has himself requested that he should be allowed to give up the Chief Ministership, the National Council of the UPKO unanimously agreed that he should remain as the Chief Minister of Sabah until direct elections are held in Sabah.

Meanwhile, mediators from Sarawak led by Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the Chief Minister, arrived in Sabah to try to mediate in the Sabah Alliance crisis. Ningkan flew in from Kuching on 16 December 1964. A meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council took place on 17 December 1964 and the decision of the Council was that Tun Stephens be given a Federal Cabinet post in return for his stepping down as Chief Minister.⁵⁶ A delegation left for Kuala Lumpur with the agreement to be signed before

55. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 13 December 1964.

56. *Sabah Times*, 16 and 17 December 1964.

the Tunku. It included Stephens, Harris, Yassin, Alliudden, Khoo Siak Chiew and Peter Lo.

Tun Stephens was quite emotional over the whole issue. When he made a speech before the National Council members later on in the day the agreement was reached, he apparently made such a stirring speech that Ningkan cried.

On his return from Kuala Lumpur after the talks with Tunku Abdul Rahman on 8 December 1964, Stephens was met by a large crowd at the airport. He gave a press conference and said that he would "support any proposal aimed at the destruction of Donald Stephens but will reject those that will destroy the people and the party." He cried openly before the people who came to meet him.⁵⁷

The "firm" resolution made on 13 December 1964 that UPKO must not "step back an inch", however, was short-lived. On 19 December 1964, the UPKO National Council met again — this time to pass a resolution that Tun Stephens step down and accept a post as Federal Minister.⁵⁸

It is interesting to note that Tun Stephens called the UPKO National Council meeting at 3 p.m. on 19 December 1964, and left for Kuala Lumpur on the same day. It is also interesting to note that both Sundang and Gilong were not present at the meeting on the 19th. Another interesting point to note about this second Alliance crisis was that the Tunku was now siding with the USNO/SANAP contingent. This was in fact mentioned by Tun Stephens to the Tunku, and the latter admitted that USNO was an affiliate of UMNO. The suggestion by UPKO for Sundang to become Chief Minister was not adopted; nor the suggestion that Sundang become the Head of State and Tun Mustapha the Chief Minister. The understanding between Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha that if the Chief Minister was a Muslim the Head of State should be a Christian had clearly lapsed.

The overall loser in this contest of strength was the UPKO party. However, neither did the USNO party win. Tun Mustapha was still not the Chief Minister although someone whom he could influence was made the Chief Minister. The real winner was the SANAP party. This was in fact put succinctly by Majid Khan, a Malay UPKO National Council member. He said in a press statement:⁵⁹

57. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1964.

58. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 19 December 1964.

59. UPKO press release, 15 December 1964.

I told him (Said Keruak) that the last time the USNO brought about a crisis and all the parties went to Kuala Lumpur to find a settlement the only party which actually gained on the parties' return was SANAP.

Apparently clever manipulation on the part of SANAP has again brought about a situation where SANAP stand to gain at the expense of the USNO and the UNKO. Because the solution which is now being forced on everyone to accept was that SANAP should be given the Chief Ministership.

To make it look to the UPKO party members as if Stephens had not lost in the contest of will and strength, the UPKO party National Council made out that Tun Stephens' taking the federal post as Minister for Sabah Affairs was a "promotion". The minutes of the National Council of 19 December 1964 stated, inter alia:

Finally, in consideration of the national interest of Malaysia and for the peace and progress for Sabah and its people, the meeting decided to accept with conditions the USNO/SANAP proposal. The conditions were that Dato Donald Stephens must be "promoted" from State Chief Minister to Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs and that direct election should be held in Sabah as soon as possible in 1965.

Tun Stephens also took great pains to explain to UPKO party supporters that as Federal Minister he would be in a better position to help the development of the rural areas as he would be close to Tun Razak the Deputy Prime Minister who was in charge of rural development. No one, however, was fooled by this: everyone knew, and in particular the Chinese knew that the UPKO party was losing its grip, and that Tun Stephens had been nicely put in cold storage in Kuala Lumpur. The "towkays" in SANAP were jubilant.

On the question of a direct election by 1965 a written agreement was made before the Tunku, but as it turned out a direct election did not in fact take place until April 1967. The lower once again was the UPKO party and the Kadazan and Murut communities, the "definitive" races of Sabah.

The Singapore Separation Crisis

Many theories have been developed to explain the separation of Singapore from Malaysia. There is a plethora of literature on the subject and most of these commentators accept that Singapore was expelled. Tae Y. Nam, for instance, believed that it was because of the peculiar political system - the Alliance system - that has evolved in Malaysia that made it

impossible for Singapore to find accommodation in the new political experiment.⁶⁰ Dr Vasil was also of that opinion. He believed that the failure of Malaysia with Singapore was because of the Malay community's desire to be the paramount race in the country — that they alone were the "bumiputra" — the sons of the soil of the country.⁶¹ Noordin Sopiee was of the opinion that Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, was probably "kurang hajar"⁶² (ill-mannered). He also presented, however, two other theories, namely: the "breakaway theory" and the "excuse theory".⁶³ Bellows, another writer on the issue has argued that Singapore's PAP leaders had in fact engineered their own "breakaway" from Malaysia by provocation. The call for Malaysian Malaysia by Singapore was deliberately engineered by Lee Kuan Yew to force separation.⁶⁴ Singaporeans' call for a Malaysian Malaysia was for a culturally and linguistically heterogeneous society (like Singapore), which was the opposite of UMNO's concept of a Malaysian Malaysia: UMNO's Malaysian Malaysia was for a culturally and linguistically homogeneous society built upon a foundation of Malay culture and Malay language. The other theory, the "excuse theory", is that Singapore was included in the Malaysian Federation as an excuse to gain British support for the inclusion of the Borneo states. Once Sabah and Sarawak were in, the Tunku had no need for Singapore.⁶⁵

Tun Stephens had developed a special bond of friendship and regard for Lee Kuan Yew⁶⁶ and he reacted angrily to Singapore's expulsion. Tun Stephens and the UPKO party's understanding of Malaysia had been that it was an association of four equal partners, brought together to form the Federation. In a press release by UPKO's Secretary General shortly after Stephens resigned from his post as Federal Minister of Sabah Affairs in August 1965, Mojuntin said:⁶⁷

60. Tae Y. Nam, *Racism and Nation Building in Malaysia and Singapore*.

61. R.K. Vasil, "Why Malaysia Failed?", *Quest*, 49 (Spring 1966).

62. Mohammad Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, p. 185.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-229.

64. J.T. Bellows, "The Singapore Party System", *Southeast Asian History*, 8:1 (March 1967), pp. 122-38.

65. The 'excuse theory' was apparently given to Mohammad Noordin Sopiee by a high ranking Alliance official. See his *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, p. 213.

66. In 1966 Datuk Peter Mojuntin told this writer that when he was visiting Singapore he made it a point to see Lee Kuan Yew.

67. UPKO press release, 16 August 1965.

This is what the UPKO asked for: that in view of the separation of Singapore from Malaysia and the fact that Sabah as one of the original four component parts agreeing to form Malaysia had not been consulted, there should be a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia.

He continued in the same press release:

We maintain that the Malaysian fabric as conceived by the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee, the Cobbold Commission and the Inter-Government Committee has been broken by Singapore leaving Malaysia.

With the advantage of hindsight, Tun Stephens and the UPKO leaders were very naive to think that Sabah and Sarawak were brought into Malaysia as equal partners. In this regard, it was Sundang who was more practical and able to see clearly what Sabah was getting into: that Sabah was just a "small fish and was about to be swallowed by a big fish."⁶⁸

Tun Stephens took Singapore's separation as a personal affront to himself as Sabah's leader. He felt that because it was he who had played a major part in getting many objectors to Malaysia to agree to its formation, because it was he who had played the centre stage in the early formation of Malaysia, especially in the Malaysia Consultative Committee and the Inter-Government Committee, he felt he had been betrayed by the Tunku. He also felt that he himself had unwittingly betrayed the people who trusted him. He therefore offered to resign as Minister of Sabah Affairs to his party's National Council meeting held on 15 August 1965.⁶⁹

Tun Stephens apparently tried to play a part in preventing Singapore's separation from taking place. He never said he did not have prior knowledge of the separation proposal: what he said was that he was not consulted about it; and what he meant here was that his opinion as an equal partner should have been sought by the Tunku before making the irrevocable decision to separate Singapore from the fold. In a press statement issued by the party's headquarters, it stated:⁷⁰

Dato Stephens offered to resign the leadership of the UPKO but the National Council felt that he was in no way to blame for what had happened as the decision taken to separate Singapore from Malaysia was done without Dato Stephens or the Sabah Government being consulted at all.

68. Interview with Datuk Sundang, 17 April 1983.

69. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 15 August 1965.

70. UPKO press release, 15 June 1965.

The same press release continued:

The National Council also expressed grave concern in regard to the Central Government's future relations with Sabah since Sabah was not consulted before an irrevocable decision was taken to separate Singapore from Malaysia and while the UPKO believes that Sabah's destiny is very closely linked with that of the other states in Malaysia and Singapore, deep regret was expressed at the way Sabah was treated and feeling was unanimous that as one of the four component parts which got together to form Malaysia, Sabah had every right to be consulted before such a far-reaching decision was taken.

Noordin⁷¹ believes that Tun Stephens made a telephone call to Lee Kuan Yew and that this telephone conversation was tapped. What the conversation was is not spelled out, but presumably it was something to do with Singapore's separation. There is a suggestion from some quarters that Tun Stephens was indeed asked to resign by the Tunku after he was confronted with a tape recording of his telephone conversation with Lee. There is also the suggestion that Stephens informed the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur of the impending Singapore separation.⁷²

Stephens gave his own account of what transpired with Singapore's separation before a full National Council meeting called on Sunday 15 August 1965. The minutes read:⁷³

The Minister of Sabah Affairs Dato Donald Stephens (Central Cabinet Minister) was not consulted about the separation move. He was only informed on Sunday 8 August 1965. The Agreement for Singapore to secede from Malaysia was signed in secret on Friday 6 August 1965 between the Malaysian (Central) Government and Singapore State Government. Only 5 Malaysian Cabinet Ministers signed the Agreement on behalf of Malaysia, i.e., Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, Dy. Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, Minister of Home Affairs Dato Dr Ismail, Minister of Finance Mr Tan Siew Sin and Minister of Posts and Telecommunications Dato Sambantan. Those who signed on behalf of Singapore were Premier Lee Kuan Yew and all members of his Singapore Cabinet.

The Sabah State Government was only informed at 1.00 a.m. Monday morning 9 August 1965.

The Bill to amend the Malaysian Constitution to allow the secession of Singapore was passed by a two-thirds majority (126 to nil) in Parliament at about 10.30 a.m. on Monday 9 August 1965.

71. Mohammad Noordin Sopiee, *op.cit.*, p. 211.

72. Told to the writer by one of Tun Stephens' closest friends and confidants who did not want to be identified.

73. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 15 August 1965.

The Sabah Members of Parliament all voted for the Bill because the secession of Singapore was already a fait accompli. If the Bill did not get a two-thirds majority, Tunku Abdul Rahman's Government would have to resign and there would have been chaos and violence throughout Malaysia and the consequences could have been tragic. The Sabah Members of Parliament had no choice but to vote in favour of the Bill.

The reason given by Tunku to justify the secession of Singapore from Malaysia was because of the recent political quarrels between the Malaysian Alliance Government and the PAP Singapore Government, there would have been racial clashes (between the Malays and Chinese in Malaya and Singapore) if the PAP-governed Singapore Island State stayed on in Malaysia. To avoid bloodshed and internal racial trouble and with the Indonesian aggression threatening Malaysia, Singapore's separation from Malaysia was the best and right step according to the Tunku.

The Council also refused to consider Stephens' offer to resign and unanimously re-affirmed their faith and complete confidence in Stephens' leadership.

The National Council adopted three resolutions at the meeting, namely:

- (a) Status quo to remain;
- (b) Proceed with the merger of all parties in the Sabah Alliance;
- (c) Ask the Sabah Alliance to appoint a special committee to re-examine Sabah's entry into Malaysia in view of the separation of Singapore.

The Council then appointed an UPKO party six-man standing committee to go fully into the re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia in conjunction with the UPKO's partners in the Sabah Alliance Party. Tun Stephens headed the six-man standing committee appointed.⁷⁴

A press release was made by the party's headquarters making known to the public at large and to Kuala Lumpur the decision of the National Council as outlined above. The press release said in part:⁷⁵

To ease public concern the National Council also subscribed to a resolution that in view of the separation of Singapore the arrangements made in respect of Sabah's entry into Malaysia should be re-examined and a six-man standing committee was appointed by the National Council to go fully into this re-examination in conjunction with UPKO's partners in the Sabah Alliance party.

74. *Ibid.*

75. UPKO press release, 16 August 1965.

The press release also mentioned that now more than ever the merger proposal for all Alliance member parties was urgent and called for all Alliance members to agree to a merger. This announcement and the decision to get the other Alliance partners (USNO and SANAP) to agree to UPKO's call for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia was perhaps optimistic, and naive. Tun Stephens must have known that the Sabah Alliance was now beyond his control and that he was in fact rapidly losing his influence in the political arena. The power broker was now increasingly Tun Mustapha who had a special relationship with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister. The Chinese community and its leadership recognised this fact and hence their growing support for the USNO party and Tun Mustapha rather than Tun Stephens and the UPKO party.

Tun Stephens however still hoped he could draw on his personality and drive to influence his partners in the Alliance but he was to be disappointed.

The Sabah Alliance National Council met on 18 August 1965. The USNO and SCA members in the Alliance agreed to look into the implications of Singapore's separation from Malaysia and also to study the UPKO's proposal for the merger of all political parties. But no decision was made on the question of UPKO's call for the re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia. The Sabah Alliance partners USNO and SCA did not back Stephens in this matter. The reason was obvious: the call for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia would have been an open challenge to the central government and neither USNO nor SCA were prepared to issue such a challenge.

Tun Stephens had hoped for an expression of dismay or dissatisfaction at the way Sabah had been treated by Kuala Lumpur, but the SANAP and USNO partners in the Alliance did not want to say anything. Stephens consequently asked his fellow UPKO leaders to allow him to return to Sabah, and in effect to resign as Federal Minister.

The minutes of UPKO's National Council meeting noted:⁷⁶

A resolution that H.S. (Huguan Siou) must return to Sabah was proposed and unanimously supported. The H.S. said that he had settled down in K.L. and was at the heart of things as a Cabinet member but he has always said he was a servant of the party and will leave if the Council so wishes.

The resolution continued:

76. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 18 August 1965.

That the Alliance should first be asked to allow Dato Donald Stephens to be Chief Minister in Sabah but if this was unacceptable by the Sabah Alliance Dato Stephens was to resign his Federal Cabinet post and return to Sabah to lead the party.

This was unanimously agreed.

The meeting of 18 August 1965 came only three days after the last National Council meeting of 15 August 1965. At that meeting on 15 August Stephens' offer to resign was not accepted by the National Council. The minutes read: "The National Council refused to consider Dato Donald Stephens' resignation and unanimously re-affirmed their faith and complete confidence in his leadership." But only three days later, the National Council accepted his resignation from his ministerial federal post.

Why then did Tun Stephens force the issue and resign as Federal Cabinet minister? He must have known that by being away from the "centre of things", away from Kuala Lumpur, he would make his position and that of UPKO more vulnerable. He knew too that he could not count on anyone in the USNO-SANAP leadership to support him since their combined efforts had forced him to resign as Chief Minister of Sabah, a post which he had cherished very much. Some have speculated that his resignation was sought by Tunku because of his taped telephone conversation with Lee Kuan Yew at the time Singapore left Malaysia. This is merely speculation but would explain his otherwise mysterious action.

The UPKO National Council's press release on the matter said that Tun Stephens was to return to Sabah to lead the party but this was patently just an excuse, for even when Tun Stephens was in Kuala Lumpur he always found time to return to Sabah to be with his committee members. According to the UPKO records, the only time Tun Stephens did not chair the UPKO Central Executive Committee was at the meeting on 15 April 1965. This meeting was chaired by Sundang his Deputy.⁷⁷

Indeed, organisationally the party was flourishing. Since the merger of the UPKO party and the Pasok party in 1964 the party had opened branches throughout the state, including in areas which were predominantly Chinese and Malay. Thus there were branches in Tawau town, Sandakan town, Kota Kinabalu town (Jesselton) and in these areas Chinese led the branches. In Malay areas, branches were opened in Labuan, in Sipitang, Beaufort, Semporna etc. In short, the UPKO party and its leaders were not exactly idle when Tun Stephens was in Kuala Lumpur as a Federal Minister. In

77. Minutes of UPKO Central Executive Committee meeting, 15 April 1965.

the Sipitang district, for instance, which is predominantly a Malay area, 9 UPKO branches were opened in January 1965.⁷⁸ Sundang, the Deputy Chief Minister, was not idle either. He was out in the country campaigning and opening branches for the UPKO party on behalf of Tun Stephens. He concentrated his efforts mostly in Murut areas of the interior.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, though, Tun Stephens went ahead with his resignation as Federal Cabinet Minister. In a press release issued on or about 20 August 1965, he said he had tendered his resignation. The press release said:⁸⁰

Dato Stephens officially tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman after a round of golf this morning. In his letter of resignation, Tun Stephens told Tunku Abdul Rahman that he was resigning with deep sorrow with immediate effect for personal reasons.

Tun Stephens said that for sometime past his people had been complaining because of his long absence from Sabah and felt that if he was not to lose the support of the people it was necessary that he return to Sabah.

He also told the Tunku that his resignation from the Federal Cabinet would in no way affect his membership of the Alliance and that he hopes to serve the country in the Legislative Assembly when the occasion arises.

Tun Stephens also said that he would leave for Kuala Lumpur next week to hand over his ministry in accordance with instructions which he hoped to receive from the Tunku soon.

He said that he discussed the resignation with the Tunku and the Tunku had also made it clear that after the stand taken by the UPKO party on the question of the separation of Singapore from Malaysia (the UPKO National Council asked for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia because of Singapore's breakaway) Tun Stephens' position in the Cabinet was untenable and the Tunku therefore had no other course but to accept Tun Stephens' resignation.

So ends Tun Stephens' interlude of struggle with the Kuala Lumpur leaders. His fight with the Sabah Alliance partners had however resumed. He had many political enemies both in Sabah and in Kuala Lumpur. His Sabah political enemies were out to oust him from the political arena, and they wanted nothing less than his resignation from the party which he had started, nurtured and led since 1961.

78. UPKO press release, 2 January 1965.

79. *Ibid.*, 5 January 1965.

80. *Ibid.*, undated.

The Press War and UPKO's Struggle for Survival

Since Tun Stephens' resignation as a Federal Cabinet Minister in August 1965, his erstwhile friends in the USNO and SANAP parties increased their "war of words" campaign in their own newspapers — the *Daily Express*, the Chinese press and in the newly published newspaper, the *Kinabalu Times*. This latter newspaper was published by Tun Mustapha's company, the Kinabalu Co. Ltd. These newspapers were used to maintain a constant barrage of criticism against Tun Stephens and his UPKO party.

Let us therefore look at the sequence of events and the manner in which the USNO and SANAP parties conducted themselves until Tun Stephens and Peter Mojuntin had to resign as UPKO President and Secretary General, respectively, in November 1965.

Tun Mustapha, who was still the Head of State, was the leader, leading the attack. He had Harris, Habib, Yassin his brother and Alliuddin as his fronts to make the verbal attack. Even Galpam, a respected leader of Orang Sungei race (Moslem) from Sandakan, was used to say a few words in the press to attack Tun Stephens. Galpam, an illiterate, and Tun Mustapha's nephew Sulaiman Mochtar, who had very little education, attacked Tun Stephens personally and accused him to being irresponsible as a leader. Tun Stephens replied to the attack:⁸¹

The Honourable Senator, Dato Pengiran Galpam, has recently become very vociferous. With all respect to the Senator, the UPKO respectfully suggests that illiterate Senators should not allow their names to be used as a front by those who want to attack the UPKO but have not the courage to do so under their own name.

Sundang then made a strong plea to the USNO party leaders not to engineer another crisis. In his statement, Sundang said:

There is no reason for thinking of another crisis as far as the UPKO is concerned, and we are inclined to regard all these talks as cheap propaganda aimed at discrediting our party.

He also appealed to the USNO leaders not to provoke the UPKO party leaders into making counterattacks in public and thus start a "war in the press."

We are at a loss to understand all the attacks that have been hurled at us. Our Secretary-General has already made it clear that the UPKO party was not connected with the Saturday publication in the *Sabah Times*, the article which evidently gave rise to USNO's outbursts.

(The article had reported some resignations and a split in USNO.)

81. *Ibid.*, 20 January 1965.

He went on to say that certain USNO leaders had charged some of our members with "luring" their members to join the UPKO party and with spreading "dirty and false" propaganda.

If they were serious with their complaints they should lodge them with the Alliance President so that the matter could be taken to the National Council and proper investigation made. Or they could report to us with a request for action to be taken, and we will certainly investigate and take action. But let us not indulge in public allegations and attacks as if the Alliance does not exist, as if we are not a friendly party. After all we too have complaints against USNO, but it will be to nobody's good to launch a public attack. We will take them up in a proper way.

Referring to attacks on Tun Stephens, Sundang said that the attacks were most unfair and uncalled for.

You cannot indulge in cheap propaganda like that. After all, he is a Federal Minister who is entitled to respect and courtesy, and If Inche Harris has any real complaints to make against him he should know how to bring them to the notice of the proper authorities. For a State Minister to attack a Federal Minister in the way it has been done is quite unprecedented.

Finally, Sundang urged political leaders not to indulge in cheap propaganda to popularise one party at the expense of another.⁸²

The people have seen enough of our troubles. Let us give them a chance, and let us keep politics clean and healthy in this beloved country of ours. The country does not belong to politicians only, but to all the people.

The *Sabah Times* apparently reported in a news item that there was a split in the USNO party — an apparent power struggle within the USNO party. The UPKO party was accused of making this false press report. Mojuntin denied this and said in a press statement:⁸³

UPKO is not responsible for the report. No reference to UPKO was made and UPKO has no control over the *Sabah Times*.

The veiled allegation that UPKO worked to bring about a split between USNO and SANAP and also in the Alliance is unfair and malicious.

The people have seen enough crisis, and we urge all leaders to make every effort to avoid another crisis, so that the public would be assured, and the government would be able to get on with its work. UPKO wants to make it clear that it stands for peace and progress.

82. *Ibid.*, 19 January 1965.

83. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1965.

By March 1964, the attack on the UPKO party and its leaders had taken a new twist. The *Daily Express* in a news report said that the UPKO's President had advocated the Chinese language as one of the official languages. Other complaints made by USNO leaders included accusations that USNO members were lured by UPKO leaders to attend its National Congress. This accusation was hotly denied by the UPKO party.⁸⁴

By September 1965, the USNO and SANAP parties' propaganda organs were increased by the publication of the *Kinabalu Sunday Times*, a weekly paper, and the *Kinabalu Times* (a daily paper), both owned by Tun Mustapha. The *Daily Express* and the *Overseas Chinese Daily*, owned by Yeh Pao Tzu, a SANAP party leader, continued to give publicity and support to the USNO-SANAP clique. The Chinese papers continued to stress the same theme: that UPKO's open-door membership policy was calculated to split the Chinese community.⁸⁵

Tun Stephens felt that the incessant quarrels in the Sabah Alliance were not good for the country. At the opening of the UPKO Divisional Headquarters at Labuan in May 1965, Tun Stephens therefore called for a moratorium. He referred to the quarrels in the Sabah Alliance as natural and part of the "teething troubles" of a young robust country, but warned the people to be careful to keep the quarrels political and not racial or religious. He continued:⁸⁶

...the best way to achieve unity and renew friendship which had been "somewhat bashed about by politics" was to have a moratorium on politicking - to stop big branch openings, to avoid disruptive speeches, to avoid criticising our partners in the Alliance, and to avoid enlarging on all differences between parties, between races and between all groups. And to work on the basis of what we agree on to strengthen ties which already exist between all parties and all communities.

Earlier, at a meeting of the newly elected UPKO National Council held on 5 May 1965, Tun Stephens had suggested that the rivalry within member parties of the Alliance should be stopped and there must be a moratorium agreed to by all member parties of the Alliance to stop issuing political press releases on the activities of individual party members. All press releases were to be made in the name of the Alliance through the Alliance Secretariat. This suggestion was unanimously agreed

84. *Ibid.*, 11 March 1965.

85. *Overseas Chinese Daily*, 5 April 1965. See also *ibid.*, 7 April 1965.

86. UPKO press release, 5 May 1965.

to and that it would be communicated to the Alliance for the consideration of USNO, SCA and SIC.⁸⁷ Alas, the latter took no heed of this call and the war of words and newspapers continued.

Meanwhile, Tun Stephens adopted another tactic to try to stem the tide of attack on himself and on his party. His moratorium proposal had failed. He thought the next proposal which he first raised in January 1965 should be pursued — and this was the merger proposal for all Alliance partners. On 24 January 1965, speaking at the inauguration of an UPKO branch at Babagon, Penampang (UNKO and Pasok Momogun branches merged) Tun Stephens had first called for the merger of all parties in the Sabah Alliance. He said:⁸⁸

...the UPKO is multi-racial and its membership includes Kadazans, Muruts, Bisayas, Kedayans, Bruneis, Malays, Chinese, Indians and others. This is how it should be and that is why we suggested that instead of being four parties in one, the Sabah Alliance should become one party. All parties in the Sabah Alliance should dissolve themselves, and form one party. This is the only way to break all racial barriers and for us all to be true Malaysians.

He continued:

...because of the speed for us to establish Malaysia, the Sabah Alliance was necessary. The parties which more or less represented different races got together so that their wants and rights would be guaranteed in Malaysia. But now that Malaysia has been formed and all our rights, irrespective of race or religion, are guaranteed in the constitution of Malaysia, surely it is time to break down racial barriers. Until this is done racialism will be ever present and as long as it exists there is danger of a racial split with all the terrible consequences which can follow. If we want to be true Malaysians, let us all now forget our racial identities and have a complete merger of all our identities into one, the only one identity that is a true Malaysian identity....I am of course speaking of the Sabah Alliance and not the Alliance in Malaya where more time may be needed to bring a complete merger of the bodies which make up the Alliance there. But in Sabah, I think the sooner we pour all the contents of the four "glasses" named USNO, UPKO, SANAP and SIC into one big bowl where there would be a complete intermixture of all four to become one, the better it will be for Sabah and all the people of Sabah.

Others will try to see evil designs in our suggestion, but this suggestion means only one thing - we are

87. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 5 May 1965.

88. UPKO press release, 24 January 1965.

willing, in fact, want to lose our identity politically so that we can have a Malaysian identity in its place. Culturally, of course, all our different races will not want and will not be able to even if they wanted to kill their own respective cultures and languages but once we are all together it should be much easier for us to merge our cultures into a single Malaysian culture.

At a meeting of the UPKO Central Executive Committee held on 5 August 1965, Tun Stephens reported to the Committee an informal discussion of the merger proposal by Alliance partners. He explained that no official party-level discussion had taken place. He said there was "keen desire to merge expressed by all concerned, but nothing definite has been made on the proposal." The UPKO Central Executive Committee then selected 10 of its members to sit in a "Special Committee" to go fully into the full aspect of merger. The 10 members included two Chinese and one Bisaya (Muslim).⁸⁹

The decision of the Executive Committee calling for a merger of the Alliance partners was also released to the press, but no response from the other Alliance partners was forthcoming. This was the last mention of the Alliance merger proposal. It was completely overshadowed by a more important issue — the separation of Singapore from Malaysia which we have already discussed.

The Defeat of Tun Stephens

Tun Mustapha resigned as the Head of State and took over the position of Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs — the position vacated by Tun Stephens.⁹⁰ Tun Mustapha's place as Head of State was taken over by Tun Mhd Raffae⁹¹ a retired Malay civil servant from Sipitang. The UPKO Central Executive Committee held an emergency meeting on 16 September 1965 to consider the appointment of Tun Raffae as Head of State. The minutes reported:⁹²

Following the decision of Tun Mustapha...not to serve a second term as the Head of State a new Yang di Pertua

89. Minutes of UPKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 5 August 1965. See also *ibid.*, 6 August 1965.

90. Tun Mustapha once told this writer that he resigned as Head of State to save Sabah from a possible racial misunderstanding and to save the "bumiputras" from being exploited.

91. Tun Mohammad Raffae, a former district chief from Sipitang, was one of the first few "bumiputras" to become an administrative officer during the colonial period.

92. Minutes of UPKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 16 September 1965.

Negara was to be appointed at 4 p.m. on Thursday 16 September 1965. The UPKO party was not consulted about the appointment of the new Yang di Pertua Negara. The meeting was of the opinion that the UPKO party should have been consulted before the appointment was made. The matter, as was done in the past, was one which had been considered in the Alliance National Council before a decision was taken.

It is understood that the constitutional position is that the appointment of the Yang di Pertua Negara is made by His Majesty the Yang di Pertua Agong on the advice of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Chief Minister of Sabah. It has been the understanding in the Sabah Alliance however that the Chief Minister should only make known his nomination to the Prime Minister after consulting the parties in the Sabah Alliance. In the present instance there has been no consultation.

At the last meeting of the National Council of the Sabah Alliance, the Chairman, Dato Khoo Siak Chiew had announced that he had consulted leaders of the Alliance parties who had agreed that Tun Mustapha bin Datu Harun should be the Alliance nomination as Yang di Pertua Negara for a second term. To the UPKO this decision of the Alliance National Council stands and if any changes are envisaged then the matter must be brought to the National Council of the Sabah Alliance for a decision. The Alliance National Council has not met and the UPKO was not informed of the nomination of Dato Pengiran Ahmad Raffae officially, nor was the public informed of the nomination and although a number of Jesselton Members of Parliament and Assemblymen were invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new Yang di Pertua Negara to be appointed was not even given in circular issued by the Chief Minister's office.

The Committee also felt that the action taken by the Chief Minister in submitting a name to the Prime Minister without prior consultation with the UPKO was a calculated move to eject the UPKO from the Alliance. Under the circumstances, the Central Executive Committee of the UPKO decided that, without any intention of disrespect towards Dato Pengiran Ahmad Raffae's person, members of the UPKO could not attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new Yang di Pertua Negara as a protest against the manner in which the appointment was made.

A press statement objecting to the way the new Head of State was appointed was released.⁹³

When Tun Mustapha took up his appointment as Federal Minister and was now openly and actively in politics, the tempo against the UPKO party in the newspapers was also increased. By October 1965, the USNO and SANAP leaders were ready finally to get rid of Tun Stephens. This time, they wanted nothing less than for Tun Stephens to leave the political

93. UPKO press release, 16 September 1965.

arena entirely. If he did not, the UPKO party would be expelled from the Alliance.

On 9 October 1965, USNO submitted to the Sabah Alliance Party Headquarters a proposed resolution to be included in the Sabah Alliance Executive Committee meeting agenda to be held on 14 October 1965. The resolution read:⁹⁴

That members of the Central Executive Committee of the United Sabah National Organisation which is a member party of the Sabah Alliance party, having met in Jesselton on 7 October 1965;

After careful consideration of the numerous activities of and several statements made by the Honourable Dato Donald Stephens, the President of the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation and by the Honourable Peter Mojuntin, the Secretary-General of the same Organisation;

Having concluded that these activities and statements were deliberately made to bring about racial disharmony among the people of this multi-racial and multi-religious society in Sabah;

Being fully aware that such irresponsible activities and statements would bring chaos and possibly bloodshed in this peaceful land of Sabah; and

Fully ready to substantiate these charges at the inquiry do hereby:

- (a) *call* upon the Central Executive Committee of the Sabah Alliance party to take an appropriate disciplinary action against the above-mentioned members who have acted contrary to the principles and objects of the Sabah Alliance party and have acted in many ways detrimental to the interests of the Sabah Alliance party;
- (b) *call* upon members of the Central Executive Committee to convene a meeting of inquiry, in accordance with the Sabah Alliance Constitution, to examine the conduct of these two members with a view to recommending their expulsion from a member party of the Alliance, i.e. the United Pasok-Momogun Kadazan Organisation.

On 14 October 1965 at 7.30 p.m. the Sabah Alliance Executive Committee met. The motion as worded above was tabled by Yassin. The motion was seconded by an SCA party member. Tun Stephens who was present at the meeting told those present that the motion was intended to oust UPKO from the Sabah Alliance because the UPKO party advocated the re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia. He appealed to the meeting to think carefully what would be the consequences if the UPKO

94. USNO resolution submitted to the Alliance party headquarters for distribution to Alliance component parties.

party were ousted from the Alliance and asked the Committee to explore fully all channels of keeping the Alliance together. He himself, he said, had consulted with the Chairman, Khoo SiakChiew, and was willing to make any sacrifice in order to keep the Alliance together.

Harris told the meeting that the USNO's motion had no connection with UPKO's demand for re-examination of Sabah's terms in Malaysia. He said USNO had notified its willingness to study whatever proposals UPKO had to put forward. He said any proposals which were made in the interest of the people would receive the support of USNO.

The motion to "convene a meeting of inquiry" with a view to "recommending their (Stephens' and Mojuntin's) expulsion from a member party of the Alliance..." was the result of UPKO's call for the re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia. Tun Stephens and Mojuntin's "activities" and "statements" which were to be investigated were in connection with their call for the re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia. Harris's blandly saying that the motion had nothing to do with the re-examination call must therefore be taken as pure nonsense.

The meeting then was adjourned for 15 minutes. On its resumption, the SIC gave support to the motion and it was carried, but it was agreed that no inquiry should take place before a meeting took place between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens when Tun Mustapha returned from London. If Tun Mustapha did not meet Tun Stephens before the date of inquiry arrangements would be made one day before the said date of the inquiry to postpone the hearing till this condition could be fulfilled.⁹⁵

This was Tun Stephens' darkest hour. He had now been given an ultimatum — not just by the USNO, and SCA parties, but also by the tiny Sabah Indian Congress, to step down as his own party's President!

The UPKO Central Executive Committee met on 1 November 1965 to consider the Sabah Alliance Executive Committee's motion. Tun Stephens and Peter Mojuntin decided to comply and step down. The minutes read:⁹⁶

The UPKO partners in the Sabah Alliance have approved a motion to appoint a Committee of Enquiry into allegations by USNO against the President Dato Donald Stephens and Secretary-General Peter Mojuntin. The allegations are very serious. They charge the President and Secretary-General of UPKO with having said and done things which are detrimental to peace in Sabah; that, in fact what we have said and done

95. Minutes of Sabah Alliance Executive Committee Meeting, 14 October 1965.

96. Minutes of UPKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 1 November 1965.

could cause bloodshed in Sabah. This, we all know to be untrue. We did not do or say anything which is against the principles of free speech in a democratic society. But all the same, our partners in the Alliance are the Prosecutors and they are also the Judges. The decision which will be taken will be a political one and will have nothing to do with justice at all.

My estimate is that this move to get the UPKO to expel the President and Secretary-General is a move designed to expel the UPKO from the Alliance so that the USNO and the SCA will have full control of the Government *before elections are held*. The resolution in the Executive Committee of the Alliance calling on UPKO to expel the President and Secretary-General was seconded by the SCA and SIC leaders. This means that we are isolated in the Alliance. We must therefore think of the consequences of our leaving the Alliance.

Our stand has been to keep the Alliance; that we are too young a country to be divided and that if we are expelled from the Alliance, the consequences would be tragic especially for our Bumiputra (natives), since once broken it may never be possible to heal the breach between brother and brother again.

It is also highly possible that once UPKO is out of the Alliance, the promised direct elections will be postponed for as long as four years from now.

The minutes continued:

After a very long and exhaustive discussion and in view of the situation as explained above, it was sadly decided to accept the decision of the President Dato Donald Stephens to step down from the leadership of UPKO in the best interest of UPKO and the peoples of Sabah. The meeting stressed that the resignation of the President is interpreted by the Committee as just a temporary leave of absence. The decision of the meeting is in fact an unquestionable expression of full confidence in the leadership of Huguang Siou Dato Donald Stephens. It was

The Secretary-General was to resign with the full understanding that he will carry on working for UPKO as before but under the name of somebody else who will be the Acting Secretary-General. Dato Ganie Gilong was given the mandate to choose a name to act as Secretary-General. He has named the *Hon'ble Richard E. Yap as the Acting Secretary-General*.

The meeting finished with sadness but also with relief because sad as the decisions were, they were made as sacrifices in the better interests of the UPKO and the peoples of Sabah and not because of personal interests of the UPKO leaders.

Gilong was elected the new President of UPKO on a temporary or interim basis. That he and Richard Yap were only filling the posts of President and Secretary-General temporarily was supposed to be a secret. But this "secret" was known to the other Alliance members. Gilong made a press statement the following day announcing the decision of Tun Stephens and Mojuntin to step down. He emphasised in his press statement that Tun Stephens' resignation as UPKO president was an act of sacrifice on Tun Stephens' part.⁹⁷

On 5 November 1965, USNO's Secretary-General, Habib, wrote to the Alliance Chairman informing him that USNO's Executive Committee had decided to withdraw its motion passed at the Alliance Executive Committee meeting held on 14 October 1965 which called for the formation of a Commission of Enquiry to hear charges against Stephens and Peter Mojuntin. The letter was copied to all political parties in Sabah. The letter stated that the motion was withdrawn in view of Tun Stephens' and Mojuntin's "resignation from politics."⁹⁸

It was Yassin who introduced the motion at the Alliance meeting. This was the same man who nearly became an UPKO member, had it not been for the party's name. This is the same man to whom Tun Stephens issued a timber licence when he was Chief Minister in 1963. Now, like Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, this is the same man who drove the sword behind his back. To the public at large, Tun Stephens was finished politically and the USNO-SCA clique had triumphed once more.

On 29 November 1965, for the first time since stepping down as Head of State, Tun Mustapha presided over the Sabah Alliance Executive Committee meeting. The motion for a Commission of Enquiry on Tun

97. UPKO press release, undated.

98. Letter from USNO Secretary-General to Chairman, Sabah Alliance party, 5 November 1965.

Stephens and Mojuntin were withdrawn officially.⁹⁹ Tun Mustapha became the Chairman of the Sabah Alliance National Council by rotation. He held this position, however, unchallenged until the demise of the Sabah Alliance party in 1976.

Gilong held the post of President of UPKO between November 1965 and December 1966. Tun Stephens was behind the move to select him as his successor. He made it known to the UPKO National Council members that it was Gilong he favoured and the National Council members voted for Gilong accordingly. Tun Stephens considered Gilong to be amenable to his direction and advice. Sundang, who was more senior to Gilong and who was president of Pasok Momogun (P.M.) before it merged with UPKO in 1964 was by-passed. Sundang was not chosen by Tun Stephens precisely because he would have been difficult to handle. He would have insisted on his own policy for UPKO. Although a Kadazan nationalist, he favoured a multi-racial party. Although Gilong was formally the President of UPKO, therefore, it was actually Tun Stephens who continued to map out UPKO's policy during this period. Tun Stephens was in his office every day to meet UPKO supporters and to discuss plans for the coming first direct election with UPKO's divisional leaders. Mojuntin too was in the office of the Secretary-General every day to help prepare minutes of meetings and to answer all correspondence received from party branches and divisions. Richard Yap was Secretary-General only in name. He was rarely in the UPKO office. He spent most of his time in his office at the Secretariat as he was a State Minister.

All decisions regarding UPKO's policy during the period when Gilong was president were, it is safe to say, the decisions of Tun Stephens. The first major decision was to withdraw the call for a re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia. This was followed by a move to get closer to USNO with a view to merging UPKO and USNO as one "bumiputra" party. The third move was to close the door of UPKO to non-"bumiputra" races and make UPKO a "bumiputra" party only.

The withdrawal of the re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia was the first step taken by the UPKO party. Tun Stephens had never got the support of the other Sabah Alliance partners in this call, and UPKO had incurred the anger of the central government. Tun Stephens therefore felt that some fence-mending with the central government and also

99. Minutes of Sabah Alliance Executive Committee Meeting, 29 November 1965.

with Tun Mustapha of USNO was necessary. At a meeting of the Executive Committee held on 24 November 1965, the Committee agreed to withdraw the re-examination call. The minutes of the meeting reported:¹⁰⁰

The UPKO request for re-examination in the light of Singapore's separation was withdrawn by the new President, Dato Ganie Gilong, because of misunderstanding of UPKO's good move by the other member parties of the Alliance, i.e. USNO, SCA and SIC. The UPKO request for re-examination is one of the main reasons why the USNO, SCA and SIC combined to push UPKO out of the Alliance. They did not succeed with their plan but forced Dato Donald Stephens and Peter Mojuntin to resign as President and Secretary-General of the UPKO.

The other move, to get closer with USNO and possibly merge was also pursued by Gilong. He made contact with USNO leaders, specially Tun Mustapha, but the USNO leaders were not ready to merge USNO with the UPKO party. USNO, however, suggested that both USNO and UPKO should become affiliates of UMNO. A meeting of UPKO's Executive Committee was called on 18 March 1966 to consider this proposal.¹⁰¹ The meeting agreed that the UPKO party should apply to become an affiliate of UMNO in Kuala Lumpur. Gilong was given a mandate to pursue this matter further, but nothing came of it.

The third move made by UPKO leaders under Gilong was the closing of the party's door to non-"bumiputras". The UPKO leaders decided to make UPKO a Kadazan-based "bumiputra" party. This third move of UPKO was to placate the Chinese leaders who were critical of UPKO's open-door membership policy. However, as we shall see in the next chapters this move did not appease the SCA leaders and deeply hurt Chinese UPKO members.

On 27 November 1966, Gilong introduced a motion at the National Council meeting to close UPKO's membership door and become a solely "bumiputra" party. Again it was actually Tun Stephens who was behind this move. Gilong informed the meeting that because of UPKO's open-door policy for membership, it had caused a lot of stresses and strains in the Alliance party. He said that one of the causes of misunderstanding in the Sabah Alliance party was UPKO's multi-racial policy.¹⁰²

Ever since the UNKO and Pasok Momogun merged to form the multi-racial UPKO, incidents like the district council by-election in Menumbuk and Penampang (Kuala Penyu district) convinced him that perhaps the majority of the Chinese in

100. Minutes of UPKO Central Executive Committee Meeting, 24 November 1965.

101. *Ibid.*, 18 March 1966.

102. *Ibid.*, 27 November 1966.

Sabah do not believe in multi-racialism.

Gilong was referring to an almost racial riot between SCA and UPKO supporters during a local authority by-election in the Kuala Penyu district and also an incident in the Penampang district.¹⁰³

Tun Stephens, who was present, agreed with Gilong's assessment that problems in the Alliance had been caused by UPKO's multi-racial character. He said that the UPKO party decision to become multi-racial was a big mistake. "It was a worthy ideal but not practical and all it did was to cause anxiety and distrust among other members in the Alliance."

All present supported the call to close UPKO's door. Even the Chinese members present, such as Stanley Ho, agreed. Thomas Jayasuria, who started as an independent, however, did not speak on UPKO's move to close its door. Instead he questioned whether Tun Stephens should return to lead the party. In a veiled sort of warning of things to come, the minutes of the meeting reported him as follows:¹⁰⁴

There is no doubt what the decision will be on the question of Dato Stephens' return to the party leadership. But before a decision is taken, he asked that Dato Stephens' advice and guidance be sought as to whether his return will be to the benefit of UPKO.

The reason why Tun Stephens decided to make the three moves outlined above during the period when Gilong was UPKO president was that he still wished to return to the UPKO leadership. He wanted to make himself acceptable again to the other Sabah Alliance leaders and also to the central government.

By mid 1966, Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders realised that Sabah's first direct election would soon be held, possibly in early 1967. The Kadazans felt therefore that it was imperative for Tun

103. The incident in Penampang almost resulted in a racial clash between the Kadazans and the Malays. The USNO party opened a party branch in a small village in the Penampang district, a predominantly Kadazan Christian area. The USNO leaders brought in a lot of Malay youths (Bajaus) from Tanjong Aru area to make up the crowd. The Kadazan youths, led by Datuk Peter Mojuntin, tried to prevent the Malay youths from entering the village. The police were called to prevent a possible confrontation between the two factions. The police arrived just when both sides were taking up positions for "battle".

104. Jayasuria and Mojuntin never seemed to get along together during the USNO/UPKO confrontation. Mojuntin used to tell this writer that he did not trust Jayasuria despite the fact that the latter was UPKO's representative on the State Cabinet. He did not elaborate why he did not trust Jayasuria.

Stephens to return to lead the party again. This writer used to hear Tun Stephens jokingly quoting one of Mao Tse Tung's famous sayings: "To go backward in order to go forward, to bend a little in order to go straight." Tun Stephens was of the opinion that his moves to drop the re-examination call, to close UPKO's membership door to non-"bumiputras", and to get closer to USNO and UMNO leaders, were "stepping backwards in order to go forward." However, as we shall see later, these calculated moves of Tun Stephens did not greatly help him or his Kadazan-based party. Other political leaders, in particular, the USNO leaders were always one step ahead of him.

UPKO's main organisational task in 1966 was preparation for the long awaited first state general election scheduled for 1967. For the whole of 1966, therefore, when Gilong was the President of the party, Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders worked furiously for the coming general election. The general hope amongst UPKO leaders was that the election results would put the Kadazans back into power, and Tun Stephens would once more occupy his rightful place as the Chief Minister. At the Annual General Meeting of UPKO in December 1966, therefore, the UPKO leaders and delegates felt that Tun Stephens should return to lead the party.¹⁰⁵

Gilong's speech at this December 1966 Annual General Meeting was to the point. He said UPKO's interest was in remaining in the Alliance party and therefore it was decided to close the party and become a "bumiputra" party only. He said UPKO's call for multi-racialism and merger was ahead of times and misinterpreted by other Alliance partners. He said:¹⁰⁶

Some time in 1964 we met in this hall to consider the merger of P.M. and UNKO. This merger was agreed upon and UPKO was formed. The object was unity not only of the natives but also the non-natives. The policy adopted was multi-racialism. It is a party for everybody regardless of race or religion. However, stresses and strains within our party appeared to come more and more to the fore because of this policy. There were suspicions and jealousies. But more crucial still was the suspicion from outside of our party. In effect our stand for multi-racialism was suspected because to others it was a stand to defeat the purpose and object of the Alliance party. The Alliance party was formed as a compromise with the understanding that each component party is based on communalism.

105. UPKO Secretary-General's Report, 28 December 1966.

106. Speech by Datuk Ghani Gilong, 28 December 1966. See also *Sabah Times*, 29 December 1966.

When UPKO was formed it was our call (and which was done by our Huguan Siou last year then) that it was time for Alliance to merge as one party. UPKO believe in multi-racialism and it was our view that the Alliance might agree with us and therefore see the point that there should be a complete merger. Our view then was based on the fact that our leaders were sophisticated enough to tolerate one another to form one happy family in a united party. But alas, perhaps our thinking was too much ahead of our time and perhaps, too, a little bit idealistic. UPKO's stand as a multi-racial party and at the same time a member of the Alliance party was strenuous. We were suspected, and misgivings were rampant. Because of these and also because of the interest of the state and of our people as a whole it was necessary for us to think again and review our position. It became obvious that UPKO as a member of the Alliance party cannot work in the Alliance party if UPKO remained multi-racial. We had no choice therefore but to follow the concept of the Alliance party and that is a grouping of political parties based on communalism and compromise. And so the National Council decided to revert along lines of "bumiputra" only for UPKO. This to us is the best solution. To revert to "bumiputra" lines however, does not mean that we are anti non-natives. It merely means that we want the Alliance party to work for the benefit of all of us so that there is no misgivings, no suspicions amongst ourselves and our other brothers and sisters in the Alliance.

Gilong then asked the delegates to support his motion that Tun Stephens and Mojuntin should return as President and Secretary-General of the party, respectively. He said the time had come for Tun Stephens to lead the Kadazans again and he was voted President unanimously. Stephens was quite emotional when he accepted the leadership of UPKO once more. With tears rolling down his cheeks he said:

I am grateful to you for the friendship and loyalty you have shown and I will do all I can to lead the party. For the good of Sabah, for the good of UPKO as well, we should remain in the Alliance and should do all we can to prove to our Alliance partners that there is no "catch" in this.

However, the Alliance partners, especially Tun Mustapha did see a "catch" in it and watched Stephens' every move thereafter. The USNO-SCA combination were even closer than formerly and they wished for nothing less than the destruction and demise of the UPKO party. For a time all parties in the Alliance had a semblance of unity and peaceful co-existence, but this was really only for public consumption. Inside the Alliance, there were strained relationships between USNO and UPKO again and these strains surfaced when it came time to allocate seats for the April 1967 elections.

CHAPTER 5

THE ELECTIONS AND THE KADAZAN STRUGGLETO RETAIN POWER

In Chapter 4 we noted that for a brief period of time, between August 1963 and December 1964, the Kadazan leader, Tun Stephens was actually in power as Sabah's first Chief Minister. During this period, Tun Stephens and his Kadazan party met much opposition from the Malay and Chinese leadership. In the first Alliance crisis in June 1964, Stephens survived the challenge to his leadership. However, in the second Sabah Alliance crisis in December 1964, he was forced to step down as Chief Minister.

It is interesting to note however, that in the early period of Malaysia, that is, between 1963 and mid 1965, the Malay leaders in Kuala Lumpur did not openly try to intimidate Tun Stephens and the Kadazans. Although the Tunku, for instance, tended to favour Tun Mustapha and the Malay USNO party, he nevertheless did not openly criticise Tun Stephens or the Kadazan party. Indeed, he even invited Tun Stephens' UPKO party to apply to become an affiliate of the UMNO party when Tun Stephens queried him on his apparent soft spot for Tun Mustapha and the USNO party. Thus, in the June 1964 Sabah Alliance crisis, brought about by the Malay leaders in Sabah wanting to take over the Chief Minister's post, the Tunku did not agree to Tun Stephens' stepping down as Chief Minister. He instead retained him and promoted Harris, a Malay USNO Minister to the post of Deputy Chief Minister. In the second crisis in December 1964, the Tunku made a compromise arrangement: Tun Stephens was brought to the central government as a Federal Minister, and a Chinese was made Chief Minister, with a Kadazan as a Deputy Chief Minister. Tun Mustapha, the USNO Malay leader, who really wanted the post of Chief Minister, was made to remain as Head of State.

The Kuala Lumpur Malay leaders' attitude towards Tun Stephens and the Kadazan party was probably largely influenced by the international environment. In the first two years of Malaysia while Indonesian confrontation was on and the Afro-Asian nations had not fully accepted the concept of Malaysia, it was important for the Malay rulers of Malaysia

to have Tun Stephens as leader of the Kadazans on their side. They therefore tended to be reasonable towards Tun Stephens to the extent of allowing him and the Kadazans to rule Sabah. However, by mid 1965, things had changed for Malaysia. Indonesian confrontation was over as soon as President Sukarno of Indonesia was ousted. The Indonesian military power which took over from Sukarno accepted Malaysia as an accomplished fact, and indeed so did other Afro-Asian nations.

The changed external environment was in favour of Malaysia. As the Borneo territories were now firmly in Malaysia with very little hope of either one breaking away from the Malaysian fold, the Malay leaders' next move was to solve the "Singapore problem". This was done by the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia in August 1965.

Tun Stephens, as we saw in the previous chapter, protested against this expulsion of Singapore. However, Tun Stephens and the Kadazans were no longer "important" to the central power's scheme of things. They did not have to be "nice" to Tun Stephens anymore, and that was why he was asked to resign as a Federal Minister.

By the end of 1965, the Malay leadership had decided that power must be in the hands of the Malays both at the national level and at the state level. Kuala Lumpur leaders came out openly therefore to side with Tun Mustapha and the Malay party, USNO. This in turn, boosted the morale of the Sabah Malay leaders, so that by November 1965, with the help of the Chinese in SCA and the connivance of Kuala Lumpur leaders, they managed to oust Tun Stephens as the leader of his own party.

By 1967, the Malay leadership had realised their ambition to be the rulers both at the national and the state levels in the Borneo territories. In 1966, the Iban Chief Minister of Sarawak, Stephen Kalong Ningkan was ousted, and at first, replaced by a very amenable Iban leader. This amenable Iban leader, Tawi Sli, was soon replaced, however, by a Muslim Chief Minister.

In this chapter, we shall trace the Kadazans' struggle to retain power and the result of this struggle. It ended with the capitulation of Tun Stephens as leader and the dissolution of the Kadazan party in December 1967.

Local Government Elections, 1962-63

The Kadazans' struggle to retain power actually started in 1962. By 1961, Tun Stephens came out as "the" leader, not only to the Kadazans but also the other ethnic races. He was the "heir apparent" to the departing British colonial masters. During the local government election in 1962-63, however, Tun Stephens' Kadazan party was out-played by the other political parties and as we shall see, Tun Stephens was actually outmanoeuvred from the very beginning.

The elections to district and town councils were held over a period of nearly six months — in December 1962 and from March to May 1963. These were direct elections, with all adults who had resided in the state for seven years enfranchised.

The introduction of the first local direct elections was made by the British with no direct pressure made on them. The British were ready to dismantle their last vestiges of colonial rule in Sabah.¹ Some Sabah leaders, appointed as Legislative Council members were not over-enthusiastic with the idea of the first elections. Tun Mustapha, the leading Malay leader in the Council was apprehensive that many people might not understand the whole election exercise as they were illiterates or had a very low level of education.² Tun Stephens, himself, was also worried and thought that the election would only bring problems. In his editorial "Do we want them?" he wrote:³

Most of the early stages of whatever electoral system we formulate will have to be experimental because extreme care must be taken to avoid hardening the core of communalism, and when, and if, it is found that at any stage the system does not work because it tends to create communalism, it should be dropped.

The registration of voters and the delineation of constituencies were completed in 1962, so that in the December 1962 election, there were 118 seats ready for the contests amongst Alliance contenders. These were in the four Town Boards of Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau, and Labuan, and district councils for Beaufort, Kota Kinabalu Rural, Keningau, Kota Belud, Kudat, Lahad Datu, Papar, Semporna, Tenom and Tuaran.⁴ The 19 other local authority constituencies were completed only late in 1962, and for

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1. Interview with Sir William Goode, 12 August 1983.
 2. Minutes of North Borneo Legislative Council, December 1960.
 3. *North Borneo News* and *Sabah Times*, 3 October 1960.
 4. *North Borneo Annual Report*, 1962, p. 238.

these areas elections were held in March to May 1963.

None of the leaders of the political parties criticised openly the delimitation of the constituencies. There was no suggestion made that the constituencies were demarcated in favour of any one race, or party.

The election was "issueless" and "unreal" according to one scholar.⁵ This might have seemed so, but nevertheless the elections did generate a lot of interest amongst the contending elites as to who should rule Sabah. This was in fact the first time that the various ethnic groups in the country were going to the ballot box, and the leaders of each community were intent on showing that their party represented the majority.

The first problem which was indicative of things to come in later years, was the contest for strength and position between Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha. Tun Mustapha's USNO was open to all "bumiputras": rightly therefore, he could claim that USNO could field candidates in all "bumiputra" constituencies. The UNKO was open to the Kadazans only. Those who preferred to call themselves Dusuns joined the Pasok Momogun (PM). It was also an allegedly open party, although it was Kadazan/Murut based. The Chinese party too wanted to have more seats and claimed that townships like Kudat and Tenom should rightly be filled with Chinese candidates.

The Alliance partners argued and haggled over the allocation of seats but fortunately at this stage it was not particularly intense or heated. The final decision was a "friendly" contest in some areas where various parties — especially UNKO, USNO and Pasok Momogun could not agree.⁶ In all, 49 seats were contested amongst Alliance parties on a "friendly basis".

Racial and communal sentiments were aroused during this election, despite the constant appeals by all leaders that race should be kept out of politics.⁷ The real contest seemed to be between the UNKO leaders and the Pasok Momogun leaders. Both parties were wooing the same people — the Kadazans or Dusuns and Muruts. The UNKO leaders were out to prove that their party was the one and only party who could speak for the Kadazans. The Pasok Momogun leaders too claimed that their party was the correct party to lead the Kadazans or Dusuns and Muruts. The attacks

5. Gordon P. Means, "Eastern Malaysia: The Politics of Federalism", *Asian Survey*, VIII (April 1968), p. 294.

6. Interview with Datuk Richard Yap on 12 April 1983. Datuk Richard Yap was UNKO's first Secretary-General.

7. Margaret Clark Roff, *Politics of Belonging*, p. 90.

on each other by both UNKO and PM leaders were vociferous and sometimes personal.

The USNO party, meanwhile, despite its "open to all bumiputra" policy, concentrated its efforts in the predominantly Malay areas. In two areas of predominantly Kadazan voters, however, USNO did succeed in winning over UNKO. These were the constituencies of Liwagu and Badu Tahun in the Tuaran district. The success of the USNO party in these areas was largely due to the influence of O.K.K. Indan Kari, the Tuaran Kadazan chief who never reconciled himself with the term "Kadazan" and who joined Tun Mustapha's USNO party right from its very beginning.

Indeed, if the Kadazans had been united from the very beginning, the results of this first election in Sabah would have been very different. As it was, the results were as follows: 53 seats went to USNO, 39 to UNKO, 12 to PM, 27 to BUNAP and 6 to independents (see Table 8).

TABLE 8

<i>Residency</i>	<i>District and Town Councils</i>					<i>Legislative Assembly</i>					<i>Federal Parliament</i>			
	USNO	UNKO	SCA	PM	IND	USNO	UNKO	SCA	PM	IND	USNO	UNKO	SCA	PM
West Coast	24	25	6	1	1	4	3	1	0					
Interior	18	13	6	11	4	1	1	1	1					
Tawau	10	1	9	0	1	2	0	1	0					
Sandakan	1	0	6	0	0	1	1	1	0					
Total	53	39	27	12	6	8	4	4	1		6	5	4	1

If USNO had not won those two Kadazan seats in Tuaran and if the Pasok Momogun and UNKO had been united, Kadazan/Muruts and non-Muslim representatives would have numbered 53 and USNO only 51. However, it was USNO who finished with the most seats.

Meanwhile, the colonial administration introduced a "member" system of government on 25 March 1963. It meant that "members" were appointed for Local Government, Communications and Works, Natural Resources, Education and Health. The "portfolios" were allocated to the appointed members of the Legislative Council, such as Tun Stephens, Tun Mustapha, Khoo and others who were all elected during the Local Council election in

December 1962. Their task was to acquaint themselves with the subjects allocated to their "portfolios" and the work of the departments concerned.⁸

The next round of active politics in Sabah was the first election to the Legislative Council. These elections were conducted in the Residency Electoral Colleges formed from representatives sent forward by local authorities elected members in the four Residencies of the West Coast, the Interior, Sandakan and Tawau. The members elected were all candidates put up by the Sabah Alliance party. "At this stage of the proceedings, the Executive Committee of the Sabah Alliance was able to work out a unified slate of candidates and to equal to the number of seats each party in the Alliance should have in the State Legislative Assembly and the Federal Parliament."⁹

The Sabah Alliance party press release of 17 May 1963 made a point of saying that the meeting was "held throughout in a cordial and friendly atmosphere", and announced also that Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens were elected by "unanimous acclamation" to be the Yang di Pertua Negara and Chief Minister designate respectively.¹⁰

The press release hid the fact that there was a lot of haggling and bargaining behind the scenes, with the Chinese leaders playing a major role as go-betweens between USNO and UNKO. The Chinese party leaders were afraid that they might not be allocated seats in the Assembly and also a Cabinet post. The Deputy Secretary of BUNAP therefore worked hard to see that this would not happen and that the BUNAP would always be the holder of the balance of power. He wrote to Dr Lim Swee Aun, the MCA leader in Kuala Lumpur on 28 April 1963, saying: "Our only hope lies in the opportune use of the situation obtaining or created with the Sabah Alliance." He recognised such a situation in the growing rivalry between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens. Both men wanted the top post — the Chief Ministership. The BUNAP Deputy Secretary-General therefore thought that the Chinese party should exploit this situation by supporting either indigenous leader on conditions set by the Chinese. He favoured Tun Mustapha for the post of Chief Minister and strongly recommended him to the BUNAP as he thought Tun Mustapha was the more amenable to the Chinese. He suggested that the condition for BUNAP's support for Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister should be that no two parties should hold between themselves two-thirds of the seats

8. *North Borneo Annual Report*, 1963, p. 213.

9. Margaret Clark Roff, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

10. Sabah Alliance Party press release, 17 May 1963.

in the legislature. In the meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council, he lectured the meeting on the need to avoid a two-thirds majority by the combination of any two parties in the Legislative Council.¹¹

As it turned out, the arrangement made by the Sabah Alliance National Council was to the advantage of the Chinese leaders. They obtained more seats than they had bargained for and in fact, in years to come, they made use of their position and numbers to combine with USNO to defeat and destroy the UPKO party. The final allocation of seats is shown in Table 9 which also shows the parties' strength.

TABLE 9
PARTY STRENGTH AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

<i>Party</i>	<i>Local Authority</i>	<i>State Legislative Assembly</i>	<i>Head of State and State Cabinet</i>	<i>Federal Parliament</i>	<i>Senate</i>
USNO	53	8	3	6	1
UNKO	39	5	2	5	1
BUNAP	27	4	2	4	1
PM	12	1	1	1	1
Independents	6	-	-	-	-

Source: Press reports.

The 1967 General Election

The call for a direct general election in Sabah had been made since 1963, soon after Sabah joined the Federation of Malaysia in September. The call had been made by both USNO leaders and UPKO leaders. The call was made because to these leaders, a direct general election would solve the inter-rivalry and struggle for power amongst them. The fixing of the date of the first election, however, was not under the State Government's control. The Federal Government was in control of this and it would appear that the federal authority deliberately delayed the calling of the first general election as it would better suit their protege and party affiliate, the USNO party.

The first call for a direct election was made by the USNO party in

11. Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah*, p. 148.

October 1963. Tun Stephens was then the Chief Minister and Tun Mustapha the Head of State. Tun Mustapha did not like his largely ceremonial position and neither did some of the younger USNO leaders like to see Tun Stephens as the Chief Minister with power to allocate or withhold timber licences. Some of these young and ambitious Malay leaders saw Tun Stephens as a stumbling-block to their plan to get rich quick through timber. They had a powerful ally in the Chinese Annual Licencees holders and in the Chinese party leadership. These latter people also saw Tun Stephens' timber policy as detrimental to their interests and they therefore wanted to see Tun Stephens out of the Chief Ministership.

Tun Stephens himself, however, was not sure whether a direct general election was the answer. In reporting the call to his November 1963 Executive Committee meeting held in his house at Likas,¹² Tun Stephens expressed doubt about having an early general election. He also expressed optimism that if there was confrontation over this issue in the Assembly, he would get both the Chinese and Pasok Momogun members to be on his side. However this call for an early direct general election persisted in early 1964, so that by February 1964, UNKO in fact reported that the "election may be in May this year".¹³ A four-man election committee was formed immediately, with Richard Yap appointed by the committee as chairman.

Meanwhile, the need for an indirect election to the Legislative Assembly, from the four residencies' electoral colleges were prepared. All political parties made their preparation so that the Legislative Council could be realigned again. The arrangement made in May 1963 by the Sabah Alliance National Council was to be rearranged.¹⁴ On 13 April 1964, the UNKO Executive Committee selected its own representatives to the Legislative Assembly and members of Parliament. The five members of Parliament selected by the UNKO leaders were evenly distributed representing various districts as follows: (i) Tun Stephens himself (West Coast); (ii) Gilong (Ranau); (iii) Amadeus Leong (Papar); (iv) Arif Salleh (Keningau) and (v) Joe Manjaji (Penampang). UNKO selected ten of its leaders drawn from various parts of Sabah as its members in the Legislative Assembly.

By May 1964, the first outward sign of unrest in the Sabah Alliance was shown when the UNKO Executive Committee meeting passed a resolution

12. Minutes of UNKO Executive Committee meeting, 5 November 1963.

13. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1964.

14. *Ibid.*, 15 March 1964.

affirming its strong support for Tun Stephens as Chief Minister and Richard Yap as the Minister for Natural Resources. There was no further call for a direct general election from USNO, for as we saw in the last chapter, by December 1964, USNO and SANAP had managed to oust Tun Stephens as the Chief Minister. It was now instead Tun Stephens' turn to call for a direct general election, and in an agreement reached before the Chief Minister of Sarawak held in December 1964, all parties concerned agreed that the first election be held in 1965.¹⁵

However, the tables were turned and it was now USNO who did not see the reason to have the general election. So, the proposed 1965 election, therefore, did not materialise, and it was not in fact until April 1967 that the first general election was held.

Gilong took over the UPKO Presidency in November 1965 after Tun Stephens stepped down and he held this office until December 1966. During this period, there was relative calm in the political arena and an eagerness not to annoy. In fact, on one occasion when Tun Stephens wished to issue a press release he was so eager not to undermine Gilong's efforts to get a closer rapport with USNO that he asked for Harris's and Yassin's vetting of the press release to ensure it was alright for publication. In a note to Mojuntin, accompanying the press release, Tun Stephens wrote:

Herewith copy of a press release on my speech at Kota Belud. Please show to Harris and Yassin and speak to Ganie Gilong and if they say it is OK - then release to the press, otherwise hold back until my return on Wednesday.

The press release was simply a report of his speech at the opening of an UPKO divisional office at Kota Belud in December 1966. His speech was a call for closer and better understanding amongst Sabah Alliance leaders, and a reiteration to the Kuala Lumpur leaders that UPKO was not anti-Malaysia.

This small matter of Tun Stephens asking for permission before issuing a non-controversial press release is an indication of another facet of his character. When he was in a disadvantaged position he went to great pains to placate his "enemies". He did not want to jeopardise Gilong's efforts in getting a closer relationship with the USNO leadership. He was a determined person and had made a strong resolution that he must return to lead the UPKO party again but with the USNO leadership not so antagonistic towards him.

15. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 29 December 1964.

His return to lead UPKO in December 1966 was not entirely unexpected as there was already a lot of speculation on the matter. His colleagues in the Executive Committee had been urging his return to lead the party. The reasoning behind his return to lead the UPKO was the coming general election in April. It was felt then amongst the top UPKO leadership that only Tun Stephens would have the necessary personality and political strength to bring the Kadazans to victory. Besides, he was also the only man who had the money to pay for the election. As one Executive Committee member said, the UPKO party without Tun Stephens at the helm would be like a ship without a captain to guide it to shore. Tun Stephens' return to the party's leadership was immediately the cause of suspicion amongst the Sabah Alliance partners, however. Both USNO and SCA did not criticise Stephens' return, but neither did they welcome him enthusiastically.

One of Tun Stephens' first actions as President of UPKO was to call for the monthly Central Executive Committee meeting and to pass various resolutions, the most important of which were:

- (i) the formation of a three-man ad hoc liaison committee to work closely with the Alliance partners "to dissolve all misunderstandings and to bring about closer cooperation in all matters affecting the Alliance",
- (ii) that no press release is to be made except through the UPKO Secretariat, and
- (iii) the appointment of a six-man election committee to deal with the coming direct election.

The three members of the ad hoc liaison committee appointed were Gilong, Luping and Lim Hong Chee. These three leaders were considered acceptable to the USNO-SCA leadership. However, no meetings were ever held with any USNO or SCA members as the USNO and SCA did not appoint any parallel ad hoc committee of their own.

The other most significant action taken by Tun Stephens at this time was to make all members of the Executive and National Council of the party take an oath of loyalty and secrecy to the party and to its leader. This was the first time it was done.¹⁶ It was felt that this was necessary in order to "bind" the leaders to the UPKO party and leaders. It was also felt that confidential information had been leaked to the USNO-SCA leaders

16. *Ibid.*, 18 January 1967.

and in fact the joke was that the USNO-SCA knew what was discussed at the UPKO top-level meetings the moment each meeting was over. There was even an occasion when UPKO leaders felt it was necessary to talk softly at the meeting and that all windows be closed as the other side had planted high-powered microphones in the building and was using them to tape the proceedings. It was therefore thought necessary that in future only Executive and National Council members who took the oath of allegiance would be allowed at meetings. In the past there were also observers present.¹⁷ The oath of loyalty and secrecy promised the following:¹⁸

- (i) To do our best either individually or collectively to further the aims and objects of UPKO.
- (ii) To properly carry out the function of the Central Executive Committee.
- (iii) To keep our oath to be loyal to UPKO and its leadership separately and individually.
- (iv) That the party's secret must be kept confidential and not to be divulged at any time to anyone, even to the party's ordinary members.

Thirty-seven Executive and National Council members signed the oath of loyalty and secrecy. But as will be seen later, some members did not apparently take this oath of allegiance seriously.

Allocation of Seats

Between February and March 1967, the Sabah Alliance partners were engaged in a deadlock concerning the allocation of seats for the member parties. To the Kadazan leaders, the allocation of seats to contest was critically important as it would mean that if they were allocated more than 17 seats in the 32 seat Legislative Assembly the Kadazans could be in power again. The Kadazan leaders therefore were facing a dilemma. On the one hand they felt that they must assert themselves as the "definitive" race of Sabah and therefore properly paramount in the politics of the country. On the other hand, the Kadazan leaders needed to keep the Sabah Alliance party as a going concern. They did not therefore want to be shown as the member

17. It has also been suggested that UPKO's own worst 'enemy' insofar as confidential matters were concerned was Tun Stephens himself. When playing mahjong with some Chinese friends he unwittingly disclosed UPKO secrets to these so-called friends.

18. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 18 January 1967.

party who "broke" the Sabah Alliance. The reason for this reasoning is two-fold. In the first place, Tun Stephens himself knew that the Tunku favoured an Alliance pattern of government in Sabah — that is to say, a government based on a coalition of various ethnic races. Tun Stephens therefore did not want to incur further the anger of the Kuala Lumpur leaders. Secondly, Tun Stephens knew that in some of the constituencies where UPKO candidates were being fielded, there were a large number of Chinese voters as well as Malay voters. In the Lamag constituency, for example, the Kadazan voters were estimated to be around 40 percent of the total only. The UPKO party therefore needed 11 percent of the votes from the Malay and Chinese voters to win the seat. These 11 percent voters must not be alienated or intimidated.

Tun Mustapha and the Malay leaders in Sabah had their own ideas too about the allocation of seats and the matter was equally important to them. Tun Mustapha was advised by his Malay advisors to adopt a position as the "Tunku Abdul Rahman" of Sabah. He was after all the Chairman of the Sabah Alliance, just as the Tunku was the Chairman of the Malayan Alliance party. In the 1959 General Election in Peninsula Malaya, the Tunku was the sole person given the mandate to allocate seats to the respective Alliance party components. Furthermore, he was even given the mandate to select the candidates. As Vasil observed in *Politics in a Plural Society*:

The UMNO's insistence on Tunku as the head of the Alliance, selecting candidates from the MCA was not without significance. This was the way the UMNO could ensure the selection of MCA candidates acceptable to it, and leaving out as far as possible, the new emergent leadership in the MCA. As part of this MCA leaders like Tan Siew Sin and Ong Yoke Lin, who did not enjoy the confidence of the MCA rank and file, were given safe Malay majority constituencies. (p. 32)

Tun Mustapha and the Malay rulers in Kuala Lumpur saw a parallel with the Malayan 1959 experience in Sabah's first 1967 election. They felt that the time had come for the Malays in Sabah to assert themselves and become the real rulers in the state.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's sending Syed Kechik to Sabah as the advisor of Tun Mustapha and the USNO party was therefore not without significance.¹⁹

19. Datuk Syed Kechik: He came to Sabah as advisor to the USNO party and in particular, Tun Mustapha. Both Syed Kechik and Tunku Abdul Rahman had said openly that Syed Kechik was sent to Sabah to help the USNO party and Tun Mustapha. He later became perhaps the most powerful man in Sabah as the 'man behind the throne'. He also became one of the richest men.

He arrived in Kota Kinabalu during the crucial period before Sabah's first general election in 1967. No doubt, too, Syed Kechik's presence was a morale booster to Tun Mustapha and his standing with Kuala Lumpur was raised a little higher in the estimation of the Chinese leaders. They were now more than convinced that Tun Mustapha had the eyes and ears of the Prime Minister in Kuala Lumpur and this in turn made them support Tun Mustapha as the Sabah Alliance party "supremo" even more strongly.

At first, Tun Stephens seemed to have agreed with Tun Mustapha that as the Chairman of the Alliance he allocate the seats to each party. However, when he conveyed this agreement to the Executive Committee in February, the Committee unanimously decided that the proposal to have Tun Mustapha allocate seats was not acceptable.²⁰ Tun Stephens himself was half-hearted in this. It would appear that he himself had verbally agreed with Tun Mustapha that seats be allocated to each party by Tun Mustapha. However, when he called the Executive Committee meeting shortly after his meeting with Tun Mustapha, he changed his mind and left it to the Executive Committee whether to agree or not. Tun Stephens was quite capable of making up his mind and quite capable of "making" the Committee and National Council agree to what he wanted as he had done in the past, but in this instance, he hesitated. On 2 March 1967, he reported to the National Council of UPKO the failure of the Alliance leaders to agree to the allocation of seats. The minutes read:²¹

- (a) The President Dato Donald Stephens reported on the outcome of the Alliance National Council meeting on 1 March 1967, about election matters.
- (b) The USNO wanted 18 seats and were only prepared to concede 8 seats for UPKO and 6 seats to SCA.
- (c) The SCA wanted 7 seats. The UPKO asked for more than 8 seats.
- (d) Since no agreement could be reached regarding the allocation of seats the USNO through Inche Harris Salleh proposed that a "friendly contest" be held to save the Sabah Alliance from breaking up. The UPKO Secretary-General, Peter Mojuntin, supported the proposal on behalf of the UPKO. The SCA and SIC representatives voiced their support. The motion to hold "friendly contests" among the Alliance member parties in the first direct election in Sabah was unanimously agreed.

20. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 16 February 1967.

21. *Ibid.*, 2 March 1967.

- (e) Immediately after the agreement the Presidents of UPKO, USNO, SCA and SIC adjourned to a room to discuss the minimising of the number of seats to be contested. Since it was agreed to have a friendly contest, the UPKO did not press hard on this matter. The USNO asked that Bengkoka-Banggi, Labuan Usakan, and Merotai constituencies be given to them. The SCA asked for Jesselton Bandar, Tawau, Elopura and Sandakan Bandar. UPKO was only given one seat, i.e. Tambunan, although more seats were asked.

The UPKO leaders through Mojuntin, supported the decision to hold a "friendly contest" because to them there was no other alternative except to break up the Sabah Alliance party altogether. As explained earlier, UPKO leaders were not prepared for this. The holding of a "friendly contest" amongst the component parties was therefore thought more desirable.

The UPKO National Council passed two other resolutions, namely:

- (i) to accept the Sabah Alliance election manifesto of
 - (a) Malaysia Forever,
 - (b) Rejection of the Philippine claim to Sabah,
 - (c) Revolution for progress.

The UPKO National Council meeting also voted to contribute \$5,000 to the Sabah Alliance party election fund, although there is no record that this was paid. The other important resolution was the decision by Tun Stephens not to contest a constituency in the state election "with the hope that this may help to stabilise the Sabah Alliance in the interest of political stability and progress in the state".

This decision by Tun Stephens not to contest in the election was probably one of the worst mistakes and miscalculations he made. He was criticised for it by the USNO-SCA Alliance and his own supporters were made dissatisfied and demoralised. To them, Tun Stephens in making this decision seemed half-hearted in his fight against Tun Mustapha and the USNO-SCA parties.

Tun Stephens' decision not to stand for the state election had in fact been made earlier in February of 1967, when he announced in the Penampang "Society of Kadazans" Clubhouse that he would not be contesting in the state elections.²² The reason he gave then was that he had promised Kuala Lumpur not to seek any office in Sabah, and he wanted to keep his word to them that he was prepared to accept a diplomatic post in Canada.

22. *Sabah Times*, 20 February 1967.

Tun Stephens also had difficulties in maintaining discipline amongst his own party leaders. So many were vying to stand for the election. In the Moyog constituency, for example, no less than six persons were vying for the constituency. These six were Mojuntin, Luping, Tibok, Manjaji, Yap and Majakil. Tun Stephens had to rely on his Election Committee (which was also criticised by Majakil) for a final decision. He decided to put Mojuntin in Moyog, much to the dissatisfaction of Yap, who after all, was one of UPKO's Vice-Presidents. Yap was made to stand in Bengkoka-Banggi against Tun Mustapha — a task which he did not really relish. Yap thought that he was the "David" made to stand up against "Goliath". He was persuaded, however, with Mojuntin's facts and figures concerning Bengkoka-Banggi as being populated largely by Kadazans (who speak a type of Dusun Rungus dialect) and should be voting therefore for UPKO. Tun Stephens had been looking after and nurturing Tandek in the Kudat area as his own constituency since 1963, and when he decided not to contest in the election, he put Luping into this constituency.

Despite the decision for a "friendly contest", Tun Stephens nevertheless persisted with his decision not to stand in the election. He maintained that by not standing, he would minimise the "war of words" between USNO and UPKO leaders as there would be no danger that he would want to aspire to be Chief Minister again. But USNO and SCA did not believe him: to them this was just another of Tun Stephens' political gimmicks. They could see clearly that UPKO had put up candidates in 24 constituencies, and this in itself meant to the USNO that if UPKO got more than 16 seats UPKO could be the government. Besides, there were still six nominated seats in the Legislative Council and Tun Stephens could be nominated as a member of the Legislative Council and therefore could become Chief Minister. His decision not to stand in the election was therefore always suspect to the USNO-SCA.

In the opinion of this writer, Tun Stephens should have contested the election to lend more weight to his party. By not contesting many felt he was showing indecisiveness and vacillation as a leader; it did not do any good for his party's image. This decision not to stand was greatly exploited by his political enemies in the rural areas.

After the meeting of the Sabah Alliance Council on 2 March 1967, and the decision for a "friendly contest" amongst the Alliance partners, UPKO issued a press statement giving its reason for the friendly contest and at the same time to deny rumours that "UPKO was thrown out of the Alliance".²³

23. UPKO Press Release, 9 March 1967.

The press release stated as follows:

The UPKO believes that it is in its own interest and the interest of the Alliance that it should clarify its position regarding nominations made by the party for the State Legislative Assembly. The situation appears to have been confused and rumours regarding UPKO being thrown out of the Alliance or that UPKO had broken away from the Alliance due to disagreement on the allocation of seats to be contested by the parties in the Assembly elections were rampant in the past few days. The UPKO has not broken away from the Alliance nor has the UPKO been "thrown out of the Alliance".

The sequence of events leading to the decision for a friendly contest was as follows: On 1 March 1967 the Alliance National Council met in Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) and amongst the important items on the agenda was one concerning the allocation of seats to the member parties. The Alliance chairman, Tun Mustapha, suggested that the allocation should be 18 for the USNO, 8 for the UPKO and 6 for the SCA. The UPKO chairman, Tun Stephens, pointed out that his party had met to consider this matter and had approved a resolution that the division should be on the basis of 13 for USNO, 13 for UPKO and 6 for the SCA, but that if agreement could be reached to let the member parties maintain the status quo he was willing to go back to his party and to do his best to try to convince the party leadership that in the interests of Alliance unity they should be ready to accept 11, which was the number the UPKO had in the previous Assembly. This was rejected and it was finally agreed that the only way to solve the problem was to hold friendly contests. This was reported back to the Alliance National Council and agreed upon with the rider that efforts should be made to minimise as far as possible the number of seats which were to be contested.

On 5 March another meeting of the Alliance National Council was held and after discussion it was decided that nine seats should not be contested. The UPKO had conceded four to the USNO and four to the SCA whereas only one seat was conceded to the UPKO. A resolution that there should be a friendly contest among the remainder was unanimously agreed to by the Alliance National Council.

On 6 March another emergency meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council was called by the chairman, Tun Mustapha. At this meeting USNO moved two resolutions, namely that the parties agree to the seats being allocated on the basis of 18 for USNO, eight for UPKO and six for SCA, and secondly that the USNO and SCA be allowed to use the Alliance symbol in all constituencies where they would be contesting. The UPKO pointed

out that it was not possible to agree since the decision regarding a friendly contest had already been conveyed to the UPKO National Council whose members had all returned to their various districts to prepare for Nomination Day and could not therefore be summoned for another meeting.

The UPKO also rejected the proposal that any component party in the Alliance should use the Alliance symbol in places where friendly contests were to be held. It was explained that if this was allowed it would appear that the UPKO was fighting against the Alliance, of which it was a part, and this had never been the intention on UPKO's part when it had agreed to a friendly contest among Alliance members. The UPKO had agreed to a friendly contest in the belief that the Alliance members generally would be given a choice of Alliance candidates in constituencies where friendly contests were held but that this must be done on the understanding that all parties thus contesting should use their own party symbol and not the Alliance party symbol.

The USNO then asked for a short adjournment after which the USNO said that they were willing to accept 17 seats and amended the motion so that the figures were 17 for USNO, nine for the UPKO and six for the SCA. This was supported by the SCA and the SIC but the UPKO again explained that it was not possible for the members attending the meeting to agree since they had no mandate from the UPKO National Council to do so. The UPKO was then informed that it would have until 4 p.m. the next day, 7 March, to make up its mind whether or not to accept the nine seats.

At 4 p.m. the Secretary-General of the UPKO personally handed a letter to the Alliance chairman, Tun Mustapha, from the President of the UPKO. The letter was to inform the chairman (Tun Mustapha) that the UPKO was not able to agree to accept the nine seats offered and asked that the original decision of 1 March 1967 be complied with by all parties.

As a result of this letter, both SCA and USNO made statements in the press giving their version of the meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council. The USNO's version of the meeting was contained in Tun Mustapha's statement. He said that in the circumstances that prevailed it was impossible for the contests to be in any way friendly (the nomination of R. Yap by UPKO to stand against him in the Bengkoka-Banggi constituency was cited as the final example of bad faith) and outlined his version of the manoeuvres which preceded nomination day, with numerous details of the misunderstandings, the mistrust, and the possible duplicity that had characterised relations amongst the parties in the Alliance. He claimed

that on 6 March both USNO and the SCA had agreed on the ratio of 17 candidates for the USNO, nine for the UPKO and six for the SCA to stand under the Alliance symbol and that the UPKO would then have been free to contest another nine constituencies under any symbol it chose. He said that UPKO had rejected this proposal.²⁴ The SCA's version was that UPKO did not want to give the SCA the seven seats it wanted: that UPKO was only prepared to give SCA four seats.²⁵ The SCA press statement said, *inter alia*:

To begin with, the SCA have from the outset maintained its case that it should be given seven seats by the Alliance party for the purpose of the elections. This request for seven seats was, however, rejected by the leaders of the other component parties of the Sabah Alliance in meetings among the heads of the component parties following the decision of the National Council of the Sabah Alliance party to leave the matter of allocation of seats to the leaders of the component parties to decide in the first instance. USNO wanted to give six seats to SCA but UPKO was unwilling to do so. No decision having been reached among the heads of the component parties, the matter was referred back to the National Council on 5 March where it was decided once more that the heads of the component parties should retire to another room to consider whether it would be possible for the component parties to agree on the number of seats to be allocated to each respective party and to minimise as much as possible the number of seats to be contested. (This decision was in fact made pursuant to the recommendation of a sub-committee formed for that purpose.) In the meeting of the heads of the component parties, SCA claimed that six seats should not be contested and should go to them on Alliance ticket. The SCA had made this request on the plain grounds that those seats asked for, namely, Kudat, Jesselton Bandar, Tanjong Aru, Sandakan Bandar, Elopura and Balung, are predominantly Chinese areas. USNO had no hesitation in supporting the request of SCA while UPKO was unwilling to concede on two seats, namely Kudat and Tanjong Aru. As no decision could be reached on the 7th, SCA felt that it should field four candidates on an Alliance ticket and two candidates under its own banner. True to their promise USNO did not field any candidate in any of the constituencies which they said they would be willing to concede to the SCA. On the other hand, UPKO had fielded candidates in two of the constituencies which SCA claimed as rightly theirs on the basis of the electoral rolls as Chinese-dominated areas, and in accordance with the Alliance spirit.

Mojuntin rejected the SCA version.²⁶ In reply, Mojuntin said the

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- 24. Margaret Clark Roff, "Sabah Political Parties and the 1967 State Election", *International Studies* (April 1968), pp. 442-443.
 - 25. SCA Press Release, 10 March 1967.
 - 26. UPKO Press Release (undated).

UPKO was willing to concede seats to the SCA but this had to be on an agreed basis of seats for all parties.

Once a friendly contest was declared, the UPKO felt that it reserved the right to contest in areas where the UPKO believes it has a majority of supporters. This was only fair; as it is the UPKO had conceded four seats to the SCA and four seats to the USNO whereas the UPKO got only one seat in return - to anyone familiar with equity, this in itself is completely unequitable, but for the sake of the Alliance the UPKO had agreed on such a big sacrifice.

The UPKO had also put a question mark on the Kudat and Tanjong Aru constituencies although the UPKO knows very well that it has many supporters in both these constituencies and was willing to concede these two seats but it had to be on a quid pro quo basis. It was also quite clear that right through the talks the SCA was completely unsympathetic towards UPKO and had at no time supported UPKO's request even for consideration of 11 seats as suggested by the UPKO President in his personal capacity. In fact UPKO could have also fielded candidates in Jesselton Bandar, Elpura and Sandakan Bandar and would have been shown to have been justified in doing so.

On the 6th the SCA representative stood up and said that since the SCA, for the sake of peace and in the spirit of give and take, was willing to accept six seats, the UPKO should be glad and happy that "Their eight seats was being put up to nine". The SCA representative then supported the USNO proposal that the division should be on a basis of 17 for USNO, nine for UPKO and six for SCA. The SIC representative, who should have been silent since his party was in no way involved in the matter, also rose to speak and similarly agreed and said he saw no reason why the UPKO should not accept and be satisfied with nine seats. All this after it had been unanimously agreed to hold friendly contests.

The UPKO say again that it had every right to inform the public, as the UPKO, of what had taken place during the meetings, since as already explained rumours were being circulated which were far from true. The intention was not to start a press war but merely to stop the rumours and to inform the public of the truth.

The President of the UPKO had told the SCA chairman that he subscribed to the idea that the SCA should have eight seats and had suggested to the SCA Co-President (Dato Khoo Siak Chiew) that the UPKO would be willing to agree that the SCA should be given enough nominated seats after the elections to bring their number to eight. But the SCA was not interested in the suggestion and as a result Dato Stephens did not bring up the suggestion formally at the Alliance National Council meeting.

The SCA's lack of sympathy for the UPKO was clearly shown by the statement it has issued.

For SCA to say that "USNO wanted to give SCA six seats but the UPKO was unwilling to do so" was far from true. As had been explained, the UPKO National Council had decided that the allocation UPKO should insist on was 13-13-6. But in the discussion among party leaders the UPKO President had said that if it was agreed that UPKO should be given 11 seats he was willing to go back to the party and try to persuade the party to accept. But this was rejected.

During the talks at no time did the SCA put in a word for the UPKO and it was clear that their opinion of what the UPKO should get was similar to that of the USNO. This put the UPKO in a very difficult position, and our President time and again cautioned the members of his party at the meeting to be patient and never to lose their tempers.

One month after the meetings to allocate seats, Yeh Pao Tzu, the publisher of the *Daily Express* and the *Chinese Overseas Daily* (as well as an executive committee member of SCA) wrote an article which was published in two Sandakan newspapers. The article was meant to give inside information as to what had happened during the seat allocation meetings and to put the blame on UPKO for the failure of the meetings. Mojuntin refuted this and his press statement is reproduced below as it contains a lot of relevant matters pertaining to the sequence of events. He wrote:²⁷

The account given by Mr Yeh Pao Tzu was a complete misrepresentation of the facts. In fact much of it was outright lies.

In his article Mr Yeh said the first meeting to consider seats was held on 5 March 1967. This is a lie. The first meeting was held on 1 March 1967 and it was at this meeting that agreement was reached to hold friendly contests. Agreement was reached after Inche Harris Salleh proposed that the suggestion put forward by the heads of the parties should be formally put to the Alliance National Council. I as Secretary-General of the UPKO seconded this resolution. It was put to the Council and carried unanimously after which everyone present went round and shook hands with one another pleading to do their best to keep the contests friendly.

After the Alliance meeting on 1 March, the UPKO National Council which was standing by met on the morning of 2 March. The UPKO National Council was told about the decision and that afternoon all the UPKO National Council members dispersed to prepare for the friendly contests.

On 5 March the Alliance chairman, Tun Mustapha called another emergency meeting of the Alliance National Council. The UPKO found difficulty in getting enough members for a quorum but was just able to do so. The UPKO thought the meeting was for the purpose of trying to reduce the number of seats to be contested, but it was clear that the other parties had been in consultation and were trying to get UPKO to agree to their using the Alliance symbol in all the constituencies they were going to contest. The UPKO said that this was not possible since the UPKO did not want it to appear that it was fighting the Alliance, being itself an Alliance member. That what had been done before in friendly contests held in the District Council elections should be followed, namely that all parties should use their own symbols.

27. *Ibid.*, 3 April 1967.

By the 5th UPKO had also printed one simple leaflet showing the UPKO symbol; this was printed after the decision had been taken for a friendly contest and the agreement that all parties were to use their own symbol.

Much was made of the fact that the UPKO had had this leaflet and the UPKO was accused of having prepared for a friendly contest a long time before the decision was taken to hold such contests. This was quite untrue, but even if the UPKO had done so, can the UPKO be blamed for doing so, when the Alliance chairman had on purpose left the consideration of the division of seats up to the very last week before nomination day?

The UPKO felt that the others were up to some tricks in purposely postponing the all-important matter of division of seats up to the very last in spite of many requests for the matter to be discussed as soon as the date of the elections was published. The UPKO felt that what the others wanted was to catch the UPKO with "its pants down" to use a vulgar phrase; but in spite of this the UPKO did its best to keep faith with its partners in the Alliance although the UPKO was surprised to see that instead of having an Alliance National Council during Tun Razak's visit (which was then scheduled to take place on 26 March) the National Council Meeting had purposely been given to take place after the Tun's visit. It looked to the UPKO then that the Alliance chairman and his close friends the SCA did not want Tun Razak to act as mediator should the UPKO refuse to accept the eight seats which they had decided to "give" to the UPKO. This was very worrying to the UPKO who had all through acted in complete good faith and wanted only an equitable share of seats to be allotted to it.

On 6 March at the persistent urging of UPKO Vice-President Thomas Jayasuriya, the Alliance chairman agreed to hold talks with the party leaders to discuss the possibility of bringing down the number of seats to be contested.

UPKO did not agree that it could only win one seat. The UPKO said it was sure that it could win at least 13 seats, but in the discussion to eliminate contests between members of the Alliance the UPKO had, in the true spirit of the Alliance, agreed to concede as a starting point to four seats to the USNO and four seats to the SCA whereas both the SCA and the USNO were only willing to concede one seat to the UPKO. It was then clear to the UPKO that the SCA and the USNO had in fact ganged up; in any case the USNO and the SCA did not consider it of any use to continue discussing the matter.

This was reported back to the National Council. The USNO then asked for a short adjournment to hold further discussions among themselves. During the adjournment, the SCA and SIC members were all seen to go to the USNO headquarters together with the USNO members.

On their return USNO said that USNO was willing to concede one further seat to the UPKO making the ratio 17 for the USNO, nine for the UPKO and six for the SCA. The UPKO said that it was not possible to accept this offer since the original resolution had been conveyed to the UPKO National Council and approved by it and it was then

too late to call another meeting of the UPKO National Council since Nomination Day was only two days away. Before this the SCA had stood up (Mr Lim Chin Hwa and Mr Cheuk Ming-to) to support the USNO proposal and said that since the SCA was willing to accept six seats, the UPKO should be grateful to the USNO for giving the UPKO one more seat. When asked by the Chairman for their views the SIC similarly said that they agreed that UPKO should be more than satisfied with nine seats.

At no time did the UPKO make any suggestions regarding division of seats except to convey the decision of the UPKO National Council which had proposed 13 for UPKO, 13 for USNO and six for SCA. UPKO's alternative suggestion that the six nominated seats should be considered to offset any dissatisfaction regarding numbers requested was completely ignored, thus giving the UPKO the clear impression that the USNO and SCA had intended, once UPKO agreed to their suggestion, to give all six nominated seats either to the USNO itself or to the USNO and SCA. The UPKO President went out of his way to try and get the USNO and SCA to agree to give UPKO 11 seats and said that he would do his best to get the UPKO Executive to agree but this was totally rejected on 1 March leaving the UPKO with no further room for manoeuvre.

There was absolutely no mention of another meeting of the Alliance National Council on the 7th. UPKO was given an ultimatum by the chairman who said that UPKO would have until 4 p.m. the next day to make up its mind whether or not to accept the nine seats offered to them, but that in any case the USNO and the SCA would go on and nominate their candidates on the basis of 17 for the USNO and six for the SCA and would use the Alliance symbol in all the constituencies they were contesting. After this the USNO, SCA and SIC walked out of the meeting.

At 4 p.m. the next day the UPKO President wrote to Tun Mustapha and told him that it had not been possible to hold a meeting of the UPKO National Council and as such the original approved resolution for a friendly contest should stand. The UPKO President also indicated concern that the USNO and SCA intended to use the Alliance symbol and indicated that this would be unconstitutional. As far as the UPKO was concerned that was the end of the matter.

After receiving the UPKO President's letter, Tun Mustapha told the UPKO Secretary-General who handed the letter to him personally, that he would like to see Dato Stephens. Dato Stephens saw Tun Mustapha and explained his difficulty: that he was in no position to change the decision of the UPKO National Council which had accepted the Alliance resolution for a friendly contest on 2nd March. Tun Mustapha asked that USNO be allowed to use the Alliance symbol and Dato Stephens said he would try and get leaders of the party to agree to USNO using the symbol provided the Alliance would issue a clear cut statement to the effect that although the USNO was using the Alliance symbol it would not mean that the UPKO was contesting against the Alliance but only because USNO had not been prepared to contest using their own symbol. Dato Stephens later tried to get hold of as many UPKO members of the Executive Council as possible but was not able to get a quorum, and in any case none of the UPKO leaders contacted would agree to any changes from the original agreement that all parties should contest using their own party symbol.

Dato Stephens conveyed this to Tun Mustapha by phone at 8 o'clock the same evening and soon after left for Kiulu where the UPKO had the "Nonon trouble" to be solved and did not return until early next day.

On his return Dato Stephens was told that the Chief Minister Inche Peter Lo, Dato Khoo Siak Chiew and Dato Pang Tet Tshung had spent a considerable time in the dark outside his house fighting the mosquitos while waiting for him to return from Kiulu. Dato Stephens was not told why he had been paid this very great honour of having a midnight visit by the three SCA ministers but when he was in Sandakan recently for the Hone Cup Games he saw Dato Khoo Siak Chiew at the NAK Hotel during the Hone Cup Reception and was told by Dato Khoo that the reason was because they had tried to get in touch with Dato Stephens "to form an Opposition" whatever that may mean.

The UPKO also learnt later that Inche Manikavasagam had arrived in Jesselton. The UPKO was never informed of his visit and only found out when the UPKO saw this published in the newspapers. Apparently another emergency meeting of the Alliance National Council was being called at which Inche Manikavasagam was to have mediated, but it was too late and as the UPKO had not been told of Inche Manikavasagam's visit nor of the meeting although Dato Stephens had a telephone conversation with Tun Mustapha at 8 o'clock that evening, the fact that UPKO was not present at the meeting was certainly no fault of the UPKO's.

These are the facts. The fairy tale told by Mr Yeh Pao Tzu one month after the event and so very cleverly in the *Borneo Times*, a Chinese publication in Sandakan, instead of his own newspaper tells its own story and needs no elaboration.

These conflicting accounts of what happened are given in detail not only to show the extent of the conflict but something of the feelings evoked.

To the UPKO party the failure of the Sabah Alliance to agree to the number of seats for each component party was a disaster. Tun Stephens in particular was most unhappy at the turn of events. UPKO leaders could now see clearly that the USNO meant to be the UMNO of Sabah, and Tun Mustapha the "Tunku" of Sabah. UPKO leaders, especially Tun Stephens, had gone all out to placate Tun Mustapha, and indeed, he was even willing to dissolve UPKO and join USNO — if Tun Mustapha did not agree to a merger. But Tun Mustapha did not want this merger, nor the UPKO members joining USNO. The "young Turks" in his party, including Harris, did not like to see such Kadazan leaders as Mojuntin, Luping, and Tun Stephens himself in USNO as these people they feared would control USNO.²⁸ Tun Stephens made a personal representation to Tun Mustapha to persuade him to merge the two parties. He tried to make Tun Mustapha realise the

28. Margaret Clark Roff, "Sabah Political Parties and the 1967 State Election", *op.cit.*, p. 439.

need for "bumiputra" unity in the interests of both Muslims and non-Muslims. But Tun Mustapha refused.²⁹

All the sacrifices of the past had come to nothing: Tun Stephens' stepping down as the Chief Minister, his resignation as UPKO President, the closing of the doors of UPKO and its becoming a "bumiputra" party only. All these efforts to placate Mustapha and USNO had come to nought and UPKO found itself driven to the wall, isolated and unwanted.

The Campaign

Long before the crucial meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council on 2 March 1967 to consider the allocation of seats to contest to the Alliance partners, each component party had set up its own selection committee to choose its own candidates. Tun Mustapha of USNO of course, was trying to play the role of the Alliance Supremo — as Tunku Abdul Rahman did in the 1964 election in West Malaysia. He requested that he be the sole person to allocate seats and even nominate the candidates from the three component parties of the Alliance.

The call for the meeting of the Alliance National Council on 1 March was delayed for some reason. Meanwhile, UPKO had prepared its own leaflet entitled "Save Democracy".³⁰ Mojuntin explained that this was prepared well ahead of time as there was no certainty when Tun Mustapha was going to call the Alliance meeting.

For the UPKO party, the sequence of events leading to the selection of its candidates was as follows: On 18 January 1967, the UPKO Executive Committee selected a six-man selection committee comprising the following: (1) Stephens, (2) Gilong, (3) Sundang, (4) Lim Hong Ghee, (5) Luping, (6) Mojuntin. The task of this committee was to select and interview UPKO's candidates.³¹ By February 1967, the candidates were more or less chosen although no announcement was made, nor the candidates themselves officially informed of their selection. Nomination papers, together with the oath of allegiance which each candidate had to sign were also prepared. Tun Stephens announced at the February meeting of the Executive Committee that names of candidates were not finalised, but in fact letters were

29. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong, 8 April 1983. See also Margaret Clark Roff, *ibid*.

30. UPKO Press Release, 21 March 1967.

31. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 18 January 1967.

already prepared to be sent to all candidates to inform them of the use of the party symbol — the buffalo.³² This was already an indication that not everything was going well at the Alliance party level.

The Chinese leaders were trying to exploit the already tense situation and inter-rivalry between UPKO and USNO, by playing the "bumiputra" leaders against one another. Before and during the negotiations for the allocation of seats, the Chinese leaders tried to see Tun Stephens both in Kota Kinabalu and in Sandakan, trying to get him to join with them to form an "opposition".³³

After the failure of the meeting of the Alliance National Council on 2 March 1967 and the agreement reached for "friendly contests", UPKO met on the same date in the evening and confirmed its Election Committee. Candidates too were finalised, so that by 5 April 1967, at an Election Rally for the constituencies of Labuk and Sugut, Tun Stephens introduced the two UPKO candidates — Malis for Labuk and Nasrun for Sugut. In his speech, Tun Stephens said Sabah's rich natural resources should be used to uplift the people's standard of living and not to be used to enrich a few elites. He said "The UPKO does not believe in a small rich elite who are selfish and who consider that they have the God-given right to dictate to the people and use them as beasts of burden for their own enrichment". He mentioned too his plan for the rural people, when he was the Chief Minister:

The 4-K Plan, which if carried out, would have given the rural people real benefits, not on a short-term basis....

Stephens too explained why UPKO printed a leaflet called "Save Democracy - Vote UPKO". He said:³⁴

When UPKO used the slogan Save-Democracy-Vote UPKO, it was not because the party considered it a vote-catching device; it was used because the party knew this to be true, that unless you vote UPKO and give UPKO enough seats for its voice to be heard in the country, democracy will become meaningless very quickly. The people know this and that is why the slogan has such real meaning, and that is why the dictators-to-be hate this slogan so much, he added.

On 6 March Stephens announced the party's policy and platform at three political rallies in Kiulu, Tuaran and Tanjong Aru. He touched on the

32. *Ibid.*, 16 February 1967.

33. UPKO Press Release, 3 April 1967.

34. *Ibid.*, 5 March 1967.

"20-points safeguards" and explained that UPKO in general was not happy with the way these safeguards were implemented. On language, UPKO supported the national language, but also called for the recognition of Chinese and Kadazan languages as official languages in Sabah. Other points raised: that immigration restrictions were not adhered to; that finance and taxation needed to be looked into; that education was lagging behind in Sabah with the tendency to slow down the teaching of English; that work on rural development had had political interference; that forest policy needed to be tightened and not to be deferred as and when Cabinet liked to suit the purpose and needs of anyone. However, Stephens' most important call was on the need to preserve democracy. He said:³⁵

Democracy was in danger, because one party in the Alliance has made it clear that it was out to gain complete control of the party. If that party itself is known to be a democratic institution, then there would not need to be any fear of dictatorship in Sabah, but knowing that one man has full control of the party, it was quite clear that the intentions were to have one man rule in Sabah. It was sad that SCA which could have helped to maintain the balance and fought to keep democracy in the state had surrendered so completely and made the danger of dictatorship so real and imminent. That is why he would call on everyone in Sabah to vote UPKO and save democracy in Sabah. This was no political ploy nor a scare slogan to get votes. Democracy was in real danger in Sabah and only the blind, those who would not see would contradict this fact.

The Candidates and Constituencies

The UPKO and USNO parties fielded 25 candidates each and the SCA seven. Of the 25 UPKO candidates, 17 were Kadazans or Sino-Kadazans and eight were Malays or Muslims. The UPKO felt that the Kadazans were in the majority in the following areas: (S3) Langkon, (S4) Tandek, (S6) Sorob, (S7) Suleiman, (S8) Kiulu, (S9) Tanjong Aru, (S10) Moyog, (S12) Papar, (S14) Kuala Penyu, (S19) Keningau, (S20) Pensiangan-Sook, (S21) Ranau, (S22) Tambunan, (S25) Sugud, (S26) Labuk, (S28) Lamag — 17 constituencies. In (S17) Tenom, UPKO felt that the Muruts would be in the majority here and hence would also vote UPKO. (S3, S4 etc. indicates State Constituency 3, 4 etc., the members being allocated by the Electoral Commission.)

UPKO also felt it had a very good chance of winning in Bengkoka-

35. *Ibid.*, 6 March 1967.

Banggi. The island of Banggi was populated by Kadazans and although they speak a different kind of Kadazan dialect which is almost unintelligible to the other Kadazans of the mainland, nevertheless, they have been classified as Kadazans, by both census numerators and also ethnographers. UPKO also thought that it had a 50 percent chance of winning Kudat (S1) constituency as it felt that some Chinese and Malays would vote for the UPKO candidate. The Kadazan and Chinese voters were almost the same in number and the Malays held the balance of power in this constituency.³⁶

UPKO also fielded a candidate in Lahad Datu, an area which was predominantly Muslim — of the "Idaan" race.³⁷ These people were supposed to be Kadazan or associated with the Kadazans, but they were the first to embrace Islam and hence integrated and assimilated into the Muslim way of life. UPKO had put up Hamid Datun, an Idaan Muslim as a candidate here, but his registration paper was rejected due to a technical fault. UPKO then supported and campaigned vigorously for a Sino-Kadazan independent candidate, Tan Chong Ming. This latter was an UPKO supporter and member. He was originally from the Penampang district, but had married and settled down in Lahad Datu. He spoke Chinese, Malay and Kadazan with equal ease. He was passed over as a candidate in favour of Hamid Datun as the latter was more well known in the area, and also because he was a Muslim. As it turned out, USNO's successful candidate Salleh Sulong's majority was only 474. Tun Stephens' influence amongst the Idaan Muslims in the interior of Lahad Datu was considered very strong.

UPKO, however, made a very bad mistake in the Tanjong Aru constituency. Of the 8628 voters, the Kadazans were considered to be in the majority in this area, but only just. The Chinese and Malay voters combined were slightly higher than the Kadazans. The mistake, however, was in the choice of a candidate. Jayasuria, an Indian-Kadazan was UPKO's candidate. Jayasuria started politics as an Independent, but was gradually drawn to the UPKO camp, and in fact joined the UPKO party and became one of its Vice-Presidents. He was also one of the three UPKO Ministers. He was not, however, considered by Mojuntin as a good candidate for Tanjong Aru. He was against his candidacy, but was persuaded

36. The UPKO Secretary-General had analysed each constituency to study UPKO's strength in the constituencies and his analysis was passed to the Election Committee.

37. See for example Tom Harrisson and Barbara Harrisson, "The Prehistory of Sabah", *Sabah Society Journal*, IV (1969-70), pp. 229-235.

to accept him because Tun Stephens had personally selected him as a candidate. None of the Selection Committee was told of this change of attitude on the part of Tun Stephens. It was felt all along that Tun Stephens was not in favour of Jayasuria nor of Richard Yap to stand as candidates. He had told the Selection Committee members individually and as a group that he did not think Jayasuria or Yap should stand as they were not popular and that they had not done much for the UPKO cause. The choice for Tanjong Aru therefore seemed to be open, with George Chin, a Chinese married into a prominent Kadazan family from Penampang — the Manjaji family — as the likely choice. The problem with George Chin was that he had only just recently resigned from UPKO when the latter closed its doors to non-"bumiputras". The feeling amongst UPKO's Selection Committee then was that George Chin could return to UPKO if he won. Tun Stephens, however, changed his mind and unilaterally selected Jayasuria. Chin, who was the *Sabah Times*' satirist-cartoonist then, meanwhile had also made up his mind to stand as an Independent. Indeed, he had spent considerable time and money canvassing in the constituency and he felt that he had a good chance of winning many Chinese and Kadazan votes. When Tun Stephens belatedly decided to field Jayasuria, therefore, Chin was in a rebellious mood. He told Tun Stephens that he would not stand down and that he would stand as an Independent. Tun Stephens and his colleagues in UPKO were in a quandary. They had to go all out to campaign for Jayasuria, which they did, but they could not possibly criticise Chin. As it turned out, the UPKO supporters in Tanjong Aru, both the Chinese and Kadazans were divided. 1389 voted for Chin and 2272 voted for Jayasuria. The SCA candidate, Lee Vui Min had 3186 votes, a majority of 496 only. Had Chin or Jayasuria stood down, UPKO could have won Tanjong Aru constituency. This was a costly mistake.

In regard to Bengkoka-Banggi, the decision to field Richard Yap was also sudden and Tun Stephens' own. The press statement issued by UPKO headquarters soon after the meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council on 2 March 1967³⁸ did not mention Richard Yap's name as a candidate, nor was it mentioned that Bengkoka-Banggi was to be contested by UPKO.

Most candidates had been selected by 8 March 1967, and had gone to their respective constituencies to campaign. Richard Yap's inclusion as a candidate was made only on 21 March 1967³⁹ when Tun Stephens changed

38. UPKO Press Release, 8 March 1967.

39. *Ibid.*, 21 March 1967.

his mind, first about fielding Yap, and second, about contesting the seat where Tun Mustapha was standing. As expected, Tun Mustapha bristled with anger and saw this as an act of particularly bad faith on the part of UPKO. This action was not easily forgotten by Tun Mustapha, and was one of the main reasons why Tun Mustapha was reluctant to admit UPKO immediately into the Sabah Alliance fold after the election was over. He took it as a personal affront that UPKO should have had the audacity to field anyone against him, let alone, Richard Yap, a former State Minister. Tun Mustapha was accused of trying to bribe Yap by asking him to withdraw his candidacy and promising him money. Mojuntin in a press release in March 1967, said that Tun Mustapha was getting desperate and accused him of trying to bribe Yap.⁴⁰

The UPKO knows that the USNO President is definitely desperate in his own constituency of Bengkoka-Banggi. The UPKO candidate, Mr Richard Yap, was secretly approached and asked to withdraw from the contest with the promise of being bribed with a big sum of money. This incident has only served to give the UPKO candidate added confidence that he shall be returned victorious.⁴⁰

Part of the reason why Tun Stephens changed his mind about contesting the Bengkoka-Banggi constituency was because of a feeling of disgust and disappointment over Tun Mustapha and USNO's charge that UPKO and Tun Stephens were anti-Chinese. Tun Stephens had all along tried to have a multi-racial party, but due to suspicion and opposition from the Chinese and USNO leaders, he was forced to close the UPKO membership doors in 1966. When therefore, he was charged with being anti-Chinese he was particularly angry and frustrated.⁴¹

An UPKO press release of 21 March 1967, denied this anti-Chinese charge by Tun Mustapha and added that UPKO had an enlightened leadership. It said the UPKO top leadership was:⁴²

40. *Ibid.*

41. This anti-Chinese feeling amongst "bumiputra" (native) leaders is factual. "Bumiputra" leaders considered the Chinese as the 'enemies' but most "bumiputra" leaders were careful not to say or express their feelings openly against the Chinese especially in front of Chinese listeners.

42. The reference to 'educated persons' in the UPKO leadership meant Tun Stephens himself, Datuk Thomas Jayasuria, Datuk Richard Yap, Datuk Peter Mojuntin and Datuk Herman Luping. UPKO's candidates for the election compared favourably with the USNO candidates in this regard as the latter had very few highly educated or qualified people in its line-up of candidates.

...composed of educated persons with mixed blood running in their veins. No one can deny that blood is thicker than water. These leaders can never be expected to be anti any race, let alone anti-Chinese. The leadership of UPKO are committed to serve its supporters and the peoples of Sabah, irregardless of race or religion. The names of the persons standing as UPKO candidates are clear proofs of UPKO being not anti any race.

The candidates were Kadazans (Dusuns), Sino-Kadazans (like Richard Yap), Muruts, Bajaus, Bruneis, Bisayas and Orang Sungei or Idaan (Malays). Indeed, up to the 1967 general election and even after the closing of UPKO's open door policy, it had Stanley Ho, a full Chinese from Beaufort as UPKO's Member of Parliament.

Mojuntin as Secretary-General then issued another press release on 21 March 1967 saying that there are "signs of a trend towards dictatorship" in Sabah.⁴³ He said this was the reason why UPKO produced a leaflet entitled "Save Democracy". Mojuntin further explained:⁴⁴

The USNO wanted 18 seats out of the 32, this would in effect mean an USNO government and not an Alliance government. The USNO had also refused to talk about the six nominated seats, indicating that if they got the 18 seats, it is more than likely that all six nominated seats would also be given to USNO. The USNO also refused to discuss Cabinet seats but indicated that of the nine Cabinet seats, USNO wanted five, two would be given to UPKO and two to SCA. This means an USNO Cabinet, since they will have a majority. To us, this means dictatorship, by USNO or more precisely by Tun Mustapha.

He also accused Tun Mustapha of misusing his position as a Minister for Sabah Affairs by using government helicopters to go campaigning for himself and USNO. The mention of Tun Mustapha as a dictator had come out at last in the open. In the past, UPKO had only indirectly remarked on this, and Tun Stephens himself in his March 5 rally in the Labuk/Sugut area mentioned the trend towards dictatorship, but did not mention the name of Tun Mustapha.

The anti-Chinese accusation against UPKO continued to be played up by both USNO and SCA, however, and in response to this UPKO then issued another press release on 28 March 1967 rebutting USNO and SCA's accusation. The press release gave the full text of the UNKO submission to the Cobbold Commission, and said that "no sane person who reading UNKO (we repeat the

43. UPKO Press Release, 21 March 1967.

44. *Ibid.*

UNKO and not the UPKO) submission to the Cobbold Commission could in any way interpret it as anti-Chinese move". The statement also dared both USNO and SCA papers to issue the statement in full, but as expected, none did.⁴⁵

As the election got closer, the campaign too got hotter. First, the resignation of O.K.K. Nonon from UPKO and his joining forces with USNO's candidate in Kiulu was played to the full by the USNO and SCA papers. They even made a big news item story on one person by the name of Setia Sugara. This man apparently had resigned from UPKO as he was disgusted with the UPKO party and leaders and called on other Kadazans to do likewise. UPKO's reply to this was short: that Setia was O.K.K. Nonon's brother-in-law who also acted as his driver and that Setia had also been expelled by UPKO along with O.K.K. Nonon who had claimed that all the village headmen in the Kiulu constituency had joined him to oppose UPKO and support USNO. Some 48 village headmen and leaders of the constituency subsequently made a signed statement denouncing Nonon. The statement said, *inter alia*:⁴⁶

We, the undersigned are very surprised to have been told that O.K.K. Nonon in his press statement lodged claims that 2,000 UPKO members including 40 Orang Tuas may resign from the membership of UPKO. We want to make it absolutely clear here and now that we and our rayats are solidly supporting our UPKO party. We wish it to be known that we have lost confidence in the leadership of O.K.K. Nonon Anad. As a matter of fact, long before nomination day we have already lost confidence in his leadership but we preferred to keep silent for the sake of party discipline.

Claims and counter-claims, resignations and joining the other camp became the order of the day during the month of March, prior to election day. Perhaps one of the most sensational was the report on 26 March 1967 which appeared in the USNO paper, the *Kinabalu Sunday Times*.⁴⁷ The paper reported in a front page headline news the resignation from the UPKO party of two important UPKO Executive Committee members, namely, Stephen Tibok and Sikopit Siganul. Both Tibok and Siganul were Tun Stephens' staunchest supporters and were amongst the people referred to as "the Penampang boys". Both UPKO leaders jointly made a press statement

45. *Ibid.*, 28 March 1967.

46. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1967.

47. *Kinabalu Sunday Times*, 26 March 1967. This paper folded in 1968 when it was considered no longer useful to USNO strategists.

denying the report and said:⁴⁸

The newspaper is shamelessly trying all sorts of cheap tricks to make it appear that there is dissension in the UPKO leadership. By using our good names to try to harm the UPKO and to further the political interests of its owner, the *Kinabalu Sunday Times* is showing to the people that it is a newspaper solely interested in furthering the interests of the political party hostile to our UPKO.... We are part of the leadership of our own party UPKO. We know better, and we do not want to be told how to run our own house.

As the campaign became even more militant, with reports of threats, bribery and biased behaviour by field information officials, the UPKO met on 29 March 1967.⁴⁹ The meeting discussed the possibility of leaving the Alliance, but decided against this. Instead, it resolved to meet leaders of the other political parties to discuss ways of preventing too much damage to the Sabah Alliance party.

The UPKO then released a statement to the press appealing to the USNO and SCA "to desist in their use of racial propaganda in trying to win votes and to keep the Alliance resolution for a friendly contest". The statement went on to say:

In spite of various propaganda tactics varying from a number of methods of intimidation, bribery, attempts to buy UPKO leaders to officers of the Information Department (invariably the reports say that they are not Sabahans and not members of the Sabah State Information Office but newcomers attached to the Information Department) canvassing for the other parties, all reports were optimistic of UPKO victories in the constituencies.

The statement then hinted that if pushed further and attacked unreasonably, UPKO might consider leaving the Alliance.

The allegation of biased field information officers was correct. These "newcomers" were sent in from West Malaysia, supposedly to help the State Information Department to help in the campaign of teaching the electorate how to vote, but invariably they used this position to influence the voters to vote USNO or SCA. The candidate for Tandek, for example, reported that he was concerned with the government officials who were taking sides and playing politics. He said:⁵⁰

I am deeply concerned that government officials who are paid by the tax payers should take sides and play politics instead of performing their true duties for which they have

48. UPKO Press Release, 29 March 1967.

49. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 29 March 1967.

50. *Sabah Times*, 24 March 1967.

been sent. My supporters told me that these officers have made speeches which were one-sided and only helpful to USNO. Before showing the film to the public they made speeches.... To these officers, it was Tun Mustapha who brought Sabah to liberation from the Japanese and that it was Tun Mustapha who brought Sabah to Merdeka through Malaysia.

The bribery charge was also correct as the candidate for Tandek had himself been shown money given to his supporters. Some village headmen were handed money and on his instruction accepted it and referred the matter to the police. The police did not take any action on any report of bribery so the money was kept by the payee.

Mojuntin issued another press release on 30 March 1967, pointing out the USNO-SCA combination against UPKO. This is perhaps one of the clearest statements of UPKO's version of events and for this reason it is reproduced in full below.

The USNO and SCA keep on talking about the Sabah Alliance spirit and unity. All the time the top leaders of the USNO and SCA have ganged up against the UPKO. They used to deny this. After openly betraying the Sabah electorate, they proudly publicise the USNO-SCA-SIC top leaders gang against the UPKO in the Sabah Alliance party. Is this their version of the Alliance spirit and unity in practice? The UPKO has nothing against the members of the SCA, USNO and SIC. They are just Sabahans innocent of their leaders selfish scheming. The USNO and SCA top leaders should face the real issue in the important allocation of Alliance seats before the Nomination Day. The unanswered questions are:

1. Why did the USNO top leadership demand a complete majority of 28 seats out of 32 seats?
2. Why did the SCA top leaders give full support to the USNO leadership demand of 18 seats?
3. Does the SCA top leaders deny the fact that 18 seats for USNO out of 32 seats means that USNO had the full power of control over the State Government and that in the Alliance it was no longer all that important whether SCA had six seats or 14 seats?
4. Why did the SCA top leaders refuse to support the UPKO's fair and sincere proposal of 13:13:6 seats for UPKO, USNO and SCA respectively? Is it not true that by this UPKO proposal the UPKO and USNO had in fact agreed to SCA having six seats as asked for by the SCA leaders?
5. If the proposal of 13:13:6 were accepted, does it not mean that SCA, USNO and UPKO each and individually holds the balancing power in the Sabah Alliance party, which is the true spirit of the Sabah Alliance so that everything must be settled by unanimous agreement and not by one or two parties over-riding the wishes of another?
6. If it is really true that the SCA top leaders DID NOT KNOW the respective strengths of the UPKO and USNO

supporters, then why should the SCA top leaders think that USNO deserved 18 seats and UPKO only eight seats?

Who in his right mind could blame UPKO for agreeing to "a friendly contest" and refusing to agree that USNO gets a complete majority of 18 out of 32 seats before the people of Sabah cast their votes? The fair and sincere proposal of 13:13:6 by UPKO was flatly refused by the USNO and SCA top leaders. Why? The top leadership of USNO wanted a complete majority to control the State Government. The top leadership of the SCA knowingly agreed to lose the balancing power which keeps any one party from having sole control of the Sabah Alliance party. The 13:13:6 proposal would have actually meant that the USNO and UPKO were restricted by Alliance agreement to contest in only 13 constituencies each.

The UPKO refused to give the USNO leadership the power of full control in the State Government before the elections. The UPKO agreed to the alternative given by the Alliance i.e. a "friendly contest". The people are given a chance to vote to choose their leaders. The UPKO believes this to be the constitutional and democratic rights of the people.

Because of this, the USNO leaders amusingly accuse UPKO of "grabbing for power" to control the State Government! They are accusing us of their own crime. It is as clear as daylight that the USNO leaders are mortally afraid of the judgement of the Sabah electorate. They stubbornly demanded for 18 seats out of 32 seats and then later get nervous fits when by their own design, they agree to face the voters! In nervous fits born out of desperation the USNO leaders make laughing stocks of themselves by making wild and irresponsible statements and cheap propagandas through their bewildered "ghost-writers".

Because the UPKO asked for 13:13:6 seats for UPKO, USNO and SCA respectively, the "SCA Election Committee" (no doubt under the nervous influence of the few SCA top leaders) says that UPKO was "selfish" and is insinuating that UPKO's proposal is outrageous! That USNO's demand for 18 seats was fair, just and in keeping with the Alliance Spirit. As further proof of the insincere and un-Alliance schemings of the USNO-SCA-SIC gang under the dictatorial leadership of Tun Mustapha, we publish the following self-explanatory letters irresponsibly and unconstitutionally written by the Alliance "Secretary-General" Inche Abdul Momen Kalakhan (of the USNO).

(1) (Addressed to the Supervisor of Elections, Sabah and dated 2 February 1967):

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January 1967. You will have noted that we are in the process of applying for the registration of our party symbol. (Vide Election Commission, Kuala Lumpur as attached.)

I would like to inform you that the Honourable Enche Abdul Momen bin Haji Kalakhan, Secretary General, Sabah Alliance party is the AUTHORISED OFFICIAL to sign all letters of authority to use Sabah Alliance symbol.

cc. Secretary, Election
Commission, Kuala
Lumpur.
Dy. Federal Secretary,
Jesselton.

Yours sincerely,
Sgd. (Abd Momen B. Hj. Kalakhan)
Secretary-General,
Sabah Alliance Party.

(2) (Addressed to the Supervisor of Elections, Sabah,
Jesselton dated 17 February 1967)

(Confidential)

Sir,

Letter of Authority for the Sabah Alliance party's
Candidates

In reference to my letter dated 2 February 1967, I hereby withdraw myself as a person who will sign the letter of authority for all the Sabah Alliance Party's candidates in the coming election.

In my place, YAB Tun Datu Mustapha bin Datu Harun the Chairman of the Sabah Alliance party *will sign this letter of authority* to use the Alliance symbol of the sailing boat for all the Sabah Alliance party's candidates.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. (Abdul Momen B. Hj. Kalakhan)
Secretary-General,
Sabah Alliance Party.

No copy of these letters was sent to the UPKO, neither was UPKO ever informed of these correspondence. The UPKO once again say that at no time was anyone in the Sabah Alliance party authorised to give permission to make use of the Sabah Alliance party symbol. And the fact that Tun Mustapha and Abdul Momen felt they could act without any resolution in the Alliance Central Executive Committee is an example of how much respect they have for the constitution and how dictatorial the "Chairman" of the Alliance has been as Chairman of the Alliance.

As for Abdul Momen's press statement "forbidding" me from saying anything about the Alliance as this was unconstitutional, I think it too puerile to deserve a reply.

Tandek: A Case Study of a Predominantly Kadazan Constituency⁵¹

The area was 90 percent Kadazan populated — with the remaining 10 percent shared by the Bajaus (Malays) and Chinese. The Kadazans in this constituency were the Miragang tribe and their dialect was closer to the Ranau dialect than the Rungus dialect of Matunggung or Kudat. However, as most government officers (District Officer, Agriculture, Health) were invariably Kadazan "boys" from Penampang or Papar, the Miragang of Tandek especially those living in the plains were very conversant with the Penampang dialect. In fact, those in the plains speak the Penampang dialect most of the time.

The religion was mixed. The majority were animists, but there were

51. The Tandek constituency is used as an example as the writer has a greater personal experience in this constituency. The writer feels that this constituency is fairly representative of the rest of Sabah, especially in the context of the power struggle amongst the "bumiputras" - the Malays and the Kadazans.

Christians, mostly of the Seventh Day Adventist persuasion. There were also a few Catholics and Basel Mission members (Lutherans). There were very few Muslims amongst the Kadazans at the time of the 1967 election. The Muslims were mostly the Bajaus of the area.

The people, like most Kadazans were self-sufficient agriculturalists. Road communication in 1967 was very poor, and villages were connected with bridle tracks only. Campaigning was done on foot — crossing rivers, hills and sometimes mountains to reach the remotest part of the area. The economy then was subsistence: on a simple survey conducted by the writer at the time, the average earned income of the people living in the hills of Tandek area was about \$200 per year. The income was mainly through the sale of forest products such as rattan, damar (collection of this was getting less), and the selling of brooms, mats etc. These were exchanged with the Chinese shopkeepers in the town for salt, cloth and sometimes tinned food.

The two candidates were both Kadazans. The UPKO candidate, H.J. Luping, came from Penampang, and he arrived in Tandek only a week before nomination day. This was his first visit to the area. He was a Christian and educated in New Zealand. The USNO candidate was a Miragang Kadazan born and bred in the area, and was an animist. His father was quite a well-known figure in the area and he had a lot of relations in the constituency which was to his advantage.

The USNO candidate, Madina Ungut, played USNO's policy as a "bumi-putra" party from the beginning — that it was open to all "bumiputras". He accused UPKO of being inconsistent and dominated by Penampang people. The name "Kadazan" was criticised as a Penampang plot to control other Kadazans in Sabah. The USNO party also had the use of "newcomers" from West Malaysia who were the field information officers. They campaigned for USNO, making use of government vehicles and equipment.

USNO Kadazan members from Penampang, like Alex Busok Ng, himself a candidate in Moyog were also sent to campaign against the UPKO candidate. Alex Ng was supposed to know the inside of UPKO as he was from Penampang and had divorced himself from the party to join USNO. He was also always generous with the purchase of clothing, salt fish etc. for the people in the hills he visited in Tandek. Obviously he had a lot of money to spend.

USNO also had Tun Mustapha campaign in a government helicopter. He had the use of this helicopter as the Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs. He used this position to his advantage and that of USNO. There was no

record of the amount of money spent by USNO in Tandek in 1967, but the rumour was that it was in excess of \$50,000. In any case, many people, mostly the cousins and relations of the USNO candidate were able to exhibit some measure of wealth and improvement in their livelihood. They managed to renovate their houses and bought new furniture.

The UPKO candidate's only "weapon" was an appeal to "Kadazanism"; that the success or failure of UPKO during this election would mean the success or failure of the Kadazan race as a whole. If Kadazans fail, then the alternative was a second-class status to the Malays. The campaign was racialistic in its approach, an appeal for Kadazan consciousness. The UPKO party was hampered with lack of money. Except for two or three other candidates who might be able to help themselves with their own funds to supplement the funds given by the UPKO party, many did not have personal funds or extra money to spend. The Tandek UPKO candidate did not have any personal funds to spend. He had to depend on the UPKO party from which he received \$7,500 altogether.

Campaign workers were given various kampongs to look after. Thus, Ungang bin Misin, for example was paid \$4 per day to look after three kampongs (villages) and the voters in these three kampongs. Saiwah bin Tamingan had six kampongs, more than 300 voters to look after and Majalin bin Manggong had four kampongs and also more than 300 voters to look after. These two persons who have more people to look after, however, had assistants to help them. These assistants were paid about \$2 per day. The village headman was also allocated with jobs — as his house was normally used for meetings.

One of the duties of the chief canvassers was to arrange meet-the-people sessions when the candidate arrived in the village. They also arranged for other canvassers, mostly women, to go from house to house to campaign for the party and candidate. These women were not paid. They also arranged for the itinerary of the candidate and other party workers from other areas who had been sent by headquarters to campaign in the area. However, the most important work of the chief canvassers and their assistants was to "educate" the voters on how to make their mark on the ballot papers. For most of these voters this was their first visit to the polls. They were mostly illiterate, and had not before had the feel of a pencil in their hands. When they "signed" documents, which was rare, they used their thumbprints. But they could not thumbprint the ballot papers, so they had to be taught how to hold the pencil and

how to make the letter "X", on a piece of paper. The chief canvasser and his assistants spent hours every evening teaching mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers (even some fathers) how to mark the ballot paper with an "X". As these canvassers were UPKO party men, they naturally made sure that the party symbol was shown and that the place for the marking of the cross was also shown. The ballot papers had the names of the candidates but for the benefit of the illiterate the party symbol was also placed against the candidate's name.

One very enterprising chief canvasser was Majalin of Kg Batition. This writer visited the village and was late, arriving there only late in the afternoon. The people of Kg Batition (with 248 voters) had gathered early in the afternoon at a school house to meet this writer in a meet-the-people session. To while away the time, Majalin lined up all the people present in single file and had a mock-up voting session. He arranged for a complete look-alike inside the polling station and even had "clerks", and a "presiding officer" to man the station for him as men and women queued up one by one to cast their mock-up ballots. All the 150 odd people who were present at the mock-up session "voted" and when the ballot box was opened only about five had made a mistake. The majority had made the cross "X" mark and on the correct column, next to the Buffalo symbol, the UPKO party's symbol.

Needless to say, this writer asked that this mock-up casting of ballots be repeated in other areas. It is no wonder, therefore, that out of the 3,330 voters in the Tandek constituency most of whom were illiterate there were only 27 spoilt votes, and nearly 90 percent of the voters voluntarily cast their votes.

During the campaign period from early March to voting time in April, the writer visited practically all the larger villages in the constituency. Wherever he went, large numbers of people turned up. He was told that USNO campaigners had arrived a day or two earlier in some areas and that they brought with them clothes, salt fish, tinned food and also a large collection of Tun Mustapha's picture and the USNO party symbol, Mount Kinabalu. These latter were invariably put in a big bon-fire, arranged especially by the village headman for the benefit of the candidate to assure him of his and his fellow-villagers' feelings about the other party. The women canvassers would have preceded the candidate's party, having arrived there one or two days earlier. Their work was mainly to prepare the food which would be served after the meet-the-

people session. The meeting would begin early in the evening, at around 6.30 p.m. when everyone would have finished their daily tasks and hence were free to attend the meeting. Some three or four speakers would speak, always preceded by the village headman of the village. The language used was always Kadazan. This writer, after speaking and mixing with the Miragang Kadazans for three weeks managed to speak with some authority in the Miragang dialect. The speakers normally spoke of Kadazan unity, Kadazan consciousness, and the need for Kadazans to be the rulers and governors of their own country. The speech normally ended up with the vital information about how to vote, and a replica of a voting paper was shown to the gathering.

The TandeK constituency had about 55 major villages, with about 40 village headmen. The Kadazan village headmen were practically all UPKO members and supporters — all except two or three village headmen. In one of the villages deep in the hills of TandeK, a village which was two days' walk from the TandeK township, the village headman of the area had left a day earlier than the UPKO candidate arrived. His excuse, passed through his wife, was that he had gone to visit a neighbour. His assistant, the number two village headman, however told a different story: that the village headman had received money from a USNO campaigner and he was obliged to follow that party and was therefore unable to meet the UPKO candidate. Cases like this were very rare, however, for many who were given money by USNO campaigners reported the matter to an UPKO canvasser or campaigner and were told either to report the matter to the police, to return the money or to keep it with no feeling of obligation to the giver. In the 1967 election, the voters were not very sophisticated. They were very simple people and also very honest. In most cases, they refused to receive any money for nothing. The example of the village headman who could not face the UPKO candidate and his party after receiving some money from the USNO campaigners was a case in point. He felt he was obligated to the USNO man, and even if he did not agree with the USNO party, he decided at least to dissociate himself from the UPKO party. As the UPKO was known as the Kadazan party, and the USNO as the Malay/Muslim party, this village headman felt that he had betrayed his own kind and people. And the people too felt inclined that way towards him.

There was also a fair amount of intimidation and threats — mostly from the USNO party campaigners. It was mostly directed against the village headmen and the families of some minor government servants. The

threat was that if they supported UPKO they would lose their jobs or would never be given any promotion when USNO and the SCA got into power.⁵²

One incident which nearly came to racial blows involved the people of Kampong Rasak. The UPKO supporters had just completed repairing the roof of the village headman's house on a "gotong royong" (self-help) basis. In the evening, the UPKO candidate visited the village headman's house and voters of the village. Some 90 persons altogether were told to gather in the house in the evening to hear the UPKO candidate's speech. The UPKO candidate arrived at around 3 p.m., more than three hours ahead of the scheduled meeting at 6.30 p.m. At around 4 p.m., however, the house was surrounded by Bajaus (Malays) who had come mostly from Kota Belud. They were all armed with daggers and were unsmiling. The brother of the USNO candidate, a school teacher who had openly campaigned for his brother, then arrived with a party of some more Malays. He said he and his friends wanted to take part in the meet-the-people session. He said it was a democratic country and he saw no reason why they should not be welcomed. The UPKO campaigners who arranged for the meet-the-people session did not want the USNO people in the meeting as misunderstandings might ensue. The crowd of Bajaus outside were becoming noisy by now, and were trying to force their entry into the house. They were also blocking any other villagers from entering the house to attend the meeting. The UPKO candidate sent for the police field force stationed at Tandek township. This police field force of Kadazans from Keningau and Tambunan, and some Malays from West Malaysia, had been stationed in Tandek as a deterrent against any trouble during the campaigning and voting. The police field force officer arrived and he decided that there should be no meeting in the house that evening. All were asked to go back to their respective dwellings. The police field force had guns with them and this might have made the USNO detractors decide to move. It transpired later that apparently the Rasak village headmen had agreed verbally to support the USNO candidate and when word came back to them that he was receiving

52. Indeed after the UPKO 'lost the election' many village headmen were replaced and some lower-grade civil servants were transferred to remoter areas. The A.D.O. (Assistant District Officer) of the area was a Kadazan from Penampang. His subordinates were Malays and the latter watched him carefully. When he attended a 'meet-the-people session' arranged by the Information Department (by a Sabahan officer) at which the writer was present, he was reported to the head office. The same officer told this writer later that as he was suspected of being pro-UPKO he was transferred to Labuan to a comparatively minor post and was a 'marked man' for a long time.

the UPKO candidate on the eve of polling, the USNO supporters in the area were naturally angry. There was also the suggestion that the money used to purchase the attap roofs and the purchase of drinks and food for the people (UPKO supporters) who took part in the gotong royong (self-help) of repairing the roof, was from a USNO campaigner. The USNO people were therefore doubly incensed.

The voting did not start until 8 a.m. the following morning. However, the voters from Kg Rasak, accompanied by one UPKO campaigner left the kampong at around 5 a.m. and gathered in the house of an UPKO supporter near the polling station at the Agricultural Station at Kg Damai. The walk from Rasak to Damai was only half an hour, but the reason for the early movement was due to a threat by the USNO camp that they would block all exits to the polling station so that none could go to the poll. As it turned out, practically all voters from Rasak turned up and voted. The Seventh Day Adventist members from Kg Damai themselves waited until nearly 6 p.m. before going to vote. They were forbidden by their religion to do any work on Saturday, their Sabbath day, and the compromise reached was that they would vote later in the afternoon. The S.D.A. Pastor, an Indonesian, was not very happy about this arrangement.⁵³

There were no major incidents on polling day itself, but there were one or two incidents which were interesting. Polling in Tandek constituency as in other rural areas was staggered within a ten-day period. At the polling station at Tandek township itself, an incident occurred involving "body snatching".⁵⁴ Apparently, a woman relation of the USNO candidate had been seen handing out \$5 notes to voters during the morning of polling day. She was trying to give this money, which in 1967 was a big amount to the rural people, to UPKO supporters. An UPKO campaigner saw this and told off the USNO woman in no uncertain terms. Heated argument ensued, but was soon calmed down by the bystanders. Then when polling started, the people started to queue up as they were instructed to do in the past. There were two queues — one for the USNO supporters and the other for the UPKO supporters. There were also two polling stations in the same premises. One for the women and the other for the men. There were four queues arranged — two in each polling station. Because it was

53. *Sabah Times*, 20 April 1967.

54. "Body-snatching", a term used by Margaret Clark Roff in "Sabah Political Parties and the State Election in 1967", *op.cit.* See also her *Politics of Belonging*, p. 103.

generally known which was an UPKO queue and which was an USNO queue, it could be seen who would have the most votes from looking at the length of the queues. In this case, both the UPKO queues in the women's and men's sections were very long and the USNO campaigners were getting a bit worried. The same USNO woman then decided to do something about the UPKO long queues. She went and joined with the UPKO woman queue. An observant UPKO woman campaigner saw this as an anomaly. She went to look closer and saw that it was the same woman and that she was trying to hide her face under her sun umbrella. But the amazing thing was that she was secretly giving out \$5 notes to the women in the queue. The UPKO woman raised the alarm once more. The USNO woman pulled the woman voter to whom she had given the \$5 to go over to the USNO queue. The UPKO woman pulled the same woman voter back — and as a result of this physical "body-snatching", a fracas ensued between the USNO woman and the UPKO woman — each pulling the other's hair! They had to be physically separated by the men.⁵⁵

Another incident during polling day involved intoxicating drinks. The Kadazans were and still are known for their hard drinking. There was a rumour going round the area that the USNO had a last "weapon" in its hand to defeat the UPKO candidate. Nobody knew what it was and it became a guessing game.⁵⁶ On polling day, this "weapon" was unfolded. The "weapons" were bottles and bottles of whisky and home-made spirit (arak). These were mixed with the rice wine (tapai) and the mixture was powerful. It could knock out even the hardest drinker. In a press statement, the UPKO candidate said:⁵⁷

In one village alone 54 UPKO supporters were intoxicated and one of them had to be carried by myself and another UPKO officer to the polling station in order that he could cast his vote.

The kampong referred to in the *Sabah Times* was Kg Batition, where the chief canvasser, Majalin had meticulously worked out a mock-up-plan to teach them how to vote. The 54 intoxicated voters — all men — managed to vote however. The one who was "knocked-out" and carried to the poll was the last to vote. He was made to go to sleep and later given cups

55. This account was given to the writer by one of 55 campaigners and agents during the election.

56. To counteract the rumours that USNO had a last "weapon" to defeat the UPKO a candidate told supporters that the Prime Minister of New Zealand was sending an army and war planes to protect them!

57. *Sabah Times*, 20 April 1967.

of black coffee to wake him up. He voted just before the polling station closed at 6 p.m. He might have cast a spoiled vote though as he was hardly able to walk to the polling booth after having been carried from the house where he rested.

When the results of the Tandek constituency were known on 28 April 1967, the UPKO candidate won by a large majority. The UPKO party won in all major Kadazan constituencies because of two important factors: (1) good organisation, and (2) the Kadazans for the first time, were united amongst themselves.

The Tandek constituency was a case in point. At the national level, UPKO Executive Committee led by Tun Stephens had monthly meetings almost continuously since 1963 when the party was established. The party's National Council also met regularly and was also well attended. The divisional organisation at the district or constituency level was also well organised and the committee members, who were mostly the educated and village headmen of the area, were also hard working for the party. The grass root level was organised at the villages' branch level organisation. These branches were headed by the village headmen in most cases and the members were mostly the villagers of the area.

The strength of each party, USNO or UPKO, was therefore known well in advance by members in each branch at the village level. The village was marked "white" or "black" or "green" by party canvassers, depending on the strength of the party at branch level. Thus, if village "A" was marked "black" it meant the party had no supporters or very few supporters in that village. If the village was marked "white", then it meant that it was a party stronghold. "Green" signified a 50/50 chance for both parties, and it was here normally that both parties would concentrate their efforts to influence the voters.

Election Results

When the final results of the election were announced on 27 April 1967, nearly two months after nomination day (8 March 1967) the position of the political parties were as follows: USNO 14, UPKO 12, SCA 5, Independent 1, to total 32. In the previous Legislative Assembly, after the Assembly seats were realigned just before the 1967 election, USNO held 14 seats, UPKO 11 and SCA seven.

The *Sabah Times* pointed out in a front page story⁵⁸ that UPKO was more than justified in its claim for a compromise allocation of seats of 11 for UPKO, six for SCA and 15 for the USNO. The USNO had rejected this UPKO suggestion because it felt that the UPKO did not have the support of the people as much as it had in 1962. UPKO's win of 12 seats was one more than it originally asked for from the Alliance: USNO's win of 14 seats was three below the minimum of 17 they asked for during the abortive Alliance meeting.⁵⁹ The SCA won in five seats out of six contested. SCA leader and the "compromised" Chief Minister, Peter Lo lost to an independent, Yap Pak Leong.

The USNO's claim that the party was the representative of the Kadazan people was dispelled after the results of the election. In only two areas where the UPKO party thought it should have won was USNO able to win: namely, Sulaman and Papar. In regard to Sulaman, USNO's candidate was a Kadazan chief, O.K.K. Indan Kari. As we saw in the previous chapter, O.K.K. Indan Kari was Tun Stephens' and UPKO's opponent from the very beginning. He joined Tun Mustapha's USNO party and was one of the party's vice-presidents. His strong feeling against the "Penampang boys" was exploited to the full by the USNO Malay leaders and he was therefore used to split the Kadazan people and their attempt to embue Kadazan nationalism amongst the Kadazan people. Indan's success in Sulaman was because of the large turn-out of voters. The Kadazan voters were divided into two: some for the USNO candidate and some for the UPKO. But the USNO candidate received the solid votes of the Bajau Muslims and also the Chinese. Of the 7,292 voters in Sulaman, it was thought that about 3,500 or 50 percent of the voters were Kadazan voters. The rest were Bajaus and Chinese. As it turned out, USNO obtained 4,644, and UPKO only 1,963.

In regard to the Papar constituency the situation was similar to the Sulaman constituency. The analysis by racial population for this area was also about 50 percent Kadazans and the rest divided between the Bruneis (Malays) and the Chinese, with the former slightly more than the Chinese. The UPKO division at Papar was well run and well organised, and Sinidol, as Tun Stephens brother-in-law was a popular candidate. There were exceptions, however, and the opposition came from some former UPKO executives who were Kadazans. One of the Daim brothers did not accept

58. *Ibid.*, 26 April 1967.

59. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1967.

Sinidol as the candidate and he became friendly with Harris. He campaigned against the UPKO in the Kadazan areas. There were also a few other Kadazans who were taken in by USNO propaganda and money persuasion. These Kadazan people joined USNO. However, the bulk of the Bruneis/Malays and the Chinese voted for the USNO candidate. USNO's majority was only 358 and the feeling amongst UPKO officials was that had all the Kadazans voted for UPKO, the party's candidate would have won. Some Kadazan village headmen were influential enough to influence one or two villages to vote for USNO — at the expense of the UPKO party. The Kadazans who joined the USNO in Papar joined the USNO party not because of any dispute with the name "Kadazan" as that is how they referred to themselves traditionally, they joined the USNO party for pecuniary advantage.

The case of Tanjong Aru constituency has already been mentioned. It was a case of indecisiveness on the part of Tun Stephens with regard to the UPKO candidate for the area. The two UPKO personalities, Jayasuriya on the UPKO ticket and George Chin as an Independent, simply split the Kadazan UPKO votes between them to the advantage of the SCA candidate.

There were three other areas which were considered potentially Kadazan areas where UPKO did not win: the Bengkoka-Banggi, the Lamag and Sugut constituencies.

The Sugut constituency was a case of bad mathematical calculation on the part of the UPKO officials from the area. The "Orang Sungei" of the area were considered Kadazans and UPKO supporters. But not all were UPKO supporters, as most of them were Muslim by religion. The UPKO candidate was believed to be another handicap for UPKO. He was apparently unpopular. But in the final analysis UPKO's defeat in this constituency was money. UPKO's opponent had more to spend and he also had a better grass root level support and better constituency level organisation than UPKO's candidate.

Before the election Lamag was also considered a potentially Kadazan area. UPKO's candidate, Philip Niun was from Penampang, and he faced an older opponent, who was a former native chief. Galpam was a millionaire many times over in his own right and his wealth had come from the possession of the birds' nest caves. He also had a big timber industry in his family name. Philip Niun was pitched against a person who was already well known and revered amongst all the races in the area. Furthermore, a good third of the voters in this constituency worked for Galpam's agricultural farm and it is not hard to imagine where their allegiance would lie when it came to voting.

The Bengkoka-Banggi constituency was particularly interesting and dramatic in that Tun Mustapha, the USNO President, and Richard Yap, the UPKO Cabinet Minister, faced each other. Mojuntin had been very optimistic that the Banggi Kadazans would vote for UPKO. These Kadazans were supposed to be in the majority, but for most of them, they were still living in primitive conditions⁶⁰ and could easily be influenced by a person of strong personality like Tun Mustapha. Tun Mustapha had the personality and drive; he also had the power and influence as Federal Minister. His making use of a helicopter as a Federal Minister to take him to visit the remotest areas in the Bengkoka-Banggi constituency was indeed a big help to his campaign. In the eyes of the simple Kadazans in the remote areas, he was the "orang kaya kaya" (man of influence and wealth), a position he held with some verve and dignity during the colonial days. He was well known in the area. Then there was money behind him. K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne for example believed that some \$5,000,000 was spent during the 1967 election.⁶¹ Khoo Siak Chiew alone was believed to have spent about \$600,000 in his Sandakan constituency and Tun Mustapha even more in Bengkoka-Banggi.⁶²

There were reports of intimidation and of buying of votes in Bengkoka. Indeed, UPKO's Mojuntin accused Tun Mustapha of trying to bribe Yap by asking him to withdraw from the contest. After the election, Yap, through Tun Stephens' help, instituted a legal action against the election of Tun Mustapha. The court was asked to declare the election null and void because Tun Mustapha had contravened the election rules. He was supposed to have used threats and also offered bribes. Indeed, the affidavits of some witnesses for Yap stated that they were offered large sums of money. There was also accusation of "rigging" of the ballot boxes.⁶³ Richard Yap, with the wisdom of hindsight, did not have a chance in Bengkoka-Banggi.

60. The Banggi Kadazans were so primitive in 1967 that some were still wearing loin cloths.

61. K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Ethnic Voting in Sabah, 1967", *Asian Survey*, IX (5 May 1969), pp. 373-81.

62. Margaret Clark Roff, *Politics of Belonging*, p. 103.

63. This was never proved. The case against Tun Mustapha's election was dropped suddenly by Datuk Yap. He had a falling-out with Tun Stephens and this might explain why he did not continue the election petition against Tun Mustapha. He told this writer, however, that he dropped the case because he did not want to see the feud between the Malays and Kadazans continued for so long.

UPKO also fielded Malay candidates in predominantly Malay areas. This was because UPKO after all was a "bumiputra" party too after it was closed for non-"bumiputras" in 1966 during Gilong's presidency. UPKO had a lot of influential Malays in its Executive Committee and National Council and these people also wanted to stand as candidates. This was the case with Pengiran Abu Bakar bin Pengiran Ahmad, a Brunei Malay (and belonging to the old Brunei royalty who held the "Sungei Tulin" for Kimanis). He belonged to an old and historical family. His opponent in USNO was Mulkiaman. The heritage of Pengiran Abu Bakar, however was insufficient to win the Malay/Brunei majority votes. He lost by only 818 votes, in the Bongawan constituency. Religion was played by the USNO as an issue in this instance, and Pengiran was accused of associating himself with animists and Christians!

The other predominantly Malay area contested by UPKO was Beaufort. This was Bisaya area. The Bisaya and the Kadazans are close ethnically and their languages are very similar. The Bisaya, however, had embraced the Islamic religion a long time ago and they began to call themselves "Malay" by virtue of being Muslim. UPKO's candidate was its Deputy President, O.K.K. Haji Asneh, a very quiet and personable gentleman. He was a very likeable man and there was hope that his personality and gentleness could persuade the voters to his side. USNO's win in Beaufort was again believed to be "religion". As Pengiran Abu Bakar was in Bongawan, so was O.K.K. Haji Asneh: he was accused of being a traitor to his Islamic faith — the USNO being the party for Islam. Then, of course, there was the problem of money. O.K.K. Haji Asneh did not have the money to spend as his USNO opponent did.

The last constituency to be announced was Sipitang Ulu-Padas, a predominantly Kedayan-Malay area. It sent to USNO's Harris, who won by just over 1,000 votes from his UPKO opponent, a Murut. The peoples' verdict and the final state of the parties was: USNO 14, UPKO 12, SCA 5, Independent 1. The USNO votes polled totalled 64,638 whilst the UPKO's votes polled were 64,767. The USNO party asked for 18 seats, compromised for 17 seats, and were elected in 14 seats. The UPKO party asked for 13, compromised for 11 seats and were elected in 12 seats. The SCA won in five of the six seats it contested.⁶⁴

64. *Sabah Times*, 28 April 1967.

CHAPTER 6

UPKO'S DECLINE AND DEMISE

The UPKO Executive Committee had an emergency meeting on 28 April 1967 at 8 p.m.¹ The minutes recorded the UPKO's winning candidates in the election and stated:

The UPKO fought alone the election with honest and clean politics. It was the first experience for UPKO. With 12 seats won, the UPKO did quite well although it was expected to do better. During the elections the UPKO faced the following odds:

- (1) USNO plus SCA plus SIC (the three parties in the Alliance combined).
- (2) The UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) helping the USNO with planners and field officers from Malaya where elections have been taking place ever since 1957.
- (3) The MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) helping the SCA.
- (4) The MIC (Malayan Indian Congress) helping the SIC.
- (5) The Malaysian Central Government all out to help the Mustapha group by providing helicopters and so-called Information Service field workers from Malaya.
- (6) The USNO and SCA are known to have used large amounts of money and grave threats to bully and intimidate the voters.

The reference to "the UPKO did quite well although it was expected to do better", has already been explained. It had been the UPKO's inner-circle secret wish and calculation that UPKO should win in all 15 predominantly Kadazan areas. The minutes also recorded that a letter was sent to the Secretary of the Sabah Alliance asking for a meeting to be convened. Two resolutions were passed at this meeting, namely:

- (1) That a delegation comprising Stephens, Dato Sundang and Dato Gilong, goes to Kuala Lumpur to see the Malaysian Alliance leaders about the current problem in the Sabah Alliance in the event that the matters could not be settled within the Sabah Alliance.
- (2) That the present policy of UPKO should be to endeavour to maintain the unity in the Sabah Alliance to ensure that the "revolution for progress" for Sabah and rakayats (populace) be properly carried out.

1. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 28 April 1967.

On the following day, 29 April 1967, the UPKO headquarters issued a press release.² The release stated, inter alia:

The Committee endorsed the action taken by the UPKO Secretary-General in writing to the Sabah Alliance Secretary-General calling for an Alliance meeting as soon as possible. The party feels that the elections have proved beyond any doubt that the UPKO is truly representative of the Pasokmomogun Kadazan people who comprise a very large section of the population of Sabah, and as such should take its rightful place in the Sabah Alliance. It was pointed out that the Alliance had been formed as a partnership of the Chinese group, the Malay group and the Pasokmomogun Kadazan group, working hand in hand in seeing to it that all communities in Sabah were properly represented in the government. The committee strongly felt that any change in the Sabah Alliance party which could be interpreted as plans to dominate one group by other groups would be a matter for regret and could cause serious repercussions in the state. The committee feels that since the elections are now over, all leaders of the Alliance should consider what is best for the country as a whole and should endeavour to bring back harmony in the Alliance by meeting as soon as possible.

This appeal for harmony by UPKO, however, was not heeded by its Alliance partners, least of all Tun Mustapha. His plan to "dominate" the other groups, meaning the Kadazans, continued and he had Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister behind him in this effort.³ Tun Mustapha apparently wanted to teach a lesson to Tun Stephens, his "Penampang boys" and the Kadazan people as a whole. But more important, and with the advice from his advisors, he felt he had better things to do for Sabah and its peoples' future: the assimilation of everyone through religion, so that Sabah would be a Muslim state as in Malaya. This aspect of USNO's and Tun Mustapha's work on the assimilation of the "bumiputra" people through religion will be fully discussed in a later chapter.

On 30 April 1967, only two days after the meeting of 28 April, UPKO's Executive Committee met again.⁴ The discussion concerned the

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2. UPKO Press Release, 29 April 1967.
 3. Tun Mustapha had always been close to Tunku Abdul Rahman. He was always grateful to the Tunku for his help during the Tun Mustapha - Tun Stephens confrontation. When the Tunku stepped down as Prime Minister after the May 13 race riots in Kuala Lumpur in 1969, and was 'exiled' in the Middle East as Secretary-General of the Islamic Council, Tun Mustapha secretly paid about £5,000 monthly into the Tunku's bank account in the Middle East. The Tunku mentioned this in his "Looking Back" column in the *Penang Star* and he also told this writer in 1981 in the presence of other USNO leaders.
 4. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 30 April 1967.

formation of the Cabinet. The members expressed anxiety over this matter as apparently none had been consulted or asked to take a portfolio by Tun Mustapha. The meeting also resolved to call a further meeting of the Executive Committee on 5 May, before the Sabah Alliance National Council meeting which was scheduled at 8 p.m. that evening.

However, there was a further delay of nearly one week for the Alliance to meet. Tun Mustapha was deliberately delaying the meeting to make his opponents in UPKO become more anxious. It was a psychological wait and see game, and understandably the UPKO leaders were tense and nervous. Not one UPKO leader, including Tun Stephens himself, had seen Tun Mustapha or any of the USNO leaders or SCA leaders. Somehow they all seemed to have gone into hiding. The Alliance meeting was meanwhile further postponed until 10 May 1967, and was scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. in Tun Mustapha's house at Tanjong Aru.

The UPKO Executive Committee met earlier at 5 p.m. on 10 May. At this meeting, the "psychological reason" for the change of date of the meeting and the change of venue for the meeting was discussed and "deplored".⁵ The minutes stated:

The meeting deplored the unwarranted sudden postponement of the meeting by Tun Mustapha as "Chairman" of the Sabah Alliance. The meeting noted with surprise and regret the last minute change of the venue of meeting of the Alliance National Council from the Alliance Headquarters to the "palatial residence" of Tun Mustapha...at Tanjong Aru.

The word "Chairman" was put in inverted commas because Tun Mustapha should not by right have been the Alliance National Council Chairman. By yearly rotation, it should have been Tun Stephens. But no one in the other parties took heed of this Alliance constitutional requirement, especially Tun Mustapha. He had simply decided that he was the "king-pin", the number one in Sabah. Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders had sadly

the inner-circle of the UPKO party. When the UPKO members arrived the SCA, SIC and USNO members were already seated. Tun Mustapha was not yet present however. It was obvious that the USNO-SCA-SIC Alliance members had been there for some time and that they had their own pre-Council meeting.

There was a tense atmosphere. Even Tun Stephens who was normally affable and always joking, was quiet. The SCA leaders, especially Khoo and Pang, looked at the UPKO leaders with blank faces. They typified the stereotypical "inscrutable oriental": they were good poker faces. USNO's Harris and Yassin avoided looking at the UPKO leaders and were talking to themselves in whispers. There were no greetings, no hand-shaking, no small talk between the USNO-SCA-SIC representatives and the UPKO representatives.

Tun Mustapha did not appear until about 8 p.m. Apparently he had deliberately made everybody wait. The writer remembers mentioning to Gilong that this was a "classic" method of making an opponent feel anxious and nervous. When Tun Mustapha at last entered, he went straight to his seat without any preliminaries.

The UPKO Executive Committee minutes of 10 May 1967 at 10 p.m. held at Stephens' house at Tanjong Aru (a stone's throw from Tun Mustapha's) are reproduced here in full as they describe clearly the earlier Sabah Alliance meeting in Tun Mustapha's house:

The President (Tun Stephens) explained that it was necessary to hold the emergency meeting immediately after the meeting of the Alliance National Council that night because of the importance attached to the result of the Alliance meeting.

The meeting of the Alliance National Council requested by Tun Mustapha to be held in his house, turned out to be not exactly a meeting of the National Council. Tun Mustapha merely informed the "meeting" that since USNO got two seats more than UPKO, he as USNO President (not as Chairman of the Sabah Alliance) was asked by the Yang di Pertua Negara to form the new government.

He said that he had decided that the new Cabinet should consist of himself as Chief Minister and the other "returned" Ministers, i.e. Harris, Salleh and Said Keruak of USNO, Dato Khoo Siak Chiew and Dato Pang Tet Tshung of the SCA. He said that he did not want to include anyone from UPKO in his Cabinet because "the USNO supporters are still very angry with the UPKO because of what happened during the elections. The UPKO must be patient and wait for the USNO people to calm down. Only when the USNO feels that it has forgiven the UPKO, will the question of UPKO's position in the State Cabinet be discussed. That is why I leave four Cabinet seats vacant", said Tun Mustapha.

The SCA leaders refused to say anything but it was clear they were supporting Tun Mustapha.

The UPKO leaders said that it was unfair to the UPKO whose supporters were not pleased with the tactics used by the USNO leaders during the elections. The leaders of both USNO and UPKO should show by examples to their supporters that the past differences were forgotten. To this Tun Mustapha almost heatedly answered that it could not be so.

When asked how many seats UPKO should get in the Cabinet, Tun Mustapha refused to say anything. Again when pressed by the UPKO leaders when the next meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council would be held to discuss UPKO's position in the Cabinet, Tun Mustapha would only say "do not worry, be patient, maybe in two or three weeks time".

Most of the time Mr Salleh Sulong answered on behalf of the USNO and his argument became so illogically unfair to the extent of saying that "leaving UPKO out by forming the five-member Cabinet between USNO and SCA is fair and the only acceptable compromise by the USNO". It was pointed out to him that the proposal by Tun Mustapha was not a compromise but merely a proposal and that it would appear that UPKO was pushed out from the Sabah Alliance. To this Mr Salleh Sulong replied that "by leaving the four Cabinet seats vacant, it means that the Alliance door is not closed to the UPKO. The UPKO can always come in later." The UPKO President reminded Mr Salleh Sulong that UPKO was very much still in the Sabah Alliance.

The UPKO leaders calmly but firmly argued that the right picture must be presented to the general public so that all are happy and the Sabah Alliance saved from breaking.

It was clear that Tun Mustapha himself was angry (with the UPKO) and not the USNO supporters as alleged by him. When it was clear that the UPKO leaders points of calm and logically fair argument made the USNO leaders find it difficult to answer, Tun Mustapha almost angrily announced that it was "up to the UPKO to decide what to do" but he was going ahead to ask the Yang di Pertua Negara to carry out the swearing in ceremony for his five-member Cabinet". With this he declared the meeting finished.

The UPKO Executive Committee then made the following resolutions:

- (a) The UPKO be allotted three seats in the Sabah Alliance Cabinet, viz. the portfolio of the Deputy Chief Minister, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Health and that the Sabah Alliance National Council recommends to the Prime Minister, Yang Teramat Mulia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al Haj, that the Federal portfolio of Minister of Sabah Affairs should be filled by UPKO, except that in the case of two State Portfolios, other than that of the D.C.M., these could be left to negotiation with the Chief Minister.
- (b) The UPKO be allotted two of the six seats which are for nomination to the State Legislative Assembly.
- (c) That UPKO write immediately to the Sabah Alliance Secretary-General, Mr Abdul Momen, asking for a few days

postponement of the Swearing-in Ceremony of Cabinet until the Sabah Alliance have met to discuss the UPKO proposals regarding its participation in the Cabinet.

The following morning, 11 May 1967, the UPKO Executive Committee met again at 11.40 a.m.⁷ The Secretary-General reported that he had in fact written the letter to the Alliance Secretary-General asking that the swearing-in-ceremony of the five member Cabinet be postponed. The letter had been delivered by hand at 8.10 a.m. on 11 April. However, the Committee noted that despite the note from UPKO, the swearing-in-ceremony of the five ministers had gone ahead at 10 a.m. on the same day. The UPKO Committee then decided that another letter to the Secretary-General of the Alliance be sent submitting again details of the UPKO resolutions on the formation of the State Cabinet and to ask for a meeting immediately.

On the same day, 11 May 1967, the UPKO Executive Committee met for a second time at 7.30 p.m. The Committee was told at this meeting that the second letter to the Secretary-General of the Alliance calling for maintenance of the status quo had been submitted immediately that same morning. The details of the UPKO resolutions made on 10 May 1967 at 10.50 p.m. had again been submitted to the Alliance Secretary-General.

Meanwhile, Tun Stephens who had been trying to get Tun Mustapha on the phone but without success, telephoned the Sabah Alliance Secretary, Abdul Momen, to call for a meeting of the Sabah Alliance. He made the call as the constitutional President of the Alliance on a rotation basis. He also made a press release stating that he had called for an Emergency Meeting of the Alliance National Council to be held "tomorrow evening at 7 p.m. 13 May 1967 at the Sabah Alliance Headquarters". He also wrote to Abdul Momen explaining that he was calling the meeting "as the constitutional Chairman of the Sabah Alliance".⁸

Tun Stephens here was strictly adhering to the Alliance Constitution Clause 19(a) of the Alliance constitution which stipulated that only the Chairman or Acting Chairman can call for a meeting of the National Council "or at the written request of at least one-third of the total number of members and such one-third shall include members from all the member parties in the Council...". Clause 19(d) stipulated at least

7. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 11 April 1967 at 11.40 a.m.

8. Press Statement by Tun Stephens, 12 May 1967.

seven days' notice in writing shall be given for the calling of the National Council's Executive Committee, "except in the case of urgent meetings, which shall be held at such shorter notice as the respective Chairman or Acting Chairman shall direct".⁹

UPKO leaders and Tun Stephens knew that to get one-third of the Alliance National Council members drawn from all member parties was impossible as both SCA and SIC were very much committed to Tun Mustapha and USNO. Tun Stephens did the next best thing: called the emergency meeting himself as the Chairman of the Alliance for the year 1967.

This course of action to call for an emergency meeting of the Sabah Alliance was not lightly taken. Tun Stephens had consultations with the "inner circle" of Gilong, Mojuntin, Lim Hong Ghee and Luping. It was a calculated move as Tun Stephens and his "boys" knew very well that the USNO and SCA, and SIC members would not attend the meeting as they would only listen to Tun Mustapha. It was therefore a move to show to the public that UPKO leaders were sincere in their attempt to get the Alliance going and that UPKO wanted to be part of it. At the appointed time, all UPKO members of the Sabah Alliance National Council, led by Tun Stephens went to the Sabah Alliance Headquarters at Gaya Street, Kota Kinabalu. As expected, however, the Sabah Alliance Headquarters' door was locked and padlocked securely. No one was there, not even the housekeeper who doubled as a coffee-maker during meetings. Even the lights to the staircase were shut off!

Although it was half expected that this would be the result, the UPKO leaders nevertheless were shocked and confused. It was a bitter pill to swallow for suddenly it dawned on them that they were definitely not wanted. There was a complete feeling of hopelessness and even Tun Stephens, who had always been the one person who gave his "boys" a feeling of inspiration and courage seemed at a loss. For once, Tun Stephens' great bulk and strong personality was somehow diminished. Some could not hide their feelings of frustration and some were even wiping tears of anguish. For some the tears were for Tun Stephens. They were sorry to see a great man who had worked so much for his country and people humiliated like that.¹⁰

Tun Stephens and the UPKO leaders later felt that they should never

9. See the *Constitution of the Sabah Alliance Party*.

10. This is the writer's own impression of the event.

have gone to the Alliance Headquarters on that fateful evening of 13 May 1967. It was not only humiliating, it was also demoralising. The sympathy which Stephens and UPKO leaders thought they would get from the populace and also from the Kuala Lumpur leaders did not materialise. Instead, people sneered and laughed. The loudest to laugh were the Chinese leaders. Further, the demoralising effect on the UPKO leaders also showed in their deliberations later. They were not entirely calm and collected as they should have been. The very thing they had wanted to avoid — the UPKO being forced to quit the Alliance — was now, they thought, their only choice. They had played right into the hands of Tun Mustapha and his USNO and SCA advisors.

An Emergency Meeting of the UPKO National Council took place on 15 May 1967.¹¹ Some at the meeting fully realised it was an historical occasion as the decisions taken would affect the Kadazan people as a whole for a long time to come.¹² The emergency meeting was attended by practically all UPKO National Council members and also about 30 observers.

Tun Stephens briefed the meeting and his remarks were primarily directed at the 30 UPKO observers, leaders in their own right in their own respective areas. They were informed of the various meetings with the USNO and SCA leaders and the abortive meeting of 2 March 1967 which led to the decision for a "friendly contest" by all member parties of the Alliance. The president also told them of the difficulties UPKO had encountered during the election, having to meet the might of the USNO-SCA combination as well as their help from Kuala Lumpur. The odds had been very much against UPKO. He then told them of Tun Mustapha's decision to form a mini-Cabinet without UPKO. He explained that Tun Mustapha wanted UPKO to beg for seats in the Cabinet. He then asked whether UPKO should remain in the Alliance.

Of the 30 observers, 10 spoke, most of them calling on UPKO to quit the Alliance and form an opposition. At 10 p.m. the observers left and the Council members then continued the meeting. The minutes read:

The President gave more detailed briefings on the events leading to the present political situations before inviting members to give their opinion.

The reference to "more detailed briefing" was Tun Stephens' attempts to try to get Tun Mustapha to speak to him on the phone and his attempts to

11. Minutes of UPKO National Council Meeting, 15 May 1967.

12. Datuk Peter Mojuntin's speech at the meeting.

reason with USNO leaders such as Yassin and Harris, hoping that they would act as a go-between between himself and Tun Mustapha. Then he also told the Council members of the humiliating incident on 13 May 1967 in which Tun Stephens' call for an Alliance emergency meeting was not only ignored, but that the door to the Alliance Headquarters was padlocked.

After Tun Stephens' stirring and quite emotional speech, Council members got up to speak, one by one. There were 47 UPKO National Council members and Assemblymen and Members of Parliament present. It was a full meeting. Only Anthony Undan, the Assemblyman for Keningau, and Ariff Salleh, the M.P. for Keningau were absent. They sent in apologies as both were indisposed. Almost everyone present spoke. The speeches made on the question of whether UPKO should leave the Alliance can be summarised as follows:

- (a) For UPKO to quit the Alliance: 36.
- (b) Against UPKO to quit the Alliance: 1.
- (c) See the Tunku and Tun Mustapha first: 4.
- (d) Neutral: 2.

Koroh (from Keningau)¹³ was amongst those who advocated seeing Tunku Abdul Rahman first. He said that the Party was not financially sound enough to be in opposition and he expressed the fear that the UPKO supporters might not understand what being in opposition meant. He also expressed concern whether UPKO could be an effective opposition in view of Kuala Lumpur's might. The one person who outright opposed quitting the Alliance was Stanley Ho — the lone Chinese member of UPKO to remain after UPKO's door was closed.

Among the prominent members who advocated quitting the Alliance were: Tun Stephens, Sundang, Gilong, Mojuntin, Luping and Stephens' wife, who was the UPKO women's section President. Here are samples of views as reported in the minutes:¹⁴

N.C. Anggupon Mogupis: My opinion is that we have been patient for three or four years but what USNO wants is that we should die. In Kudat our flag is being taken away and not allowed to be flown. I think we should leave, because if we don't, we have no voice, even if they take our wife, we have no say. We must leave the Alliance. We are all humans and have our right to speak and fight constitutionally for our rights.

13. Stephen Koroh, now Tan Sri Suffian Koroh.

14. Minutes of UPKO Emergency National Council Meeting, 15 May 1967.

Ignatius Daim: My ears are still burning because of what I have heard in public. We have been accused of being beggars because we are still clinging to the Alliance when it is clear that we are not wanted. Let us get out now.

Dato G.S. Sundang: We had decided at the Central Executive Committee meeting before I left for Sandakan: If we do not get a fair share of seats we should leave the Alliance. I see no further use in further discussion with the Alliance. We should decide to leave the Alliance tonight.

Mojuntin's speech was longer and the record of his speech in the minutes was also more detailed. He pointed out that it was futile to go and see the Tunku in Kuala Lumpur because "what has happened here in Sabah was planned in Kuala Lumpur". He also pointed out the way Kuala Lumpur had ousted Kalong Ningkan as the Chief Minister of Sarawak without regard to the provision of the constitution. Mojuntin indicated that it was his belief Kuala Lumpur was in favour of Muslims only as the rulers of Sabah and Sarawak.

Tun Stephens, in his closing remarks, noted that the leaders had overwhelmingly made up their minds to quit, and stressed that they must all "remain cool and whatever happens there must be respect for law and order and the constitution". Tun Stephens himself felt, in summary, that UPKO must leave the Alliance "if the UPKO is to keep the respect of its members".

At 3.50 a.m. on Monday 16 May 1967 therefore a vote was taken formally and the National Council of UPKO unanimously resolved that UPKO should leave the Alliance party. The meeting ended at 4.30 a.m., the longest meeting the UPKO leaders had ever had — and for some the last meeting they ever attended as a Kadazan party. On 15 May 1967, an UPKO press release was issued, which appeared in the *Sabah Times* on 16 May 1967. The press statement recorded the decision at the meeting of the National Council and explained simply why UPKO had decided to leave the Alliance.

The Final Solution: May 15 to December 9, 1967

Many important events took place between the period of UPKO's resignation from the Sabah Alliance on 15 May 1967 and UPKO's final dissolution as a party on 9 December 1967. These events included a "battle" with Kuala Lumpur in respect of the case for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia; a petition instituted by Richard Yap against Tun

Mustapha's election to the Bengkoka-Banggi constituency; Payar Juman's defection from UPKO to USNO; and USNO's hard-line tactics against UPKO supporters.

When UPKO announced its decision to leave the Alliance on 16 May 1967, the federal Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Razak was quick to criticise the move as unjustifiable and premature. UPKO was as quick to give a reply.¹⁵ The press statement said:

The UPKO had done its best to maintain unity in the Sabah Alliance but has had to admit failure, not for the lack of trying on UPKO's part, but because the UPKO had been treated as an outcast, by its Alliance partners.

The statement continued:

The mere use of the words "the door was still open for UPKO" indicates beyond any doubt that as far as the USNO and SCA are concerned, the UPKO was "out". One does not open one's door for those who are already in. But the SCA-USNO coalition had completely ignored the Sabah Alliance Constitution and the spirit of compromise necessary to make it work. When an UPKO member at the so-called meeting at Tun Mustapha's residence tried to point this out, Tun Mustapha said that what he was doing was in accordance with the Sabah state constitution and implied that by so doing he need not bother about the Sabah Alliance constitution or how UPKO felt about the matter! The UPKO leaders did not rush into a decision to leave the Sabah Alliance in anger or out of pique. The decision was taken after long deliberation and objective appraisal of all that had taken place within the Sabah Alliance since its inception.

The statement also explained that UPKO National Council members did not like the churlish manner in which UPKO had been treated. They felt that as a party representing a very large section of the population, to accept the implied suggestion that the UPKO was solely responsible for the heat generated during the elections and that the party should now be the scapegoat for the irresponsible action of the others who broke the terms of the "friendly contest" was unfair, uncalled for and intolerable by the masses who had supported UPKO. The statement also pointed out that by leaving UPKO out of the Alliance Cabinet, half the "bumiputras" of the country, namely the Kadazans, were not represented in government at all. On the other hand, the SCA who represented only a small proportion of the Chinese population of Sabah was included in the Cabinet. This was regarded by UPKO as a calculated slight to the Kadazan people and the other "bumiputras" represented by the UPKO party.

The *Straits Times* in a leader article also criticised the UPKO party

15. UPKO Press Release, 18 May 1967.

for leaving the Alliance and blamed UPKO for "the difficulties of forming an Alliance government from the start by making threats".¹⁶ Mojuntin as Secretary-General was quick to reply to this apparent misconception on the part of the *Straits Times* editor.¹⁷ Mojuntin denied that UPKO had made any threats. In fact, UPKO leaders had from the start tried to keep the election contests as friendly as possible, but "two days after Nomination Day, Tun Mustapha said that the contests were definitely going to be 'not friendly'". Once this cue was given, the USNO and the SCA went all out to be unfriendly, despite UPKO's president's call for moderation. Mojuntin also said that he could produce a number of instances where Tun Mustapha had said in public that he did not want UPKO in government and that the USNO and SCA could form the government by themselves. Mojuntin also pointed out that Tun Stephens' speech at the Kadazan Harvest Festival Celebrations was a call for friendship amongst all and to forget the past.

His reference to a "new form of struggle" was prompted by what was then common knowledge among political circles here that the USNO and SCA were determined to go ahead with a USNO-SCA government. It was, if anything, a reminder to the USNO-SCA that this would inevitably bring about a new form of struggle in Sabah which would not, as you had yourself pointed out,...be good for Sabah.

From the time of the resignation of UPKO from the Alliance party until the UPKO's dissolution on 9 December 1967, Kuala Lumpur leaders became very active in the "battle of words" in the press. Both the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman and his deputy, Tun Razak joined in the denunciation of the UPKO leaders. The first of the federal leaders to join the battle was UMNO Secretary-General and Federal Minister Khir Johari. He arrived in Sabah to attend a "Language Week" celebration on 24 May 1967, and announced that he would seek a reconciliation of the Sabah Alliance. He said he would be acting as arbitrator.

He met Tun Stephens in his house on 25 May 1967 and it transpired that all he conveyed to the UPKO president was that UPKO should wait for a while for a period of a "three weeks truce". He was more or less saying exactly what Tun Mustapha had been saying. As a result of this meeting with Khir Johari, Tun Stephens called a meeting of his Executive Committee. The minutes stated: "Mr Khir Johari had nothing new to offer the UPKO except to ask that the UPKO should observe a political truce of three weeks during which time he hoped that a solution could be

16. *Straits Times*, 18 May 1967.

17. Mojuntin's letter to the *Straits Times* editor, 19 May 1967.

found".¹⁸ The UPKO Executive Committee considered Khir's offer a mere repetition of Tun Mustapha's stand and the UPKO leaders decided not to accept it.

In a press release the UPKO leaders stated that they could not accept Khir Johari's proposal for a "cease fire" for a period of three weeks when he hoped to be in a position to produce a formula which would be acceptable to all parties in the Alliance. The UPKO leaders felt that Khir's proposal was nothing new as he was vague and not very encouraging to the UPKO party. The statement added: "It was also felt that if a solution was to be found, concrete proposals should have been made and decided upon before 29 May, the day on which the Assembly would have its first sitting". The statement added that UPKO leaders were now firmly committed to their decision to remain in the opposition.¹⁹

There was also the question of Kuala Lumpur's previous offer to Tun Stephens of the post of High Commissioner to Canada. Apparently this was also broached with Khir, and a condition of the renewed offer was that UPKO must return to the Alliance after the "cease fire". Tun Stephens saw this as a further slight on UPKO's prestige and therefore at the meeting of the UPKO Executive Committee on 26 May, it was resolved that Tun Stephens could not accept the post of High Commissioner to Canada as UPKO was in opposition.

Tun Stephens himself released a press statement on 27 May 1967 stating that he had written to Tun Razak, the federal Deputy Prime Minister, informing him that he could not now accept the post of High Commissioner to Canada. The statement said:²⁰

Some time before the elections he had intimated that he would accept an overseas appointment and the Prime Minister was kind enough to suggest that he should go to Canada as High Commissioner. But there was some delay and because of the elections, he had asked the Prime Minister to delay the announcement of his appointment until the elections had been completed and the differences in the Sabah Alliance had been amicably settled. Since no settlement has been possible and the UPKO was now out of the Sabah Alliance...it was not possible for him to leave the state. The UPKO's Central Executive Committee had also resolved that he should not now leave Sabah and that he should remain in the state to lead the party.

18. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 26 May 1967.

19. UPKO Press Release, 27 May 1967.

20. *Ibid.*

The Post-Election Legislative Assembly Meeting

UPKO's 12 newly elected Legislative Assemblymen together with the lone Independent member from Sandakan were all ready for the Assembly meeting — the first to be held since the April election. The first day of the Assembly was the swearing-in-ceremony of members after the speech from the Head of State. The speech was prepared by USNO and it reflected the new government's policy for the next five years. UPKO members had had the opportunity of reading the policy speech and Tun Stephens got down to preparing speeches for Gilong who became, in the absence of Tun Stephens in the Assembly, the leader of the opposition. Gilong's adjournment speech would have been very critical of the government and it condemned the USNO-SCA combination during the election. Mojuntin and Luping too had their speeches written ready for the occasion as did Yap Pak Leong.

However, the much anticipated heated debate in the Assembly was not to be as every time Gilong stood up to speak and started to say something, he was heckled by the USNO members and ruled out of order by the Speaker, an USNO nominee. The USNO either stood up and said Gilong was reading his speech, or simply said the speech was irrelevant, and each time the Speaker agreed and ruled in USNO's favour. It became a farcical meeting. It became very apparent that USNO and SCA members never wanted the UPKO members to speak as an opposition, and were out to destroy any hope of UPKO making a speech in the Assembly. The opposition, the first and last in the state, must be muted.

It became apparent also that UPKO lacked experienced speakers in the Assembly. Apart from Gilong and Mojuntin who had served briefly as Assemblymen before the election, during which time all were members of the Sabah Alliance, all the rest of the other Assemblymen were new. This was their first appearance in the Assembly, and naturally they were a bit nervous. Although the language used was either Malay or English, most of the speakers spoke in English as it was constitutionally permitted for Sabah until 1973 — ten years after the formation of Malaysia. This was the time that Tun Stephens' absence was sorely felt. His presence in the spectators' gallery was not sufficient to inspire and give courage to his troops. Mojuntin, Luping, Matakim and Koroh tried to help Gilong by asking the Speaker to explain his rulings as to where Gilong was making a mistake, but they too were ruled as out of order and told to sit down. Tun Stephens' vast experience as a debator and leader was badly missed.

UPKO leaders felt later that this was another reason why Tun Stephens should never have stood down during the election. Tun Stephens' explanation for not standing was that he had promised the federal Prime Minister that he would accept the post of High Commissioner to Canada and would go there after the election when the Alliance problems were all settled. He had agreed then not to contest the election himself for fear that it could be misconstrued by the USNO-SCA combination that he was still aiming for the Chief Ministership. However, as could be seen in the first ever Assembly meeting in 1967, this decision was misplaced as his followers had great need of his experienced debating skills.

When Gilong was not making much headway in his attempt to say something in the Assembly during the debate of the Yang di Pertua Negara's speech, Luping looked across at the spectators' gallery. He saw what he thought was Tun Stephens giving him a sign to come out. He packed his bag and was ready to go. At the same time, all the other UPKO and Independent members also took this as a sign from Tun Stephens to walk out. So, as one, the 13 opposition members walked out. The newspapers the next day called it "A walk-out" by the opposition, in protest against the government of USNO-SCA's blatant disregard of parliamentary propriety. It transpired, however, that when Tun Stephens signalled Luping to come out to see him, he was merely trying to tell him to start on his own speech and see whether this too would be ruled out as irrelevant. Luping's speech had been prepared by himself the previous night and Tun Stephens had had the occasion to vet it for him. The vetting was to see whether the speech was in conformity with parliamentary procedure during the debate on government's policy. Luping misunderstood Stephens' signal. He took it to mean that they, the opposition members, were to walk out. Stephens told Luping of his real intention, but as everyone had walked out "it did not matter now".²¹

The UPKO then issued a press statement by the UPKO Legislative Assembly members. The important point of the statement is reproduced to show clearly UPKO's frustration at not being able to voice their feelings against Tun Mustapha's government policy and it also clarified why UPKO then decided to leave the Assembly en-bloc. The statement said:²²

We left the Assembly today during the debate on the Motion by the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, thanking his Excellency the Yang di Pertua Negara for his policy address on 29 May 1967 as we were not permitted to speak

21. This is the writer's own recollection of the incident.

22. UPKO Press Release, 31 May 1967.

on matters which we consider to be of the highest importance to Sabah.

The Motion was meant, in democratic parliamentary practice, to approve or disapprove, the policies of the new government. For this reason it was important that the political situation from the time Malaysia was established to the present should be clarified.

There was mention in the policy address of the change of government and of the Alliance Manifesto, but when we spoke on the change of government and on the Alliance, we were ruled out of order. The Alliance Manifesto appeared in large capital letters in the copies of the Policy Speech issued to all of us. It is clear that the Manifesto must concern the policy of the new government and this was made doubly clear by the Chief Minister himself when he introduced the Motion. The first point of the Alliance Manifesto was the reaffirmation of Sabah's intention to remain in Malaysia, but when we spoke about Malaysia and the background leading to Malaysia, how Malaysia came about and what was done in Sabah to bring it about, we were again ruled out of order and told that this was "irrelevant".

No one can deny that one of the most important issues before the Assembly was the question of Reaffirmation of Sabah's desire to remain in Malaysia. The Chief Minister himself, and members of the government benches who spoke on the motion left no doubt on this point. And it was quite apparent that instead of a separate motion on the subject, the intention was to sue the Policy Address as an instrument capable of complying with Article One of the Jakarta Agreement. This makes it even more important that the whole subject of Sabah's part in Malaysia should be given a hearing.

The members in the Opposition had every right as representatives of a large section of the people to say what it had to say about Malaysia and Sabah's part in Malaysia. It was ruled that Malaysia had not been mentioned in the Policy Address and that members must only speak on policies which had been enunciated in the Address. An attempt to introduce an amendment so as to allow the subject to be aired was disallowed.

The Opposition has a right not only to touch on subjects which the government sees fit to include in the policy address but also on policy matters which had been omitted from the Policy Address. This we tried to do, but was (sic) again ruled out of order.

We had been stopped from expressing the views of our people on a matter which is of the greatest importance to Sabah. This was made abundantly clear by the continuous interruptions by government members and by Mr Speaker's ruling.

We had no other course to take than to leave the Assembly en bloc as a sign of protest against the curbing of our democratic rights. We would not be a party to action which was blatantly undemocratic.

The Assembly went ahead with its meeting, with USNO and SCA members heaping praises on Tun Mustapha and on themselves (but particularly on Tun Mustapha) for his great and dedicated leadership. This trend of singing the praises of Tun Mustapha was to be the order of the day for the nearly ten years of Tun Mustapha's reign in Sabah.

UPKO Rallies

As UPKO was now in opposition, it sought to strengthen its base at the grass roots by the opening of more branches and divisions in each constituency and the employment of more field officers.²³ UPKO headquarters was reorganised and it was also planned to have seminar courses for UPKO leaders and field workers so that these people were more conversant with their work in the districts.

Meanwhile, UPKO leaders went on the offensive too against the Kuala Lumpur leaders. The failure of the Alliance which led to UPKO's leaving the Alliance party was blamed on Kuala Lumpur leaders. In a speech at the opening of the Papar UPKO Youth Divisional Committee on 11 June 1967, Mojuntin called for a renewed re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry to Malaysia. This speech was sanctioned and approved by Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders. The feeling then was that as UPKO was now in the opposition, it must reopen its call made in 1965 soon after Singapore was expelled from Malaysia for the re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia.

In an apparent reference to Kadazans and other "bumiputras" who were UPKO's supporters Mojuntin said: "The UPKO fervently believes that for a nation to withstand the test of time, its people must feel at least the minimum of satisfaction and pride in belonging to the nation as a whole". He then cited examples of happenings that had accumulated to cause dissatisfied feelings and unhappiness among the masses of Sabah. This included Kuala Lumpur's connivance with the USNO-SCA leaders. Because of dissatisfaction UPKO was now renewing its call for re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia and this "has found ready and popular response by Sabahans". He declared that when the feelings of the masses in Sabah were satisfied by a properly carried out re-examination, Malaysia would be much strengthened. According to Mojuntin some of the

23. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 28 June 1967.

20 points safeguards were slowly being whittled away by Kuala Lumpur. He cited the immigration safeguards as being flouted by Kuala Lumpur. He also expressed concern that many people were leaving Sabah as they were unhappy with the new government. He urged the UPKO Kadazan youths to be vigilant and "to make sure that in the near future they would not be made to inherit a corrupt and an inefficient government". In an apparent reference to some Kadazan opportunists who had decided to leave UPKO and join USNO before and after the elections, Mojuntin warned the youths of the "small time political opportunists lurking in the kampongs. They are usually shameless political outcasts. They have no feeling for the people except that they want money and position for themselves." The most important warning, however, which brought immediate reaction from Kuala Lumpur was his warning that "if Sabah becomes a vassal state under a mini-dictator, the people who are the voters would only have themselves to blame. The people of Sabah should be united in fighting against such an eventuality."²⁴

Re-examination of Sabah's Terms of Entry

Meanwhile, this call for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry was intensified when Gilong, in his maiden speech in Parliament on 15 June 1967 charged that the Malayan Alliance in West Malaysia assisted the USNO party during the recent elections in Sabah because of religion and race and charged further that the little autonomy that was given the state at the formation of Malaysia was being stripped away. Gilong asked for the re-examination of the 20 points safeguards and said that the 20 points safeguards were only on paper. He stated:²⁵

As far as I know, the spirit and wisdom of our leaders, who included the present President of our party (Tun Stephens) who drafted the 20 points was that it was not only a safeguard for the interest of Sabah, but also for the integrity of Malaysia. I assume that the leaders had pointers in their minds. They had Burma in mind and other unions or federations comprising diverse races. They were aware of the unsuccessful attempt to create a federation of the West Indies. They were aware of the problems facing Indonesia and the outer islands who have secessionist tendencies. They were also aware of the problems in Burma. Burma is worthy of mention at some length because to some extent, the union of Burma is similar to ours. That country also has a plural society as we have.

24. UPKO Press Release, 15 June 1967.

25. *Sabah Times*, 19 June 1967.

It has minorities, whose interests are safeguarded in the constitution. But as one learned Burmese wrote: "The Burmese government pronounced something different but it ran counter to this pronouncement...". In effect, the 20 points are safeguards against secessionists or disintegrational tendencies from the minorities.

Gilong went on to show that in the matter of religion, it was clearly pointed out that Sabah should have no state religion.

Yet today, we are appalled to find mosques sprouting out everywhere. We are not quarrelling against the building of mosques, but where is the compensation for every mosque built? The federal government was supposed to compensate and spend an equal amount of money on social projects. It was the understanding that Sabah would be on an equal footing with Malaya and other countries that formed the Federation. But today, it would appear that we are merely an extension of the State of Malaya. The first proof of this was when Singapore separated from the Federation. We were not even consulted. The tentacles of federal administration are creeping further and further. We don't appear to be able to do anything without reference to K.L.....The little autonomy that we requested at the outset of Malaysia is being stripped away. To me, this is not a healthy sign. My party and the people we represent are unhappy with the trend. We are not happy to see racialism clouding the reasoning power of our people. We certainly do not like to see people who did not like Malaysia say that we are a subjected people. We do not want people to have doubts about Malaysia. To this extent, we still feel that we should get to a round-table conference again and re-examine the 20 points to see which ones were broken or which ones are applicable. We are confident that with the good leadership that we are enjoying at present, the power of discretion, understanding and reasoning will prevail. We are confident that the central government will assist us in our request for the sake of Malaysia, for all we want is re-examination and if possible, to give back the status quo that we once had - as contained in the 20 points.

Gilong's speech was delivered by him in the English language, and it was possible that a large part of it was lost on the Malay opposition M.P.s from the Pan Malayan Islamic party who had been from the beginning anti-Malaysia. However, the important point was that Gilong was speaking largely to an UMNO-dominated strong Malayan Alliance government who had been returned in the 1964 general election with a resounding victory.²⁶

Bruce Ross-Larson's book *Politics of Federalism*, which was written largely to explain and justify Syed Kechik's presence in Sabah, said:²⁷

At the session on June 15, Ganie Gilong reopened the question of not only the implementation of the 20 points, but the principles underlying them, thus breaching a tacit agreement between the federal and Sabah governments. Tan Sri Ghazali

26. K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964*.

27. Bruce Ross-Larson, *Politics of Federalism*, pp. 81-82.

Shafie, the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs approached the UPKO member after the session to suggest that he focus instead on the implementation, a focus which would be far more constructive. But as Ganie left by taxi with some of his Sabah colleagues, Herman Luping, the UPKO Assemblyman for Tandek, poked his head out of the window and muttered that the people of Sabah were not interested in staying in Malaysia. UPKO's methods were going too far particularly at a time when Kuala Lumpur was committed to portraying the opposite picture. Syed Kechik then set about to build up a case to counter their rhetoric.

Ross-Larson's account, however, of the reaction to Ganie Gilong's maiden speech in the federal parliament was only partially correct. For one thing, he did not mention that Tan Sri Ghazali Shaffie was the one who had suggested, out of anger probably, for Sabah to get out of Malaysia. In an interview with the press on his return from Kuala Lumpur on 20 June 1967, Gilong said that he was concerned at the attitude of a government servant, a top echelon one for that matter. He said that Ghazali Shaffie, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had confronted him in the lobby of Parliament House and accused him of criticising the "principles of Malaysia". "In the first place, this man did not have the right to be rude to me. He did not have the right either to say 'If you are not happy then get out' implying that we (Sabah) should get out of Malaysia. With me at that time was Herman Luping and other UPKO M.P.s, waiting for a taxi to pick us up for the hotel." Gilong continued: "I told Enche Ghazali that we were not asking for separation or criticising the principles of Malaysia. We were only asking for the re-examination of the 20 points - to see whether the government had kept its promises."²⁸

Gilong's statement provoked an angry reaction from Ghazali Shaffie. In a press statement issued in Kuala Lumpur he said that he had never told Sabah to get out of Malaysia. Gilong reiterated what he had earlier stated and said that he did not lie, nor "invent stories for cheap publicity".

I am aware of the good work put by Ghazalie Shaffie and I have a high regard for him. It is for these reasons

28. *Sabah Times*, 26 June 1967. The writer who accompanied the UPKO's Members of Parliament to Kuala Lumpur and who also attended a proposed formation of a Malaysia-wide opposition front was standing next to Tan Sri Ghazali Shaffie when he told Datuk Ghani Gilong that Sabah should leave Malaysia. He probably said this out of anger at Ghani's long speech in Parliament. The writer said that if Kuala Lumpur wanted Sabah out of Malaysia then so be it. He said this while still standing with Ghani and other UPKO M.P.s in front of Parliament House and not from a taxi as Ross-Larson wrote in *Politics of Federalism*, p. 82.

therefore that I was appalled by his shocking lack of diplomacy and unwarranted remarks by telling us (Sabah) to get out of Malaysia. May I remind Ghazali that I was not alone in the lobby when he made the remarks.

Gilong's call for re-examination also aroused a reaction from the USNO leaders. They accused him of being anti-Muslim. This was probably Syed Kechik's effort to try to "counter UPKO's rhetoric" as his biographer Ross-Larson put it. Further, no less a person than Tun Mustapha's brother, Datu Alliuddin²⁹ came out with a press statement accusing Gilong of trying to secede from Malaysia.

Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, also rebuked Gilong in Parliament and said that the 20-points safeguards had been carefully maintained. But perhaps the most important remark made by the Deputy Prime Minister was that "it was the duty of the Central Government to take the necessary measures to integrate the people of these two states (Sabah and Sarawak) with the people of West Malaysia".³⁰

As a result of UPKO's renewed call for a re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia, an USNO press statement, thought to be that of Harris, suggested that the UPKO leaders should be put before a firing-squad. The UPKO leaders were compared to Subandrio, Omar Dhani, and Yusof Dalam, three Indonesian leaders who were facing a firing squad for their complicity in the abortive coup in Indonesia. The UPKO leaders who were to be put before the firing squad were probably Tun Stephens, Mojuntin and Luping.

In a press statement, the UPKO said:³¹

It would appear that the USNO has already sat in judgment on their political rivals and sentenced them to death. The statement by the USNO was typical of the completely irresponsible and undemocratic thinking of the party leaders. This sort of statement can only be made by dictators, and those who aspire to become dictators, and those who want to bring chaos into the country.

But let us warn the USNO that if such talk and such threats continue, they will have to answer for the consequences. If their chief advisor from Kuala Lumpur who runs their affairs cannot give them better advice than to use threats which can easily spark off dangerous emotions and bring chaos and bloodshed to Sabah then maybe

29. Datuk Alliuddin bin Datu Harun: He is the younger brother of Tun Mustapha. Datuk Alliuddin took over the post of Secretary-General of USNO in 1968 and held this post until the election in 1976.

30. *Sabah Times*, 21 June 1967.

31. UPKO Press Release, 21 June 1967.

it is time the USNO find more sober minded advisors from among their own Sabahan ranks.

The advisor from Kuala Lumpur was Syed Kechik. Apparently, Syed Kechik also masterminded the exclusion of UPKO from the mini-Cabinet of Tun Mustapha and sent a cable to Tun Razak of the swearing in of the five Ministers on 11 May 1967 suggesting at the same time that two companies of the Royal Malay Regiment be sent to Sabah.³²

The presence of increased military power in Sabah no doubt lent further encouragement to the USNO leaders so that they were even prepared to say openly that some UPKO leaders should be put before a firing squad. The UPKO statement therefore continued:³³

Backward and undeveloped as we may be, we are a civilised people. Let us behave like civilised people. Sabah should be more precious to us than our paltry pride. The fact that USNO has the support and backing of the Federal Government should not give their leaders the idea that they are almighty and can sit in judgment on their brother Sabahans and condemn them to death. This sort of talk is the surest sign of mental bankruptcy and proves more than anything else that USNO aims to dominate others in Sabah by the use of force. Force will bring counter force. The UPKO leaders and the UPKO supporters in Sabah have as much right to Sabah as anyone else, and anyone who thinks they can take these rights away by force or otherwise, had better think again!

Mojuntin, meanwhile, caused a furore when he not only called for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry but also asked that another United Nations team be asked to come over to ascertain the wishes of the people in a referendum. Mojuntin said that he believed that 70 percent of the people would ask for re-examination in a referendum. Both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister were provoked. The Tunku said that UPKO was unwise and explained that the United Nations Secretary-General had already carried out a referendum. Tun Razak, his Deputy, called the call a "political stunt".³⁴

Tun Stephens issued a press statement in turn and said that UPKO's call for re-examination was not a political stunt. He said UPKO had not changed its mind about Malaysia, but because Sabah's partners in Malaysia had changed their minds the whole structure of Malaysia as it was originally conceived had been changed. Singapore's expulsion from Malaysia was an enormous change.³⁵

32. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

33. UPKO Press Release, 21 June 1967.

34. *Sabah Times*, 26 June 1967.

35. UPKO Press Release, 27 June 1967.

It was (Singapore's exit from Malaysia) a private arrangement between Malaya and Singapore which was given the trimmings of legality and constitutionality by bulldozing it through Parliament. Who then broke the picture of Malaysia, the Malaysia as we had been led to expect would remain forever intact? And when we tried to lodge our objection we were told that we were traitors to Malaysia, that the PPSO (Internal Security Act) would be used against us, that in fact we had no voice whatsoever in the matter, a matter of the greatest importance to us, as a partner in Malaysia. We had in fact been made to feel that once in the net we had no escape. That we are not even a "junior partner" in Malaysia. We are mere unimportant appendages, with no voice left, not even to cry halt when we see that what was being done was proving Sukarno right when he spoke of neo-colonialism.

Tun Stephens then listed UPKO's concern at breaches made to the 20 points safeguards. First, on taxation and tariffs. This was a subject the state was very concerned with and had to fight hard in the I.G.C. to get Kuala Lumpur to agree that taxation in Sabah should be raised in "graduated stages" and over a period of ten years.

It was also agreed that the state should be consulted on taxes which are likely to affect the state detrimentally insofar as investments in the state are concerned. This promise has been thrown completely overboard by Tun Tan Siew Sin, who treats Sabah the same way that Disraeli treated British colonies in the nineteenth century.

Education was another area where the spirit and the letter of the Malaysia Agreement had been broken. The guarantee that the state would have a say "is now almost non-existent", he continued.

Religion was perhaps the most important matter which UPKO leaders at that time considered as having been breached by Kuala Lumpur without regard to the sensitivities of the Sabah non-Muslim people. Stephens said:

Sabah was adamant on the question of religion. There is no state religion and there should be complete freedom for people to practice the religion of their choice. There is no interference directly on people practising the religion of their choice but the Federal Government has brought in religion by making grants to religious institutions, the great number of grants, for mosques and the spot grants for small mosques has strong religious nuances which the UPKO finds disquieting. There have also been the odd grants to churches and a Chinese temple or two to offset the other grants. This brings even more disquiet as it shows government having a hand in matters of religion. The reason Sabah had made it clear that we do not want a state religion was because of this fear of government interference in religion, and we consider that giving money to religious institutions by government to be interference, political interference which is contrary to the

spirit of the Malaysia Agreement. Recently, there has also been the order that Christian missionaries in Sabah would not be allowed more than ten years' stay in the state. Although the reason given for this was federal "immigration policy", it is clear that this was discriminatory action against the Christian missions in the state. The get-rid-of-the-missionaries order although disguised as "immigration" (which should be a state matter anyway) was to the UPKO another blatant breach of the Malaysia agreement on an explosive emotional matter. We have spoken against it very strongly but have not done so in the open because it was an emotional matter. As a result of protests made by the state there have been some slight conciliatory changes made to the order, but the order in fact stands and all missionaries who now come to Sabah would be under the order, they must take two years leave during the ten years, which therefore gives them a total of eight years' residence in the state.

Tun Stephens went on that UPKO wanted new and tighter guarantees — to "guarantee the guarantees given to Sabah in the Malaysia Agreement".³⁶

Another very important reason for our demand for re-examination is the knowledge that the antagonism against us by the party in power in Kuala Lumpur is because of our belief that promises made to Sabah before Malaysia must be kept and that there should be no breaches to what had been agreed. It is clear that those who would dance to the tune played in Kuala Lumpur no matter how discordant the music may sound to the people of Sabah, are the favourites with Kuala Lumpur. This was proved by the recent elections and the secret meetings which led to the formation of the five man Cabinet. The USNO-SCA got what strength they have from Kuala Lumpur and the reason they are given this support is because of the desire to eliminate the UPKO from the political scene, which in turn could eliminate all resistance to the complete tearing up of the Malaysia Agreement and the promises made to Sabah in that Agreement. If this in fact happens, Indonesia would have indeed been proved right, in saying the idea of Malaysia was nothing but a neo-colonialistic plot, into which we in the UPKO had been duped, and used as one of the tools in its creation. Unless and until we can be sure of promises made and that our safeguards are truly safe, we cannot help feeling that we have been cheated and trapped, and that Malaysia for us will mean a new form of colonialism for Sabah.

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36. The standard argument by academics as to why Malaysia was formed was for an arithmetical balance to defuse the large number of Chinese from Singapore. The Tunku's condition for accepting Singapore in the new federation was the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak. A very highly positioned Malay leader who, for obvious reasons, did not want to be named, told this writer that there were however two other reasons why Sabah and Sarawak were included in the new federation, namely: (1) For religious expansion into the Borneo territories. The Muslim leaders in Kuala Lumpur saw the opportunity for Islam's expansion into the Borneo states. (2) For territorial gain and expansion by a new Malay nation. He said Sukarno's charge that the new Malaysian federation was a neo-colonialist plot was not entirely incorrect.

Earlier, on 19 June 1967, Tun Stephens had also accused USNO and the other state ministers of dancing to the tune played by Kuala Lumpur, and surrendering state rights to Kuala Lumpur.³⁷ This accusation by Tun Stephens coincided nicely with the publication of Gilong's speech in Parliament, in which he also accused the federal government of favouring only USNO.

The UPKO Executive Committee, meanwhile had its monthly meeting in June 1967. One of the important resolutions passed at this meeting was the case for re-examination to be revised and intensified.³⁸

Between June and December 1967 there was an intensified propaganda campaign within Sabah to win and influence supporters, by whatever means. The USNO leaders used their position as the government party to the full. Salleh Sulong³⁹ was appointed USNO's youth leader and arranged for innumerable youth seminars throughout the state. There were fearful rumours going round Kota Kinabalu that USNO was actually training USNO's youth how to handle guns; that Sulong's youth seminar held in Pulau Gaya (an island of about three miles out of Kota Kinabalu) was actually an indoctrination seminar, teaching the youths the art of handling guns. Village headmen from all over the state were also rounded up and were required to attend this seminar.⁴⁰ USNO field officers were apparently using the government's name to invite village headmen to attend "meetings" at Pulau Gaya. In the Tandek constituency for example, six USNO field officers approached all village headmen in the area, telling them that government required their presence at a meeting and that they would be picked up as soon as they were ready. Kadazan village headmen belonging to the UPKO party were in a quandary. They considered themselves as "menurut perantah" (honorary government servants) by virtue of their

37. *Sabah Times*, 19 June 1967.

38. Minutes of UPKO Executive Committee Meeting, 28 June 1967. This meeting of 28 June 1967 was the last recorded meeting of UPKO's Executive Committee. The party's Executive Committee did not meet in July, August, September and October 1967. In November, there were two meetings, one on 26th and the other on 28th, but these two meetings were only recorded in the minutes book but no minutes were taken of the proceedings. This was because everyone in UPKO's leadership was busy in the various constituencies.

39. Datuk Salleh Sulong. He was to become the Finance Minister and then Minister of Local Government under Tun Mustapha. He was considered one of Tun Mustapha's 'blue-eyed boys', but later was overshadowed by Dzulkifli and Syed Kechik.

40. *Sabah Times*, 6 October 1967.

position as village headmen, and as such were duty bound to attend the meetings called by government. The native chiefs were, however, in a worse position. Whereas village headmen were mere appointees by government on the advice of the district officer, and they did not receive salaries but only attendance fees in the native court if they were called upon, plus a small token monthly allowance, the native chiefs were considered to be civil servants because they in fact received monthly salaries from the civil list. The position of village headmen and native chiefs, together with the low ranked civil servants (classed in Division Four and below) was considered in 1963 just before Malaysia was formed. The Sabah Alliance party then and the departing colonial government had agreed that these people were allowed to involve themselves in politics. The dilemma of the village headmen and the native chiefs became very acute during the April election in 1967, and more so during the June to December 1967 period when both UPKO and USNO were competing for their support.

The "meetings" arranged for them in Pulau Gaya in September 1967 by the USNO was the first sign that USNO meant to go all out to weaken UPKO's grass root support in the villages. Most UPKO supporters were in the villages, chiefly amongst the Kadazan and Murut communities. The village headmen and native chiefs were still very influential in their own villages and areas and it was therefore astute of USNO to start their "plan of attack" on UPKO in this way. The tussle for allegiance continued so that by September 1967 it was not only the Kadazan village headmen and native chiefs that were affected and influenced to cross to the USNO, but also some UPKO party leaders, people who were seduced by the promises of wealth and position.

In November 1967, soon after the defection of some UPKO leaders to the USNO party, a native chief conference was held in Sandakan. Tun Mustapha, the Chief Minister opened the conference and his speech contained what is regarded by UPKO as "threats and intimidation" against native chiefs who did not tow the government line, that is the USNO line.⁴¹ Mojuntin thought Tun Mustapha's speech to the native chiefs had dangerous implications. He said:⁴²

Tun Mustapha's call for native chiefs and village headmen to be "loyal" to the government was dangerous. As servants of the public, they (native chiefs and village headmen) are expected to serve the public with fairness and justice in accordance with the laws laid down by government. In carrying

41. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1967.

42. *Ibid.*

out their duties, politics must not be brought in. On the other hand, the native chiefs and village headmen in their role as politicians in a true democratic society, should be expected to make their choice without hindrance. And more important, there should be no question of intimidation. All citizens of a country must be loyal to the government of their country as an established institution. However, no one should be intimidated and cajoled to be "loyal" to the political party in power.

Mojuntin also called for a committee to review the role of native chiefs and village headmen in their work in the rural administration of the country and in the political arena. He concluded:

Dictatorial control of the freedom of choice of individuals seeking justice, control of the Public Service Commission and now an attempt to make native chiefs and village headmen "field officers" of the USNO are bound to retard the progress of Sabah which this country can ill afford.

Tun Stephens had explained that there was an agreement by all concerned that native chiefs were allowed to take part in politics in a transitional period. But as native chiefs they should be impartial and should not be intimidated and told to quit just because they happened to be members of a different political party from the party in power, he said.

The *Kinabalu Times*, the USNO newspaper published a report that all native chiefs at the meeting had made a declaration that they supported the USNO government and USNO party. The paper published a photocopy of the declaration together with the signatures of all native chiefs at the conference. About half of these native chiefs attending the conference were Kadazans or UPKO supporters. The writer who was then working as Chief Editor of the *Sabah Times* was told by Tun Stephens to go to Sandakan to interview the UPKO native chiefs to clarify their true stand. With the aid of a tape recorder, the writer managed to get permission from the chairman of the Native Chief Conference, O.K.K. Zainal Kerahu, and also from the East Coast Resident, Richard Lind, to interview all UPKO native chiefs and record the interviews on the tape recorder. Luping's only question was to ask whether the *Kinabalu Times* report was true, and to say exactly what they wanted to say as a transcript of the recorded interview would be published in the newspaper. All the UPKO native chiefs denied that they had signed a declaration to the effect that they were supporters of the USNO party and had therefore left the UPKO party. N.C. Gitas, from Kiulu, from the constituency of Payar Juman the UPKO Assemblyman who had defected earlier, was quite categorical in

his denial. O.K.K. Anthony Undan of Keningau (who was also the Keningau Assemblyman) explained that a piece of paper was circulated by O.K.K. Abu Bakar Titinagan, of Tawau (he was also USNO's Vice-President at that time). This piece of paper had nothing written on it. It was blank. The chiefs were told to sign their names as it was an attendance record — to show that they were present at the conference. After all the chiefs had signed, the declaration of support for the USNO party was then typed in above the signatures. The UPKO chiefs said they were all very surprised to see the report in the newspaper that they had left UPKO and joined USNO.

The UPKO native chiefs were also told that they would be dismissed if they did not tow the USNO line. True to their word the USNO government did dismiss nearly all UPKO native chiefs. The first to go was N.C. Gitas of Kiulu. So did N.C. Jemari of Tandek and many others. Many of these Kadazan chiefs were later re-appointed after the dissolution of UPKO and after they changed their religion and embraced Islam.

As USNO intensified its machinery as well as its various actions of intimidation and buying of supporters, UPKO too strengthened its own organisation in the various constituencies. More branches were opened in the UPKO constituencies as well as in USNO areas. UPKO's aim then was two-fold: to retain its present supporters and at the same time to try to expand its strength.

In its effort to strengthen and expand its own party base, UPKO met with strong opposition. UPKO, for example, opened a branch at Bongawan, a strong Malay area. Those who left USNO to join the new UPKO branch were under great pressure. Officials from USNO headquarters turned up in Bongawan to tell the people that if they left USNO they would be thrown out of the country, or that they would not be buried in the Muslim cemetery because they belonged to a "Party Kapor" (pagan party) if they joined UPKO. Tun Stephens and the UPKO leaders however continued their tours of the state, speaking to UPKO supporters. The UPKO leaders took every opportunity to direct their "grievances" towards Kuala Lumpur leaders. The re-examination matter was pursued with intensity. Thus, in Keningau, speaking to the UPKO Divisional Committee, Tun Stephens once more called on Kuala Lumpur for a radical change of attitude towards Sabah and Sarawak. This he said was essential if Malaysia was to be a real success.⁴³

43. UPKO Press Release, 2 July 1967.

The Federal Government should understand that having the guns, the soldiers, the aeroplanes, the naval ships and the PPSO is not enough. With these they may be able to keep Sabah and Sarawak indefinitely - but where then will be the happy Malaysia which our Bapa Malaysia (Tunku) had so often spoken about.

In the same statement Stephens explained that it was easier for the former Malayan states to think of themselves as Malaysian. They had had independence since 1957; but in Sabah, they had always been Sabahans, "and a Sabahan national consciousness had, willy nilly, been imbued in us".

When we agreed to join Malaysia, we were of course willing and proud to be Malaysians but at the same time it cannot be expected that our feeling of what may be called "Sabah Nationalism" could be extinguished overnight.

Stephens also warned Kuala Lumpur that the use of force through the opportunist leaders both in Sabah and Sarawak would only bring about more chaos and probably the fall of Malaysia. He said the safeguards were to allow the eastern states to be "worked into" the Malaysian pattern. It was a process to give confidence to the people in Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia. But if the safeguards themselves needed further safeguarding because the first safeguards were broken, then the people would lose confidence. He said the use of force or coercion would, instead of making the people forget their sense of Sabah or Sarawak nationalism, only increase it.

It would appear that Kuala Lumpur has not given much thought to this aspect of Malaysia and had been irked by those in Sabah and Sarawak who speak of Sabah's or Sarawak's rights. There has been a lack of sympathy for and understanding of the true feelings of the people of Eastern Malaysia. Having found opportunists in both Sarawak and Sabah who are willing to do it their way, Kuala Lumpur has apparently embarked on a policy aimed at the elimination of the feeling of Sabah and Sarawak nationalism in these states as quickly as possible. The result is a feeling of resentment and the growing suspicion that Malaysia means a new form of colonialism.

Like Ningkan before him in Sarawak in 1966, Tun Stephens in 1967 was fighting as a Sabahan nationalist. However, Tun Stephens was not gaining much ground, particularly with the Chinese. Even his Kadazan supporters were showing signs of unrest and as we shall see later, some top leaders defected lured by the promise of wealth and position. But his work as a Sabah nationalist against the might of Kuala Lumpur must go on.

The SNAP leaders, in Sarawak, conscious now that they were facing the same trouble and "foes" as their counterpart in UPKO came to Sabah to

have a dialogue session with UPKO leaders. Eight SNAP leaders, led by Ningkan arrived in Sabah on 7 July 1967.⁴⁴ At the airport to meet the SNAP leaders were Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders. Before the arrival of the SNAP leaders, Tun Stephens was reported as saying that both SNAP and UPKO had common problems and could benefit if they cooperated together. "We face similar problems and I am sure a joint effort will be of material benefit in our endeavour to solve them", Tun Stephens said. Stephens also described the SNAP visit as the "beginning of a new chapter" in Sabah and Sarawak relations.⁴⁵

A meeting took place amongst the leaders of the two parties behind closed doors on Saturday 8 July 1967. The meeting discussed the need for closer rapport between the two parties and the exchange of visits. They agreed that both parties and peoples (Kadazans and Ibans) were facing similar problems from the federal government. An UPKO-SNAP communique was released after the meeting which stated, *inter alia*:⁴⁶

The leaders deplored the State Alliance in Sarawak and Sabah for having become parties to the apparent plan of the Grand Alliance to eliminate state rights in Sabah and Sarawak. Both UPKO and SNAP pledged full cooperation to resist all federal intrusion into Eastern Malaysia. The parties also agreed that the harm done to the image of Malaysia was due to the neo-colonialist approach of the Federal Government in its treatment of Sabah and Sarawak.

On 9 July 1967, at a welcome celebration held in their honour Tun Stephens, in his welcoming speech said that UPKO and SNAP should have worked together right from the beginning, as they had in the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee, the inter-governmental committee and in the top level talks to bring Malaysia a reality.⁴⁷

But once in Malaysia we were too busy to make Malaysia work to realise that the wheels of history could have been different if we in Sabah and Sarawak had from the start worked closer together to ensure that Malaysia will indeed be the Promised Land for us all, that those we consider our partners in Malaysia, would not, to use a crude term "play us out". The Malaysia we had in mind and the Malaysia promised to the people of Sabah and Sarawak is slowly and surely getting out of focus. The leaders we have believed in and given our trust to have shown that

44. *Sabah Times*, 7 July 1967.

45. *Ibid.*, 6 July 1967.

46. *Ibid.*, 8 June 1967.

47. For the welcoming speeches by Tun Stephens and Datuk Mojuntin to the visiting Ningkan delegation, see *Sabah Times*, 10 July 1967 and also UPKO Press Release, 9 July 1967.

they are incapable of fulfilling the promises they made: not to me, Stephens or if I may say so - Ningkan - but to the people of Sabah and Sarawak. That is why I say, Malaysia is not the land of promise we had all expected it to be and if we do not stand together and fight for the Malaysia we want and the Malaysia which we have all been promised, then I fear greatly that the net result for us as far as Malaysia is concerned will be a state of vassalage and neo-colonialism.

It is good therefore that two very important political bodies like SNAP and UPKO should get together and plan as to how best we can make the people at the Centre understand that if there are indications that Malaysia is breaking up it is their fault and not ours: their willingness to understand the aspiration of the people of Sabah and Sarawak with more sympathy; their apparent aim to control Sabah and Sarawak with a hand of iron, harder even than the iron hand of the colonialist, their breaking of promises solemnly given, their use of religion as a political weapon - all this has caused many in Sabah and Sarawak to change their ideas about Malaysia and those who pretend that this has not happened are "playing ostrich".

He then said that Kuala Lumpur was discriminating against the "original indigenous" people of Sabah and Sarawak by making them second class citizens in their own homeland. He concluded that UPKO and SNAP as representatives of a large section of their respective communities in Sabah and Sarawak could do much together to see that the Malaysia Agreements were not broken. He expressed the hope that the two communities they represent - Ibans and Kadazans, could work firmly together for their common aims and benefits. He concluded:

During the recent elections in Sabah, we in the UPKO felt very lonely and the feeling of loneliness persisted, but is now evaporating in the sunshine of your friendship. I only hope that you will never need to feel lonely, and if an occasion occurs for you to feel alone, please remember that we are here, your friends, true friends.

Ningkan and Mojuntin echoed the same sentiments in their respective speeches. In Mojuntin's speech he said the USNO-SCA leaders were people who did not care about Sabah's rights and safeguards and were therefore troublemakers. He continued:⁴⁸

If UPKO had won the elections, it would have been the party in power in the state. As such it would certainly have asked that the state rights of Sabah in Malaysia be fulfilled. Even before Malaysia, the UPKO had been on record as always protecting the rights of the Sabahans. In this matter, as a signatory to the Malaysian Agreement, UPKO is committed to the people of Sabah. The UPKO will never break faith with the Sabahans.

48. Mojuntin's speech, 9 July 1967.

These were brave words indeed, and at the time they were spoken, Mojuntin meant what he said. He was convinced that UPKO was strengthened by this nationalistic call for the Sabahans to unite and more so because of the closer rapport between SNAP and UPKO. But as we shall see later, Mojuntin would soon have to swallow these brave words.

The communique issued after the meeting as well as the speeches of Stephens and Ningkan met with hostile reaction from USNO leaders. The USNO condemned the meetings of SNAP and UPKO as farcical and a failure. The USNO also said that UPKO during the April election really wanted to win. Mojuntin replied to the USNO statement and admitted:⁴⁹

It is true that UPKO was forced to try to win on its own during the last election. What would have happened if UPKO did not fight the election on its own? The answer is simple enough: the USNO would have 18 seats instead of 14 seats and would be completely in control of the state government. The SCA would have six instead of the present five seats, but would have been useless to the USNO unlike now. Not even the SCA could blame the UPKO for having gallantly fought the elections on its own to win 12 seats, four more than the USNO leaders were prepared to give the UPKO.

Kuala Lumpur also reacted to Tun Stephens' speech and his attack on Kuala Lumpur as neo-colonialist. Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, on the eve of his visit to Sabah — ostensibly to see for himself the continuing problem in the state with the hope of finding a solution, accused the UPKO leaders of creating tension and also arousing sentiments against the central government.⁵⁰

Tun Stephens was quick to reply to Tun Razak's accusation. Tun Stephens said that Tun Razak could not make an impartial on-the-spot study of the situation as he had already made up his mind before leaving. He also said that UPKO was not campaigning against the central government but against the policies of the central government. Threats would not stop UPKO from saying what was considered to be true. Tun Stephens maintained that Tun Mustapha's statement and that of Tun Razak against the UPKO contained a veiled threat. He continued:⁵¹

There is no tension in the country other than that created in the minds of the ruling power. If there is any feeling of antagonism against the central government it is certainly not UPKO inspired but has been caused by the insincere policies of the central government towards Sabah.

49. UPKO Press Release, 11 July 1967.

50. *Sabah Times*, 19 July 1967.

51. UPKO Press Release, 18 July 1967.

The USNO leaders continued their criticism of the UPKO leaders and in the *Kinabalu Times* of 19 July 1967, accused the UPKO leaders of being anti-Islam and anti-Malay. The UPKO party reacted sharply against this and said that the USNO leaders were embarking on an emotional topic by involving race and religion in politics. The statement said:⁵²

UPKO's enemies have conveniently used this as an excuse to propagate the lie that the UPKO is against Islam. The lie is being told over and over again, using the Hitlerite method, a lie big enough, told often enough, will be believed....We are also accused of being anti-Malay. Here again is a lie which is being spread in a whispering campaign and which has been going on for quite some time even while we were in the Alliance. Moves were initiated which the UPKO found were aimed at strengthening the USNO and weakening the UPKO. The USNO was given help. In ordinary political circumstances this would be natural enough, but the USNO is controlled by what has been called the Malay group and the help and favours shown them by the power UMNO dominated centre has naturally revived old fears among many Sabahans and especially among the non-Malays. The UPKO Moslem members themselves are worried by these moves because they fear that this could cause a split among the people. They fully understand that the UPKO is not anti-Malay or anti-Moslem, and they have been among the most vocal in the party in asking for instance, that the picture at the top should be maintained, namely that if the Yang di Pertua Negara is a Malay, the Chief Minister should be a non-Malay indigenous or vice-versa. This may be immature but it should not be forgotten that Sabah is young in politics and however much we may want to divorce communalism from politics, it cannot be done by waving a magic wand.

Tun Razak arrived in Kota Kinabalu on 23 July 1967. The Deputy Prime Minister before leaving Kuala Lumpur said that he hoped to see Tun Stephens amongst other leaders in Sabah.⁵³ However, the USNO-SCA government made sure that no UPKO leaders were present when Tun Razak arrived. Not one UPKO leader was invited to attend any of the functions held in honour of the Deputy Prime Minister. Neither did Tun Razak make any further move to suggest that he wanted to speak to Tun Stephens or any of the UPKO leaders when he was in Sabah. The *Kinabalu Times* criticised UPKO leaders for not attending functions in honour of the Deputy Prime Minister, and suggested that this was a mark of disrespect to the Deputy Prime Minister. The UPKO issued a press statement concerning this matter and said that no UPKO leader was invited to meet Tun Razak; either Assemblymen, or the Members of Parliament of the UPKO.⁵⁴

52. *Ibid.*, 20 July 1967.

53. *Straits Times*, 22 July 1967.

54. UPKO Press Release, 25 July 1967.

The political differences should not be a reason for keeping others away from functions honouring official visits by the country's Acting Prime Minister, unless the intention was to make it appear that the UPKO was truly anti-federal. The UPKO may have faults but bad manners is not one of them.

In speeches made by the Deputy Prime Minister during his visit, UPKO was accused of keeping quiet about federal infringement in the first four years and making noises only after the UPKO lost the election. The UPKO reply to this was that UPKO had always and constantly raised the question of state rights and federal infringement in the Alliance, but as a member of the Alliance the "noises" were made inside the Alliance.

However, probably the most important accusation made at this time was the suggestion by Tun Mustapha that the UPKO was on the way to becoming a subversive body. Naturally, the UPKO denied this.⁵⁵ This accusation of UPKO being subversive was to continue for some time. By August 1967, the USNO-SCA government struck at UPKO's main means of dissipating news to its supporters and members of the public. The work permit of the *Sabah Times* editor was cancelled and he was expelled from Sabah within 24 hours.⁵⁶

Naturally the *Sabah Times* attacked the cancellation of the work permit of the editor and also his expulsion.⁵⁷ The USNO did not like that. It accused the UPKO of creating a "Mustapha-phobia", by making it appear that Tun Mustapha was an ogre, a dictator, and a man to hate.⁵⁸ The UPKO had been attacking the continued absence of Tun Mustapha from Sabah and also the apparent fondness of the Sabah State Ministers to fly to Kuala Lumpur or Singapore at the drop of a hat, pretending that they

55. *Ibid.*

56. Work permits in Sabah are granted and controlled by the Chief Minister. The granting of newspaper licences were (until recently) also controlled by the Chief Minister. There was a fear that Tun Mustapha might cancel the *Sabah Times*' licence to publish and print newspapers. One of the reasons why the *Sabah Times* editor was expelled was the publication by the *Sabah Times* of Tun Mustapha's connection with the royal family of the Sulu Sultanate. At a time when the Philippines was making a claim on Sabah, Tun Mustapha did not want to be publicly known to have any connection or relationship with the Sulu Royal house.

57. UPKO Press Release, undated.

58. The writer took over the job of editor of the *Sabah Times* when Ken Martinus was expelled from the state. It was next to impossible to get anyone from outside Sabah to take the editor's post as a work permit would not be granted.

were on a job for the state. The UPKO statement said that the report about Tun Mustapha being ill in London was not true as there was also a report in the press of a big birthday celebration for him. "As a political party we also have a right to ask whether in fact the fares to and from London for the Chief Minister were paid by himself or by the government of Sabah - taxpayers' money." The statement continued:⁵⁹

We know that something like a state of terror is being infused into the minds of many by the USNO, and very often the name Tun Mustapha is used as a front by the USNO leaders by trying to intimidate. It is doubtful in fact that Tun Mustapha himself had given these people permission to use his name so often and for such purposes, but that it is used is common knowledge. And now the UPKO is being accused of the very offence which the USNO itself is committing; producing Mustapha-phobia. It must be because of this that they had themselves coined the name "Mustapha-phobia".

The man in charge of the counter-offensive against UPKO was Syed Kechik, and he had an able lieutenant in Dzulkifli who was the Establishment Officer, in charge of the entire civil service and directly under Tun Mustapha the Chief Minister.⁶⁰ The accusation of UPKO as a subversive party was the beginning of more to come. By October 1967, Tun Mustapha was reported as accusing the UPKO of being communists or working for the "communist cause for the conquest of South East Asia". Tun Stephens naturally refuted this as a bogey to frighten the people.⁶¹ In a front-page story captioned: "Point the Commies", Stephens accused Tun Mustapha and his USNO advisors of:

Resorting to the Goebbels method of the big lie and as for chauvinism the mote in Tun Mustapha's eyes was responsible for making him see in others what was inherently in himself.

Tun Stephens said the red label on the UPKO party was a laughable accusation and no one could possibly believe it. It was difficult to see why

59. The image of Tun Mustapha as portrayed by the USNO party leaders themselves was that of a very hard and uncompromising man. Many USNO leaders used his name to intimidate people, especially the Kadazan supporters of UPKO, thus lending weight to Mojuntin's charge that he was a dictator. As will be seen from our discussion of the 1976 election Tun Mustapha was greatly disadvantaged by this image of being a dictator, created for him by his own party officials.

60. See Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, on Syed Kechik's involvement in the UPKO-USNO confrontation and the battle for supremacy in the art of propaganda campaigning.

61. *Sabah Times*, 4 October 1967.

such accusation was considered timely except as veiled threat to the opposition in Sabah, and possibly in Sarawak, since the statement was made the day Tun Mustapha left for a visit to Sarawak. This tactic of accusing UPKO of being communist was probably thought of by Tun Mustapha's advisors as Tun Stephens had made speeches in Sandakan and Labuk on a visit to these areas attacking the USNO-SCA government of dissipating Sabah's natural resources, such as timber "with gay abandon".⁶²

At this stage of Sabah's history, soon after the formation of the USNO-SCA government, thousands of acres of timber land had been excised and allocated to the USNO-SCA leaders or "select favourites". Other applications by those who wanted agricultural land to cultivate by making use of the proceeds of the timber stand to develop the land, however, were turned down. Tun Stephens' timber policy of careful exploitation of the timber resources was replaced. Most USNO and SCA leaders were now possessors of large tracts of timber land. The SCA leaders at least must have been most grateful and gratified for their support of Tun Mustapha and the USNO party. They were proved correct by events in their belief that Tun Mustapha was more amenable to the Chinese aspirations.⁶³

The rhetoric against UPKO and its leaders continued, and UPKO leaders were now accused of not only being racialists and communists, but also "prepared to harbour and aid 'fifth columnists' in the state".⁶⁴ The USNO statement began "We are confident that the people of Sabah are all behind the government's action to root out from the state all elements which are threatening the security and happiness of the country". The statement also added that the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha had sounded a warning that the people of Sabah must be alert against the threats posed by:⁶⁵

Fifth columnists, political opportunists and trouble-makers. In other words, UPKO leaders are prepared to let such elements have a free hand in furthering their aims and acts of sabotage....Elements who are working for the destruction of democratic system in the state and endangering the happiness

62. *Ibid.*, 5 October 1967.

63. Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah*.

64. USNO Press Release, 30 October 1967. Also in the *Kinabalu Times* of same date.

65. USNO Press Statement, 30 October 1967. Tun Stephens and friends spent a few days holidaying in Manila in 1967. This visit by Tun Stephens to Manila during the height of the Philippines claim to Sabah must have been considered of propaganda value by Tun Mustapha's advisors for the benefit of the Kuala Lumpur leaders.

of our people will be "isolated, contained and eliminated". Whether UPKO leaders like it or not, such destructive elements may not only spend the next 10 or 20 years behind bars, but they may even yet face a more severe sentence in accordance with the crimes that they may have committed.

Earlier in August 1967 the Philippines Consul in Singapore, Mr Mariano Logata, had claimed that Sabah was being treated as a province by the central government which was draining its resources. He also claimed that Malaysia had taken 400 million dollars from Sabah the previous year (1966) by way of resources. The figure he said was given to him by a high ranking Sabah official. Tun Stephens was quick to come forward with a statement saying that UPKO was against the Philippines claim to Sabah and UPKO's difficulties with Kuala Lumpur had nothing to do with outsiders, least of all Mariano.⁶⁶

If there is any idea in the minds of some people that because the UPKO is in the Opposition and because of our differences with the federal government, we can be used to further the baseless claim on our territory, these people can think again. We are loyal Malaysians....

By this stage even the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was openly favouring the USNO side. He attacked not only the UPKO leaders but also the *Sabah Times* as anti-Islam and attempting to break Malaysia.⁶⁷ Gilong replied and said that "the Prime Minister was unfair, and was listening too attentively to USNO advisors who used him for their own ends. Gilong also charged that the gentlemen's agreement reached before Malaysia was formed (that if the Head of State was Malay (Muslim) the Chief Minister should be a non-Malay indigenous - i.e. a Kadazan) had been broken just over a year after Malaysia was established.⁶⁸ He said the USNO-SCA had excluded from government the Kadazans or Pasok Momogun people who comprised the largest section of the population in Sabah. In an obvious reference to Payar Juman, who it was said had defected in September (and who will be dealt with later in this chapter), he said Kadazans were represented by "those who are opportunistic and looked down upon as traitors both of their own people and the masters they stooped to serve".

66. *Sabah Times*, 2 August 1967.

67. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1967.

68. In October 1967 there was an UMNO-MCA confrontation over the position of the Malacca Head of State. The latter was then a non-Muslim but UMNO leaders wanted this changed and a Muslim Head of State was appointed. Datuk Gilong referred to this as having a parallel in Sabah. Sabah's Head of State after Tun Mustapha stepped down had to be a Malay, a Muslim also.

Tun Stephens too came out more eloquently and accused Tunku Abdul Rahman of resorting to a new form of colonialism in Sabah.⁶⁹ Tun Stephens who was making a tour throughout the state in the months of July, August, September and October 1967, was in Tenggilan, near Kota Belud. UPKO had a severe set-back in the defection of Payar Juman of Kiulu, but all the same UPKO leaders and Tun Stephens had to show a brave and determined front and fight for a Kadazan share and equality in Sabah's politics. In his speech in Tenggilan, Tun Stephens said that he had a dream: a wonderful dream of a Sabah truly free where democracy in its finest form would hold sway, where all sections of the population would feel that they had their rightful place in the sun in their own beloved Sabah. But some people who got into power "by hook or by crook" and through the use of intimidation, bribery and corruption, were destroying all these, he charged. He appealed to Tunku Abdul Rahman and asked him: "Where is the Malaysia we dreamed about?". He said UPKO was not racialistic as charged by others, but that it was the others who were racialists. In a reference to the other continuing "battle for control and power in Sarawak", he said:⁷⁰

Even Tan Sri Temmonggong Jugah, a leader of the Sarawak Alliance and a Federal Cabinet Minister felt he had to speak out against racial politics and objected to the way development funds were being expended in Sarawak. This too happened in Sabah, and UPKO Assemblymen were told by the Sabah Alliance government that development would not take place in UPKO's constituencies and used this as a threat to get UPKO Assemblymen to resign from UPKO.

He called on the Prime Minister who was visiting Sarawak and Sabah at that time to intervene and curb the activities of Sabah Ministers so that development work would be carried out in all areas of the state and not just those with Muslim majorities.

Payar Juman's Defection

The November 1967 Native Chief's Conference incident already mentioned was the culmination of a continued propaganda effort by the USNO machinery to confuse and demoralise UPKO supporters. Since June 1967 the USNO propaganda network was busy. While UPKO leaders were making public objections to what they considered USNO-SCA perfidy and Kuala Lumpur

69. *Sabah Times*, 20 October 1967.

70. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1967.

leaders connivance to attack and demoralise the UPKO supporters, Tun Mustapha's advisors were also busy finding the UPKO's vulnerable soft spots to attack. The word had been issued that UPKO's rhetoric must not only be stopped but the UPKO itself must be destroyed. Thus, lesser Kadazan village headmen and native chiefs were made to sign papers saying they had joined the USNO or had left UPKO. Apparently these people were promised they would be rewarded by Tun Mustapha. The name of Tun Mustapha as the king-pin, the "great chief" was bandied around, and used to intimidate and influence these people.

However, this tactic on the part of USNO was not dramatic enough to demoralise or strike at the heart of UPKO strongholds. Many USNO supporters, angry at the way UPKO supporters were being lured to USNO and were getting rewards at the USNO supporters' expense, rebelled and many of these USNO peripheral leaders defected to UPKO. Syed Kechik had therefore to think of the best and surest way to get at UPKO, and he found that UPKO and the Kadazans worst enemy were themselves: they could be bought! At first, Syed Kechik, through the use of middlemen, mostly Chinese businessmen, approached only the peripheral UPKO leaders — such as the native chiefs and village headmen. He did this because USNO fingers had been badly burned earlier in April when they approached Richard Yap who was then considered one of UPKO's foremost leaders and the candidate standing against Tun Mustapha. In Yap's own words, he said:⁷¹

Mr Tan Sioe Tie⁷² offered me a job in his firm for five years at \$2,000 per month salary if I withdrew my candidacy against Tun Mustapha. All I needed to do was to come to the office now and then. It was on 9 March 1967 after I returned from Kudat where I filed my nomination papers that Tan came to my house to make the offer. He also told me: Tun Mustapha is a Federal Minister, rich and powerful. You will lose and get into trouble. Your children might not even be able to go to school.

Yap was testifying in court in the case of Crown versus Tan Sioe Tie.

71. *Sabah Times*, 19 July 1967.

72. Datuk Tan Sioe Tie: He converted to the Islamic faith and became Datuk Haji Ali Tan. He even managed to get a 'Surat Anak Negeri' (bumiputra certificate) later. He was Tun Stephens' former partner in the timber business and also in the *Sabah Times* newspaper business. Tan joined forces with Tun Mustapha after Tun Stephens forced Tan to resign from the timber and newspaper business. Tun Stephens accused Tan of cheating and the police were called to investigate. No action was however preferred on Tan by the police.

The latter was charged with bribing Mr Yap to withdraw his candidacy in Bengkoka-Banggi constituency. This attempt to bribe a high UPKO official and leader did not succeed and since then, USNO advisors had not attempted to approach any highly placed UPKO official or leader.

However, as UPKO's accusation against USNO's maladministration amongst other things was gathering momentum and as it would appear that UPKO was gaining ground on its call for re-examination of Sabah's entry into Malaysia amongst the populace, especially amongst the Kadazan people, Syed Kechik was apparently becoming more desperate. Thus, an approach to defect was made to Matakim, an UPKO Assemblyman for Langkon (Kudat area) who was one of UPKO's National Council members. He was also UPKO's Youth president.⁷³ Matakim did not then agree, but nor did he tell Tun Stephens or any of the other UPKO leaders of this approach by USNO for him to defect.

The next people approached were Ismail Gimbad, a Kadazan Muslim UPKO Assemblyman for Sorob (Kota Belud), Jimmy Malis, a Kadazan (Orang Sungei) UPKO Assemblyman for Beluran, Tingkalor Lampag, a Murut UPKO Assemblyman for Tenom, and Wong Fook Siang, a Sino-Kadazan UPKO Assemblyman for Kuala Penyu. All these people reported to the UPKO leaders that they had been approached by USNO "middlemen" to defect with the promise of position and wealth.⁷⁴

There were rumours that Payar Juman had also been approached and that he was swayed with the promise of position and wealth. The rumours persisted saying that Payar Juman, the UPKO candidate for Kiulu, was resigning from UPKO and becoming an Independent, but there was no confirmation yet as he could not be contacted.

On 15 September 1967, however, the USNO's newspaper the *Kinabalu Times* announced in a front-page story that Payar Juman had resigned from UPKO and that he would be an Independent member in the Legislative Assembly. The newspaper reports said "Payar Juman's resignation came in the wake of reports that UPKO Assemblymen in some other areas have also been unhappy with the present UPKO policies". Payar Juman's statement as reported in the newspaper read:⁷⁵

73. Told to the writer by Datuk Richard Yap in an interview on 12 April 1983. Datuk Idrus Matakim did not deny or confirm it as by the time the writer interviewed him he was already appointed the USNO Secretary-General by Tun Mustapha.

74. *Sabah Times*, 18 September 1967.

75. *Kinabalu Times*, 12 September 1967.

I, the undersigned, wish to notify that as from today (Monday 11 September 1967) I have resigned from the Opposition, the UPKO party. I have taken this step after careful thinking and I will be an Independent Member in the State Legislative Assembly. I am of the opinion that my participation in UPKO will not benefit the *rayaats* who have elected me as their representative in the Legislative Assembly. I will endeavour to serve the *rayaats* to the best of my ability and work for the harmony and prosperity of the country.

It must be pointed out that Payar Juman neither spoke nor wrote English. As the statement made by him was in English, it was assumed that someone also wrote it for him.

Tun Stephens issued a press statement in reply to the *Kinabalu Times* report of Payar Juman's resignation.⁷⁶ He said Juman's resignation was not sure and that he was investigating the whole matter, including the reason for his resignation. He called on the UPKO members not to be disheartened or confused and to remain solidly with the party in spite of attempts by UPKO's political opponents to make capital out of something for which it is already known they are not responsible.⁷⁷

A meeting of all UPKO Assemblymen and Members of Parliament with Tun Stephens presiding was held on 16 September 1967 at the UPKO headquarters.⁷⁸ Only Payar Juman was not present out of the UPKO's Assemblymen and M.P.s. He refused to attend. The President, Tun Stephens, explained that the meeting was urgently called to discuss the reported resignation of Payar Juman. After Tun Stephens explained the way in which Payar Juman was lured to defect, the meeting agreed to issue a joint statement. The press statement was drafted and prepared immediately and it was read and explained by Tun Stephens to all present. All MPs and Assemblymen agreed with it and they all signed.

The statement recounted how Payar Juman, Ismail Gimbad, Tingkalor and Malis had been approached with promises of wealth. The statement also explained why the USNO-SCA coalition resorted to such methods:

76. UPKO Press Release, 12 September 1967. See also *Sabah Times*, 13 September 1967.

77. This was Tun Stephens' attempt to bolster the confidence of UPKO leaders. Meanwhile, he sent this writer and Datuk Mojuntin to Tenom to persuade Tingkalor not to defect and to come down to Kota Kinabalu for an emergency meeting of UPKO leaders. After some persuasion Tingkalor agreed to come down to Kota Kinabalu. He attended the meeting on 16 September 1967.

78. Minutes of Emergency Meeting of UPKO Assemblymen and M.P.s, 16 September 1967.

(1) with one additional member in their ranks (whether openly or covertly) they would obtain a two-thirds majority in the Assembly thus enabling them to change the State Constitution at will and to do away with the 20 points and other safeguards for the state.

(2) If the USNO succeeded in getting other Assemblymen to join their ranks, they would have a majority in the Assembly and would therefore cease to rely on the SCA for support in forming the Government....

The statement also said that the above two conclusions by UPKO leaders were supported by the fact that during talks with USNO and UPKO leaders for a possible amalgamation of the two parties, Tun Mustapha had asked that the 20 points safeguards be abolished first as a pre-condition to the parties' merger. In conclusion, all Assemblymen and M.P.s swore allegiance to the UPKO party.⁷⁹

The UPKO "inner circle" later met again and discussed what action to take in the light of this latest development. It was agreed that a soft approach should be adopted towards Payar Juman as UPKO leaders felt that by not antagonising Juman and his family, he might be persuaded to return to the fold. The UPKO leaders were convinced that if Payar did not return to the UPKO, he would definitely be enticed to join the USNO thus giving the USNO-SCA coalition a two-thirds majority in the Assembly. The UPKO leaders were genuinely worried at the prospect of the USNO-SCA coalition introducing legislation in the Assembly to do away with the 20 points safeguards. Thus, UPKO was careful not to make further statements against Payar Juman. His family, particularly his wife was approached.⁸⁰ But no one was able to persuade Payar Juman. He had meanwhile left Sabah for Kuala Lumpur, accompanied by one of USNO's men.⁸¹

The village headmen and the people of Payar Juman's Kiulu constituency met on 24 September 1967. The meeting agreed to appeal to Payar Juman to return to the UPKO fold. The minutes, written in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) said: "We, all the village headmen of Kiulu and the people of

79. UPKO Press Statement, 16 September 1967. See also *Sabah Times*, 17 September 1967.

80. Tun Stephens told the UPKO 'inner circle' and the writer that Payar Juman's wife was even more ambitious when contacted and that it would appear that it was she who wanted Payar Juman to defect.

81. The writer and a photographer of the *Sabah Times* went to the airport to see Payar Juman who hid behind a USNO man, Halik Zaman, and when he was photographed he hid his face behind his briefcase. When he returned one month later, he appeared more confident and did not hide behind anyone. He had two big briefcases with him.

Kiulu are united in appealing to Payar Juman to return to UPKO. We are not angry with Payar Juman and we want Payar to return to our party." The meeting was headed by Native Chief Gitas and signed by 15 village headmen who represented the signatures of all Kiulu people.⁸²

Tun Stephens himself appealed to Payar Juman to come forward and return to his people. He made a public announcement to this effect on the matter of the absence of Payar Juman:⁸³

I am sorry that Payar has decided to ignore the wishes of those who have elected him. Many messages have been sent to him to return home and explain his strange conduct to those who elected him, but he apparently prefers to stay away. As far as I am concerned I still hope that Payar will realise his mistake and return to the party. I am sure that Payar would like to come home but has been persuaded not to return by the USNO, the party which sent him to Kuala Lumpur and has kept him incommunicado since then.

However, in the absence of any reply to these appeals to Payar Juman, the leaders of the UPKO Kiulu Division met on 17 October 1967. Present at the meeting were again all the village headmen and Native Chief Gitas, the UPKO Women's Section and the UPKO Youth Section of Kiulu Division and many other people of Kiulu constituency — amounting to about 200 persons.⁸⁴ The meeting gave Juman one week to return to the people and to his party. It was an ultimatum. Further, the meeting passed four resolutions, namely:⁸⁵

(1) that Payar Juman must return to Kiulu from West Malaysia or wherever he was. He had not visited his constituency since he was elected and the reason he gave for resigning was not satisfactory. He must give a full explanation to the voters and in front of the village headmen and people of Kiulu.

(2) that Juman owed an explanation to the Kiulu people. The 4,260 UPKO supporters voted for the party and its symbol, and not Payar Juman as a person.

(3) that if Payar Juman decided not to be the representative of the Kiulu constituency, then this was his business. Juman must know that he was elected not because he was Juman but because he represented the party. Juman was given one week's notice to show himself, otherwise action will be taken.

82. Minutes of Meeting of Village Headmen of Kiulu Constituency, 24 September 1967.

83. *Sabah Times*, 20 October 1967.

84. UPKO Press Release, 17 October 1967. See also *Sabah Times*, 19 October 1967.

85. The original four resolutions were in Bahasa Malaysia and kept in UPKO's press release file, vol. III.

(4) that if Juman was still in West Malaysia, those concerned must return before the time limit. "We the rayaat feel we have the just and democratic right to take action according to the constitution", the resolution ended.

Some 52 persons signed the resolution — which included all village headmen and UPKO branch leaders in the area. To emphasise that the Kiulu people meant business, a photograph of N.C. Gitas signing his name on the resolution was shown.

As expected, Juman or those hiding him in Kuala Lumpur ignored the resolutions or the call by the Kiulu people. By 31 October, the Kiulu Division met at Tamparuli to discuss what action to take against Payar Juman.⁸⁶ The reason for the delay was because UPKO really thought that Juman should be given time. At this meeting at Tamparuli it was decided to hold a peaceful demonstration to protest against Payar Juman's resignation "to make it known to the world that the electorate felt that they had been cheated by Payar Juman, and to demand his resignation from the Assembly".

A committee was also formed to arrange for the peaceful demonstration headed by Native Chief Gitas. Tun Stephens who was present at the meeting agreed with holding a peaceful demonstration. He expressed regret at Juman's action and thought that Juman was under pressure and duress. He said Juman had no friends in Kuala Lumpur and the whole thing looked almost like an abduction. He asked that Payar Juman should resign from his Assembly seat. Tun Stephens pointed out that before Payar Juman was nominated as UPKO's candidate, he had taken an oath of loyalty to the party and made a solemn declaration that if elected on the party ticket he would serve the party loyally and abide by the decisions of the party executive and that should he at any time resign from the party, he pledged also to resign his seat in the Assembly. Tun Stephens also added that even those closest to him in Kiulu, among them his close relatives:⁸⁷

condemned his behaviour and demanded that he should resign. They said that he has left the people who had voted for him like a thief and that he had left his poor children in Kiulu to be cared for by relatives. If he has done nothing wrong, why was he afraid to have his picture taken when he was leaving Jesselton and why was he afraid to meet his own people and

86. UPKO Press Release, 31 October 1967. See also *Sabah Times*, 31 October 1967.

87. *Sabah Times*, 1 November 1967.

explain his behaviour. The only explanation was that he was aware that for his own personal profit he had betrayed his people: his very actions are that of a guilty person.

Payar Juman returned to Kota Kinabalu in the first week of November⁸⁸ accompanied by USNO's Halik Zaman. In a short statement in Bahasa Malaysia, Payar Juman said that he had left the UPKO party and joined the Alliance:⁸⁹

For the good of the people and also because it is the only way in which I would be able to protect my people in Kiulu from the communal tactics used by leftist elements who oppose the government. I, and my people do not like the juggling in the UPKO because I realise that there is danger in causing enmity, hatred and jealousy between one and another; this only means that our people are losers and the nation as well.

Meanwhile, Tun Stephens was interviewed by the *Sabah Times* on Juman's statement and his first reply was: "Juman did not say that; someone said it for him". He was referring to Juman's accusation that UPKO was racialistic and leftist. Stephens pointed out that if Juman was genuine in his reasons for leaving the UPKO, he should have made it clear when he first announced his resignation and not after a long "brainwashing session" in Kuala Lumpur. Tun Stephens revealed that Juman told a few of his friends in Kiulu that he was not leaving UPKO and that he was merely becoming an Independent because if he did not he would not get the 30,000 acres of timbered land for himself and the "company". And the government would stop all development projects in Kiulu. The money allocated for Kiulu would not be released until he announced his resignation from the UPKO. Tun Stephens continued:⁹⁰

Now after hiding like a coward for so long he comes back and tells a different story. Who prompted him needs no elaboration. He has been in hiding. His people have made fruitless attempts to get in touch with him and he did not write to anyone. His own relations asked at a meeting in Tenghilan: "Where did Payar get the money to live in big hotels in Kuala Lumpur and why did he sneak out of Sabah like a thief?". Payar Juman is now talking blatant lies about UPKO because he was promised "rich rewards" and the managing directorship of a company to operate 30,000 acres of timber land. It is not possible for me to feel anger for a prostitute because such a person is more to be pitied.

88. *Ibid.*, 7 November 1967.

89. *Ibid.*

90. UPKO Press Release, undated.

N.C. Gitas also got himself in the front page of the *Sabah Times*. He too asked for Payar Juman to resign and called for a by-election in Kiulu. He also said that he was arranging for a big peaceful demonstration in Tamparuli to protest against Payar Juman's defection.⁹¹ Soon after Payar Juman's return from Kuala Lumpur, Tun Mustapha announced the new line-up of his cabinet. Payar Juman was made the Minister of Social Welfare — a full cabinet rank.

Payar Juman's first act as a newly appointed Minister was to condemn UPKO, the party he once belonged to as racialistic and implied that he never was in agreement to being called Kadazan. Throughout his statement, he referred to the Kadazans as Dusuns, and that he was elected because he was a "Dusun". The old controversial name was again exploited by a clever manipulation by USNO's ghost-writers and advisors. He accused Tun Stephens of being a self-proclaimed "Dusun". He said Tun Stephens was a frustrated man and was now trying to clean up his shaky leadership by making unfounded allegations. He said he had received the support of the "Dusuns" who accept the manifesto of the Alliance party. It is not surprising that he won in Kiulu because of the support given to him by the Dusun community. He also claimed that Tun Stephens had intended to stand in Kiulu in place of O.K.K. Nonon Anod, "but the high priest of the UPKO failed to turn Kiulu into a stepping stone because the people of Kiulu wanted a Dusun to be their representative and not a self-proclaimed Dusun". He also charged that Tun Stephens wanted the Kadazans of Penampang "who seem to be leftist" to control the Alliance. He concluded: "What is clear is that my victory in the Kiulu constituency is accepted by the Dusun community and as this is correct, then it is clear that I represent the real Dusun community".⁹²

Luping replied to Payar Juman's statement immediately. He corrected Payar Juman's assertion that Tun Stephens intended to stand in Kiulu. Tun Stephens was to stand in Tandek, the constituency where Luping stood,

91. N.C. Gitas was later reported in the newspaper as having resigned from the UPKO party and having denounced the UPKO party and leaders. He was purported to have made the announcement on 23 November 1967. The writer flew to Sandakan where the native chiefs' conference was being held and attended by N.C. Gitas and confronted him. He denied the newspaper report. Later, he went to Tun Stephens' office in Kota Kinabalu and signed a declaration that he supported the UPKO party. This declaration of his support was also published by the *Sabah Times*. Soon after this, N.C. Gitas was sacked as native chief of Kiulu.

92. *Sabah Times*, 8 November 1967.

he said. He also accused Payar Juman's advisors of trying to create differences amongst the Kadazan community by the use of the term "Dusun". Luping said that Tun Stephens was urged by the Kiulu leaders to stand in Kiulu when O.K.K. Nonon became a turn-coat. Tun Stephens, however, did not stand because of his earlier promise to the Tunku. Luping charged that Payar Juman had clearly been indoctrinated in Kuala Lumpur.⁹³

A peaceful demonstration took place on Monday 13 November 1967. Some 4,000 people packed the Tamparuli football field to hear Tun Stephens and other leaders speak. The unanimous decision was that Payar Juman must resign his seat in the Sabah Assembly. Banners were everywhere, calling on Payar Juman to resign. N.C. Gitas was first to speak. He related the various attempts to get Payar to return, but that when he did return, he joined the USNO and became a Minister. He said the people wanted Payar Juman to resign. Buja, another UPKO leader and a district councillor, gave a resume of events leading to the mass rally and why it was held. One after another the village headmen spoke and called on Payar Juman to resign and cause a by-election to test his own strength and that of the USNO-SCA in Kiulu. A Tuaran-born leader, Limbai Angkapon, came out from the hospital for a few hours to speak. He was emotional in his condemnation of Payar Juman. "Payar claimed to be the representative of the Dusun people. Payar was completely shameless to have said this because during the height of the Kadazan-Dusun controversy among our own people, he told me that he was a Kadazan and did not agree with the name Dusun." Limbai was the leader of the group from Tuaran who had wanted the name "Dusun", but as it was a "family matter" he felt it should be settled amicably and Kadazan was used. He accused Payar of being used by USNO-SCA to revive this controversy in order to divide the Kadazan people. He accused the Alliance of cheating and buying Payar Juman. Even the UPKO women section of Kiulu spoke condemning Payar Juman. Tun Stephens told the rally that Payar Juman was induced to join the Alliance to obtain a two-thirds majority in the Assembly. He also said that Payar Juman's appointment as a Minister in the state was an insult to Sabah and to Malaysia "because nowhere in the world where democracy is practised has anyone who is known to be a traitor to his people and also is unwanted by the people, made a Minister". Tun Stephens reminded Payar Juman that his "glory" would be shortlived as there will be other elections.⁹⁴ The

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1967.

Mass Rally approved a five point resolution, namely:⁹⁵

1. RESOLVE that Payar Juman has no right to sit in the Legislative Assembly as a person representing the people of Kiulu;
2. RESOLVE that Payar Juman should adhere to his solemn declaration made to the party and resign his seat in the Assembly;
3. RESOLVE to ask all right thinking men and women in Sabah to join us in demanding that the people of Kiulu be represented by a person who has their trust and confidence and that they all join us in demanding that Payar should resign his Assembly seat so that the people's democratic right will be maintained;
4. RESOLVE that the government should not allow a person who is a traitor to his party and his people to remain a Minister in the state and
5. RESOLVE that unless Payar Juman resigns from the Assembly we will continue to do everything possible to obtain our democratic right and to continue to demand for his resignation.

The USNO party organised a counter mass rally in the same area on 22 November 1967.⁹⁶ Some 500 people attended, but they were mostly bussed in from Tuaran, Kota Kinabalu and Kota Belud. They were not the Kiulu voters. The mass rally was heckled by UPKO supporters. The speakers were Payar himself, N.C. Belinggi — who was amongst the first to leave UPKO and to join USNO, Tun Mustapha, and Khoo Siak Chiew of the SCA. As expected, all condemned the UPKO leaders for being racialistic and communalistic. Payar Juman did not resign his seat, nor did the USNO-SCA coalition relent on their attack on UPKO and its leaders.

The UPKO leaders turned their attention now to attack the slow process of Sabahanisation of the Civil Service⁹⁷ and also the manner in which members of the Sabah Public Service Commission were appointed by political affiliation.⁹⁸ The UPKO leaders said that the Chief Minister was trying to control the State Public Service Commission and the appointment of the new P.S.C. smacked of political influence. The UPKO predicted that the next thing the USNO-SCA would do was to "suppress the

95. *Ibid.* There were rumours that the USNO would send people to disturb the rally. There were also rumours that UPKO supporters were arming themselves and there was talk of bloodshed. Police field force personnel were therefore very evident during the rally. The police also recorded the whole proceedings on a tape recorder.

96. *Sabah Times*, 23 November 1967.

97. UPKO Press Release, 26 November 1967.

98. UPKO Press Release, 13 October 1967.

opposition openly and more desperately". This would be to ensure that Tun Mustapha and Khoo could get what they wanted in respect of Sabah's natural resources.

Both Tun Stephens and Mojuntin tried their level best to portray the fear that the Kuala Lumpur leaders were not only aiding the USNO-SCA coalition but were actually in control of Sabah and hence out to take away the remnants of Sabah's autonomy. Mojuntin in his statement shortly after UPKO's Assemblymen and M.P.s pledged full support for UPKO on 16 September 1967, again referred to the USNO and SCA ganging up against UPKO. "The methods employed by the USNO-SCA leaders and their supporters from Malaya are still talked about", he said. Then in another statement on 26 September 1967, Mojuntin agreed with an USNO statement that he was UPKO's "mouthpiece" — but with a difference, he said. "I prepare my own speeches and press statements quite unlike USNO's mouthpiece — who has 'lawyers from Kuala Lumpur stationed in Jesselton' to put words in his mouth."⁹⁹ He asked: "Is it not true that the USNO activities at headquarters level are under the control of UMNO boys and lawyers from Malaya. Even USNO members have been heard to complain about this...."¹⁰⁰

On 16 September 1967, on "Malaysia Day", the date when Malaysia was formed and founded, Tun Stephens issued a Malaysia Day message.¹⁰¹ He said he felt uneasy about giving a Malaysia Day message as it could easily be misinterpreted by others. He said his Malaysia Day message was from himself personally and not as UPKO president, nor as ex-Chief Minister of Sabah, nor as ex-Minister of Sabah Affairs. He said he rejoiced because Sabah was now independent from colonial domination:

Four years ago, I had agreed that my country Sabah should obtain its freedom by becoming a partner in a wider Federation, in Malaysia. It was done after much back breaking work....It was no hurried decision on my part.

He went on to bemoan the fact that the pledges made amongst the partners were now broken. He pleaded that the peoples of Sabah's hope and aspiration in Malaysia must not be in vain. He then went on to share his vision and quote from the great poet Rabindranath Tagore to show his feeling of the ideal Malaysia. For a while he seemed to have forgotten

99. Mojuntin as Secretary-General of UPKO normally wrote his own press statements. He was very adept in this. Sometimes he showed them to Tun Stephens for vetting, but not always.

100. UPKO knew about this through the help of 'spies' or informers. Both Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha seemed to have 'spies' or 'moles' informing them of the activities of the other party.

the reality of politics and the reason why the others in the Alliance never really trusted him: it was a struggle for supremacy, a struggle for control of Sabah. In the eyes of the Kadazans, in particular the younger ones who were willing to die for him, he represented the great Kadazan hope for the present and the future.

As early as October, Stephens was visited privately by his erstwhile friends in the USNO party — such as Yassin and others. They had discussions with him on a wide range of subjects, but mostly on Sabah's politics and the need for a united front from all sides, particularly amongst the "bumiputras" of Sabah.¹⁰² Always, the result of such conversations were that the "bumiputras" must unite, that there should be one party for them, and the time had come for their merger in a single party.

It was not surprising therefore that while preparation was being made for the biggest mass rally in Tamparuli in November 1967, with the prospect of violence erupting, Tun Stephens issued a press statement which he said was his very own and contained a "formula for the future of Sabah".¹⁰³ In brief, Stephens called for a rapprochement — a call of truce for six months. All the older leaders like himself, Mustapha and Khoo should go away from Sabah for a while and let the younger leaders work things out amongst themselves. He said the thing to do was to start again, and this could be done by the younger and junior leaders amongst the three major political parties. He said his concept was not a sign of weakness on his part. It was his honest attempt to find a solution to the divisions between USNO-SCA and UPKO.

However, despite Tun Stephens' own feeling that his formula was not a sign of weakness, it was nevertheless a remarkable admission of a confused and tired mind. The high hopes expressed in his Malaysia Day message, as exemplified by the quotation from India's most distinguished poet, was becoming dimmer and dimmer as Stephens found himself hemmed in and confined in all directions. The party's funds were fast going and the timber stand of Nabahu Co. Ltd. (a company of which he owned more than 50 percent) was diminishing. Nabahu Co. was now the only company which

101. Malaysia Day is now celebrated on 31 August every year. This was Independence Day for Malaya. The inauguration day for Malaysia was actually on 16 September 1963. UPKO Press Release, undated.

102. The writer was present during this private discussion in Tun Stephens' house at Likas.

103. UPKO Press Release, 17 November 1967.

supported the party's fund, and the company had only about 2,000 acres of land to work for a period of one more year. In short, the UPKO would have no financial support when the Nabahu Company's timber stand was finished and worked out by mid 1968. There was no possibility at all that the Tun Mustapha-Khoo regime would extend his timber licence, so with financial problems in mind and with many other problems on his shoulders, Tun Stephens began to show signs of capitulating. The visits of erstwhile USNO-SCA "friends" were now more frequent, and by December 1967, there was in UPKO and Tun Stephens a mood of utter hopelessness.

The Dissolution of UPKO

Until 21 November 1967, there was no inkling in the minds of Mojuntin and the other "UPKO inner circle" that Tun Stephens was having second thoughts about UPKO and his capacity to lead it. Indeed, Mojuntin as Secretary-General had just issued yet another withering attack on the USNO-SCA coalition as a government which was cheating the people.¹⁰⁴ This was to be the last brave and attacking press statement by Mojuntin.

Various incidents and events took place in November, so that by 26 November 1967, the first meeting of UPKO's new Central Executive Committee was called: the agenda was very innocent. It was to discuss the Assembly meeting to come, the Annual General Meeting of the party, and any other business.¹⁰⁵

The notable absentee during this meeting was Wong Fook Siang, the UPKO Assemblyman for Kuala Penyu. He had already crossed the floor earlier and was soon made an Assistant Minister by Tun Mustapha. There were no minutes taken. Only the signatures of all present were recorded in the minutes book. The meeting was very brief and quite gloomy. But the word was out that Tun Stephens was contemplating dissolving the party — or finding out a way to get closer to USNO and Tun Mustapha.

Another meeting was called on 28 November 1967 at 8 p.m. This meeting did not finish until 12 midnight. Luping and Gilong were not present at this meeting. Luping was in his office editing the *Sabah Times*, and Gilong was visiting his constituency, to speak to his closest

104. *Ibid.*, 21 March 1967.

105. Letter to all UPKO Central Executive Committee members to attend a meeting on 26 November 1967 in minutes book of Executive Committee meeting of UPKO.

aides and supporters.¹⁰⁶ The emergency meeting discussed the possibility of dissolving the party. There were no minutes taken at this meeting either but just the signatures of the people present. It was decided to call a full National Council meeting.

The UPKO emergency National Council meeting was held on 9 December 1967. It started at 3.45 p.m. in the afternoon and did not finish until 10.50 p.m. There was only one agenda item - the dissolution of the UPKO party.¹⁰⁷ Everybody spoke at this meeting; Tun Stephens wanted them to. He introduced a motion at the meeting which read: "Resolved that this National Council agrees that the UPKO should be dissolved and that the USNO be approached to accept en bloc all UPKO members as members of the USNO". Gilong seconded the motion. In presenting his motion, Tun Stephens spoke for nearly one hour - and many had tears in their eyes. Othman Yusof, a former USNO man who joined UPKO was openly crying and said that he had personal reasons why he could not get on with Tun Mustapha, but as it was the decision of the members he had to support the motion.

Tun Stephens' speech was mainly a plea for understanding for his action. It was in short, an admission of defeat and of mistakes made. He felt that the "bumiputras" must be united as one. He said he now accepted Tun Mustapha's leadership, and asked all UPKO leaders to do the same.

He deserves to lead the "bumiputras". I ask you and in the interest of "bumiputra" unity to divest ourselves of all the mistrust, envy and enmity which have been built up against him and give him all our loyalty and support....He has not trusted us because we have not trusted him. I am confident that given our trust, he will not let us down. If we expect confidence in us, we must first give our confidence. Show it. Let us show it by agreeing to dissolve the UPKO and ask that we all be accepted in the USNO. I intend to do it as your leader and I ask that you will all agree to follow me. We should have done it a long time ago, but pride, racial prejudice and the desire to win and be on top has stopped us from doing so....The USNO is a "bumiputra" party,

106. According to Datuk Ghani Gilong he called his closest supporters such as his brother-in-law, N.C. Sepikit of Ranau, Datuk Anthony Gibon of Tambunan and others and entertained them to a dinner party. After the dinner he told them of the plan to dissolve UPKO by Tun Stephens. Datuk Anthony Gibon told him that if he had told them of the plan before dinner he would not have eaten his food. Apparently they were all very angry with Tun Stephens. Datuk Gilong said he somehow managed to pacify them and persuaded them to follow his and Tun Stephens' decision.

107. Minutes of UPKO Emergency National Council Meeting, 9 December 1967. Also UPKO Press Release, 10 December 1967, *Sabah Times*, 11 December 1967.

a Sabah national party; as your leader in whom you have put your trust I ask you to believe me when I say that in doing this we will have done a great and wonderful thing: bring all our "bumiputra" people together. A house divided cannot stand and our Bumiputra House cannot stand if we remain divided. It is only by unity that we can bring about a true national consciousness, and the time has come when we must take no other course but to unite and to work together in the USNO.

On leadership, he said that USNO had the backing of Kuala Lumpur government leaders. UPKO had criticised this as being one-sided on the part of the UMNO leaders. He admitted this was wrong on the part of UPKO. He now acknowledged that the Malays of Kuala Lumpur were the leaders and that the Kadazans must accept the Malays as their rulers:

It is well that we realise this and to realise also that we must work with them and must accept the fact that if we consider ourselves "bumiputras" then we must also accept their leaders as our national "bumiputra" leaders. The Kadazans, in order to be saved, must lose our sense of racialism or rather tribalism and not only accept all "bumiputras" as one but we must learn to feel one. If we do not start now and infuse this feeling into our children, if we continue to imbue into them a feeling that although we are "bumiputras", we are alien "bumiputras", we would be doing ourselves and our future generations the greatest possible disservice.

He admitted having made the mistake of not accepting the hands of friendship offered by Kuala Lumpur. He apologised to Kuala Lumpur for this, and said the door was still open — and to enter that door of friendship with the Malays in Kuala Lumpur, the Kadazans must go through the USNO house, by joining the USNO party. He said this decision to dissolve the party and join USNO was not a complete about-face on his part. He said he always wanted to have "bumiputra" unity, but that unity was conditional on the Kadazan leaders being on the top — the king pin in a proposed UPKO-USNO merger. This unity of "bumiputras" could only be forged together if UPKO dissolved itself to prove beyond any doubt the Kadazans' good intentions. He said that those who did not accept his suggestion to dissolve were hindered by pride. But he had swallowed his own pride and said he had finally made up his mind. He said it was time to forego UPKO's motto of "let us fight to the death" — meaning a fight for the maintenance and perpetuation of Kadazanism. People might think he was silly and stupid, for discarding Kadazanism, but he did not mind. He did not think, in any case, that he was shirking his responsibility as a Kadazan and UPKO leader. He considered what he was doing was a "duty" to those who had placed so much trust in him, rather than shirking his

responsibility. He stressed that the decision to dissolve UPKO was his alone and that he had had no discussions with Tun Mustapha on the matter.¹⁰⁸

But dissolving UPKO and joining USNO en bloc did not mean condoning the action of turncoats like Payar Juman and Wong Fook Siang. He said these two had joined the USNO for personal and economic advantage. He then concluded that he was himself retiring from politics — that his political career had ended:¹⁰⁹

If this resolution (to dissolve) is approved we will have to call a Congress of Representatives of our party to approve the dissolution of our party....Once this National Council has approved this resolution, however, we will then be able to approach Tun Mustapha and his party executive for advice and to find the best possible means of putting our resolution into effect.

When Stephens finished speaking there was dead silence in the room. One could have heard the proverbial pin dropping on the floor. Some faces were white or ashen. Many of these people had no inkling that UPKO was to be dissolved. They had hoped that Tun Stephens had effected a compromise solution with Tun Mustapha and they did not expect a total admission of defeat. Some therefore openly cried. The most astute speaker was Limbai Angkapan of Tuaran, the strong Kadazan nationalist. Limbai asked at the fateful meeting the following questions:

- (a) Was the decision final?
- (b) Was Tun Stephens giving up politics?
- (c) Had Tun Stephens lost faith in the 64,000 voters who voted for UPKO?

Mr Limbai said he doubted whether the USNO leadership wanted to see the "bumiputras" united. "I do not say I do not agree with the motion because

108. This remark by Tun Stephens was not entirely true. He had had discussions with Datuk Yassin and Datuk Harris earlier. He also saw Tun Mustapha. This is how Tun Mustapha described to the writer what transpired when Tun Stephens went to see Tun Mustapha in his house at Tanjong Aru: He said that one morning early while he and Datuk Galpam and others were sitting in the lounge the door to his house flew open and in came Tun Stephens with tears streaking down his cheeks. He opened his shirt buttons to bare his chest and said: "Abang (elder brother), I have done an enormous wrong and if you want to shoot me, go ahead". He stood there for a while waiting for Tun Mustapha's decision. Jokingly, Datuk Galpam told Tun Mustapha to go ahead and shoot Tun Stephens as he deserved it. Tun Mustapha said that all the anger and frustration of the past were forgotten. He decided to accept Tun Stephens as a 'blood brother' once more.

109. Minutes of UPKO Emergency National Council Meeting, 9 December 1967. Also in UPKO Press Release, 10 December 1967. See also *Sabah Times*, 11 December 1967.

the party leaders have spoken and it would appear that no matter what I say, this resolution will be approved".¹¹⁰ Limbai was right. Tun Stephens had made up his mind and he had asked the "inner-circle" UPKO leaders to support him earlier. Gilong therefore was made to second the motion and the first speaker to agree and support; Mojuntin was the second speaker who also supported the motion. In the press release issued on 10 December 1967, Mojuntin wrote: "The resolution was seconded by Dato Ganie Gilong, Deputy President, and supported by the Secretary-General, Mr Peter Mojuntin, both of whom spoke at some length in support".¹¹¹

The Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was the first to react. He sent a cable to Tun Stephens to congratulate him and the UPKO party. The cable read:

I agree with your move to dissolve UPKO so that the people of Sabah can work together in unity and understanding for the good of Sabah as a whole. And as a compatriot I heartily congratulate you and the members of the UPKO for an act of patriotism unsurpassed anywhere within Malaysia. Sabah must be united to meet the threats from outside and by coming together of the original members of Sabah freedom fighters they have shown they are able and capable of meeting any challenge from any source and in any form. Please convey to your members my good wishes and heart warming welcome back to the party.

This cablegram was cyclo-styled and sent to all UPKO National Council members from the UPKO's office. When Tun Stephens was asked about the cablegram he said:¹¹²

What a great man, a true father of us all. From now on we will never again forget Bapa Malaysia. We will serve him with heart and soul for the good of Sabah and Malaysia. It all makes me feel so small and doubly confirms my conviction that it was right to do what I have done, and I am grateful to the Almighty for having shown me the light.

There was no reaction from the Chinese leadership. Understandably, they

110. The writer did not support the motion. See Minutes of UPKO Emergency National Council Meeting on 9 December 1967. The writer had a row with Tun Stephens on this matter before the meeting. Tun Stephens told the writer that if he wanted to lead the party he could go ahead. When the meeting was over Tun Stephens drew the writer aside to pacify him and jokingly told him that they (the Kadazans) had nothing to lose, "only our foreskins". This last remark, although spoken in jest, appeared to have been true for Tun Stephens.

111. UPKO Press Release, 10 December 1967.

112. *Sabah Times*, 12 December 1967. The whole press release was written by Tun Stephens himself. He wrote the whole article for the newspaper. He even interviewed himself in the report.

were quiet. It seemed that the erstwhile jubilant and laughing Khoo had stopped laughing too.¹¹³ So did many other people, for as we see later in this chapter, Mojuntin's prediction of a one-man rule became a reality.

Meanwhile, however, there were persistent rumours from all walks of life in Sabah that Tun Stephens dissolved the party because he was promised certain favours for himself and his party and that the dissolution was pre-arranged. Tun Stephens vehemently denied these rumours and said that the decision was his and his alone.¹¹⁴ He said there was no pre-condition and that he did not ask anything for himself.

Tun Mustapha himself did not come out immediately to welcome the dissolution. He waited for nearly one week, and announced that he would consult his colleagues in USNO before deciding what to do.¹¹⁵ He said both USNO and the SCA noted UPKO's National Council decision to dissolve with interest. He would wait until after the UPKO's Congress had met to approve the dissolution before making further comments, he added.

The UPKO Congress met on 28 December 1967. There was only one item on the agenda: the dissolution of UPKO.¹¹⁶ A motion for the party's dissolution was introduced by Tun Stephens, and seconded by Gilong, and the UPKO party was formally dissolved. Tun Stephens' speech was a repetition of what he had said to the UPKO emergency National Council held on 7 December 1967. Most speakers supported the motion. Stephens expressed some concern at the apparent lack of response from Tun Mustapha and the USNO party, but he said: "Let the Tun decide".

And so, the UPKO died, and with it seemingly the Kadazans' aspirations for power and control of their own future and of their country, Sabah. They had lost in the battle for supremacy to the Malays. An analysis of what actually went wrong and why Tun Stephens appeared to have suddenly given up the fight and admitted defeat seems in order.

This writer believes that at least three main factors contributed to

113. If the UPKO party's dissolution seemed to be the end of Kadazan nationalism, it was also the start of the decline of Chinese power-play and holding the balance of power in the struggle for supremacy between the two "bumiputra" leaders. By 1972, Datuk Khoo Siak Chiew was eased out and he went to live in Hong Kong for a time until his death. The SCA party was a dead party by 1972.

114. *Sabah Times*, 14 December 1967.

115. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1967.

116. *Ibid.*, 28 December 1967.

the decision to dissolve the UPKO. These were:

- (1) The defections of UPKO leaders such as Payar Juman, N.C. Belingi, O.K.K. Nonon, and N.C. Philip Toyong.
- (2) The decision by Richard Yap not to go on with the election petition against Tun Mustapha. This was perhaps the last straw (for Stephens) which broke him.
- (3) The fear that the *Sabah Times* licence would be cancelled and that the Nabahu Co. Ltd.'s timber concession licence would not be extended.

In addition to the three main factors above, the writer feels that there is another important consideration — the realisation by Tun Stephens that his "fight as a Kadazan nationalist" was at his own expense and for the benefit of the Chinese community and their leaders — especially people like Khoo, Pang, Lo and others. While Stephens and his Kadazan colleagues fought for control for the sake of Kadazanism against Tun Mustapha and his Malay party, the Chinese community and their leaders reaped the harvest for having allied themselves with the Malay leadership. Stephens saw finally that it was the Chinese who were the main benefactors in the fight between Tun Mustapha and himself.

Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders were especially irked when Chinese leaders spoke in the 1965-67 period. They spoke as if they were the real inhabitants of Sabah, the owners of the country — and the true leaders and the "definitive" people of Sabah, and the Kadazans were the outsiders. But perhaps more important still, was the realisation by Tun Stephens that he had more or less burnt his bridges in his rhetorical attacks on neo-colonialism and vassalage by the central power, and dictatorship by Tun Mustapha.

The Two Leaders and Their Roles

Meanwhile, too, Tun Stephens was facing growing problems with his chiefs — the Kadazan native chiefs. These latter could see clearly that their brother chiefs among the Malays and Moslems were getting better and better in life: they had gained economic advantage from getting small timber areas or being made members and shareholders of timber companies especially set up in partnership with Chinese timber men and contractors.

In short, Kadazan native chiefs could see clearly the economic advantages gained by the USNO native chiefs. Indeed, some of the Kadazan chiefs who had earlier left the UPKO and joined the USNO were now showing signs of "prosperity". They were sporting new shirts, new shoes, and some had vehicles! It is of course to be noted that this "giving" something to the native chiefs was a standard practice even before the election of April 1967. The USNO were said to have given free outboard motors, boats, free bicycles and even landrovers. And UPKO too, would be asked the same, and Tun Stephens did provide some of these, including landrovers to the chiefs in areas like Lahad Datu, Kudat etc. Even barbed wire for fencing was asked for and provided in some cases.¹¹⁷

When Tun Stephens first entered into politics during the colonial days as an appointed member of the Legislative Council, he was always asked by parents to help young boys and girls to find jobs for them in the colonial administration. These requests had come from all races but as Tun Stephens became involved in the Kadazan associations in the late 1950s he devoted more time towards helping the Kadazan people. He was an influential man in the community and the European officers had a very high regard for him.¹¹⁸

117. Tun Stephens was a master politician. Before the 1967 election, Tun Stephens became sick. He asked the writer to fill in for him to meet visitors and callers to the office. The writer was told never to get angry and to take down all requests from these visitors. Most of the callers had come from the remote parts of Sabah and they came to see Tun Stephens for some help - such as a small loan in cash, some barbed wire for fencing, etc. When Stephens returned to his office some two days later there were the normal callers - all asking for favours. Stephens welcomed them all; had them seated and given coffee to drink and cigarettes to smoke. After they had finished telling him what they wanted from him Tun Stephens would

Tun Mustapha too was an influential man in the community, but more particularly to the Malay community. He was a "Datu" — a hereditary title he inherited from his father — suggesting that he was a member of the Sulu royalty. He was appointed a native chief in Kudat, and later, became an O.K.K. (Orang Kaya Kaya) first grade. There were not many first grade native chiefs during the colonial days, and the one who was promoted to this position was normally a person of exceptional quality. Tun Mustapha had exceptional quality.¹¹⁹ He too was always approached by members of his community especially for help in one way or another and he used his position as an appointed member of the Legislative Council to advantage, as did Stephens.

After the formation of Malaysia these leaders found that they were indeed now the very persons who were dispensing "favours" such as the giving of jobs, the promotion of civil servants and above all, the granting of licences — timber or other licences — to various applicants. Tun Stephens tried to be impartial in the question of recruitment and promotion in the civil service. He relied on the State Civil Service Commission for this. Indeed, he retained the services of many of the old colonial administrators — including the State Secretary — when he was Chief Minister. However, in 1967 and when Tun Mustapha was the Chief Minister, apparently he tried to change the character and composition of the State Public Service Commission and for this Tun Mustapha was accused of appointing political nominees. Tun Mustapha's actions and the accusations of the UPKO leaders were both understandable. By 1967, jobs in the civil service were becoming scarce, and there were many civil servants — especially "bumiputras" — who were still in the lower echelons of the civil service. They had ambitions to go up the ladder, and fast. The appointment of Dzulkifli as head of the Establishment Office — in charge of recruitment and promotion was no accident, therefore. He was Tun Mustapha's right hand man in this office.

As the political history of Sabah's "bumiputra" parties progressed, so did the mentality of the people. The supporters were no longer as "unsophisticated" as they had been before. The requests were no longer small things such as a recommendation for their children for a job, for a place in the civil service, or even for a licence or a good word to the man in charge in respect of their tender application for some Public Works

119. It was rumoured at one time that Tun Mustapha had a 'Kabal' or 'charm', the same as Mat Salleh had had during the rule of the North Borneo company.

Department work. Many simply became bold and asked for better rewards in return for their support. It was therefore not uncommon to see native chiefs the proud owners of landrovers or other vehicles and even speed boats complete with 40 or 60 horse-power outboard motors. It was no wonder that Sabah's sales in vehicles of all sorts boomed in the 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In some cases, these higher and more influential native chiefs were also given positions such as a place in the town or rural councils, or even senatorships. It does not matter whether they could read or write: as long as they could thumbprint their signatures. Some too were given small timber concessions of 100 to 500 acres which were promptly sold to the Chinese timber men for cash. Lawyers' income too boomed during this period as the number of clients increased asking them to prepare timber agreements for them. It was therefore easy to understand why it was imperative that the leaders, such as Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha who were constantly approached for "favours" of one kind or another, felt the need to try and get into positions of power and influence. The fight for political control then was not just for the sake of the community they represented (which was of course the stated primary aim of each political party), but also because of the many goods and services the holder of high office could dispense.

When UPKO was in the Opposition, therefore, Tun Stephens was denied the power to dispense "favours" to his supporters. He had to dip into his own pocket to "help" the more influential chiefs so that they continued their support. Their support was vital because through their influence they could bring the votes from their respective villages. It was a form of "blackmail": if you don't help me with my requests I will go to the other side. It must be understood, however, that not all the chiefs were "beggars" or "blackmailers". There were also genuine ones whose interests were really for their community and the party.

In any case, after Payar Juman and Wong Fook Siang defected, and as the "blackmailers" in the UPKO ranks became more demanding, Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders were worried. Only Tun Stephens of all the UPKO leaders had the money and wealth to dispense to these "blackmailers". His colleagues had nothing to contribute in this respect, except a certain percentage of their Assemblyman or Member of Parliament monthly wages which were automatically contributed to the party.¹²⁰ Tun Stephens and

120. Datuk Ghani Gilong told this writer that when Tun Stephens was the Chief Minister of Sabah in 1963-64, he wanted to be fair in the distribution of timber and did not want to be accused of favouritism.
(footnote continued over)

UPKO then were in no position to compete or match the USNO party insofar as the granting of "favours" was concerned. Neither was UPKO in a position to promise better positions or wealth to anyone.

As the weeks dragged into months, therefore, UPKO's shield was becoming thinner. Tun Stephens by November came out with a "formula", which he thought was acceptable to the "old hands" like Tun Mustapha, Khoo and himself. This was the first sign of some admission of worry, anxiety, if not defeat, although Tun Stephens said this was not so. "Is this a sign of weakness on the part of the UPKO, this attempt at producing a peace formula by a person who is also the head of the party. It is not...", he wrote.¹²¹ But no one was fooled — least of all Syed Kechik the man from Kuala Lumpur sent especially by Tunku Abdul Rahman to help USNO. Tun Stephens was showing signs of desperation, and one did not have to be a psychologist to see it.

For along with the problem of rebellious political elites and chiefs in his party, Tun Stephens was also facing acute business problems. The timber stand of the Nabahu Company Ltd. was fast going as the years progressed, and the licence too was due to be renewed in a year's time if the Tun Mustapha government felt inclined.¹²² The Nabahu Company Ltd. was the timber licensee. About 51 percent of the shares in this company were owned by Tun Stephens and the rest were divided amongst various Kadazan leaders — such as Gilong, Mojuntin, Yap and Luping.

The Nabahu Company Ltd., formed in the early 1960s, was one of the three original timber concessions given to the "bumiputras" by the colonial government: one to Tun Stephens, one to Tun Mustapha, and one to Sundang. In fact Tun Stephens' and Sundang's concessions were contiguous in the Koya area in Kinabatangan river district. At first, the Nabahu Company itself tried to work the extraction of its concession area, but

(footnote 120 continued):

He therefore rejected other Kadazan leaders' approaches to him to grant them timber concessions so that they too could get rich and be in a position to help finance the UPKO party. When Tun Mustapha became the Chief Minister, however, he did not seem to have Tun Stephens' reservations. Many of his fellow Malay leaders were given timber concessions.

121. UPKO Press Release, 17 November 1967.

122. Datuk Dzulkifli bin Datuk Abdul Hamid told this writer that when he was the Establishment Officer and one of Tun Mustapha's close advisors, he looked for Tun Stephens' weaknesses so as to make him vulnerable. He said he found out that it was Tun Stephens' timber concession which was his political weakness. The timber concession was due to be renewed and he had only a few acres left. USNO used this as its trump card to defeat Tun Stephens.

found that it was too difficult to manage as none of the Kadazans had any experience in the timber extraction business. Tun Stephens therefore formed another company called the Samudra Company Ltd. to undertake the extraction of the Nabahu Company Ltd.'s concession. This latter company was a joint venture between Tun Stephens and Tan Sioe Tie, a Chinese businessman who had left Indonesia earlier from Sukarno's discrimination against the Chinese in that country. The agreement signed between the Nabahu Company Ltd. and Samudra Company Ltd. was that Samudra would work the Nabahu's timber concession by exploiting and exporting all the timber stands from Nabahu's concessions, and in return, the Samudra Company would pay a lump sum of \$500,000 to the Nabahu Company Ltd. every year — regardless of whether Samudra made money or not in the extraction and exportation of the timber. Both Tun Stephens and Tan Sioe Tie agreed that each would have some of their own people employed in Samudra Company Ltd. Thus, Vincent Lojingau was employed by Tun Stephens as the Camp Manager and a Mr Tan was employed as the administrative manager in charge of all sales and exports. This man was a Chinese, reputedly with timber business experience. Tan also provided another Chinese person to manage another key position; the management of the log pond where the log timber was kept and graded.

In order to keep out of the company's record the fact that the Nabahu Company Ltd. was giving a direct contribution to the UPKO party, the company paid twelve Nabahu Company Ltd.'s directors the sum of about \$12,000 per annum. This same sum was then transferred to the UPKO account by the twelve directors. The administration of the Nabahu Company affairs in Kota Kinabalu was in the hands of a very capable Sino-Kadazan, Lim Hong Ghee, who was also the UPKO's treasurer. Indeed, Lim Hong Ghee held this position until UPKO was dissolved, and until the Nabahu Company Ltd. itself was wound up in 1983.

By 1966, Tun Stephens felt that all was not well in Samudra Company Ltd. his contracting company, in which he held majority shares. Tan Sioe Tie was becoming cagey and was indeed making overtures to Tun Mustapha. In fact, Tan Sioe Tie did cross over to Tun Mustapha and formed another joint-venture timber business with him. Tun Stephens had independent auditors check on Samudra's accounts, and it was found that something like \$2,000,000 was not accounted for. Tun Stephens called in the police to investigate and the police had the manager and log pond manager taken in

for interrogation.¹²³

It would appear that Tan Sioe Tie was not entirely honest in his business dealings with Tun Stephens, and it has been thought that this was at the instigation of USNO's advisors in order to strike at Stephens' vulnerable economic position. It was thought that Tun Stephens lost something like \$2,000,000 in the Samudra Company Ltd. venture. Tan Sioe Tie was removed as a director and the Samudra Company Ltd.'s remaining timber agreement with Nabahu Company Ltd. was sold to a Sarawak Chinese timber firm — one of the owners and directors of whom was Stephen Yong, the SUPP Secretary-General. Tun Stephens' heavy losses in the timber business was a big financial blow to him personally and to his party. This heavy loss came at the most critical time in UPKO's history — at a time when UPKO was fighting for its life.

The Sabah Times

While his timber business was facing difficulties, Tun Stephens' newspaper business was also getting a hammering from all sides. The *Sabah Times*, formerly a partnership of Tun Stephens and Tan Sioe Tie, was transformed into a company in 1966 when Luping joined Tun Stephens. The *Sabah Times* Company Ltd. was formed with Tun Stephens, his wife and Luping as the directors. The *Sabah Times*, both English and Chinese editions, was not making much money as the circulation was not very big, but Tun Stephens' timber business had been able to subsidise some of the outgoings in the past. However, with the timber business itself in trouble, it could not possibly subsidise the newspaper business as well. The *Sabah Times* Company Ltd.'s only fixed capital was the land on which the printing presses were situated, plus the printing presses themselves and the photographic equipment. But even the land was mortgaged to the Borneo Housing Co. to raise the money to build the premises and the machinery and photographic equipment were all on hire purchase. By 1967, the *Sabah Times* was facing real financial problems. Payments for the machines were over-due, and there was no money even to pay for newsprint. This was due in part to the fall in income received from advertisements.

123. An accountant was sent to audit the Samudra timber company's accounts. The initial verbal report given was that some 2,000,000 dollars was missing. The two Chinese managers, one the manager of the office and the other in charge of the logs in the log pond, were arrested and questioned by the police. No criminal or civil charges, however, were instituted against these people.

Government departments, especially the P.W.D., the Public Service Commission, and local authorities had stopped sending advertisements to the *Sabah Times* English and Chinese editions. The income from government advertisements represented quite a major portion of the newspaper's income and the sudden stoppage of these advertisements was indeed a big blow to the *Sabah Times* Company.

Luping travelled to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to ask the advertising agents to arrange for annual contracts and to increase the number of advertisements in the *Sabah Times*. These were mostly for alcoholic drinks, cigarettes, milk and other food products which were controlled by advertising agents in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Whether the major advertising agents in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur knew of the *Sabah Times*' problems or not was not known. Whether they, too, had been approached by USNO people and advised not to advertise in the *Sabah Times* was also not known, but the fact remains that instead of increasing, the advertisements in the *Sabah Times* actually decreased, and some accounts were transferred to the newly published USNO newspaper the *Kinabalu Times* of Tun Mustapha.

By June 1967 the *Sabah Times*' head office had received the first notification from creditors' lawyers that unless the *Sabah Times* paid for the supply of newsprint, legal action would be taken. The supply of newsprint to the press was dwindling and the supplier refused to supply any more unless the payment for the previous month's supply was made. The bankers were not helpful either.¹²⁴ The *Sabah Times*, however, managed to get a temporary overdraft facility payable in three months' time, and with the money most creditors were paid either in whole or in part. The threat of legal action and hence receivership was temporarily averted. By October 1967, the *Sabah Times* income receipts were not improving, but it was surviving.

However, there were rumours that Tun Mustapha was not going to renew the licence. The *Sabah Times* licence to print and publish in the English,

124. The smaller merchant banks with Chinese managers were not helpful to the *Sabah Times*, as most seemed to have identified themselves with the USNO party officials. These latter people had accounts in their banks. The foreign merchant banks were no better, either. One banker was approached by this writer for a loan to cover the payment of bills from creditors to avoid being sued in court. This particular bank manager called the writer 'boy' and told him that the *Sabah Times* Company was sick. He did not even look at the letter from Tun Stephens who had agreed to stand as a guarantor.

Chinese and Kadazan languages was renewable once every year, and the licence was due to be renewed in January 1968. Newspaper licences in Sabah were in the control of the Chief Minister's department and issued by the State Secretary; in short, by the Chief Minister himself. Tun Stephens was very worried about this. To him, apart from the UPKO party, the *Sabah Times* was his favourite child, his baby. He did not want the "baby" to die.¹²⁵

Election Petition

Saddled with the prospect of the closure of the *Sabah Times* and the non-renewal of his timber licence, Tun Stephens was confronted with yet another major problem — and this was perhaps the deciding factor which finally made up his mind to dissolve UPKO. This was Richard Yap's announcement that he was not going on with his election petitions. Yap made up his mind not to go ahead with the election petitions against Tun Mustapha as early as November 1967, but the official announcement was not made until 1 December 1967.¹²⁶

One of UPKO's and indeed Stephens' chief hopes to dislodge Tun Mustapha from his new pinnacle of power was the election petition lodged by Richard Yap. He had petitioned the Court to declare the election of Tun Mustapha in Bengkoka-Banggi null and void due to offences committed by Tun Mustapha and the USNO party during the campaign period. Some of these offences were the bribery of voters, intimidation of people and the use of government helicopters when campaigning. Tun Mustapha was also said to have used funds far in excess of the limit permissible by law (at that time \$7,500 only). The frequent use of helicopters in his campaigning was considered in dollar terms far in excess of the permitted amount of money to be spent in the campaign, and he was reputed to have bribed voters by the provision of boats, outboard motors, vehicles etc. — and straight out cash granted or given to some key voters and local leaders.

David Marshall, a well-known Singapore barrister was engaged in the three election petitions against the election of Tun Mustapha in Bengkoka-Banggi, of Khoo Siak Chiew in Sandakan Bandar and of Salleh Sulong in

125. Told to the writer personally by Tun Stephens' father-in-law.

126. *Sabah Times*, 1 December 1967.

Lahad Datu. The petitioners were Richard Yap, Chong Thain Vun and Tan the independent candidate in Lahad Datu. The three petitions were in actual fact financed by Tun Stephens.

The serving of the petitions on the respondents was difficult. All three were away from Sabah and did not return until after the expiry date when the petitions should have been filed in court and served on the respondents. The solicitor, Chong Thain Vun, wrote a letter to all three asking them to appoint their lawyers for service of the writs, but he did not receive a reply.¹²⁷ David Marshall's application in court was to ask the court to consider the writs as having been served within the requirement of the Election Petitions Rules which required the petitioners to have the writs served on the respondents by 9 June 1967.

Marshall explained that the only other recourse for the petitioners to have the writs served on the respondents was to publish them in the Government Gazette. But when the government printer Sulong, the father of one of the respondents, was approached to publish the writs before 9 June, he refused, stating that he had not enough machinery as the printing machines were all out of order. The court adjourned a decision on the case. Before the court could decide on this issue, however, David Marshall was unable to return to Sabah to represent the petitioners. The Sabah government refused him entry permits to enter Sabah. His place was taken over by two very competent lawyers from Perak, the well-known lawyers and politicians, the Seenivasagam brothers. Both were leaders of the P.P.P.¹²⁸

Tun Stephens was most perturbed by this turn of events. In a statement he said the refusal of entry permits to non-Malaysian lawyers to enter Sabah to defend clients in the courts of justice was most unfair and charged that the Mustapha-Khoo coalition government had gone over the line of justice and decency.¹²⁹

I could not believe the learned Sabahan lawyers could possibly have asked the Chief Minister to do something which clearly means to restrict the freedom of choice of a person seeking justice. From the clear explanation given by the local Bar Council of Sabah, it is evidently clear that the legitimate request of the lawyers in Sabah was purposely twisted in order to serve the interest of

127. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1967.

128. For an excellent account of the PPP and the Seenivasagam brothers, see R.K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society*, pp. 222-251.

129. UPKO Press Release, 13 October 1967.

the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha. Every individual is entitled to the best lawyer of his own choice from anywhere in the world. To deny him or restrict him in his own free choice is tantamount to committing an evil sin against the Human Rights as spelt out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The request of the Sabah Bar Council was to prevent foreign lawyers from entering Sabah to set up practice in the state. This was to protect their interests as there were quite a number of Sabahan lawyers in the state practising. This request, however, came at an opportune time for Tun Mustapha and he used this not to give immigration clearance for David Marshall.¹³⁰

The three petitions, however, were never proceeded with despite the appearance of the two Seenivasagam brothers. Richard Yap, the most important petitioner in the case insofar as Tun Stephens was concerned decided to withdraw his petition. As soon as he withdrew his petition, the other two petitions were also withdrawn.¹³¹ Yap's withdrawal of the petition case seemed to be the last straw for Tun Stephens. He seemed to be completely drained of energy and the willpower to go on with the fight.

His "peace formula" of 12 November 1967 must therefore be seen and interpreted as a sign of desperation. Before the end of the month (November) therefore, on 16th and again on 20 November, he had two meetings of the UPKO Central Executive Committee and both discussed the possibility of dissolving the party.

Tun Stephens, who only a few months before had taken both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and also the USNO-SCA to task and said that he had a "dream" — a dream in which everyone was living in peace and harmony, in equality — a perfect democracy, and charged the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister with neo-colonialism and breaking the spirit and intention of the Malaysia Agreement — had finally decided to fold up the Kadazan party, the UPKO, which he had built from the ground up. The poem of the Indian poet R. Tagore who had written:

Where the mind is without fear,
and the head is held high....

130. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, pp. 83-84.

131. The rumours were that Datuk Richard Yap was approached by Tun Mustapha's people and offered a timber concession. There is, however, no foundation to this rumour. Datuk Richard Yap told this writer that he withdrew his petition against Tun Mustapha as he had wanted to see an end to the political feud between Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha.

Where the mind is led forward by thee into
 ever-widening
 thought and action -
 In that Heaven of Freedom,
 My Father,
 Let my country awake.

was now forgotten by Tun Stephens. Instead, Tun Stephens capitulated. He said, not without irony, "We have not lost the battle, but from recent occurrences, we must admit that although we have not lost, we are not winning". And when he received a congratulatory telegram from the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, after the dissolution of UPKO he said: "What a great man, a true Father of us all".

Kadazan consciousness and nationalism it seemed thus ended and died on 28 December 1967, when "an almost unanimous vote" was taken to dissolve the UPKO party and advise members to join USNO. The UPKO leaders, who were supposed to keep close to one another and who had high hopes of "taking over" USNO were disappointed. The USNO Malay leaders were one step ahead of them. They were never "allowed" to take any major office in USNO — not yet. They had to be kept at a distance. The USNO's advisors saw to it, in any case, that the erstwhile UPKO leaders were kept divided amongst themselves and not allowed to regroup. And indeed, in the following years, the Kadazan leaders went their separate ways — each one for himself. Some were to re-emerge in 1981, but by then it was too late: the USNO party itself by then was a dead horse, ready for burial.

The writer has written quite exhaustively on the 1962-67 period because he believes that this was a crucial period for the Kadazans. This was the time that they attempted to be the governors of their own destiny and country and lost. Any account of the rise of Kadazan consciousness and nationalism shows that Tun Stephens was the only person who was able to weld the Kadazans together and awaken their sense of pride as Kadazans. The rise and formation of UNKO and UPKO, the Kadazan party was Stephens' own brain-child. All the rest of the actors with him were peripheral; he alone was leader. As more and more young Kadazans take their place in Sabah's politics of the 70s and 80s their quest is not so much now the quest for a Kadazan "Huguan Siou" nor their ideal Kadazan nationalism: their quest is to be allowed to participate in the governing of their own people and state. Indeed, even Tun Stephens himself seemed less interested in the title of "Huguan Siou" when the chance came in 1975-76, and he was then no longer interested in

the call for a specifically Kadazan concept and consciousness. By then his dream was multi-racialism. When he finally departed from the Sabah political scene in June 1976, in a tragic plane crash, the Kadazan dream of becoming governors in their own land died with him.

CHAPTER 7

TUN MUSTAPHA IN POWER:RELEGATION OF KADAZANS TO A SUBORDINATE STATUS, 1968-1975

Perhaps the best way to describe this period is to say that it was a period of mopping up by the USNO leaders, particularly by Syed Kechik, the man who could be said to have been the main person responsible for the demise of the UPKO party and Kadazan nationalistic zeal.

With the defection of Payar Juman and Wong Fook Siang to the USNO party, the USNO-SCA coalition in the Assembly was assured of a two-thirds majority. The USNO party had sixteen Assemblymen and the SCA five. With the addition of the six nominated Assembly seats provided in the constitution the USNO-SCA coalition had twenty-seven seats. With a two-thirds majority now available therefore, Syed Kechik's first priority was to draft a number of new bills and amendments to the state constitution.

The first amendment concerned an amendment to the state's constitution to give the Chief Minister the power to dismiss the Attorney General. Procedure then demanded that the drafts had to be submitted to the Attorney General himself for vetting. On receiving the draft, the Attorney General resigned and left the state. Soon after, the State Secretary, John Dusing (the man who had caused the resignation of Tun Stephens) also resigned. The bills drafted for presentation to the Legislative Assembly scheduled to meet on 18 December 1967 included the formation of a Sabah Housing Commission, a Sabah Land Development Board, a Sabah Padi Board, and more important still, the extension of the powers of the Sabah Foundation so that it could apply for and operate timber concessions on its own. It was felt necessary by Syed Kechik and the USNO leaders to amend the constitution to enable the Chief Minister to dismiss the Attorney General because it was thought that most expatriate officers still working in Sabah, and in particular the Attorney General, were more amenable to Tun Stephens and the UPKO party than to Mustapha and USNO.¹

With the bureaucracy laden with expatriates, obstruction against the government in power was the order of the day. But expatriates could not simply be expelled. There was no one to replace them. For those in key positions,

1. Bruce Ross-Larson, *Politics of Federalism*, p. 87.

there was not even the means to displace them had Sabahans been available. To change the pattern of obstructionism, Syed Kechik focussed on two key highly visible posts: the State Attorney General and the State Secretary (now renamed Permanent Secretary to the Chief Minister), the former held by an expatriate, the latter by an Indo-Kadazan - both of whom were extremely influential in the Cabinet and thought to be working closely with Stephens and UPKO to discredit the ruling party. Their positions were secured by the constitution. They could be displaced only by retirement or dismissal by the Public Services Commission, neither of which seemed imminent, or by amending the state constitution to give the Chief Minister the power to dismiss them.

There was never any indication by Tun Stephens that he was getting any secret information from the expatriate officers, nor from Dusing. He never mentioned any one of these officers to any UPKO leaders, nor indicated that he was getting information from them. What seemed apparent, however, was his ability to gain inside information of what was going on in the USNO meetings and of proposed actions by Syed Kechik. When Tun Stephens therefore warned the Kadazans and UPKO supporters that the USNO-SCA coalition was trying to get a two-thirds majority in the Assembly so that they could amend the constitution to suit their whims and fancies, it was not pure guess work. Someone had informed him what Syed Kechik and the USNO inner circle were up to. Dusing's resignation, however, was apparently caused by his own indiscretion. It was said that he was heard talking to Tun Stephens on the phone and that he was saying something about Tun Mustapha's administration which he should not have done.²

Meanwhile, Tun Stephens himself had to complete his own work. There was yet another important job that he had to do to ensure the final death of the UPKO party — so that it would never rise again. UPKO leaders must not only be seen to have dissolved their party; they must also act individually to show that they meant what they said. Thus, on 8 January 1968, only ten days after the formal dissolution of the UPKO party, Stephens wrote to all UPKO National Council members, and in particular to the UPKO M.P.s and Assemblymen. In his letter, he asked them to acknowledge Tun Mustapha as their new leader, and added:³

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2. This allegation concerning Datuk John Dusing was never proved or substantiated. Tun Mustapha did not reveal the reason why Dusing resigned as State Secretary except by innuendo, suggesting that Dusing's telephone was bugged.
 3. Letter from Tun Stephens to National Council members dated 8 January 1968. The writer has a copy of this letter addressed to him.

I would also ask that anything which could be construed as being anti-Alliance or anti-government should be withdrawn forthwith. Although the UPKO has been dissolved I hope that our friendship is enough to give me the privilege of writing you this letter and asking that you will be so good as to comply with my request.

He enclosed a prepared letter of apology from all UPKO Assemblymen and M.P.s and requested that all Assemblymen and M.P.s should sign — and send it to Tun Mustapha.⁴ Tun Stephens' letter expressed anxiety about the cold reception by USNO towards UPKO members. He expressed the hope that Tun Mustapha would eventually accept everyone of them. He cautioned them to be patient.

In compliance with Tun Stephens' request, all Assemblymen and M.P.s immediately sent their signed letter of apology to Tun Mustapha. The letters read:

Dear Tun,

As you know the UPKO has been dissolved and it was agreed that on dissolution we should ask to join the USNO. As a former UPKO Assemblyman I am writing to pledge to you my loyalty and support and in doing so I would also ask you to forgive me for all that I have done in the past which may have caused you offence or annoyance.

Although in the past, because of politics, I may have appeared to be working against you, I hope you will not hold this against me and will allow me to work for you and for the USNO and that we will be accepted by the USNO and given the opportunity to prove our sincerity towards you as our bumiputra leader, and we hope to be given a part to play in solidifying bumiputra unity. I put myself in your hands.

Kindest regards,

Yang menurut parentah.

Everyone was so demoralised that not one single Assemblyman or M.P. went against Stephens' request. Some former UPKO National Council members amongst the Malay group went even further. They went to see Tun Mustapha to kiss his hands to show their allegiance and obedience to him as a Muslim.

Stephens' anxiety about USNO's slowness in accepting USNO members was understandable. He had been out-manoeuvred in the past, and he did not know whether he was going to be played out again. After all, the Chinese leaders were very much still in control of the situation, and they still had the ears of Tun Mustapha. Further, Tun Stephens and other UPKO leaders were intelligent enough to realise that they were the

4. Letter to Tun Mustapha from the Assemblymen and M.P.s of UPKO prepared by Tun Stephens. The writer has a copy of this letter in his keeping.

"defeated enemy" and had no say whatsoever in the matter. Their political fate was mainly in Tun Mustapha's hands. With the USNO-SCA coalition already in control of two-thirds of the Assembly seats in the Legislative Assembly, the UPKO and its former leaders were mere irritants: they were not much use to them. Tun Stephens' announcement that UPKO would join the USNO "en bloc" was therefore mere bravado on his part. The more discerning amongst his erstwhile "boys" knew that UPKO former supporters would not be allowed to join en bloc but in a trickle. The USNO party in 1968 had become an "exclusive club", and one did not join it; one was invited to sign up.

Bruce Ross-Larson wrote:⁵

The USNO leaders welcomed the dissolution of UPKO but the call to join the USNO was not immediately welcomed. Tun Mustapha wanted to punish them for their past transgressions and would have been content to let them flounder without a voice for some time. Party workers at branch level were also reluctant to admit those with whom they had been engaged in such a long and vociferous battle of words. The cause of suspicion was real.

Indeed, Harris told a political scientist in an interview that he would have preferred UPKO to go into opposition rather than merge with USNO. She said that Harris was of the opinion that UPKO should be excluded from the Alliance.⁶

He held the view that as long as the UPKO remained within the Alliance, it would waste a lot of political energy which might be used in more purposeful ways. An admirer of the Malayan Alliance pattern of ordering politics, he argued that since the UPKO had clearly demonstrated its unwillingness to abide by the "rules" of such a system, it should be sent into opposition....

The USNO's newspaper mouthpiece, the *Daily Express*, had also written that several USNO leaders felt that as long as "the Penampang boys" (by whom they generally meant Stephens, Peter Mojuntin and Luping) held prominent positions within the UPKO, there was no hope of merger; "they would be running us inside a few months".⁷

However, USNO leaders by 1968 also knew that former UPKO politicians, removed from the levers of distributing largesse, had become politically

5. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

6. Margaret Clark-Roff, 'Sabah's Political Parties and the 1967 State Election', *International Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 1968), p. 447.

7. Margaret Clark-Roff, *ibid.*, p. 440.

unimportant. Tun Mustapha and his advisors⁸ however, were astute enough to realise that there were some UPKO politicians who were talented and who were natural leaders in their own right. USNO could well use their talents for the USNO party and cause. To leave them out in the cold indefinitely might only encourage these young talented Kadazan leaders to regroup and form another party. The decision then was taken to accept these UPKO politicians first. Tun Mustapha did not acknowledge or reply to the apology letters sent to him by former UPKO National Council members. However, there was enough rapport and contact between the ex-UPKO politicians and USNO leaders for them to know that a move was being made to accept them into the USNO fold.

The USNO Central Executive committee met on 15 January 1968 specifically to pass resolutions to amend USNO's constitution to be tabled at the USNO's general assembly (Congress) scheduled for 21 January 1968. One of the important resolutions was the amendment to the USNO constitution to vest power in the Central Executive committee — which effectively meant in Tun Mustapha — to accept the application of ex-UPKO members, instead of by the branch committees. The explanation given for this amendment was the fear that branch committees might cause embarrassment to former UPKO leaders by refusing their applications. This explanation seemed cogent, except for the fact that by 1968 Tun Mustapha's power and influence amongst the Malays was such that all he needed to do was to give a short directive to the branch committees and they would have complied. No one dared to oppose Tun Mustapha. One can only guess that the real reason for the amendment was to give Tun Mustapha the power to decide who to accept and when to accept any of the ex-UPKO leaders. It was a classic and calculated move to give Tun Mustapha more power and control over the Kadazan leaders and community as a whole. Former UPKO divisions and branches throughout the state therefore were not automatically merged with the USNO divisions or branches. Each individual UPKO branch leader had to submit an application to the USNO Secretariat for membership or asking for a new branch to be opened in his area. This policy served two purposes: first, it helped the USNO leaders at the head office level to keep tabs on who were UPKO's former leaders at the division or branch levels, and secondly, it gave them time to study

8. Tun Mustapha's chief advisors were: Datuk Syed Kechik, a lawyer from Kedah; Datuk Rozan Kuntun, then the State Development Officer and later the Federal Secretary; and Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid who became the Establishment Officer. See also Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-93.

whether those same people should be the ones to be used and cultivated to be the leaders of the branch committee in question.

Tun Mustapha therefore adopted the classic divide-and-rule policy in his dealings with ex-UPKO leaders. They were kept deliberately apart from one another and where possible made to compete with one another. Some former UPKO divisional chairmen, for instance, were ignored, in favour of "new" ones who were considered more amenable. Village headmen who were vocal in the past in their support for the UPKO party were replaced with more amenable ones. Native chiefs were similarly affected.⁹

As it turned out, the first to be accepted were all UPKO M.P.s and Assemblymen and moves were made to re-arrange the seating in the Legislative Assembly so that no former UPKO Assemblyman was in the opposition, except the lone Independent from Sandakan. Tun Stephens too was accepted as a member and, as we shall see later, was "bundled off" to Australia to be Malaysia's High Commissioner there soon afterwards. He was also appointed one of the Vice-Presidents of the USNO party in 1972.

The other important amendment to the USNO constitution was the provision for the appointment by the USNO President of a lawyer to membership of the USNO Central Executive Committee. In effect, this was to ensure that Syed Kechik, who was only appointed as legal advisor to the party and spoke and advised the party through Tun Mustapha, would now be actually able to sit in USNO's most important and powerful body — the Central Executive Committee. To make it doubly sure that there was no loophole in this amendment Syed Kechik also included a provision to allow any non-Sabahan "bumiputra" to become an USNO member after having resided in the state for not less than six months.¹⁰ To make it doubly certain that he was a member of the USNO Central Executive Committee, he made his membership to this body on an appointment basis. There was therefore no need for him to stand for election in any of the offices in the Central Executive Committee. He was assured of one.

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9. By not accepting the Kadazans from UPKO with open arms the USNO party paid for this dearly in the 1976 election. Many Kadazan leaders did not forget this 'cold treatment' by the Malays in the USNO party and showed their feelings in the 1976 election.
 10. Datuk Syed Kechik was granted the 'Surat Anak Negeri' (Bumiputra certificate) by the native court at Kota Kinabalu. This enabled him to purchase native-title land. The regulation regarding Malays from West Malaysia was that they could not buy native land in Sabah until they had resided in the state for at least three years.

However, to be fair, the USNO constitution was further amended to allow the President to nominate and appoint further members of the Central Executive Committee. Three extra Vice-Presidents were on nomination basis, and two extra Executive Committee members were also on appointment basis by the President. The post of Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and Treasurer were from the beginning appointed posts by the President.

On the post-UPKO dissolution, Ross-Larson thus wrote:¹¹

The explosive issues had been diffused, and Kuala Lumpur had a leader in Sabah who was committed to the Federal concept. All these changes had unfolded quickly even more. Consequently, Syed Kechik filled the media with explanatory releases - all couched in terms favourable to USNO and to Malaysia, with the occasional jibe directed at UPKO to preclude their resurgence. Everything seemed to be working out perfectly and so it would seem for some time.

The next step to complete the "mopping-up operation" was the purchase of a majority interest in the *Sabah Times* to make it doubly sure that this hitherto dissident voice would make no such noise against the USNO in the future. Tun Stephens, who was by now in Australia as Malaysia's High Commissioner, was persuaded to sell a majority of his shares in the *Sabah Times* to Tun Mustapha.¹²

Luping, who had earlier been replaced as the Editor by a Malay journalist from Kuala Lumpur, had remained as the Managing Director. He held this post for some time although his power in the newspaper was much curtailed and controlled. However, before the election in 1971, the writer was also replaced as Managing Director of the *Sabah Times* Company. His replacement was another young Malay graduate from Kuala Lumpur who was made the General Manager. Syed Kechik did not want Luping to have anything to do with the newspaper and so Tun Mustapha was advised accordingly.¹³

Luping was given a non-executive post in the Sabah Ports Authority as its Chairman. He took this post in October 1970. The USNO-SCA

11. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

12. The writer was abroad when the purchase of the *Sabah Times*' shares was made. He did not know in advance about the sale of the *Sabah Times*' shares to Tun Mustapha as Tun Stephens never told him about his intention on this matter.

13. Tun Mustapha called the writer to his office and offered him the post of Chairman of the newly created Sabah Ports Authority.

government coalition was then pursuing its development plans and one of these was the construction of new wharfs or the extension of existing ones. The process of taking over all the smaller ports of Sabah by the Sabah Ports Authority was also to be undertaken. Indeed, the USNO-SCA coalition embarked on some very ambitious development programmes during this period. Two new ports at Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan, costing around \$70,000,000 were to be constructed and a World Bank loan was to be sought. Luping was occupied with this project until the election was held in October 1971 and he was made one of the Assistant Ministers in the new USNO-SCA line-up of Ministers and Assistant Ministers.

To be fair to Tun Mustapha, he did not ignore former UPKO leaders entirely. Many of them were given important functions to perform. Mojuntin was made the Chairman of the Penampang Rural District Council, for instance, replacing a former Kadazan USNO man who had held this post. Some other former UPKO leaders, such as Matakim, Koroh, Tingkalor and Gimbad were also given shares in timber business enterprises. As for Gilong, he was given a special consideration as the most senior of the ex-UPKO leaders, next only to Tun Stephens, and was made the Federal Minister of Sabah Affairs. When this post was abolished, however, Gilong was given a more meaningful portfolio — as Federal Minister of Works and Transport, with which he was very happy.

Gilong, born and bred in the interior of Ranau district, knew only too well the hazards and difficulties of not having good road networks to connect the interior with the major towns. This aspect of development was left behind by the colonial administration. The price of landing himself a Federal Cabinet post, however, was that he had to resign as Assemblyman for Ranau. (Gilong was both Assemblyman for Ranau and M.P. for Kinabalu — i.e., representing the constituency of Ranau and Tambunan.) His place was taken over by Yassin, the defeated candidate in the 1967 election at Tenom. A by-election in the constituency of Ranau was held during this period in order to give Yassin a chance to become one of Tun Mustapha's Cabinet Ministers. It was thought that Yassin's experience as an administrator, as a former appointed member of the Legislative Council in the colonial administration, would be an advantage to the USNO-SCA coalition government. Yassin, like Tun Mustapha was at one time a native chief of the first class, and was entitled to be called O.K.K. and later he was promoted to A.D.O. (Assistant District Officer). Just before Malaysia was formed, he was amongst the first few "bumiputras" to be promoted to District Officer. Yassin briefly entertained the idea of joining UNKO,

Stephens' party, but in the end decided to join USNO, the Muslim party of Tun Mustapha. Besides Yassin's apparently good qualifications as a Minister, he had to be "rewarded" for his financial and moral contributions to the USNO party during the USNO-UPKO rivalries in 1965-1967.¹⁴

The period between 1968 and 1970 was also a period of reorganisation. To begin with, most USNO Malay politicians had to be contented with the idea that Syed Kechik seemed there to remain. The USNO party needed reorganisation not only at the branch but also at the divisional level. There were only 32 constituencies. However USNO had more than 32 divisions, and for this reason, the number of divisional committees were cut down to 32. Direct communication between branch committees and the USNO head office was also stopped. All branch committees from henceforth had to go through their respective divisions who in turn would communicate whatever problems there were at grass root level to the headquarters. Membership dues were also collected for the first time.

The 1969 Parliamentary Election

The year 1969 was the Federal Parliament election year. Tun Mustapha had promised Tun Razak to deliver all 16 seats in the Federal Parliament and he was not going to be distracted from his promise. He was after all fast becoming the "super-federalist" in Kuala Lumpur political circles. He was doing more for Malay nationalism in Sabah than some UMNO leaders were able to do in the Malayan Peninsula. He seemed to think that if he could show that he had the total support of the electorate, it would enhance further the notion that he had the right to rule Sabah. Ross-Larson seemed to have an insight into Tun Mustapha when he wrote:¹⁵

He could not tolerate dissidence, perhaps reflecting personal insecurities about his capability to govern, and he preferred instead to rule autocratically. He wanted to dominate the British still residing in Sabah in the same way the British once dominated him. This spilled over into his desire to rule the people of Sabah with equal domination. He had the British model for emulation and anything less than its full realisation would have left him dissatisfied.

Tun Mustapha's advisor, Syed Kechik, also wanted total victory, but

14. Datuk Yassin's eldest son was married to Tun Mustapha's eldest daughter.

15. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

for a different reason. He wanted to see that the Grand Alliance had a two-thirds majority in the Federal Parliament to ensure the smooth passing of any constitutional amendments necessary. There was also the delicate timber negotiations which he had initiated recently which would allow the state government to take over some large tracts of timber land from foreign companies. He did not want any Independents jeopardising this negotiation. Then as advised by the third "inner-circle" group who advised Tun Mustapha, Rozan Kuntum, Sabah then would be in a strong position to negotiate for better and larger federal funds for development projects in Sabah.

Before nomination day, all election agents in the 16 constituencies were issued with a check-list of what to expect and how to scrutinise the nomination papers of candidates. The object of the exercise was to acquaint election agents of the Alliance how and what to see as "irregularities" and how to object with a view to disqualifying the opposition candidates from even contesting. Loyal district officers were installed in each nomination centre. They were the returning officers and had the power to accept or refuse nomination papers. On nomination day itself, ten Sabah Alliance candidates were returned unopposed.¹⁶ This meant only in six constituencies would there be a contest.

The Alliance candidates were all selected by Tun Mustapha as the Chairman of the Sabah Alliance party. He had now placed himself permanently as the Chairman of this body. The selection reflected the advice given to him from divisional committees of both the USNO and SCA parties. Constituencies where Kadazans predominated were given to Kadazan candidates — such for example as the Kinabalu constituency given to Gilong, and the Penampang constituency to Tibok, a former UPKO National Council member. The Marudu constituency in the Kudat district was however not given to a former UPKO leader. This seat was given to another Kadazan but who had joined the USNO camp in the 1967 election.

There was no political party opposing the Sabah Alliance at the time. Only Independents stood for the election, and for some of them, it was an opportunity to get something from the Alliance party. As Ongkili described them:¹⁷

16. Some Independent candidates could not even get to the nomination station to present their papers on nomination day as they were 'way-laid' by over-enthusiastic Alliance supporters.

17. James Ongkili, *Modernisation in East Malaysia, 1960-1970*, pp. 71-72.

Those so-called Independents had, with the exception of Yap Pak Leong who defeated Peter Lo in the 1967 election, shown themselves prone to join the winning group after an election. Indeed, an increasing number of East Malaysian politicians were acquiring the tactics of West Malaysian opposition personalities who made good by first strongly criticising the ruling Alliance and subsequently accepting comfortable offers and becoming a member of the ruling group.

The D.A.P. Secretary-General, Lim Kit Siang came to Sabah to help the Independent candidate for Kota Kinabalu. Polling had already finished in West Malaysia and the combined opposition had secured 37 seats. They needed 12 more to block the Alliance from getting the two-thirds majority it required in Parliament. Lim gave an impassioned speech for a Malaysian Malaysia (and against Malay domination), and for the recognition of the four languages as the official language of Malaysia (i.e. Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English). He made his speech at the same time as the May 13 race rioting was taking place in Kuala Lumpur. Such rabble rousing speech in Sabah was not welcomed, and he was expelled from Sabah under Sabah's immigration law.

Polling in Sabah was scheduled for 15 May 1969, but this had to be postponed as on 15 May 1969, a State of Emergency was declared by the federal government. Polling was therefore suspended in both Sabah and Sarawak. Sabah's unopposed ten candidates, however, were sufficient to give the Grand Alliance a majority in Parliament to form the government. Without Sabah's ten seats, the opposition could have claimed that the federal government's actions in response to the riots were taken by a minority government. The Alliance in West Malaysia captured 67 seats and with the ten from Sabah it was more than the 73 needed to have a majority government.

When the state of emergency was declared, Tun Mustapha as the Chief Minister of Sabah, was granted the power of arrest and detention. This power and his control on Sabah's immigration law made him a powerful person in Sabah. After the lifting of the State of Emergency a year later, polling restarted in Sabah and Sarawak in June 1970. When the results were announced on 27 June the Sabah Alliance had won all the remaining six contested seats. One of the six Independents (Marudu) pulled out just before polling day and re-joined the Alliance.¹⁸

18. He was Majuning Majun, now known as Omar Majun. He was a school teacher but resigned to take part in politics. He was UPKO's strong man in Tander in the 1967 election and helped the writer during the election campaign.

The "mopping-up" operation by Syed Kechik was more or less completed insofar as the Kadazans were concerned by 1970. A new era was to emerge, and during the period 1971 to 1974, Syed Kechik as advisor to Tun Mustapha would find that although his power and influence on Tun Mustapha had increased, he was nevertheless getting more and more opposition from USNO's Malay politicians, so that he was forced to resign his post as legal advisor and a member of the Central Executive Committee during this period.

Malays at the Zenith of Power and Control, 1971-1974

By 1971 the Malay hegemony and might in Sabah was at its zenith. Tun Mustapha had the powers of detention and expulsion of people from Sabah, and during this period his Islamisation zeal was uppermost in his policy. He used his detention power and control over immigration in Sabah to detain and expel Christian priests or any other person whom he thought was not toeing the Alliance line. He had the means to muffle dissent and remove all obstructions to his governance. Thus, soon after receiving detention powers, a number of people were detained, including Yap Pak Leong and, a big blow to Khoo Siak Chiew, his own brother, Khoo Tao Chiew. This was Tun Mustapha's first taste of near absolute power and marked a turning point in the style of his rule.

Perhaps the most important event in 1971 insofar as Tun Mustapha was concerned was Tun Stephens' decision to embrace the Islamic faith. Tun Stephens was not the first one to do this, however. The "honour" must go to Matakim — then Andrew Matakim, the former UPKO Assemblyman for Langkon. He was the first Kadazan politician to embrace the Islamic faith, together with his wife and children.¹⁹ The United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA) inaugurated in mid-1969 with Syed Kechik as its Secretary-General was instrumental in establishing branches throughout the state with the object of spreading the Islamic faith.

What is important is that soon after USIA became a strong organisation especially in the rural areas of Sabah, Matakim was amongst the

19. Datuk Idrus Matakim was known as Andrew Matakim before his conversion to the Islamic faith. He came from Penampang but moved to Kudat in the 1960s just before the 1967 election. He was a Christian before joining the Islamic religion.

first of the former ex-UPKO Christians to become one.²⁰ Matakim became very active in bringing new converts to the Islamic faith, enhancing the work of USIA's missionary work.²¹

There was no connection, however, between Matakim's conversion and that of Tun Stephens. The latter embraced Islam on 5 January 1971. After his conversion ceremony Tun Stephens told the press that he had considered becoming Muslim because of the close ties he and his family had with Tun Mustapha. He added that he and Tun Mustapha were "blood brothers" when they pricked their fingers and mixed their blood in August 1959.²²

After Tun Stephens became Muslim the stage was set for USIA and Tun Mustapha to force other people to convert too. There was no strong opposition leader, or a strong spokesman for the Christian or Kadazan community then. Tun Stephens himself came to Tun Mustapha's defence on several occasions when the latter was accused of forcing people to become Muslim. Like Matakim before him, he too became a "St Paul" for the Muslim faith. In fairness to Tun Stephens, however, he did not try to pressure any of his former "boys", such as Mojuntin and Luping, to follow him in his new faith. Indeed, on one occasion, during an USNO Executive Committee meeting, he sided with Luping when the latter was rebuked by Tun Mustapha for not following the "general trend" and becoming a Muslim.

Tun Stephens, however, did try and explain his action to Mojuntin and Luping. Neither Mojuntin nor Luping attended the conversion ceremony in Tun Mustapha's house on the night of 5 January 1971 although they were invited by a special invitation in the name of the Chief Minister. It had indeed become a standard practice that all Ministers, Assistant Ministers, heads of departments and other influential people of all religious affiliations were invited by the Chief Minister to his house for important conversion ceremonies. Needless to say, full publicity, including television coverage, was given to the conversion ceremony.

Two days after the conversion ceremony, Tun Stephens called both Mojuntin and Luping to a game of golf in the morning. It was an embarrassing

20. The central theme of Margaret Clark-Roff's book *Politics of Belonging* was Malayanisation and Islamisation for the Sabah and Sarawak peoples. There is a great deal of truth in this thesis as will be seen in our discussion on assimilation in a later chapter.

21. Some of Matakim's critics said that when he became a Muslim he was very rough on the Christians, particularly on the foreign missionaries in Sabah.

22. *Sabah Times*, 6 January 1971.

moment for all concerned. The writer and Mojuntin had discussed the matter between them prior to meeting Tun Stephens. They decided that to avoid embarrassment they had to inform Tun Stephens at the outset, and before he broached the subject of Islam, that they did not intend to follow his example of becoming Muslim. When this was conveyed to Tun Stephens, he was quiet and said something about "bumiputra" unity. He did not go any further on the subject, however. Mojuntin, however, had the impression that Tun Stephens was not serious as a Muslim and that his becoming one was just another step to get closer to Tun Mustapha with a view to getting back at him later. Luping, however, did not have this impression. It was possible that Tun Stephens had spoken to Mojuntin about this aspect of his becoming Muslim when Luping was not with them.

On the other hand, Tun Mustapha did try to ask both Luping and Mojuntin to embrace Islam. Before Stephens became Muslim, Luping was called to Tun Mustapha's office. He was informed that he was to relinquish his *Sabah Times* post as Managing Director and to take over the Sabah Ports Authority as its Chairman. At the same time he told Luping that Tun Stephens was getting closer ("repat" was the word used - meaning closer) to him as a "brother" and expressed the hope that Luping too would do the same. Luping had no prior knowledge of Tun Stephens becoming a Muslim. He was therefore unable to understand Tun Mustapha's reference to Tun Stephens' "getting closer" to him as "a brother". In fact Luping misunderstood Tun Mustapha completely. He thought that he was referring to the Kadazan community as a whole adopting his leadership just as Tun Stephens was now doing. Tun Mustapha also mentioned to Luping that he had had words with Mojuntin on the same issue. But like Luping, he too did not understand Tun Mustapha's meaning of "getting closer". Tun Stephens kept his impending conversion very secret.

Tun Stephens' conversion to the Islamic faith was a shock — and indeed a traumatic experience to many of his fellow Christians. Mojuntin and Luping were demoralised, and after the initial shock, they expressed anger.²³

It was therefore probably because of this reaction that Mojuntin tried to form the USAP party. It was more an expression of anger directed chiefly at Tun Mustapha and the USIA. He wrote a letter to Tun Razak and

23. Many of Tun Stephens' Christian friends and supporters in the erstwhile UPKO party were demoralised. One former UPKO leader from the interior told this writer that he burnt all of Tun Stephens' photographs.

copied it to many people accusing Tun Mustapha of persecuting the Christians, running a police state and covering up dishonesty with dishonesty. In February 1971 he announced in Kuala Lumpur he was forming a political party to be known as the Union of Sabah People (USAP). The anger directed at Tun Mustapha could also have been aimed at Tun Stephens. When Mojuntin announced his intention to form USAP, he also claimed that he was backed by many ex-UPKO members and Chinese people.

This is how Bedlington described Mojuntin's action:²⁴

Following the anti-Christian discriminatory campaign and the Muslim missionary crusade of the early 1970s, Peter Mojuntin, a young Roman Catholic Kadazan politician announced in March 1971 that he would seek permission to register a new political party in Sabah, to be called the Partai Persatuan Raya Sabah - the Union of Sabah People's Party (USAP) in opposition to the Alliance. Mojuntin bitterly attacked the USIA for its arrogance and crudity in seeking converts to Islam. As well as exerting pressure on educated non-Muslims, Mojuntin claimed that the USIA's paid canvassers had penetrated into the remote jungle areas of the hill peoples where they had become even more reckless....

Mojuntin actually announced the formation of USAP on Friday 18 February 1971, and not in March.²⁵ When Mojuntin made the announcement at a press conference, he did not mention who were with him in the new party — except to say that "it will represent all the peoples of Sabah". With him at the press conference were Lim Kit Siang, the D.A.P. Secretary-General and Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the President of the Sarawak National Party (SNAP).

Soon after this announcement, the USNO party announced that Mojuntin was expelled from it.²⁶ The USNO press statement said that a USNO working committee had met to discuss Mojuntin's action of forming an opposition party and said that if this was true, then it was decided unanimously to expel him with immediate effect. The statement continued:

Mr Mojuntin since becoming a member (on 4 September 1968) had never made any official complaint in writing to the party, except in the press about his dissatisfaction with the activities of the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA) after becoming the Chairman of the Parish Council.... Like any other political party which had existed in Sabah previously it will surely collapse after a brief existence and adventure in the political arena.

24. Stanley B. Bedlington, *Malaysia and Singapore*, pp. 159-160.

25. *Sabah Times*, 19 February 1971.

26. *Ibid.*, 22 February 1971.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review*²⁷ speculated that the new party would be supported by ex-UPKO leaders and mostly Kadazans. Mojuntin's intention to form an opposition party, however, was shortlived. It did not even reach the registration stage. One writer suggested that Mojuntin was placed under a psychological threat as well as given material inducements. He wrote:²⁸

Subjected to unknown but undoubtedly intense pressures (a mixture of psychological threats and material inducements) Mojuntin quickly withdrew his application to register the proposed new party....He simply stated that "some people will be disappointed and some will be happy with this decision".

Another writer wrote:²⁹

Then mysteriously, the moves to form USAP were aborted. Somehow Tun Mustapha brought Mojuntin back into line, and the young Kadazan idealist was destined once again to be the USNO Member for Moyog.

The material gain mentioned by Bedlington seemed to be accurate. Mojuntin mentioned to Luping about some 10,000 acres of timber to be allocated to him by the Nabahu Co. Ltd. He was then explaining to Luping the reason why he should be given a further number of shares in the Nabahu Co. Ltd. Apparently, Gilong had questioned this allocation of shares to Mojuntin and as a result Tun Stephens had to explain to Tun Mustapha in a letter written on 21 August 1972, when he was High Commissioner for Malaysia to Australia.³⁰ It was surprising, however, that Gilong should question this allocation of Nabahu Co. Ltd.'s shares to Mojuntin as he was apparently present in Tun Mustapha's house when Tun directed his brother Alliudden and Abdul Momen to promise Mojuntin the allocation of some timber area.³¹

The odds were against Mojuntin in his attempt to form an opposition party. To begin with, he did not canvass the opinion of all ex-UPKO leaders. The writer in any case was not consulted about the proposed party. Mojuntin seemed to have taken it for granted that many Kadazan leaders — especially the Christians, would rally to his call. This was

27. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 February 1971.

28. Stanley S. Bedlington, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

29. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

30. *Sabah Times*, 11 August 1975.

31. Datuk Ghani Gilong told this writer that Tun Mustapha told those present how to deal with the Kadazan leaders: not to give them too much as they might get rich and become a powerful enemy, nor to give too little as they could also become an enemy.

typical of Mojuntin as he also took many things for granted in the pre-1967 election period.

Perhaps the man who really dissuaded Mojuntin from leaving USNO was Tun Stephens himself. He said so in his letter of 21 August 1972 to Tun Mustapha. Stephens was by now in Australia, but he communicated often with the "old ex-UPKO boys", and also visited Sabah quite often on his own, to keep tabs on what was going on in Sabah. The letter clearly showed that he had his hand in getting one of his "boys" in line and in tune with Tun Mustapha's wishes. In his long letter (in the form of a report) he wrote, *inter alia*:

In relation to Peter Mojuntin. The truth is that he had sold all his shares to Nabahu last year when we *refused* to accept him in the company. Adik (younger brother - meaning himself) had bought the shares. After that he withdrew himself from USAP and adik believes that abang (elder brother - meaning Tun Mustapha) *had agreed to extend the licence of Nabahu in order to give another chance to Peter.* As such adik had agreed to sell to him all adik's saham (shares) in Nabahu other than the 150 shares which adik had transferred to my son Johari. The shares of which abang had come to know about which are in Peter's name were the shares which adik had also recently transferred to him and the share-holders of Nabahu had also recently agreed to increase the shares which should be given to Peter because they thought that that was what abang wants them to do, and forest land which was granted annually to Nabahu would not be granted to Nabahu had it not been for Peter. This is the truth about Nabahu and Peter. Adik gives you this explanation not with the view to defend Peter but adik wants abang to have the real picture.

In short, Peter was at first forced out of Nabahu Co. Ltd.³² His share was purchased by Tun Stephens in cash at considerable value and in return he was asked to withdraw USAP's formation. Then in the Kuala Lumpur agreement with Alliuddin and Momen, Mojuntin was given a further allocation of shares (which he believed was the equivalent of 10,000 acres altogether) from Nabahu Co. Ltd.'s concession area. The Nabahu Co. Ltd.'s timber coup and licence was extended to accommodate Mojuntin's shares in the company. Tun Stephens then re-sold his shares in Nabahu Co. Ltd. to Mojuntin.

Tun Stephens had not only become Tun Mustapha's strongest ally: he also had become his "spy" on the ex-UPKO boys. The same letter to Tun

32. Datuk Peter Mojuntin was one of the life directors of Nabahu Company Ltd. - the timber company of Tun Stephens.

Mustapha, for example, continued:³³

Recently, adik had tried to fish out information from Peter to ascertain whether he is still in secret contact with USAP members and he swears that he had no contact whatsoever with USAP and that was why whenever he goes visiting people he had always with him at least one USNO stalwart to avoid any misunderstanding. Despite this fact, adik is of the opinion that these youths should be watched closely. Especially Herman (Luping) because he is more cunning than Peter and is smart enough to hide his real feelings and one of the notorious hypocrites. As far as adik knows, Herman is very close to malabar (a derogatory term used for Yassin as he was quite dark) in business and perhaps in many other matters including politics.

The USAP party, however, was formed but not with Mojuntin as its leader. It was formed by some disparate people, a mixture of Kadazans and other races. The purpose it would appear was to "cash in" in the coming second general election scheduled for October 1971.

The 1971 State General Election

The USAP party was formed in preparation for the snap state election in October 1971. The acronym "USAP" stood for the "United Sabah Action Party". This name was chosen as if it was linked to the "Democratic Action Party" in West Malaysia and the "Peoples Action Party" in Singapore. But there was no direct relationship however. By May 1971, the leaders of USAP announced that they would be registering the new party to stand against the Sabah Alliance during the October 1971 election. Tun Mustapha, still vested with the power of detention however was unconcerned with any opposition moves as he was confident that the Alliance would be returned with no problem. He wanted to win in all 32 seats, however. A writer suggested that Tun Mustapha was confident "of getting all 32 seats and unconcerned with opposition moves as he would simply have the instigators locked up at nomination time".³⁴

Syed Kechik, once more, was in the forefront in preparations for the 1971 election. As was done in the 1967 state elections and 1969 parliamentary elections, Syed Kechik had all election agents gathered together and given lectures as to their duties and obligation to the party. They

33. Tun Stephens was probably over-dramatic in his presentation of his former 'boys' to Tun Mustapha. None was planning anything against Tun Mustapha.

34. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 128.

were taught once more what to look for in the nomination papers and how to lodge objections to the returning officers with a view to nullifying the opposition's candidates' papers. Further, Syed Kechik also devised a plan to obstruct or block the more talented ones from reaching the nomination centres on nomination day. On 18 September, some 70 USNO dissidents, mostly former UPKO members, were ready to join the new party USAP or to stand as Independents. Some of the more talented were persuaded however to go on a holiday tour of Southeast Asia, including Tokyo and Taipeh on all expenses paid by the USNO party. On 19 October 1971, 53 of these would-be opposition candidates were on their way to Bangkok and on 20 September, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved with nomination day set down for 2 October 1971 and voting scheduled to begin on 21 October 1971.

As we noted earlier, by the end of 1968, most of the former UPKO leaders had been accepted into the USNO fold. Some ex-UPKO leaders like Mojuntin, Gilong, Stephens, Luping, Gimbad and Koroh were inducted into the USNO Central Executive Committee by 1969, so that there was indeed a mixture of Malays and Kadazans in USNO's highest governing body. The Malays of course predominated in numbers.

A meeting of the Sabah Alliance National Council was called and as Tun Mustapha was now the "Tunku Abdul Rahman" of Sabah who had complete control and power of selection of candidates, the Alliance meeting was a mere formality. The other matter to be discussed at the meeting, however, concerned the allocation of money for the election campaign funds. It was decided that the bulk of the campaign funds should be provided by the USNO party, but the SCA was to contribute about one-third of the funds needed. As it turned out, however, very little money was expended during this election as all 32 candidates were returned unopposed. One writer commented:³⁵

Little can be said of party politics in Sabah between 1967 and 1975, since the process was not allowed to exist outside of Tun Mustapha's Sabah Alliance.

In the line up of candidates for the 1971 election, however, the Kadazans were well represented. There were 11 Kadazans/Muruts selected, four SCA and 17 Malays. The 11 seats given to the Kadazans were the same seats and number requested by the UPKO party as a compromise in the

35. A. Sullivan and C. Leong (eds), *Commemorative History of Sabah, 1881-1981*, pp. 152-153.

abortive 1967 Alliance party meeting. Had the USNO-SCA agreed to this compromise number of seats asked for by UPKO the Kadazan party would still have been with the Alliance as a party.

The changes made by Tun Mustapha insofar as the Kadazan candidates were concerned were that Yassin was given the Sipitang constituency and Harris, Labuan. The Ranau constituency which was won by Yassin in a by-election after Gilong's resignation to accept a Federal Cabinet post, was returned to a Kadazan candidate — the cousin of Gilong. Jimmy Malis, however, was not nominated as a candidate. Tun Mustapha explained that he was "too young and inexperienced". The constituency of Labuk was given to a Malay. Tanjong Aru, however, was allocated to a Kadazan (Luping). SCA's Lee Vui Min retired. Luping's constituency of Tandek was allocated to another Kadazan.

Former UPKO leaders like Mojuntin, Gilong and Luping were also co-opted to the enlarged Sabah Alliance Council and Central Executive committee. Tun Stephens must have been very happy to see that his "boys" were not forgotten in the 1971 line-up and that those who were dropped were given alternative jobs. Malis, for example, was made a political secretary to a Minister.

The loser in the 1971 line-up appeared to be the SCA party. Whereas they were allocated six seats in 1967, the party was allocated only four in 1971. Khoo Siak Chiew was not a candidate as he was retired by then. In the allocation of the six nominated seats in the Legislative Assembly, the SCA was given only one. Again the Kadazans were well represented in the nominated seats in the Legislative Assembly.

When the Assembly was dissolved on 20 September 1971 and nomination day was announced for 3 October, the USAP was taken by complete surprise. They had not yet received official registration for their party, and many of their key people were away somewhere in Southeast Asia on a holiday tour. It seemed unlikely that approval for the registration of the party would be immediately forthcoming from the Registrar of Societies in Kuala Lumpur. They had no choice but to file as Independents.³⁶ Many of these Independents knew that the exercise was futile. Many too feared detention and many therefore deliberately sabotaged their nomination papers. A number of candidates deliberately entered the line allocated for their names thus: "I wish to be described on the ballot paper as a sheaf of padi". They were naturally disqualified. Some nomination papers

36. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-129.

had no seconders or were without the requisite statutory declaration. Ross-Larson described the election as a non-event. He wrote:³⁷

The election was a non-event, but one that was to have great repercussions. USNO and SCA candidates were returned unopposed in all 32 constituencies. This raised suspicious eyebrows in Kuala Lumpur and the press, reinforcing claims of Tun Mustapha's resorting to totalitarian methods. The suspicions were not entirely unfounded - a few opposition candidates had indeed been thrown in jail and one opposition candidate had the attache case containing his nomination papers pinched as he made his way to the nomination centre. Nevertheless, Tun Mustapha got what he wanted, the entire vote. He had the total mandate he had been searching for, albeit totally without substance, insofar as nobody voted.

The USAP, when it was finally registered in 1972, was itself short-lived. USNO's big guns made sure of that. Tun Mustapha's brother Alliuddin condemned it as "divisive" and it had no chance. Gilong, too, condemned it as leaderless when he spoke to the Ranau people. Dzulkifli simply called it a party of "ex-UPKO defeated candidates" in the 1967 election. Mojuntin, although also dissociating himself from the party, advised caution to Dzulkifli and requested that UPKO's name be not mentioned again as the party was defunct. He said it was not politically wise to harp on the name UPKO.³⁸

After the election, it was time to appoint the new Cabinet Ministers. Out of nine Cabinet Ministers (including the Chief Minister), seven Malays were appointed Ministers, all occupying the important posts, one Chinese and one Kadazan. That Kadazan was a turncoat, the renegade of 1967, Payar Juman. Syed Kechik did not forget his promise. The Kadazan and Murut communities, the largest in the state, and represented only a few years before by a very strong United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Organisation were relegated and occupied only secondary roles: seven were made Assistant Ministers. The Kadazans, after the brief hope and expectation of 1963 and 1964 — during the height of Tun Stephens reign as Chief Minister, suddenly found themselves once more the governed, and not the governors.

The positions given to the ex-UPKO politicians were secondary and second-class, but even so it was not easy for Tun Mustapha to convince young Malay hopefuls that to ignore the Kadazans altogether was not

37. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

38. For accounts on the USAP party see the *Sabah Times* issues of 12, 16, 17, 19 and 24 June 1972.

politically wise. It was better that some ex-UPKO leaders were put under Tun Mustapha's wing. In that way, he argued, it was easier for the USNO advisors to watch them closely. And they were constantly watched — their various movements monitored and reported. Even Tun Stephens himself became one of the "monitors" and he reported to Tun Mustapha from time to time the various activities of his former "old boys".

If the Kadazans thought that they were badly represented in the governing of the state, the Chinese party was placed in an even worse position. Now that the "bumiputras" were under one party, they had lost their "balancer" position. There was now only one Chinese full Minister and one Assistant Minister. There was also only one nominated member of the Assembly. Suddenly the Chinese found themselves superfluous and uninfluential.

Perhaps the person who gained the most for his work during the hectic days of USNO-UPKO rivalries was Dzulkifli. He was appointed as Assemblyman and was given the important post of Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister. He was very close to the centre of power, and in some cases, it was said that he was "the power". The association of three important persons who were the advisors of Tun Mustapha, Syed Kechik, Dzulkifli and Rozan Kuntum was strengthened even further. Needless to say, Syed Kechik's power and influence was even more enhanced as he positioned himself firmly behind the "throne".³⁹

But this interlude of power, control and influence could not last indefinitely. Some other ambitious Malays could not be made to remain in the wings always. Some were therefore openly critical of Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli's monopoly on Tun Mustapha's patronage. The result of this was an open confrontation. Syed Kechik was forced to resign as a member of the USNO Central Executive Committee, and later, as Secretary of the Sabah Land Development Board. Other young and ambitious Malays thought that the position of Executive Director of the powerful Sabah Foundation should be enough to occupy Syed Kechik's time.

At one time the confrontation between Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli on the one hand and Alliuddin, Harris and the other Malay Ministers on the other was so fierce, that for a while it was thought that the very foundations

39. Apparently there were occasions when Cabinet Ministers had to go to his office to discuss policy matters and not the other way round, he was so powerful a man in Sabah at that time.

of the USNO party were coming apart.⁴⁰ Even Tun Stephens tried to intervene in this open confrontation. He wrote a letter to Tun Mustapha while he was in Canberra and tried to explain that Alliuddin's action in relation to Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli was not out of jealousy for these two, but out of fear that Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli were only using his name for their own ends. The letter was written in August 1972. Somehow Tun Mustapha managed to pacify the warring factions in USNO. He seemed to side with the Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli faction at the time, but as pressure was mounted against these two people, Tun Mustapha began to have doubts about them too.⁴¹

As the years went by, Tun Mustapha himself became more and more confident of himself and his interests too had varied. He was less and less in Sabah, and more and more in Europe and elsewhere. In his absence, however, Sabah seemed to be under the control of Syed Kechik and this made the people even more angry. The Ministers were powerless and no important decisions could be made as the Chief Minister was not there. Cabinet rarely met. Syed Kechik through the use of Tun Mustapha's name and awesome power, was now truly entrenched. Tun Mustapha's visits to London and Europe became longer and more frequent. This must have suited Syed Kechik well.

When Tun Mustapha left for Europe or arrived from his "European tour" Syed Kechik would be at the airport to send him off or meet him along with all the State Ministers and Assistant Ministers. All senior government servants would also be there to meet or send off Tun Mustapha. As Tun Mustapha was very meticulous about dress sense, everyone, including senior civil servants must have their suits ready and kept in the office. Senior civil servants too would be spending more and more time in Kuala Lumpur, and although there were direct flights to Kuala Lumpur from Kota Kinabalu most would prefer to go via Singapore and spend a few days in that island republic, either to buy more suits or spend lavishly at the

40. Datuk Alliuddin, the younger brother of Tun Mustapha, obtained the signatures of some top USNO leaders petitioning Tun Mustapha to put his trust in the party's leaders rather than on a few advisors. When Tun Mustapha was confronted with the choice of which side to choose, apparently he opted for his advisors.

41. In an interview with Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid, he told this writer that Tun Mustapha started to make mistakes when he ignored his advice and that of Syed Kechik. He said it was the beginning of the end of the USNO party and of Tun Mustapha's rule in the state. Interview with Datuk Dzulkifli on 12 April 1984.

various night clubs in that country.⁴² Sabahans in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore were known for their big spending and Chinese businessmen were quick to take advantage of this. Senior Malay civil servants and politicians who had not been awarded the "Datukship" paraded themselves as "Datuks", just to satisfy their egos when they were away in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Back in Sabah, however, it was tough going for Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. USNO's politicians and Ministers did not like to see the Kechik-Dzulkifli clique becoming more and more powerful. The USNO Malay leaders started fighting amongst themselves and this fighting spilled over in the newspapers.

Tun Mustapha naturally became angry and decided to put his foot down. In a tough speech delivered at the wedding ceremony of his adopted daughter, Tun Mustapha told the "warring USNO Malay leaders" to stop the newspaper war of words or face the prospect of being expelled from the party.⁴³ He said:⁴⁴

Whoever amongst the USNO leaders who seeks for his individual influence and publicity without due regard to the welfare of his brothers-in-arms in USNO is a traitor to whatever USNO stands for....I demand that the leader resign from USNO and vacate his office. Tonight is one of the happiest nights in my life on the occasion of the wedding. Such happiness should not logically be tempered with unwelcome news and incidents. Regretfully it cannot be as one wishes and it is unavoidable. Lately, that is on June 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 the newspapers had been carrying news of some unhealthy activities which had taken place. I, as President of USNO, SANYA and as the Chief Minister regret having to read the accusations and counter-accusations, mud-slingsings and comments launched by leaders of SANYA USNO Youths and the leaders of USNO in general.

He ordered that there should be no more press releases or press statements from any quarter.

42. After the fall of the USNO party in the 1976 election, Tun Mustapha asked for an honest opinion as to the real causes of the party's bad election results. One of the USNO leaders present listed a long list of causes and amongst these were 'ostentatious' living by USNO officials and civil servants themselves were not attentive to their work as they spent far too much time pleasing the politicians and the senior civil servants spent too much time in Kuala Lumpur.

43. *Sabah Times*, 1 July 1972.

44. For further accounts on the intra-USNO rivalries see the *Sabah Times* issues of 26, 29 and 31 July 1972 and 2 August 1972. See also the issues of the *Daily Express* of 1 and 3 August 1972.

In the long battle for supremacy amongst Malay leaders within USNO, it was inevitable that one side should fall. The Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli faction was just too strong. Dzulkifli, by 1973, was openly advocating one religion, one language and one culture. Other languages in Radio Sabah — such as Kadazan and Chinese were abolished and there was a fetish about Bahasa Malaysia signboards in front of all shops to replace the Chinese characters and Chinese names. The people in general were quiet, but angry. The first to fall in the long duel, however, was Harris. He could not work together with the Syed Kechik clique and he resigned as Minister of Industrial Development. He at first went to take up law study but then he decided to return to Sabah to concentrate on his business.

The USNO 10th Anniversary

This celebration was spread over seven days — from 28 July to 3 August 1972. Dignitaries from West Malaysia — Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister, Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, other Federal Ministers and also guests from abroad were invited as witnesses to the fun fairs, the parades, the banquets and many other shows arranged for the occasion. The guests from abroad were mostly ex-colonial administrators. The former State Secretary, R.N. Turner came, but the former governor, Sir William Goode could not come. The stage was then set for the big occasion and it is not hard to imagine that Tun Mustapha took the centre stage.

At the opening ceremony on 28 July 1972, Tun Mustapha pledged more development to be undertaken — especially in the field of agriculture. He said his government was determined to speed up development under the second Malaysia Plan. He also urged non-"bumiputra" businessmen to co-operate and assist "bumiputras" so that the government efforts to restructure society would be successful. He pledged that USNO would always work closely with the UMNO party.

A mammoth rally took place in the town padang (central grassed square) on August 1, in which representatives of USNO from all divisions and branches were present dressed in their respective traditional costumes. Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak were the guests of honour during this mammoth rally. Together with the hundreds of other dignitaries and invited guests, they heard Tun Mustapha pledge Sabah's continued confidence in Malaysia and in the leaders in Kuala Lumpur. There was also a pledge

that Sabah would strive for a unity amongst the various races and to bring this quickly to fruition the Sabah government would pursue a policy of one culture, one language and one religion.

One of the important events of the celebration was the unveiling of the Tunku's monument, especially erected by the state government of Sabah in honour of the Prime Minister. The monument was in the form of a statue of the Tunku in bronze. The statue is twice life-size. It shows the Tunku as a man of goodwill, wisdom and vision holding the documents of "Merdeka" (freedom) and Malaysia. On either side of the statue are two bronze plaques, showing the Tunku signing the Malaysia Agreement. With the Tunku in the bronze plates are Tun Tan Siew Sin, Tun Sambathan, Tun Mustapha, Tun Stephens and of course, Tun Razak. Tun Mustapha in his speech, explained that the Tunku monument was a special tribute to the Tunku as the founder of Malaysia and for "successfully freeing the states from the handcuffs of the colonialists". He said during the colonial era the people were divided, but the leadership provided by the Tunku made it possible for the people to unite. The then Federation of Malaya was able successfully to build a "magic bridge" across the South China Sea to bring within its fold the two East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak under "one umbrella which is Malaysia", he said. He also announced that four other monuments would be built: Tun Razak's monument in Sandakan, Tun Ismail's in Keningau and Tun Tan Siew Sin's in Labuan. These four monuments, however, were never erected. Tun Razak's speech at the ceremony was full of compliments for the Tunku but more for Tun Mustapha. He described him as "the father of the independence of Sabah within Malaysia". He expressed the hope that the people of Sabah would one day erect a monument for Tun Mustapha. He also expressed great satisfaction in regard to state-federal relationships.

Tun Razak's mention of a monument for Tun Mustapha in Sabah was probably in reference to the earlier proposal by the Sabah Alliance Committee to build a national monument in honour of Tun Mustapha. The idea for a Tun Mustapha National Monument was first mooted on 21 August 1970. The idea was "to erect a national column in appreciation of the invaluable services rendered to the country by the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha".⁴⁵ The foundation stone of the column was to be laid on Malaysia's National Day, 31 August 1970. It was, however, hard to get

45. Minutes of meeting of community leaders (Alliance party leaders) to discuss the erection of a national column in honour of Tun Mustapha, dated 21 August 1970. The minutes are with the writer.

Tun Mustapha's approval for this project. He simply did not reply when contacted in England. The committee went ahead with the laying down of the foundation stone. It was performed by Said Keruak, the Minister of Agriculture who normally acted as the Acting Chief Minister in the absence of Tun Mustapha. The foundation stone, a big block of river granite was placed in the roundabout in front of the proposed site for the state mosque. Tun Mustapha never agreed to having a monument built on his behalf however. He said it was against the Muslim religion to have a statue erected when the person was still alive. Probably, Tun Mustapha was just superstitious as the Tunku did not appear to mind when his statue was erected instead. Tunku was then the Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat based in Saudi Arabia after his retirement as Prime Minister.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's monument then was an offshoot of the proposed monument to Tun Mustapha which was never built. The Tunku Abdul Rahman monument cost \$400,000 (Malaysian dollars) and stands in front of the state secretariat in Kota Kinabalu. During the 1975-76 second confrontation between Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha, the justification of the monument was questioned by some Berjaya party members. They thought it was inappropriate and a waste of peoples' taxes. The statue was even smeared with red paint by some unknown persons during the night. Apart from that single incident, however, the statue has remained in its place and is well cared for.

Another important event during the celebrations was the granting of awards and medals to some dignitaries and USNO top officials. Tunku Abdul Rahman was awarded the "Seri Panglima Bapa Kemerdekaan Malaysia" — the highest USNO party award. Tun Razak received the "Seri Panglima Pambungan Malaysia". Tun Mustapha himself received the "Seri Panglima Kemerdekaan Sabah". Stephens, Tun Ismail and Ghazalie Shaffie received the "Seri Pahlawan Kemerdekaan Sabah" award. All these were USNO party awards. Other recipients were Gilong, Harris, Alliuddin and many more.

On 1 August 1972, USNO's Congress was declared opened by the Prime Minister. He praised Tun Mustapha's leadership and expressed great satisfaction at the close relationship between USNO and UMNO. He described Tun Mustapha as a "genuine nationalist, sincere and dynamic". In the election of office bearers for the years 1972-73, which followed, Tun Mustapha was elected President unopposed. Two Kadazans were elected Deputy Presidents: O.K.K. Indan Kari (of Tuaran) and Gilong, a former UPKO Deputy President. Other Kadazans elected were Stephens, Mojuntin,

Luping, Koroh, Matakim, Gimbad, and Ariff Salleh (of Keningau). Although Malays dominated the USNO committee, it was apparent nevertheless that the Kadazans were slowly becoming accepted by the Malays at grass roots level.⁴⁶

The celebration of USNO's 10th anniversary ended with high hopes for Sabah's future, and indeed for the USNO party. A multi-storey USNO headquarters building was also planned and the foundation-stone laid by the Prime Minister at a special ceremony. The building, to be situated in the heart of Kota Kinabalu was expected to be completed by the end of 1974. However, the proposed building was never erected, although money, reputed to be some \$10,000,000 had been collected for it.⁴⁷

Tun Mustapha was pre-occupied with other matters and beginning with Tun Razak's visit to Peking in May 1974, Tun Mustapha had begun his campaign against the federal government. Like Tun Stephens before him in 1965-67 he was now openly questioning Kuala Lumpur's role in Sabah and was critical of some federal leaders. The old arguments about Sabah's state rights and secession once more came out into the open.

Before we turn to the open conflict between Tun Mustapha and Tun Razak and the central government, however, perhaps we should mention another big celebration — Sabah's 10th Independence anniversary within Malaysia. The celebration was held in 1974 to celebrate Malaysia's National Day as well as Sabah's independence through Malaysia. As in the previous celebration of 1972, dignitaries were invited from all over the world — and so were federal ministers from Kuala Lumpur. It was another demonstration of Sabah's continued prosperity and its close relations with Kuala Lumpur. This celebration is mentioned here only because it appears to the writer that an important event involving Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha during this

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46. One incident of some note occurred during a meeting of the USNO Executive Committee to discuss the opening ceremony of USNO's annual congress on 1 August 1972. The question of 'national dress' came up and Tun Mustapha thought that the national dress of Malaysia was the Malay dress and the 'songkok'. He noticed that there were Christians amongst the committee members and he got very angry. He thought these Christian members of the USNO party leadership were 'hard-headed' for not becoming Muslim.
47. The USNO proposed building site reverted to government as the premium was not paid. The Berjaya government accepted the application of Tan Sri Said Keruak and his brother-in-law, Datuk Askhar Hasbollah (both former USNO leaders) for the same piece of land. The proposal was for a multi-storey shopping complex and indeed the building construction had started but USNO leaders had taken a court action to stop work as they claimed the USNO party through its leaders had spent money on the reclamation and piling of the building site.

celebration must have been one of the deciding factors which made Tun Stephens allow himself to be used by the central government to go all out against Tun Mustapha in 1975 and 1976. It was not long past when Tun Stephens had pledged to Tun Mustapha that he would "follow him from this world to the next".⁴⁸

The incident concerned the expulsion of one of Tun Stephens' European friends from Sabah by Tun Mustapha. The latter ordered the Director of Immigration to cancel the work permit of the European and to expel him from the state within the next 24 hours. The background of the incident was like this:⁴⁹ Tun Mustapha was entertaining a group of golfers in the Golf Club one evening. The golfers were especially invited to participate at the golf tournament as it was one of the anniversary featured events. Tun Stephens was also invited. He passed word that he would be late as he was also invited by another club. Just before Tun Stephens arrived, Tun Mustapha was explaining the need for discipline and respect for elders and for authority by the younger people, especially those in the army and police force. He was actually directing this lecture to a senior police officer. The police officer seemed to be too familiar with Tun Stephens and to Tun Mustapha, he seemed cheeky. He kept on referring to Stephens as the H.E. (His Excellency) or "Don" (short for Donald - Tun Stephens' Christian name) in his conversation. Tun Mustapha rebuked the officer on this and reminded him that the Head of State, even if he was not present should always be respected and honoured. He said he was the representative of the King, and his position must therefore be respected. He also told the police officer and those near him that the "orang puteh" managed to maintain discipline because of their respect for position and rank. He said no person, especially an Asian would dare to mention the whiteman's governor by his first name especially amongst police officers. He did not see any reason why Asian officers should not be just as respectful to their own people who had now taken over the reign of leadership from the whiteman. Up to this point, Tun Mustapha was not angry.

Tun Mustapha was of course well known for being a stickler for protocol and was always impeccably dressed. He never tolerated tardiness. Just when Tun Mustapha finished his "lecture" on discipline, respect and good manners, Tun Stephens arrived. He was dressed in evening suit with

48. Letter from Tun Stephens to Tun Mustapha in 1971 shortly after he embraced the Islamic religion.

49. The writer was a witness to the incident. The writer was the organiser of the golf tournament as part of the 10th anniversary celebrations.

black tie and he was accompanied by a group of Europeans who were similarly dressed. This was quite a contrast to Tun Mustapha's guests who were only dressed informally. The Europeans with Tun Stephens were committee members of the Sports Club — the club for the whitemen during the colonial days. This club was off bounds to the local people — as natives were not allowed to enter the premises — except of course if they were bar boys or servants.

However, one of the Europeans, a senior employee of an international firm in Kota Kinabalu approached Tun Mustapha and asked him whether he could come and declare open the club's premises extension. It was the way that this European made this request that probably irritated Tun Mustapha. He interrupted him while he was still talking to someone else. The European also seemed to ignore everyone around him. He only had his attention on Tun Mustapha, and every time Tun Mustapha turned in order to include those around him in the conversation the same person would block Tun Mustapha's move and present his back to the others. These others who were talking to Tun Mustapha before the European's arrival were Ministers, Assistant Ministers and senior civil servants. The European was also a tall man, well above six feet and he over-towered Tun Mustapha. When he spoke to the latter, he seemed to be looking down on him. The European obviously did not realise that Tun Mustapha was irritated by this brashness on his part. The European therefore tried to be informal and friendly and placed one of his elbows on Tun Mustapha's shoulder. To Tun Mustapha, and to those near him, the European was not just trying to be familiar with the Chief Minister of Sabah: he was also rude and trying to be paternalistic. Tun Mustapha calmly told the European that he had Ministers, Assistant Ministers and also Permanent Secretaries. He advised the European to get in touch with any of these men and he would see whether he had the time to come and declare open the club's premises extension. But the European did not understand. He persisted that only Tun Mustapha was invited to do the honour. The implication was that no one else was acceptable to the Sports Club. Tun Mustapha tried to free himself from the European who still had his elbow on his shoulder, but the European seemed even more persistent. It was at this time that Tun Mustapha got angry and told the man that he was rude. Perhaps Tun Mustapha saw the European as the epitome of the whitemen before him during the colonial days who seemed to consider the Asiatics as inferior people. He called on the Director of Immigration and told him

to send him away from Sabah. He said Sabah did not need a person like him.

At this stage, Tun Stephens who was a little distance away from where Tun Mustapha was, came and when he heard about the expulsion order of his European friend, he was visibly shaken. He excused himself and told Tun Mustapha that he wanted to go back home. He was quite polite and Tun Mustapha was equally polite. In fact the writer had the distinct impression that Tun Mustapha did not know that Tun Stephens was angry and hurt. As he entered his waiting car, Tun Stephens muttered something about ill-treatment and wondered how much more of this he could take. He was clearly very angry.

Later, Tun Stephens' private secretary, Ghani Rashid, phoned the writer and told him that Tun Stephens wanted to resign as Head of State and that Tun Mustapha also wanted to resign as Chief Minister.⁵⁰ He told the writer that on arrival at the Istana, Stephens had written a letter of resignation as Head of State to Tun Mustapha. He told his private secretary that he could not take any more of Tun Mustapha's insults. He asked Ghani to deliver the letter. Ghani did not know what to do. He was very close to both people but he was duty bound to obey the Head of State. But instead of waiting until the morning, he went to Tun Mustapha's residence and woke him up to deliver the letter. Tun Mustapha was angry with him and told him to tell Stephens that if he really wanted to be the Chief Minister, he was ready to resign himself.

The Cabinet Ministers and Assistant Ministers were called early in the morning by the Cabinet Secretary informing them that Tun Mustapha was calling for a Cabinet meeting. However, before the Cabinet met at 10 a.m., the whole misunderstanding between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens was resolved and the celebration went ahead without any further incident.⁵¹ This incident, however, illustrates how fragile was the friendship between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens.⁵²

50. This was the account made by the private secretary to the Head of State to the writer.

51. Tun Stephens' wife intervened in the matter and that was why the misunderstanding between the two Sabah leaders was solved to everyone's relief.

52. There was another incident which occurred at the Istana, also involving Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha. Both this writer and Datuk Yassin were present. Tun Mustapha appeared very angry about something and Tun Stephens was visibly very concerned.

The 1974 Election

The 1974 parliamentary election was another non-event, just as it had been in the state election of 1971. But the 1974 parliamentary elections were probably the beginning of a long chain of events to be decisive in changing the course of Tun Mustapha's political future. For some time since the 1969 parliamentary election and the return to parliamentary democracy, Tun Razak and his "inner circle" had been working on plans to bring about greater unity and consensus amongst the various factions in the country.⁵³

It went almost unnoticed that on 1 June 1974, the Barisan Nasional of Malaysia was registered by the Registrar of Societies as a legal functioning party. Tun Razak was its Chairman with Michael Chen as Secretary and Asri (the PAS President) as the Treasurer. The member parties were: UMNO, MCA, MIC, PAS, PPP, Gerakan, SUPP, PBB, and the Sabah Alliance. This latter, however, hesitated to join as Tun Mustapha thought he could use this as another bargaining point to get his wishes attended to by Tun Razak. The important point to note, however, was that by the time the 1974 parliamentary general election was held, there was virtually no strong opposition left, except the DAP. The delivery of Sabah's 16 parliamentary seats therefore was not as important as it was in 1969 for the new framework of the Barisan Nasional appeared certain to bring in more than the 103 seats required for a two-thirds majority.

Tun Mustapha's advisors were, however, determined to show that the USNO party was very popular and had no dissidents. But underlying this facade, however, was the fear that the SCA with the former ex-UPKO politicians could perhaps join together to defeat USNO. To this extent, the USNO prepared for the 1974 parliamentary election with more vigour as Tun Mustapha wanted to demonstrate to Kuala Lumpur that he was still the number one king-pin in Sabah. The only challenger to the USNO-SCA Alliance was the Pekemas party. Fights between the Alliance and Pekemas supporters had taken place, and in the guise of maintaining order, some Pekemas candidates were rounded up and detained on the morning of nomination day. Others were threatened with arrest and detention. As Ross-Larson described the 1974 parliamentary election:⁵⁴

53. D.K. Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional*, pp. 75-103 gives a good account of the steps taken by Tun Razak to get the PMIP, GERAKAN and SUPP to join in the newly created Grand National Alliance known as the National Front or 'Barisan nasional'.

54. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 157.

When nominations closed at noon, only the Pekemas candidate for Tuaran had lodged his papers successfully, and even he retreated into hiding. Upon him, the competing forces of idealism and expediency were to work until, no longer able to face it all, he too withdrew. Tun Mustapha had once again, with the cooperation of the police, kept dissent off the streets, and delivered his 16 parliamentary seats to the Razak government. But given the new arithmetic of the National Front, his seats were by this time generally superfluous.

For Tun Mustapha, the "winds" were changing against him. His erstwhile strong supporters in the central government were becoming wary of him and were now against him. Tun Mustapha, like Tun Stephens before him in 1965-67, had committed the cardinal sin of championing "states' rights", and to the federal leaders this must not be allowed to take place.

Thus, from 1975 the word was out that Kuala Lumpur was no longer backing Tun Mustapha. In his place, the Kuala Lumpur government was backing a new political party — the Berjaya party. It was the beginning of the end of a "closed party", or communal parties for Sabah, and the beginning of a new era — the rise of an open party, a multi-racial party.

CHAPTER 8

MUSTAPHA'S DOWNFALL AND BERJAYA'S BIRTH, 1976-78

Tun Stephens, the Kadazan leader, returned to become Chief Minister in April 1976. His party, Berjaya, a multi-racial political party, was voted into power with the central government's connivance.

As we shall see in the following account of the rise of the Berjaya party, Tun Stephens' return to power was not for the Kadazan cause. He was not seeking for the "definitive" race to be the governors of Sabah anymore. It was purely an exercise to vindicate himself and to get his revenge against his erstwhile "blood-brother" Tun Mustapha.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Tun Mustapha's and the Sabah Alliance's influence in Kuala Lumpur was declining. This was partly because of the rise of the "National Front" (Barisan Nasional) in Kuala Lumpur, which made the Sabah Alliance's usefulness less urgent or important, and also because of Tun Mustapha's open conflict with Tun Razak, the Prime Minister.

To Tun Mustapha's colleagues and supporters in the Sabah Alliance party, they believed that his struggle with Tun Razak and the central government was because of two important factors for Sabah, namely, first, the question of Sabah's share in the oil discovered off the coast of Sabah, and secondly, Tun Razak's rapprochement with China culminating in the exchange of ambassadors between the two countries. Tun Mustapha seemed to have taken this latter aspect of Malaysia's foreign policy towards China as dangerous to Malaysia and more particularly to the eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak, as he saw this new policy as virtually inviting his enemies — the Communists — to come over to Malaysia.

There are a good many writings about why Tun Mustapha by 1975 had hardened his stand against his own erstwhile mentors and supporters

— the Malay UMNO party and the central government in Kuala Lumpur.¹ All these writers were generally of the opinion that Tun Mustapha's main concern and the reason for his falling out with the central government and especially with Tun Razak was because of the latter's refusal to allow him to borrow money from the open market (merchant banks) to finance his grandiose projects such as the Kudat new township reclamation and for the purchase of two Boeing 707s for his personal use. This assumption is correct as it was true that Tun Mustapha had wanted to borrow money from various merchant banks in New York.² Indeed, it is believed that he managed to raise a loan of U.S.\$300,000,000. State Ministry of Finance officials, led by its permanent secretary, Lim Ting Kwang, apparently negotiated for the loan.³

The question of a loan of one billion dollars from merchant banks in New York, however, was probably not too important as to cause Tun Razak "to go all out" to displace Tun Mustapha and the USNO party. After all, the loans could not be raised unless the central government agreed to guarantee them. All that Tun Razak had to do was to refuse to guarantee the loan. The writer feels that the real reason why, in the view of the central government, Tun Mustapha had to go as Sabah's strongman, was his clumsy threat to secede from Malaysia and his strong stand for a better deal and involvement in the Sabah oil find. Tun Mustapha might have used the threat of secession as a weapon to get the central government to give in to his requests — namely, the one billion dollars loan, but to the Kuala Lumpur leaders, they took his threat seriously. They would

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1. See, for example, the following:
 - Bruce Ross-Larson, *Politics of Federalism*.
 - R.S. Milne and D.K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government of Malaysia*.
 - D.K. Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional*.
 - Stanley S. Bedlington, *Malaysia and Singapore*.
 - R.O. Tilman, 'In Quest of Unity: The Centralisation Theme in Malaysian Federal-State Relations, 1957-75', *Occasional Paper Series No. 39*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
 - R.O. Tilman, 'Mustapha's Sabah: 1968-75, The Tun Steps Down', *Asian Survey*, 1976, vols. 1-6.
 2. The writer was present when Tun Mustapha mentioned to Tun Stephens and other USNO officials that he could get a loan for Sabah from merchant banks in New York. He also mentioned that Tun Razak was against getting a loan from merchant banks and was prepared to seek a loan from proper channels such as the World Bank. The writer was also asked by Tun Mustapha to deliver a personal letter to Tun Razak in Kuala Lumpur. This writer was made to understand that the letter was connected with the loan to be raised in New York.
 3. Lim, then the permanent secretary to the State Ministry of Finance, told this writer that it was not difficult to raise loans from merchant banks in New York as long as the federal government was prepared to guarantee the loan.

not allow anyone to speak of secession.⁴

Further, the finding of a substantial deposit of oil in the offshore of Sabah was a big bonus to the central government. The agreement on natural resources did not touch on oil findings in the seas around Sabah, especially if the oil deposit was about three miles out of the shores of Sabah. All other resources found inland were within the competence of the state government to exploit. Offshore, however, was supposed to be a federal matter. However, this was not properly spelled out and there was therefore a need to amend the constitution in this regard so as to vest power in the federal authority where oil found offshore was concerned. All states where oil deposits were found were therefore asked to comply with the federal legislation. Pahang, Sarawak and Sabah did not want to sign the new agreement and did not want to go along with the federal government's proposed new legislation on the matter. Tun Mustapha was particularly strong in his opposition and he had the support of the Chief Ministers of Sarawak and Pahang at first. There was agreement from amongst them that they had to work together and bargain for a better deal for their own state. Sarawak and Pahang, however, capitulated, leaving Tun Mustapha alone in his fight.

Tun Mustapha was angry about this capitulation, and indeed referred to it as a "stab in the back". Tun Mustapha explained to the USNO Central Executive Committee that all he wanted from Kuala Lumpur was a better deal, a better share in the oil revenue. He was at first asking for a 50/50 shareholding with Petronas, the national oil organisation, but was prepared to accept a 20 percent share for Sabah. He also told of an encounter with Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, then the Chairman of Petronas at the time. He said that Tengku Razaleigh was angry with him and he was accused of being unreasonable on the matter. Tengku Razaleigh apparently told him that if he had any objections he should have voiced his objections in Parliament, instead of waiting for the legislation to be passed into law. His reply to this seemed cogent: that there was no point in his raising any objection in Parliament for it would only be recorded in *Hansard* but the legislation would still be passed. He would only get the 16 M.P.s from Sabah to vote for him. The other reason was that he did not want to appear in public to be anti-federal or anti-central government.

4. Interview with Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid on 12 April 1983. Datuk Dzulkifli was in Kuala Lumpur as the Deputy Minister of Defence. He told the writer that Tun Razak told him that he could not tolerate any threat of secession from Tun Mustapha and suggested to Datuk Dzulkifli that he should advise Tun Mustapha not to mention secession at all.

To his colleagues and supporters in USNO, therefore, Tun Mustapha's argument was very sound. Sabah officials who were in the forefront of negotiations with federal officials advised Tun Mustapha and his Ministers that Sabah would only get 5 percent of the oil revenue, and in terms of dollars and cents, this would only amount to about \$10,000,000 a year. This revenue from a bonanza in oil seemed very small, and that was why Tun Mustapha's fight on this matter received many supporters.⁵

Let us for the moment trace the sequence of events which took place from 1974 to the birth of the Berjaya party — and see why Tun Razak was disenchanted with Tun Mustapha. After all, in 1972 he had publicly called Tun Mustapha a "real nationalist", and the father of Sabah's independence through Malaysia.

For some time, the central government tried to find a way to bring Tun Mustapha into the central government. Tun Mustapha's style of living was becoming an embarrassment to Kuala Lumpur. The Kuala Lumpur leaders were mostly moderate in their habits and conservative Muslims and they were trying to create an image of Malaysia as a good Muslim country. Tun Mustapha's liking for the good life including marrying women in many countries therefore caused eyebrows to be raised. Furthermore, he was also causing an embarrassment where the Muslim rebels from the southern Philippines were concerned. It was believed that he had direct connections with Colonel Gaddafi of Libya and that he was the courier of Libyan arms for the Moro Muslims in the southern Philippines.⁶ The Philippines, as a member of ASEAN, was naturally not very happy about this. A political scientist suggested that Tun Mustapha had the grand idea of becoming a Sultan of Sabah — and included in the Sultanate was to be the southern Philippines. However, perhaps the most embarrassing fact for the central

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5. When Tun Razak was in Peking in May 1974, Tun Mustapha was in Sarawak leading a group of golfers from Sabah to take part in the Sarawak Open. The writer was present when a meeting took place in Tun Mustapha's hotel room between Tun Mustapha and the then Chief Minister of Sarawak, Datuk Pattinggi Rahman Yacob (now the Head of State of Sarawak and has the title of 'Tun'). At this meeting Tun Mustapha expressed his concern about Tun Razak's visit to Peking and the danger to Sabah and Sarawak if Malaysia had diplomatic relations with China. He was clearly against the idea. He also mentioned the possibility of secession. Somehow Tun Mustapha seemed to have the impression that the then Chief Minister of Sarawak was supporting him in his stand against Kuala Lumpur and Tun Razak.
 6. The writer was in Tripoli, Libya and was met by some of Gaddafi's senior officials. He was told that Tun Mustapha was Libya's foremost friend. See also S.S. Bedlington, *op.cit.*, for an account of Tun Mustapha's close relations with Libya's Colonel Gaddafi.

government was Tun Mustapha's romping around the world's capitals, masquerading as the "roving Prime Minister of Malaysia".⁷ His high-handed manner in dealing with dissidents in Sabah, especially the manner in which new converts to the Islamic religion were won, was also not acceptable to the central government.

Consequently, Tun Razak approached Tun Mustapha and invited him to join his Cabinet in Kuala Lumpur. This invitation was made at a dinner in Kuala Lumpur celebrating the success of the National Front in 1974. Tun Mustapha apparently accepted this offer, although at first he wanted to be Deputy Prime Minister. But he was persuaded to accept the portfolio of Defence, a number three post in the Federal Cabinet line-up at the time, and a few days later, he wrote a formal and confidential letter to Tun Razak expressing his "availability and desire to become Minister of Defence".⁸

Tun Mustapha was, however, in a dilemma. He did not want to relinquish his Chief Ministership post and yet he wanted to be a Federal Minister. He knew that the latter post would curtail his independence. He received differing advice on this matter: on the one hand, Syed Kechik, eager to see Tun Mustapha firmly entrenched in the Kuala Lumpur mold, advised him that he should accept. He would still be the USNO President and would still have full control in Sabah. Members of the Central Executive Committee in USNO on the other hand advised him that this federal appointment was a Kuala Lumpur plot to cut him down to size. They believed Tun Mustapha's stand for greater autonomy for Sabah was the real reason why Kuala Lumpur wanted him out of Sabah so that they could watch him closely.⁹

For the time being, Tun Mustapha prevailed on the Prime Minister to give him time to make political re-alignments in Sabah. He suggested that his Assistant Minister in Sabah, Dzulkifli be appointed the Deputy of Defence. He wanted to retain his Chief Ministership meanwhile. Tun Razak agreed but was not pleased. He did not want publicly to revoke the

7. In an interview with Datuk Dzulkifli on 12 April 1983, he told the writer that Tun Razak, the Prime Minister had related to him a story about Tun Razak meeting the wife of a Prime Minister from another country at a function and that the Prime Minister's wife told Tun Razak that she had met the 'other Prime Minister of Malaysia - the roving Prime Minister'. Tun Razak was most embarrassed by this, and angered.

8. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

9. R.O. Tilman, 'In Quest of Unity', *op.cit.*, pp. 45-61. In this article Tilman argued that Tun Mustapha advocated a parallel autonomy with Kuala Lumpur.

appointment, however, for fear that Tun Mustapha might be provoked.

Meanwhile, according to Ross-Larson, Ghazalie Shaffie, then Minister of Home Affairs suggested a creation of a one party system in the country. The idea was to consolidate all member parties of the National Front into a single party and to rule for 25 years. The opposition parties would either be incorporated or dissolved completely. There would be no state elections and Chief Ministers would be appointed by the central government after consultation with voters. Federal elections were merely to be held to ratify the selected M.P.s standing and a central executive committee would appoint the Prime Minister. Happily, this proposal was not acceptable to most UMNO leaders and Dr Mahathir, then the Minister of Education, was especially against the proposal. Sabah leaders felt that Tun Mustapha's stand for Sabah's autonomy was right and they were quite alarmed with the Ghazalie's proposal.

With Ghazalie's proposal rejected, the UMNO leaders then decided to tighten further the National Front's set up and amendments were proposed to give the central executive committee greater powers. Tun Mustapha did not agree with the amendments. He was advised that the amendments were meant to force him to accept discipline imposed by the central government contrary to his own intentions. The USNO Executive Committee and later, the Sabah Alliance Central Executive Committee rejected the amendments. The Sabah Alliance Executive Committee proposed certain alternative amendments and there was an implication in the latter that unless Sabah's proposed amendments were incorporated, the Sabah Alliance would leave the National Front. At the time this counter-proposal was made, Sabah was in a position of strength to negotiate. Some critics of Tun Mustapha, however, suggest that the counter-proposal was a mere ploy on the part of Tun Mustapha to get the federal government and Tun Razak to agree to his application for a huge loan in the open market.¹⁰ The writer, however, believes that the USNO Central Committee and the Sabah Alliance Central Executive Committee were serious about their counter-proposal for amendments. They saw that the original amendment was an attempt to curb the states' autonomy. Tun Mustapha himself might have had his own reasons for objecting to the amendment and indeed he might have used the counter-amendment as a ploy, but not the other Sabah Alliance leaders. When the Berjaya party was formed in 1975, and applied to join the National Front, the question of whether USNO could veto Berjaya's application was raised. The Secretary-General of the National

10. See for example Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

Front, Ghafar Baba however announced that USNO had resigned from the National Front and was therefore not in a position to veto Berjaya's application.

In 1974 and 1975, there was a worldwide slump in the timber trade and this affected the state's financial position. In the past, Sabah had carried out and paid for some federal projects in Sabah. These included the introduction of television, airport expansion, and the building of police and military headquarters. The amount expended by the state was more than \$100,000,000 on behalf of the federal government. Tun Mustapha tried to get a refund of this but the federal government was only prepared to reimburse the amount which it had originally approved. The sum reimbursable was only \$20,000,000. Obviously this matter of reimbursing the state for funds spent on federal projects became another irritant in the already unfriendly relationship between Tun Mustapha and the federal leaders.¹¹

Tun Mustapha meanwhile thought of a device to raise money. In February 1975 he called a meeting of senior officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the State Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO) and Harris himself, who was then a businessman and Chairman of Gaya Trading and director of many other companies. Syed Kechik was also present. The proposal was for the formation of a big corporation that would combine the Ministry of Natural Resources, SEDCO, the Sabah Foundation and the Gaya Trading. This new organisation would have been a massive business venture in shipping, mining, wood-based industries and many others. Syed Kechik, however, vetoed the proposal as unworkable. It was understandable. He did not have a good relationship with Harris and never had. It was also possible that Syed Kechik viewed this latest proposal as another ploy by Tun Mustapha to get federal leaders to give in to his requests. After all, Tun Mustapha by now was open in his defiance of Kuala Lumpur and he was indeed already talking about the 20 points safeguards privately. This must have been heard in Kuala Lumpur through Dzulkifli who was then the Deputy Defence Minister. Syed Kechik, after all, was a federal man and had been sent to Sabah specially to see to it that the rise of Kadazan nationalism be curbed and to bring Sabah closer to Kuala Lumpur. As a federal man it was not conceivable

11. Apparently when Tun Dr Ismail, then the Deputy Prime Minister heard about Sabah's lack of funds and Sabah's officials were in Kuala Lumpur asking for the reimbursement of state funds expended on behalf of federal projects, Tun Ismail remarked that Tun Mustapha should go 'jolly-jolly', referring to Tun Mustapha's liking for the good life.

that Syed Kechik would be a party to the formation of a body which might conceivably strengthen Sabah's autonomy from the centre.

Apparently, Tun Mustapha tried to persuade Syed Kechik to agree to the proposal. He explained to Syed Kechik that he was afraid he would lose Harris to the federal leaders if his proposal for the formation of the large corporation was not met.¹² The proposed huge corporation, however, never got off the ground. By 1975, both Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli had had a falling out with Tun Mustapha. USNO politicians and even the press became quite brazen in their criticism of these two. This was probably because they no longer enjoyed the protection of the Chief Minister. The reason for the "falling out" was the stand taken by Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. Both were very pro-federal government and against Tun Mustapha's tussle with the centre.¹³ Tun Mustapha condemned Dzulkifli in the press and even called him a python.

After his massive corporation proposal failed, Tun Mustapha next asked for an opinion on the merits of Sabah staying in Malaysia as opposed to being independent on its own. He asked some politicians, senior government officials and a lecturer to prepare a paper on this matter, with particular reference to Sabah's economy, manpower (including military), and the likelihood of support from neighbouring countries to an independent Sabah. The 20 points safeguards were going to be reviewed again.¹⁴ Before the formation of the committee to investigate and to report on the above, however, Tun Mustapha had also asked for a report on the correct amount of federal revenues raised or obtained in Sabah from custom duties, income taxes and others. This was given to him, but in the process of obtaining this information from the respective federal departments' officials it was possible that they had also informed their respective senior officials in Kuala Lumpur, who in turn, informed the Prime Minister. A short report was sent to Tun Mustapha and apparently the confidential report was shown to Syed Kechik for his opinion, but in seeing the subject he refused to have anything to do with it.¹⁵

12. See Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 156.

13. Interview with Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid on 12 April 1983. Datuk Dzulkifli said that Tun Mustapha was ill-advised by the other side, meaning the other USNO leaders.

14. Some senior USNO officials were to be sent to the other ASEAN capitals to find out from the other ASEAN leaders their reaction if Sabah were to break away from Malaysia. As far as this writer can recall, none was actually sent.

15. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 157. Datuk Harris made this accusation in the Legislative Assembly in August 1975 and accused some top USNO officials of plotting to form a new federation to be called 'Bornesia'.

In any case, the whole issue about Sabah's continued membership of Malaysia came into the open on 23 April 1975, when Tun Mustapha called a meeting of USNO's Central Executive Committee and invited the former Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister of Sarawak, Rahman Yacob, Tun Stephens then the Head of State, the former Head of State (Tun Raffae) and other senior politicians. At this meeting, Tun Mustapha read a paper entitled 'The Future Position of Sabah in Malaysia'. The paper was obviously prepared by Tun Mustapha himself — as the manner in which it was written — (in English) appeared to be his style. He pointed out in the paper that the federal coffers were receiving more revenue from Sabah than it was returning to Sabah for development projects. He also pointed out that Sabah's autonomy was declining as time went on and then suggested that Sabah had an alternative plan as to the form of government it should have. This was probably his suggestion for Sabah's secession from Malaysia, but it was not made very clear.¹⁶

Apparently, Tun Mustapha had also discussed the possibility of Sabah's making unilateral Declaration of Independence with Tun Stephens. Tun Stephens told the press in July 1975 that Tun Mustapha had been plotting to take Sabah out of Malaysia and form a new state consisting of Sabah, Mindanao, Pelawan and the Sulu Islands, with himself as Sultan. Harris also accused Tun Mustapha of secession and that the new state he was contemplating was in fact the Federation of Bornesia to include Sabah, Brunei, Sarawak, Kalimantan and the Sulu Islands.¹⁷

The final and last straw for Tun Razak which prompted him to encourage the formation of an opposition party in Sabah to oppose Tun Mustapha was the latter's meeting with all federal heads of departments, including the Sabah Commissioner of Police, the Head of the Special Branch, and the Military Commander in charge of the Infantry Brigade stationed in Sabah. He told them that he was serious about his plan to leave Malaysia, and asked them to go and inform their "respective bosses" in Kuala Lumpur of this.¹⁸

Like Tun Stephens before him in 1965-67, Tun Mustapha had burnt his bridges and probably played his last ace. Tun Razak took up the challenge and so the opposition party, the Berjaya, was given a hasty birth.

16. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 August 1975, p. 12.

17. *New Straits Times*, 12 August 1975. See also D.K. Mauzy, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

18. The writer as his Assistant Minister and the State Secretary at the time were present at the meeting called by Tun Mustapha in his official residence at Tanjong Aru.

Birth of a Multi-Racial Party, Berjaya

Tun Mustapha's detention powers were withdrawn by the federal government shortly after the meeting of 23 April 1975 at the presentation of his "secession paper". Next, Tun Razak called Gilong, who was then a Federal Minister and confided to him his deep concern about Tun Mustapha's desire to secede Sabah from Malaysia.¹⁹ Tun Razak told him, just as he had told Dzul kifli, that there was no way he would allow Sabah to secede. The words he used were "over my dead body". He asked Gilong to speak to Tun Mustapha and advise him to step down as Chief Minister. Gilong had a meeting around May 1975 with Alliuddin and Said Keruak in Sabah House, Kuala Lumpur, to inform them of Tun Razak's wish. Tun Mustapha as so often was in London and so Gilong was unable to speak to him personally. Shortly after his meeting with Alliuddin and Keruak, he had a second meeting with the same people. Alliuddin informed Gilong that he had spoken to his brother by phone and that he had agreed to step down as Chief Minister, but only after the state election was over. Tun Razak apparently could not and would not accept this. He said if Tun Mustapha won the election in a landslide victory without any opposition, he would be in a position of strength to bargain and he could not imagine then that Tun Mustapha would go ahead with his undertaking to retire. Tun Razak gave an ultimatum accordingly that if he did not step down then an opposition party would be formed.

From Sabah, Tun Razak co-opted the cooperation of Harris.²⁰ He informed Harris that if Tun Mustapha was to declare Sabah independent, he would declare a state of emergency, send troops in under martial law, and appoint Harris as the Chairman of a State Operations Committee that would assume control in the state. Harris responded to this call and also mentioned that Tun Stephens should be co-opted into the scheme to form an opposition party.

Tun Stephens called on the Prime Minister in Kuala Lumpur soon after Harris had met him. Tun Stephens was on his way to London for a second medical check up following a stroke.²¹ The stage was set for the formation and registration of the Berjaya party. Tun Stephens agreed

19. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong on 14 April 1983.

20. Datuk Harris had had a falling out with Tun Mustapha.

21. Tun Stephens' stroke took place the night after he took part in a golf tournament. It was raining during the golf tournament and he also wanted to have a swim in the pool with the other golfers after the game. When he left after the swim, he looked sick.

to join in the plot as Rahman Yacob, the then Chief Minister of Sarawak had done in Sarawak to oust Kalong Ningkan. The Sabah personalities involved in the plot as arranged by Kuala Lumpur were Harris, Gilong, Stephens and Peter Mojuntin and later Sulong was pulled in. The Kuala Lumpur leaders used as a smoke screen for Tun Razak's direct involvement were Abdullah Ahmad, the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Ghafar Baba and Tengku Razaleigh.²²

Tun Razak's original intention was merely to keep the new party in the wings in case Tun Mustapha called a snap election. However, Abdullah Ahmad had another idea. He suggested that the party be formed, announced and registered by mid-July. He felt that Berjaya might not have to wait for the coming state election as some USNO Assemblymen could be persuaded to join Berjaya. He was certain that with Kuala Lumpur's visibly backing the new party, it would not be hard to convince and get 19 USNO Assemblymen altogether to cross the floor. A vote of no confidence in the Assembly could then be forced and Tun Stephens could be nominated as an Assemblyman to take over as Chief Minister to replace Tun Mustapha. If this "coup attempt" failed then the blame could be attributed to Harris for jumping the gun and the blame could also be attributed to Abdullah Ahmad and Ghafar Baba so that Tun Razak would not be directly implicated.

The Berjaya was therefore officially registered on 15 July 1975 with Harris as the interim President. Since coming to know about the "proposed coup" in the Sabah Legislative Assembly, Syed Kechik took the matter into his own hands. With hindsight perhaps this was one of the biggest mistakes made by the USNO party leaders — especially Tun Mustapha — to place too much reliance on Syed Kechik during this crucial period. Syed Kechik's involvement in the matter was no doubt most welcomed by a most demoralised USNO rank and file, for he did manage to stave off the attempted coup and at the same time found a compromise solution and accommodation from Tun Razak, but unfortunately, he stayed too long in control and put himself too much in the limelight in the process. He became the butt of criticism by Berjaya leaders and he was called all sorts of names, including "Rasputin" by Mojuntin and was simply referred to by the Chinese newspapers as the "shadow Chief Minister". His enemies, in short, went all out and capitalised on the propaganda that Syed Kechik intended to remain the strong-man in Sabah. Perhaps Syed Kechik should have used and confided more in local USNO politicians, especially Said Keruak and the other leaders who remained loyal to Tun Mustapha instead

22. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

of keeping them in the dark. The situation became simply a Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli affair, with Tun Mustapha as a reluctant bystander and the rest of USNO's loyalists mere on-lookers!

Furthermore, Syed Kechik was not entirely free of enemies amongst the UMNO leadership in Kuala Lumpur. Some were jealous of his enormous power over Tun Mustapha and Sabah politics — and were obviously not overly happy to see a one-time struggling Kedah lawyer becoming one of Malaysia's richest men.²³ Abdullah Ahmad apparently had a distinct dislike for Syed Kechik and so did Ghafar Baba. These two gentlemen were keen supporters of the new party. To them the formation of Berjaya was not just to destroy Tun Mustapha. They wanted Syed Kechik out too. While Syed Kechik was working out compromises for USNO with Tun Razak, with the help of Hussein, Ghazalie Shaffie and the Tunku, both Ahmad Abdullah and Ghafar Baba were busy convincing the Prime Minister that Tun Mustapha could never again be trusted and must therefore be driven out of politics altogether.

Syed Kechik's first action was to see Tengku Razaleigh and Ghafar Baba. He saw them separately. He prevailed on Tengku Razaleigh the futility of getting Tun Stephens to dissolve the Assembly as it was not just unconstitutional, but could also have repercussions on Malaysia as a whole. But Ghafar Baba was not receptive to his request to forestall the coup attempt. He simply said that he knew how to displace Tun Mustapha.²⁴

Syed Kechik then went to Penang to consult with the Tunku, the former Prime Minister. Tun Mustapha had meanwhile been requested to return to Sabah via Penang. All USNO Ministers and members of the National Council were at the airport to meet him. On arrival at Penang, Tun Mustapha was taken to a meeting with Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tan Sri Ghazalie Shaffie, who represented Tun Razak. He was told that Tun Razak and the National Front had agreed to the formation of Berjaya because of concern over Mustapha's secession talk and the prospect of a snap election that he might call. He was also told that both Harris and Tun Stephens were behind the formation of Berjaya.

This meeting with the Tunku and Ghazalie Shaffie was fully exploited

23. Datuk Syed Kechik's total wealth is reputed to be more than US\$1 billion. See *New Nation*, 14 May 1980 and Ed. Hunter, *The Misdeeds of Tun Mustapha*.

24. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, gave an excellent account of Syed Kechik's involvement in the fight to forestall the 'coup attempt'.

for propaganda purposes: a picture of a confident Tun Mustapha with a smiling Tunku, Ghazalie Shaffie, Alliuddin and Syed Kechik appeared in the morning papers. It gave the impression that nothing was amiss, and that the federal government represented by the Tunku and Ghazalie Shaffie was still behind Tun Mustapha. If anything, it was a master-stroke, another plus for Syed Kechik's efforts to bolster sagging public opinion on Tun Mustapha and the USNO.

When Tun Mustapha arrived in Kota Kinabalu from Penang on 19 July, his arrival was made to look like a hero's welcome. He immediately went to the Community Centre where more than one thousand people were waiting for him. Tun Mustapha, the complete politician, exuded an aura of complete confidence. But pride too, got the better of him and he attacked former USNO opportunists, like Tun Stephens and Harris for what they had done, for allowing themselves to be the tools of ambitious Kuala Lumpur leaders. Indirectly, he also attacked Tun Razak, the Prime Minister. Obviously, this was a mistake for it only increased the rift between Tun Razak and Tun Mustapha. Instead of going straight to Tun Razak and discussing matters with him, Tun Mustapha decided to hear the counsel of Syed Kechik and allowed the latter to do the talking on his behalf. Most of the USNO Central Executive Committee, however, advised him to see Tun Razak personally. But Tun Mustapha did not reply and looked up to Syed Kechik instead. Sakaran, one of his strongest supporters in fact advised him to exercise caution and that he should try and do some fence mending with Tun Razak. But up to this point, Tun Mustapha thought he was still in a position of strength to bargain and was still confident that he would get support from the Sabah people.²⁵

Out of the 11 USNO Assemblymen who had defected to Berjaya, only five remained in Berjaya. Six returned to the USNO party. As one writer, however, put it:²⁶

But it was nevertheless clear that if the federal government were to come down strongly behind Berjaya, by declaring an emergency or by accepting Berjaya into the National Front while at the same time disavowing USNO, the winds of opportunism would send many flying back into the arms of the

he made Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister announce that the Assembly would be convened on August 11 to pass two important resolutions: (1) that Sabah's separation from Malaysia would never be raised again and that federal parliament would be urged to amend the Malaysian constitution to give effect to this resolution; and (2) a vote of confidence on the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha. The first resolution was obviously aimed at placating federal leaders to make it easier for Syed Kechik's negotiations with them. He met Hussein Onn then Deputy Prime Minister first, and asked for understanding. He warned of possible human bloodshed as the more than 30,000 refugees from the Southern Philippines were very loyal to Tun Mustapha and even if Malaysian Armed Forces would eventually win, Malaysia as a nation would be put in a bad light. He also showed the business ventures of each Berjaya leader and their intrigues to depose Tun Mustapha. He also mentioned that Berjaya did not have the backing of the people, least of all from the Malays/Muslims. Hussein arranged for a meeting with Tun Razak the following day, on 24 July 1975.

At this crucial meeting with Tun Razak, Syed Kechik concentrated on three main topics: (i) the future of Tun Mustapha; (ii) membership of USNO in the National Front; and (iii) the future of Tun Stephens as Head of State. With regard to the first, Tun Razak was insistent that Tun Mustapha must resign as Chief Minister, President of USNO and as Chairman of the Sabah Alliance. On the position of the membership of USNO in the National Front, Tun Razak said he had decided that USNO would be expelled and Berjaya accepted to join in. He agreed to defer announcing a decision on this, meanwhile. With regard to the position of Tun Stephens, Tun Razak thought that he should not resign as Head of State as it would appear that Kuala Lumpur had been hard on him. He nevertheless agreed that Tun Stephens would be asked to resign on 28 July 1975.

Tun Mustapha was prevailed on by Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli to resign. He agreed to sign a letter post-dated to 31 October 1975 that he was resigning as Chief Minister. Tun Mustapha, however, did not resign as President of USNO and the Sabah Alliance. He stipulated that the letter of resignation was to be kept with Tunku and not with Tun Razak.

Tun Razak was not happy that Tun Mustapha should retain his positions as President of USNO and the Sabah Alliance. He was even less happy that the post-dated letter be kept in the hands of the former Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. He nevertheless agreed to the arrangement as long as

Tun Mustapha would leave politics altogether eventually. Berjaya was not accepted into the National Front and federal politicians would phase out their support for the Berjaya party. Tun Stephens stepped down on 28 July and his place was taken over by O.K.K. Indan Kari — who converted to Islam and took the name of Mohd Hamdan Abdullah.

Ghafar Baba, however, was not happy about the whole set up and announced on July 26 that the Berjaya party's application was being considered and that the Sabah Alliance party was still not a member of the National Front. This announcement was obviously made at the request of Tun Stephens, but it did not help matters. It only confused the people even further. Tun Razak when confronted, however, admitted that Ghafar Baba's announcement was premature but gave the impression that it was not unilateral. He reiterated his demand for Tun Mustapha's resignation to be made public soon so that he could answer critics in Parliament effectively. Syed Kechik, however, managed to get the Prime Minister to ban political rallies and this hit the Berjaya party hard.

Berjaya leaders were demoralised, and once more as in 1967, Tun Stephens seemed to be looking straight into the face of defeat. The Berjaya party failed to get the "coup attempt" in the Assembly; failed to get the Assembly dissolved so that a new election could be held and their 11 Assemblymen were reduced to five; failed to get accepted into the National Front as Ghafar Baba had promised them; and also failed to get the active support of the federal government. The Berjaya party, however, had their newspapers, the *Daily Express* and the *Chinese Overseas Daily* and other Chinese papers in Sandakan and Tawau to support them.²⁷ Tun Stephens was adept at writing press releases and in this respect he was most effective. He made it appear that Berjaya had the support of the whole population and was even considering getting Berjaya's remaining Assemblymen to resign every two months so that there would be by-elections to test the strength of each party.

27. The irony was that ten years previously (in 1965-67) Yeh Pao Tzu's paper the *Daily Express* was used by Tun Mustapha as his mouthpiece against Tun Stephens. In 1975-76, however, the same paper was used by Tun Stephens as his mouthpiece against Tun Mustapha. There was a rumour and a suggestion from some quarters but never confirmed that Yeh Pao Tzu had asked for a deposit of some \$2,000,000 Malaysian from the Berjaya leaders before he could agree to allowing his newspapers to be the party's mouthpiece. The reason for this apparently was that he wanted an insurance to protect his interest in case Tun Mustapha's government revoked his printing licence. The question of revoking Yeh's printing licence was indeed entertained but the State Cabinet in later 1975 thought it was not 'democratic' and Yeh's printing licence was therefore left untouched.

On 11 August 1975, the Assembly meeting went as planned — and the motions were passed. The Alliance Assemblymen resolved to remain in Malaysia forever, and the motion of confidence in Tun Mustapha was passed. The wavering 16 Assemblymen who were sent to the Middle East on holiday returned, refreshed and vowed complete allegiance to Tun Mustapha. Even Tun Stephens was censured for taking part in politics while still occupying the office of Head of State. (It should be mentioned here, however, that Tun Mustapha had also involved himself in politics when he was the Head of State in 1963-64. Tunku Abdul Rahman, who was then the Prime Minister said that Sabah's position was unique and that the Head of State was allowed to take part in politics.)

Another interesting event concerning Tun Stephens was that the USNO offered him the post of Chief Minister if he agreed to join forces with Tun Mustapha against Berjaya and the central government. Shortly after the formation of the Berjaya party was announced on 15 July 1975, the USNO Central Executive Committee met. It was a gloomy event and two USNO Ministers got into heated arguments. Everyone seemed to be blaming everyone else for the rise of the opposition and everyone was completely shattered. They could not believe that it was possible for any opposition party to be formed as they thought the USNO party was well entrenched. The decision of the meeting, however, was that a delegation be sent to see Tun Stephens to ask him to step down as Head of State and accept the Chief Ministership. He declined to accept the offer.²⁸ However, encouraged further by the result of the August 11 meeting, a delegation of USNO Ministers were sent to Kuala Lumpur to discuss USNO's membership in the National Front. The Berjaya leaders were also there. The result of the meeting was that no immediate decision was to be made on the matter as many more meetings were necessary to iron out details.

Tun Stephens, irked probably by an apparent Kuala Lumpur "sell-out" insofar as Berjaya was concerned, went to the press, announcing that the National Front had accepted Berjaya. This was apparently to force the central leadership's hands to make a decision. Syed Kechik and Said Keruak confronted Tun Razak on this and he agreed that Tun Stephens' announcement was not true and agreed that UMNO would make a clarification and the National Front's headquarters would also make a similar clarification. Syed Kechik asked for a moratorium on press releases

28. A Berjaya high official who did not want to be identified told this writer that when Tun Stephens was offered the post of Chief Minister to replace Tun Mustapha, he phoned Tun Razak immediately and asked for his opinion. Tun Razak apparently advised him not to accept.

as the newspaper reports were getting more and more racial and religious overtones. Tun Razak agreed only if Tun Mustapha signed another letter of resignation and placed the letter in his hands and not with the Tunku. This was given and Tun Razak informed both Tun Stephens and Harris to ease off the newspaper personal attacks on personalities.

Tun Mustapha was ready to step down but he wanted it not to be seen as if he was forced out. Some "face" had to be given to him. Thus, in the September 4 legislative session, the Assembly approved a pension for life for Tun Mustapha, plus a car, driver, police out-riders and other perks such as servants, gardeners etc.

On 3 September, an extraordinary general meeting of the USNO party was called and Tun Mustapha formally announced that he was stepping down as Chief Minister with effect from 31 October 1975. His successor was Said Keruak. The position of a Deputy Chief Minister to succeed Said Keruak became an issue. Syed Kechik wanted his protege and friend, Dzulkifli to be the Deputy Chief Minister. He thought that he was best qualified for the job as he was also very acceptable to Kuala Lumpur. Tun Mustapha did not trust Dzulkifli by then and strongly objected. The compromise result was to have three Deputy Chief Ministers — one Malay, one Chinese and one Kadazan. The idea was to give the impression that the Sabah Alliance was very united and receptive to the needs of the various ethnic races in the state.

The speaker of the Assembly, Kassim, the brother of Yassin was to retire and a replacement was necessary. Abdul Momen, the Alliance Secretary-General was chosen for this job. It was then suggested that Syed Kechik be made the Deputy Speaker. This appointment added more fuel to the speculation amongst the Chinese, Kadazans and Malays that Syed Kechik was out to grab more power. As a result of this appointment, the moratorium on personality attacks was shortlived and both Harris and Mojuntin went all out to attack Syed Kechik. The Chinese press especially was vehement in their attack on Syed Kechik. They reminded the Chinese people that the real enemy was Syed Kechik as he was responsible for usurping Chinese positions, especially in the timber trade in Sabah.

Tun Mustapha stepped down on 31 October 1975, but he continued to dominate the USNO scene. Because Kuala Lumpur was still wary of Tun Mustapha's influence in Sabah's politics and because Tun Mustapha was still the President of the USNO party and Chairman of the Sabah Alliance party, Kuala Lumpur would not abandon the Berjaya party altogether. The

federal government realised that it stood to gain from the power struggle in Sabah and the Berjaya party was still their trump card to force Tun Mustapha out of the political arena.

The next move was to respond to Berjaya's taunt for an election to test the peoples' wishes. Syed Kechik advised that by-elections should be held and he proposed to have by-elections in Labuan (Harris's constituency), Lahad Datu (Salleh Sulong's constituency) and Tambunan (Gibon's constituency — a Kadazan area). Tun Mustapha vetoed the Tambunan by-election and agreed on the first two. Previous undated letters of resignation by Harris and Sulong kept by the USNO party were dated and forwarded to the Speaker of the Assembly. In effect the letter was a resignation letter as Assemblyman. The Speaker accepted the letters and declared the two constituencies vacant and ready for a by-election. Berjaya objected to this and appealed to Tun Razak, but it was found out that this same method had been adopted in Peninsula Malaysia. There was nothing that could be done about it, except to respond to the challenge.²⁹

Kuala Lumpur, however, did not discard the Berjaya party. The sum of \$500,000 was sent by Tengku Razaleigh as UMNO's contribution to Berjaya, and Rahman Yacob, then the Sarawak Chief Minister sent in UMNO workers to help in the campaign. Even religious teachers from Sarawak's religious body, SABERKAS (the equivalent of USIA) were sent to help in the campaign.

Harris and Salleh Sulong resigned on November 11 and by December the election was held. Tun Mustapha campaigned vigorously in both constituencies.³⁰ His call was for unity, especially amongst the Muslim community. The Muslim character of both constituencies was the deciding factor. The USNO party won by large majorities in both constituencies. With the big win in these two constituencies, Syed Kechik started thinking of bigger things: a general election, and this was his biggest mistake.

However, before discussing the 1976 election itself, perhaps it is in order for us to discuss why Tun Mustapha attempted at all to raise the question of secession when he knew very well that this same subject

29. This method of getting rid of rebellious Assemblymen or M.P.s was ruled unconstitutional by the Privy Council in a case involving a Sarawak M.P. who was similarly sacked.

30. Tun Mustapha still used the helicopter to take him to the various constituencies, but he had a State Minister accompanying him. The latter was entitled to use the helicopter for his official duties.

had spelled political doom to Tun Stephens in 1965-67. The writer had the distinct impression that the secession move was not just a ploy: Tun Mustapha meant it. If he failed, he was at least hoping for greater autonomy for Sabah from Kuala Lumpur, with himself well entrenched as the leader. Furthermore, the writer felt that Tun Mustapha did not really get on with Tun Razak. Somehow, Tun Mustapha seemed to think that Tun Razak was a "usurper" of power at the expense of his mentor and friend, Tunku Abdul Rahman. He might have hoped that something might happen to Tun Razak, and Tun Mustapha did indeed entertain the wish that the Tunku should return to be the Prime Minister again.

However, perhaps the most cogent reason why Tun Mustapha broached the question of secession was his complete confidence in his ability to get the undivided support of all Sabahans. For one thing, he was very confident that Tun Stephens would back him. He was led to understand by Tun Stephens' actions and words in the past that he (Tun Stephens) was behind him all along. In one of Tun Stephens' letters to him (and there were many), he promised him that "he would follow Tun Mustapha in this world to the next".³¹ Then just before the presentation of his paper on "Sabah's Stand in Malaysia" at the 23 April 1975 meeting, he had called practically all USNO Central Executive Committee members, including Tun Stephens, then Head of State to his house. One by one each one was asked to take the oath of allegiance and loyalty to the party, USNO — that none would waver in their support for the party. The Muslims took the oath on the Holy Koran, and the Christians on the Holy Bible.³² It was quite a moving ceremony. None in the meeting took the oath-taking lightly. But perhaps the most important fact insofar as Tun Mustapha was concerned was Tun Stephens' own voluntary oath of allegiance and loyalty to him and to the USNO party made in Mecca when both went to perform their Haj. Apparently, when Stephens entered Islam's holiest shrine, he took the oath in the presence of many Malaysians — including a Federal Minister. Tun Mustapha told Tun Stephens that he was standing on hallowed ground and should not make such an oath, but Tun Stephens persisted. He vowed that he would always support Tun Mustapha and the

31. Letter from Tun Stephens to Tun Mustapha dated 21 August 1972 and published in the *Sabah Times* on 11 August 1975.

32. Interview with Tan Sri Said Keruak on 18 April 1983. The two Christians who were present at this oath-taking ceremony were Datuk Peter Mojuntin and the writer. The oath-taking ceremony took place just before the famous speech of Tun Mustapha on 23 April 1975.

USNO party and that if anyone was to harm Tun Mustapha, physically or politically, he would be the first person to come forward and die for Tun Mustapha and the USNO party.³³

This oath, made in Islam's holiest place, was above all the most important. This paled into insignificance the various pronouncements of loyalty and friendship in the press, including the oath taken in Tun Mustapha's house. Even the little ceremony of mixing their blood together by pricking their finger with a pin and mixing the blood to symbolise that they were "blood brothers" was not as important. The oath made in Mecca convinced Tun Mustapha absolutely that Tun Stephens was firmly committed to him and to the USNO party and would never renege from the oath and promise.

Earlier, too, their children were betrothed. Tun Stephens' daughter was betrothed to one of Tun Mustapha's sons, and it was billed the most important union of the two leading families in Sabah by the newspapers. At the betrothal ceremony, Tun Stephens also made a statement that the engagement was also symbolic of the bond of friendship between him and Tun Mustapha. It was the final manifestation of their little ceremony of mixing their blood to make them "blood brothers".

Further, Tun Mustapha was also convinced that the Kadazans, particularly the Christians were not in their heart of hearts in favour of Malaysia. He was convinced that they resented Malay domination over the Kadazans, and more particularly, they resented the assimilation process through religion and the Malay culture. The Kadazans represented by Tun Stephens, Mojuntin, Gilong, Richard Yap, Manjaji, and Luping had shown their true feelings about Malaysia and Malay domination in the 1965-67 period. This feeling was still there, but dormant, waiting only to be lighted again. Tun Mustapha therefore thought that he could count on these Kadazan leaders to support him in his fight against the central government.

But he was sadly mistaken. Tun Stephens, especially, turned "traitor" and left him in the cold.

As his fight against the central government progressed, it became

33. Oath-taking was common amongst Sabahans of all ethnic communities. The Kadazans used to take oaths in a special oath-taking ceremony when they agreed to be subservient to the Chartered Company rulers. The Chinese too took an oath of allegiance and loyalty when they took office as committee members of a Chinese guild or Chamber of Commerce.

more and more a fight between Tun Mustapha and Tun Razak. It became a matter of "which of us should go first". All the literature on the question of Tun Mustapha's fight with Kuala Lumpur and the central government's decision to remove Tun Mustapha from Sabah's political scene suggested that after they had tallied all the pluses and minuses together, they found that there were more minuses than pluses, therefore there was no need to keep Tun Mustapha in power. He had to be removed.³⁴

There is, however, another aspect of the story. The writer feels that after Tun Mustapha was forced to step down as Chief Minister on 31 October 1975, he was more than convinced that his biggest enemy was Tun Razak, the Prime Minister. He started entertaining the idea that this political enemy should be removed — along with him if he had to go himself. Thus, his campaign in Kuala Lumpur — to get closer to some of the other Federal Ministers. He was also very close to Datuk Asri, the PAS President, and was particularly sympathetic to Datu Harun, the fallen Chief Minister of Selangor. But above all, he was very close to the Tunku. There were many occasions when Tun Mustapha wished that the Tunku might return to power and take up the Prime Ministership again. To Tun Mustapha, Tun Razak had failed, not only the Malay people, but also the country as a whole. Tun Mustapha never expressed this feeling publicly, and to be fair, never even mentioned his desire to depose Tun Razak. But this is the writer's own interpretation of the situation in his association with Tun Mustapha.

The next question then is why did Tun Stephens renege from his oath and promise? Why did he not stand behind Tun Mustapha in his hour of need? Was this not the chance Tun Stephens was waiting for to get back at the central government which was responsible for his own downfall a few years before? Was Tun Stephens not interested anymore in his call for greater autonomy for Sabah, for the Kadazan cause, and the review of the 20 points safeguards for Sabah? Or, had Tun Stephens changed his views of Kuala Lumpur as the colonial masters who took over the governance of Sabah from the whiteman?

To the writer, Tun Stephens showed his first sign of vacillation about whether he should be behind Tun Mustapha when he met Tun Razak at the funeral of the Sultan of Pahang. Tun Stephens went to the funeral as Sabah's representative, and Tun Mustapha did not go. Apparently, Tun Razak drew Tun Stephens to a corner and asked him "what happened to your

34. See R.S. Milne and D.K. Mauzy, *op.cit.* See also *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 August 1975.

boss — why is he not here?". The "boss" referred to was Tun Mustapha. Tun Razak appeared sarcastic according to Tun Stephens and he was convinced that Tun Razak was out to get Tun Mustapha out of the political arena. He told Mojuntin that this was probably their chance to strike back at Tun Mustapha.³⁵

The second indication that Tun Stephens was not fully behind Tun Mustapha was when he was asked to take over the Chief Ministership by Alliuddin, the brother of Tun Mustapha. He refused the offer. It would appear that his reasoning for not accepting the Chief Ministership in this way was that he would remain under the shadow of Tun Mustapha and apparently he did not want that. Clearly then, he saw an opportunity to "free himself" from Tun Mustapha's string and be himself again. This time around, the table was turned and if he played his cards well, he could use the central government to help him to strike back at Tun Mustapha. All the pains and pent-up feelings of the past suddenly came up and when he saw his chance, his immediate reaction was to lash back at his old tormentor and enemy. The promises, the oaths were all forgotten. He must take revenge.

There was another consideration: Tun Stephens, like many others in Sabah had swallowed his pride and kept his cool at the arrogance of people like Syed Kechik, Dzul kifli and many others. These people had obviously looked down on Tun Stephens as a "defeated" person and Tun Stephens had felt humiliated. There was an occasion when as Head of State, and unable to get Tun Mustapha to accede to his request, he had to write to Syed Kechik, the Director of Sabah Foundation — the man behind the "throne", asking Syed Kechik to consider his application for the exchange of his timber land area with a Sabah Foundation area. He mentioned that his timber area had very little timber stand and wanted to exchange this with the more lucrative timbered area of the Sabah Foundation concession area. Syed Kechik refused this request and to add insult to injury, stated that the Sabah Foundation belonged to the people — implying that the people should not be deprived.³⁶

35. Tun Stephens told this writer and Datuk Mojuntin about this conversation with Tun Razak at the writer's house on the evening of 15 May 1975. The writer had invited some close friends to attend a wedding anniversary dinner. Tun Mustapha was also there. After they left, Tun Stephens and Datuk Peter Mojuntin remained and it was then that Tun Stephens told Mojuntin and this writer that Tun Razak wanted to oust Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister.

36. This matter of the timber area exchange came out into the open in the 1976 election campaign. Tun Stephens' personal letter to Syed Kechik as Director of Sabah Foundation was even published in full in the *Sabah Times*.

Finally, there was the question of vindicating himself. Tun Stephens, after realising his mistake in thinking that the Kadazans alone could form the government in Sabah, just as the Malays were able to do in West Malaysia, became convinced later on in his political career that Sabah's answer was in multi-racialism. After the merger of the UNKO and Pasok Momogun, the UPKO opened its door to all races. He met stiff opposition from both the SCA and the USNO for this, and when he closed the doors in 1966, he admitted, through Ghani Gilong, his successor as President of UPKO, that he was ahead of his time, that it was a mistake. He then tried to have a merger with the USNO — an all-"bumiputra" party by dissolving the Kadazan party. He found that his position in the USNO party was only "secondary", and that he might have the rank (as Head of State) and his former Kadazan "boys" might be Assistant Ministers, but he and his former "boys" had no real power at all. The power was in Syed Kechik, the man behind the throne.

To get back power for himself, he must look towards the concept of multi-racialism. And in 1975, the time was opportune for this. Some USNO Malay dissidents did not like the treatment they had received from Tun Mustapha and Syed Kechik, and were more than ready to combine forces with him. These were Harris, Salleh Sulong, Ampong Puyong, Mohd Noor Mansoor and others. In the Chinese camp, there were at first not many: foremost was Yeh Pao Tsu, who probably saw a great opportunity for himself as he had seen it when he threw his allegiance with Tun Mustapha in the USNO-UPKO confrontation of 1965-1967. He saw once more the might of the central government, but this time, favouring Tun Stephens. Also there was Yap Pak Leong who had a grudge against Tun Mustapha in any case for throwing him in jail; then there was Lim Guan Sing, Khoo Siak Chiew's protege in the early stages of politics, and who decided to wait in the wings when Khoo was "retired". On the Kadazan side, the notable recruit was Peter Mojuntin, and for a brief period, Gilong. Gibon of Tambunan, despite his earlier disenchantment with Tun Stephens for turning his back on the Christian community by embracing Islam, also followed. Younger and newer Kadazan leaders also took part: there was James Ongkili, Pariin Kitingan to mention but a few. But most of Tun Stephens' former Kadazan boys did not follow him. These included Richard Yap, his first right-hand man, and the first Secretary-General of UNKO, Joe Manjaji also did not join; neither did Matakim, Luping, Tibok, Majakil, Gimbad and Tingkalor. And of course, both Payar Juman and Wong Fook Siang stayed with Tun Mustapha.

The Kadazan leadership was split, therefore, with slightly more than half remaining with Tun Mustapha, and the rest going with Tun Stephens. Gilong, who was Tun Razak's first contact man to inform Tun Mustapha that he had to resign, and amongst the first top leaders to form the Berjaya party, rejoined the USNO party in 1976 — just before the election. His reason for rejoining was his disenchantment with the Berjaya party and what it stood for (multi-racialism which he thought was favourable to the Chinese community); but more important still, he saw no reason for Berjaya's existence anymore after Tun Mustapha retracted his call for secession.³⁷

Who were actually behind the Berjaya organisation? The most prominent as we have seen in the foregoing was Tun Razak, the Prime Minister himself. With him in the central government were Ghafar Baba, Tengku Razaleigh, and briefly, Abdullah Ahmad.³⁸ The central power, not only gave moral support and logistic support such as the provision of campaigners from the centre, but also financial support. The sum of \$500,000 was donated to the party to be used for the by-election at Labuan and Kuala Kinabatangan in December 1975.

On the Sabah side, the timber "towkays" were evenly committed at first, with a slight edge towards the USNO party. Many, however, were sitting on the fence, making their move only after they saw where the winds were blowing. These fence-sitters contributed equally to both parties. These timber "towkays" were naturally mostly Chinese. "Bumi-putra" timber men like Tun Stephens, Harris, Sulong and briefly, Gilong were behind Berjaya. Yassin was also briefly aligned with Tun Stephens, but like Gilong, he returned to the USNO party soon afterwards. Tun Mustapha himself, Syed Kechik, Sakaran, Titingan, Galpam and many more smaller timber concessionaires were backing the USNO party.

However, perhaps the biggest contributor to Berjaya's party fund came from Sarawak. Rahman Yacob's support for Berjaya has already been noted earlier. His contribution was more in the nature of moral and logistic support. The financial support came from Sarawak's "towkays"

37. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong on 8 April 1983. Datuk Ghani also wrote a book entitled *Sabah: Why I Rejoined the USNO*. This book explained the reasons why he left the Berjaya party. He mentioned that federal leaders, including Tunku Abdul Rahman, encouraged him to return to the USNO party.

38. Datuk Abdullah Ahmad was later arrested and detained for alleged communist associations. He is now released and is engaged in business ventures.

in the form of hard cash, in return for getting timber concessions in Sabah if and when Berjaya won the elections. Indeed, one enterprising Sarawak timberman helped arrange for a huge loan with a bank in Sarawak.

The loan sought was about \$12,500,000 (twelve million five hundred thousand) and the applicants were seven persons, three women and four men. The amount of loan approved was about \$8,000,000. Three of the loan applicants were from Singapore as the money was utilised from a Singapore office. The amount of loan granted to the two women from Singapore was \$3,000,000. One of the loan applicants was a Chinese. The rest were all Malays. Four of the loan applicants were from Kuching and the amount utilised was from a Kuching office. These seven loan applicants were all guaranteed by Berjaya politicians — notable amongst the guarantors were Tun Stephens, Sulong and Yeh Pao Tsu.

The loan was ostensibly raised for the financing of a huge development project in order to satisfy the requirements of the Central Bank and the laws governing merchant banks financing a political party's campaign funds. It was, however, the understanding that the money would be used by a political party — as security, five top Berjaya leaders were asked to guarantee the loan. The total loan was repayable by the end of 1976. All the loan money was apparently expended, and presumably, by the end of 1976 was also all paid up, together with interest thereon.³⁹

Sabah politicians, USNO or Berjaya, were therefore not unduly surprised to see a seeming large influx of Chinese businessmen spilling over to Sabah from Sarawak after April 1976, and many have stayed adding more to the already increasing number of Sabah "towkays" in the timber trade.

When the USNO party, therefore, decided to dissolve the Assembly one year before the stipulated date of dissolution, the Berjaya party was more than ready.

39. The information about this loan from a Sarawak bank was told to the writer by a highly placed Berjaya leader. For obvious reasons he did not want to be identified. The writer, however, has reason to believe this account of the Sarawak bank loan was authentic. During the 1976 campaign it was common knowledge amongst many people in Sabah that the Berjaya party was getting financial aid from Sarawak but the USNO party officials did not have time to investigate this and expose the true source of Berjaya's financial aid.

The Election of 1976 and Tun Stephens' Appointment as Chief Minister

The April 1976 election was in fact another April 1967 election in reverse. The contenders were the same: Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens. The difference this time was the lieutenants behind them. They were a mixed crowd. Tun Mustapha had a mixture of Malays, Kadazans and Chinese, with the Malays predominating. Tun Stephens had the Kadazans, Malays and Chinese with the Chinese and Kadazans predominating. The issues were the same: to save democracy on the part of Berjaya and Tun Stephens, and from the USNO, a fight to maintain "bumiputra" unity in Sabah. The really big difference, however, was the alignment of the central power. Whereas in the 1967 election, the Tunku and the central power was with Tun Mustapha and the USNO party, the 1976 election saw Tun Mustapha pitched against the might of Kuala Lumpur who had turned to support Tun Stephens and Berjaya.

Before we discuss the election campaign and the manifesto of each contender, let us go through the sequence of events which led to the 1976 election and the reason why Kuala Lumpur decided to back Tun Stephens and Berjaya, and seemingly to discard the "bumiputra" party and more particularly, the Muslims of Sabah.

The announcement of the dissolution of the Assembly was made on 23 January 1976. Indeed, Syed Kechik had wanted to announce the dissolution in December soon after the Labuan and Kuala Kinabatangan by-elections, but Tun Mustapha had gone to London and his successor as Chief Minister, Tan Sri Said Keruak could not make the decision. The idea was to have a snap election, to take Berjaya off guard when they were still smarting over their defeat in the two by-elections. Further, Syed Kechik believed that the UMNO leaders in Kuala Lumpur — meaning Tun Razak, Tengku Razaleigh and even Ghafar Baba — were wavering in their support for Tun Stephens and the Berjaya party.

The by-election results of Labuan and Kuala Kinabatangan were announced on 10 December 1976.⁴⁰ The results boosted the confidence of the USNO party, and particularly Tun Mustapha who had campaigned vigorously. There was a feeling of doom in the Berjaya camp.

Shortly after these by-election results were known, Tun Razak left for London for medication. He left on 18 December 1975. There was no

40. *Sabah Times*, 11 December 1975.

indication whatsoever to the public that his sickness was serious. The press bulletin released by his department simply stated that he was going for a medical check-up and for a little rest. Photographs of a smiling Tun Razak walking in one of the parks in London were even printed in the newspapers in Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu to assure the public that Tun Razak was well. However, on 14 January 1976 Tun Razak died and it took some time for the Malaysian leaders to digest this news. Tun Mustapha was in London when Tun Razak died.⁴¹ Tun Razak's body was flown back to Kuala Lumpur by a special MAS flight on 18 January 1976. Tun Mustapha arrived earlier by the Sabah jet. Tun Razak's funeral was attended by many world leaders.⁴²

Tun Razak's death was probably seen by Tun Mustapha as a chance to get back into the Sabah leadership again. He took it as a sign and therefore did not let up his campaign for USNO. Indeed, he was quite insistent that he must stand for the election. He thought that his main adversary in Kuala Lumpur, Tun Razak, was not there any more and his promise to resign from the political arena was no longer valid. It was probably with this in mind that he agreed with Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli for the dissolution of the Assembly and to call for the election — one year ahead of the scheduled time for the election.

He called all the Ministers to his house on the eve of January 22 1976. Not many knew what was the nature of the meeting. The writer was amongst the later arrivals. When the writer arrived, Said Keruak, Syed Kechik, Dzulkifli and most of the other Ministers were already there. Tun Mustapha then announced that he had told the State Secretary to inform the Head of State to dissolve the Assembly the next day. An announcement in the name of the Chief Minister would be made to this effect, he said. This was a shock to many. Obviously, the whole thing was master-minded by Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. The writer protested, informing Tun Mustapha that the three constituencies under his charge — Moyog, Inanam and Tanjong Aru were all "black" areas — meaning they were Berjaya strongholds. Reports from other constituencies that practically all Kadazan areas, and areas where the Chinese held the

41. Tun Mustapha told this writer that he arrived at the bedside of Tun Razak a little after his death. He said he prayed for his soul and asked for forgiveness on their past differences.

42. Amongst the leaders from abroad were the then Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Fraser, and also the then Australian Labour leader, Whitlam.

balance in the voting, also showed that they were "black" areas, and that as it stood the USNO and the SCA would not win the election. Tun Mustapha was not convinced. Instead, he said he had 12-tier reports from all sources, and all indicated that the USNO/SCA would win handsomely.⁴³

Before the dissolution of the Assembly, all political leaders in the USNO party were told to start work on the coming state election which was due in October 1977. The constituencies had been realigned by 1975 and increased to 48 constituencies instead of the 32 original constituencies.

Each Minister was allocated constituencies to look after and this writer was given three. The Director of Operations was the USNO Secretary-General, Alliuddin. Each Minister became the Chairman of a Divisional Operation Committee set up in each constituency. The plan was to set these operation committees up well in advance and to make reports and recommendations to the Director of Operations at USNO headquarters. Needless to say, each Divisional Operation Committee needed man-power and field workers, and in turn, this needed funds. The USNO Headquarters allocated these funds.

The Ministers and other Central Executive Committee members put in charge of two or three constituencies met from time to time and it became very apparent that the reports coming from the constituencies were not very encouraging. Of the 48 constituencies, there were about 22 which were populated by predominantly Kadazan and Murut communities, and about eight predominantly Chinese. The indications, according to the reports from these Ministers, was that the majority of the Chinese leaders and community had decided to back the Berjaya party — and not the USNO/SCA. The Chinese had decided that Kuala Lumpur and the UMNO leaders were behind Tun Stephens and Berjaya and being Chinese, they must follow the dictate of their business acumen: to support the winning side.

The death of Tun Razak put a temporary doubt in the minds of the Chinese community with regard to Berjaya as the winning horse. Some

43. Tan Sri Said Keruak who took over as Chief Minister from Tun Mustapha was told of the dissolution by the latter in Kuala Lumpur after the funeral of Tun Razak. When Tan Sri Said protested, Tun Mustapha sarcastically told him he (Tun Mustapha) was not after his post as Chief Minister. Tan Sri Said said that he protested the dissolution of the Assembly because he thought it was not opportune. Interview with Tan Sri Said Keruak on 18 April 1983.

were wavering and money support for the Berjaya party was also decreasing. Once more, Tun Stephens was facing the same old problems: money.⁴⁴ His lieutenants too were dwindling, and even Yassin, who went to his side to join him in August 1975 had returned to the USNO.⁴⁵ More former USNO defectors returned to the party once again, so that the expected coup in the Assembly did not materialise. This was demoralising to Tun Stephens. But the dissolution of the Assembly which was announced sooner than he expected was a blessing and augured well for Tun Stephens and his party.

Kuala Lumpur too was surprised at the dissolution. Some interpreted this sudden dissolution as Tun Mustapha's attempt to return to power. After all, he had still not relinquished his posts as President of USNO and Chairman of the Sabah Alliance as promised. Said Keruak's appointment as Chief Minister was seen as a mere stop-gap for Tun Mustapha. The former was seen as Tun Mustapha's man and would agree to whatever Tun Mustapha wanted him to do. Tun Hussein who was now the Federal Prime Minister and who was thought to be more amenable to the USNO party actually also hardened his stand when he too saw that Tun Mustapha was obviously attempting to return to politics. Syed Kechik especially might have miscalculated Tun Hussein's stand in the matter as he thought Tun Hussein was pro-USNO.

The post of Deputy Prime Minister then came up to be decided and the contenders were Ghafar Baba, Tengku Razaleigh, and Dr Mahathir. The outsider, who was also considered the contender was Tan Sri Ghazalie Shaffie. USNO, after some consideration gave its support to Dr Mahathir, and this apparently antagonised Ghafar Baba and Tengku Razaleigh even more. USNO's bridge towards these two people was now completely burnt.

The idea of the dissolution was to have a snap election. It was thought that the nomination should take place in February 1976 and election the following month — so that the Berjaya party would not have

44. A Berjaya supporter who was very close to Tun Stephens told this writer that Tun Stephens was thinking of dissolving the Berjaya party when Tun Razak died. He thought that the new leadership in UMNO was not pro-Berjaya and was more inclined towards the USNO party. When therefore the announcement of the dissolution of the Assembly was announced, Tun Stephens was so happy and told his nearest closest friends that God had answered his prayers and that he was going to win over Tun Mustapha.

45. Datuk Yassin was also present at the USNO Central Executive Committee meeting on 15 July 1975. Soon after this meeting he announced his resignation from the USNO party. However, he rejoined later.

time to prepare for it. But Syed Kechik did not have the Chairman of the Election Commission in mind when he advised a sudden dissolution. Indeed, his argument at the meeting of Alliance Ministers on the night of 22 January 1976 was that he was worried about the more than 40,000 new voters who were still unregistered. He felt that these new voters — mostly Chinese in the urban and semi-urban areas and younger "bumi-putras" — were anti-USNO and would not vote for the party if given the chance to vote. The election therefore must be held before they were registered.

However, Tan Sri Ahmad, the Election Commission Chairman was of another mind. He wanted to show his independence, and without the central government behind the USNO party, he could not be influenced to call for the election as soon as possible. He wanted the new voters to be registered first. He realised the requirement of the law in Sabah — that within 90 days after the dissolution of the Assembly, an election must be held. But he was confident that his office could register all the new voters within the period. The nomination day therefore was set down for March 18 and the election for April 5-14 1976. This gave the Berjaya party enough time to plan and organise itself.

The loan money raised from a Sarawak bank in July 1975 was fast depleting, but the announcement of the dissolution of the Assembly, and the long delay in setting down the date for the election itself, gave the Berjaya leaders renewed vigour to raise further money from Sarawak and Sabah "towkays". But more important still, the federal government also announced that it had lifted the ban on political rallies. This suited the Berjaya leaders very well for they could now shout all their propaganda directly to the people. This was a departure from Kuala Lumpur's normal policy of not allowing public rallies as they maintained then that the speeches by politicians could incite the crowds. This had happened in the 1969 election and that was why at subsequent elections after the 1969 federal election, there was always a ban on public rallies. The decision to allow for a public rally by political parties was obviously another way the central government was helping the Berjaya party. The USNO party which was still in power had the use of the Information Department to organise closed door civic dialogue sessions with the people with a State Minister in attendance ostensibly to answer questions from the public or to inform them of the various development projects being done for them by government. These dialogue

sessions were, however, used by the party in power to propagandise itself and to attack the opposition party. The opposition party did not have this facility, so it had to resort to a house-to-house campaign or a gathering of people in a house ostensibly to hold birthday parties or even a prayer meeting. Without the public rallies, the opposition was clearly in a disadvantageous position. When the decision to allow public rallies was made and communicated to the respective parties, it was natural that the Berjaya leaders greeted it with glee. They had obviously prevailed on Ghafar Baba or Tengku Razaleigh to get the new Prime Minister to agree to this. The USNO leaders were unhappy with this decision but accepted it with grace. Dzulkifli, however, accepted the decision with personal enthusiasm for he saw his big chance to practice his showmanship and his adeptness in public speaking. He was getting a reputation as a long-winded speaker, with lots of "pantuns" (rhyming quatrains), and invocations to the Almighty interspersed in his speeches.

The public rally decision was not the only sign that Kuala Lumpur leaders, especially Tun Hussein, were changing their minds about USNO and in favour of Berjaya. The decision of whether USNO was in the National Front was deliberately withheld. The reason for this was Kuala Lumpur's uncertainty about Tun Mustapha's intentions in politics because he had made his position clear that he was standing in his old Assembly seat. USNO tried to disclaim the rumours and the propaganda campaign by Berjaya that Tun Mustapha was making a come-back as Chief Minister of Sabah, but these disclaimers by USNO were not very convincing. Furthermore, the announcement that Tun Mustapha would stand in the election was greeted by the Sabah Malays with enthusiasm. They saw in Tun Mustapha a strong personality and leader to lead them against Tun Stephens and his Chinese partners.

This announcement, however, was equally exploited by the Berjaya party to ensure the support of the anti-Tun Mustapha factions, especially amongst the Christian community of both Chinese and Kadazans. This matter of Tun Mustapha's standing at the election should not have been made known for on balance, the negative aspect generated by it outweighed the positive aspect. This was obviously a tactical mistake by the USNO leadership. Furthermore, the Petronas agreement with the state government of Sabah was not signed. Sabah was the only state government to refuse to sign it, and this made Tengku Razaleigh even more doubtful

about Tun Mustapha. Clearly, Said Keruak did not have the final say: it was Tun Mustapha who still had the say in Sabah, and if Tun Mustapha was given another chance to win, he would renew his stand for greater autonomy for Sabah. Syed Kechik tried to dissuade the federal government from moving further into the Berjaya camp, however, by the announcement on 3 March, that Berjaya's Secretary-General, Mohd. Noor Mansoor was allegedly involved in a conspiracy with Filipino military officials to assassinate Tun Mustapha. The military officials were not interested, but Tun Mustapha came to know about this plot from his own connections in the Philippines. The federal government did not do anything about this allegation however, until much later in April 1976 when its desired effect was no longer important.

The newspaper propaganda war was intensified and Berjaya seemed to have a slight edge in this. George Chin, the cartoonist with the pen-name "Mingo" went all out to draw political caricatures of all USNO leaders — and invariably these cartoons depicted them as greedy leaders. Tun Mustapha especially was painted as a dictator, and the cartoons highlighted his womanising escapades and his use of the Sabah jets, and his purchase of the Boeing 707 for his personal use.

Syed Kechik in "Mingo"'s cartoons and in the press was depicted as the man behind the throne — the real power. He was even called the Rasputin of Sabah. They painted a picture of Syed Kechik as responsible for all the problems in Sabah — that he alone was making all the decisions for the Ministers and for Tun Mustapha. He was also accused obliquely in the press of mismanagement of the Sabah Foundation. Tun Stephens came down particularly hard on Syed Kechik in his press statements, and even went so far as to say in the Berjaya's manifesto that when the party got into power, Syed Kechik would be the first person to be deported. Tun Stephens' anger at Syed Kechik was perhaps understandable. He saw Syed Kechik as the cause of his humiliation in 1967 and in later years, Tun Stephens found himself grovelling to Syed Kechik having to write to him asking for his permission to exchange his timber area with a Sabah Foundation area. Syed Kechik refused of course. It is not hard to imagine how humiliating this must have been to Tun Stephens, a former Chief Minister and also Head of State of Sabah.

Dzulkifli too, was attacked for his alleged anti-Chinese stand and for his call for one language, one religion and one culture. The Chinese saw in Dzulkifli an enemy of what they stood for — the cultural integrity

of their community. The Berjaya newspapers were full of press statements and articles decrying the misdeeds of Tun Mustapha and his lieutenants. A book was also published entitled *The Misdeeds of Tun Mustapha*. Perhaps this book more than anything else did a lot of damage to the image of Tun Mustapha and the USNO party. It was a vile book, and it was meant to be. It was especially published to coincide with the election campaign and thousands of copies of the book were sent by post to thousands of people throughout the state. The book was purportedly written by "Ed. Hunter", a non-existent person. The publisher's name in Hong Kong was also a pseudonym. It was a non-existent company when an investigation was made. There were rumours, however, that the materials for the book were supplied by senior civil servants in the Ministry of Finance and that western educated Chinese got together to write the book. It was amazing that Kuala Lumpur — especially the Malay leaders — allowed such a book which contained a lot of half truths, innuendoes and speeches taken out of context to be freely circulated in Sabah. The book was not only anti-Mustapha, anti-Dzulkifli and anti-Syed Kechik it was also aimed at belittling the Muslim community.

The Berjaya manifesto was comprehensive and to the point. The whole manifesto was aimed at belittling the USNO party and Tun Mustapha. One of the five main principles of the manifesto was: "To safeguard and promote the special position of the nation and the constitutional rights and privileges of every citizen in Sabah within a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-religious Malaysia". But as we shall see in the next chapter, this part of the manifesto remained largely only on paper. The Berjaya leaders had more to say than the USNO leaders. The latter were at the receiving end. As the "under-dogs" the Berjaya had the upper hand in the issuance of propaganda materials. They were fully prepared and their public rallies were also fully attended.

The Christian communities of all denominations came in full force to support Berjaya. In their blind fury against Tun Mustapha's repressive acts against the Christians and the expulsion of foreign priests, they forgot that Tun Stephens himself was a Muslim convert and that indirectly he was the cause of Tun Mustapha's actions in the religious sphere. But the Christian leaders, both Chinese and Kadazans had a field day in this matter. They did not have to shout at the public rallies how the Christians had been mistreated. All they had to say was that Berjaya would give respect to all religions in the country, and the people understood. In smaller groups and in house-to-house campaigns, the

Christians were told that when Berjaya was elected and became the government, Tun Stephens would return all the foreign priests to Sabah. The Christian community was even promised by some field campaigners that the state religion — Islam — would be abolished.⁴⁶ These were big promises and also very emotional issues.

The next target was the Filipino refugees — mostly Muslims from the southern Philippines. They had come into Sabah in their thousands, and they claimed that they were fleeing from the repression of the Christian President, Marcos. Tun Mustapha took them under his wing, with the tacit support of the federal government. Apparently, both Tun Mustapha and the UMNO leadership saw these people who were Muslims as potential Muslim voters for Sabah in the future. They would increase the voting capacity of the Muslim population in the state. These refugees had caused a lot of problems to the state and the Sabahans as a whole did not like them. It was a vote-getting issue for anyone to come out openly to say that the refugees would be firmly dealt with. Tun Stephens went one step further: The Berjaya party when it got into power would throw these refugees into the sea! This promise, however, was short-lived. Tun Stephens apparently did write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs under a confidential cover letter when he became the Chief Minister in 1976. After the death of Tun Stephens, someone in the Chief Minister's department forwarded a copy of the secret letter to Dzulkifli, who in turn published it in the newspaper, asking Harris, who had taken over as Chief Minister, what he was going to do about the refugee problem. For doing this, Dzulkifli was charged in court with stealing a secret document under the Official Secrets Act and was tried, and found guilty.

Another most effective method used by the Berjaya propaganda machine was the sending of thousands of "poison letters" to the electorate. There were literally thousands of these "poison letters" thrown during the night in strategic places and villages and some were sent by post. The "poison letters" attacked the USNO leaders and contained a lot of inaccuracies and untruths. The Berjaya leaders, led by Tun Stephens, were very adept at character assassination.

The USNO's manifesto, on the other hand was not as eye-catching as

46. Some enthusiastic field campaigners for Berjaya candidates told the Christians that Tun Stephens was not really a Muslim, or would revert to Christianity if he won the election.

the Berjaya's. It had no real issues to present or to fire the imagination of the electorate. It reiterated its stand to stay in Malaysia forever — a call which was directed towards the central power more than anything else. Most of the time, USNO was in the defensive and it was towards defending its record in office that it concentrated its efforts.

On the matter of Tun Mustapha's and USIA's great enthusiasm to Islamise the population, the USNO leaders, especially the Kadazans, tried to mend some fences. Some funds were allocated to the Christian churches for the construction of chapels or for the repair of church buildings. Privately, the Christian Kadazan leaders also tried to show that the USNO party, together with the SCA would put greater pressure on the USNO Malay leadership to relax their policy on the Islamisation and assimilation of the "definitive" races. On the refugee problem, however, USNO was in a bind. USNO leaders tried to explain that this was the responsibility of the federal government, but they could not explain why the state government had spent millions of dollars to make the refugees welcome in the state. They were housed in camps and unoccupied government quarters in Kudat, Sandakan, Semporna, Lahad Datu and Tawau. For a brief period of time, the state government also issued them with money as relief funds. In the matter of the refugee problem, therefore, USNO was placed in a bad position and was unable to counter-act the Berjaya's attack on this. The Berjaya leaders simply told the electorate that when they got into power they would return these people to where they belonged.

On the charges of maladministration, USNO's reply to this was that if there was any, the Berjaya leaders, who were themselves once USNO leaders were equally to blame. They were just as guilty. But here again, the counter-propaganda and replies rang hollow and it did not impress the electorate. They were convinced that the maladministration of the state was solely the responsibility of Tun Mustapha and his advisors such as Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli, and they and they alone were to blame.

The Berjaya attack on USNO's Ministers taking part in major business ventures was also very effective. They painted a picture that all USNO leaders were corrupted. They ran a long story on Habib Abdul Rahman, then Minister of Finance, on his involvement in the sale of paints to government. They managed to show that as Minister of Finance, Habib was responsible for the decision as to which company should be given the sole

agency to supply paints to government and to quasi-government bodies. Indeed, on this aspect of the sole agency for the supply of paints, Habib was charged in court by the anti-corruption squad. The case is still not concluded. Dzulkifli was also depicted as a corrupt Minister, and they even included a story about him in the book *The Misdeeds of Tun Mustapha*. Tun Mustapha of course was pictured as the greatest evil and the Berjaya leaders went all out to point out his alleged misdeeds in the newspapers and in the book *The Misdeeds of Tun Mustapha*.

The USNO counter-propaganda was also vitriolic in nature. Harris was shown as corrupt during his ministerial period and all of Harris's business ventures were put to the public to read and judge. Tun Stephens, on the other hand, was portrayed as a man who could not be trusted. His private letters to Tun Mustapha were printed and his various actions to get more and better timber areas were exploited to the full. Even Fred Sinidol's wife got into the picture. Apparently Sinidol had applied for a timber area, and the application was sent in by his wife and his sister-in-law, Junie, the wife of Tun Stephens. Instead of approving the timber application, Tun Mustapha gave Fred Sinidol's wife the sum of \$500,000 free of tax. This incident was also graphically recounted in the Sabah newspapers.

The USNO leadership, especially amongst the Kadazans in the party, tried to explain to the Kadazans that Tun Stephens had "sold" them for his own political advantage. Kadazan leaders in USNO went all out to show to the Kadazans that the real "enemy" was the central power and not Tun Mustapha. For the Kadazans to rise again as the "definitive" race and therefore, the paramount race in the state, they must now use Tun Mustapha to help them fight against the might of the central government. The Kadazans were also informed that Tun Stephens had in fact been asked to join and to stand united with Tun Mustapha to fight for Sabah's rights and continued autonomy. Indeed, Tun Stephens was even offered the Chief Ministership, but he declined to accept. The Kadazans were told that Tun Stephens' refusal to accept to lead the USNO party was because of his personal interest in getting his revenge against Tun Mustapha. The Kadazans were also told that Tun Stephens' fight in Berjaya against the USNO party was not for the Kadazan cause but his own political interests.

Unfortunately, the bulk of the Kadazans, especially the Christian Kadazans refused to heed or listen to these calls. They were blinded by their fury at Tun Mustapha's religious persecution of the past and were

therefore not prepared to listen whether Tun Stephens' fight was for themselves or for his own political interest.

In any case, the Berjaya leaders made sure that the USNO leadership, including the Kadazan leaders in the USNO party, were discredited. The thousands of "poison letters" scattered in the villages, in the towns and sent by post to private individuals, were character assassinations against Kadazan leaders in USNO. Unfortunately, many Kadazans are gullible and many believed in the contents of the "poison letters".

The "newspaper war" was at its highest and best. It was better presented than the 1967 "newspaper war". But USNO, this time, was at the receiving end and was without the help of the more able Chinese writers. This was mainly because the SCA party had been completely revamped, and the older SCA leaders such as Pang Tet Tshung, Khoo Siak Chiew, and Peter Lo were no longer at the SCA helm. The new SCA leaders were young Chinese intellectuals who were more inclined towards the ideal, rather than the pragmatic aspects of politics. They were more concerned with Chinese culture, language, and education than the given situation confronting the SCA as a party. This, however, was understandable. These younger Chinese leaders felt that the long USNO domination of the Sabah Alliance had eroded the SCA's influence and lost them the support of the Chinese people. They felt that Chinese honour and dignity — namely, their culture and language — must be championed once more to entice the Chinese to their side. These young Chinese leaders, however, were probably naive. They forgot that the Chinese were not only interested in the governing of the state. They were also interested in the business aspect of politics and how much they could benefit from it.

When the Sabah Alliance met to discuss the allocation of seats, Tun Mustapha was confronted with a different breed of people. The SCA was represented by younger Chinese as all the "old hands" had gone. The Sabah Indian Congress too had changed. The new members were younger and like the Chinese SCA young leaders, they too were outspoken and demanding. It seemed that Tun Mustapha was ill-at-ease in the meetings with these younger leaders.⁴⁷ They were not inclined to be brow-beaten. Nor were they inclined to listen. They were there to participate in the deliberations and to give their views. They knew and realised that

47. The writer was a member of the Sabah Alliance Central Executive Committee, and therefore an eyewitness.

Tun Mustapha and USNO needed them and they capitalised on this. The SIC leader, for example, spent a great part of his speech informing the meeting of the injustices done to the Indian community in Sabah for not getting any direct representation in the Assembly or Parliament. He forgot that all told there were not more than 5,000 Indians in Sabah. This time he wanted an assurance from Tun Mustapha that at least one SIC member would be appointed as an Assemblyman.

The SCA on the other hand was talking of the need to show to the Chinese community that they were the one and only representative of the Chinese community in Sabah. To do this, they must be seen to be representative and therefore must be allocated 12 constituencies in the newly aligned 48 constituencies. The haggling and bargaining on this was long and arduous, and Tun Mustapha had some difficulty in controlling himself. The Chinese community was in the outright majority in only six constituencies, two in the Kota Kinabalu urban area, two in the Sandakan urban area, one in Tawau and one in the Kudat urban area. But in at least six other constituencies, the Chinese voters were about in equal numbers to the Malays and to the Kadazans. In the newly realigned Tanjong Aru constituency, for example, the Chinese had one-third of the voters. There was a similar situation in Tenom and in Inanam. In the Papar constituency they also held the balance of power.

Tun Mustapha realised, however, that this time he was not in a position of strength. He was not the king-pin, nor the "Tunku Abdul Rahman of Sabah" anymore. He simply could not afford to do without the SCA. The latter party was therefore given eight constituencies — two more than they were strictly entitled to.

The question of finance was another matter. Without Khoo Siak Chiew and the other Chinese timber towkays at the bargaining table, it would appear that Tun Mustapha was alone in the responsibility to provide money. The SCA had nothing to contribute this time. The SCA's only contribution was the promise to the Sabah Alliance to produce the eight Assemblymen after the election. It is also interesting to note in passing that the meetings of the Sabah Alliance were no longer in its old office at Gaya Street. Indeed, the Sabah Alliance National Council rarely met anymore. The meetings of the Sabah Alliance had shifted to the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA) building. This was perhaps indicative of Tun Mustapha's mood, for more and more he found himself spending his time in USIA's office as Chairman of USIA. In the final

analysis, Tun Mustapha was after all a Muslim and he felt he must fight his "last battle" in a Muslim place. The Chinese and Kadazan non-Muslims in the Sabah Alliance, however, were a little bit uncomfortable in the new surroundings. It is also interesting to note that unlike the Sabah Alliance meetings in the 1960s and 1971-74, the Chinese party this time depended on Tun Mustapha for the party campaign funds.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Tun Hussein thought that it would make matters easier if both the Berjaya and the Sabah Alliance came to a compromise regarding the allocation of seats. By this time, both political parties had been accepted as members of the National Front. The Sabah Alliance members who went to see Tun Hussein were led by Said Keruak as leader, accompanied by Syed Kechik, Dzulkifli, Alliuddin and Luping. The Berjaya contingent was led by Tun Stephens with Gilong, Ongkili and Sulong. The thinking was that if a compromise was reached, the heavy costs to be incurred during the election time could be minimised.

The exercise, however, was the National Front's attempt to gauge the strength of each party. As it turned out, the National Front was in no mood to intervene in the intense competition and struggle for power amongst the contending elites in Sabah. The central power, after all was the eventual beneficiary from a continued rivalry amongst the elites in the state of Sabah.

Khalil Akasah, then the National Front's executive secretary and the personal secretary to the late Prime Minister, Tun Razak, was the only other National Front representative, apart from Tun Hussein, who was present at the meeting. Before the meeting he intimated to the USNO contingent that Tun Stephens was ready to dissolve Berjaya. USNO's (Dzulkifli's and Syed Kechik's) estimates of Berjaya's strength was between 12 and 15 seats and they thought the Berjaya party was also running short of money. Syed Kechik then intimated to Khalil that USNO would be prepared to give Berjaya 16 seats and might be persuaded to give 18 seats in exchange for a no contest agreement.

However, Berjaya asked for 24 seats and were unwilling to accept anything less. Berjaya spoke with great authority and confidence and

48. In the 1975 Kuala-Kinabatangan by-election, the Chinese leaders from the Sandakan SCA branch produced a long list of estimated expenditures for the USNO party to pay. The total amount was about \$500,000 Malaysian. In a short report, the Sandakan SCA branch said that the only way to bring the Chinese to vote for the USNO candidate was to spend a large amount of money. The request for the funds was not granted however.

there was no sign whatsoever that it was a party on the verge of dissolution. Khalil must have engineered the whole thing just to get the USNO off-guard and to find out what was really USNO's real strength.

The USNO contingent stuck to their original stand, and that was for 30 seats for the Sabah Alliance and 18 for Berjaya as a form of compromise. Dzulkifli explained to Tun Hussein that the USNO was in a position of strength and even if all the Chinese voted for Berjaya, USNO would still win 40 seats. He maintained that all the Malays and Muslims were with the USNO party, and a large majority of the Kadazans were also still with USNO.

The Prime Minister did not attempt to find a compromise for the contending parties. Kuala Lumpur wanted to see a weakened USNO party led by people whom they could control. Kuala Lumpur also wanted to see a weak opposition party in Berjaya to keep the USNO leaders on their toes. There was no real intention on the part of Kuala Lumpur to intervene. There was also the fear in Kuala Lumpur thinking that USNO and Berjaya would form a coalition or merge and thus form a stronger party. The question of Sabah's rights and greater autonomy might therefore be raised again. It was better not to do anything. Besides, the Tun Mustapha matter was not decided or made clear entirely. Kuala Lumpur felt that he was planning a come-back and if USNO won with a large majority he could be a threat to Kuala Lumpur leaders and federalism. Perhaps it was better that the Berjaya party was given a little backing, and with a bit of luck, Berjaya would win and end Tun Mustapha's political life altogether.

Gilong, meanwhile, decided to return to the USNO fold. Shortly after the meeting with Tun Hussein, on March 15, he announced that he was returning to the USNO party. He explained that there was no reason for him to remain in Berjaya as the USNO party had already made it clear that it would not secede from Malaysia. The implication given then was that Berjaya had become superfluous in the circumstances.⁴⁹ Soon after Gilong's rejoining the USNO, Berjaya's Secretary-General, Mohd. Noor Mansoor was arrested under the provisions of the Internal Security Act for his alleged involvement in the assassination plot on Tun Mustapha. Berjaya's position seemed weakened and its supporters demoralised.

However, USNO made one great mistake and that was allowing PAS

49. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong on 14 April 1983. He told this writer that the Prime Minister, Datuk Hussein Onn (now Tun Hussein) encouraged him to return to the USNO party.

leaders to come to Sabah to help in the campaign. The presence in Sabah of Datuk Asri, the PAS President, and many of his foremost leaders not only made the Kuala Lumpur leadership apprehensive, but also antagonised non-Muslim Sabahans, particularly the Christian Kadazans. The latter viewed the PAS as fundamentalist Muslims who were uncompromising in their stand where religion was concerned.

To the Kuala Lumpur leadership, Datuk Asri's help to the USNO party was aimed at helping Tun Mustapha to rise to power again. Further, they envisaged the scenario of an Asri-Tun Mustapha combination in the Kuala Lumpur Parliament. Even some UMNO Members of Parliament who were sympathetic to Tun Mustapha or Asri might cross over and thus create a strong "bumiputra" opposition and a challenge to the UMNO's hold amongst the Malay community. With this in mind, therefore, Kuala Lumpur privately gave tacit support to the Berjaya party. UMNO made another \$500,000 donation towards the Berjaya's campaign fund just two days before polling began.

In terms of Sabah's politics and the amount of money expended, \$500,000 was a small sum indeed. However, the money coming from federal leaders, and from UMNO in particular, had a devastating effect on many people. Tengku Razaleigh made a point of using UMNO letterhead when he wrote a covering letter to Berjaya enclosing the \$500,000 donation. The Berjaya leadership made capital use of this. Wavering Chinese voters were shown a photocopy of this letter, and Chinese businessmen, always able to smell good business ahead of them, started to come out with tangible support in the form of donations. The Chinese community were very impressed indeed with the Berjaya party now that they saw proof of UMNO's support for it. According to Ross-Larson:⁵⁰

Suddenly, Berjaya campaign workers were handing out \$50 notes to enlist the votes of all and sundry...and with backing under-way, there were a lot of people moving around Sabah with bags containing \$100,000 to \$150,000.

The USNO party had made estimates as to the amount of campaign funds to be used in each constituency. It must be noted that each constituency differed from one another and so the estimated amount for each constituency would also differ. It must also be noted that this estimate was worked out by party agents for the writer who was looking after these constituencies at the time.

The election campaign of 1976 was fast and furious with no holds

50. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

barred. Character assassination and personal attacks were the order of the day. The Berjaya party had the edge insofar as the propaganda campaign was concerned. Most of the well-educated people in Sabah were Chinese and most of them were in the Berjaya camp. Amongst the "bumi-putras", the Kadazans had the edge on the Malays in education, and most of these people too were in the Berjaya camp. Many Berjaya campaigners and field workers went to campaign on "voluntary basis" with the understanding that they would be amply rewarded when Berjaya got into power.⁵¹ The USNO campaigners, however, were not as hardworking, nor belligerent as Berjaya's. The USNO arranged for some 100 campaigners from Kuala Lumpur, and these were sent to the Malay constituencies. The Berjaya too had their supporters from Kuala Lumpur. The money expended was estimated at around M\$30,000,000 altogether during this campaign.⁵²

However, it was not the money that decided the whole issue. It was the federal government's support for Berjaya. Ross-Larson has put it succinctly when he wrote:⁵³

The money raised and dispensed by Berjaya in the closing days of the campaign was not the decisive factor in the elections. It was the explicit support of the federal government for Berjaya, as manifested in Tengku Razaleigh's letter to Tun Fuad (Stephens) and the impact this made on Chinese voters. The letter was regarded as incontrovertible evidence of the federal government's desire to have Berjaya in power, and the implication was that if USNO were to win, federal government support for Sabah would be withheld. The Chinese ever practical, have never supported lost causes. Their traditional view of politics is based on the belief that the dynasty in power has the right to rule by virtue of possessing a mandate from heaven. The faltering strength of a dynasty is seen as indicative of the passage of this mandate and, because the will of heaven has changed, no virtue accrues to supporting the faltering dynasty. So it was with USNO and the passage of Kuala Lumpur's mandate to Berjaya. An estimated 95 percent of the Chinese in Sabah voted for Berjaya, for the new dynasty, for the cause blessed with the mandate from heaven - and in this case, heaven did not want to see the birth of a new coalition of factions that would oppose its right to dispense the mandate. It was not so much that Kuala Lumpur wanted to have Berjaya in power as to forestall the emergence of a bumiputra opposition in Parliament. Berjaya was the unwitting beneficiary.

The observation by Ross-Larson here is most astute and the writer believes, accurate. Kuala Lumpur, under Tun Razak, did not want Tun Mustapha and

51. Many of these 'volunteer campaigners' were awarded either taxi licences or small timber areas.

52. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 196.

53. *Ibid.*

the USNO party to continue to rule and govern Sabah because Tun Mustapha was posing a threat to Kuala Lumpur's work of integration and assimilation. The "parallel autonomy" for Sabah advocated by Tun Mustapha could not anymore be tolerated. Furthermore, Tun Mustapha, was seen as having shown intentions of deposing Tun Razak and replacing him with those whom he could manipulate. His association with known political adversaries of Tun Razak — as in the case of Datuk Harun and other UMNO M.P.s who were not entirely with Tun Razak, was viewed with suspicion and apprehension. Tun Razak, ably aided by Ghafar Baba, Tengku Razaleigh, and briefly by Abdullah Ahmad, had to get Tun Mustapha out of the political arena. The USNO party was not the prime target. The hope and wish of Tun Razak was that once Tun Mustapha was out, the new USNO leadership, particularly under Dzulkifli, would have been more amenable to Kuala Lumpur's views.

Under Tun Hussein's leadership, the emphasis changed. It was not just Tun Mustapha who should be replaced and ousted from the political scene. The whole USNO party must be replaced and taken over by a party more amenable to Kuala Lumpur's views and wishes. Tun Mustapha was seen as a dangerous man. He could gather support from the PAS members of federal parliament and influence other UMNO leaders to his side to form a formidable "bumiputra" opposition to the UMNO party. Tun Mustapha could, with the help of Asri and PAS, split the Malays and perhaps present a new type of Malay government in Kuala Lumpur. Tun Mustapha and the USNO Muslim members which continued to be his power base must therefore be stopped and eliminated from power.

When the results of the election were announced, Berjaya won in 28 and USNO in 20. The SCA was wiped out. Most Kadazans — possibly 70 percent altogether voted for the Berjaya party. Of the Kadazan Christians, about 90 percent voted for the Berjaya party. The Chinese also went all out to support Berjaya. The estimate is that about 95 percent of them voted for the Berjaya party. The interesting thing about the Chinese voters, however, was that when they went out to vote they all went to the Sabah Alliance polling station to collect their identification number.⁵⁴

54. Each political party had its own little hut situated in a strategic place and manned by each party's field officials. Their work was to check the voter rolls and to issue the voter who came to the little hut with a piece of paper showing their voting number in the voter rolls. Those who passed through the little huts to collect these little pieces of paper were considered supporters of that party. Their names in the register of rolls of voters were then ticked and shown as party supporters.

From past experience, this was an indication that the voter was voting for the Sabah Alliance party.

In the Likas constituency, for example, which was a predominantly Chinese electorate, the SCA (Sabah Alliance) polling stations were always full of people, and the Berjaya's polling station hardly had anyone. The SCA clerks in these polling stations were fully occupied the whole day dispensing the little piece of identification paper for the voters and ticking the register book. By the end of the day, the number ticked in the register books as SCA supporters and voters was about 80 percent. There was cause for jubilation, for clearly, the SCA was going to win in Likas. However, when the ballot boxes were opened, there was the opposite result. 80 percent of the voters voted for the Berjaya candidate. This method of voting by the Chinese was apparently repeated in all Chinese areas — or where the Chinese were voting. The idea behind this was quite cunning. The Chinese did not want to be seen as anti the Sabah Alliance government. There was a possibility that the USNO/SCA would win and if they won, they could always say that they voted for the party in power!

The Malay voters gave their vote solidly to the USNO party. The Kadazan Muslims were also sympathetic towards the USNO party and voted heavily for the USNO. They identified themselves as the Malay voters.

The religious affiliation of the voters seemed to show that most Christians voted for the Berjaya party — as shown in predominantly Christian constituencies while most Muslims voted for the USNO party. The new constituency of Kundasang, which had a majority of Kadazans was won by the USNO party. The Christian Kadazans of this constituency were concentrated in the Bundu Tuhan area, and when the ballot boxes from the polling booths in this area were opened, the votes went mostly to the Berjaya party. The voting patterns on religious and ethnic lines have not been documented or analysed in detail. However, there is every reason to believe that the Chinese voted overwhelmingly for the Berjaya party. The Kadazans and more especially the Christian Kadazans also voted overwhelmingly for Berjaya. The Malays, including the Kadazan Muslims voted overwhelmingly for the USNO party.⁵⁵

To substantiate this assertion, let us consider the more obvious constituencies. The six urban constituencies of Kota Kinabalu, Likas, Sandakan, Elopura, and the two Tawau urban constituencies all voted for

55. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 189.

Berjaya candidates. The Berjaya candidates were returned with large majorities. In all cases, the SCA votes were Malay or Muslim votes, with very little or none from the Chinese voters. We have already explained the reason for the Chinese swing to vote for the Berjaya party.

On the Kadazan side, the majority of the Christian Kadazans voted for the Berjaya party. Two constituencies were predominantly Kadazan Christian areas. These were Moyog (Penampang) and Tambunan. Both constituencies voted overwhelmingly for the Berjaya candidates. The USNO candidate in Moyog, although also Christian Kadazan, polled only 690 votes out of 5,600 votes. The racial composition and religious affiliation of the voters in Moyog were:

(a) Kadazan	=	4877
(b) Chinese	=	465
(c) Bajau/others (Malay)	=	258
Total	=	5601

Religion:

(1) Islam	=	219
(2) Others (Christians)	=	5382

Political affiliation (estimate only):

(a) USNO	=	1300
(b) SCA (these were Chinese voters identifying themselves as USNO/SCA supporters)	=	218
(c) Berjaya	=	1800 (from 12 branches)
(d) Independents or uncommitted	=	2534

The above was the USNO's Moyog Division report to the USNO headquarters on 31 January 1976. The report strongly recommended more funds to pay for more canvassers. The report said:

The over-all picture for the USNO/SCA in Moyog is NOT VERY BRIGHT but given more funds to pay for more canvassers, we stand a chance. As we stand as at 31 January 1976, we only have a total strength of about 1500 against Berjaya's 1800. Most of ours are *claimed*. We need to swing at least 1000 votes to our side during the election campaign in order to have a chance of winning.

The USNO candidate in Moyog constituency was a former district officer. He was transferred to the district some six months earlier in order to give him time to reacquaint himself with the people in the Penampang district. He was in fact born and bred in the area, and came from a well respected Christian (Catholic) family. His father was the

catechist of St Michael's Church, Penampang. He was strongly recommended to Tun Mustapha to be USNO's candidate to stand against Berjaya's Mojuntin. Despite the good background of USNO's candidate, however, he was nevertheless trounced. He only polled about 690 votes.⁵⁶

The Tambunan constituency which had a Christian Kadazan majority (about 80 percent are Christians) also returned the Berjaya candidate overwhelmingly. Meanwhile, in another constituency which had Muslim Kadazans in the majority, namely, Kundasang, the USNO candidate received a large vote from the Muslim Kadazans.

The Malays themselves overwhelmingly voted for the USNO. In fact of the 20 constituencies won by the USNO, 18 were considered to be predominantly Malay voters. As we explained earlier, they voted for the USNO party because they identified the party as a Muslim party.

Tun Mustapha's use of the United Sabah Islamic Association's (USIA) office as his headquarters during the election was not missed by the Muslim voters, but alas, neither did the Kadazan Christian and Chinese voters miss the implication. Furthermore, the campaigners from PAS emphasised the need for unity under a Muslim religion. Some campaigners started their speech with a Muslim prayer. In the case of Dzulkifli, he normally started his speech in public rallies with "Allah Akhbar" (God is great) three times, and when the crowd was emotionally awakened, Dzulkifli would start on his long speech — most of which was directed against the Berjaya leaders and the Chinese community. Some analysts later suggested that the Chinese fence-sitter voters swung to the Berjaya camp at the last minute because of Dzulkifli's apparent anti-Chinese stand in his speeches.⁵⁷

The majority of the Kadazans voted for Berjaya because of their antagonism towards Tun Mustapha. It was not for their love of Kuala Lumpur or for the central power. It was more a revenge against Tun Mustapha for what they considered to be his repressive acts against the Christians in particular and the Kadazans in general. His drive to assimilate the Kadazans into Malay culture had offended many Kadazans.

56. Many Penampang people were anti-Tun Mustapha. Many educated Kadazans also came from the Penampang district. The area is also the stronghold of the Roman Catholic Church in Sabah.

57. These analyses were delivered by USNO National Council members and candidates for the 1976 election to Tun Mustapha at a meeting specifically called by the latter to discuss the reasons why the USNO party failed in the election. The meeting took place in the USIA's building.

His blatant disregard of the Kadazans' feelings and their appeals for consideration in respect of their priests had angered them.⁵⁸ This aspect of Tun Mustapha's work will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

The Chinese too voted the Berjaya party into power, and not because they loved the central power or Kuala Lumpur. For most of the voters, it was the fear that Tun Mustapha, and especially Dzulkifli, was seen as becoming more and more anti-Chinese. The call for one culture, one language, one religion was taken seriously by the Chinese community. The stoppage of the Chinese language station on Radio Sabah, and the use of Bahasa Malaysia on all display boards in front of their shops was seen as an attempt to kill the Chinese culture. They pictured themselves as following the plight of their fellow race in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. The Sabah Chinese did not want to be assimilated into Malay culture. For the Chinese "towkays" however, it was pure good business instinct. To support a "winning horse", with the help of Kuala Lumpur meant a lot of profits in the future — for indeed, the main beneficiaries of the Berjaya party's winning in the election were not only the Chinese "towkays" but also the Chinese community in general.

As soon as the results of the election was known by midnight, Berjaya supporters began to celebrate. In the Moyog constituency, bands of youths in pick-up trucks and cars were seen roaming around the villages beating the Kadazan traditional gongs to express their jubilation. Kadazan USNO supporters were booed, jeered at and laughed at. This kind of torment did not end for nearly one month.⁵⁹

For the first time, too, the Chinese themselves had become bold. They too started booing and jeering at USNO's supporters, especially the Kadazans. They were a little more restrained in their jeering at the Malays, but Chinese Berjaya campaigners and supporters were celebrating everywhere and laughing at USNO supporters. The following day after the election, a band of young Berjaya supporters went to the secretariat building and took control of the secretariat. All the offices of the former USNO and SCA Ministers were taken over immediately and their files all taken out from drawers and scrutinised. Some former

58. Interview with Datuk Anthony Gibon on 16 April 1983.

59. One Kadazan village headman in the Penampang district who supported the USNO party candidate was alleged to have shot himself. Apparently he could not bear the incessant jeering and mocking by Berjaya supporters.

Ministers were not even allowed to get into their old offices to collect their personal papers. After months of scrutinising their articles and files (and finding none incriminating), these were bundled up and sent to the respective ex-Ministers. There was no handing-over notes to the incoming Ministers. These were not asked for, and were not encouraged.

Perhaps the "taking-over" of the secretariat almost immediately by Berjaya leaders was a result of a fear that the USNO leaders might refuse to leave their offices. They were probably fearful of the possibility of rioting or *amok* amongst the Malays which would mean a state of emergency being called by the federal government. The USNO leaders who met the next day in Tun Mustapha's house did not consider this possibility, although this was mentioned by one of the more vocal young Malays. There was also a suggestion that Sabah could emulate the example of the Fijian government. One young USNO hot-head said that after the "All Fijian party" lost in the election by one constituency to the "All Indian party", the Head of State (Fijian) refused to allow the All-Indian party to form the government.⁶⁰ The USNO leaders were advised that perhaps this step would be taken by the Head of State, a Kadazan Muslim, who was from the beginning a USNO supporter. He was the Tuaran Kadazan chief, the former O.K.K. Indan Kari. Almost immediately, a witch hunt was started by Berjaya leaders.⁶¹

First against the ex-Ministers. Almost immediately their names were submitted to the anti-corruption agency to investigate the extent of their involvement in corruption during USNO's reign in power. As a result of this investigation, two ex-Ministers were charged in court for alleged corruption. They were Habib Abdul Rahman, ex-Minister of Local Government and Dzulkifli Abdul Hamid, ex-Minister of Finance. At the

60. This is not, however, the correct interpretation of the Fijian crisis. The correct version was this: the All-Indian party was advised not to form the government by advisors for fear that a similar incident to the May 13 riots in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia might ensue. Most of the All-Indian party elected M.P.s heeded this advice and called for a coalition government with the incumbent native Fijian Prime Minister. The All-Indian party President, however, wanted to be the Prime Minister and asked the Head of State, a native Fijian, to let him form the government with himself as the Prime Minister. The Head of State refused telling him that he did not have the full confidence of the people including the full confidence of his own political party and was therefore not in a position to command a majority in Parliament. See also R.K. Vasil, *Politics in Bi-Racial Societies: The Third World Experience* for an excellent account of Fijian politics.

61. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, p. 197.

time of writing, the latter's case, a long-drawn-out affair, had concluded with the High Court finding him guilty. He was fined. He was appealing against the conviction and sentence. The former's case is still not finished at the time of writing. There was no other case or charge brought against any of the other Ministers although all were investigated by the anti-corruption agency. There was also no charge brought against Tun Mustapha and Syed Kechik although during the election campaign the Berjaya leaders had repeatedly said that these two would be investigated for corruption.⁶²

Against the civil servants the witch-hunt was apparently personally supervised by Tun Stephens and Mojuntin.⁶³ The first target was of course Syed Kechik. Tun Stephens himself personally supervised the expulsion of Syed Kechik from Sabah. He ordered the Sabah Director of Immigration to deport Syed Kechik from Sabah. The former refused on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. Syed Kechik was a Malaysian citizen and also a holder of a Native of Sabah certificate (Surat Anak Negri) given to him by a Native Court in Sabah. It was a question of interpreting the Director of Immigration's power to deport a Malaysian citizen from Sabah. Only undesirable persons could be deported, and even then it would need the sanction of the court. Tun Stephens was advised that it could not be done, otherwise it would mean that any Sabah citizen including Sabah natives could be deported. Tun Stephens insisted that he, as the Chief Minister, was ordering him and that he would be assisted by the police to serve the deportation order on Syed Kechik. Tun Stephens said that even if the court granted Syed Kechik an injunction, he wanted to have the satisfaction of getting at his old tormentor.⁶⁴

The deportation order was never served, however. The only way for the Berjaya government was to amend the Sabah constitution and for this they needed a two-thirds majority. Some cross-overs were therefore needed. The witch-hunt on USNO leaders, including the elected USNO

62. It is interesting to note that some USNO ministers were criticised for having large houses, suggesting that these were acquired through corruption. USNO's Ministers' houses were built some five to ten years after they got into power. In contrast, some Berjaya Ministers started building huge houses after only one or two years in office.

63. This writer was told by a Berjaya official, but not proved or substantiated for correctness, that after the plane crash in June 1976 killing Tun Stephens, Mojuntin and others, a paper was found in Mojuntin's drawer which contained names of government officials who were in the blacklist.

64. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, pp. 198-199.

Assemblymen therefore was meant to have a two-fold effect: first, to punish and take revenge against the USNO leaders through the punishment of their relations who were civil servants, and secondly, as a threat to the USNO Assemblymen that if they did not join the Berjaya government, their relations in the civil service would be either sacked or transferred to a remote place, far in the interior of Sabah. Hundreds of civil servants were sacked on the accusation that they were engaged in political campaigning during the election. Some were taken back to the civil service after they intimated that they would join the Berjaya party and would be subservient to the new government. Some were made to decry and abuse USNO leaders, including their relations for "forcing" them into supporting USNO. Some others were transferred with immediate effect — i.e. within 24 hours to remote interior places.

The Cabinet was sworn in on 20 April 1976, and the first task was to get at least two USNO cross-overs in order to secure the two-thirds majority in the Assembly necessary to amend the constitution and to revoke such state appointments as chairman of quasi-government bodies. The rumour was that when the threat on USNO's Assemblymen's relations who were government officers failed, Tun Stephens was offering the sum of \$500,000 in cash each to the first two defections.⁶⁵ Some Berjaya leaders had some experience in this matter. After all it was only some ten years before that some USNO leaders had tried this trick on UPKO Assemblymen and many of those in Berjaya were ex-USNO leaders. They must have known how Payar Juman and Wong Fook Siang were won over to join the USNO party in 1967. This was now a reverse performance. Instead of Tun Mustapha waving the carrots and the promises of wealth and high office, it was now Tun Stephens' turn.

For a while Tun Mustapha was able to stem the tide of defections from his Assemblymen. All Assemblymen and ex-Ministers were flown over to Kuala Lumpur and put in one of Tun Mustapha's hotels at his expense.⁶⁶ Tun Mustapha must have spent quite a considerable amount in trying to keep his Assemblymen from defecting. It was, however, a futile exercise.

Meanwhile, in Sabah the witch-hunt continued and many Malay officers found themselves either demoted because it was felt that they were promoted to positions of authority despite their low education, because

65. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

66. Tun Mustapha called many meetings in the hotel penthouse. This writer was present in all the meetings as he was one of the ex-Ministers who were called to gather in the hotel.

of their party affiliations or connections during Tun Mustapha's reign, or transferred elsewhere where they were not in a position to raise their heads again.

The fear of a Malay *amok* or racial disturbance was real and the Berjaya leaders were in fact unwittingly exacerbating the possibility of racial riots by their own witch-hunt actions. It was not therefore surprising that racial tensions were high. On the evening of 8 May, there was a spate of bomb explosions in Kota Kinabalu, Kudat and Sandakan. USNO extremists were blamed for the bombing. Thousands of people, mostly refugees and some USNO leaders were apprehended by the police. Some of those apprehended included USNO Assemblymen, native chiefs, district chiefs, village headmen, most of whom had earlier sponsored the refugees' entry into Sabah. All were herded into detention camps. Many were interrogated and intimidated. Some were allegedly tortured.⁶⁷ The police were unable to locate the ring-leaders, however.⁶⁸

There was fear amongst top USNO leaders, however, that they might be implicated by some of those who were detained in detention camps out of fear or spite. Indeed, one former Malay soldier who was a relation of a top USNO leader almost implicated his relation. He told this writer that he could not take the beating any more and when he was repeatedly asked about his relation's association with the bombing he told his interrogators that he knew his relation had a cache of guns kept in a hiding place. Immediately the house was surrounded. It was found out that the guns belonged to the army and the house was used temporarily as a safe place to keep them. The explosions took place in shop buildings, and were clearly aimed at Chinese businessmen. However, no serious damage was caused to any building, nor anyone hurt.

Meanwhile, too, Tun Stephens wanted his friend, John Dusing, the same man who had caused an uproar in 1965 which led to his resignation as Chief Minister, to be the new Speaker of the Assembly. The Speaker, Abdul Momen who was only appointed in 1975 was asked to resign. He was not able to be removed however unless two-thirds of the Assemblymen agreed to remove him. He was intimidated and was even asked to be present at a ceremony installing John Dusing as the new Speaker. Abdul Momen did not attend and so they could not remove him.

67. Bruce Ross-Larson, *op.cit.*, pp. 202-203.

68. The late Datuk Alliuddin, the brother of Tun Mustapha told this writer that the bombing incidents embarrassed his brother greatly. He also said that those responsible for the incidents were probably amateurs and did not really know what they were doing.

The hunt for defectors from USNO became even more intense. Some were wavering, mainly because their means of income — the timber concessions — which gave them the good life were threatened with termination. Some were promised big timber concessions. Once more, the Chinese middlemen played their part, and once more they found for the ruling party some dissatisfied Assemblymen to cross over to the other side.

However, Tun Stephens did not live to see his greatest dream — the purchase of USNO renegades to cross-over to Berjaya. This would have been his greatest revenge on Tun Mustapha. This hour of glory and triumph was shortlived, for on 6 June 1976 the plane carrying him from Labuan to Kota Kinabalu crashed just before landing at Kota Kinabalu airport. With him in the plane crash were Mojuntin, Sulong, Chong Thain Vun and six others. All were killed. Tun Stephens was returning from a public rally in Labuan to show to the people Berjaya's great victory over Tun Mustapha and the USNO party.

The Petronas Agreement with the State of Sabah government was also to be signed; Tengku Razaleigh and Rahman Yacob were guests of honour. They came to share with Tun Stephens and other Berjaya leaders the joy of Berjaya's victory. They spent the evening in Labuan, and were returning to Kota Kinabalu the next day to celebrate further. A banquet was arranged at the Istana on the night of 6 June.

With the bombings still fresh in the minds of the people, it was immediately rumoured that the plane was sabotaged by USNO supporters. Gilong, who was still USNO's Federal Minister of Works and Transport and who was the Minister in charge of the investigation which followed, announced that the crash was caused by over-loading. There was no suggestion of sabotage. This was not believed and many Kadazans, especially those in the Penampang area continued to think that it was USNO's work of sabotage. Later on, this blame was shifted to Kuala Lumpur. Some thought that Kuala Lumpur might also have had a hand in the sabotage work. For a long time, many Kadazans never accepted the fact that Tun Stephens was killed because of an over-loaded aeroplane. They still thought the plane was sabotaged.⁶⁹

In accordance with Kadazan custom, a Kadazan medium (priestess) was called to find out about Mojuntin's death. When the medium was in a

69. Datuk Pattinggi Rahman Yacob, then Chief Minister of Sarawak, was supposed to have been in the same flight as Tun Stephens. He decided to go with Datuk Harris and Tengku Razaleigh in another plane.

trance, she apparently got possessed and started describing the incident as Mojuntin saw it. She said that Mojuntin saw the burning fuse attached to a bomb underneath Stephens' seat in the plane. But too late, by the time he got to the bomb, trying to extinguish the fuse, the bomb exploded. The fallacy of this medium's highly imaginative account was obvious. Who was the saboteur and why did he want to kill himself in the plane crash at the same time?

After the death of Tun Stephens, Harris took over as the Chief Minister. However, Ongkili was the clear choice of some Berjaya leaders to be the Chief Minister. The Kadazans holding ministerial posts were far more than the other races. There was Ongkili himself, Mojuntin, Koroh and Stephens. There were also a lot of Kadazans made Assistant Ministers. To the Kadazan populace, the indications were that the Kadazans had finally made it to the top in 1976. To them these were signs that the Kadazans, represented by Tun Stephens and Mojuntin were once more holding the reigns of power, and there was confidence amongst younger educated Kadazan and Kadazan government servants that Kadazanism might be revived once more. But this was never to be. Tun Stephens himself was no longer interested in the rise of Kadazanism in any case. In the 1976 election, Tun Stephens never mentioned Kadazan nationalism at all.

The Chinese themselves did not want to see Kadazanism revived, and they showed this very clearly when the leaders, for the second time, were given a chance to declare their support for the leadership. They did not support Ongkili. Instead, they put all their support on Harris, a Malay. Soon after Harris became the Chief Minister, and the Petronas Agreement with the Sabah government was signed.

There were signs of rapprochement between USNO and Berjaya. The USNO did not put up any candidate to contest in the by-elections which followed after the deaths of five Assemblymen in the plane crash. The USNO was desperately trying to show eagerness to work together with the Berjaya party. However this keenness was mostly Syed Kechik's and Dzulkifli's, and was totally one-sided. The Berjaya party, especially Harris and the Chinese Ministers, did not reciprocate this feeling.

The Berjaya party continued to govern the state from 1976, and Kadazan involvement became more pronounced in Berjaya politics. But Kadazan influence was just as small as it was when the Kadazans were in the USNO party between 1967 to 1975. Kadazan involvement in Berjaya politics, however, will be explored further later after we have considered

the 1978 parliamentary elections.

Before concluding this account of the 1976 election, perhaps it is pertinent to point out that Tun Stephens not only got his revenge on Tun Mustapha by winning the election; more important still, he got his personal revenge on Payar Juman, the man who had caused him the greatest pain and humiliation — the first Kadazan political traitor. He himself stood in Kiulu and beat Juman who was standing as an Independent.

CHAPTER 9

THE 1978 AND 1981 ELECTIONS: USNO IN DISARRAYThe 1978 Parliamentary Election

By 1977, the Berjaya government obtained its two-thirds majority. The Berjaya leaders managed to get USNO assemblymen to cross over. The excuse given by some of these USNO defectors was that they could not stand the extremism of Dzulkifli and Syed Kechik. They maintained that the USNO party had been taken over by the extremist young Malays.¹ By 1977, too, Tun Mustapha had resigned from the USNO party. He was asked to continue to be the President by USNO's Congress, but he never took up the position. He spent more time in London. His place was taken over by Said Keruak.

One of the reasons Tun Mustapha gave for not returning to accept USNO's leadership was the loss of his brother Alliuddin, who had died of a heart attack. Tun Mustapha seemed to have lost all appetite for politics after his brother's death.² However, after returning from Sabah, he called up a few of his old USNO colleagues who were in London and announced that he was thinking of taking up USNO's leadership after all. He thought the Berjaya party was splitting up and there was talk of a "coup d'etat" by some Berjaya Assemblymen to oust Harris.

Tun Mustapha said then that he would seek the counsel of Tunku Abdul Rahman on this matter before he made up his mind. The Tunku, in his weekly "View Point" column in the *Penang Star* gave Tun Mustapha firm backing and wrote:³

In his heyday, Tun Mustapha was a pillar of strength to UMNO. In substance he gave a few million dollars towards UMNO's election expenses in Tun Razak's time, and in service he actively participated in the state's election campaign in Peninsular Malaysia. Now that he has fallen on bad days, members of UMNO cannot just forget and ignore him. I would expect them to show at least some sympathy for him, if nothing more.

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1. One witness described Tantik's cross-over speech as pathetic and not very convincing.
 2. He told this writer that he was playing golf in London when the news reached him about his brother's death. He said he was devastated especially as it came shortly after the death of his elder sister.
 3. Tunku Abdul Rahman, *View Points*, p. 145.

Tun Mustapha also intimated to the Tunku that some USNO leaders were trying to get rid of him and did not want him to return to the USNO party.⁴ Tun Mustapha was quite confident that the "rebels" within Berjaya's ranks in the Assembly would be successful. The plan was that a group of Berjaya Assemblymen would cross over to the opposition and introduce a motion of no confidence in Harris. The plan, however, was found out by Harris so that before the coup could be staged in the Assembly the ring-leaders were ousted as Berjaya members. The other Assemblymen therefore had cold feet and decided to remain loyal to Harris and the Berjaya party. Tun Mustapha returned in disgust to London and his intention to lead the party once more did not materialise.

It was therefore left to his faithful deputy to carry on the work of the USNO in opposition. Said Keruak's intention was to bring unity to a demoralised and disunited USNO organisation. It was not easy. From the 20 original USNO Assemblymen, only eight were left. The older and richer Assemblymen like Mohd Dun Banir and Abu Bakar Titingan had crossed to Berjaya. Even the Speaker, Abdul Momen Kalakan, the man Tun Stephens wanted to be replaced by Dusing had crossed over to the Berjaya party. There was no need to replace him as Speaker after all. The *Sabah Times*, now taken over by younger men continued the fight. The older and more experienced *Sabah Times* editor who helped in the 1976 campaign for Tun Mustapha and USNO had resigned and joined Harris. The replacements were not only young but quite inexperienced as editors. The General Manager too was another young man who was one of the former USNO candidates who lost in the 1976 election.⁵ As the *Sabah Times* continued its fight with the Berjaya party there was a fear that its licence would be suspended, and indeed the Chinese edition was suspended by the Berjaya government. Harris, however, did not suspend the English edition. It was believed that he was under pressure from Kuala Lumpur leaders not to do this.

Things were not faring well for the USNO. It was not only the loss of Assemblymen; it was also losing a good number of its rank and file members in the National Council as well as in the various branches in various districts. There was real pressure on the USNO party to dissolve.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

5. Tun Mustapha had to give employment to a lot of unsuccessful candidates at the 1976 election. These unsuccessful candidates were former senior civil servants who resigned from their posts to contest the election. There were also civil servants who resigned because of intimidation and/or who were sacked for their political affiliation with the USNO party. These people all needed jobs.

Dzulkifli, the lone articulate USNO Assemblyman in the House was making some impact in his criticism of the Berjaya government. The Assembly Committee on Privileges decided however, to suspend him on the ground that he had contravened a House standing order and had abused his privileges as a Member of the House. His suspension was for the duration of the House in session. But as the Assembly rarely met, his suspension was more or less indefinite. The USNO "young Turks", the same people whom Tun Mustapha had accused of not wanting him to return to the USNO party to lead it, laid a wreath at the door of the Assembly, symbolising that democracy was dead. It was an attempt to protest against the suspension of Dzulkifli.

The Berjaya government, however, did not take this action too lightly and decided that it signified gross disrespect to Sabah's Assembly House and to the Speaker. The police were persuaded to take action on the matter and the "culprits" were brought to court and fined.

The USNO party itself was disorganised and disunited. There were those who wanted Tun Mustapha to lead the party. But there were also those who wanted him out. These latter, led by Dzulkifli, blamed Tun Mustapha for USNO's downfall. Had Tun Mustapha stepped down and left the political arena as Kuala Lumpur wanted in the first place they argued, the USNO party would still be in power. These anti-Mustapha factions, however, did not realise that Tun Mustapha held the most potent weapon in the political fight: the *Sabah Times*. He was still the majority shareholder, and hence had the majority voice in regard to the paper's policy.

Before the 1978 parliamentary election, therefore, the Berjaya leadership tried to find a way to get at the *Sabah Times*. They knew of the continuing fight within USNO and the anti-Mustapha faction. Said Keruak, the USNO President was approached by a Harris envoy and offered the job of Head of State if he resigned from the USNO party.⁶ He declined the offer. He did not want to be known as the person responsible for selling out and dissolving the USNO party as this was the implication of the offer. Meanwhile, too, the eldest son of Tun Mustapha, Datu Hamid, joined the Berjaya party and shortly after joining the party he was appointed a full Cabinet Minister with the Youth and Sports portfolio. It was with the above dispiriting state of affairs that USNO, under Said Keruak, entered the July 1978 parliamentary election.

6. Interview with Tan Sri Said Keruak on 18 April 1983. This was also mentioned by Tan Sri Said Keruak to the USNO Executive Committee meeting to which committee the writer also belonged.

Both parties were in the National Front. USNO had more federal M.P.s than the Berjaya party, but most Assemblymen of the USNO party had crossed to the Berjaya party. The National Front leaders this time were quite definite in their allocation of seats to the two contending parties. Out of the 16 parliamentary seats, 10 were allocated to the Berjaya party and five to the USNO party. These 15 seats would be National Front seats and candidates would use the National Front symbol. The remaining one was to be contested between the USNO party and the Berjaya party. The USNO claimed that this constituency should rightly go to the USNO as the incumbent M.P. for the constituency was an USNO man. But the three Assemblymen for this parliamentary constituency (of Kinabatangan) had all joined the Berjaya party. The National Front therefore decided to allow both parties to fight this out between themselves and both parties were allowed to use their own respective symbols.

The Berjaya party now had the confidence and the strength that USNO had had in the 1969 and 1974 parliamentary elections. It had the money, the power and the influence behind it. Harris, it seemed, also wanted to produce 16 M.P.s for the federal parliament.

Two USNO parliamentary candidates were singled out for a concerted Berjaya attack. These were Ganie Gilong, the Kadazan federal minister who was one of the original organisers of the Berjaya party and who returned to the USNO party in 1976 and Ampong Puyon. This latter also originally joined the Berjaya party but returned to USNO shortly before the 1976 election. Both Gilong and Ampong Puyon were standing as Barisan Nasional candidates and therefore had the use of the Barisan Nasional symbol. They also had the use of the Prime Minister's picture to distribute to the electorate. In short, like the Berjaya candidates, USNO candidates were also given federal backing. They were, in fact, candidates for the National Front.

However, Berjaya put up Independents to contest against the USNO candidates. As mentioned earlier, Gilong was the number one target for removal from the political scene. A young former magistrate stood as an Independent against Gilong. He was Mark Koding. He was given all material support by Berjaya, and Harris himself went to campaign for him. Gilong, however, had the disadvantage of not having a good propaganda campaigner. He was attacked for his involvement in the dissolution of the UPKO; he was attacked for returning to the USNO; and was attacked for not helping his people in his constituency.

His long period of stay in the federal capital had caused him to lose contact with the people of his electorate. In some polling districts, the presiding officers were visibly more amenable to the Independent Berjaya-backed candidate. Some government officers openly used their office and position to influence voters to vote for the Independent. The odds were therefore against Gilong, and not surprisingly, he lost to the Independent.⁷

Out of the five USNO seats, under the Barisan Nasional, the USNO only won in four, and the Berjaya who contested in 10 won in nine. It lost the Sandakan constituency to the Democratic Action Party. Berjaya won the straight contest of USNO-Berjaya in the Kinabatangan constituency.

The important thing to note in this election, however, was that USNO candidates won by a very slim majority. In Hilir Padas, it won by 73 votes; in Labuk Sugud by 347, and even in Kota Belud, Said Keruak won by the skin of his teeth. The Independent-Berjaya backed candidates managed to get a lot of votes because of Berjaya's money, power and influence. The strength of the Berjaya party was again demonstrated in the 1981 state election to which we shall now turn.

The 1981 State Election

As the state election of 1981 drew nearer both parties, Berjaya and USNO, tried to consolidate their positions. In respect of the Berjaya party, the leadership was very careful not to antagonise the federal leaders. In fact, it went overboard to please federal leaders and federal-state relations were more than cordial. Harris, the Chief Minister who took over from Tun Stephens, saw to this. He advocated a speedy integration of Sabah with the centre and hence encouraged the removal of the immigration constraint on West Malaysians to enter Sabah. There was even talk that state control on immigration would be abolished in favour of handing this matter entirely to the central government.

Moves were even initiated for the eventual taking over and absorption of quasi-government bodies — such as the Sabah Padi Board, the Sabah Electricity Board, and the Fire Department. The Sabah Padi Board was to be merged with the National Padi Authority and the Sabah Electricity Board with the National Electricity Board. The Berjaya government also invited the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) to operate in Sabah. A

7. D.K. Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional*, p. 124. See also Ismail Kassim, *The Politics of Accommodation*, pp. 85-92.

large area of land was allocated to this authority to start its agricultural projects in the state. The move to integrate the Sabah Land Development Board (SLDB) with FELDA, however, did not materialise as the latter did not want to be saddled with the SLDB's huge loan from the state government of Sabah. On the matter of refugees, the Berjaya government welcomed them in conformity with the central government's policy of allowing fellow Muslims into Sabah's territory.⁸

A federal-state Relations Committee was also formed in 1977. This committee was comprised of federal officers (from West Malaysia) and Sabah government officials. Its objects, as the name suggests, were to promote better federal-state relations and understanding. In November 1977, the University of Malaya organised a conference on South East Asian Studies, and the papers presented at this conference included state-federal relations. Harris, in short, did not want to make the same mistake as had Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha before him in their call for Sabah rights and parallel autonomy respectively. Harris knew that to continue his hold on Sabah's leadership, he must have the continued goodwill and backing of the central government. He realised that he himself did not have grass-roots supporters. He belonged to an ethnic minority and was politically propped-up by the majority races in the state — the Kadazans and the Chinese. The Malay community were not yet all supporting him. Most of these latter were still with the USNO party so he decided the USNO party should be made to look weak and disorganised. Said Keruak, its President, was made to look weak as a leader.

The strategy to strengthen and win federal support by Berjaya backfired briefly in 1978 when one of the Berjaya-backed Independent Members of Parliament for Kinabalu, Mark Koding, was used to make a very controversial speech in parliament. The speech, which was later published and distributed entitled "A moment of truth" called for the abolition of Chinese and Tamil schools. It called for a complete integration of all races in the country. It questioned the need to allow any Chinese or Tamil to be taught in schools. This was a brave and bold step which made a large majority of the Malay M.P.s happy, but incensed the non-Malay M.P.s in parliament. The latter called for a police investigation on the grounds that Mark Koding had contravened the constitution by invoking sensitive issues. Koding was later fined in court. Everybody, however,

8. In an interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shaffie, the present Foreign Minister, he told this writer that Malaysia could afford to accept 10 million people as the country is sparsely populated. He also said that the 'refugees' in Sabah once granted citizenship would move over to West Malaysia.

knew that the man behind Mark Koding was Harris. The idea was to bring attention to the need for a greater and speedier integration, and more particularly, assimilation of non-Malays into the Malay culture. His real motive and intention — to be known as a committed pro-Malaysia leader — was not missed by UMNO leaders. He had one brief indiscretion vis à vis Kuala Lumpur in so far as etiquette was concerned. He invited foreign rulers into the state without the federal government's sanction but this was a minor transgression and Kuala Lumpur was not overly concerned in this minor issue.⁹

The USNO, meanwhile, tried to portray itself as a worthy party to the federal government. Tun Mustapha was depicted as not having any further political interest in Sabah or connection with the USNO party. At the same time, the USNO party tried to reorganise itself and arranged for its leaders to visit various areas to reorganise divisions and branches and at the same time report on the strength of each constituency.¹⁰

Seminars were conducted, and in these seminars Kadazans and Malays joined together to discuss USNO's problems of communicating with the "bumiputras". The party had a dual function: to represent all the "bumiputras", and yet it must also be seen to support actively the Muslim religion and USIA. This was USNO's dilemma, how to strike a balance between the interest of USNO's main supporters, the Malayo-Muslims, and the Kadazans, especially the Kadazan Christians.

The USNO party was also dogged with another dilemma: funds. Without Tun Mustapha or Syed Kechik, money was very limited. Chinese "towkays" kept away from USNO leaders and there was no hope whatsoever that they would help or donate any money towards the party's campaign fund. Those who came forward to donate what they could were Tun Mustapha's old colleagues.¹¹ However, the money donated was insufficient. Syed Kechik, secretly therefore provided for the party's fund for nearly the whole of 1980. Dzulkifli tried to make capital of this aid from Syed Kechik by openly saying that he could raise whatever amount of money was needed by the party. Everyone knew, however, that it was Syed Kechik who was behind the funding of the USNO party. Dzulkifli made no bones about Syed Kechik's

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9. The incident here was the invitation to President Suharto of Indonesia to visit Sabah without the prior sanction of the federal government who looked after all foreign matters.
 10. The USNO leaders were led to believe that the central government leaders were behind the USNO party at this election.
 11. Datuk Ali Tan, now in Kuala Lumpur, and also Datuk Abu Bakar Tan of Sandakan was supposed to have agreed to donate to the party.

interest in getting Dzulkifli returned to the USNO's hierarchy and central committee. He stood as Deputy President against Ghani Gilong, and despite appeals from all quarters not to do this as it would only show that the USNO party was divided, he went ahead. Gilong won the deputy presidency but not until USNO was deeply split into two.

Dzulkifli was antagonistic towards Tun Mustapha. He made it clear that Tun Mustapha was no longer needed in the USNO party. For this, Tun Mustapha refused to contribute towards the party fund. Dzulkifli then questioned Tun Mustapha on the USNO's building funds and asked what had become of the alleged \$10,000,000 collected towards the proposed USNO building. This episode on the money for the proposed building disunited the USNO party even more.

The anti-Mustapha factions, led by Dzulkifli were the young USNO leaders. They were very close to Syed Kechik in Kuala Lumpur and were influenced by him not to support Tun Mustapha. They claimed that no Kuala Lumpur leader would want to see Tun Mustapha returned to power again. They further claimed that it was due mainly to Tun Mustapha's participation in the 1976 election that the Kuala Lumpur leaders turned against the USNO party. It was also because of the fear of Tun Mustapha's return to power that the electorate did not support the USNO party. These younger anti-Mustapha factions were quite convincing, but they did not, however, get the grass-root support of all the Muslims. These latter supported Tun Mustapha. They were the older Malay leaders, most of whom owed their present status and livelihood to Tun Mustapha. They represented the more conservative group of USNO Malay supporters. They did not care what Kuala Lumpur thought or wanted to do with the USNO. All they cared about was that the USNO party was a Muslim party and that the majority of its supporters were Malays.

Those in the middle of these two factions were led by Said Keruak himself, the USNO President. With him were Askhar Hasbollah, his brother-in-law, Datuk Ganie Gilong, his Deputy President, Idrus Matakim, Luping and a few other young Malay intellectuals, mostly lawyers, who had recently joined the USNO party. This faction would have liked to see Tun Mustapha continue to participate in the USNO party as the man behind the show and with financial backing. Tun Mustapha called this middle-of-the-road faction to see him and discussed his involvement with the party. He told them that he had money for USNO's use during the campaign. He also claimed that he had the support of some rich Arab supporters who were willing to

donate a large amount of money to the USNO party.¹² He made it clear that he did not want to do anything with the party if he was not to take part actively in it. He did not seem to trust Said Keruak anymore. He thought that Said Keruak would not want to relinquish his position as Chief Minister if and when elected. The promise that when USNO got into power again he could return to lead it by appointment in the Legislative Council as an Assemblyman did not appeal to him.

The anti-Mustapha faction within the USNO itself was not the only one which did not want Tun Mustapha to participate again in politics. The newly formed Kadazan-based party Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Pasok Nunuk-Ragang Bersatu (PASOK) also did not want him to participate. As we shall see later, the USNO party was trying to form a pact with the other opposition political parties in Sabah so that these parties could forge a strong united front during the election. PASOK leaders, however, were taken over by younger Kadazan leaders. They had managed to oust the older and more conservative Kadazan leaders who started the PASOK party. They were ousted because they were pro-Tun Mustapha. There were talks that these older Kadazan leaders were receiving party funds from Tun Mustapha. The younger Kadazan leaders who managed to oust the older ones were led by Ignatius Malanjum, the Deputy President of PASOK. He was said to be anti-Mustapha and receiving his funds from Dzulkifli and Syed Kechik.¹³

In reply to the Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli allegations Tun Mustapha openly attacked them for their opportunism and blamed them for USNO's failure in the 1976 election. The newspaper, the *Sabah Times* was the most important weapon for the party. But Tun Mustapha, probably out of sheer frustration and as an act of revenge, decided to sell all his shares to a government corporation. His oldest son, Datu Hamid had been the Managing Director of the paper, and it was during this time that Tun Mustapha was somehow persuaded to sell his majority shares in the *Sabah Times* to the government corporation. As we saw earlier, Datu Hamid joined the Berjaya party and was made a full Cabinet Minister. Whether his becoming a State Minister was due to the sale of the *Sabah Times* shares to the government is not

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12. This writer was present at two separate meetings with Tun Mustapha concerning his position in the USNO party. These meetings were held in his office in the USIA's building. The others present were: Datuk Askhar Hasbollah, Datuk Ghani Gilong and Ansari Abdullah.
 13. One former central executive committee member of PASOK told this writer that the younger PASOK leaders led by Malanjum were very forceful in getting pro-Jaikul factions out from the committee. He said he was threatened with physical force if he did not resign. This allegation, however, was never proved.

clear. This writer was told by Tun Mustapha, however, that he was tricked into selling his shares.

The USNO party, therefore, did not have a mouthpiece as it prepared itself in 1980 for the coming general election in 1981. The USNO leaders arranged to apply for a permit to publish another newspaper from Kuala Lumpur but the application was not granted.

In the meantime, therefore, Tun Mustapha, who had earlier invested some of the proposed USNO building fund into the *Star* newspaper in Penang, sold the shares to the MCA in Kuala Lumpur and with the money, invested in a small Malay publication called *Watan*. For a while this newspaper was used by the USNO party to publicise its activities and also to criticise the Berjaya government. It was not long, however, before *Watan's* entry into Sabah was banned and its editor/Managing Director was detained in West Malaysia for alleged communist activities. When he was released, he made it clear in *Watan* that he did not want to have anything further to do with the USNO party and dissociated himself completely from it. It was never made clear how and why he was detained by the central government or whether the Berjaya government had pressured Kuala Lumpur for his arrest.

Tun Mustapha's counter attack on Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli was supported by the Sabah Chinese Consolidated Party (SCCP). This other newly organised Chinese party, a replacement of the old SCA, was led by Stephen Chan of Tawau. With him were many Chinese intellectuals, mostly lawyers from Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu. They represented the younger Chinese community, who did not subscribe to the Berjaya party or its policies. Stephen Chan was in fact a former Berjaya leader, one of the pioneers in its early formation, but he resigned because he did not like its policies. Stephen Chan was a supporter of Tun Mustapha, and was therefore anti-Dzulkifli. In Tun Mustapha's own thinking, he had the backing of the Chinese community. But perhaps the most significant and strong supporter of Tun Mustapha was the Tunku himself, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia. He wrote in his weekly column expressing his feelings about why Tun Mustapha must return to lead the USNO party.¹⁴

This strong and open support by the Tunku for Tun Mustapha and the USNO party incurred the anger of some people, however. On New Year's Eve 1979 some person or persons unknown covered Tunku Abdul Rahman's monument with red, white and green paint. It was an act of vandalism obviously aimed at Tun Mustapha. In a press statement, the USNO President Said

14. Tunku Abdul Rahman, *op.cit.*, p. 143.

Keruak, called the action of vandals deplorable and called on the Berjaya government to protect all monuments and public buildings.¹⁵ The Berjaya government was quick to respond. Halik Zaman, the Berjaya Information Officer, went on television and accused the opposition itself — namely the USNO — of the act of vandalism on the Tunku's statue.

It was also public knowledge that Harris had demanded from Tun Mustapha the repayment of various expenditures by the Tun Mustapha government which Harris thought had not been right. It included the special fund approved by the federal government for the rehabilitation of refugees and also for the money expended in the construction of the Tunku Abdul Rahman monument. The Tunku wrote:¹⁶

Datuk Harris who took over from the late Tun Fuad Stephens began his rule with a vengeance, according to Tun Mustapha, who said that he was the first to come under the axe. For instance, he told me he was asked to pay back \$9,000,000 in expenses incurred on his journeys abroad when he was Chief Minister. There were many other payments which he was asked to disclose and make good, he said, such as the special fund approved by the federal government in connection with the rehabilitation of refugees. He was also asked to pay for the cost of the monument which the Sabah government erected in my honour.

Tun Mustapha had a powerful ally in the Tunku, but it was not sufficient in itself to bring him back to power or to influence the central government to back the USNO party. The Berjaya, now firmly under Harris's leadership, had the central power backing them.¹⁷ He encouraged more visits by federal ministers to the state, and there were rumours that many were given large timber areas in Sabah. It was also alleged that some important people were given agricultural land for development and even parcels of land for the construction of their mansions in Sabah.

Tengku Razaleigh, the Federal Minister of Finance, and a strong supporter of the formation of Berjaya to replace the USNO was invited many times to Sabah and no doubt his presence in the state was a further

15. USNO press release dated 4 January 1980.

16. Tunku Abdul Rahman, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

17. Shortly after the defeat of the USNO party at the 1976 election a meeting of some USNO and Malay leaders in Kuala Lumpur took place in Tun Mustapha's house in Kuala Lumpur. These Malay leaders were sympathetic towards Tun Mustapha. The meeting was at the end of April, soon after the election. The writer was also present. The discussion centred on how to revive the USNO party so that it could regain power again. It was then suggested that the UMNO party could be extended to Sabah and absorb the USNO party. As the UMNO party is only open to Malay Muslims, it was suggested that the Christian Kadazans could perhaps be admitted by an appropriate amendment to the UMNO constitution insofar as Sabah was concerned. This suggestion, however, was never put into practice.

assurance to the Chinese businessmen that the federal government was strongly behind the Berjaya party. In one of the federal minister's visits to the state, the newspapers quoted Tengku Razaleigh as rebuking the USNO party and USNO's President, Said Keruak, as irresponsible for allegedly promising that if and when the USNO got into power, the loans granted to fishermen to buy boats, nets etc. would be cancelled.

"Konalayan" was a new fishermen's body — a quasi-government body — set up by the Berjaya government to help fishermen by granting loans to purchase nets, and other fishing equipment. These loans were alleged to be unsecured, but a letter of demand to repay the loan from the authority had been received. These fishermen had complained about these letters of demand to repay.

Another body, known as the Bumiputra Participation Unit had been giving loans to "bumiputra" businessmen. These loans were allegedly also not secured. The borrowers too had received word that their loans would be recalled and as many had failed in their business ventures, they could not find any way to repay. When Said Keruak was speaking to a group of fishermen and "bumiputra" businessmen he was asked by one of the crowd whether the USNO party if elected would cancel all these loans. According to Said Keruak he thought the question was odd, and was of the opinion that perhaps the questioner was planted there by the Berjaya party. His answer to this question was that a loan was a loan and must be paid. If it was not a loan but a straight grant-in-aid, then there should not be any call for its payment.

The following day, both the *Daily Express* and *Sabah Times* reported that the USNO President promised to cancel the loans if the USNO got into power.¹⁸

Said Keruak had reason to be worried that some federal ministers, especially Tengku Razaleigh, seemed to be openly backing the Berjaya party. The USNO's first priority since losing the 1976 election was to get closer to the Kuala Lumpur leaders and at the same time to try to neutralise the concept in the minds of the Sabahans, especially the Chinese, that the Berjaya government had the full backing of the central government. USNO's strategy was to win friends amongst the Kuala Lumpur leaders. Dzulkifli and Syed Kechik were in the forefront of trying to make this a reality. Dzulkifli spent more time in Kuala Lumpur to be near the "centre of power" and he was confident that USNO was gaining friends amongst the

18. The tape recording of Tan Sri Said Keruak's speech on this subject is with the writer. He never said that he would scrap the loans.

Kuala Lumpur leaders.¹⁹ Syed Kechik was also making advances to the Kuala Lumpur leaders and it was reported that he was in close contact with the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, Dr Mahathir. Said Keruak, the USNO President also made several trips to Kuala Lumpur and took every opportunity to see federal ministers. At one time he was confident that UMNO leaders, led by the Prime Minister, would be neutral during the 1981 election. Said Keruak also thought that UMNO leaders wanted the USNO party to win in the 1981 election; that UMNO leaders were not ready for a multi-racial party in power and would prefer to see the "bumiputra" party of Sabah govern the country once more. Said Keruak's understanding from UMNO leaders was that as long as Tun Mustapha did not return to the political arena in Sabah, the UMNO leaders in Kuala Lumpur would not mind the USNO party returning to power. Indeed, at one of the central executive committee meetings of the USNO party, Tan Sri Said conveyed this understanding of his to those present. In this regard he was backed by Dzulkifli, who confirmed Said Keruak's view that Kuala Lumpur did not want Tun Mustapha to stand in the coming election nor lead the USNO party.

The Formation of the Sabah Front

USNO's leadership's understanding was that the central government was not in favour of a multi-racial party governing the state of Sabah. The National Front in West Malaysia was a coalition of many political parties, the dominant members of which were communal parties, like the UMNO, the MCA and MIC. To this extent, the USNO leaders thought that as an alternative to the multi-racial party Berjaya, which had now been in power for nearly five years, the USNO party should form a new coalition of parties in Sabah which would be acceptable to the central government in Kuala Lumpur. The USNO leaders thought that the old concept of the Alliance party was no longer the fashion in Malaysia. In Sabah, the name "Sabah Alliance" would bring back memories of the Tun Mustapha reign of the 1960s and early 1970s and was therefore considered not appropriate. It was therefore thought that a new coalition of the two "bumiputra" parties — USNO and PASOK — and the newly revamped Chinese party be formed, to be called the "Sabah Front" or "Barisan Sabah". Their intention was to form a pact with the two new political parties to challenge the Berjaya

19. From 1977 to 1980 Datuk Dzulkifli worked hard in Kuala Lumpur to 'win friends' for the USNO party. This writer met him on several occasions in Kuala Lumpur to discuss this important strategy for the USNO party.

party in the coming 1981 state general election.

To launch the new coalition, it was intended to have a mammoth rally in Kota Kinabalu. Tun Mustapha was approached for his help with the finance needed to have the mammoth rally. It was also felt that his friendship with Tunku Abdul Rahman should be exploited with Tun Mustapha seeking the Tunku's blessing and patronage for the new pact. USNO leaders, led by Deputy President Ghani Gilong, met Tun Mustapha in his USIA office. (The others in the delegation included Datuk Askhar Hasbollah, the Secretary-General of USNO, and Luping.) When the idea of forming an election pact with the other two new opposition parties and the big propaganda advantage the pact would gain if the Tunku launched it was explained to him, Tun Mustapha immediately approved of the plan. He said money would be no problem as he would himself personally finance the proposed mammoth rally. He also agreed to lead a delegation to see the Tunku to ask him to launch the election pact in Kota Kinabalu. Indeed, Tun Mustapha did not waste time in making the appointment with the Tunku, so that by May 1980, an USNO delegation led by him and consisting of Ghani Gilong, Askhar Hasbollah, Ansari Abdullah and Luping were seriously talking to the Tunku of the need to return USNO to power. It was explained to the Tunku by Gilong that there was a need to see the "bumiputras" of Sabah firmly in control of the government in Sabah again. The Berjaya's experiment of multi-racial politics was only helping the non-"bumiputras". Examples of large business enterprises newly opened and operated by Chinese businessmen were shown to the Tunku. There were even some Chinese from abroad — from Canada, Australia, United Kingdom and elsewhere who had left the state a long time ago, returning to Sabah to make a "quick buck". The Tunku did not need to be persuaded. He was a firm believer in the "Alliance party concept" and he did not think that a multi-racial party was right for Sabah, and for that matter, Malaysia. He also wanted to see the USNO in power again, with all "bumiputras" really working together. He mentioned how USNO used to come to the financial aid of the UMNO party when Tun Razak was Prime Minister, and he expressed the hope that the UMNO would not forget this. With an assurance from the Tunku that he would not only come to Sabah to launch the new coalition party, but would also campaign to get other UMNO leaders to come forward to help the USNO party, the delegation left with high hopes.

The USNO leaders arranged for a meeting with the United Pasok Nunuk Ragang National Organisation (PASOK) and the Sabah Chinese Consolidated Party (SCCP). The first meeting was held in late May 1980. The USNO

leaders, most of whom were used to the old style of largely having their own way and making the other partners follow their lead, were confident that the SCCP and PASOK would accept USNO's leadership in the proposed coalition. After all, the USNO had been in power before and most of its leaders were seasoned and experienced politicians. Furthermore, USNO had representatives in the Assembly and had a wider and bigger organisation.

But PASOK and SCCP leaders were not overly attracted to the old pattern. It would be appropriate at this point to look briefly at their origins and concerns.

New Opposition Parties

The United Pasok Nunuk Ragang National Organisation (PASOK) was registered in 1978. It was a new party theoretically open to all "bumiputras" but it was Kadazan-based, and most of its membership was drawn from the Kadazan ethnic group. The original intention of the organisers of PASOK was to revive the defunct Kadazan political party — UPKO — as they felt that the absence of a Kadazan party had left a vacuum in the political arena for the Kadazan people.²⁰

Membership however remained small. The reasons for this were manifold: First, the party had no funds as the leaders were not rich themselves. They had no rich Kadazan supporting them. The President, Jaikal, was a retired civil servant from Tambunan but domiciled in Papar. He was not known to the Kadazans at large and he had had no political experience in the past. His deputy, Ignatius Stephen Malanjum, was no better. He was a young man recently returned from overseas study. He too was not known amongst the Kadazans. The Secretary-General of the new party was definitely not in the Peter Mojuntin mold. He was a quiet young man. He worked as an orderly or peon in a private firm. Apart from Malanjum, who had a legal qualification, the rest of the top committee members of the new party were poorly educated.

The Borneo party leaders, particularly the Kadazan leaders in...

1978 parliamentary election. They charged also that Malanjum joined the party because he was disappointed at not being chosen as the Berjaya candidate for Moyog in the by-election in 1976 following the untimely death of Peter Mojuntin in a plane crash.

Secondly, the top two, Jaikul and Malanjum, started a struggle for power right from the very beginning. Jaikul was seen by Tun Mustapha as an ally for the USNO party. He therefore cultivated Jaikul and it was believed that he helped finance the party through Jaikul.²¹ Malanjum, meanwhile, became the protege of Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. They saw him as the likely "Peter Mojuntin" of the new Kadazan party and a potential strong ally of the USNO party. As we pointed out earlier, within the USNO party too there was a struggle between the Tun Mustapha faction and the Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli faction. Each faction had chosen their own ally: Tun Mustapha for Jaikul and Syed Kechik-Dzulkifli for Malanjum. The PASOK party therefore also received donations from Syed Kechik through Malanjum. Indeed, when Malanjum was questioned in 1981 by a newspaper whether he was receiving donations from Syed Kechik, he told his interviewer that he and his party would welcome any donation from anyone, even if the donation came from the devil himself. Shortly after this interview, Berjaya's cartoonist "Mingo" (George Chin) depicted Malanjum as a small child receiving money from a caricature of Syed Kechik with the latter depicted as a devil, complete with a long pointed tail! This cartoon which appeared in the *Sabah Times* was also drawn on a huge billboard and erected in a strategic road junction in the Moyog constituency.

The internal power struggle between Jaikul and Malanjum was perhaps one of the most important determining factors for many Kadazans not joining the new Kadazan-based party. Malanjum, since 1979, worked towards ousting Jaikul as President. In this effort he was encouraged by Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. Malanjum told his followers that Jaikul was being paid for by Tun Mustapha and as the latter was not acceptable to the Kadazan electorate Jaikul was thereby weakening the party. He accused Jaikul of causing the lack of Kadazan interest in PASOK because of his association with Tun Mustapha.

By May 1980 Malanjum managed to oust Jaikul in an emergency meeting called to settle the position of both leaders. Malanjum packed the meeting with his supporters and in the ensuing voting Jaikul was voted out as President and Malanjum was elected. Jaikul called the meeting

21. The writer was told by Tun Mustapha that he had donated money to the new party, PASOK, through its President, Stephen Jaikul. This was never confirmed by Jaikul however.

illegal and unconstitutional. Jaikul was elected in 1979 and should have been the President until the annual general meeting in 1981. The emergency meeting called to oust Jaikul was not the correct procedure and true enough when the matter was referred to the Registrar of Societies for adjudication, they were informed that the emergency meeting held in May 1980 was unconstitutional and that Jaikul was still the President.²² Jaikul, however, did not have the confidence of the central executive committee and they simply ignored him. He might be the President constitutionally, but Malanjum was regarded as the party leader.

PASOK began to disintegrate. The PASOK Secretary-General was the first to resign and cross over to the Berjaya party. He was soon followed by Jaikul, the President of PASOK. The latter's crossing over to Berjaya was well timed. He made his move just before the 1981 state general election campaign started so that he was used extensively by Berjaya leaders to campaign in Kadazan areas to belittle the PASOK party and its new leaders. As expected, he charged that Malanjum was in the "employ" of Syed Kechik and that the PASOK party was in fact Syed Kechik's political party in Sabah.

The Chinese party was also a new party. It was an offshoot of the Sabah Chinese Association party (SCA) which died a natural death after the 1976 election. The SCCP was organised by some young educated Chinese from Tawau, Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu. The President was Stephen Chan, who was a Berjaya stalwart when the Berjaya party was first formed. He was not new to the political arena, having stood at the various elections in the state as an Independent.

The SCCP's political stance was the same as the old SCA. Chinese culture and pride was to be maintained but like the old SCA in the 1976 election, the SCCP leaders did not have the money nor the influence amongst the Chinese community. What they had were young and energetic educated Chinese who were mostly lawyers trained abroad.

The SCCP leaders, like those of PASOK were also divided amongst themselves. The President was a supporter of Tun Mustapha and it was believed that the SCCP through the President was also receiving donations from Tun Mustapha. However, most of the committee members of the SCCP did not support Tun Mustapha, but their opposition to him was not as pronounced as the opposition of the PASOK leaders. The SCCP leaders

22. Letter from the Registrar of Societies to PASOK party dated 31 May 1980. A copy of the letter is with the writer.

were however strongly opposed to Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli. They saw Dzulkifli as an anti-Chinese fervent Muslim leader and therefore a potential enemy of the Chinese community. As we shall see later in our discussion of the negotiations to form the Sabah Front, the SCCP's major obstacle to joining the Sabah Front was USNO's desire to have Dzulkifli as one of its candidates for the 1981 election. Happily, Dzulkifli did not press the USNO president to select him as one of the candidates for the election. He was persuaded to stand down for the sake of the Sabah Front. Besides, he had two court cases pending (one on charges of corruption, and the other a charge under the Official Secrets Act) and if he was fined more than \$2,500 in either of the two court cases, he would be barred from holding any public office for five years.

The USNO, however, saw the SCCP as another good partner in the formation of the communal coalition, the Sabah Front. The USNO's thinking was that the SCCP, given proper guidance and encouragement, could sway the Chinese voters for the Sabah Front candidates in the 1981 election.

Negotiations for the Formation of the Sabah Front

With the foregoing in mind, therefore, the USNO leaders met PASOK and SCCP leaders for the first official meeting to consider an alliance or a united front to oppose Berjaya at the election. The USNO were represented by Askhar Hasbollah, Ansari Abdullah and Luping; the PASOK were represented by its Acting President, Ignatius Malanjum and George Mikil, and the SCCP was represented by its Secretary-General, Joseph Chia, who was a lawyer, and three other lawyers, Peter Chong from Kota Kinabalu and two Tans from Sandakan.

The first meeting was held in the office of the writer as it was considered a neutral ground, and was chaired by Askhar Hasbollah who explained the purpose of the meeting. He said that a decision had to be taken that evening whether the three parties could form a coalition to oppose the Berjaya party at the 1981 election and when this decision was reached, they were to fly over to Penang to see Tunku Abdul Rahman who would witness the agreement of the new coalition party. So confident were USNO that PASOK and SCCP would agree, a short press statement was already typed up saying that the three parties had met and had agreed to form a pact to oppose the Berjaya party at the coming election in 1981. The USNO representatives, however, were in for a shock. They were not prepared for the presence of the four lawyers representing the SCCP.

Joseph Chia, the Secretary-General agreed with the idea in principle, but the SCCP would not be bulldozed into agreeing with just anything, he said. He said the SCCP was not the SCA of old, and no one was allowed to tell the SCCP what to do. In any case, he wanted to know straight away such matters as the position of Dzul kifli and Tun Mustapha in the USNO party, and more important still, the allocation of seats. He was interested to know how many seats the SCCP would be allocated to contest at the 1981 election. He also wanted to know the nature of the Manifesto, whether the Chinese community as a whole would benefit from the policies of the new government if and when it defeated the Berjaya party. And more, he wanted participation of the SCCP in the new government to be clearly defined and agreed to. The SCCP would like to see more Chinese as Ministers, Assistant Ministers and also represented in the local councils and quasi-government bodies. The Chinese also wanted to see the Sabah Foundation Scholarships open to all races and not just to the "bumiputras".

The PASOK representatives for their part expressed the same sentiments as the SCCP. They were even more particular about the participation of Tun Mustapha however and stated firmly that if Tun Mustapha was allowed to participate and to stand in the 1981 election, PASOK would not consider joining in the coalition. The PASOK leadership was insistent on this, saying that if Tun Mustapha was to be involved in Sabah politics again, the three parties might as well forget about contesting the elections. They said the Kadazans did not want Tun Mustapha under any circumstances.

The USNO representatives had expected the meeting to be short and sweet, but it did not end until late into the night, and even then there was no decision made on the matter. No press statement was issued, and the meeting with the Tunku had to be postponed. It was, however, agreed to meet again before the end of May so that arrangements could be made to see the Tunku some time in June. Further, it was also agreed that if the new coalition eventuated it was to be called the "Sabah Front" or "Barisan Sabah" in Malay.

A second meeting of leaders of the three parties was held on 5 June 1980, again in the writer's office. The meeting was friendlier and although most of the points discussed at the last meeting were unresolved there was a general consensus on the desirability of getting together.

Eight resolutions were passed at this meeting, viz.:

- (i) That the proposed name of the pact would be the Sabah Front or Barisan Sabah.

- (ii) That the symbol to be used at the coming election would be the symbol of each individual party.
- (iii) That election formula shall be worked out to determine the allocation of seats for each component party.
- (iv) That a joint Manifesto shall be produced.
- (v) That leaders of each political party shall help each other in the election campaign.
- (vi) The selection of candidates shall be the responsibility of each component party.
- (vii) That one of Barisan Sabah's manifesto would be not to resort to victimisation on anyone when it was elected government.
- (viii) That the opening ceremony for the launching of Barisan Sabah shall be the responsibility of all three component parties.

The meeting also agreed in principle to the following allocation of seats: PASOK 6, SCCP 6 and USNO 11. The PASOK, however, reserved the right to ask for a further five seats, and similarly the SCCP asked for six other seats to be discussed and reviewed.

It was further agreed that if one party obtained a simple majority over the rest, the formula for ministerial portfolios would be 4-3-2. If one party obtained an absolute majority over the rest of the parties combined then the formula would be 5-2-2. It was also agreed that although the formula was one full Minister for three constituencies returned, each component party should have a minimum guaranteed allocation of two full Ministers even if a party won only one seat in the election.

The allocation of the six nominated seats in the Assembly was based on the Cabinet composition. If it was a Cabinet of 5-2-2 formula, then the nominated seats would be 3-2-1. But if the Cabinet formula was 4-3-2, then the allocation would be 2-2-2. The allocation of Assistant Ministers was to be the same formula as the Cabinet formula.

Having agreed in principle to the foregoing matters, representatives of the three parties left for Kuala Lumpur to meet with Tunku Abdul Rahman. The USNO was represented by Said Keruak, Gilong, Askhar Hasbollah, Luping and Ansari Abdullah. The PASOK was represented by its President, Ignatius Malanjum, Newman Gaban and George Mikil; the SCCP was represented by its President, Stephen Chan, Chan Tet On and Joseph Chia.

The meeting with the Tunku was cordial. He said that the "Barisan Sabah" could use his name if that was helpful. He also agreed to speak to Tun Mustapha again on the question of participating in politics. He said he had spoken to him, but he did not know whether he listened to his advice.

anymore. The Tunku also said he felt that Syed Kechik should help in the financing of the Sabah Front as all his wealth had come from Sabah and he would suggest this to him. Further, he also agreed that Tun Mustapha should help in the financing of the election campaign, even if he was not standing or taking an active part in the election.

After the meeting, the three presidents of the three parties issued a press statement. The original draft was hand-written on the Regent Hotel letterhead. It read:

Realising the fact that the people of Sabah have suffered for over four years under the Berjaya government because of its repressive and impulsive policies, we, United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), United Pasok Nunuk Ragang National Organisation (PASOK) and Sabah Chinese Consolidated party (SCCP) have reached a consensus among ourselves that we must work together to form a pact to contest in the next state general election in order to offer an alternative government to the people of Sabah. We are happy that Bapa Malaysia YM Tengku Abdul Rahman has given his blessing to this pact.

The three presidents of the party jointly signed the press statement.

The original intention of the Sabah Front members was to have a big rally in Sabah for the launching of the Sabah Front and the rally was to be attended by the former Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman. There were at least two reasons why this did not materialise. First, the Sabah Front members took too much time arguing amongst themselves, unable to agree on the allocation of seats. They did not come to any agreement until 10 March 1981, nearly one year after their first meeting in 1980. Secondly, the central government had meanwhile agreed that they would be neutral in the Sabah election, and that no one would be allowed to go over to Sabah to campaign for any of the contending parties. This caveat included the Tunku.

Part of the problem, however, was USNO's leaders' indecision on Tun Mustapha. No one wanted to tell Tun Mustapha directly that he was not wanted in the USNO party. USNO leaders, like Said Keruak, Askhar Hasbollah, Gilong and Luping were close friends of Tun Mustapha. They were themselves in a dilemma as to what to do. The USNO also badly needed money for the election and Tun Mustapha held this card. In fact, USNO leaders were given two opportunities to speak openly and directly to Tun Mustapha about whether he should take part in the coming election, and twice the USNO leaders baulked at telling him directly. This was partly due to the Asian method of avoiding making another person feel small, or lose face, but with the advantage of hindsight it would have been far better if Tun Mustapha had been told right from the start that USNO's leaders did not in fact want

him to stand during the 1981 election.

As it was, the USNO leaders called by Tun Mustapha to see him in his office, namely Gilong, Askhar, Luping and Ansari Abdullah did not make it clear whether USNO wanted him to stand. He was only told that PASOK had made a stand against him standing, and that there were talks of Kuala Lumpur leaders also objecting to his taking part in the 1981 election. This was not sufficient grounds to sway Tun Mustapha. As regards PASOK, he felt, and rightly so, that the new leader was influenced by Syed Kechik. As for the talk about federal leaders, he also felt it was Syed Kechik-inspired. He said he had seen Dr Mahathir and Datuk Musa himself and they both supported him. At the second meeting with Tun Mustapha, this time with only Askhar Hasbollah and Luping, he again asked point-blank whether he should stand in the election. The answer given to him was again vague and not helpful. He was told that if he did not participate in USNO's politics, the party would lose a large number of Muslim supporters. If he took an active part, he would antagonise the Kadazan Christian votes. It was up to him to decide. He was asked instead to consider carefully himself for the sake of the party. The two USNO leaders, who were considered his close friends, appealed to him to think in terms of USNO's future and the need to get the USNO back into power again. The results of the 1976 election were shown to him. The results were analysed by the USNO. The simple analysis in terms of voters was that some 95 percent of the Chinese votes went to the Berjaya party. These Chinese votes were very effective in all constituencies where the Chinese held the balance. Some 90 percent of the Kadazan Christians voted for the Berjaya too while an equal number of Kadazan Muslims voted for the USNO. The Kadazan animists also voted for the Berjaya party as demonstrated by the votes in areas like Kebayau, Tandek, Matunggong in the Kota Belud and Kudat areas. Given this situation, the USNO could not win the election alone. It must have the support of the SCCP and PASOK. Tun Mustapha was left to consider all this and make his own decision.

There was also some dishonesty on the part of some USNO leaders over the whole matter with Tun Mustapha. While trying to make him believe that he was needed in the party, some were also actively getting support, moral and financial, from Syed Kechik in Kuala Lumpur. Syed Kechik had made a stand right from the very beginning that Tun Mustapha was not wanted. Through Dzulkifli, he agreed to provide all of USNO's expenses including the election campaign expenses. Indeed, the money expended for the running of the USNO headquarters, the various divisions and payments of field

officers came from Syed Kechik. As Syed Kechik was actually holding the purse strings, with only intermittent funds coming from Tun Mustapha, the former had real control of the USNO party. The USNO administrators who were also top central executive committee members like Dzulkifli and the Ghani brothers (not related to Ghani Gilong) were Syed Kechik's men. They were the real "decision-makers" in USNO. The launching of the Sabah Front with Tun Mustapha and the Tunku was not really backed by Syed Kechik's men as they too saw in it the inevitable return of Tun Mustapha to USNO's politics. Dzulkifli, the Ghani brothers and others allied with Dzulkifli in the anti-Mustapha faction, did not want Tun Mustapha. They saw him as a threat to themselves as they too realised that the feeling of antagonism was mutual. They knew that if Tun Mustapha got into power again, they would not be in the line-up for positions in the governing of the state. For a different reason, therefore, they backed and encouraged the stand taken by the PASOK leaders to stop Tun Mustapha from standing at the election.

Allocation of Seats

Meanwhile, the Sabah Front members continued to haggle and bargain on the question of allocation of seats. The original agreement made on 5 June 1980 was reopened. The PASOK party wanted to have 11 if not 12 seats allocated to it as uncontested seats. The seats in fact allocated to it as uncontested seats were: (1) Moyog, (2) Tambunan, (3) Kiulu, (4) Kemabong, (5) Langkon, (6) Sook. Twenty seats were to be contested amongst all three parties, namely: (1) Tamparuli, (2) Kawang, (3) Papar, (4) Inanam, (5) Bingkor, (6) Kuamat, (7) Tampasuk, (8) Tandek, (9) Ranau, (10) Kundasang, (11) Kuala Penyu, (12) Matunggong, (13) Kudat, (14) Tenom, (15) Sugut, (16) Kebayau, (17) Pensiangan, (18) Bengkok, (19) Labuk, (20) Banggi.

The PASOK party wanted another six more of the above to be allocated to it as uncontested seats, namely: (1) Tamparuli, (2) Matunggong, (3) Tandek, (4) Kebayau, (5) Bingkor, (6) Kuamat.

The PASOK leaders wanted to have all the Kadazan constituencies for themselves. Ignatius Malanjum's argument was that the PASOK party must be seen as an equal partner with the USNO party and not as its junior partner. When told that the USNO had a large number of Kadazans supporting the party, together with many Kadazan leaders still with the USNO party, his reply was downright rude. He did not think these people were Kadazan

leaders. He said they had been rejected by the Kadazans in the 1976 and 1978 elections and were "sorely wounded" and they "smell".

Malanjum was referring to Kadazan leaders like Ghani Gilong, Idrus Matakim, Herman Luping and others. Malanjum, of course, did not mention that this would be his third attempt to stand as a candidate for election — having tried as an Independent after the June 1976 tragedy involving five Assemblymen and the by-election which followed. He lost his deposit. Again in the 1978 parliamentary election, he stood as a PASOK candidate, but again he failed. Malanjum did not think that he was "sorely wounded" or "smelly" to the Kadazans. He still thought that he was the Kadazan "king-pin", the rightful successor of Peter Mojuntin as Syed Kechik and Dzulkifli wanted him to be known to the people.

When asked to show his party's strength in each of the constituencies he wanted a PASOK candidate to stand, he said that was his party's secret. He did not even want to show who were the leaders at divisional or branch levels. He also did not want to show the number of branches he had in each of the constituencies. He said this too was his party's secret. The PASOK leaders were shown the USNO's divisions and branches in each constituency. They were not impressed. They thought it was USNO's fabrication. When it was pointed out that in the Kebayau constituency, for example, the USNO party had a lot of USNO supporters and that they were asking for Ghani Gilong to be the Kebayau candidate, PASOK leaders were not impressed either. They did not have a basis for their wanting to have the Kebayau constituency as they could not or did not want to show their party's support in the area. When it was pointed out that if Kebayau was opened to be contested by both USNO and PASOK, it would divide the people, PASOK leaders only smiled.

PASOK representatives at the meeting also kept on changing. They did not send the same person all the time, unlike the USNO's and SCCP's representatives who were the same people. Malanjum realised that he was the only president of the three parties present at the meeting. He probably thought that this was not right and beneath him to be negotiating with only the USNO's deputy president, Ghani Gilong and others. He kept out from the meeting for a while and sent representatives who could not make decisions for PASOK. Whenever there was a decision to be made, PASOK representatives would always defer decisions until they had discussed the matter with their central executive committee. They would return with the decision at the next meeting.

However, as the date of the election came closer, PASOK leaders became more conciliatory. The PASOK was allocated 10 uncontested seats. The 10 seats allocated to PASOK were: (1) Langkon, (2) Matunggong, (3) Ranau, (4) Tambunan, (5) Sook, (6) Moyog, (7) Kiulu, (8) Inanam, (9) Pensiangan, (10) Kemabong. Matunggong was given to PASOK as the PASOK's Secretary-General, Newman Gaban, was standing in this constituency. Idrus Matakim, who had been hoping to stand in this constituency as an USNO candidate had to be told that the constituency was to be uncontested and allocated to the PASOK party. He was very disappointed, but accepted the USNO president's decision with grace.

PASOK's compromising attitude at the later stage of the meetings was probably due to pressure to be conciliatory being put by Syed Kechik. It was believed that the PASOK party received its party's funds from Syed Kechik. In fact, in the absence of regular money coming from Tun Mustapha for the USNO party, Syed Kechik had to look after and fund two political parties: the USNO and PASOK parties. The USNO too was pressured to be more compromising with the PASOK party. Karim Ghani, the main spokesman for the USNO party at the meeting suddenly became less rigid in his arguments and the reason for this was that Syed Kechik had given instructions to the USNO headquarters to get on with the meetings and conclude arrangements as soon as possible. In fact, both PASOK and USNO met secretly without the SCCP and agreed on the 10 uncontested seats for each party. The PASOK got what it wanted: an equal partnership with USNO, and at the same time a promise that if PASOK won the most number of seats at the election, its president, Malanjum would become the Chief Minister of Sabah. As was pointed out earlier, Syed Kechik had two political parties to finance and both had to listen to his directives.

With regard to the SCCP leaders, they wanted at least 12 uncontested seats for the party. It was a long battle with the young SCCP leaders. Their reason for asking for 12 seats was that they must show to the Chinese community that they were better represented in Barisan Sabah than in the Berjaya party. They also claimed that since the 1976 election, the number of Chinese voters in some areas such as Tanjong Aru and Balung were more than the "bumiputras". This claim, however, was not substantiated with facts and figures. In fact, like the PASOK party, the SCCP did not have many divisions or branches in operation in the Chinese constituencies which they claimed were supporting them. As with the PASOK party, their estimate of their strength and support in each constituency was very much a guestimate rather than factual. The USNO party at least had some figures

to show their party strength in each constituency. Admittedly, the figures provided by the various 48 divisions were outdated as some dated back to the pre-1976 calculations, but even so, the USNO party had some basis for their claims. Unlike the PASOK, however, the SCCP had no one to pressure it to make conciliatory moves. Tun Mustapha who was believed to be financing the party was not helpful in this direction. In the end, however, the Chinese party leaders were forced to accept a compromise: eight uncontested seats for the SCCP, the same as the SCA were allocated in 1976. The eight seats for the SCCP were: (1) Likas, (2) Kota Kinabalu, (3) Sandakan Bandar, (4) Karamunting, (5) Elopura, (6) Tawau Bandar, (7) Kudat and (8) Tanjong Aru.²³ The constituency of Tanjong Aru was allocated to the Chinese party, not because it was felt that Tanjong Aru had more Chinese voters, but because both USNO and PASOK agreed that the SCCP candidate, a Chinese Christian lawyer, could perhaps pull the thousands of Chinese voters to vote for him. Both USNO and PASOK agreed to help the SCCP candidate, Peter Chong to win this constituency.

There were therefore 28 seats allocated to the three Sabah Front component parties as uncontested seats. The remaining 20 seats were to be contested.

The idea behind the allocation of 20 seats to be contested amongst the three Sabah Front component parties was that it was supposed to help split the votes of the Berjaya party to the advantage of either the USNO, the PASOK or the SCCP, whichever the case might be. Karim Ghani, who seemed to have become the master planner for the USNO party, explained to those present at the meeting that this tactic was used by the National Front in West Malaysia. Where UMNO was being contested by PAS in the 1978 parliamentary and state elections, another National Front member party also fielded a candidate. The Berjaya party, another Malay party was used for this purpose — to split the PAS votes.

This theory works only, however, if one party had solid support for itself to begin with. It must have at least 49 to 50 percent of the voters as confirmed party supporters, and the other 50 percent uncommitted. However, Karim Ghani was very confident that the same methods could be used in the Sabah election. His calculation was this: in the Tandek constituency for instance, which was predominantly Kadazan voters (Christians, Muslim and animist Kadazans were almost the same in numbers) the USNO had

23. Minutes of Sabah Front meeting dated 5 June 1980. A copy of the minutes is with the writer.

the solid support of the Muslim Malays and Muslim Kadazans. The USNO also had some supporters from the Christian and animist Kadazans. The rough calculation was that about 40 percent supported the USNO party. The other 60 percent were considered uncommitted or supporting Berjaya. The PASOK was claiming some 40 percent support from the voters in Tandek constituency too, and together with USNO, the Berjaya supporters should be decreased to split into two. This was a clean-cut calculation, however, and did not take into consideration the voting habits of the people. As it turned out, the calculation was wrong and this method was in fact more advantageous to the Berjaya party.

The same method of calculation was made in areas where the SCCP was to put up a candidate alongside USNO or PASOK. The constituency of Tenom and Sekong had a large number of Chinese voters, and the presence of an SCCP candidate would help split the votes for the Berjaya candidate. But no one mentioned the possibility of all three Sabah Front parties competing against each other vying for the same supporters in a given constituency.

The agreement signed on 4 March 1981 was very comprehensive. It was timed to be signed just before nomination day. The signing which took place in the evening at the residence of the writer was delayed, however. There was a complication with Tun Mustapha and the pro-Tun Mustapha faction. A large crowd of Tun Mustapha's supporters had gathered in Tun Mustapha's house on the morning of 4 March 1981. They were demonstrating their solid support for Tun Mustapha and wanted him to stand for the coming election. They also signed a petition, addressed to the USNO's president, Said Keruak, asking him to include the name of Tun Mustapha as one of the candidates for the election. Nearly half the USNO central executive committee had also signed the petition.²⁴

By 7 p.m. however, the number of signatures on the petition was getting longer as more and more people signed the petition. At 7.30 p.m. Sakaran Dandai, one of USNO's strongest and longest serving committee members presented the petition to Askhar Hasbollah, the Secretary-General at the USNO headquarters. Askhar was informed by Said Keruak to accept the petition on his behalf. Said Keruak was in the writer's house together with the two other presidents of PASOK and SCCP. They were gathered there for the signing of the hammered out agreement. The other committee members of the respective component parties were also present.

24. This writer went to Tun Mustapha's house in the afternoon and saw hundreds of people gathered in the compound of the house. He was also shown the petition letter signed by hundreds of USNO supporters.

For a while, it appeared that the electoral pact or Sabah Front would not materialise. Tan Sri Said Keruak's hands were tied and he was clearly in a dilemma. If he signed the agreement, it would mean burning bridges irrevocably with Tun Mustapha. If he did not sign the agreement, there would be no pact and nomination day was only two days away. He had to make the decision that evening.

Most lawyers from West Malaysia had arrived in Kota Kinabalu to help the Barisan Sabah's candidates with their nomination papers. Each candidate or nomination centre had at least one or two lawyers to help the candidates with their papers. These lawyers were sent by Syed Kechik himself and some were at the invitation of Tan Sri Said Keruak. Most of these lawyers who had arrived were also present at the signing of the agreement ceremony. They had been occupied all the previous day, going through the nomination papers of all Barisan Sabah's candidates, checking that none had made a mistake. Syed Kechik had, as in previous elections, produced a list of "do's" and "don'ts" for the candidates, lawyers and party's election agents.

At around 8 p.m., Askhar Hasbollah phoned from the USNO headquarters. He told Said Keruak that he had received the petition and he read it over the phone. It was asking him to include Tun Mustapha as one of the candidates of USNO at the general election. Shortly after this phone call from Askhar, he received a call also from his Deputy, Ghani Gilong who was in Kuala Lumpur making arrangements for a meeting with the Tunku. Gilong, informed of the petition by Said, apparently advised Said to ignore the petition. While waiting for Askhar to come over from the office, Said called a short meeting with USNO's "inner circle" who were with him at the signing ceremony. Said told his inner circle — most of whom were Dzulkifli's anti-Mustapha faction, that he was in a dilemma and needed their advice. He said his inner feeling told him that he should have Tun Mustapha with him, beside him at the election and not away from him or even against him. If ever he needed Tun Mustapha it was at that time, he said. However, he had to think in terms of the Sabah Front, the election pact, and the agreement which was ready to be signed. He was aware of the need for the pact if USNO was to have any chance to win in the election. He mentioned, however, Kuala Lumpur's warning to him that they would not accept Tun Mustapha standing in Sabah's politics again. He was told of this in no uncertain terms, he said. Publicly Kuala Lumpur had announced that they would remain neutral and would not take sides in the fight amongst the contending elites at the election, but privately,

Said had been assured by them that so long as Mustapha did not stand, USNO would be favoured to win and that all federal facilities, such as the police, information department etc. would be accordingly informed of this. Said was told that the central government wanted to see the USNO party win at the election. The proviso for the central government's support was that Tun Mustapha must not stand.²⁵

To emphasise the federal government's announcement that it was neutral, federal ministers' visits to Sabah were minimised. Tengku Razaleigh came, but he made sure that he visited both Berjaya and USNO meetings. At the USNO meeting held in Said's house, he was asked whether it was true that the central government did not want Tun Mustapha to take active part in politics. He answered in the affirmative. Datuk Musa, the Deputy Prime Minister, also visited Sabah, and his role was as a mediator. He would listen to all sides, and stayed in a hotel for a few days to see that no major flare up ensued in the continuing struggle for power in Sabah. He too said that the central power was neutral.

USNO's "inner circle" who got around Said that evening of 4 March 1981, however, advised him that he should sign the pact. Too many things had happened and a lot of work had been put into getting the other parties to join the pact. It was too late to consider Tun Mustapha's petition, they claimed. In any case, Tengku Razaleigh had clearly shown that Kuala Lumpur did not want Tun Mustapha to stand in the election. Meanwhile, Askhar arrived and joined the closed-door meeting in the writer's study room. His vote was to sign the agreement. In this writer's opinion, it was Askhar's vote and decision which finally made Said make his decision. Had Askhar voted in favour of Tun Mustapha it was very likely that Said would have also followed him. He depended and leaned on his inner circle for decisions, but more so on the Secretary-General who was also his brother-in-law. The dye was cast, and the decision was made: to sign the agreement for the realisation of the Sabah Front pact. By about 10.00 p.m., the agreement was signed by all three presidents and witnessed by all three Secretary-Generals.

The agreement of 4 March 1981 was not for public consumption, however, as it contained some clauses which could be used by the "enemies" for better advantage. The agreement contained a clause which made the USNO party agree to ban both Tun Mustapha and Dzulkifli from taking part in the election. Clause 15 of the agreement said:

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25. This assurance of support by Kuala Lumpur leaders (UMNO leaders) to the USNO party was told to the writer by Tan Sri Said Keruak many times, before and after the 1981 election.

USNO agrees that Tun Mustapha shall not stand as a candidate in the coming election. USNO and PASOK agree that Datuk Dzulkifli shall not stand as a candidate in the coming election nor will he be nominated as State Legislative Assemblyman. A joint statement is to be issued by the three parties regarding Datuk Syed Kechik to the effect that he should not take active part in Sabah politics nor will he be given special privileges and special position.

Apart from the number of uncontested seats allocated to each party, the agreement also reached a consensus on the allocation of full Ministers, Assistant Ministers, senatorships, and nominated seats. The Chief Ministership would go to the one whose party received the most number of seats at the election. Clause 14 contained the areas of understanding which included the local authorities, statutory bodies, quasi-government bodies like Kojasa, land organisations, timber policies, religion, refugees and illegal immigrants and the Sabah Foundation. On religion, it was agreed to set up a consultative council as a quasi-government body to look after the interest of the various religious groups in the state. For most of the points included in the area of understanding, it was the Chinese representatives who seemed to have the upper hand. They did not like to see quasi-government bodies, like Kojasa being set up to compete in business. They did not like to see the Sabah Foundation scholarships concentrated on native students only. The USNO representatives seemed to have given in to most of the Chinese demands. But as has already been explained, USNO needed the Chinese as partners, just as it needed the PASOK for the Kadazan Christian votes. Whether the conservative Muslims in USNO as well as the conservative "bumiputras" in the USNO party would have allowed the USNO leaders to stick to the agreement if the Sabah Front had won, however, is a different matter.

For public consumption purposes, the "Barisan Sabah Declaration" was also signed by the three presidents of the Sabah Front component parties. The "Declaration" was a form of a Bill of Rights and a declaration as to what the Sabah Front would like to do for the people. It also contained the Sabah Front Manifesto.

This "Barisan Sabah Declaration" however was not even mentioned by the Sabah papers. The *Sabah Times*, the erstwhile USNO newspaper had now gone the full circle: it had returned to its original owner — the Stephens family and government. No one in Sabah therefore really knew what the Barisan Sabah Declaration was all about, or for that matter, what the Barisan Sabah stood for.

The next stage was the signing of the "Declaration of our Intention" scheduled at 5 p.m. at the Tunku's Kuala Lumpur house, on 10 March 1981. This was preceded by a press conference at the Kuala Lumpur Regent Hotel. The whole show from beginning to end was run by a master public relations man. No small detail was left out, including the provision of motor cars for the Barisan leaders, the provision of television cameras and even drinks for everyone.

After a briefing, and lunch, the press conference took place at 2 p.m. All three presidents were there, flanked by their own advisors. Malanjum played his role admirably and gave the impression that all the Kadazans of Sabah were behind him and that he would soon be leading them as the number one Kadazan nationalist. He almost visualised himself as the new Chief Minister. Stephen Chan, the SCCP President had difficulties explaining why he resigned from the Berjaya party. And one very astute Malay journalist from the *Business Times* asked why the press conference was held in Kuala Lumpur and why the Barisan Sabah was launched in Kuala Lumpur and not in Sabah. No one could give him the direct and full answer to this, except to say that Kuala Lumpur was the nation's capital and it was felt that the newspapers and other mass media would give the Barisan Sabah a better coverage. The *Business Times* had a one paragraph news item on the conference the next day. Other newspapers, like the *New Straits Times* were a lot more generous. The foreign journalists representing Reuters, U.P.I. and A.P. however, were frankly unimpressed and did not even ask a question. Said Keruak read the press statement to the press.

The signing of the "Declaration of our Intention" was a near disaster. All the members of the press were there again and also Television Malaysia. The Tunku, always the gentleman, was in his best mood. The problem, however, was that no one had briefed him what he was witnessing! He thought that he would give a short speech and that it was the launching of a new Sabah Alliance party. He was openly critical of the "Declaration of our Intention" as it was inadequate. No one showed him the agreement signed on 4 March 1981 nor the Manifesto and the Barisan Sabah Declaration. No one indeed told him what the whole exercise was at all. All the lawyers in Barisan Sabah who put their heads together in producing the three documents, the agreement, the Barisan Sabah Declaration and Manifesto, and the "Declaration of our Intention" looked very embarrassed under the stern questioning of the Tunku. Even the members of the press present were uneasy.

After Ghani Gilong explained to the Tunku the existence of two more

documents and the manifesto, only then would Tunku sign the third document — as a witness.²⁶

The impact of the signing of the Declaration and the launching of the Sabah Front somehow went flat. It did not receive the full publicity it was supposed to get and most people in Sabah were unaware of the existence of the Sabah Front. No small wonder, the Berjaya propaganda machinery laughed about the whole episode and Harris, the Berjaya leader, predicted a landslide victory for Berjaya. He said the Berjaya party would get 44 seats if not the whole 48 at the election. Meanwhile, the USNO managed to get Tun Mustapha to put out a press release to say to the effect that he was supporting the effort of the Barisan Sabah.²⁷

When the election campaign got under way, the Barisan Sabah had no outlet to disseminate news or information about its activities. On the other hand, the Berjaya had all the newspapers in Sabah — the Chinese and English editions. The two English dailies, the *Sabah Times* and *Daily Express* went all out to publicise the activities of the Berjaya leaders.

The USNO party, meanwhile tried to inform the Kadazan people that if and when it got into power, the religious fervour of Tun Mustapha's time would not be repeated. A declaration to this effect was published and signed by the USNO president, Said Keruak, Ghani Gilong, Askhar Hasbollah, Herman Luping, Ansari Abdullah and Charles Mosuil. The declaration said, inter alia:²⁸

The USNO party will never attempt a policy of forcing people to embrace a religion not of his own choosing and will not condone any one person or religious community to force other people to embrace a religion against his will.

The Berjaya party, however, had more money in its hands. It was also the party in power. USNO's request for open public rallies to be allowed was not entertained by Kuala Lumpur leaders. This was a big set back. This was USNO's and also Barisan Sabah's main hope to get across to the people. Berjaya too was not allowed to hold public rallies, but as the government in power they had the upper hand of having the Information Department arrange the "meet-the-people" sessions in "balai rayas". They could send their Ministers and Assistant Ministers to speak to these sessions.

26. *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1981.

27. Tun Mustapha's press release dated 6 March 1981.

28. USNO party's Declaration of Religious Freedom. A copy of the Declaration is with the writer.

Berjaya, however, wanted something to distract the people and minimise the house-to-house campaigning by the USNO party. To do this, they decided to have a celebration to be known as Sabah's 100 year centenary. A huge exhibition complex, reputed to cost some \$5,000,000 dollars was hastily erected at Likas — appropriately at the Zara Sdn. Bhd. proposed housing complex. This company was owned by Syed Kechik and the land — reclaimed sea area, had been compulsorily acquired by the Berjaya government. Zara Sdn. Bhd. was offered compensation at \$10,000,000 for the land, but the company refused. It wanted \$200,000,000 apparently. It went to court and the case is pending even at the time of writing. The purpose of the 100 years centenary was obvious; to distract people from the campaigning of USNO and at the same time to draw crowds to Kota Kinabalu to listen to Berjaya leaders speak and also invited Kuala Lumpur leaders.²⁹

The USNO protested. The USNO Secretary-General wrote to the UMNO Secretary-General protesting against the 100 years centenary and at the same time appealing to the UMNO leaders not to attend the official opening ceremony. The Secretary-General wrote:³⁰

We submit herewith our appeal note against the intention of some of our national leaders from the UMNO party to participate in the so-called 100 years centenary celebration in Sabah.

As you are aware the USNO party and its members have strongly objected to this celebration on the following grounds:

1. That the celebration is an affront to the pride of the state and nation in that the celebration is to honour an era of the advent of colonialism in the state. In September 1881 the legal history of the state started by the granting of the "Royal Charter" to the British North Borneo Company to govern the country.

Whilst it is in order for the states in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States itself to celebrate the founding of their respective state and country as the white men themselves took over the country, we do not think that for Sabah, we should honour the year and time when this state became the slaves of colonial masters from the United Kingdom.

Our history of freedom started only when we joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1962. To us, the colonial past and the yoke of colonialism is best forgotten forever and that we should look forward to our own future, beginning from the

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29. Datuk Yap Pak Leong, a former Berjaya Minister told this writer that he conceived the idea of the 100 Years Centenary celebration. He said it was one way to bring the people to attend a huge 'rally' and at the same time see for themselves the various government projects undertaken or completed by the Berjaya government.
 30. Letter from USNO Secretary-General to UMNO Secretary-General. A copy of the letter is with the writer.

time we shook away the chains of colonialism which started over 100 years ago.

2. That the celebration is a waste of money. The sum of \$20,000,000 has been allocated to this celebration. Thus sum of money is best utilised in the construction of roads etc.

3. That the celebration is a cover for the Berjaya party to enable them to utilise public funds for their own political campaign.

4. That the so-called "Pesta Rakyat" is in fact part and parcel of the 100 years anniversary celebration and a participation by our national leaders in this so-called "Pesta Rakyat" is tantamount to a tacit approval of the Berjaya government in honour of the past colonial era and more important still, a tacit approval for the Berjaya government to waste public funds unnecessarily.

This appeal note, therefore is copied to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and to all those invited to attend and declare open the so-called "Pesta Rakyat" or 100 years anniversary celebration, with the hope that they decline from accepting such invitation.

Despite USNO's protestation the celebrations nevertheless went ahead, and some UMNO leaders attended the official opening all the same. As polling day drew nearer, the election campaign became more hectic and dirty. Poison letters started appearing once more with the aim of character assassination. It was the same as in the 1976 election.

The Berjaya party leaders, meanwhile, made full use of their position as the party in power. On the eve of polling day, the Sabah Foundation trust fund distributed the annual payments to the aged and to those who qualified for the dividends. The dividends had not been distributed for some years, despite Berjaya's election promise in 1976 that it would increase the dividends to \$100 per person. Just before polling day, thousands of people were queuing up to receive their dividends and the amount was \$100 per person. This was perhaps the biggest crowd puller for the Berjaya party. It was the best propaganda campaign material and was made use of by the Berjaya leaders to the full. Those who were inclined towards the opposition were ignored or threatened not to be given the dividends. Thousands did not receive the dividends therefore. At the same time as Sabah Foundation officials, most of whom were carefully handpicked as Berjaya sympathisers, were distributing the dividends, other government servants, through the District Office, were also distributing spot grants to various villagers for the construction of small bridges, the provision of electricity wiring of houses, and in many cases, the provision of corrugated iron sheets for the repair of the voters' roofs. Barbed wire for fencing was also provided.³¹ There were also reports of acts of intimidation. As the

31. The extent and types of 'spot grants' given by the state government and distributed by the district office in various areas in Sabah was recounted by USNO's witnesses in a petition case against the election of Berjaya's candidate in the Kawang constituency. The USNO party lodged 26 election petitions against the Berjaya candidates who were elected.

Berjaya party was in power, its candidates were able to distribute or withhold largesse. They used this power to full advantage. They also told USNO supporters and campaigners that if they did not vote for them they would make sure that the USNO campaigners' relations who were working for government as civil servants or as field workers for MUIS (Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah) a state government sponsored Islamic body, would lose their jobs. These were powerful weapons and many succumbed to these threats. Chinese retailers and shopkeepers too were similarly intimidated and warned that their annual trading licences would be withdrawn or not renewed.

However, perhaps the greatest weapon used by the Berjaya leaders was the constant reminders to the people through its newspapers and word of mouth at meet-the-people sessions — that if the USNO got into power again, Syed Kechik and Tun Mustapha would return to power. The newspapers even went to the extent of reporting that Syed Kechik was in Kota Kinabalu directing the USNO's and other Sabah Front's parties campaign efforts. The reports also stated that Syed Kechik and Tun Mustapha was working closely together to make a comeback. The alleged misdeeds of Tun Mustapha were again printed and publicised and Syed Kechik was alleged to have spent millions on the election as it was an investment for him. The Berjaya leaders charged that the USNO leaders had agreed to pay Syed Kechik \$200,000,000 for his lands confiscated by the Berjaya government. And on the eve of polling day, the newspapers carried a photograph of Sabah Front leaders eating with Syed Kechik in his Kuala Lumpur home. The photographs showed Ghani Gilong, Ansari Abdullah, and Ignatius Malanjum amongst others. The caption and story which followed the photograph clearly showed that these Sabah Front leaders were seeing Syed Kechik in Kuala Lumpur and that the latter was financing the party's election campaign. Thousands of the newspaper issue were reprinted and reproduced and distributed to every household in Sabah. The propaganda gimmick was most effective in Kadazan areas, where the PASOK and USNO candidates were contesting.

The officers provided by the election commission such as the returning officers, presiding officers and polling clerks, were reported to have been carefully handpicked. They were chosen for their loyalty to the party in government. Sabah Front candidates and election agents complained bitterly after the election was over and when a post-mortem of the election was conducted that many presiding officers and polling clerks were openly biased and campaigning for the Berjaya candidate on polling day. Presiding

officers were especially singled out as the most effective weapons used by Berjaya. Sabah Front election agents said that these presiding officers marked the ballot papers themselves on behalf of the aged and old voters, and they never asked the voter for their preference or showed the election agents present how he marked the ballot papers. The suggestion was that the presiding officers marked the ballot papers in favour of the Berjaya candidates. The average number of polling stations in each constituency was around 15, and if each presiding officer marked at least 100 ballot papers themselves on behalf of the aged and crippled, the Berjaya candidate had already an advantage of 1500 votes from his opponents. Most constituencies did not have more than 5000 voters, and the average turnout to the poll was about 75 percent. The above allegations by election agents, however, was never proved. The USNO party wrote and complained to the election agents about the above allegation and also about other election infringements, but nothing came out from the complaints.

Some USNO supporters and campaigners also reported after the election that they had to show clearly how they voted by showing the ballot paper and their marking on it to the Berjaya election agent. If they did not, their relations would lose their job. But this allegation too was not substantiated. It remained an allegation only.

Perhaps the biggest surprise on nomination day was the disqualification of Newman Gaban, the Secretary-General of Pasok. His paper was disqualified on the ground of a technical error. According to Newman, his sister who typed his nomination papers forgot to put his occupation in the nomination paper. There were rumours that his nomination paper was doctored or altered by Berjaya agents at the nomination centre. It was nevertheless difficult to understand why Newman's nomination paper was disqualified as there were lawyers and more lawyers helping in the preparation of the nomination papers. They were checked and re-checked before distributing them to the candidates. As it turned out, it would appear that Newman Gaban's nomination papers were retyped by his sister — who was a civil servant — and most probably typed in her office. As to why Newman asked for his nomination papers to be retyped was never explained.

The USNO leaders had a premonition after touring around the various polling stations that they were going to lose. The question, however, was by how many seats. The party's polling huts were constantly full of its own supporters and voters, and by the party's calculation from its own voters' registers, it should win by a narrow margin, perhaps by 20 or 30

percent in each constituency. There was hope. But when each election agent started reporting back and alleging that presiding officers in each polling station were marking ballot papers on behalf of the crippled and aged without following the rules set down for this purpose, the USNO leaders admitted defeat. USNO President, Said Keruak, went to his house in Kota Belud after touring his own constituency and seeing that he was on the verge of losing his own constituency. He received telephone calls of similar allegations from other centres. The picture was not very bright for the USNO party, nor for the PASOK party.

By the time the votes were counted therefore, the USNO leaders did not expect to win or return many seats, but they hoped that its partners, the PASOK and SCCP would somehow manage better. By 10 p.m., however, it was known that Berjaya had won once again and by a large majority. By 12 midnight, the USNO and Barisan Sabah were virtually wiped out. The Berjaya won 44 of the 48 seats with three going to the USNO party, and one to the SCCP. The PASOK did not win a single seat. Some of its candidates even lost their deposit. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* called the crushing defeat of the Sabah Front a "Harris masterstroke".³²

When the dust of the election campaign settled down, USNO leaders met to do a post-mortem on its defeat. The indications were that not only the Kadazans and Chinese had deserted the USNO and its partners in the Sabah Front, the Malays themselves had also deserted the USNO party. The desertion of the Malays from the USNO party was perhaps a vindication to some extent of Tun Mustapha's claim that he alone was able to rally the Muslims behind him. In regard to the Kadazan voters, it seemed that the Syed Kechik-Mustapha return to power was a powerful propaganda weapon for the Berjaya. This fear of a Syed Kechik-Tun Mustapha return to power was orchestrated throughout the election campaign and the photograph of Malanjum, Ghani Gilong and others eating with Syed Kechik in his house was distributed widely in the homes of the voters. How this photograph got into the hands of the Berjaya was the question. Obviously, the Berjaya leaders had a "mole" planted in the Barisan Sabah's rank and file. As for the Chinese, the age-old explanation for their behaviour stands. As in 1967, and again in 1976, they saw where the real power was favouring and as practical businessmen, they stuck to where the likely winners would be.

The only winners of the USNO were Said Keruak, Sakaran Dandai, and

32. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 April 1981.

Salam bin Datu Harun. The latter is the younger brother of Tun Mustapha. All won by a bare margin and in the case of Said, the USNO President, by 78 votes only.

The USNO leaders, after a brief silence, announced that they would lodge election petitions in the High Court against various candidates for alleged malpractices undertaken by them during the election. Twenty-six election petitions were lodged by the USNO and PASOK candidates or election agents. These 26 petitions were against the election of Berjaya candidates in:

(1) Kawang	-N24	(14) Tandek	-N6
(2) Labuan	-N34	(15) Sulaman	-N13
(3) Sugut	-N10	(16) Tamparuli	-N14
(4) Semawang	-N11	(17) Tempasuk	-N8
(5) Kundasang	-N16	(18) Papar	-N31
(6) Sekong	-N28	(19) Bongawan	-N32
(7) Kuala Kinabatangan	-N29	(20) Kuala Penyu	-N33
(8) Kuamut	-N30	(21) Klias	-N35
(9) Lahad Datu	-N40	(22) Kebayau	-N9
(10) Kudat	-N41	(23) Lumadan	-N36
(11) Tenom	-N43	(24) Bingkor	-N37
(12) Merotai	-N46	(25) Sipitang	-N44
(13) Balung	-N47	(26) Tanjong Aru	-N21

The Chinese SCCP candidates did not lodge any election petitions, although they too charged election frauds by their opponents.

The idea of the 26 petitions lodged seems obvious: if all the election petitions were successful, the USNO and PASOK could in fact be in the majority in the Assembly and therefore form the government. This, however, did not escape the eyes of the Berjaya leaders. Plans were therefore set in motion to get at least three of the petitioners to withdraw their petitions. And so, as in 1967 and 1976, the petitioners were scrutinised and studied once more by the victors, to see which ones were the most likely to be amenable to the victors' persuasion. And just two weeks after the presentation of the petitions to the High Court, at least three petitioners sent in their letters to the Deputy Registrar of the High Court that they were withdrawing their petitions. As Tunku Abdul Rahman once wrote:³³

Sabah politicians never have had the opportunity to experience the acting pains of politics, its ups and downs and other political upsets, because they have always had one-party rule and, in addition, they look upon politics as a profitable business.

The election petitions therefore became academic insofar as the USNO

33. Tunku Abdul Rahman, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

party was concerned. More defections took place, until only 20 petitions were left in the High Court. The election petitions were presented within 90 days of the election results being announced in 1981. However, it took the High Court up to 29 April 1983 to conclude even one case — some two years after the event. The one case involving the Kawang constituency took a long time to be dealt with because of changes in the court judge and also because of adjournments and more adjournments. The first judge allocated by the High Court to hear the case sat for only a few days and asked for leave to be relieved because of more important pressing work in Sarawak. The successor, also from Sarawak, did not finish the hearing until 29 April 1983.

The USNO petitioned the court to declare null and void Berjaya's candidate elected in the Kawang constituency on the grounds of corrupt practice and of aiding and abetting the commission of the offence of bribery and undue influence before and during the election. The final decision was delivered on 29 April 1983, and the judge found that the petitioner did not establish any of the charges of bribery and undue influence. As all the original 26 petitions had alleged the same offences in their petitions, USNO decided not to continue the remaining 19 cases.³⁴

The 1981 general election was duly ended, and for the USNO party and the Kadazans in USNO, it was the end of an era. USNO's attempt to return to power as a closed party in coalition with other closed parties failed.

For a brief period of time, however, the USNO party was in the hands of Kadazan leaders. Soon after the crushing defeat of USNO in 1981, Said Keruak and his brother-in-law, Askhar, resigned as President and Secretary-General respectively. Their posts were taken over by Ghani Gilong and Idrus Matakim, two of the erstwhile UPKO's foremost leaders. When they took over the USNO party for a while between 1981 and prior to the parliamentary election of 1982, the USNO party, however, was a dead and spent force. Ghani Gilong jokingly said of the take over by him as President of USNO, that he had finally arrived at USNO's top post. This, he said had been Tun Stephens' intention when UPKO was dissolved in December 1967; for the Kadazans to take over the control and management of the USNO party. It took the Kadazans a long time to reach USNO's summit, but ironically when they arrived there, the USNO party was dead. He said his task was merely to bury the "dead horse".³⁵

34. *Sabah Times*, 29 April 1983.

35. Interview with Datuk Ghani Gilong on 8 April 1983.

The 1982 Parliamentary Election

The 1982 parliamentary election was thought to be the USNO party's last hurrah as a political party.³⁶ All five candidates allocated to it by the National Front were wiped out at the election at the hands of Berjaya-backed Independents. In the case of the Berjaya party, the 1982 parliamentary election was probably its own watershed. The Berjaya party could either go further and win another state election in 1986, or lose the election as USNO did in 1976 and 1981.

The April 1982 parliamentary election was held more than a year before the term of the parliament elected in 1978 was due to expire. Dr Mahathir, the new Prime Minister who took over from Tun Hussein in mid-1981 wanted to have a fresh mandate. The election gave Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, the opportunity to establish their own brand of government. The slogan adopted was "Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy" and many "old faces" were discarded in favour of "new faces". The election provided a convenient occasion for the new party leadership to overhaul the party's representation at all levels in West Malaysia.

Insofar as Sabah was concerned, the position before the 1982 election was that the Berjaya party was fully entrenched as the government. In parliament, the Berjaya had 11 seats, with the USNO having four, and the DAP one. This was the result of the 1978 parliamentary election. But in the state general election in 1981 the Berjaya party won 44 of the 48 seats. USNO was practically wiped out and won only 4 seats. Although both Berjaya and the USNO party were members of the National Front, the USNO party had remained in the opposition in the Sabah Assembly. "Berjaya ruled alone, increasingly adopting some of Tun Mustapha's methods to stay in power."³⁷

In the allocation of seats to the Sabah members of the National Front — Berjaya and USNO — the Berjaya party was allocated 11 seats and the USNO party five. The Berjaya leaders were not happy with this arrangement as they felt that with 44 of the 48 seats won by the Berjaya party in the 1981 election, the USNO party had clearly lost supporters and should only have one seat allocated to it.

Indeed even before the announcement was made that USNO would be allocated five seats in the parliamentary election, Harris, the Berjaya

36. For an excellent account of the 1982 parliamentary election see Harold Crouch, 'Malaysia's 1982 General Election', *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Occasional Paper No. 34*, 1982.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

President and Sabah Chief Minister, announced that the Berjaya party would not back the USNO's National Front candidates.³⁸ The announcement of the allocation of seats for the Sabah National Front members was made on 24 March 1982 and published on 25 March. Harris's announcement of non-cooperation with USNO at the polls was made on 23 March 1982. Harris also told Berjaya youths to "crush the enemy".³⁹ Anyone reading the Berjaya leader's press statement would have got the impression that Harris was blatantly showing his displeasure at the Prime Minister and challenging his decision to give five seats to the USNO party. Nomination day was scheduled on 7 April 1982 and polling was staggered in Sabah, from April 22 to April 26. However, on 29 March 1982, the Berjaya party announced the names of five Berjaya-backed Independents who would be standing against the USNO National Front candidates.⁴⁰ The Berjaya youth leader, Yahya Lampong said in his press statement that the "Berjaya was forced by circumstances" to put up the five candidates to stand as Independents.

The seats allocated to the USNO party by the National Front were all in predominantly Malay areas, except for the Kota Belud constituency, where the Kadazans predominated. The five seats were: Silam, Hilir Padas, Labuk, Sugut, Marudu and Kota Belud. Marudu was the former constituency of Tun Mustapha. Askhar Hasbollah the then Secretary-General of USNO won this seat for USNO in the 1978 general election. The Berjaya youth leader explained that the Berjaya party was not going against the National Front's Prime Minister, but the Berjaya party was contesting against USNO's candidates "in keeping with the political reality in the state". He also said that the result of the election would settle the political dilemma in Sabah once and for all; and the best way to do this was by the Sabah people themselves at the polls. The Berjaya's 16 candidates (including the five Berjaya-backed Independents) were: seven Kadazans, seven Malays and two Chinese. The USNO party fielded all Malay candidates in its allocated five seats.

The PASOK party fielded seven candidates in predominantly Kadazan areas, with PASOK President, Ignatius Malanjum contesting against the former PASOK Secretary-General, Newman Gaban in Bandau constituency. The SCCP fielded two and the DAP also two candidates.

The real contest at the election was between the Berjaya party and

38. *Sabah Times*, 23 March 1982.

39. *Daily Express*, 23 March 1982.

40. *Sabah Times*, 29 March 1982; *Daily Express*, 29 March 1982.

the USNO party. The Berjaya party was going all out to "thrash" USNO and finish the party off. The Berjaya youth leader explained that it was necessary to do this so that in the next parliamentary election there would be no USNO candidates to contest as National Front candidates once USNO was eliminated at the polls. He was confident of Berjaya's clean sweep at the polls.⁴¹ The USNO party on the other hand was fighting a losing battle. Tun Mustapha had taken over the presidency of the party when Said resigned. However, he was still having difficulties with his rank and file, in particular with his deputy, Dzulkifli. Tun Mustapha surrounded himself with the "old guard" and was not prepared to accept changes.⁴² He also had difficulties in selecting the right candidates for the five constituencies. In particular, he had difficulty with the selection of the candidate for the Kota Belud constituency. Said Keruak, his former loyal deputy who took over the presidency from 1976 to 1981, had resigned as USNO's President soon after the party's defeat in the 1981 election. Said thought then that his son would be selected to be the candidate. His son had just returned from overseas with a degree and he thought that he was qualified to take over his father's old seat. If his son was not selected, he thought it would be his brother-in-law, Askhar Hasbollah. However, Tun Mustapha selected a young lawyer, Pandikar, who was a Muslim Ilanun but not a Bajau. Said thought that the selection of Pandikar to take over his old seat was a mistake.⁴³ Tun Mustapha was also having problems of defections from USNO's rank and file. Both Said Keruak and Askhar resigned, as did Said's son, Salleh from the USNO party. Ghani Gilong also resigned and so did Ansari Abdullah, the USNO youth leader. The defections reported in the newspapers were daily and it was reminiscent of the days when Tun Stephens was experiencing defections from the UPKO party in 1967.

Tun Mustapha's problem was not just the defections of key personnel and supporters. He was also having problems with the central government. When USNO complained that Berjaya leaders should be reprimanded because they were openly supporting Independents to contest against National Front USNO candidates, Dr Mahathir replied: "Face it, and don't be scared with the challenge."⁴⁴ Dr Mahathir was speaking at a meeting with USNO

41. *Sabah Times*, 9 April 1982.

42. Interview with Datuk Dzulkifli on 12 April 1983.

43. Tun Mustapha told this writer after the election that Kota Belud would never be the same again. He said there were too many factions to please.

44. *Daily Express*, 14 April 1982.

leaders in Kota Kinabalu on 13 April 1982. He was there to help in the election campaign for the National Front. He saw the Berjaya leaders first, and later saw the USNO leaders. USNO was led by Tun Mustapha at the meeting. The Prime Minister also received a memorandum from the USNO party, and although he did not mention the contents of the memorandum, many believed that it was USNO's objection to the fielding of Independent candidates by the Berjaya party. The impression gathered by the Prime Minister's action and replies to the question at the meeting was that he wanted the Sabahans themselves to solve their own political problems and that the central power would not interfere.

Soon after the visit of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam came to Sabah.⁴⁵ It was generally believed that Datuk Musa was a friend of Tun Mustapha and also of the USNO party and that he had strained relations with Harris. Some believed that this was due to the alleged support by Harris of Datuk Musa's arch political rival, Tengku Razaleigh when the two UMNO's foremost political leaders contested for the number two position in the UMNO party. USNO's hope was that Datuk Musa had come to Sabah to help USNO and to inform the Berjaya leaders to dissociate themselves from the Independents contesting against the USNO candidates. This hope however was dashed, and perhaps also demoralised a lot of USNO supporters, when Datuk Musa was quoted in a front-page story as saying "Problems? What problems?!"⁴⁶ The *Daily Express* reported:

"Problems? What problems? There is no problem. The weather is good and the plane can take off" said Datuk Musa, pointing to a slightly overcast sky at the airport. The Deputy Prime Minister was replying to a reporter's question on whether there was any problem following a report from Kuala Lumpur yesterday that the Prime Minister ...had asked Datuk Musa to settle the existing problem between USNO and Berjaya.

The election results were as predicted. The Berjaya party took all but one seat. The USNO candidates lost in all five seats to the Berjaya-backed Independents. The only seat lost by the Berjaya party was the Sandakan seat which was won by the DAP.⁴⁷

In the wake of Berjaya's defeat in Sandakan, the Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh, dismissed the district officer, the Chairman of the Town Council and another senior official. He also persuaded the State Governor

45. *Ibid.*, 19 April 1982.

46. *Sabah Times*, 19 April 1982.

47. Harold Crouch, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-57.

to withdraw the title of "Datuk" from former Berjaya head of information, Haji Halek Zaman who had stood as an Independent against the Chief Minister.

In fact, four persons were stripped of their Datukship after the 1982 general election. They were Halik Zaman, Abu Bakar Tan, Yacob Tingkalor Lampag, and Lee Soon. In a press conference, Harris agreed to a question that the move to strip the four of their awards was politically motivated. He said:

Ours are political policies and the decisions taken are therefore political. Those who do not conform to the requirements of being a Datuk are not entitled to have these titles.

He pointed out that it was the politicians who recommended that people get the Datukships, and those who received Datukships were being watched to see if they "conformed".⁴⁸ Halek Zaman, shortly after being stripped of his title was charged in court with corruption when he was the Chairman of the Sabah Land Development Board. He faced no less than 21 charges of corruption in the High Court. The court case hearing is still pending. Halek Zaman also announced in a deed poll that he had adopted the name "Datuk" to precede his name "Halek Zaman" so that he would be known as "Datuk Halek Zaman".

Predictably, USNO's defeat in the 1982 election at the hands of the Berjaya-backed Independents was a bitter pill to take by the USNO leaders and supporters. Tun Mustapha forwarded a "long letter" to the Prime Minister.⁴⁹

After the 1982 election, USNO lost more supporters and the party became weaker. At the time of writing, various USNO divisions and branches had been dissolved. This was because the Prime Minister had openly criticised the USNO leaders for their opposition to the island of Labuan becoming a federal territory. The Prime Minister said that the USNO party would be sacked from being a member of the National Front.⁵⁰ Despite desertions and defections, however, including the dissolution of divisions and branches throughout the state, the USNO Acting President, Sakaran Dandai told a meeting of USNO divisional committee members in Papar not to be disheartened. He said if the USNO party was sacked from the National

48. *Daily Express*, 29 April 1982.

49. Told to the writer by Tun Mustapha. He said he was going to see the Prime Minister to present his party's analysis of the election and to explain why the USNO lost.

50. *Sabah Times*, 27 February 1984.

Front it was the will of God.⁵¹

At the time of writing, Harris has been in control of Sabah politics for nearly 10 years - nearly the same length of time as was Tun Mustapha. Unlike Tun Mustapha, however, Harris has always been careful not to antagonise the federal leaders. Indeed, he seemed to go overboard in his attempt to please them. He is determined not to repeat the faults or mistakes of his predecessors - Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha. Thus, in his speech at the opening ceremony of the conference of state-federal relations committee at Kota Kinabalu on February 17 1983, he emphasised the need for state and federal civil servants to work closer together.

The question of integration with the central power is one of Harris's main objectives. He saw in this something very important to Sabah and the nation as a whole, and also very important to himself if he wanted to maintain his hold on power and control in Sabah. Tun Mustapha, too, emphasised integration with the federal power during his reign as Chief Minister, but at the same time he wanted "a parallel autonomy" for Sabah.⁵² He wanted to be the "kingpin" in Sabah. To make this ambition a reality he embarked on not just an integration policy, but went further, and that was the assimilation of all the races and cultures in the state.

Harris too sought to do the same thing. He too saw that integration was not sufficient. Assimilation of the different cultures was the ultimate answer - not just for the sake of the Malays but also because this would bring Sabah that much closer to Kuala Lumpur. The difference between Tun Mustapha and Harris however is their style in making this assimilative objective reality. We shall explore how this was done and is being done in the next chapter.

51. *Daily Express*, 5 March 1984.

52. See R.O. Tilman, 'Mustapha's Sabah 1968-1975: The Tun Steps Down', *Asian Survey*, April 1976.

CHAPTER 10

THE KADAZAN DILEMMA

The Kadazans are the most numerous ethnic group within Sabah, but in Malaysia as a whole they are a small minority. In the beginning of Malaysia, the Malay masters in Kuala Lumpur for a time allowed the Kadazans to rule and be the dominant race in Sabah. This was because Indonesian confrontation against Malaysia was on and the Malay authorities did not want to be seen as practising colonialism in Sabah. However, by 1965, when the international environment changed, the Malay power elite became less tolerant towards the Kadazan call for Kadazanism and a separate form of identity for themselves. The Malay authorities set out to see that the Borneo territories were integrated more closely with the federal government. Also they set out to assimilate the various indigenous ethnic races into the Malaysian national culture — which they defined as Malay based. Islamisation had therefore to be pursued with more vigour amongst the Kadazans.

It was of course possible that the Malay power elite in Kuala Lumpur could have allowed Kadazans to keep a separate identity for themselves within Malaysia since their number was so small a proportion of the whole. However, the UMNO party in Malaya was under constant pressure from the more fundamentalist Muslims in the PAS party to propagate the Islamic faith in Malaysia at large. Confronted with PAS pressure, therefore, UMNO Malay leaders had to be seen to be working for the Islamic faith in Sabah. The Kadazans, the majority of whom were still animists, must be persuaded to embrace the new religion — Islam.

Furthermore, it was unfortunate for the Kadazans that their relationship with the dominant indigenous ethnic segment in Malaysia, the Malays, and their quest for autonomy in respect of their culture, religion, language and identity has essentially become a part of the overriding issue and problem of the relationship between the indigenous Malays and the immigrant non-Malays. If Kadazan aspirations had not become a part of the larger Malay/non-Malay equation, possibly the Malay governors of Malaysia, facing some 200,000 Kadazans only, could have adopted a more relaxed and reasonable response. They would certainly not have viewed them as a threat to Malay

culture, religion and language. Similar demands by the immigrant non-Malays are viewed by the Malays as divisive and dysfunctional and as a serious obstacle to the creation of a united Malaysian nation. The problem as far as the Kadazans are concerned, therefore, is how to ensure that the major "nation-building" policies of the government, encompassing the issues of culture, religion and language, directed at the immigrant non-Malays, who constitute a near-majority of the Malaysian population, are not applied in respect of the Kadazans, who like the Malays are an indigenous people and who constitute only a tiny minority of the whole. It determines the very existence of Kadazans as an ethnic group, distinctly different from the indigenous Malays.

National Integration

According to Dr Mahathir, now Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Malays' dilemma in West Malaysia was the need for them to improve their economic and social position in relation to the non-Malays. This was important if the Malays did not want to become the "Red Indians" in their own country. They had therefore to participate actively in the economic and business aspects of the nation and become successful businessmen. They had also to take an active part in educating themselves so that they could compete successfully with the non-Malays in all fields of endeavour in the country. At the same time, however, the Malays also needed to observe and preserve their culture and customs — that is to say, preserve the "Malayness" of the Malay ethnic group. And in Malaysia, when one talks of Malay culture and custom, one is also talking about the Muslim religion, of which religion nearly all the Malays are members. The Malay dilemma, in short, then is the need for them to aspire to get to the top in business and other fields of social endeavour, and yet retain what is "Malay". And what is "Malay" necessarily places constraints and impediments on the other objectives.¹

The Kadazan "dilemma" seems to be similar to the Malay "dilemma" as analysed by Dr Mahathir; but in addition to that, the Kadazans of Sabah also face the dilemma of having to accept the need for nation-building on the one hand, so that Malaysia is built on a sound foundation with no ethnic confrontations amongst the population, especially amongst the "bumiputras", and on the other hand the felt imperative need to preserve their identity as Kadazans. The Kadazans, as the minority group in Malaysia, but the

1. Mahathir Mohammad, *The Malay Dilemma*.

most numerous in Sabah, therefore have the added problem and dilemma of how to adjust to the federal attempt to integrate or assimilate them into Malaysian society.

Another added dilemma for most non-Muslim Kadazans is the question of which of the two other major races — namely Malay (Muslims) and Chinese — to support and be identified with. Most Kadazans identify their problems as "bumiputras" with the other indigenous races (e.g. Muruts, Bajaus and Malays) of Sabah and feel that they have a common goal and aspirations with the other indigenous races. Together with the other indigenous races of Sabah, they feel that the Chinese are the "others", the immigrants, the race who were the "outsiders". However, there are other non-Muslim Kadazans who associate themselves with the Chinese community and indeed identify their problems with them. They feel that the Chinese, as non-Muslims, have similar likes and dislikes and for this reason the "outsiders" are the Muslim Malays who have a different culture and exclusive religion. These are the Kadazans who have an added dilemma: with which of the two major races should they identify their problems? Is it the Malays or the Chinese?

One way of looking at the Kadazan dilemma is to compare their situation with the Karens, or the Kachins of Burma. These people are also in the minority in the Union of Burma as a whole, but in their own state, they form the majority of the population. Since Burma achieved independence nearly 40 years ago, these minority groups have fiercely guarded their own identity, and culture and refused to be absorbed or assimilated into the Burmese mold as the central government wished them to.

The Kadazans of Sabah have not and perhaps will never rise against the federal power to preserve and guard their identity as the Karens of Burma have been doing for years. Nevertheless, the problems are there and in this chapter, the writer intends to try to explore and analyse how the federal government looks at the Kadazan situation vis-à-vis Malaysia, and deals with the matter.

When the proposed Federation of Malaysia was being considered and discussed by the leaders of Malaya, Britain and the three states of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak, academicians too were discussing the viability of the proposed federation. A large book, *Malaysia - A Survey* was published soon after the Federation of Malaysia was formed.² The book contained a series of articles produced by various academicians

2. Wang Gungwu (ed.), *Malaysia: A Survey*.

well versed in their own fields of study. But the important aspect of the study on the proposed new federation was the obvious question of how these new states of Singapore, Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak would be able to get together and build a nation acceptable to all the numerous races in the newly formed federation. Wang Gungwu, in his introduction wrote :

It cannot be denied that there are some fundamental difficulties about recognising the four territories of Malaysia as a new nation....The question most often asked by people outside of Malaysia is whether this common colonial experience is enough to bring the territories together and keep them together....There is no simple answer to this. What the four territories have in common is extremely subtle. The peoples have each learnt many common lessons during the first century, about the importance of freedom and sovereignty, about the value of political and economic stability and how to live peacefully in a plural society. The country thus based its principles of government on the twin pillars of mutual tolerance among the various communities, and respect for the law which protects the rights of all, whether they be the majority, the minority or mere individuals. The territories have come together mainly in order to protect these values in a region where there are many dictators and many types of tyranny; in other words, it may be said that they have come together not because of their common past but because they have become convinced that they have a common future.

The book was not written to find the answers nor to determine whether the proposed federation was good or bad. It was a positive study of whether it was possible to bring together four states populated by various races to form a new federation, a new nation.

Some other academicians were not sure, however, whether the "experiment" of a new federation of plural societies would work. A political scientist once wrote that the Federation of Malaysia would make or break in the first ten years of its existence. He was right. The Federation of Malaysia broke up in 1965 when Singapore was expelled from the Federation. At least two other political scientists held the view that the Federation of Malaysia would inevitably fail because of the differences amongst Malaysia's different ethnic groups. R.K. Vasil, for instance, wrote that Malaysia as a multi-racial concept failed because of the Malay ethnic group's insistence that the Malays must be paramount in the new nation, and that only Malay culture and customs could be used to weld a new Federation of Malaysia.³

3. R.K. Vasil, 'Why Malaysia Failed', *Quest* 49 (Spring 1966), pp. 51-59. See also his *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, for an excellent account of how the Malay leaders insisted that the Malay culture and custom must form the 'core' or basis of moulding a new Malaysian nation.

Another critic of the Federation of Malaysia was Tae Y. Nam. The central theme of his thesis was a consideration of the problem of political integration in a plural society, with emphasis on the prospect of the cultural assimilation of all the races in the two countries — Malaysia and Singapore. His conclusion seemed to be the same as Dr Vasil's: that there was a difference of opinion between the Malay leaders and the Chinese leaders of Singapore as to how the new Malaysian nation should be made to grow and develop as an entity. Singapore wanted a "Malaysian Malaysia", meaning a fusion of all cultures, of all ethnic groups, but the Malay leaders wanted a Malay Malaysia with Malay culture and customs as the base.⁴ In his other work, which Dr Tae described as a functional analysis of political integration, the author came to the same conclusion as Dr Vasil: that racism and nation-building do not work well hand in hand.⁵ The continued presence of Singapore with strong Chinese culture was therefore not feasible in the Malay concept of Malaysia. Singapore had to go.

The Rukunegara and the Constitution

Both the Rukunegara and the Constitution, however, recognised the plural aspect of the Malaysian population and respected and recognised the customs, religions, and languages of all races in the country.

The Rukunegara, for example has this to say on the country's national culture:⁶

We are dedicated to ensuring the existence and growth of a liberal society in which its members are free to practice and progress their own religions, customs and cultures consistent with the requirements of national unity. The Malaysia nation is indeed unique in having rich and diverse cultural traditions and practices. We aspire to a society in which this diversity can be an asset and a source of strength.

The Rukunegara was established as Malaysia's guiding principles in promoting nation-building after the May 13 1969 racial riots. Whether these guiding principles are to be accorded only lip-service or taken seriously is of course another matter.

The Constitution, meanwhile, has also provided clauses for the preservation of the interests of non-Malay ethnic groups in the country.

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4. Tae Y. Nam, 'Malaysia and Singapore: The Failure of a Political Experiment', Ph.D. thesis presented to the University of Iowa, 1969.
 5. Tae Y. Nam, *Racism and Nation Building in Malaysia and Singapore*.
 6. See preamble to the Rukunegara.

When the 1957 Malayan Constitution — later amended and extended to form the Malaysian Constitution — was promulgated, it was supposed to give balance to the needs of all races in the country.

R.K. Vasil sees the Constitution as being particularly important in a plural society as it is the supreme law and provides a framework for the development of mutual trust and good relations amongst the various races.⁷

It also indicates whether the dominant political group believes in the eventual economic and political integration of the various ethnic groups into a united nation or that it is committed to the involuntary assimilation or absorption of the immigrant peoples and seeks to establish the paramountcy of the indigenous community through constitutional and political means.

Have the Malaysian leaders, in particular the UMNO leaders, used the Constitution in an attempt to absorb and assimilate the non-Malay races? The answer to this depends on one's point of view. The Chinese opposition leaders, especially the DAP leaders, seem to think that the Malays *are* using the Constitution to suppress other ethnic races and have even gone so far as to accuse UMNO leaders of flouting the provisions which protect the immigrant races.⁸ DAP leaders highlight some of the provisions of the Constitution which they claim are being flouted by the UMNO leaders. These include:

(1) Section 8(2) *Equality* reads:

Except as expressly authorised by this constitution there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law or in the appointment to any office or employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of property or establishing or carrying on any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment.

Chinese leaders argue that the Chinese are being discriminated against in appointment to the civil service and also for places in higher institutions of learning. Further, they argue, the introduction of the New Economic Policy - NEP - was nothing more than a legalised form of discrimination against the non-Malays in the field of business.

UMNO leaders, however, are quick to point out that in the civil service, more than half the total number are non-Malays and no less than the Deputy Prime Minister (then Datuk Hussein) had to make this announcement to the press. He backed his statement by showing the correct figures of

7. R.K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, p. 11.

8. See *Who Lives if Malaysia Dies?* a DAP publication. See also Lim Kit Siang, *Time Bomb in Malaysia*.

all grades or divisions in the civil service in the federal and state governments set up. With regard to the New Economic Policy, the official explanation was that it was instituted with the tacit consent of all community leaders. The aim was to help the "bumiputras" to be on a par with the non-"bumiputras" in the fields of business, trade and industry. The present Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam, has said that on paper the N.E.P. might look to the outsiders and uninitiated as discriminatory to the Chinese and other non-"bumiputras". However, the background as to why the N.E.P. was introduced must be understood, and non-"bumiputras" in Malaysia understand the reason. It was a temporary programme — to narrow the gap between the "bumiputras" and the non-"bumiputras" so that future racial confrontation and misunderstanding based on economic disparity between the two ethnic groups could be avoided.⁹

It is perhaps opportune to mention at this stage that in the state of Sabah, the allegation of discrimination against the non-"bumiputras" has become farcical. To begin with, many Kadazans with Chinese grandfathers or great-grandfathers have continued to use their Chinese surnames — as Lee, Tan, Wong, etc. Because of the fear amongst the parents of these Sino-Kadazans who have Chinese surnames of being discriminated against in the appointment to jobs, or promotion in their jobs in the civil service, and the fear of not getting a scholarship, many have changed their surnames by deed poll. Solicitors' offices in Kota Kinabalu have suddenly found a lot of work in helping these people prepare for the deed poll to change their surnames. Some seem to have grounds for their fears of being discriminated against if their surnames remained a Chinese name. However, a survey of the government departments in Sabah seems to show that except for some of the very top posts, like Permanent Secretaries to the Cabinet Ministers, most Directors of State Departments (as well as federal) and also the second echelon level of the civil service are all manned by Chinese or non-"bumiputras". The Public Works Department is one case in point. The Director, the Deputy Director, and indeed all the senior posts in this department, are Chinese. The only positions where "bumiputras" are found are in field work such as supervisors or assistant superintendents of works. Admittedly, the Public Works Department is a highly technical department and the majority of local engineers, architects and draftsmen are non-"bumiputras", but the fact that these non-"bumiputras" are employed and on a permanent and pensionable basis does not seem to substantiate the Chinese fears of discrimination against them in the civil service. Other

9. Interview with Datuk Musa Hitam on 5 May 1983.

departments which have a large concentration of non-"bumiputras" are Lands and Survey and the Customs Department. Non-"bumiputras" occupy all the senior posts in these two departments. These two departments have more than 60 percent non-"bumiputras" on their payroll.¹⁰

As we saw in our discussion of the I.G.C. meeting and background to the 20 points safeguards, the Malaysian delegation admitted that in the civil service the government maintained a certain quota for the Malays. The Sabah delegation did not want this for Sabah as they felt that the civil service would be unduly hampered if a quota system in favour of the "bumiputras" was introduced. This probably explains why the Sabah Civil Service has a high percentage of senior civil servants who are non-"bumiputras".

Section 17 of the Sabah Land Ordinance prohibits the sale of native land to non-natives. However, many Chinese and Anglo-Burmese in the state have somehow obtained a native court certificate certifying that they are bona-fide natives of the state. These "Anak Negeri" (natives) certificates were normally applied for and granted to Sino-Kadazans who have Chinese fathers or mothers, but lately there have been a spate of pure Chinese, some from Hong Kong but domiciled in Sabah, applying and getting the "Surat Anak Negeri". This certificate entitles them to purchase native-title lands and take up appointments in the civil service. After strong pressure from the Kadazan community on the government to curb apparent Native Court's abuses on the "Anak Negeri" matter, the state government has taken action, but the holders of these "Surat Anak Negeri" are still parading themselves as natives and buying up native lands for speculation purposes.¹¹ There have been cases of native chiefs brought to the court on corruption charges on this matter, but the syndicates who are specialising in getting Native Courts to grant "Surat Anak Negeri" to the Chinese are still prevalent in Sabah.¹²

10. Interview with a senior government official who did not want to be identified.

11. A Chinese top businessman from West Malaysia told this writer that he obtained his 'Surat Anak Negri' (native certificate) by bribing some native chiefs with drinks.

12. A former member of a syndicate told this writer that the syndicates acted as the go-between for the applicants and the native courts. The syndicates were a mixture of Sino-Kadazans and Chinese businessmen. The Sino-Kadazans obtained the application forms from the 'friendly' native chief and the same 'friendly' native chief then held a sham court hearing. Signatures of two or three other native chiefs who were not 'friendly' to the idea were then forged to show that they too were present at the sham court hearing. Unwittingly District Officers approved the application without realising that the court hearing was a fraud. The charges for these 'Surat Anak Negri' ranged from \$M2,500 to \$M6,000.

During the time of Tun Mustapha's regime, two very prominent and notorious persons were granted "Surat Anak Negeri" by the native court. They were Ali Tan (Tan Sioe Tie), a Chinese businessman from Indonesia and a close business associate of Tun Mustapha, and Syed Kechik, USNO's advisor from Kedah, a Malay lawyer. The first had converted to the Islamic faith. But there is no provision, however, in the Constitution to show that a Chinese converted to the Islamic faith could be considered a Malay.¹³ The second person, a Malay from Kedah, West Malaysia, had successfully used his certificate as a native of Sabah in court when an attempt was made by the Berjaya government in 1976 to have him thrown out or expelled from Sabah. The High Court considered him not only a "bumiputra" in his own right of birth, but also a Sabah native by virtue of the certificate granted to him by the native court. The decision on the "Surat Anak Negeri", however, was only in arbiter, and not a judgment of the court. There have as yet been no tests made in court against the validity of the "Surat Anak Negeri" granted to pure Chinese. The Berjaya government, despite their erstwhile criticism of Tun Mustapha's government for allowing a pure Chinese to acquire a native certificate, did not seem however to heed their own criticism on the matter. There has been no proper record kept of how many pure Chinese businessmen and other top civil servants who are non-"bumiputras" have acquired the "Surat Anak Negeri", but the estimate is in the thousands.

The foregoing is just another example of how the non-"bumiputras" in Sabah could exploit situations to their advantage. They criticised the government and called the federal leaders anti-Chinese, anti-non-"bumiputras", and accused the federal government of reducing them to second class citizens, but the truth of the matter is that they are still far better off economically and socially than their "bumiputra" fellow citizens. In Sabah, as we have seen, they can even buy their way to become a "bumiputra" and enjoy the privileges of both worlds. They occupy high positions in the Chinese guilds — for example, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce — and yet at the same time, by virtue of the "Surat Anak Negeri", they also qualify for any of the privileges accorded to the natives.

In West Malaysia, a Chinese top businessman once publicly bemoaned

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13. By 1972 quite a few prominent Chinese businessmen were converted to the Islamic faith. At one of the meetings of the Sabah Alliance Executive Committee, a new Chinese convert member asked Tun Mustapha whether he could qualify to become an USNO member now that he was a Muslim. His request was diplomatically turned down by Tun Mustapha.

that the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) was reducing him to a second class citizen. The Prime Minister (then Tun Hussein) replied that he would prefer to be considered a second class citizen if he had all the privileges of the rich, and opportunity in business, trade and industry. The same critic, perhaps for his own personal reasons, was seen in a newspaper two days later shaking hands with the Prime Minister, with head bowed in submission.

Since the introduction of the N.E.P. the non-"bumiputras" have criticised it as unconstitutional as it breaks the very tenets and spirit of the Constitution on equality. The New Economic Policy aims at removing the economic imbalance amongst the various peoples of Malaysia. There is widespread acceptance of the need for some such policy.¹⁴ The federal government is very happy to see the results of the N.E.P. since its introduction. More and more "bumiputras" have taken up the government's call to take up trade and enter business or industry as an occupation. The target is for at least 30 percent of the business and trade in the country to be in the hands of the "bumiputras" by the end of 1985. Federal Ministers are confidently saying that they will reach the target.

However, "bumiputra" leaders fear that the target of 30 percent might not in fact be reached by 1985, and argue that only about 10 percent of the business and trade in the country will be in the hands of the "bumiputras" by 1985. They also claim that not all "bumiputras" are actually benefiting from the N.E.P., but only a handful of elite Malays and other "bumiputras". The system of having quasi-government corporations actively participating in business on behalf of the "bumiputras" benefits only a few, but not the masses according to these critics. Another criticism of the N.E.P. is also that it concentrates on West Malaysia. Sabah leaders and "bumiputra" businessmen feel that the federal government's corporations are only located in West Malaysia and not in Sabah so Sabah "bumiputra" businessmen are not benefiting from the huge corporations sponsored by the federal government.¹⁵

"Bumiputra" leaders also accuse the non-"bumiputras" of sabotaging the efforts of the federal government to implement the N.E.P. A "bumiputra" M.P. accused the non-"bumiputras" who opposed the N.E.P. of being anti-national.¹⁶

14. Interview with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam on 5 May 1983.

15. Interview with a senior Berjaya party official who is also a leading "bumiputra" businessman, on 7 April 1983.

16. Mark Koding, *A Moment of Truth*, pp. 8-9. This publication is a reproduction of Mark Koding's parliamentary speech in 1978.

Those who oppose the policy wish to maintain the status quo and perpetuate economic imbalance among the various races. While they make loud claims over the unfairness of the policy towards the rich, they fail to mention the tremendous riches they have harvested and amassed through the implementation of the second and third Malaysia Plans aimed at achieving the objectives of the policy. The nation for the first time in its modern history embarked on gigantic development efforts and has spent so far \$31,544 million during the two plan period. Out of this total development expenditure, a great portion went to non-"bumiputras" who today complain the loudest. The "bumiputras", who are supposed to benefit and get the lion's share have benefitted through creation of new opportunities only....For example, in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, where there are some 700 retail shops, there is not a single "bumiputra" wholesaler or retail outlet which can be compared with other shops....The sincere efforts by "bumiputras" to establish themselves in the retail business are frustrated through a united front put up against them by the well-established non-"bumiputras". The venturesome "bumiputras" who open retail businesses soon find themselves out of business with heavy financial losses, including, in some cases, their life savings and properties....

The "bumiputra" Member of Parliament, Mark Koding had hit the crux of the matter when he spoke of the main beneficiaries of the more than \$31,544 million spent in the second and third Malaysia plan on development. In Sabah, the estimated amount of development found to be expended within the fourth Malaysia plan is not less than 4 billion dollars. In the first quarter of the fourth Malaysia plan, nearly one billion had already been expended on various fields of development, such as the construction of roads, highways, electrical power (hydro), school buildings, bridges, and the maintenance of existing buildings, roads, bridges and machinery.

A Sabah businessman estimated that fully 60 percent of these development expenditures went straight into the pockets of the non-"bumiputra" businessmen who control all the outlets of trade in Sabah. He claimed that the Sabah Chinese Chamber of Commerce have a stranglehold on business and trade in Sabah to the exclusion of "bumiputra" businessmen. The same businessman claimed that even in the timber business the non-"bumiputras" were in control. Most of the timber logging companies are in the hands of non-"bumiputra" companies and it is common for "bumiputras" who have been awarded timber concessions by the state government to lease or sell their timber concessions to the Chinese timber logging companies. The contractors for the construction of roads, bridges, buildings etc. as well as the suppliers of materials and repair equipment are non-"bumiputras". Even the professionals such as lawyers, architects, engineers, doctors, are nearly all non-"bumiputras", and with

the multi-racial Berjaya party in power, these people were having the upper hand over their "bumiputra" counterparts — who are very small in numbers in any case. Most trading banks are also managed by non-"bumiputras", and it is not hard to imagine how difficult it is for the "bumiputra" businessmen to get a loan from these trading banks.¹⁷

The National Language

Let us now look at the question of language. Section 152 of the Constitution provides that the national language shall be the Malay language, provided that:

No person shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for official purposes) or from teaching or learning, any other language, and nothing in this clause shall prejudice the right of the federal government or of any state government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in the federation.

To question the National Language — Bahasa Malaysia, is punishable under the Sedition Act 1940 under Section 3(1) of the said Act. However, Chinese leaders applied to the government for permission for the setting up of a Merdeka University which would use the Chinese language as the medium of instruction. The application was turned down in 1974. The Chinese leaders took legal action against the decision of the government and charged that they were deprived of their right to put up a university by virtue of using the Chinese language as medium of instruction. They claimed that this was against the provision of Section 152(1) of the Constitution which allows for the unofficial use of the Chinese language. The court dismissed the petition, so the Chinese appealed to the federal court. The federal court dismissed the appeal on July 6 1982. The federal court ruled that the use of the Chinese language as the medium of instruction in the proposed university would be deemed official, and hence contrary to Section 152 of the Constitution which allows for Malay to be the only official language in the nation. The court also ruled that the proposed university would be deemed to be a "public authority", by virtue of its being set up under the provisions of the Federal University Act. As a public authority, the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction would make that language the official language of the proposed university.

17. Interview with a senior Berjaya party official who is also a leading "bumiputra" businessman on 7 April 1983.

The application for the setting up of the Merdeka University was a demonstration by the Chinese leaders that they wanted their language to be an important part of the cultural heritage of Malaysia. They argued that they were not given the protection of Section 152 insofar as their language was concerned. The interpretation of Section 152 and its protection of languages other than Malay was finally laid to rest by the federal court's decision on 6 July 1982. However, before the decision was made, the Chinese federal opposition backed by Chinese leaders in the MCA and Gerakan (who are members of the National Front) had agitated for the setting up of the proposed university. This agitation was one of the contributory causes of the race rioting after the 1969 parliamentary election.¹⁸

A Sabah M.P. criticised the action of these Chinese leaders as demonstrating self-interest and being divisive, an attempt to frustrate the federal government's effort at creating an integrated society and nation. He argued that Section 152 of the Constitution had created problems as the Chinese chauvinists interpreted the provision widely for their own purposes. He said that members of the opposition from the non-"bumiputras" "look at some of the Articles of our Constitution with sanctimonious reverence and deem them like the ark of the covenant: too sacred to be touched because they suit their purposes". The same M.P. felt that Section 152 of the Constitution should be amended for it allowed for the teaching of the Chinese and Tamil languages in school. He considered the teaching and learning of any non-Malay languages as detrimental to the advancement of a cohesive and integrated Malaysian nation. He called for the abolition of Chinese and Tamil schools.¹⁹ For his effort, Koding was charged under the Sedition Act, and the court found him guilty of sedition and he was fined.²⁰

Koding's views, however, did not reflect the general views of all Sabahans. Indeed, it is believed that his speech in parliament was in fact inspired by Harris, the Chief Minister of Sabah. The latter wanted to test the reaction of the Malay rulers in Kuala Lumpur.

18. See the National Operations Council, *May 13 Tragedy: A Report*. See also F. Gagliano, *Communal Violence in Malaysia, 1969: The Political Aftermath*.

19. Mark Koding, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-7.

20. *Sabah Times*, 31 March 1982.

The National Culture Policy

The slogan during the Twenty-First National Day anniversary in 1978 was "unity through a national culture". The national culture policy was the result of nation-wide consultations and deliberations, and a committee was appointed to make recommendations. The committee presented its recommendations and it was agreed that the national culture should be Malay-based and that finer points of other cultures should be embodied into the national culture.

Negara, a quarterly magazine published by the Prime Minister's department, said:

It has been the policy of the government to seek some form of common denominator among its plural population, i.e. a national culture. This idea was launched with great enthusiasm but faced some difficulties in its implementation. On the 21st anniversary of independence, it was announced by the then Prime Minister that the theme of that year's independence celebration was to be "culture is the cornerstone of unity". He said that a nation without culture is like a man without character. It is the culture that gives a nation its distinctive identity.

The same publication quoted the king on national culture as saying:²¹

Divided from each other in almost every respect the people of Malaysia have in common essentially only the fact that they live in the same country.

Negara then defined a national culture as a common core culture that provides an understanding between individuals and more important, between groups. This "core" could provide a bond between the various groups thus creating some form of integration between the groups. It is the policy of the government to form a core culture based on Malay culture and at the same time accept various aspects of Chinese and Indian cultures if they do not contradict the Malay culture.

The federal Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports issued guidelines on national cultures:

- (1) That the base of national culture is the culture which is native to the region.
- (2) The traits from other cultures which are pertinent should be absorbed to enrich the national culture.
- (3) That Islam as the official religion of Malaysia should play its role in the formulation of the national culture.

This latter guideline, however, presented the greatest problem as it

21. *Negara*, December 1981, p. 7.

is very difficult to separate Malay culture and Islam. Since Malayness and Islam are sometimes taken to be synonymous, the non-Malays find it difficult to distinguish between what is Muslim and what is Malay. The non-Malays feel that the adoption of a national culture based on Islam would mean the adoption of the Islamic religion.

Malaysia as a nation then has a defined national culture but at the same time has made it ambiguous by the insistence that it is not only based on Malay culture but also on Islam. Further, the leaders have not been consistent in its implementation. The main criticism against the national culture policy is that it is a policy of ambiguity.

It is not therefore surprising that many non-Malays, especially amongst the opposition Chinese leaders, have attacked the national culture policy and paralysed its implementation. The DAP's Secretary-General, Lim Kit Siang was amongst the loudest critics. He said "DAP M.P.s and State Assemblymen must be the 'pillars' of the 'many languages, many cultures policy' so that any attempt to impose a 'one language, one culture' policy would be abandoned".²²

The 1980s will be a very crucial decade in determining whether the multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious basis of Malaysia holds or is shattered. Recent developments have shown a growing Islamisation in the country and the upheavals in PAS, leading to the resignation of Datu Asri Muda as PAS President was another indicator of this trend.

Dr Chan Chee Beng, lecturer at the University of Malaya in the Department of Chinese Studies, was quoted as saying:²³

There should be no attempt to suppress ethnic culture or to impose Malay culture in toto on non-Malays.... The crucial factor in achieving integration is to ensure greater social interaction between ethnic groups.... A true national culture will be neither a juxtaposition of different ethnic cultures, such as exists at present, nor the assimilation of minorities into Malay culture. It will transcend all ethnic cultures, and include shared ways of life, shared values and a Malaysian world view.

The views held by Tan Sri Ghazalie Shaffie, Foreign Minister of Malaysia, are the opposite of what Dr Chan said. He delivered himself of the opinion that:²⁴

Only characteristics of art which are based on the Malay identity should be accepted as elements of the national

22. *The Star*, 31 October 1982.

23. *New Straits Times*, 12 January 1983.

24. *Ibid.*, 9 October 1982.

culture....The Malay identity must be moulded and developed in all aspects of national culture. In this respect there should be no give and take....Historical and cultural effects of the British, Dutch and Japanese occupation of Malaysia should instill in the minds of people that there would not be any recurrence of such periods.

Tan Sri Ghazalie seemed to have the support of Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar, a lecturer at the University of Malaysia, when he said of the national culture:²⁵

Malay culture in the country is a heritage that has withstood the test of time and one that is eminently suitable as the pillar of national culture...Malay culture had undergone various trials and tribulations over the last 3000 years and was never at any time 'extinct', developing from the animistic period to the advent of Islam in the Malay world and the colonial era....It has managed to adapt to the lifestyles and changes in the region. The evolution of Malay culture in the region had created a progressive society with its individual system of order, economy and religion.... Malay culture had undergone changes with the process of diffusion and assimilation of cultural and social contacts with external influences....It has grown from a single to a complex structure over the centuries, experiencing from time to time changes arising from such contacts.

Not all Malay leaders, however, are as explicit or blunt as the two foregoing in their views concerning the national culture. The Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam expressed the view that it should be a fusion of all cultures in the nation — and that it should be done slowly and surely until a Malaysian identity is achieved. It could not be forced, but could only be done by gentle persuasion until everyone accepts the real Malaysian identity, the real Malaysian culture.²⁶

Adib Adam (then Minister of Youth, Culture and Sports) agreed with the Deputy Prime Minister, when he said:²⁷

The national culture will contain elements of the cultures of the indigenous people in the region and the ways of life of the Malaysian people....The government's attitude towards foreign culture is based on the principle that whatever of foreign culture is suitable could be accepted to become elements of the national culture. Malaysia needs to have a liberal attitude towards the country's rich cultural heritage. Elements of cultures like

25. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1982.

26. Interview with the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam on 5 May 1983.

27. *New Straits Times*, 20 November 1982.

Chinese, Indian, Arabic, Western, Japanese and others that were suitable should be given the opportunity to be included in the national culture.

A top civil servant, Baharuddin Zainal, also agreed with the above views, and said that Malaysians from other communities should not worry about the Malay language and culture.²⁸

Chauvinism has never been dominant in Malay culture. We have always practiced moderation. One of the strengths of the Malay world is its flexibility — its readiness to take the good in other cultures. As the national culture evolves, you will find that it has absorbed the finest elements from all Malaysian communities, and from foreign cultures as well.

Tengku Razaleigh, the Minister of Finance, was even more cautious in his views of the national culture. He said that national culture should not be pursued at the expense of other ethnic cultures in Malaysia. Ethnic cultures will not vanish in the process of inculcating a national identity. Every culture will instead evolve with the passage of time to attain better status. He said in the process of building a national identity we should give priority to the cultural factors advances that would bring about harmony and national integration.²⁹

The question of whether the Malaysian constitution has been used by the central government as a tool to suppress the minority groups is therefore not immediately apparent. It depends very much on who interprets the action of the government. It would appear, however, that the consensus of opinion amongst government leaders is that the Constitution is seen as a sacred institution and should not be tampered with. The case of Mark Koding, invoking Section 152, on the language issue, and who was subsequently found guilty in court for sedition, must be seen as one example of the federal leaders, especially the UMNO leaders, idea that the Constitution is sacrosanct and should not be questioned. Most UMNO leaders seem to be careful about what they say on the question of national culture and national integration. They are very conscious of the need not to antagonise the non-Malays.

The writer, however, is of the opinion that when the national leaders express their cautious views on national integration and national culture, they are mainly thinking in terms of the nation as a whole, and more specifically thinking in terms of the Chinese and Indian communities and their relationships with the Malay community in West Malaysia.

28. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1982.

29. *Sabah Times*, 20 February 1983.

Thus, when Datuk Musa talked about the need to find a consensus and a fusion of all cultures in the nation amongst the various races, he was thinking of the Malays and their relationship with the Chinese and Indian community. Since the May 13 racial riots in 1969, all national leaders in the government party have been extra careful not to make any statement which could arouse misunderstanding amongst the various races. Indeed, a recent symposium was held in which the question of national unity was discussed. The consensus of opinion amongst the participants which included some Malay and Chinese intellectuals seemed to be that Malaysia had no definite "culture" which it should aim at.³⁰ This view is perhaps understandable in view of the "policy of ambiguity" which we have sketched above.

On the one hand, national leaders speak of the need to fuse all cultures and find a consensus to establish what is a Malaysian identity. On the other hand, they speak of the Malay culture and Islam as the base and only acceptable base for this national culture.

Despite this national leaders go some way to placate the non-Malay communities in the nation — such as the Chinese and Indians. They do not want to antagonise them. These communities are sophisticated and perhaps have longer cultural historical background than the Malays. Besides, the Chinese in Malaysia are amongst the most populous race in the world — nearly one billion of them altogether. The Indians too are well represented — nearly 800,000,000 of them in the world. For this reason, the national UMNO leaders have been cautious in their approach towards national integration vis-à-vis the Chinese and Indians.

It is, however, quite a different story in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. In Sabah, the integration of the state within the Federation is not the only question. The other question is how far the various minority "bumiputra" groups should be assimilated into Malay culture. And it is to the Sabah scene and the apparent assimilative process which is going on there that we should now turn.³¹

30. Pre-publication copy of 'Panel of Discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations on 25 March 1983 chaired by Dr Tan Sri Tan Chee Khoo'.

31. Dr Gimfil James Fill, a prepublication copy of a book entitled 'The Kadazans at the Cross-Roads'.

Sabah's Position in Malaysia

When Sabah leaders decided to join the Federation of Malaysia, they asked for safeguards. This is known as the 20 points safeguards. These were used by the Sabah leaders as the basis of their negotiations with the Malayan leaders. As we saw in the introductory chapter, the Sabah and Sarawak leaders were quite firm in their stand for these points as they saw these as the foundation on which their states would stand in relation to the Malayan or federal power. Seen as a whole, the 20 points were Sabah's attempt to prevent the central power from absorbing the whole state. The Sabah leaders were prepared to join the Federation as a unit, but felt they must have some autonomy reserved for the state. Point 16, for instance, called for a constitutional safeguard and the original text of Sabah's request for this was:³²

No amendment modification or withdrawal of any special safeguard granted to North Borneo should be made by the central government without the positive consent of the government of the State of North Borneo. The power of amending the Constitution of the State of North Borneo should belong exclusively to the people in the state.

The control on immigration by the Sabah state government was another example of the feeling of the Sabah leaders that immigration from Peninsula Malaya should be controlled so that Sabah was not swamped by the more sophisticated population in the west. Another important point was the position of the indigenous races in Sabah. Sabah leaders wanted the "bumiputra" of Sabah's position to be analogous to that of the Malays so that they too were guaranteed special rights and privileges by a constitutional safeguard as the "sons of the soil" of Malaysia. Tun Stephens for one, was concerned that the majority race in the state, the Kadazans, who should be considered to be the real "sons of the soil" of Sabah, just as the Malays were considered to be the real "sons of the soil" in West Malaysia.

On the matter of religion, the Sabah leaders wanted to be assured that there would be freedom of religion for everybody in Sabah. On the question of language, the Sabah leaders agreed that Malay should be the national language of the Federation but asked for two further points in this matter, namely:

- (1) That English should continue as the official language in Sabah to be used for a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day.

32. 'The Twenty Points'. See chapter on inter-governmental committee above.

- (2) That English should be an official language of North Borneo for all purposes state or federal without limitation of time.

Point (1) was agreed to by the Malayan leaders, but point (2) was modified to read: "English shall be an official language of North Borneo for state and federal purposes until the state legislature otherwise provides."

On education, the Sabah leaders asked that "The existing educational system of North Borneo should be maintained and for this reason it should be under state control". The agreement reached on education was that, in the national interest, it should be federal, but the educational system in Sabah should be allowed to continue until the central government decided to bring it into line with the federal system.

The writer feels that the three matters mentioned in the foregoing are the dilemma facing the Kadazans of Sabah today. The implementation of all three are deemed essential in the national interest by federal leaders, in order that the nation grow as a strong cohesive unit. For the federation to be strong, it needs to integrate its people so that the nation can evolve as a united whole. But is it also necessary to assimilate the people in this process?

As we have seen earlier, this attempt to evolve a distinctive Malaysian culture based on the Malay culture has not been successful with the other major races in the whole country, namely, the Chinese and Indians. These latter races are strong in their own culture and will not be assimilated into the Malay culture. The Kadazans, the Muruts, and other non-Malays in Sabah on the other hand are in a different category. They are in the minority overall and besides, they also belong to the ethnic Malayo group of the region. It was no accident therefore when Tunku Abdul Rahman called the indigenous races of Sabah and Sarawak "all Malays". And Tan Sri Ghazali Shaffie also sees the indigenous races of Sabah and Sarawak as belonging essentially to the same stock as the Malays and therefore does not see any reason why these same-stock people should not merge and unite. He does not seem to think that the Kadazans of Sabah's culture is different from the Malays.³³

The Kadazans of Sabah then are faced with the dilemma of wanting to be in Malaysia to gain the benefits and advantages of a strong Malaysian Federation, and yet, at the same time, they want to preserve their identity as Kadazans. They do not want to be absorbed and assimilated into the Malay culture and religion. Put in another way, the Kadazans would have

33. Interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shaffie, Minister of Foreign Affairs on 9 January 1984.

liked to have a strong connection or ties with the Malays as they share the feeling of being the "sons of the soil" and would endeavour to work for the realisation of a "bumiputra" Malaysia as they too see the non-"bumiputras" of Sabah as chauvinistic and a danger to the indigenous people, but in the process of forging close ties and identification with the Malays, are they not in fact in danger of losing their own identity?

The question to be answered first, however, is whether the central government is consciously and actively promoting a policy of assimilation of the indigenous races in Sabah.

The Kadazans' fear of being assimilated into the Malay culture through the Islamic religion seems to have been answered by Datuk Musa. According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the promotion of the Islamic religion amongst the Kadazans in Sabah should not be seen as an assimilative process. He said that conversion to Islam did not mean abandoning previous socio-cultural values "but reaffirmed racial and ethnic identity". He said: "Islam in fact, sanctions Muslims' loyalty to clan and race". He continued: "In providing Islamic instruction (to Sabah's multi-cultural peoples) we should use toleration and not coercion. For example, Kadazans who embrace Islam do not become Malays but remain Kadazans."³⁴ Datuk Musa was speaking at a ceremony marking the signing of an agreement between the Sabah government and the federal government on the latter taking over the Dakwah (mission) schools in Sabah.

In considering Sabah's assimilation within Malaysia we should look at the work on this matter by Sabah's three Chief Ministers — Tun Stephens, Tun Mustapha and Harris, and discuss the three main important factors of nation building insofar as Malaysia is concerned namely, education, language and religion.

Education

Dr Mahathir once wrote on the role of education in nation building. He said:³⁵

The education policy of any country, apart from its function of imparting and promoting knowledge, is invariably a means to instilling into the minds of future citizens a sense of oneness, loyalty and pride in the country. The language medium is of extreme

34. *New Straits Times*, 22 May 1984.

35. Cited in Mark Koding, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

importance in creating a feeling of oneness, and so the medium of instruction is always that of the definitive race. But the language is not the only important aspect of a national education policy. The whole curriculum is important. The teaching of history, geography and literature are all designed to propagate one idea: that the country belongs to the definitive people, and to belong to the country, and to claim it, entails identification with the definitive people. This identification is all-pervading and leaves no room for identification with other countries and cultures. To be identified with the definitive people is to accept their history, their geography, their literature, their language and their culture, and to reject anything else. The education system is always single and national.

Dr Mahathir's definitive race is the Malays of West Malaysia, the predominant race in the nation. Here lies, therefore, the dilemma of the Kadazan race, the definitive race of Sabah. Should the system of education so advocated in the above quotation be actively pursued as to make all Kadazans evolve into Malays?

Writing in 1967, Tun Stephens thought that the educational programme or curriculum should not be the cause of making a race vanish and be absorbed into a more sophisticated one. He thought there should be give and take so that the best of all cultures are fused and evolved into a new Malaysian culture. When he wrote on the 20 points safeguards therefore, he recalled that those were the minimum safeguards which Sabah wanted guaranteed before Malaysia was formed. He went on to discuss each of the 20 points, and in respect of education, he wrote:³⁶

Broken. The Board of Education has been relegated to a back seat and used as an advisory body. The intention was that the state should have full say in educational matters but today the state plans for the study of English have been tampered with and the Director of Education takes his orders from Kuala Lumpur and does not continue to administer the department as much as he did before Malaysia. The Director's post should also have been Sabahanised in accordance with the Sabahanisation policy instead of which we now have someone from Western Malaysia as Director.

As the co-leader for Sabah in the Intergovernmental Committee, Tun Stephens had reason to fear that the education policy of the federal government was not following the spirit and intention of the agreement as he saw it. Perhaps Tun Stephens did not foresee the implication or the importance of education and a comprehensive national curriculum to bring about oneness and a sense of belonging in the nation. Tun Stephens,

36. *Sabah Times*, 30 June 1967.

nevertheless, must have been concerned for the Kadazans' future he represented in the UPKO party. Whereas the Chinese and the Indians had schools of their own where they could learn their own languages and be taught their own culture and identity, the Kadazans did not have this facility. As Sabah schools, including former Mission schools became integrated into the federal educational system, the whole curriculum had to be changed, and the medium of instruction too had to be changed.

In the past, schools in predominantly Kadazan areas had taught the Kadazan language in the preparatory and primary classes. But these had to go when the school system was integrated. The Chinese and the Indians objected strongly to the introduction of the three R's in the Malay medium in 1982. The announcement was made just before the general elections were due, and all sectors of the Chinese and Indian communities pressured the government to change the policy. They felt that the presentation and the manner in which the three R's were introduced — that is, in the Malay language — was objectionable to the Chinese and Indian school educators. They feared that the introduction of the three R's as presented by the Department of Education would inevitably mean the changing of the character — i.e., the Chineseness and Indianness — of their schools. The introduction of the three R's was therefore postponed or modified by the central government. The indigenous races of Sabah and Sarawak, however, did not have the organisation nor the capacity to object to the introduction of the three R's so strenuously or effectively. So far as Sabah was concerned therefore the medium of instruction in all schools including secondary schools was in the national language by 1980.

The sequence of events leading to this was as follows: When Sabah joined Malaysia in September 1963, the State Education Department became a federal department. However, under the inter-governmental agreement, Sabah retained its interest in educational policy through the Board of Education and Local Education Committee. By 1965, the Sabah Education Ordinance No. 9 of 1961 was declared a federal law.³⁷ When Tun Mustapha was the Chief Minister of Sabah from 1967 to 1975, his emphasis on education was Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction in schools. The Third Malaysia Plan — 1971-1975 — saw a period of consolidation in the educational system, with a view to national integration and unity. For Sabah, the use of English as the official language was to be for some time — ten years after Malaysia Day. The teaching of the English

37. *Education in Malaysia*, 1974, prepared by the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, p. 51.

language was also to be maintained indefinitely in the Sabah schools. However, when Peninsula Malaysia introduced Malay as the medium of instruction in primary 1 in 1970, Tun Mustapha decided to follow suit. He made his announcement of this policy in December 1969.³⁸

Tun Mustapha saw in the national educational system a sure way to get the indigenous people integrated into Malaysia — if not assimilated. In this matter, he was most active, just as he was active in the promotion of the national language and the Islamic religion in Sabah. These were the "pluses" in his favour that Kuala Lumpur leaders were weighing when they had to decide whether or not to remove him in 1975.

In the case of Harris, the Chief Minister from 1976 to 1985, he did not have much to do insofar as the promotion of the national educational policy in the state. By the time he came to power the state educational system was already firmly integrated within the national framework. The Education Act of 1961 was extended to Sabah to take effect as from 1 January 1976. With the introduction of the Education Act 1961 to Sabah, the State Public Services Commission ceased to be responsible for the control of posts and promotion of staff in the department and the Director of Education became an officer directly responsible to the Ministry of Education. The power of the State Public Services Commission was transferred to the Education Service Commission.

The standard of education in Sabah, however, had deteriorated to such an extent that many parents who can afford it, prefer to send their children abroad for their schooling. The state government, and Harris, had expressed concern about the low standard of education in Sabah, and indeed a committee comprising government officials and leading businessmen has been set up to study the educational problems facing Sabah today. The committee is to report its findings to the state government so that the latter can bring the matter to the attention of the federal government.

Language

All members of the Inter-Governmental Committee were agreed that Malay should be the national language. Both Sabah and Sarawak requested that the English language should also be an official language for Sabah and Sarawak without limitation of time. The agreement, on this matter, however, was that Sabah and Sarawak would be allowed to use English in the federal

38. *Sabah Times*, 23 December 1969.

and state parliament for ten years from Malaysia day, and that the English language would also be an official language of Sabah for state and federal purposes until the state legislature otherwise provided. Tun Stephens did not query whether this provision had been broken or not when he wrote his article on the 20 points safeguards in June 1967. However, when Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in 1965, and he called for a re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia, he did raise the question of language. He wanted Chinese and Kadazan to be included as official languages of Sabah. This call for re-examination was made in 1966-67 and he was emphatic that the Kadazan language should be used as one of the official languages.

Insofar as Tun Mustapha was concerned, we have already seen that in December 1969, he announced that the medium of instruction in primary 1 classes would be in Bahasa Malaysia by January 1970, following the example of Peninsular Malaysia.³⁹ Tun Mustapha was a strong advocate in the promotion of the national language — Bahasa Malaysia. After the collapse of the UPKO party in December 1967 Tun Mustapha did not have any opposition in this matter. By 1969 he was able to get all "bumiputra" leaders to sign a joint statement to make Bahasa Malaysia the only official language of the nation. Some 30 leaders drawn from the Kadazans, Muruts, Bajaus, and other indigenous races jointly signed a statement declaring their full determination to support and assist the state and central governments to make Bahasa Malaysia the official language of all Malaysia, including Sabah. Amongst the Kadazan leaders who signed the statement were: Peter Mojuntin, Ghani Gilong, Stephen Tibok, Anthony Undan, Idrus Matakim and practically all the "bumiputra" Assemblymen and M.P.s who were present in the state during that time.⁴⁰

The statement said that the leaders met on 2 September 1969, and after careful consideration and study of numerous factors which would strengthen Malaysian national unity, and realising that the colonial government of the past had used the language issue to divide the people into various groups, the Sabah "bumiputra" leaders were determined to make Bahasa Malaysia a truly official language in the nation in every sense of the word, both in the letter of the law as well as in spirit. The statement then called on:

39. Tun Mustapha, a self-taught and self-made man used to joke about Sabah intellectuals trained abroad. He used to call them 'inter-sexual'. See also Ed Hunter, *The Misdeeds of Tun Mustapha* on this matter.

40. *Sabah Times*, 4 September 1969.

- (i) The Sabah state government to do everything it could to encourage the usage of Bahasa Malaysia as an official language of the state of Sabah.
- (ii) The central government to give every assistance in order to make Bahasa Malaysia an official language by giving facilities in every way it could so that through Bahasa Malaysia the multi-racial peoples of Sabah could be united "in one language, one nation and one country".
- (iii) Malaysian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to terminate the Radio Malaysia (Sabah) programmes in Murut, Bajau and Kadazan and to substitute in their places Bahasa Malaysia programmes, so that the people would not be divided and through the programme in Bahasa Malaysia the people could understand each other better and achieve greater unity amongst the multi-racial and multi-religious communities of Sabah.
- (iv) The Sabah and central governments do everything they could to minimise the differences among the multi-racial people so that inter-racial harmony and political stability could be achieved, and in turn, generate confidence amongst the people so that together they could build a strong Malaysian nation.

It is significant that the Chinese leaders were not asked to sign the joint statement, nor was there a call to abolish the Chinese programme broadcast over Radio Malaysia (Sabah). Tun Mustapha was obviously testing his strength on the Kadazan and Murut leaders to see their reaction if he were to introduce a motion in the Legislative Assembly concerning the use of English in official correspondence and also the official language in the Assembly and Parliament. As the Kadazan and Murut leaders did not present any problem, it paved the way for him to do a bigger thing, and that was also to abolish the Chinese language over Radio Malaysia (Sabah). This latter, however, was not immediately done, as he knew that it would not be so easy with the Chinese. They had powerful backing from West Malaysian Chinese leaders, and also felt passionately about the preservation of their mother tongue.

From 1969, although the official correspondence was still in the English language, most official letters from government departments and

Chinese language or Chinese characters were discouraged and replaced with signboards in Bahasa Malaysia. Practically all Chinese and other non-"bumiputra" shopkeepers and businessmen complied with the request. Overnight signboards hanging on top of shopping premises were changed into Bahasa Malaysia, and some of the translations were amusing. "Seaview Hotel", for example, was changed to "Seabiau" hotel. Even announcements at the airports were changed into Bahasa Malaysian only.

Soon after the state general election in 1971, a language bill was passed in the Assembly, making Bahasa Malaysia, the sole language in Sabah for official correspondence and in the legislative and federal parliament. The provision contained in point 2 of the 20 points regarding language therefore came to pass sooner than expected. Point 2(c) says: "English shall be an official language for Sabah for state and federal purposes until the state legislature otherwise provides". And in the final report of the inter-governmental committee, Clause 28(9) provided: "For a period of 10 years after Malaysia Day and thereafter until the State Legislative Assembly and for all other official purposes in the state, whether federal or state purposes, including correspondence with federal ministers and departments".

In March 1974, radio broadcasts in Kadazan, Murut, Bajau and Chinese were abolished. Only Bahasa Malaysia and English were retained.⁴¹ Tun Mustapha's work on the Bahasa Malaysia issue was completed and the Kuala Lumpur leaders were very happy and grateful for his positive contribution to nation-building.

Since the introduction of Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction in 1970, and the announcement that the Bahasa Malaysia language is the only official language in Sabah, Bahasa Malaysia courses were stepped up. For the Kadazans and other "bumiputras" who are not Malays it is not difficult to learn and speak Bahasa Malaysia. The "lingua franca" of the state since the Brunei overlordship had always been Malay. However, there was no conscious effort to spread or teach the language and competence in the language was not a criteria for promotion in the civil service or for being successful in one's application for a job or for a scholarship during colonial rule. This is now changed. All must be competent in Bahasa Malaysia before their promotion in the civil service can be considered, and applicants for jobs in the civil service or for government scholarships must also show competency in the language before they can be considered.

41. Stanley S. Bedlington, *Malaysia and Singapore*, p. 140.

Inevitably, there were cases of abuse and even corruption.⁴²

Kadazan parents, ambitious for the future of their children started to encourage them to learn Bahasa Malaysia seriously. Many households started to speak only Bahasa Malaysia at home in preference to their own language. To speak Bahasa to the children became the fad, especially when parents were themselves either working in the civil service or in like fields of endeavour. Soon Kadazan little children, even in remote areas were unable to speak a word of their own mother tongue.⁴³ There has been no proper survey or study made as to the extent to which young Kadazans throughout the country are unable to speak their own Kadazan language today, but committee members of the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association (SKKS) are concerned and think that the percentage is high and growing.

The SKKS Executive Secretary said that his organisation was concerned enough as to apply to the Director of Education, Sabah for a permit to allow Kadazan children to learn their own language in the lower classes in schools. This application was in conformity with the Education Act requirements where there were more than ten children in need of tuition in their own language in any given school, they must be given the facility. Iban children in Sarawak according to the President of SKKS were already given this facility. The SKKS application has been referred by the Sabah Education Department to the Ministry of Education in Kuala Lumpur for a decision. To date, no ruling or decision has been received by the SKKS. The President of the SKKS, Joseph Pairin Kitingan, also felt that there was not enough concern amongst the Kadazan parents themselves. Not many had come forward to pressure the SKKS on the Kadazan language issue. Nevertheless, the SKKS leaders are so worried at the apparent trend of Kadazans not able to speak their own language, that they themselves have set up an evening class for Kadazan children to learn their language.

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42. A Chinese senior civil servant told this writer that he was not confirmed in his post as a division one officer despite the fact that he passed his Malay examination test with a 75 percent pass. He said for a Chinese to get promotion he must have a pass mark of at least 90 percent in the Bahasa Malaysia test.
43. Interviews with two teachers in two predominantly Kadazan area schools. They told this writer that young Kadazan boys and girls born around 1970 onwards could not speak the language. This writer went to see the Director of Education, Sabah to interview him and at the same time sought from him some statistical data on education in Sabah, but he refused to give the same. He said the writer must obtain permission from the Minister of Education first.

Another SKKS proposal was the up-dating of the Kadazan language dictionary started by Rev. Fr Antonisson. The SKKS leaders felt that there was need for a standardised Kadazan language, incorporating all the various dialects of the Kadazans. The spelling, for instance, needed to be standardised.⁴⁴ According to the SKKS Executive Secretary, Topin, himself a graduate student in Humanities, his association was following the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics closely.

Some members of the SKKS were optimistic that the trend of young Kadazans not being able to speak their own language was not insurmountable as they think the Kadazans were going through a phase in their lives. When the Federation of Malaysia had become a firm entity, the Kadazans themselves would become conscious of the need to have their own identity — through their own language and culture, and would once again endeavour to learn the language. Besides, there would always be the SKKS and other Kadazan associations who would monitor the trend and find ways to correct the problem. However, there are also those in the SKKS who are pessimistic and fearful for the future of their own ethnic identity. They argue that language is important to any human group, and the loss of a language would inevitably mean the loss of a race. They argue further that many Kadazans are also converting to the Islamic faith and in time these Kadazans will not only forget their own language but also forget that they were Kadazans in the first place. They will have been totally assimilated into the Malay culture. Some Kadazan leaders feel that the Islamisation process started by Tun Mustapha in the early 1970s and vigorously pursued by various quasi-government religious bodies to the present will have a far reaching impact on the Kadazan community of Sabah in the future. To this other area of the Kadazan dilemma, religion and Islamisation, we must now turn.

Religion

The role of the Islamic religion in nation building in Malaysia is perhaps the biggest dilemma facing the Kadazan community today. Past history seems to show that the Kadazans who embraced the Islamic faith had been absorbed into the Muslim way of life and hence considered them-

44. The Summer Institute of Linguistics, Malaysia Branch is presently conducting a survey of Sabah languages and they have so far compiled a Compendium of Articles relating to a survey of Sabah's languages. This writer is grateful to the Director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics at Kota Kinabalu for providing him with a pre-publication copy of this Compendium of Articles.

selves as Malays.⁴⁵ As we saw in Chapter 2, a social scientist believed that the Kadazans of Sabah were actually Kedayans, but most of the Kedayans of Sabah found in Labuan and the interior areas of the West Coast have embraced Islam and have therefore removed themselves from the animistic Kadazans of Sabah.⁴⁶ The Bisayas of the Beaufort district are also considered to have belonged originally to the Kadazan ethnic group, but since embracing the Islamic faith, they too have divorced themselves from the animistic Kadazans.

The Orang Sungei of the Labuk, Lamag and Kinabatangan area are another case in point. Those who have embraced the Islamic faith are now generally classifying themselves as Malays, while those still animists or Christians consider themselves to be Kadazans. Another example are the Idahan of Lahad Datu and Tungku district. These people too were Kadazans. Indeed some people believe that the original name of the Kadazans was "Idahan".⁴⁷ But the Idahans of Lahad Datu district have embraced the Islamic religion too and today they also have divorced themselves from the Kadazans. They generally consider themselves to be Malays.⁴⁸

The historical instances of former Kadazan individuals or groups being absorbed or assimilated into the Malay way of life are therefore many. As a result, there is a genuine worry, indeed fear, amongst the Kadazan leaders in Sabah that there is a danger of the Kadazan community losing its very identity by becoming assimilated into the Malay or Muslim culture. The feeling amongst these Kadazan leaders is this: that in the not too distant future, the Kadazan ethnic group will have decreased in numbers considerably, as those who would still identify and call themselves Kadazan will be only the Christian Kadazans. Those who have become Muslim will bring up their children as Muslims, and their second, and probably even their first generation will consider themselves to be Malays.

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45. For an excellent discussion on the Malays of Sabah and how and why these Malays of Sabah prefer to be called Malays although ethnically they might be Bajaus, Bisayas, Idahans, Suluks etc, see Supriya Bhar, 'The Malays in Sabah, 1970: A Problem of Community Classification', *Manusia dan Masyarakat*, 2 (1981), pp. 35-41.
 46. Rev. J. Staal, 'The Dusuns of North Borneo: Their Social Life', *Anthropos* 20 (1926).
 47. S. Holly, 'The Origins of the Idahan People', *Sarawak Museum Journal* 6 (1966), pp. 257-262.
 48. There are many cases of Kadazans marrying Muslim women. The children of these marriages are nearly always brought up as Muslims or 'Malays' and they speak only the Malay language.

The 1980 Census did not, for the first time, classify the various native ethnic groups in Sabah. All the "bumiputras" were aggregated as "Pribumi"⁴⁹ the new name by which the authorities in Sabah wished the "bumiputras" of the state to be known. It is therefore now not known what is the total number of Kadazans in the state, or even how many are actually Muslims or Christians. The earlier 1970 Census, however, showed that there were about 650,000 people altogether in the state, and out of these some 203,000 were Kadazans.⁵⁰ The exact figure for Kadazans was 203,799. Bhar categorised the population of 1970 into four main groups namely:

Non-Islamic Indigenes	=	37.6%
Muslim peoples	=	38%
Chinese	=	21%
Others	=	2%

In the 1970 Census of Population, the Kadazans at 203,799 were the single biggest group at 31.8 percent and the Muslim indigenous at 29.3 percent. The latter included the various Muslim groups including those who were categorised as Islamised indigenous.

The 1980 Housing and Population Census shows a total population of 1,002,608.⁵¹ This figure included the "refugees" from the southern Philippines. The U.N. Commission for Refugees in Sabah put the figure for refugees in the state at 72,000.⁵² This figure was mainly Suluk from Mindanao but included the Vietnamese "boat people" refugees who were housed in temporary camps before they moved to a permanent country. A Reuter's report appearing in the *Daily Express* of 27 June 1981 put the refugee population at a much higher percentage, about one-tenth of the total population of about one million altogether. However, the

49. The term 'Pribumi' is actually an Indonesian word to refer to the indigenous races in Indonesia. The equivalent in Malaysia is 'bumiputra' meaning sons of the soil. This term 'pribumi' was introduced by the Sabah state government in 1983 so that terms such as Kadazans, Dusuns etc, would no longer be necessary. An official letter from the Chief Minister's department was issued to inform all departments in Sabah that when registering new births etc. only the term 'pribumi' would be used. It was intended to strike at the Kadazan community as a whole. Leaders in the Sabah Kadazan Cultural Association attacked this directive and petitioned the government to drop this term. There has been no official announcement that the term would be dropped.

50. See 1970 Housing and Population Census.

51. Preliminary Field Count Summary Population by District, 1980.

52. *Daily Express*, 30 June 1981.

figures quoted by Government Ministers ranged from 180,000 to 250,000.⁵³

The estimated number of Kadazans by 1980 is around 300,000. Out of these, some 80,000 are Christians, and about 41,000 are newly Islamised Kadazans. These figures are an estimate, as neither the Christian churches nor the Islamic organisations in Sabah give the correct figures for their adherents.⁵⁴ The state government's announcement made on 17 April 1983 gave the figure of newly converted Kadazans since 1976 at 20,000.⁵⁵ The President of the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA), Tun Mustapha, however, announced that since 1969, the number of newly converted Muslims from all categories of people (but mainly Kadazans and Muruts) was 85,000.⁵⁶

The Kadazan leaders' fear of the vanishing Kadazan community because of absorption or assimilation to Malayness is not exaggerated. The Kadazan population is now estimated to number about 300,000 of which some 80,000 are Christians and some 40,000 are Muslims, leaving a balance of some 200,000 animists. The government's religious agencies such as MUIS, DAKWAH, and also USIA, are very active in proselytising the Islamic faith amongst these uncommitted Kadazans. The targets for conversion are first and foremost Kadazan leaders of some influence in all areas so that they can be used in the influencing of others to change their religion to the Islamic faith. The general target is the large numbers of animist Kadazans. With funds readily available to these various Islamic organisations,⁵⁷ it will not be long before the large number of Kadazan animists embrace the Islamic religion. In time too, perhaps in the second generation of Kadazan Muslims, these people will not consider themselves to be Kadazans but Malays, just as the Orang Sungei of Kinabatangan and Idahan of Lahad Datu have done before them.

53. No government official is prepared to give the correct figures of the number of refugees from the southern Philippines or Indonesia. It is a closely guarded secret.

54. This is the writer's own guesswork based on a report presented to the state government of Sabah. The report was prepared by Datuk Peter Mojuntin and this writer.

55. *New Straits Times*, 17 April 1983.

56. *Daily Express*, 18 April 1983.

57. A highly placed former Kadazan Christian who became a Muslim and was working for DAKWAH told the writer that the government religious agencies like the Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah (MUIS) and DAKWAH had a large amount of money donated from Arab countries. DAKWAH is a foreign missionary organisation which is very active in the promotion of Islamic schools in the state.

The conclusion then is not very bright for the Kadazan community. The people who will continue to identify themselves as Kadazans will be Christian Kadazans, and they will be in the smallest minority. The figure for the non-Islamic indigenes by the next century will be very much less than the 37.6 percent shown in the 1970 Census. On the other hand, the figure for Muslim indigenous could rise to something like 60 percent.

The question of whether it was the state government's or the federal government's idea to move to an active proselytising campaign in the state is not very clear. It is also not very clear whether it is the intention of the UMNO party and hence the Malay central government to pursue the ideal of an Islamic government. According to Dr Syed Kusin Ali, the UMNO could not afford to do this if it wanted to remain in power.⁵⁸

In Sabah, however, it would appear that the Islamic revival and active proselytising of the religion was started mainly by Tun Mustapha probably on advice from Syed Kechik or Dzulkifli in 1969. He was probably also influenced by his friend and admirer Tunku Abdul Rahman who was then the Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat in Jeddah, and later the President of Perkim, a quasi-government Islamic organisation in Malaysia. Perkim is the Malaysian national Islamic organisation and other Islamic associations in the various states, such as USIA in Sabah, were affiliated to it. One social scientist believed that it was Tun Mustapha's desire to construct a "unified state in Sabah" that led him to the fervent proselytising of the Islamic faith in Sabah. He wrote:⁵⁹

His efforts at constructing a unified state in Sabah is one of the utmost interest. Never himself a devout Muslim (certainly in my own considerable personal knowledge of him), the Tun and his associates have consciously adopted a policy of mass conversion to Islam of the state's non-Muslims, including the Chinese, as a means of creating a single "national" identity. The process of becoming a Malay has always been known as "Masok Melayu or entering Malayhood" (it is now known as "Masok Islam or entering Islam" by the newly sensitive government leaders), and it goes further than a single religious exercise. To become a Muslim implies also the assumption of Malay cultural attributes... and in Sabah, the process goes one political step further:

58. *Panel of Discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations*, dated 25 March 1983, part III. A pre-publication copy of the transcript of the discussion chaired by Tan Sri Dr Tan Chee Khooon was made available to the writer.

59. Stanley S. Bedlington, *op.cit.*, pp. 137-138.

to convert to Islam is also to become a Sabahan and a Malaysian, in a real political sense, symbolising acceptance not only of a new religion but also a new political order. Tun Mustapha believed that political — and cultural — homogeneity could be accomplished by mass conversion to a single religion, and so all non-Muslims, Christians included, were constantly exhorted by various means (some not so subtle) to swear allegiance to the crescent of Islam. Indeed, the haste, the numbers of persons involved, and the methods of persuasion exerted gave pause to many devout Muslims, who believe that to become a Muslim is an intense individual and spiritual act, not to be lightly undertaken for the furtherance of mundane pursuits.

Bedlington's description of the Islamisation process pursued by Tun Mustapha and his advisors in the foregoing seems both succinct and accurate. Those who knew Tun Mustapha as this writer did were led to understand that Tun Mustapha's idea of Islamisation was politically motivated.⁶⁰ His call for "one language, one religion and one culture" in his speeches in the early 1970s seemed to point to this conclusion. Other devout Muslims tolerated his unorthodox methods of persuading people to become "saudara baru" (new brother, another common term used by the Muslims for the newly converted) because to many of them, they thought that it was not the immediate "saudara baru" that they were interested in. These "saudara baru" might have embraced the Islamic faith for their own reasons, such as economic advantage and position, but the devout Muslims around Tun Mustapha were thinking of the "new generation" born or yet to be born from these "saudara baru". The children or grand children who were converted with the "saudara baru" would be in a different category. They would be taught properly in the correct interpretation of the Koran and they would, in time, become good Muslims themselves.⁶¹

We have already mentioned that Tun Mustapha was probably influenced chiefly by Tunku Abdul Rahman in his zeal for the Islamic revival in

60. In a discussion with Peter Mojuntin and the writer in 1971 (on the way to Kudat on an election campaign) Tun Mustapha explained his reasons for the Islamisation process or exercise in Sabah. He said it was for political reasons, so that the 'bumiputras' could be united under one religion. He did not, however, say whether this 'one religion, one culture' exercise for the 'bumiputras' of Sabah would mean the eventual assimilation of the Kadazan race into Malay culture or whether it was meant for the perpetuation of Malay supremacy over the Kadazans in Sabah. He did not want to be drawn into this argument.

61. This view was expressed by a highly educated and senior federal officer to the writer. He explained that he was not in favour of the 'forced Islamisation' of the people as it was against the teaching of Islam. Further, he thought many of the prominent people who became converts had embraced the religion under highly suspicious motives. Nevertheless, he felt that the children of the new converts could be schooled and guided to become good Muslims.

Sabah. There is, however, another aspect to be acknowledged and that was the irresistible opportunity afforded to Tun Mustapha. By December 1967, the Kadazan party had collapsed. Tun Stephens and other (UPKO) Kadazan leaders had capitulated and declared themselves subservient to Tun Mustapha. It was not therefore surprising that by 1969, the USIA organisation was well in train with huge building headquarters being constructed at Kota Kinabalu, just beside the proposed site of the state mosque (which was completed in 1976). Tun Mustapha and his advisors wanted to show to the Kuala Lumpur Malay leaders that he was ahead in the efforts to have a Malay-based national culture for Malaysia. The state of Sabah was going to be a shining example for the whole of Malaysia.

The methods used to promote oneness amongst the peoples of Sabah were three-fold: first the expulsion or deportation of foreign missionaries in the state, by the cancellation of work passes or permanent stay permits or by simply not renewing work passes. Secondly, strong persuasion on the leaders of the community, particularly amongst the Kadazans and Muruts, to embrace the Islamic religion. And thirdly, an active campaign by the various Malaysian Islamic organisations to convert as many people as possible, particularly those in the interior. This three-pronged attack on the introduction and proselytising of the Islamic religion was well thought out and very effective.

Before we discuss in detail the implementation of these three-fold methods employed by the state government of Sabah, however, perhaps we should also mention the early role of the federal government insofar as foreign missionaries in the state were concerned.

On 30 September 1966, the Director of Immigration, Kota Kinabalu, wrote a letter to all Christian churches in the state informing them that the government, meaning the federal government, had decided on a uniform policy regarding the granting and extending of passes to priests and other religious workers to enter and work in Malaysia. The letter is worth quoting in full.

Controller of Immigration
Jesselton. 30 Sept. 1966

Sir,

Entry and Residence of Priests and Other Religious
Workers in Malaysia

1. I have the honour to inform you that government has decided on a uniform policy regarding the granting and extending of Passes to priests and other religious workers to enter and work in Malaysia.
2. Briefly the policy is:

- (a) The government will not grant permanent residence to priests and other religious workers.
- (b) Priests and other religious workers may be allowed to enter and work in Malaysia on three tours only, each tour of duty not exceeding four years. There must be a break of at least six months after the first and second tours. The duration of the third and final tour will depend entirely on the total number of years that have been granted to them on the first and second tours. In any case the total number of years for the three tours shall not exceed 10 years. This policy will allow such persons to work and stay temporarily in the Federation for a period not exceeding 10 years.
- (c) The persons will be required to return to the country from which they entered the Federation at the end of their first and second tours to ensure that they maintain their connection with their homeland and not get rooted in the Federation.
- (d) If such a person wishes to come back and work in the Federation after the completion of the first or second tour, a fresh application for a new Visit or Work pass will have to be lodged.
- (e) The pass issued to such a person for the third and final tour will be endorsed "final tour - stay not exceed.... years from date of entry."
- (f) This policy will be applicable to all priests and other religious workers who have already entered this country, and are currently holding any type of pass issued under the Immigration Regulations as well as to all new comers.

3. However, in view of representations made by the Roman Catholic Church, the government has agreed to modify the above policy in respect of those priests and other religious workers who wish to serve a continuous tour of eight years and allow them to do so. This concession of not having to break the person's residence in this country every three or four years may be granted to the priests or other religious workers from any other missions if they apply for it.

4. Although the policy mentions tours of service of three or four years being granted to these missionaries, due to a number of reasons connected with the travel documents and return-ability of the persons concerned, Visit passes or Work passes are issued initially for one year and made renewable on a year-to-year basis up to three or four years, according to the normal tours of service (or up to eight years in the case of those missionaries who desire to do one long tour without break of eight years).

5. It is essential before a Visit pass is issued or renewed for the person concerned to have his travel documents, re-entry permits and/or re-entry visas validated for a period exceeding the period of validity of the Visit pass or the period of validity of any extension to the Visit pass. I am to emphasise that no Visit pass will be issued or extended unless the person's return-ability to his country of origin or the country from which he entered the Federation is so long assured.

6. The new policy only applies to expatriates entering from outside Malaysia, irrespective of their country of origin. I shall be grateful if you would compile a list of all missionaries now serving within

your organisation under the headings as set out on the attached form and submit it to this office for examination. The list should include all missionaries who are currently holding Work passes and persons who have been granted Entry permits (indefinite stay, or permanent stay as it was formerly called), and also persons who are at the moment on leave outside Malaysia. Dependent families need not be included in the list, and only the name of the head of each family is required.

I have the honour etc.

The above letter was received with dismay by the various church leaders in Sabah. They immediately wrote a letter to the Chief Minister of Sabah, Peter Lo, then interim Chief Minister, who replaced Tun Stephens after he was forced to resign. Tun Mustapha had stepped down as Head of State, meanwhile by then and had become the Federal Minister for Sabah Affairs. The letter from the heads of the Christian churches in Sabah is reproduced below:

20 October 1966

Honourable Chief Minister,

We, the undersigned, heads of the Christian communities in Sabah, most respectfully wish to put before you a matter of the gravest concern for the Christian churches in this state.

We beg to refer to the letter from the Controller of Immigration, under the reference CIM/C31/9, dated 30 September under the heading "Entry and Residence of Priests and Other Religious Workers in Malaysia".

We deem it our duty, as heads of the Christian communities and in the interest of our flocks, to inform you that the immigration policy as set out in this letter, has deeply injured the religious feelings and sentiments of the Christians of Sabah, who learned the news with sadness and dismay. It has shaken their trust and confidence in the assurance given by the Constitution.

Explanations given by the Federal Minister, privately and in the press, have failed to convince our people that this ruling is not an infringement on religious freedom as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental right and includes all basic and incidental acts and things mandatory or necessary for practising and propagating it on the part of the followers of the particular religion concerned in accordance with its tenets and teachings, insofar as such acts and things do not infringe any existing law in the country relating to public order, public health or morality.

The Christian churches will, for many years to come, need the services of missionaries from outside Malaysia and if these missionaries should be denied re-entry into the country just when they have acquired a thorough knowledge of the language and customs of its people, it must have a restrictive effect on the activities to which the Christian communities are entitled in accordance with the Constitution.

It is the intention to make this ruling immediately effective, and if it applies to all, even to those who arrived in the country before Malaysia Day, the organisation of the churches will be utterly crippled and disrupted.

It is felt that this policy restricts not only the right to propagate the religion but also the right to practise Christianity in that it interferes with the otherwise ready and interrupted availability of priests and religious workers who could not be replaced at the rate our most useful men will be departing. The loss of a missionary is not just the loss of a man but of much knowledge and experience which cannot easily be replaced.

The letter speaks of a "uniform policy regarding the granting and extending of passes to priests and other religious workers to enter and work in Malaysia". It is our considered opinion that this aim to have uniformity as far as Eastern Malaysia is concerned is unwarranted because insofar as religion is concerned conditions in Sabah and Sarawak are acknowledged by law to be quite different.

The missionaries have always aimed at indefinite stay rather than permanent residence and have never been a liability to the country in which they worked. The Christian communities do consider that they possess the right to recruit missionaries for as long as such missionaries can be useful for the work among them.

Nothing less than a guarantee that this right will be upheld, will restore their peace of mind.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. Roland Koh, Dd, Ll.D., Anglican church
Chee Gen Min, Basel Christian church
James Buis, DD, CBE, Roman Catholic church.

As a result of this letter of appeal, the State Secretary, then John Dusing, replied:⁶²

I am to inform you that the Chief Minister fully appreciates the difficulties faced by Christian churches in Sabah in carrying out the new immigration policy. The Minister of Home Affairs had, however, stated that he was prepared to amend the policy to permit all missionary workers who were already in the country to stay on for a further period of 10 years. It has, therefore, been decided that all expatriate missionary workers, who are already in the country on Employment passes, Visit passes, Professional or Work passes would be permitted to stay for another period of 10 years as from 1 January 1967. A subsequent extension of

62. Letter from Datuk John Dusing, State Secretary to Bishop James Buis, dated 24 April 1967. The above quoted letter and other letters and documents including the letter from Datuk Peter Mojuntin to the Prime Minister were made available by the Bishop to the *Singapore Herald* when he was interviewed by that newspaper. Copies of these letters and documents are also with the writer. He obtained some of these copies from the St Joseph's Society, Mill Hill library, London.

stay beyond this period would only be considered if found necessary.

The Director of Immigration also confirmed the above in a letter to the Christian church leaders. He wrote:⁶³

I am to refer to my letter of even reference dated 30 September 1966. The federal and state governments have now reviewed this policy and it is agreed that all expatriate missionary workers who are now already in Sabah on Work Passes may be permitted to stay on Work Passes for another period of 10 years as from 1 January 1967 should they wish so. A subsequent extension of stay beyond this period will only be considered if it is found necessary at that time. My letter of 30 September 1966 therefore, may be cancelled.

The Expulsion of Priests

The new policy on expatriate missionary workers was made before Tun Mustapha formed his mini Cabinet. This latter was on 17 May 1967. The change in the immigration policy by the state and federal governments was as a result of representations made by the various heads of the Christian churches on the Chief Minister of Sabah at the time, Peter Lo, who was himself a practising Catholic.⁶⁴ John Dusing, the State Secretary was also a practising Catholic.

The immigration policy for foreign missionaries, however, was soon shattered when in March 1970 the state government of Sabah under Tun Mustapha cancelled the Work Permit of Rev. Fr John Rooney. He was to be the first foreign priest to be ordered out of the country by the Tun Mustapha government.⁶⁵ From March 1970 to November 1970, 26 foreign missionaries had their work passes terminated, permanent stay cancelled or work passes not renewed. (Table 10 below shows the names of the priests and nuns who were told to leave the country.)

63. Letter from Director of Immigration, Sabah (Mr B.J. Arrowsmith) to heads of Christian churches in Sabah, dated 24 April 1967.

64. The late Catholic Bishop, Rt Rev. James Buis told this writer that Datuk Peter Lo, then Chief Minister of Sabah who took over from Tun Stephens in 1964, was instrumental in getting the immigration policy changed in favour of the Christian churches in Sabah.

65. Rev. Fr John Rooney, the first Rector of St Andrew's Church, Tandek. He had been sent there by the Bishop to help start a new school. He was very active in this as well as in getting new converts into the Christian faith. Idrus Matakim was also active in the area to spread the Islamic religion. Fr Rooney's work permit was cancelled. He was the first priest expelled from Sabah by Tun Mustapha.

TABLE 10

Roman Catholic Mission, Sabah
List of Fathers and Sisters Expelled from Sabah
 (March 1970 - Nov. 22 1970)
 (N.B. C. = Carmelite; D.S.P. = Daughters of St Paul; F.M.S.J. = Franciscan Missionaries of St Joseph (England))

<i>Name</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Nature of Expulsion</i>	<i>Date of Expulsion</i>
Fathers				
Fr J. Rooney	British	Dec. 1961	termination of workpass	March 1970
Fr H. Rooney	Dutch	7 Apr. 1963	workpass not renewed	May 1970
Fr G. Goes	Dutch	3 Dec. 1962	workpass not renewed	May 1970
Fr L.v.d. Geest	Dutch	Dec. 1952	termination of workpass	Aug. 1970
Fr A. Aherne	Irish	3 Dec. 1963	workpass not renewed	Sept. 1970
Fr J. Oostdijk	Dutch	Jan. 1964	workpass not renewed	Oct. 1970
Fr S.L. Terpstra	Dutch	19 Jul. 1946	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr A.G. Lampe	Dutch	29 Nov. 1937	termination of workpass	Nov. 1970
Fr J.L. Quinn	British	Nov. 1924	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr L.M. Parsons	British	16 Nov. 1933	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr J.W. Roetenberg	Dutch	Mar. 1947	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr P. Windram	British	Dec. 1960	workpass not renewed	Nov. 1970
Fr A. Mulders	Dutch	Nov. 1935	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr D. Bekema	Dutch	19 Jul. 1946	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Fr R. Hogan	British	1 Dec. 1965	workpass not renewed	Nov. 1970
Sisters				
Sr Antonia Robles D.S.P.	Phillipina	1967	workpass not renewed	April 1970
Sr Justina Bansuela D.S.P.	Phillippina	1961	workpass not renewed	May 1970
Sr Maria Lorenzana C.	Spanish	1967	workpass not renewed	June 1970
Sr Edwards F.M.S.J.	British	1935	workpass not renewed	June 1970
Sr Felicity McCarthy F.M.S.J.	British	1958	workpass not renewed	Nov. 1970
Sr Berchmans O'Sullivan F.M.S.J.	British	1950	workpass not renewed	Nov. 1970
Sr Germaine Henry F.N.S.J.	British	1950	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Sr Joachim Byrne F.M.S.J.	British	1935	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Sr Henriette F.M.S.J.	British	1934	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Sr Ann J. Kerr F.M.S.J.	British	1955	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970
Sr M. Teresia Palacios C.	Spanish	1930	cancellation of permanent stay	Nov. 1970

The new Director of Immigration, now a Malay from West Malaysia, wrote in the following manner:⁶⁶

Tuan,

I am directed to inform you that the State Authority by virtue of the powers vested in them by Section 5(1)(c) Immigration Act, 1963, have now deemed you to be an undesirable immigrant. As a result, your presence in Sabah has now been declared unlawful under Section 14(4), Immigration Ordinance, 1959, and you are hereby requested to leave Sabah.

You will be given a special Pass valid for one month (until 13 December 1970) to enable you to make necessary arrangements to leave the state of Sabah. Please call at the nearest immigration office to have the necessary endorsement regarding this.

Naturally, the leaders of Christian churches were apprehensive about this new turn of events. Representations were made to the authorities, including a representation to the Minister of Home Affairs in Kuala Lumpur, by church leaders and Christian politicians.

In October 1970, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, wrote to the Catholic Bishop of Sabah in reply to the latter's appeal to stop the expulsion of priests and missionaries. The letter said:⁶⁷

Tuan,

I am to refer to your letter dated 16 September 1970 on the above subject and to inform you that the policy regarding the issue and extension of Work Passes for expatriate priests and missionaries in Sabah is that the approval to work for ten (10) years (with effect from 1 January 1967) is not a blanket approval for all priests and missionaries, but that it is only granted on the merits of each case. However, the Sabah state government has agreed that in future three (3) months' notice would normally be given before Work Passes are terminated, while those with extremely adverse records from the security angle would be given one (1) month's notice.

The reason for the termination of work passes and expulsion of priests then was for "security" reasons. The priests and missionaries were found to be security risks by the state government of Sabah. This was indeed the reason given by the Minister of Home Affairs in his press statement which appeared in the *Kinabalu Sabah Times* in December 1970.⁶⁸

66. Letter from the Director of Immigration to Rev. Fr Bekema, then Rector of the Sacred Heart Church, Kota Kinabalu dated 13 November 1970.

67. Letter from the Permanent Secretary to the Kuala Lumpur Ministry of Home Affairs, to the Catholic Bishop of Sabah dated 26 October 1970.

68. *Sabah Times*, 19 December 1970.

He said that in not renewing the work passes of a number of foreign Christian missionaries, Tun Mustapha, the Sabah Chief Minister, had acted on police information that the missionaries were carrying out activities not conducive to racial harmony and national unity. The Federal Minister also said that Tun Mustapha had discussed the matter with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Tun Dr Ismail the then Home Affairs Minister, also added that Tun Mustapha had acted in his capacity as Chairman of the State Operations Committee of Sabah. "In exercising that function under the Immigration Act, however, he acted on police information to the effect that the missionaries concerned were carrying out activities not conducive to racial harmony and unity", he concluded. Tun Mustapha had been given full powers of expulsion and detention by the federal government soon after the May 13 1969 race riots in Kuala Lumpur.

The leaders of Christian churches in Sabah were surprised, if not angered, by the accusation that the foreign missionaries were security risks and not conducive to racial harmony and unity in the state. The most remarkable thing about this accusation of security risk was the non-renewal of work permits for two Carmelite nuns. These two nuns had come from Europe, and one came in 1930. She was 82 years' old and in keeping with the Carmelites' vow of silence, she had spent 40 years within the cloister walls. She was also very ill when she received her order to leave by the Immigration Department. Like all the rest of the foreign missionaries, she was also considered an "undesirable immigrant". However, when the Bishop told the immigration officials that they would have to carry her in her sick bed to the aeroplane and that they would be responsible for her safety, the order to deport her was revoked.

Tun Mustapha gave an assurance that if the church concerned could prove to the satisfaction of the state government that church work in the state of Sabah would be seriously disorganised as a result of the departure of the missionaries concerned, he might, strictly on the individual merit of each case, consider allowing a reasonable number of foreign missionaries to fill in the vacuum.⁶⁹ The church leaders, naturally viewed this assurance as vague, ambiguous and non-committal. The Chief Minister had placed himself as the sole jury and judge of the needs of the Christian community in the state. "All this does not amount to an assurance and much less to a sense of security which the Christians have been lacking

69. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1970.

ever since the USIA began its activities."⁷⁰

By 1971, the number of expelled foreign missionaries was 41. An inter-faith meeting of all Christian leaders was held on January 12 1971, and the record of expelled missionaries so far was as follows:

1. Protestant Church in Sabah:

- (1) 4 work passes cancelled before expiry.
- (2) 1 renewal of work pass refused.
- (3) 4 refused re-entry permits.
- (4) 4 pending renewal of work permits.

2. Basel Christian Church in Malaysia (Lutheran Church):

2 renewals of work pass refused.

3. Anglican Church:

- (1) 2 renewal of work pass refused.
- (2) 1 refused re-entry permit.
- (3) 5 pending renewal of work pass.

4. Borneo Evangelical Mission (Americans):

- (1) 2 work passes cancelled before expiry.
- (2) 1 permanent stay cancelled.
- (3) 4 re-entry permits refused.
- (4) 1 renewal pending.
- (5) 6 Sarawak Malaysian citizens to replace those above refused entry permits into Sabah.

5. Seventh Day Adventist:

3 work passes cancelled before expiry.

6. Roman Catholic Church:

- (1) 2 work passes cancelled before expiry.
- (2) 11 permanent stays cancelled.
- (3) 13 renewal of work passes refused.
- (4) 3 re-entry permits refused.

The meeting also noted that the total number of Christians in Sabah by 1970 was around 200,000 and that the Catholic church had by far the largest number of adherents with nearly 100,000 altogether. Most of these were Kadazans and Muruts.⁷¹

*The Singapore Herald*⁷² meanwhile, carried a headline "Christian Persecution Complaints from Sabah". In a front page report it said:

Christian clerics and laymen are accusing the authorities in Sabah of religious persecution. Complaints have been laid before Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Tun Dr Ismail.

70. Notes and comments from the Catholic Bishop of Sabah on Tun Mustapha's assurance to the Christians in a memorandum to the Catholic priests in Sabah. Copy with the writer.

71. Minutes of Inter-Faith Fellowship Meeting held on 12 January 1971.

72. *Singapore Herald*, 12 February 1970.

The report then said that church sources had released four documents to journalists and foreign correspondents in Singapore. One of the source documents was the Catholic Bishop's letter of 1 December 1970, to colleagues and friends outside the state. The letter from the Bishop referred to "heavy losses in personnel", and continued:

Ten (10) European sisters, quite a few with permanent or indefinite stay, were expelled from Sabah. 15 priests were expelled in a very rude manner. Two sisters of St Paul received the same treatment. Even two Carmelite sisters were declared undesirable immigrants. One of them is 82 years old and spent 40 years in Sabah. My successor, Bishop Peter Chung, a Malaysian citizen, was refused entry to Sabah to take over from me on my retirement. And I expect this is not the end. The other churches have suffered very heavy losses too. It is a real persecution of Christianity and this is in only one state of Malaysia - viz, Sabah. Appeals to the central government in Kuala Lumpur have failed. The Chief Minister seems to be all powerful. Appeals and protests are answered by more violent actions against the Christian churches. At the same time, a powerful campaign of bribery and intimidation to convert the Christians and others is in progress. I am posting this letter from Singapore and please let your references to the present situation be indirect. We are living in a police state and under a dictatorship.

Other documents released to the press included a letter from the Catholic bishops to the priests and nuns dated 26 November 1970 and a text of the speech of Datuk Peter Mojuntin at the Consecration of Bishop Peter Chong as Bishop of Sabah in Kota Kinabalu on 15 November 1970 and also the copy of his letter to the Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak dated 14 November 1970.

The Catholic bishop's letter of 26 November 1970 was in the form of a circular to all priests and nuns. It expressed great concern at the way the state government of Sabah and the federal government were treating the foreign missionaries. It listed 26 names who had been expelled. The letter said, inter alia:

During November (1970) alone 16 priests and sisters were expelled from the state of Sabah. All our efforts to stem this unfortunate turn of events have failed. No one seems to be responsible. The central government at Kuala Lumpur maintains that it is purely a state matter and that their assurances given in 1967 (that until 1977 we should have no reason to fear and that in 1977 they would wish to review the situation), did not amount to a 'blanket approval'. Incidentally, this assurance was given by both the federal and state governments. They further added that each case had to be judged on its own merits. We now know that these assurances rather seem to amount to a 'blanket disapproval'.

The delegation mentioned in the above letter, sent to see Tun Mustapha in 1976, were the late Michael Yong, Fong Peng Loi, a Kadazan active in the Pastoral Council of Sabah, and the late Peter Mojuntin. Tun Mustapha told this delegation that it was Kuala Lumpur's policy and not his state government's.

On 14 November 1970, Peter Mojuntin wrote to the Prime Minister. In his letter, Mojuntin accused the Sabah state government of persecuting the Christians through intimidation and threats by the USIA campaigners. He wrote *inter alia*:⁷³

I am now convinced that we the Kadazans (Dusuns) are expected to lose our pride, self-respect, sense of decency, feeling of morality, and our belief in God, before being accepted as true citizens of a democratic Malaysian nation. We are being treated now as second class "bumiputras" unless we abandon our Christian religion to become members of the United Sabah Islamic Association or USIA. The Protestant Church of Sabah (Basel Mission) missionaries have been expelled out of Sabah without any reason....A Catholic missionary at Tander, Rev. Fr John Rooney...like many other Christian priests, was expelled without any reason given by the Sabah State Immigration Authority. The poor Christians are especially the target for an intensive propaganda campaign by USIA's paid workers.

Mojuntin never received a direct reply to this letter, but he continued his attack on the state authority for persecuting the Christians and the Christian church when he spoke at the consecration of Bishop Peter Chung on 15 November 1970. Many bishops were present at the consecration of the Bishop including a representative of the Pope from Rome. At the luncheon party in honour of the new bishop of Sabah, Mojuntin made a speech which was meant both for the attention of the Kuala Lumpur authorities as well as the attention of the Catholic leaders in Rome. He said, in part:⁷⁴

The Christians in Sabah at the moment are possessed of mixed feelings; we are happy and joyful to welcome our new Bishop of Sabah to take over from our Bishop Mgr James Buis when he finally decides to retire to Holland. At the same time, we feel very sad and angry because the Christian religion is currently suffering from ruthlessly subtle persecution by persons, our fellow-humans currently holding influential positions in the state of Sabah....The actions taken so far to expel our Christian missionaries are against the letter and spirit of the Constitution and certainly against the principles of Rukunegara and Muhibah. The Heavenly Paradise

73. Letter from Peter Mojuntin to the Prime Minister, Tun Razak, dated 14 November 1970. Copy of this letter is with the writer.

74. From text of speech of Datuk Peter Mojuntin delivered on 15 November 1970 on the occasion of the Consecration of Mgr Peter Chung as Bishop of Sabah.

or "Surga" that we all aspire to reach after this worldly existence has many doors leading to the presence of the Creator and eternal existence. I am sure our Malaysian national leaders were very much aware of this human belief when the Constitution was drawn up and the Rukunegara and Muhibah were promulgated. No one religion, professing allegiance to the only one true God Almighty, should claim to have the good fortune of possessing the only key to Heaven because the gates to "Surga" are countless. It follows therefore, that the principles of the Rukunegara and Muhibah will only be meaningful if multi-racial Malaysians honestly respect each other's religious beliefs. In the best national interests of multi-racial Malaysia, no persecution of any religion in whatever form should be under-written by our national leaders or even tolerated - regardless of the social, professional or political standing of the persecutors.

From then on, Mojuntin was a marked man. He was making this "defence" as it were for the Christian community without the one man who could help him most, Tun Stephens, who was now in Canberra as High Commissioner. Tun Stephens was not and would not be in a position to help in this matter as he himself had embraced the Islamic religion on 5 January 1971.⁷⁵ The ceremony took place at the residence of Tun Mustapha. Hundreds of people were invited to witness the conversion ceremony.⁷⁶ After the conversion ceremony, Tun Stephens said that he had become a Muslim because of the close ties he and his family had with Tun Mustapha. He said he had given thought to becoming a Muslim since he was small. He added that Tun Mustapha and he were "blood brothers" when they pricked their fingers and mixed their blood in August 1959. He said much of the conflict in society today was due to differences in culture, religion and language. He explained that he embraced Islam as he believed that the religion was a factor that could help bring unity, prosperity, and happiness in Malaysia in general and in Sabah in particular for generations to come. Tun Mustapha also took the occasion to say his piece. He said the people could only be united through one common language, culture and religion. He believed that in a plural society there could not be peace unless the peoples were united in one religion, one language and one culture. He regarded his effort at Islamisation of the people as a means of bringing peace and prosperity, and as beneficial to the future generations of Sabah Malaysians. According to the *Kinabalu Sabah Times* report, "Tun Mustapha and Tan Sri Mhd Fuad Stephens were emotionally moved and tightly

75. *Sabah Times*, 6 January 1971.

76. Neither Peter Mojuntin nor this writer attended the conversion ceremony in Tun Mustapha's house. The writer was shocked and demoralised. He spent the evening talking to a priest.

embraced one another, with tears of joy welling in their eyes".⁷⁷

The next day, Tun Stephens told a press conference that he had become Muslim "for unity, peace and progress among the people". He believed that through one language, one culture and one religion, unity, peace and prosperity could be perpetuated for generations to come. On the allegations made by the Catholic Bishop and Peter Mojuntin that Christians were being persecuted, he said that there was no basis for such allegations. There were still a lot of foreign Christian missionaries in the state, he said. He added that he agreed with the actions of the state government to expel foreign missionaries who were found to be interfering in the internal politics of Sabah, or who had become security risks. He also denied that there was coercion or force on people to become Muslim. He urged the people to think of religion as simply religion and not to make use of it as a political weapon, and he warned of the futility of using religion to cause dissension among the people as it would only be to the detriment of the "bumiputras". He concluded his press interview by saying that he had made up his mind to become a Muslim in October 1970.

The warning against the use of religion as a political weapon to create dissension was obviously aimed at Peter Mojuntin and other former members of the Kadazan UPKO party who had remained Christians. These people became active to counteract the Islamic revival and actively participated in the formation of the Pastoral Council of Sabah (PAX) which included membership from all Parish Councils throughout the state, with the Bishop as Chairman and Fong Peng Loi as the Laity Co-Chairman.⁷⁸

As both Peter Mojuntin and Luping were active in the Pastoral Council, Tun Stephens was obviously aiming his warning at them. Indeed, Tun Stephens had become a strong supporter of Tun Mustapha's action to expel the Christian priests. In his letter to Tun Mustapha in August 1972, at the height of the state government's harsh treatment of Catholic priests, including the arrest and detention of three of them at the

77. *Kinabalu Sabah Times*, 6 January 1971.

78. The formation of the Pastoral Council of Sabah (PAX) was made in early 1970, soon after the United Sabah Islamic Association (USIA) was formed. This latter became very active in promoting the Islamic faith and its officers were responsible for forcing people to embrace the Islamic religion. The inaugural meeting of PAX was held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral with the writer as the chief convenor. The writer was then the Chairman of the Sacred Heart Parish Council and Peter Mojuntin the Chairman of the Penampang Central Parish Council.

Kepayan jail, Tun Stephens wrote:⁷⁹

In relation to Peter and Herman, adik (younger brother) too has many doubts and adik often reminded both of them not to think of any other matter except how to further strengthen the unity of bumiputras. Adik had also warned them that if they were to change their mind, I myself will destroy them. Their reply was, that they would not change their minds, but they often talk to me about religion and they had sought adik's assistance to plead to abang (older brother) 'please do not be too harsh on the Christians and allow the priests to remain in Sabah till Sabah is in a position to produce Malaysian priests'. In relation to this, adik has often said that I myself when adik was still a Christian adik advised the Bishop to Malayanise all the priests but evidently my advice has been ignored.

This was not the only attack by Tun Stephens on the Christian community and its leaders, however. In a Hari Raya sermon at the Canberra Mosque in the presence of 200 Muslim diplomats and their families, he criticised the Christian society as permissive, and "if allowed to go unchallenged, would drag mankind down to its lowest level, to that of animals or worse". He continued: "The moral values which differentiate man from beast are slowly being undermined. This is largely an influence which has materialised in the so-called Christian countries."⁸⁰

Tun Stephens had not only become Tun Mustapha's strongest ally in the quest for one religion, one language and one culture: he had become his chief weapon to further the policy to assimilate the Kadazans to Tun Mustapha's vision of Malayness.

As for Peter Mojuntin his strong stand on the issue was followed by disenchantment at Tun Mustapha's and Tun Stephens' action. He threatened to form a political party to be known as USAP, but as we saw in an earlier chapter, this was soon abandoned. However, he did continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with other Christian leaders in their defence of their religion and in making representations on behalf of the foreign missionaries in the state.

The first representation was in the nature of a letter signed by the Pastoral Council of Sabah Goodwill and Liaison Commission members. This body was formed by PAX with a view to liaising and working closely with the state authorities and the federal government on matters of religion.

79. *Sabah Times*, 11 August 1975.

80. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1972.

It was aimed at diffusing a possible direct confrontation between the Catholic church and the Sabah state government. The members selected were drawn from the local clergy and some from the laity. The Commission members were: Fong Peng Loi (as Chairman), Herman Luping, Peter Mojuntin, Ben Stephens, Michael K.M. Yong, Rev. Fr J.B. Yong, and Rev. Fr T. Chi. In their letter to Tun Mustapha, they appealed to him on humanitarian grounds to consider the plight of the church if personnel such as priests were sent away. They explained that priests were not easily obtainable even if the church had to Sabahanise the church. Priests had to be trained and the training and preparation was long. They then recalled that in August 1970, three of the signatories, Fong, Peter Mojuntin and Michael Yong had been to see him appealing on the church's behalf in respect of the non-renewal of the work passes of the priests. They referred to his reply that certain missionaries had displayed certain conduct deemed to be prejudicial to the harmony and peace of the state, that government on security grounds could not take chances, and therefore acted as it did.

We, of course, are not aware as to which conduct on the part of priests is desirable and which is not, from the government's viewpoint. We shall be grateful if you will give us advice as guidelines in order not to fall into error likely to contravene government policy resulting in non-renewal of work passes of our priests or in termination of their permanent stay certificates.... We wish you to know that should the head of our church deem that the conduct of anyone of our priests has been undesirable, our church will on its own volition and initiative send such a priest away from this state. We would appreciate it very much if you would inform us (confidentially, if necessary) of undesirable activities on the part of our priests before you contemplate taking action.

The letter then referred to the lifting of the State of Emergency imposed after the May 13 incident in 1969 and the coming general state election, and appealed further for the reconsideration of the work passes, in particular, of Rev. Fr Putnam of Toboh, Tambunan, Rev. Fr Van Velzen of Bundu Tuhan as the parishioners from these areas were perturbed and unhappy about the non-renewal of their priests work passes.⁸¹

Tun Mustapha never replied to the letter, nor took the bait and gave "advice" to the petition writers as to the best guidelines for priests' behaviour.

81. Petition letter from Goodwill and Liaison Committee of PAX to the Chief Minister of Sabah dated 25 November 1971.

Meanwhile, Bishop Buis retired and his place was taken by the newly consecrated Bishop, Mgr Peter Chung. Bishop Chung was a Sarawak Malaysian citizen, but he was not allowed to take his place in the state of Sabah. He was never granted a work permit. Bishop Chung was given visit passes of two weeks' duration and this state of affairs continued until 1975 when Rome decided to transfer Bishop Chung to Kuching and consecrated a new Bishop, Mgr Simon Fung, who was a Sabah-born Malaysian.⁸²

On 19 and 20 January 1971, a General Council of Churches meeting for East and West Malaysia and Singapore was held in Kuala Lumpur. The General Council of Churches discussed various topics at this meeting, but the chief concern was work permits for missionaries in Sabah. The Council passed a resolution to be presented to the Prime Minister. The resolution was:

Whereas this Council has been informed of the serious difficulties faced by Christians in the state of Sabah; and whereas apprehension has been expressed from Christian quarters over the freedom of individuals to practice their faith; and whereas we are also desirous to fulfil our obligations as responsible citizens of the nation of Malaysia; and whereas our efforts are directed towards the enriching of the quality of religious life of our members, we therefore resolve that this Council mandate a delegation to seek an audience with the Prime Minister to obtain clarification and assurance with regard to religious freedom in the various states of Malaysia.

The delegates chosen to present this resolution to the federal government were Tan Sri Bishop Roland Koh (Anglican), Archbishop Vendargon (Catholic), Bishop Temenggong (from Sarawak), Patrick Mandalog representing Sabah from Kudat, and two others. The delegation was also mandated to present the facts and express concern over the difficulties faced by the Christians in Sabah. The Prime Minister listened attentively to the delegation and showed concern and promised the delegation to inquire into the various points mentioned in the resolution.⁸³

The church became even more concerned that the state authority did not seem to relent on its policy to cancel permanent stay permits or renew work passes for foreign priests. Considerable problems were being experienced with the work passes of the parish priests of Toboh, Tambunan, Keningau and Kuala Penyu.

82. Bishop Peter Chung told this writer that he was disappointed but he took the 'punishment' in his stride and as part of Christian fortitude and charity.

83. Circular letter from Catholic Bishop to members of the clergy and religious dated 22 February 1971. Copy with the writer.

The church decided to send Peter Mojuntin and Herman Luping to accompany Archbishop Vendargon of Kuala Lumpur to see the Prime Minister to appeal to him to intervene in the matter of priests' work permits in Sabah. This was in 1972. The Prime Minister, Tun Razak was sympathetic but he told them that it was an immigration matter and therefore a state concern and not federal. Archbishop Verdargon, who had been awarded a Tan Sri-ship by the federal government offered to return this award to the government if the government thought that the church and its priests in Sabah had done anything wrong, politically or interfered with the national security of the nation. Tun Razak only smiled at this and told the Archbishop that it was not necessary to return his award. Tun Razak, however, promised to look into the matter and have a word with Tun Mustapha. Whether the Prime Minister spoke to Tun Mustapha was not made known, however. What transpired was that instead of relenting or considering the requests for the renewal of the priests' work passes, the state authority instead became even more determined to expel more priests.

The local Catholic priests themselves sent a petition later addressed to the Chief Minister of Sabah. They explained to the Chief Minister that the church was seriously disorganised and disrupted by the large number of expatriate foreign missionaries whose work permits were being cancelled or not renewed. They also expressed deep regret to note that some of the priests had been served with "removal orders". The petition asked the Chief Minister to give due consideration and sympathy to the Christian church in Sabah. The letter pointed out that in the absence of the foreign priests, there would be only 11 priests for more than 100,000 Catholics in Sabah.⁸⁴

This letter was not heeded. Instead, Tun Mustapha called Peter Mojuntin and Herman Luping to his office and suggested to them that a delegation be sent to visit the various parishes where the foreign parish priests were refusing to leave the country despite the serving of the removal orders. He suggested that the delegation should consist of the members of the Goodwill and Liaison Commission of PAX. The members were Rev. Fr Yong, Fong Peng Loi, Peter Mojuntin and Herman Luping. The parishes visited by these delegates were Limbahau, Papar, Toboh, Tambunan, Keningau and Kuala Penyu. The delegates heard the views of the Christian

84. Petition letter from Catholic local priests in Sabah to the Chief Minister dated 23 November 1972. Copy of letter petition is with the writer.

community in these areas. The delegation also explained that the state government was concerned that policemen were barred by members of the public from delivering legal removal orders from the Immigration Department. As a result of these visits, a report was prepared for the Chief Minister. He was told of the reaction of the people and warned that government's decision to remove the missionary priests was not wise. The recommendation stated:⁸⁵

We feel that after visiting these areas, government should reconsider its decision regarding the removal of the two priests as well as the three others who have already received the removal orders. For the sake of the USNO party's unity, we recommend to government that a cooling off period be observed first. At the same time government should review the people's request for the replacement of these priests in consultation with the Catholic church authority.... It is clear that if the foreign Christian missionaries go away, vacuums will definitely be created and serious disorganisation is likely to happen.

It would appear that the delegation's report and recommendation was not what the Chief Minister wanted. It seemed that he had wanted to use the Catholic leaders themselves to try and persuade the foreign priests to obey government orders and to make the people understand government's policy: that it was meant to unite the people into one.

The Catholic community in each parish throughout the country also sent in petitions on behalf of their priests to the Chief Minister, asking him to reconsider the renewal of work passes. From the parish council of Telupid Sandakan some 1301 persons signed a petition.⁸⁶ From Papar parish council some 800 persons signed a petition.⁸⁷ From the Keningau parish council some 2126 persons signed a petition letter.⁸⁸ From the Limbahau parish council some 3000 persons signed a petition letter.⁸⁹ Tambunan, Kudat and other areas also sent in petitions. None of these petitions were acknowledged.

Instead, on 2 December 1972, three priests were arrested by the police and detained. They had been served with "removal orders" some

85. Copy of full report held by the writer.

86. Petition letter from parish council, Telupid to Tun Mustapha dated 14 July 1972. Copy with the writer.

87. Petition letter from the parish council of Papar to Tun Mustapha dated 21 July 1972. Copy with the writer.

88. Petition letter from the Keningau parish council to Tun Mustapha dated 13 April 1972. Copy with the writer.

89. Petition letter from the Limbahau parish council to Tun Mustapha dated 22 February 1972. Copy with the writer.

months back, but they had refused to sign the document.⁹⁰ The police sent to serve the "removal order" from the Immigration Department met with strong opposition from the Catholic communities in the respective areas.

In the Toboh parish in the Tambunan district, for example, the situation was worst. A laity working committee of the parish was concerned enough to write a letter to Peter Mojuntin informing him of the police arrival to serve the "removal order" and a number of Christians turned up to block the police. They advised the priest not to accept service of the removal order. He said in his letter that the situation was tense and indicated there might be clashes.⁹¹

The priest himself described the incident in a report to the Bishop at Kota Kinabalu. He said six policemen came to visit him to serve a removal order in the morning when he was not in the house. The police told the people in the house that they would return in the afternoon. By 3 p.m., hundreds of people had gathered in the church compound. They had been ringing the bell for hours to call the people. When the police finally arrived, they asked the priest to sign the paper to show that service was served on him. The priest refused. The police left.⁹² This was on 27 October 1972. By 2 December 1972, a police field force armed with guns arrived early in the morning (3 a.m.) to pick up the priests.

Here is a description of the arrest which took place:⁹³

On Saturday, 2 December 1972 three priests, i.e. Father Putnam, McDonald and Frerichs had been arrested.

One truck and a few landrovers with policemen, CID, and men of the field force left at about 10 p.m. on Friday evening from Kota Kinabalu, the state capital, heading for Toboh, Tambunan. They arrived there at 3 a.m. the following morning, when everybody, of course, was asleep. The first thing they did was to cut the rope of the churchbell to prevent people from ringing it as a sign to the people that the police had arrived. They forced the doors of the Father's

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90. Some of the foreign priests asked the Bishop for permission to allow them to use their own conscience in the matter of the 'removal orders'. They requested this at an urgent meeting of PAX to consider the deteriorating problems faced by the church in 1972. They explained that they were duty-bound to follow their own conscience as their responsibility was with their people and parishioners. They therefore asked to be permitted to disobey the state government's 'removal order' even if they had to go to prison for it.
91. Letter from Joseph Podtung, Secretary, Laity Working Committee to Peter Mojuntin dated 29 October 1972. Copy with the writer.
92. Report from Toboh-Tambunan dated 27 October 1972.
93. Report from a Catholic priest to the Bishop. Copy with the writer.

house open and in no time they had Fr Putnam out of bed and carried him to the truck they had parked on the road near the entrance to the mission compound. In about five minutes it was all over. He was taken to the top security wing of Kepyayan in the state capital the same morning.

Fr McDonald (of Papar parish) was also arrested at 3 a.m. on that same Saturday morning. He was sleeping alone in his new house. The police must have known that, because they only sent two jeeps there with policemen and people of the Immigration Department. He too was taken straight away to the top security wing of Kepyayan in the state capital, where prisoners serving life sentences for rape and murder are kept.

By taking away the Fathers at 3 a.m. it was obvious that the police wanted to arrest them without being noticed by the people. Their plans, however, were upset in Bundu (Kuala Penyu), where it took them nine hours to arrest Fr Frerichs. The police field force arrived, as in Papar and Toboh, at 3 a.m. They found the mission compound occupied by several hundred people. Some of the crowd spotted the force hiding in the bushes behind the church. A teenage boy began to ring the bell (an agreed warning signal of the arrival of the police to arrest the father). One of the police poked his gun through the open window threateningly, but the boy bravely continued ringing. Crowds of people advanced, shining their torches in the faces of the men in hiding and shouting at them to go away, quoting the "Rukun Negara" (principles of ideology as laid down by the Malaysian government) calling for freedom of religion. One voice called out in English: "Go back and tell your boss, we don't appreciate your coming here". The police retreated to the clapping and cheering of the crowd. The retreat, however, was only to muster and strengthen their forces. Evidently a call must have gone back to Kota Kinabalu that the priest in Bundu wouldn't be taken easily. At 9 a.m. that morning helicopters flew low over the Mission and landed some distance away out of sight. Suddenly, at 11 a.m., what seemed an army, stormed the Mission from the cover of the nearby convent running at the double with guns at the ready. Still when they came to the edge of the crowd surrounding and guarding the priest's house, they could get no further. Inside the house the women sat three abreast on the stairs leading up to the priest's room, prepared to block the police in their attempt to arrest. Outside, women, young boys, young girls and men continued a battle of words with the invaders arguing they had no right to take away their priest, that they had been guaranteed freedom of religion by the Rukun Negara and so on. After 20 minutes of heckling, the forces resorted to tear gas. The poor defenseless people had no answer to this trick. At any rate they could never have expected this to be used against them. Nobody could stand it and men, women and children had to make for the bushes at a distance with tears streaming down their faces. The intent of the police, of course, was to smoke the people out of the house, so that they could go in and get hold of the priest. And so they succeeded. Fr Frerichs was eventually taken off in a landrover at 12.30 p.m. with his people still doing their best to keep him back, weeping and begging for a final blessing. And so it had taken the field force, the mobile force, the riot squad, and the police with 15 landrovers and two trucks, and helicopters to arrest one unarmed priest.

In a recent speech given by the Chief Minister during a conversion ceremony he said "The best way to unite the people is through ONE religion, that is Islam, which is a religion of peace, goodwill, and justice". The government uses all possible means to achieve this "unity". They even offer money or promotion to those who want to become Muslims. The greatest obstacle is the priests. They must therefore go.

Many priests had been expelled during the emergency period some two years ago and ever since then the government has systematically refused to extend the workpasses of priests; then the priests decided to take a stand against the injustices of the government to the Constitution, the Rukun Negara and the natural rights peoples have to freedom of religion. So they have refused to leave the country although they know that they had been ordered to go. They argued like this: "If we are taken away, parishes will become vacant, which means that the Catholics are prevented from practising their religion fully, a right which is enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution. Moreover, an agreement was made between the government and the church in 1967 that priests would be allowed to stay until 1976. The priests only took this stand after every avenue of appeal had been tried. The pleas of prominent men in the State Cabinet, the signatures of countless thousands of people in Sabah, Christian and non-Christian alike, repeated delegations to the Chief Minister were to no purpose.

It has to be seen yet what consequences the arrest of these priests will have for Sabah.

On the morning of 2 December 1972, the police field force and army personnel were in evidence throughout the main centres. The road from Penampang to Tambunan for instance was closed and manned by police field forces, possibly to prevent the Penampang crowd from going over to Tambunan or vice versa.

The Christian political leaders were in their respective offices in the afternoon when a delegation from Kuala Penyu arrived to report what had happened. Most had red eyes as a result of the tear gas used.⁹⁴

It is not very clear why the state authorities under Tun Mustapha acted as harshly as they did towards the expatriate priests. The agreement reached in 1966 was that they would be given a further extension of time to take effect on 1 January 1967. This meant that these foreign priests were allowed to stay in Sabah until 1977. Many others had

94. A sad and moving account of the incident at Kuala Penyu was given by one of the eye-witnesses to this writer. He said he was one of the people trying to prevent the police from entering the priest's house. As he had just come to Kota Kinabalu the same day that the priest was arrested, his eyes were still red from the reaction of the tear gas used. He said when they (the police) finally got to the priest, one police officer who was a Catholic knelt before the priest and asked for his blessing and forgiveness. He said the police officer told the priest he was only obeying orders from his superiors.

permanent residence status, but these permits were all terminated. Tun Mustapha himself never explained his harsh action to anyone, but it is possible that he was motivated by the following factors. First, the removal of the foreign priests would create a "power" vacuum in the various Kadazan areas. The collapse of the UPKO Kadazan party meant that the Kadazans in general had no particular leaders to lead them. Peter Mojuntin's brief opposition to the state authority's action on the Christians was making him a "hero" amongst the Kadazan Christians.⁹⁵ Obviously this could not be tolerated, nor allowed to happen. His proposed political party, USAP, could pose a problem if the Christians were united under him and the priests were seen as the people who could influence the people to unite under Peter Mojuntin. If the foreign priests therefore were removed, there would be a "power vacuum" created and the Christian Kadazans would be leaderless at the grass-roots level.

There is another aspect which seemed to suggest that the state government, obviously on advice, was pursuing the notion that the "orang putehs" were influential people and therefore a lot of Kadazans had become Christians. Their removal therefore eliminated this influential factor. The USIA employed the "orang putehs" themselves in the persons of two Australians, who became Muslim. These two were recent converts to the Islamic faith and they were sent to various areas, especially in the interior of Sabah to proselytise. They dressed in white cassocks like the ones normally used by the expatriate Christian priests. Mohammed Steel, one of the two Australians, also wrote a series of articles, published in the *Kinabalu Sabah Times* entitled "Quo Vadis" and he seemed to show that he was an authority on the study of religion. It was aimed at belittling the Christian religion. However, perhaps the most hurtful thing to the Kadazans was the action taken to close down all the little clinics run by the Catholic nuns.⁹⁶ Some areas still have no hospitals, or if there was one, it was often distant or there was no road to it. The health clinics run by the nuns were considered essential services to the rural Kadazan people but still Tun Mustapha said they must close.

Islamisation of Kadazan Leaders

However, perhaps the most effective way of promoting the policy of one religion, one language and one culture was through the former UPKO

95. Sta Maria, *The Golden Son of the Kadazans*.

96. Interview with Datuk Anthony Gibon of Tambunan on 16 April 1983.

Kadazan leaders themselves. The call for one religion, one language, one culture had become very frequent from 1971 on. This was probably partly motivated by the outcome of the August 1971 National Culture Congress in which it was agreed that the core of Malaysian culture should be native-based (and that by 1978 at the twenty-first anniversary of independence, it was then agreed that the national culture should be Malay-based). The Prime Minister had then announced that the theme of the celebration of independence was to be "culture as the cornerstone of unity". It became the policy of government to form a core culture based on Malay culture and at the same time accepting various aspects of Chinese and Indian culture if these did not run counter to the Malay culture.

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, issued the guidelines of what the national culture should be. These were:

- (i) That the base of national culture is the culture which was native to the region.
- (ii) The traits from other cultures which were pertinent should be absorbed to enrich the national culture, and
- (iii) That Islam as the official religion of Malaysia should play its role in the formulation of the national culture.

With the foregoing in the minds of the Malay leaders in Sabah, therefore, a way had to be found to absorb "the traits from other cultures", in this case, the Kadazans, to enrich the national culture. One way to absorb that trait was to assimilate the Kadazans by making them "masuk Islam", and become "saudara bahru".

As the Kadazans were by and large very unsophisticated and could easily be persuaded by example and manipulation, it was essential to get the cooperation of their top leadership first, and then slowly work down to the second and third echelons of the leadership, until the masses were reached.

Tun Stephens and family embraced the Islamic faith on 5 January 1971. Before this, Idrus Matakim and family (formerly Andrew) had also embraced Islam. Others to follow were Suffian Koroh (formerly Stephen), Fadzil Wong Fook Siang (formerly Wong Fook Siang), Tingkalor Lampag, Ghani Gilong and a whole host of second and third echelon leaders of the Kadazans in various areas. These were either native chiefs, village headmen, school teachers or senior or second division civil servants. The conversion ceremonies for these people normally took place at the residence of the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, and they would be televised, sometimes live. These new converts were themselves then used by

the USIA to propagate or influence others in the villages to embrace the Islamic faith — in short, to follow them.

In his long letter to the Prime Minister, Peter Mojuntin accused former Kadazan Christian leaders who became Muslims of lying to the people and also intimidating them. He wrote, *inter alia*:⁹⁷

Lies are being spread by USIA's active campaigners. One such lie is that Enche Matakim (i.e. Idrus Matakim - then known as Andrew Matakim), Assemblyman for Langkon told illiterate and innocent Rungus Kadazan that Peter Mojuntin and other former UPKO leaders who are Christians had already "masok Islam" and therefore "what are the people waiting for but to follow suit". Basel Mission and SDA Christians are told that if they refused to join USIA, they would be lucky if their lands were not taken back by government and distributed to landless Muslims, but they will definitely not get approval for their land applications in the future. The government will not look upon them with any favour.

Kadazan civil servants too were targeted by the USIA and other Malay leaders for conversion. These people were seen as influential people for the assimilation cause. Civil servants who refused to convert were not given promotion, and those who did were promoted almost immediately. Dzul kifli saw to this as he was, since the 1971 election, Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister.

In the same letter to the Prime Minister, Peter Mojuntin referred to a Christian education officer offered the post of Deputy Director of Education if he became a Muslim. He refused and was sent to a far away place in Sabah — in cold storage. Another Kadazan Christian who occupied a relatively low position and whose education was lower was promoted immediately when he became Muslim. Indeed, a former Christian Kadazan officer from Tambunan was reported as having used his position to intimidate people in the area. Peter Mojuntin's letter to the Prime Minister already referred to earlier gave a long list of civil servants approached and coerced to embrace the Islamic faith, including non-Muslim police officers.

The Islamisation process in the early 1970s escalated, so that by 1974 the state government was bold enough to ban some Christian prayer meetings and Sunday masses. This is known as the Nabawan and Biah affair. These were two new settlement schemes for Murut people moved from

97. Letter from Peter Mojuntin to Tun Razak, the Prime Minister dated 14 November 1970.

Pensiangan. They were resettled in two new padi cultivation schemes organised and administered by the Sabah Padi Board. These settlers from Pensiangan were Christians. The first indication of problems being encountered by the Murut settlers in respect of their spiritual needs was contained in a letter from the parish priest of the Keningau parish. He wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Padi Board and expressed concern that the Manager of the Nabawan Scheme had told him that the Christians in the scheme needed permission to pray in their houses or to attend Sunday mass or devotions. The permission had to be obtained from the Chairman of the Padi Board. The letter also expressed concern that the priest visiting the scheme to conduct prayer meetings needed the permission of the Chairman of the Padi Board before he was allowed entry into the scheme.⁹⁸ There was no reply to the letter, so the priest in charge of the catechists in Keningau wrote to the Bishop asking for his intervention. The Bishop counselled calm and urged the priest not to precipitate the issue.⁹⁹

Meanwhile the Nabawan settlers themselves wrote a long letter of protest to the Chairman of the Sabah Padi Board, expressing their deep concern that they were not allowed to practice their religion.¹⁰⁰ The letter said that there were 500 Christians in the scheme and they were denied the freedom to choose their religion or to practise their chosen religion.

The real reason for this harsh policy towards the Nabawan and Biah settlers was because of an impending visit of the Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha, to attend a mass conversion ceremony. He was promised that some 5000 Muruts in the area would be converted to Islam. The USIA campaigners had been active to get people in the district to sign forms to say that they were joining USIA, and hence embracing Islam. If they refused they were told that Tun Mustapha was coming and they could be reported to him and thrown in jail. They were told not to go to church as it was wrong for them to do so as they were on government property as settlers. Some police officers and even the Resident, the most senior

98. Letter from Rev. Fr Bauer, Catholic Mission, Keningau to Chairman, Sabah Padi Board, dated 15 January 1974. A copy of this letter is with the writer.

99. Letter from Fr De Wit to Bishop dated 23 January 1975 and the reply from Bishop to Fr De Wit dated 30 January 1975. Copies of letters with the writer.

100. Petition letter from the Nabawan Settlers to Chairman, Sabah Padi Board dated 20 January 1975. Copy of petition (in Bahasa Malaysia) is with the writer.

officer in the district, visited the area and told them to comply with the wishes of the state government. This is how an eye-witness described the scene:¹⁰¹

In the whole Murut area, the village headmen and newly converted Muruts have threatened the remaining Christians. There were spies everywhere, listening to what was happening and what was said amongst the Christians. If a catechist visited a Christian family one day, the following day, an USIA campaigner would be there to intimidate the poor family.

In Nabawan a priest is forbidden to visit the area. Even local priests, like Fr Amandos were not allowed entry. The whole exercise is in preparation for the Tun to arrive in May 1975 when a huge conversion ceremony was planned.

Islamisation of the Masses

The real target for the policy of one religion, however, was the masses themselves, the Kadazans in the interior who were either lapsed Christians or animists. In 1972 and 1973 when Tun Mustapha was occasionally in Sabah, having returned from his frequent visits abroad, an intensive programme would be drawn up for him to visit various districts, and included in these programmes was always a conversion ceremony which the newspapers and the television never failed to report at length. The newspaper reports normally mentioned that the conversion ceremonies were attended by thousands. In one area in the Keningau district, the report said that the new converts numbered 10,000 souls.¹⁰²

If the reports were correct, it would appear that every district in Sabah where there were Kadazans predominating had become a strong base for the Muslim faith. Several estimates offered in 1973 of new converts amongst the Kadazans alone were more than 150,000. However, in 1983, this figure was reduced suddenly to 85,000 in an announcement made by Tun Mustapha, President of USIA.¹⁰³

101. Told to this writer by one of the Murut leaders in Nabawan Settlement Scheme when he came down to the office of the writer to deliver a copy of the petition to the Chairman of the Sabah Padi Board.

102. A Muslim USNO official reported to an emergency meeting of USNO's Executive Committee called to discuss why USNO failed in the 1976 election, that many new converts to the Muslim faith in the Keningau district went through the Islamisation process two or three times. He said some unscrupulous USIA officials (normally newly converted themselves) wanted to swell the number of new converts in order to impress Tun Mustapha. They therefore arranged for the same people to go through the same process of Islamisation twice, sometimes three times.

103. *Daily Express*, 18 April 1983 and *New Straits Times*, 17 April 1983.

How far had this policy of one religion, one language and one culture advanced in Sabah at the present time? Is the programme initiated in the early 1970s by Tun Mustapha and USIA still being actively pursued?

Recent action by some Christian communities in the Tambunan district seems to suggest that the Islamisation process is still being pressed. It is not now just the USIA which is involved, but two other Islamic organisations — the Majlis Ugama Islam Sabah (MUIS) and the DAKWAH. The latter is foreign sponsored, and funded mostly by Middle Eastern countries.

According to a highly placed official of the DAKWAH organisation, they receive something like \$10,000,000 in U.S. dollars annually in donations from Middle Eastern countries. The money is used for the administration of the organisation, for the monthly stipends of DAKWAH campaigners, as well as for the proposed social work of DAKWAH. The organisation is contemplating emulating the former work of Christian nuns by providing clinics in remote areas in the interior and providing doctors instead of just trained nurses to man the clinics.

One informant told this writer that the Christian churches, especially the Catholic church, had had 100 years of missionary work in Sabah. They had failed to Christianise the whole population and failed thereby to unite the people under one religion. It was now the turn of the Muslim community's organisation to take over from the Christian missionaries. The aim he said was to unite all the "bumiputras" under one religion so that they could progress in peace and prosperity. One way to achieve this was seen to be through the provision of clinics to entice would-be believers and followers just as the Christian missionaries had done in the past. The Muslim organisation would also provide schools for the "bumiputras" in the interior in the future, he said. Suraus (little prayer houses) were being built in every village by the Muslim organisations. These were used for religious instruction and thousands of religious teachers were spread around the country to teach the tenets of the religion to newly converted Kadazan Muslims. The emphasis is on the younger ones.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile the Bishop of Sabah, Simon Fung, is philosophical about the whole Islamisation process in the state. He said he leaves everything

104. Interview with a former Christian now a Muslim. He did not want to be identified.

to the Almighty. He did not elaborate on this, nor did he mention whether the Catholic church had any contingency plan to stem the tide of Muslim religious campaigners going into Christian territories. The Pastoral Council of Sabah still exists, but there is no sign of the existence of the Goodwill and Liaison Commission anymore. Nor is there any sign of the Bishop himself taking an active part to encourage Christian leaders to resist and speak up against the methods used to win new converts into the Muslim faith. Indeed, the newspapers now are totally silent on this score and no-one has openly criticised or accused the Muslim organisations of intimidation or promises of wealth and power if people convert.

The Bishop strongly believes that the Chief Minister, Harris, had nothing to do with the Islamisation process in Sabah. He believed it had become a Kuala Lumpur matter, divorced from the Chief Minister of Sabah. He said he was sorry for Harris when he was Chief Minister as he was placed right in the middle of things. By this, the Bishop seemed to suggest that Harris, as the President and leader of a multi-racial party, was committed towards the concept of multi-racialism in all aspects of the word, including religion. However, as a Malay, he was also committed to the policy of the central government and UMNO to propagate the Islamic religion in Sabah actively.¹⁰⁵ And the fact is that there are now only three European priests in Sabah. These three are Malaysian citizens who took out Malaysian citizenship soon after Malaysia was formed.

The Islamisation process is still going on, and even more intensely in some areas. One target is Tambunan where a recent case involved a district chief and a native chief who were removed from their offices because they refused to join the Islamic faith. They were replaced by a former Kadazan Christian, who in 1971-74 had been one of the strong objectors to Tun Mustapha's style of coercing and intimidating people to join Islam. These newly converted people were given high positions, and another former Kadazan Christian was made a District Officer and awarded a Datukship. According to a report from the area, he became a very active campaigner for DAKWAH and MUIS and told the people that they must become Muslim otherwise they would be left behind.¹⁰⁶

The Christian community of Tambunan gathered the signatures of nearly 3000 people from all over Tambunan on a petition to the Prime Minister asking him to intervene in the unwarranted action by some over-zealous

105. Interview with Catholic Bishop Simon Fung in Kota Kinabalu on 6 April 1983.

106. Interview with Datuk Anthony Gibon of Tambunan on 16 April 1983.

DAKWAH officials. However, when it came to the Berjaya Christian leaders in Kota Kinabalu to sign the petition, many balked, or simply made themselves scarce by flying out of the country. Only two leaders signed, and in the end, even the second signatory withdrew later. The petition which was supposed to be handed over to the Prime Minister by the Kadazan Deputy Minister in Kuala Lumpur, Mansul, was apparently never delivered.¹⁰⁷

But a copy of the same *was* handed to the Chief Minister. The petition letter was quite specific. Addressed to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Dr Mahathir, it referred to some disturbing events taking place in the state of Sabah and in particular in the Tambunan district. It said that the disturbing events were caused by government and DAKWAH officials. The petition named both the government officials and DAKWAH officials. The names included the District Officer of the area, who was a former Kadazan Christian, and many more former Kadazan Christians who had become Muslim and were now active campaigners for the DAKWAH. The petition asked the Prime Minister to intervene in the matter as it contravened Article 11, Clauses 1 and 2 of the Constitution, i.e. freedom of religion. The petition said that government officials and DAKWAH officials had defamed the Christian religion and also forced the people to embrace the muslim religion. The petition then listed their various grievances, inter alia:¹⁰⁸

- (i) That DAKWAH officials had been saying that civil servants who remained Christians would be expelled from the civil service or not promoted.
- (ii) Christian children would be denied places in the universities.
- (iii) Villages would not be given development funds.
- (iv) Native chiefs and village headmen would be replaced by those who joined the Islamic faith.
- (v) A DAKWAH seminar held for former Christians who had embraced Islam had been told that the Christian teaching was false.
- (vi) That a former Christian, now a political secretary to a State Minister, had intimidated people to become Islam by telling them that Christians in the area would be discriminated in all fields of endeavour if they did not join the new faith.

107. One senior Berjaya Minister told this writer that the Islamisation and hence the assimilation process in Sabah was inevitable. He said that in the 1970s the Christian leaders tried to fight the trend and failed. The Kadazan Christian leaders in the Berjaya government and party would not fight this trend as it would be like hitting one's head against a brick wall.

108. Petition letter from the Tambunan Christians to the Prime Minister, Dr Datuk Mahathir Mohammed dated 22 July 1982. A copy of the petition is with the writer.

The Catholic bishop himself apparently did not associate himself with this petition. He was not in the state. Nor did his representative show much enthusiasm in the matter. It was a matter of urgency amongst the Kadazan Christians of Tambunan themselves only, and also amongst the Kadazan priests, but their leaders in the church remained quiet.

There is also a difference in style between Tun Mustapha and USIA, and Harris and MUIS. Whereas Tun Mustapha enjoyed mammoth gatherings of people, seemingly all being converted, with himself as the centre of things and taking the credit for the conversions, Harris tended to take a low profile for himself. To begin with, he did not take the position of President of MUIS as Tun Mustapha did with USIA. He had another close associate hold this position for him. The present Speaker of the Assembly is the President of MUIS. MUIS moves quietly, without much of the publicity which USIA used to have. The only times when wide publicity was given to a conversion ceremony under Harris's government was when the President of Perkim, Tengku Abdul Rahman, was present at a mass conversion in Kudat, and when the king was present at another mass conversion in Keningau.

The question then is whether assimilation of the Kadazan ethnic group has been fully successful in Sabah. Time will only tell. Meanwhile, however, the Deputy Prime Minister does not believe in full assimilation. He said that the Thai government, the Indonesian government, and the Philippines government action to integrate the Chinese community was assimilation. This could not happen in Malaysia, he said. He explained that integration was sufficient to bring about a successful foundation for nation building. There were two ways of integration. One was political and bureaucratic such as the integration of services and the other was social. This could be done by the fusion of all the cultures of the various races to form one Malaysian identity.¹⁰⁹

This view of the Deputy Prime Minister was for Malaysia as a whole. The scenario for Sabah, and for that matter, Sarawak, is probably different. The Sabah and Sarawak "bumiputras" are often ethnologically called "Malays". They belong essentially to the same stock as the Malays of West Malaysia, the Filipinos of the Philippines and the Indonesians of Indonesia. There is no reason therefore, from Kuala Lumpur's point of view, why the Kadazans, the Ibans, and the Muruts cannot be assimilated

109. Interview with the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam on 5 May 1983.

with the Malays. After all, as one federal minister has said publicly, the Kadazans and the Ibans have nothing much to lose in the way of culture in any case. At the most, they could only lose their animist habits and identity and also the drinking habits.¹¹⁰

And here lies the problem: for most Kadazan leaders want to keep their identity as Kadazans, and be able to speak Kadazan. Language is fundamental to culture and they want to keep this. On the other hand, if they become Islamised, even this language-culture will be lost. Already there is a division of opinion amongst newly converted Kadazan Muslims on this matter. Some are of the opinion that the Kadazan Muslims should remain Kadazans and be counted and called Kadazans. But there are others who say, why fight the trend. They argue that it is for the ultimate good of the Kadazan people that they lose their identity as Kadazans and become identified instead as fully Malay.

The central theme of this thesis is this: that there is a danger indeed a likelihood of the Kadazan ethnic group becoming totally assimilated into the national Malay-based culture. The Kadazan identity may disappear. The reason is because the Kadazans on the whole are unsophisticated and their culture is relatively weak. But more important perhaps still is that there is no Kadazan elite cohesion. The absence of Kadazan elite cohesion has made it easier for those in authority to pursue a policy of full assimilation of the Kadazan race, and in turn make the Kadazan ethnic group continue to be the "governed and not the governors".

110. Interview with a federal minister who did not want to be identified.

CHAPTER 11

PROBLEMS OF ELITE COHESION IN SABAH

In a multi-cultural society, political integration is not an easy task. The process of nation building or political integration is two-fold: vertical and horizontal. Vertical integration is the process of making all the different ethnic groups have a sense of over-riding loyalty to the claims of the nation state. Horizontal integration is the process of creating agreements or consensus about national values as well as the capacity of all the different ethnic groups to cooperate with each other. The two processes of political integration are intertwined.¹

To achieve successful political integration there is a need for elite cohesion on the national level. The presence of elite cohesion amongst the various ethnic groups would indicate that all the elites are participating in the national political process. Further, the presence of elite cohesion can contribute to the process of political integration by ensuring stability and preventing communal conflict. Lijphart, in his study of the Dutch experience came to the conclusion that "over-arching co-operation at the elite level can be a substitute for cross-cutting affiliation at the mass level".²

The definition of elite cohesion is the ability of the political elites of the various ethnic groups in a given country to work together to maintain the political system. Political elites here means the various individual leaders in a given ethnic group who take part in the political process at the national level. They are the real political decision-makers. In order for elite cohesion to be effective and to work towards political integration and nation-building, the national political elite must be able to co-operate, to bargain and to make compromises with each other. In short, it is vital for the national elites to be able to accommodate differences.³

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1. For a discussion on the theory of political integration, see Claude Ake, *A Theory of Political Integration*.
 2. Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, p. 200.
 3. See "Panel of discussion on National Unity and Ethnic Relations" dated 25 March 1983 chaired by Dr Tan Sri Tan Chee Khoo. A copy of the pre-publication text of the discussion is with the writer.

There are two types of elite cohesion: unified and pluralistic. In the unified type of elite cohesion, there is only one non-communal (or multi-racial) party which is dominant in the political system. The elites of the various communities or ethnic groups co-operate with each other within the one non-communal political framework. The form of cohesion amongst the various political elites is characterised by disciplined political co-operation and collective responsibility. The political elites are national-orientated and bound to each other by a set of non-communal norms. They must accept these non-communal norms as a pre-requisite for entry into the non-communal parties. This is a difficult form of elite cohesion in plural societies, just emerging from the shackles of colonialism. Communal ties in these plural societies, such as in Malaysia are still very strong. This unified type of elite cohesion could also be called the "open political parties".⁴

The pluralistic type of elite cohesion has several communal political parties and these communal political parties are in a constant state of conflict. This type of elite cohesion is characterised by the various leaders from each communal party cooperating with one another to form an electoral pact or alliances and winning coalitions in political cooperation. This form of cohesion is essentially structural in nature. It is an institutional arrangement in which communal elites are brought together out of necessity and in a joint effort to solve the problems of the polity. The various communal elites may not have cross-cutting ties with one another.

In Malaysia, it is the pluralistic model of elite cohesion which constitutes the present political system of the country. Both the erst-while Grand Alliance Party and later, the National Front are a collection of various political parties which have been organised along communal lines. The problems facing Malaysia's political elites have been their relationship with one another and also with their followers. The fundamental question for Malaysian leaders is: how can the political elites from the various ethnic groups co-operate with each other and make concessions without losing support from their own people? This is the perennial problem facing the National Front.⁵

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4. For a discussion on 'Closed Political Parties' and 'Open Political Parties' see: John Arthur MacDougall, 'Shared Burdens: A Study of Communal Discrimination by the Political Parties of Malaysia and Singapore', Ph.D. thesis presented to Harvard University, 1968.
 5. Leong Ah Beng, 'Elite Cohesion in Malaysia: A Study of Alliance Leadership', M.A. thesis presented to the Singapore National University, 1972.

In Sabah, the period between 1963 and 1967 was a period of intense ethnic rivalries and power struggles. The chief contenders were the Kadazans and the Malays, with the Chinese holding the balance of power. The political system which evolved during this period followed the example of the Malayan Alliance Party in West Malaysia. It was based on the "plural model" we mentioned in the foregoing. The various ethnic groups' leaders were able to set up the Sabah Alliance in 1963 because they had a common aim in mind: the need to get rid of the yoke of colonialism and govern the country themselves even if under the watchful eyes of a new power, the central government in Kuala Lumpur. It was therefore easy for them to get together and form a consensus of opinion to present a united front at the inter-government committee meeting. The twenty points formed the basis of negotiations for the formation of Malaysia. For the Sabah delegation at the I.G.C. meeting, Tun Stephens was the main speaker. The other Sabah ethnic group leaders were content to let him lead them as they had reached a consensus amongst themselves earlier.⁶

At best, the Sabah Alliance was a marriage of convenience, bound by the thin thread of the political elites' desire to get on with the governing of the state. It was therefore not surprising that not long after the formation of Malaysia, the Malays of Sabah started questioning their role in the overall governing of the country. Tun Mustapha, who was made the Head of State, found this position too restricting and without power. The real power was with Tun Stephens, who was the Chief Minister. This precipitated the first crisis with Harris, a Malay, and at that time, Tun Mustapha's protege moving up as Deputy Chief Minister. This crisis was solved by Tunku Abdul Rahman in Kuala Lumpur, who became the arbitrator for the various Sabah ethnic factions. It was not long before there was a second crisis in 1965 involving the appointment of John Dusing as the new State Secretary. There was no consensus amongst the Sabah Alliance in this matter. To Tun Stephens, the appointment of the State Secretary was an administrative matter and the prerogative of the Chief Minister. Tun Mustapha and his Malay colleagues did not agree. Neither did the Chinese. The Chinese leaders of course saw that a continuing struggle between Tun Mustapha and Tun Stephens was beneficial to them. They also saw that the immediate beneficiaries of the outgoing European state

6. Interview with Tun Mustapha on 18 July 1983. He said he was criticised by USNO committee members for not being active in the inter-governmental committee meetings. But he had his reasons. He did not want to jeopardise the formation of Malaysia by asking too many conditions and pressing too hard on the Malay language or religious issue.

servants was to be the Chinese administrative officers. In the civil service, the most senior administrative officers were almost all Chinese, followed by the one Kadazan (Indo-Kadazan) John Dusing and there were no Malays amongst them. Harris, Yassin, Kassim, Tun Pengiran Raffae would have been eligible for consideration as they were quite senior in the civil service, but these people had either retired or had taken part in politics by joining the USNO party. Tun Stephens selected an Indo-Kadazan candidate to fill in the post, thinking that the Malays in USNO would support him because he was a "bumiputra" after all. He was wrong. The result of this crisis was the ousting of Tun Stephens, and he was replaced by a Chinese Chief Minister, whom the Malays considered a temporary measure, pending their taking over the post at a more convenient time. In any case, the Chinese leadership by this time had aligned themselves with the Malay leadership and the latter could manipulate and control the Chinese leaders in accordance with their wishes.

To understand why there was a constant state of stress and strain in the Sabah Alliance it is necessary for us to discuss briefly the profiles of the major contending political elites.

The principal political leaders in the early history of Sabah in Malaysia were Tun Stephens, Tun Mustapha and Khoo Siak Chiew. This latter emerged as the chief Chinese leader after a contest of strength amongst themselves. All three leaders had known each other for some time, as each had sat in the colonial legislative council as a member, but each had a different orientation and outlook.

Tun Stephens was pursuing a Kadazan nationalistic movement. There is room to suggest that Tun Stephens had completely misjudged the situation in this. He thought that the Kadazans were in the majority of the population in Sabah and that like the Malays in West Malaysia, they would always occupy the majority position in the state. He did not seem to realise that the UMNO seats in Parliament were more than 50 percent of the total and that the Malays in UMNO could effectively form the federal government without Chinese or Indian cooperation. A system of weightage in favour of the rural areas, and hence Malay constituencies, had been devised to make sure that the Malays could always occupy more than 50 percent of the Parliamentary seats. This was not the case for the Kadazans. They did not form 50 percent of the population to begin with (only about 40 percent) and neither did the division or demarcation of constituencies give them a majority of seats in the 32-seat Legislative Assembly.

Tun Stephens and other Kadazan political elites had therefore erroneously calculated their potential strength in the Sabah Alliance. They thought that in the final confrontation amongst them at the general election that the Kadazans would have at least 17 seats in the Legislative Assembly. Tun Stephens had thought from the very beginning that the Kadazans as the majority race in the country should occupy the central position of power and control, just as the Malays were in West Malaysia. Further, Stephens also thought that he personally had a legitimate claim to be Sabah's number one politician for, after all, he was the chief negotiator at the I.G.C. meeting. All the rest, including Tun Mustapha, were mere passengers.

However, Tun Stephens overlooked the fact that Tun Mustapha had his own ambitions.⁷ He too had the notion that it was the Malays, the Muslims who were in the majority in Sabah. He too felt that the Malays must occupy the foremost position of power and control in Sabah, just as UMNO occupied the central position of power and control in West Malaysia. The USNO leaders thought that their party would win in at least 20 seats and would therefore, like UMNO, be in a position to govern on its own. They wanted the same privileged position as the Malays in West Malaysia. Tun Mustapha, therefore could not allow Tun Stephens and UPKO to take the lead in the struggle for power and control.

The Chinese leaders, personified by Datuk Khoo, meanwhile had decided to ally themselves with Tun Mustapha and the Malays. They saw that Tun Mustapha had the ear of the UMNO leaders, particularly the Tunku. The Chinese were not just good businessmen they were also practical people when it came to politics.

The contest in the Sabah Alliance from the beginning then was mainly two parties against one — Tun Mustapha and the Chinese leaders against Tun Stephens and the Kadazans. With this sort of a set up, it was no wonder therefore that Tun Stephens in the end became the main loser in the contest for power in the period 1963 to 1967.

The continuing stresses and strains in the Sabah Alliance were clearly not conducive to a peaceful and prosperous Sabah. The lack of consensus and cooperation in the Sabah Alliance did not augur well for nation building within Sabah or Malaysia as a whole. There was some threat that

7. Tun Stephens told this writer that Tun Mustapha misunderstood his position as Head of State. The latter thought that he was occupying the position of the departing governor Sir William Goode and was therefore taking over his functions as well.

continuing tension could pose a problem for the Federation itself. The central government saw this, and was therefore prepared to attack whoever was deemed to be the chief offender. The offender at the time, in the view of Kuala Lumpur, was Tun Stephens and the Kadazan ethnic group. Tun Stephens' and the Kadazans' offence was their call for the defence of Sabah's rights and the call for the re-examination of Sabah's terms of entry into Malaysia. In the final confrontation over this issue, Tun Stephens lost, and also the ethnic group he represented, the Kadazans, lost. Why was this?

The Sabah Alliance members did not give Tun Stephens the support he needed in his quest for a re-examination of the 20 points safeguards. In 1965 he called for a Sabah National Council meeting. All he received from the Malay and Chinese leaders at first was that they would study the situation. The Chinese, who would have been the chief beneficiaries in this matter if they allied themselves with Tun Stephens, balked and then decided to put all their weight behind Tun Mustapha and the Malays. Singapore was with Tun Stephens and so were Sarawak's SUPP party. The opposition parties in Kuala Lumpur, who were mainly Chinese, were also with Tun Stephens at this time. There was some talk of the merger of a new federation of the three S's (Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah) as an alternative to the wider Malaysia Federation. However, the Chinese did not support Tun Stephens in his call for re-examination, nor for the proposed three "S" merger. As there was no consensus, and no cooperation amongst the political elites in the Sabah Alliance, the central government won and it won totally as it did not have to budge one inch from its stand for a strong central power.

At least two other incidents can help us illustrate further the absence of consensus amongst the Sabah political elites, which in the end spelled the doom of the Alliance in Sabah. One was the controversy over the division of seats amongst the Sabah Alliance. Tun Mustapha, who had the strong backing of the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was in a commanding position at the bargaining table. With the Chinese leaders also firmly on his side he was now in an equivalent position with that of the Tunku in the Peninsula. He could afford to tell Tun Stephens and the Kadazans to take or leave what he was giving them. The Chinese did not side with Tun Stephens or the Kadazans for the same reason that they did not side with him in all the other Sabah Alliance controversies: they saw in Tun Mustapha the "winning horse" in the continuing struggle for power. As there was no consensus at the top level of the Sabah Alliance,

the alternative was to separate and contest the elections alone. Tun Stephens and the Kadazans on one side, and Tun Mustapha with the Malays and Chinese on the other. The result of the election was a tie, with no one the real winner. But the decision to contest the election against one another was the beginning of the disintegration of the Sabah Alliance.

The next and perhaps the most crucial controversy was the Cabinet arrangement after the election in 1967. Tun Mustapha simply did not want to discuss the matter with Tun Stephens and the Kadazans. He was content with forming a Cabinet just with the Malays and the Chinese, leaving the Kadazans, the majority race, unrepresented in the Sabah Cabinet line-up. Tun Stephens could not go to the central government asking it to intervene as Tun Mustapha had been able to in the past because in the eyes of the Tunku and other Malay leaders Tun Stephens and the Kadazans were trouble-makers. Besides, Tun Mustapha and the Chinese leaders with him were fulfilling for Kuala Lumpur what they wanted: a closer federal-state relationship and further, Tun Mustapha was amenable to the central government's policy of national integration and assimilation.

The central government, through one of its Ministers, Khir Johari, nevertheless tried to mediate in the matter. The federal government did not want to see the Sabah Alliance party collapse entirely as it did not augur well for a future federal-state relationship, but Khir Johari's efforts failed. Tun Stephens refused to accept a moratorium to cool the atmosphere. With the advantage of hindsight, perhaps Tun Stephens and the Kadazan leaders were over-hasty in rejecting Khir's suggestion. However, Tun Stephens' decision to reject the proposal must be understood from his point of view. To begin with, he felt slighted and offended at the way Tun Mustapha and the Chinese leaders had treated him at the crucial meeting in Tun Mustapha's residence to consider the question of Cabinet representation amongst the Sabah Alliance component parties. To put it simply, it was a matter of face, which is most important to Asians.

Further, there was the underlying reason of pride and principle. Tun Stephens felt that the Kuala Lumpur government had rejected him and had slighted him. Tun Stephens felt that he was the main force behind the I.G.C. and therefore the man who had made Sabah join Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur leaders at least owed him this much. Furthermore, the UPKO party he had formed was his whole personality and a reflection of his ideas and vision of Sabah and Malaysia. Just as Tun Mustapha was USNO, and was Tun Mustapha, Tun Stephens was UPKO, and UPKO was Tun Stephens.⁸

8. Tunku Abdul Rahman, *Viewpoint*, p. 140.

Both Tun Stephens and Tun Mustapha were playing for big stakes, and the big prize was Sabah, the state, the Chief Ministership and all the power and benefits connected with the office of Chief Minister. It was therefore preposterous that a moratorium as suggested by Khir should be observed. Kuala Lumpur could quite easily have come forward to force Tun Mustapha to change his idea of leaving the Kadazans in the cold, but they did not. Soon after this, Tun Stephens and UPKO left the Alliance, and not long after the UPKO party of Tun Stephens was dismantled and destroyed. The Sabah Alliance from 1968 to 1975 existed only in name. It was no longer used as a forum to find consensus and cooperation amongst the various political elites in Sabah. It was not necessary as USNO ruled.

In the final analysis, therefore, the Sabah Alliance party failed because the political leaders were unable to compromise and cooperate on the issues which were essential to them and to the Sabah Alliance. The Sabah Alliance had the outward look of a "plural model" as it had two component communal parties, but to all intents and purposes it was run as if it was a "unified model", an open party.

The Kadazan party, the UPKO, had to be dismantled and destroyed because amongst the Kadazan elites, too, there was not much cooperation. There was not much unity of purpose, and further, the party had been too much identified with and concentrated on the personality of one person: its founder and president, Tun Stephens. The Kadazans had suffered and still are suffering from the problems of elite cohesion and to this we now direct our attention.⁹

Problems of Kadazan Elite Cohesion

At the outset, it must be pointed out that the Kadazan party — UPKO — was a strong one. It represented a large section of Sabah's population. It was strong enough to earn a healthy respect from its adversaries — from the central government and also the Malays and the Chinese in Sabah. The strength of UPKO was concentrated on the personality of Tun Stephens. This strength, however, was also its weakness, for in the end, when UPKO's premier personality Tun Stephens decided to give in, the UPKO party also collapsed.

To understand Tun Stephens' strength and hold on the UPKO party, one must understand that the party was not only financed by Tun Stephens

9. See Ismail Kassim, *Problems of Elite Cohesion* for a study of the problems of elite cohesion amongst minority groups in Singapore.

himself and his timber company, but also that most of the UPKO Central Executive Committee members were financially dependent on Tun Stephens, either directly or indirectly. UPKO's Executive Secretary, Fred Tan (now Datuk Fred Jinu) who was a member of the Central Executive Committee was a paid employee of the party. The Secretary-General, Peter Mojuntin, was a paid director of the Nabahu Co. Ltd, a timber company of Tun Stephens'. This same company also employed Ghani Gilong as its paid director, and a whole host of many other paid directors. Indeed, when Ghani Gilong was the president of UPKO in 1966, Tun Stephens loaned him a house to stay in in Kota Kinabalu indefinitely. Richard Yap, one of UPKO's State Ministers, owed his position and salary to Tun Stephens as it was the latter who put him there. The two other UPKO Ministers, Jayasuria and Sundang, however, were in a different category. Each one was independent as each one had some means of income of their own. Sundang was himself an owner of a timber concession, but there was nothing in UPKO's minutes to show that he contributed any of his timber company income to the party.

As Tun Stephens had financial control of most of the party's Executive Committee and also the National Council members, it is not hard to imagine that most decisions of the UPKO Executive Committee and National Council were almost always recorded as "unanimous". (Jayasuria and Sundang rarely attended the meetings in any case.) The UPKO party's strength in Tun Stephens was therefore also its weakness as it turned out later. However, it was inevitable that in the beginning someone had to be dominant amongst the Kadazans and become the "Huguan Siou". The Kadazans had never been united in the past, so Kadazan elite cohesion had not existed before Malaysia was formed probably because of the geographical nature of the country and also because of historical circumstances examined at the beginning of this thesis.

The formation of the United National Kadazan Party (UNKO) was the first real sign of a Kadazan consciousness which had been growing since the early 1950s. However, when the Kadazan party was formed, not all the Kadazan leaders joined forces with Tun Stephens. Despite early setbacks in uniting the Kadazans, however, Tun Stephens did finally manage to bring in other influential Kadazan leaders from the interior, such as Sundang and his brothers and the formation of UPKO took place. UPKO was a strong party and really reflected the personality of Tun Stephens. In many ways he "owned" the party and the majority of the Central Executive Committee. This control of the party and its policy

was in some ways good for the party and for the Kadazan people as a whole, but in this strength also lay the party's fatal weakness. UPKO's ultimate failure was due to people like Payar Juman, Wong Fook Siang and others who defected. They were also indebted to Tun Stephens in various ways but the bribe of greater wealth and power was just too much for their loyalty to Stephens.

After the dissolution of UPKO the Kadazan political elites were thoroughly disunited. It was a question of each one for himself once more. It became a situation reminiscent of the days of the Brunei overlordships and the rivalries of the Kadazan Datuks amongst themselves.

The Kadazan Christians and the Kadazan Muslims, 1971-75

Between 1971 and 1975 the Kadazan political elites found themselves divided into two camps, with the majority going over to one side. The divisions were: Christians and Muslims, with the majority joining the latter after they had gone through the ceremony of "masok Malayu" (joining the Malay), or becoming "saudara bahru" (new brothers in Islam).

The first of the former UPKO Christian Kadazans to convert to the Muslim faith was Andrew (Idrus) Matakim. This gentleman's name and action appeared prominently in Peter Mojuntin's letter to the Prime Minister after Matakim became a Muslim. Matakim became a kind of "Saint Paul" of the Muslim faith by his apparent fervour to proselytise his new-found religion.¹⁰ He attacked his old faith and encouraged his fellow Kadazans in the Kudat area to follow his lead. It was shortly after that none other than the Kadazan "Huguan Siou", Tun Stephens, himself followed. He and his family embraced Islam on 5 January 1971. He too became an instrument of USIA's campaign to get more new converts to the Islamic faith. He was indeed the biggest ace in the hands of the USIA campaigners in their drive to get more new converts to the Islamic faith. He too attacked the Christian faith and by implication painted the Christian societies in the West as decadent. Soon after Tun Stephens became a Muslim more Christian former UPKO Kadazan leaders embraced the Islamic faith. These included native chiefs, village headmen and sometimes, if the newspaper reports were correct, "whole villages" embraced the Islamic faith.¹¹

10. Letter from Datuk Peter Mojuntin to the Prime Minister, Tun Razak, dated 14 November 1970.

11. *Sabah Times*, 16 November 1972.

Of the original 12 UPKO Assemblymen who were elected in 1967, only Peter Mojuntin, Herman Luping, Anthony Undan and Anthony Gibon remained Christian. The latter two Kadazan leaders were inactive in politics, however. This meant that of the original UPKO Kadazan politicians only two remained at all active in the period 1971 and 1975. They were Peter Mojuntin and Luping. They were assisted in the defence of their religion by a few other Kadazan Christian stalwarts and Chinese Christians but these latter were not involved in politics at all. Former politicians like Richard Yap, Joe Manjaji, Stephen Tibok, Amadeus Leong all decided to keep a low profile and did not actively come forward to defend their faith as Peter Mojuntin and Luping did.

The religious issue, which was very important insofar as the Kadazans were concerned, became a "battle" not only against the Malays led by Tun Mustapha, but also against former UPKO Kadazan Christians such as Matakim, Tun Stephens, Suffian Koroh and Ghani Gilong. The odds were clearly against the Christian Kadazan leaders from the beginning.

The Catholic Pastoral Council of Sabah, which was formed shortly after the formation of USIA was not strong enough to withstand this latter's organisation.¹² To begin with, the USIA had powerful political backing. The Chief Minister, Tun Mustapha himself was the President of USIA. It was also an affiliate of Perkim, a Malaysia-wide Muslim Organisation with Tunku Abdul Rahman as the President. USIA also had the backing of UMNO leaders as well as the central government in Kuala Lumpur. In Sabah it had powerful campaigners such as Matakim, Stephen Koroh (now Tan Sri Suffian Koroh), Ghani Gilong, Tun Stephens and many more erstwhile Kadazan Christians. In no time, whole villages in the interior became predominantly Muslims. The villagers in the Kundasang area (Ranau district) for example all became Muslims. The erstwhile

12. The Catholics were the most numerous amongst the various Christian denominations in Sabah in the 1971-74 period. An unofficial figure of the break-down of the various denominations was as follows:

(1) Protestant Church in Sabah	10,000
(2) Basel Christian Church in Sabah	12,000
(3) Borneo Evangelical Mission	21,000
(4) Anglican Communion	20,000
(5) Seventh Day Adventist	15,000
(6) Baptist Church	1,000
(7) Roman Catholics	100,000

Those in items 1 to 6 were mostly non-Kadazans, although there were a large number of the Rungus Kadazans belonging to the Borneo Evangelical Mission. Many Kadazans were also members of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA). The majority of Catholics, however, are Kadazans.

ubiquitous village pigs roaming the village area were no more to be seen. In their place were goats.¹³

Furthermore, the USIA had money in abundance. Many of USIA's political leaders were millionaires in their own right as they possessed large tracts of timber land. The Chinese "towkays" who became Muslims, such as Ali Tan (formerly Tan Sioe Tie) and Abu Bakar Tan (Tan Tee Bak) were also multi-millionaires with huge timber concessions to work on. USIA did not have the problems of raising funds for donations from these people. It is also said that the USIA organisation was granted a huge tract of timber land.¹⁴ Apparently the timber concession was allocated to one of the USIA's top committee members and he held USIA's timber concession in trust for the organisation. USIA was also said to have received large donations from overseas. Tun Mustapha's frequent visits to the Middle East were not all in vain insofar as the Muslim religion was concerned. He made contact with many influential and rich Arabs and these people donated to the Muslim cause in Sabah.

Confronted with the array of USIA's "arsenal" as it were, the Christian church in Sabah had very little show.¹⁵ However, the church's attitude was one of caution and calm and not to meet the situation in a head-on confrontation. To a young priest who had written protesting about forced conversions to Islam the Bishop wrote:¹⁶

Pardon me if I suggest that we make an act of faith in Jesus Christ before I write this reply and you read it. That we are called, sent and fortified by Jesus Christ to do a job not of ours but His, both smoothness or hindrance and success or failure in this work are His concern rather than ours. "Lord Thy will be done."

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13. One village headman from upper Penampang district complained to this writer in 1972 that he and his people became Muslims because they were promised that they would receive buffaloes and goats to replace their pigs. However, this promise was broken and all they received were the Malay national dress and the hat. This village head man said that they had all resigned as Muslims and considered themselves as free from any religious affiliation.
 14. This was a closely guarded secret. The estimate is that the USIA owned a large tract of timber land but not in its own name but in the name of proxies.
 15. A Kadazan Catholic priest told this writer that in a way the 'religious persecution of Christians' in Sabah was a blessing in disguise. He said thousands of Catholics who did not bother to go to church suddenly came to church every Sunday and the church itself became very active to urge young people to join the priesthood. Many young Kadazans had answered this call and were in various seminaries throughout Malaysia.
 16. Letter from the Bishop (reply) to Rev. Fr De Wit dated 30 January 1975.

In due time I will ask the parish councils to send an appeal with complaint to the proper authority of the government on behalf of the Catholics in those two schemes.

And to the Catholics in the two schemes, the Bishop wrote, *inter alia*:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter/report to the Sabah Padi Board....I have informed all parish councils of your difficulty and asked all your fellow Catholics to pray for you and for a quick solution to your difficulty. Please be assured of sympathy and support of all your fellow Catholics throughout Sabah.

The various parish councils which were organised throughout the state by the Christians themselves, however, were weak politically and economically. Like the Pastoral Council of Sabah which is the parent body of the parish councils, these little parish councils did not have powerful political backing. Even Rome was quiet. When Peter Mojuntin made his famous speech on 5 November 1970 at the luncheon in honour of the newly consecrated Bishop Peter Chung, he was indirectly asking for Rome to intervene in Sabah on behalf of the Catholics. Rome was represented at the consecration by Cardinal Jean Jadot but he opted to remain silent and did not even speak to the press on the matter.¹⁷

The question of Kadazan elite cohesion in the matter of religion between 1971 and 1975 did not even arise. There was none. The Christian Kadazan political elites were few and when they presented their objection to the work of USIA they were alone and not supported by other Kadazan political leaders who were more rich and influential and had already converted. Thus, when Tun Mustapha decided to amend the Constitution to make Islam the official religion of Sabah in 1973 no one was there to oppose him.

The amendment to the Sabah Constitution to make Islam the official religion of the state was made on 25 September 1973. According to the record, it was passed unanimously with only four abstentions. These four were Peter Mojuntin, Luping, Anthony Gibon and Anthony Undan.¹⁸

17. In an interview with Sir William Goode in London on 12 August 1983, he told this writer that the British government was concerned about the expulsion of foreign priests by Tun Mustapha.

18. See Sabah Legislative Assembly Debates dated 25 September 1973. Bahasa Malaysia and Islam became the official language and official religion of Sabah respectively. Datuk Yassin visited the writer and Peter Mojuntin the night before the Assembly met to pass the two amendments to the Constitution. He warned them of repercussions if they voted against the amendments. Both Mojuntin and the writer did not vote. They were absent when the roll call was made in the Assembly.

Out of the 38 Assemblymen (32 elected and six nominated) there were only five Christian Kadazan Assemblymen left. These were Peter Mojuntin, Herman Luping, Anthony Undan, Anthony Gibon and the UPKO defector of 1967, Payar Juman. Of the Chinese members in the Assembly, only Pang Tet Tshung had not embraced Islam. The Tawau representative, Edwin Chan had already converted as had the nominated member for Sandakan who took the name of Farid Tan. There was therefore no problem for Tun Mustapha in getting the two-thirds majority required to amend the Sabah State Constitution even if the six Assemblymen had voted against the amendment.¹⁹

On the question of the national language or Bahasa Malaysia the Kadazan political leaders of all religions were unanimous in their support for its speedy implementation. Thus in 1969 when USNO "bumiputra" leaders²⁰ called for the speeding-up of the use of Bahasa Malaysia as the official language, there was a consensus of opinion amongst the Kadazan political elites not to oppose Bahasa Malaysia. Thus, when the Language Bill was introduced at the same time as the Islamic religion bill on 25 September 1973, no one objected to making Bahasa Malaysia the sole official language in Sabah. In 1974, the Radio Malaysia Sabah abolished the Kadazan, Murut, Bajau and Chinese broadcast programmes. The objections to this were muted and confined to mere grumbles of dissatisfaction. The Kadazan Cultural Association, which was now reduced to organising annual Harvest Festival celebrations for Tun Stephens to attend, remained quiet. No Kadazan political leaders came out openly to object to the closing of their language broadcast over Radio Malaysia Sabah.

On the matter of education, the Kadazan political elites were also quiet. They shrugged and left this matter entirely to the authorities. They did not seem to mind that their children were educated in Bahasa Malaysia when it became the medium of instruction in schools. The Sabah Cultural Kadazan Association too was quiet on this matter and it made no effort to express any concern that their children were fast losing their ability to speak their own mother tongue.

19. When the votes were taken at the Assembly both Mojuntin and this writer were in the coffee lounge.

20. *Sabah Times*, 4 September 1969. The call to make Bahasa Malaysia an official language in Sabah was headed by Datuk Ghani Gilong. The other signatories were practically all former UPKO Assemblymen and M.P.s. This was a plus for Tun Mustapha for his clever use of the Kadazan leaders to promote his policy and intention to make Bahasa Malaysia an official language in Sabah. See Chapter 1 on Tun Stephens' stand on this issue during the IGC meeting.

In 1971-75, the only matter on which the Christian Kadazan political elite registered strong objections was the religious issue. The process of enforced Islamisation was opposed and objected to by those who remained Christians, but they were very few and lacked the political and economic strength of the Muslim organisations and Muslim leaders.

The only state wide manifestation of Kadazan culture to be maintained was the annual Harvest Festival celebrated as a holiday, but the emphasis by the state government was that the Kadazan Harvest Festival was for all Sabahans and not just Kadazans. It was a festival honouring all the bumiputras who were farmers and agriculturalists. However, the Kadazans continued to celebrate the occasion as theirs particularly and all the Kadazan political elites were united in their support for this festival. There was, however, a noticeable lack of enthusiasm amongst them for wearing the black Kadazan national dress. Tun Stephens himself, who used to attend these festivals in Kadazan attire with his wife, now attended the festivals in the newly introduced Malaysian form of dress — the "batik shirt". Kadazanism, the Kadazan national consciousness, was dead or dormant in this period of Tun Mustapha's power.

Within a Unified Multi-Racial Political System, 1976-82

We have seen the rise of multi-racial politics in 1976 and the defeat of the closed party of USNO and Tun Mustapha in that year. We have also seen that Tun Stephens and Peter Mojuntin did not long enjoy power, for soon after the Berjaya party's win over the USNO party, they died in a plane crash. It is therefore not possible to see what action Tun Stephens or Peter Mojuntin might have taken insofar as Kadazanism was concerned. Tun Stephens did, however, express concern about the large influx of southern Filipino Muslims allowed into the state. He saw that these people could constitute a social and political problem for Sabah in the future. In his speeches before the 1976 elections he had said that his government when elected would send these Filipinos back to where they belonged. He also wrote a letter to the Foreign Minister in Kuala Lumpur about the matter.²¹

On the other hand Harris, the successor Chief Minister, had openly welcomed these new immigrants from the Southern Philippines. In a news-

21. A federal government official told this writer that it was government's policy to allow the Southern Filipino Muslims to enter Sabah freely.

paper report captioned: "Refugees: Signs of Acceptance", he told the "refugees" in a ceremony handing house-keys to them that Sabah needed them.²²

There is no consensus of opinion amongst the Kadazan political elites, nor amongst the Chinese political elites in the Berjaya party regarding the refugee situation in the state. They have not come

direct confrontation with the authority on the issue of Kadazan language or education.²⁴ Most did not want to see an open confrontation with Harris as they felt that they could achieve their aims more by quiet and gentle persuasion than by open direct confrontation. Furthermore, they did not want the Kuala Lumpur government to misinterpret their actions as a revival of the 1965-67 rise of Kadazan nationalism.

On the matter of the Harvest Festival the new leaders, politicians and non-politicians in the S.K.K.S., allowed the state government the honour of staging an official celebration and to pay for the celebration cost.²⁵ Thus, for four years from 1980 the state government under Harris allocated funds for the Kadazan Harvest Festival celebration. The state government through government officials with leaders from the S.K.K.S. and United Sabah Dusun Association (USDA) arranged for the annual celebration. The word "Kadazan" was dropped and the Kadazan Harvest Festival was no longer called the "Kadazan Harvest Festival": it was simply called the Harvest Festival. Even some of the Kadazan Harvest Festival songs where the term "Kadazan" is mentioned were replaced.

That Harris and the state government were able to take over from the Kadazans the celebration of their own festival is indicative of the disunity amongst the Kadazan leaders. The lack of cohesiveness amongst the Kadazan political elite is very obvious.

The state government did not like to see the revival or the increase in the number of cultural associations in Sabah either. In October 1977, therefore, Harris announced the formation of a Sabah Cultural Association and put a Kadazan leader as its head to organise and form the association. The aim was to unite all the cultural associations. In a speech in 1978, Harris said, *inter alia*:²⁶

The activities of these cultural associations under whatever name they operate, are dedicated to the identification and preservation of their respective cultures....But if they go beyond and lead to ethnic groupings and vying for power resulting in rivalries and suspicions and jealousies, and consequent political dissensions, then the leaders must pause to think....Not only will their efforts be counter productive but they will constantly undermine our efforts

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- 24. Interview with a former State Cabinet Minister in the Berjaya government.
 - 25. Interview with a S.K.K.S. leader. He said it was better to allow Harris and the state government to organise the harvest celebration as it would make things easier to all concerned.
 - 26. In 'Peranan Persatuan Kebudayaan Dalam Membangun Negara' (unification of cultures for nation-building), published by the Chief Minister's department as JKM No. 19.

at the great task of national unity and nation building. It is with all these considerations in mind that in October last year on the occasion of the opening....I announced the formation of a Sabah Cultural Association to bring together all the cultural organisations under one roof in line with the national cultural policy.

Lately, the SKKS has taken a positive stand over the language issue and the 'Pribumi' issue.²⁷

At the annual general meeting of the SKKS held in March 1981, the SKKS leaders passed a resolution asking the federal government to introduce the reading of news items in the Kadazan language over T.V. Malaysia. Another resolution was a request to the authority in charge of RTM (Sabah) to re-introduce the "gong" at the start of the Kadazan/Dusun programmes over Radio Malaysia (Sabah). The playing of the "gong" as the signature tune at the opening of the Kadazan programme had been dropped in 1977. But more importantly still the SKKS passed a resolution urging the state government to discard the use of the term "Pribumi" and to make the term "Kadazan" the official name of the Kadazan people.

Other resolutions passed at the annual general meeting of the SKKS in March 1984 were:

- (i) To ask the state government to allocate to the SKKS and approve an application for 5000 hectares of timber land to finance all programmes undertaken by the association.
- (ii) To give more air time to the Kadazan/Dusun radio programme.
- (iii) To ask the State Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports to finance activities related to the development of culture in the state.
- (iv) To urge the government that the Harvest Festival holidays could also be enjoyed by the residents of Labuan after the island had become a federal territory.
- (v) To set up a co-ordination or research committee to find ways to bring together the various dialects used by the Kadazan/Dusun community in Sabah.
- (vi) To urge government to make Bahasa Kadazan a medium of instruction in all primary schools and kindergartens where the majority of the students were Kadazans or Dusuns.
- (vii) To urge the SKKS to hold civic courses and youth conventions to increase the knowledge of the Kadazan youths as regards their culture.
- (viii) To urge the SKKS officials to circulate reports of the activities of the association to all branches at least once a month.
- (ix) And finally to bestow the title of "Huguan Siou" or "paramount leader" on Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan who was re-elected

27. *Daily Express*, 5 March 1984.

President of the SKKS. The resolution said that this was to fill in the vacuum created by the late Tun Stephens.

This latter resolution to confer the "Huguan Siou" title on Pairin was probably a public demonstration on the part of the Kadazan community to begin to show their unity and solidarity again at last. For it was as recently as September 1983 that Harris had publicly told Pairin to resign.²⁸

In a front page story the *Daily Express* reported a confrontation between Pairin and Harris. The confrontation took place at a Berjaya leaders' meeting on 24 September 1983. This meeting of Berjaya leaders from all over Sabah was a monthly occurrence initiated by Harris. He wanted to encourage criticism by Berjaya non-Assemblymen at an open meeting with Berjaya Assemblymen, M.P.s and Ministers. Pairin, a Vice-President of the Berjaya party, and a former State Minister, criticised government policies. Pairin was speaking not as a vice-president but as a leader of the Berjaya delegation from his constituency, Tambunan. However, Harris did not take the criticism kindly and told Pairin to resign from the party. According to reports, Pairin tried to explain the reason for his speech, but Harris rudely told him to go. Pairin then went to his seat, but Harris told him to go out and pointed to the door. Pairin then left the room, followed by the Tambunan delegation. Not one of the other Kadazan delegations from other Kadazan constituencies, such as Penampang, Kudat, Inanam etc., stood in defence of Pairin. Not one left the room to follow the Kadazan SKKS leader who was rudely driven out of the conference room by the Malay Chief Minister.

This was a dramatic demonstration of Kadazan political elites' disunity and lack of cohesiveness.²⁹ It is not known why the large number of Kadazan leaders in the Berjaya party seemed unable or unwilling to speak out for Kadazan rights or even for Kadazan pride. The State Cabinet had at one time four Kadazans as full State Cabinet Ministers, with one of them serving as Deputy Chief Minister. In the Assistant Ministers line-up, there were at least five Kadazans. The members of the Legislative Assembly also had a number of Kadazans, so that if they combined with the Chinese members, they would in fact have formed the "core" of the leadership and might even have ousted the Malay Chief

28. *Ibid.*, 29 March 1983.

29. A young Kadazan leader who was present at the meeting told this writer that Joseph Pairin Kitingan's expulsion from the meeting room by the Chief Minister was most shameful and yet not one of the Kadazan leaders stood up to speak for Joseph.

Minister. However, the Kadazan political leaders never tried to go against the Malay Chief Minister and never tried to speak of cooperation with the Chinese leaders in Berjaya. There were two attempted "coups" against Harris, but both were inspired by the Malays themselves.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Kadazans in the Berjaya party did not appear to have any elite cohesion was that there were two camps: Muslim Kadazans and Christian Kadazans with the former in a slightly advantageous position insofar as numbers were concerned. The other reason which was commonly mentioned by the critics of the Kadazan political elite's lack of cohesion was that most of them "owed" something to Harris the leader of the Berjaya party.

The Kadazan political elites in the Berjaya party appeared to be unable to give the Kadazan community the leadership they wanted. They are not united as to how best to represent the Kadazan community and their needs for the future.

However, in the cultural association, namely, the SKKS, it seemed a different matter. Between 1976 and 1983, the SKKS had quietly but confidently worked out its own programme for a possible rebirth of Kadazan consciousness. The resolutions passed in March 1984 were perhaps a manifestation of Kadazans wishes and dreams of the future. They are gradually seeing that the Kadazans are losing their identity and are wanting to remedy this situation. They do not now appear to be afraid to air their concerns and needs openly, and only time will tell what Harris and the Malay leaders in Kuala Lumpur will do.

The Kadazan dilemma then is in many ways the same as the dilemma of the Malays as described by Dr Mahathir, namely, the pursuit of equality in the political, economic and social sectors. But the Kadazan dilemma is compounded by the fact that neither do they want irrevocably to lose their Kadazan identity nor do they want to be fully assimilated into the Malay culture.

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