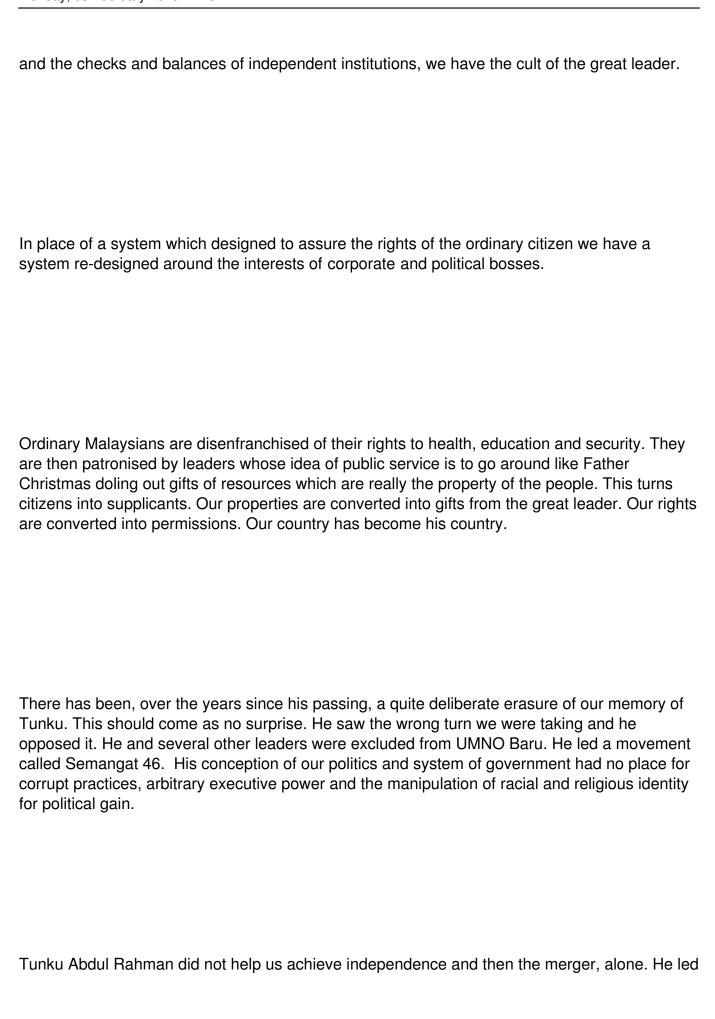


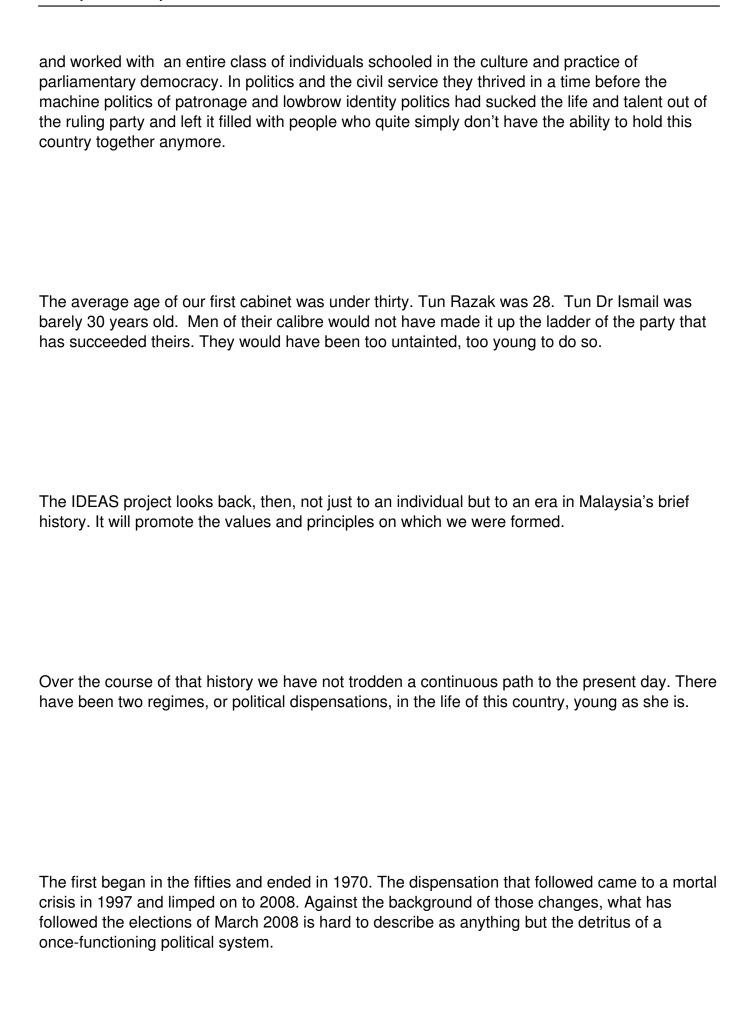
First published in The Malaysian Insider

FEB 8 – Tunku Abdul Rahman was the founder of Malaysia. That has been obscured by an intervening period in which his memory has been brushed out of our national consciousness.

He brought together a Malaysia that had come together "through our own free will and desire in the true spirit of brotherhood and love of freedom", in a union arrived at "by mutual consent by debate and discussion...through friendly argument and compromise," and "in the spirit of co-operation and concord."

Malaysia has forgotten Tunku, and Tunku would not recognise Malaysia – Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah Monday, 08 February 2010 14:45
This was the basis for Malaysia he worked for and established, and that his life embodied. That basis has been replaced by something alien to it, his memory has been suppressed, and our history revised.
Part of the reason our collective memory of Tunku has faded, and that Tunku would not recognise today's Malaysia, is that Tunku and his generation built institutions that empowered the people rather than cults of personality to concentrate power and wealth in themselves. They reached instinctively for democratic decision-making. The concepts and precepts of constitutional democracy were part of their natural vocabulary and instinctive reactions. They knew who the country belonged to, and that they lived to serve.
The day of Tunku's funeral was not even declared a public holiday. It is no accident that the erasure of his memory has gone hand in hand with the erosion of our institutions. Tunku built up a system of good civil service in which ordinary citizens did not need to see so-and-so to get things done. This has been replaced by a domineering style of leadership in which what you get done depends on who you know. Of course the rich and powerful have better connections.
In place of the protection for ordinary citizens guaranteed by popular representation, rule of law





Malaysia has forgotten Tunku, and Tunku would not recognise Malaysia – Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah Monday, 08 February 2010 14:45
If any one of us was tempted to imagine that Malaysia had outgrown the sordid events of 1997, the government's newspapers bring to our breakfast tables each day Sodomy 2, to remind us that after another decade of sloganeering, as Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin pointed out, we have come full circle to find ourselves back at the doorstep of our debased institutions and a Constitution that is increasingly inoperative.
The progress of the trial of the leader of the Opposition, the government's apparent ignorance of the sovereign rights of the states and the way in which we have allowed religious issues to be manipulated, point to that conclusion. The constitutional crisis in Perak, in which a government has been installed by illegal means, the failure to implement two royal commissions of inquiry findings, point to that conclusion.
The barbarous political culture promoted by the establishment media brings us full circle, and drives home the point: our system of government is still in 1997. We are still in the after-wash of a wave of bad taste, authoritarianism and arbitrary power that destroyed our practice of parliamentary democracy, compromised our judiciary and police, and disenfranchised our people.
To modify Tunku's words, we now have a democracy "existing in name, but grievously compromised in substance, reality and fact."

Our penchant for slogans is a reflection of our dislocation from the living reality of constitutional and parliamentary democracy. We don't need slogans. We need our Constitution back. This, then, is the context in which IDEAS has adopted its noble purpose. The efforts of idealistic young people, attuned to the principles of parliamentary democracy and to our real history, and equipped with a plan to effect that purpose, are exactly what we need at this time. We need this and other such efforts from the young. They should not let their repugnance at the ugliness of our political system turn them away from it. It is precisely because we have a broken political system that it is so ugly. It is precisely because our main political parties are bound to infantile ethnic politics that we are now stagnant and declining as a country. Instead, I hope they see the mindlessness and ugliness of our present politics as a call to service. I urge young people to rise to the task of changing our political system. We have left it to "the deranged" for too long as Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin calls them. To expect change from the incumbents is to expect, in the Malay saying, the mice to repair the gourd... "Bagai tikus baiki labu-labu." It is time for us to understand, discuss, organise and act together. Tunku was a true Malaysian. As we have forgotten him, we have also forgotten how to be Malaysians. We must learn again how to be free and equal citizens of a constitutional

democracy. In our national life we must learn again how to be a Federation of sovereign states

governed by the rule of law.

Monday, 08 Februa	
	obbed of our memory, and have had it replaced with slogans, but we have also our country. Let us come together to recover both.
	he personal opinion of the writer or publication. The Malaysian Insider does not wulless specified.