

SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE MONOGRAPHS

CHIN UNG-HO

CHINESE POLITICS IN SARAWAK

A STUDY OF THE SARAWAK
UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY



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*For my parents
Joseph Chin Ting Ming
and
Lao Küng Ngo*

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With this study I hope to encourage more local people to look seriously at Sarawak politics. Thus far, practically all serious attempts to record Sarawak politics are done by non-Sarawakians and even then, these are only a handful. As Sarawak changes into a complex society, local perspectives on political change and processes are urgently required and I hope this study, with its limitations, is seen as a worthwhile contribution from someone who was born and raised in Sarawak.

Lastly, no one, other than myself, bears responsibility for this book.

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Abbreviations and Glossary

<i>adat lama</i>	indigenous customs and laws
BBCAU	British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit
Berjasa	Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak
Bersatu	Parti Demokratik Bersatu
BMF	Bumiputera Malaysia Finance
BN	Barisan Nasional
BN3	Barisan Nasional Tiga (PBB, SUPP, and SNAP)
<i>bumiputera</i>	indigenous people
CACC	PBDS Chinese Affairs Consultative Committee
CC	SUPP Central Committee
CCC	PAS Chinese Consultative Council
CCO	Clandestine Communist Organization
<i>ceramah</i>	a political meeting in a non-public place, usually held in a small hall or coffee-shop
CHSBM	Chung Hua Schools Board of Management
Council Negri	Sarawak State Legislative Assembly
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPM	Communist Party of Malaya/Malaysia
CSBM	Chinese Schools Board of Management
CWC	SUPP Central Working Committee
DAP	Democratic Action Party
Dewan Negara	Senate (Upper House)
Dewan Rakyat	House of Representatives (Lower House)
DO	District Officer
DUN	Dewan Undangan Negeri (replaced the Council Negri)
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
<i>hsien</i>	counties
<i>huaqiao</i>	overseas Chinese or Chinese sojourner
IGC	Inter-Governmental Committee Agreement
ISA	Internal Security Act
<i>Kangchew</i>	area headman
<i>Kapitan China</i>	appointed leader of the Chinese community
KCCC	Kuching Chinese Chamber of Commerce
<i>khalwat</i>	illegal 'close proximity' between male and female

<i>ketua masyarakat</i>	village headman
KMC	Kuching Municipal Council
KMT	Kuomintang
<i>kongsi</i>	company
KRDC	Kuching Rural District Council
LSD	Sarawak Land and Survey Department
MCA	Malayan/Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malayan/Malaysian Indian Congress
MMC	Miri Municipal Council
MNU	Malay National Union
MP	Member of Parliament
MSC	Malaysia Solidarity Convention
MSCC	Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee
<i>nanyang</i>	Chinese community in South-East Asia
NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operations Council
PAJAR	Parti Anak Jati Sarawak
PANAS	Party Negara
PAP	People's Action Party
PARAKU	Pasokan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara
PAS	Partai Islam Se Malaysia
PBB	Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu
PBDS	Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak
PBS	Parti Bersatu Sabah
PERMAS	Parti Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak
Pesaka	Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak
PETRONAS	Petroleum Nasional Berhad
PGRS	Pasokan Guerrilla Rakyat Sarawak
PKI	Parti Komunis Indonesia
PLUS	Parti Buruh Sarawak
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
POO	Public Order Ordinance 1962
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PPSR	Preservation of Public Security Regulations
PRB	Parti Rakyat Brunei
RRO	Restricted Residence Ordinance
SAO	Sarawak Administrative Officer
SAPO	Sarawak People's Organization
SAYA	Sarawak Advanced Youths Association
SCA	Sarawak Chinese Association
SCO	Sarawak Communist Organization (<i>see also</i> CCO)
<i>semananjung</i>	peninsula
SFO	Sarawak Farmers' Organization
SLL	Sarawak Liberation League
SNAP	Sarawak National Party
SOC	State Operations Council
SOC DYL	Sarawak Overseas Chinese Democratic Youth League

STA	Sarawak Timber Association
SUCA	Sarawak United Chinese Association
SUDC	Sibu Urban District Council
SUF	Sarawak United Front
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
TNКУ	Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara
<i>tokay</i>	successful and influential Chinese businessmen
<i>tuai rumah</i>	longhouse head or village chief
UCA	United Chinese Association
UMAT	United Malaysia Timur Party
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UNKO	United National Kadazan Organization
USNA	United Sarawak Natives Association
USNO	United Sabah National Organization
UN	United Nations

Note

Non-English words have been spelt as they appear on documents. Conforming with this, place names are kept consistent with the period under discussion. For example, 'Simanggang' is used to refer to the town before 1973 when it became 'Sri Aman'. The old spelling of 'Batu Kawah' is used whenever appropriate, as is the recent spelling 'Batu Kawa'.

1

Introduction

THE study of political parties has been one of the primary concerns of political scientists. Its behaviour is crucial to the understanding of how societies work, develop, and change. This is especially so in developing countries where political parties are often the key instigators of political, social, and economic change for the better as most developing nations have low standards of living. This is in part due to economies almost exclusively dependent on extractive and primary industries for exports. It can be assumed that the majority of the population must devote most of their time to the main human priorities: food and shelter. In addition to low standards of living, most developing countries have a rapidly growing population, putting pressure on the search for food and shelter, and thus pushing more people into subsistence agriculture and life-styles.¹ Illiteracy is another obstacle to political participation, as often less than 50 per cent of a developing country is literate. Cultural and traditional cleavages such as ethnic status, religion, and regional and kinship loyalties interact with one another and render the political process—and participation within it—a highly complex affair. Any economic development has, for the most part, benefited the urban populace at the expense of the rural poor, thus leading to the problem of increasing inequality between the rich urban and the poor rural sectors.² All these factors contribute to political apathy and low levels of political participation.

Here lies the classic dilemma for many political leaders in developing nations. Too little participation may hamper or slow down political, social, and economic development. The very success of reforms and modernization relies on the creation of effective political institutions, especially political parties. These institutions in turn rely on citizen participation. Yet too much participation may be destabilizing. The tensions resulting from these social and political changes may lead to social chaos.³

In Malaysia, all the problems associated with developing countries discussed above are evident. In addition to the limits of political participation and the dominant role of the Barisan Nasional (National Front or BN) coalition government, the plural population of Malaysia creates a political climate where there are clear and deep ethnic cleavages. These divisions contribute directly to the establishment of ethnically based political parties.⁴ According to Donald Horowitz, an ethnic political party is

a political party that 'derives its support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups) and serves the interest of that group'.⁵ The rationale behind the formation of these ethnic political parties is quite straightforward. Where ethnic loyalties are deep, there is a strong tendency to organize along ethnic lines, particularly in communities in which only a few members of different ethnic groups meet at national level politics.⁶

In Malaysia there are basically three ethnic groups with distinct customs, cultures, religions, and languages. This leads observers of Malaysian politics to concur that ethnicity fundamentally decides the essence, feature, character, trends, and limits of Malaysian politics.⁷ Scholars adopting this perspective argue that politics in Malaysia revolves around the tension and conflict or accommodation between the indigenous community, the Malays, which possesses political power, and the immigrant, non-Malay communities, the Chinese and Indians, which dominate the Malaysian economy. This ethnic perspective is based on the fact that for the most part, support for political parties in Malaysia is along communal lines. Thus, for the Malay population, political participation in parties is mainly restricted to Malay-based parties such as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS). For the Chinese population the political party perceived to represent Chinese interests is the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and, for the Indian community, the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).⁸ The MCA and the MIC have constitutions that bar other ethnic groups from membership.⁹ Even in political parties that espouse non-racial politics, like the establishment Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan) and the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP), the majority of members and leaders come from the Chinese community. Their policies and issues, especially DAP's, have been, for the most part, concentrated on the non-Malay community and its interests.¹⁰

In Sarawak there are problems with this approach. The situation is often confusing as there are as many as 20 ethnic groups competing for political power. This is a fundamental point because, within any theoretical scheme based on ethnicity, each ethnic community is treated as a homogeneous bloc with its own political voice to 'bargain' with other groups. However, many ethnic groups in Sarawak do not have a separate party, and it could be argued that many smaller ethnic groupings have been completely marginalized. Thus ethnic cleavages are more complex and coincide less perfectly with parties than the situation in Peninsular Malaysia.¹¹

Political Parties in Sarawak

Because of the number and diversity of ethnic groupings in Sarawak, political parties have, in practice, to be more multiracial in their membership than their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia. Not one ethnic group in Sarawak can claim to have more than one-third of Sarawak's

population. Thus for electoral success, most political parties in the state have been forced, strictly speaking, to be multiracial and to represent more than one racial grouping. However, this does not mean that within these political parties, power is shared evenly among different ethnic groups. Rather, the multiracial front is very much like the front put up by parties like the Gerakan. Real power is still vested in one particular ethnic group that controls the party's decision-making process. If Horowitz's assertion that a political party can be classified as 'ethnic-based' if it represents 'an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups)' is accepted, then Sarawak has an ethnic political party system.

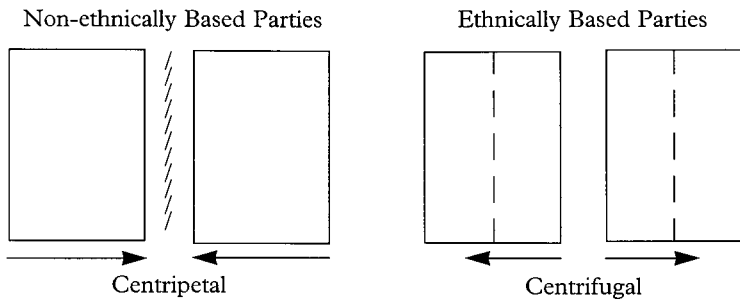
The Malay/Melanau grouping is often identified with the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), which champions the issues of the Malay/Melanau and the Muslim community in Sarawak. The Chinese are predominantly supporters of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). The Dayak vote, consisting primarily of Iban and Bidayuh voters, is primarily split among two parties, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) and Sarawak National Party (SNAP). Thus, the bulk of PBDS and SNAP activities is centred on Dayak interests and issues. However, there are also pockets of Dayak support for PBB and SUPP.

The votes of the other indigenous groups, such as the Kelabits, Kayans, and Kenyahs (known collectively as the KKK), are scattered among the four main parties named above. In fact, PBDS was formed by former SNAP members who left the party after internal party elections in 1983. Even with the birth of the PBDS, the Iban vote is still split among the many different political parties. At the simplest level, most Dayaks and other indigenous groups who are Muslims tend to support PBB, the Chinese tend to support SUPP, and the non-Muslim Dayaks tend to concentrate on PBDS and SNAP with a small minority of Dayak support for SUPP.

Thus, it would appear that ethnicity does not fully explain the nature of political parties in Sarawak. Religious cleavages cut across, and sometimes are as salient as, the ethnic barrier. However, race is still the key political weapon. Thus, the Melanau ethnic grouping controls PBB, the Chinese control SUPP and SNAP while the Ibans control PBDS.

Horowitz¹² also argues that in an ethnic party competition configuration, party competition occurs within ethnic groups and not across ethnic group lines (Figure 1.1) In a non-ethnic party system, say a two-party system, competition makes the parties converge because both parties compete for the 'floating' voter, whose views lie between the two parties. This, Horowitz argues, creates a pull towards moderation. The competition of the two parties is centripetal. However, with ethnic political parties, the only 'floating' votes are not in the middle but on the side. Thus for these ethnic political parties to consolidate their votes, they have to move further away from the other parties and concentrate more on their ethnic group.

FIGURE 1.1
Direction of Competition in Non-ethnic and
Ethnic Two-party Systems



Key: Each rectangle represents a party.
Dotted lines indicate the potential location of new competitor parties in ethnic party systems.
Hatched lines indicate the probable location of floating voters (defined below).
Arrows indicate the direction of competitive appeals, convergent or divergent.

Source: Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 347.

Note: From the figure, it is clear that the two non-ethnically based parties form part of a single competitive system. Floating voters, potentially available to support either party, tend to be located between the parties. Competition, and thus the nature of competitive appeals, brings the positions of the parties closer together. By contrast, the two ethnically based parties are not in the same competitive system. Since the parties are ascriptively defined, no significant number of floating voters is located between them. Competition, if it comes, will be located on the flanks in the form of new parties appealing for support within each ethnic group. Voters who may shift party allegiances are located at the extremes. The threat of such competition drives both parties to protect their flanks, thus pushing their positions apart.

Patron-Clientism

Given this setting, R. S. Milne has argued that politics, and presumably political parties, in Sarawak (and Sabah) can be explained within the framework of a patron-client relationship.¹³ James Scott has defined this relationship as

a special case of dyadic (two person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influences and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron.¹⁴

The key element, according to this definition, is the unequal relationship and exchange. The inequality is expressed in terms of power, status, or wealth, or a combination of all three. Likewise, exchange takes place because the patron (superior) has the ability to give or provide what the

client (subordinate) wants, and vice versa, but with an important distinction. The patron makes the final decision as to whether there is to be an exchange or not. In a nutshell, the relationship between a patron and a client is lopsided and power is disproportionate.

In Sarawak's case, it would appear that those who fit the above description of a patron are the political leaders in the state, such as the chief minister and members of his Cabinet, state assemblymen, individuals with wealth—especially those in the timber industry—and others with status. Political leaders, as patrons, in Sarawak must provide some sort of support to their followers. In the same vein, the political party as a whole must be in a position to be a patron in order to reward its members. The party members receive support from the party in the form of protection, jobs, contracts, and sometimes outright financial support. The members (clients) in return help the party to mobilize more support, especially during elections, attend to the party's administrative needs, and in some cases, provide personal support to certain political leaders within the party.

Here the concept of major and minor networks in the patron-client theoretical scheme is important.¹⁵ The major network consists of established political leaders—who are also sometimes government leaders—in a position to affect or make major political decisions. The minor network consists of individuals, usually party members, who function or provide the link between the major network and the 'ordinary person'. Members of the minor network tend to be the political party's middle echelon cadres, or regional leaders such as mayors and union organizers. The major networks are basically political élites, and the minor networks consist of politicians who aspire to be part of those élites. They are also, in a sense, 'little patrons', who connect the populace or clients to the major networks of 'real' patrons.

The implication of patron-clientism on political parties is that it creates natural factions within the same party.¹⁶ This is because most political parties have more than one patron, and the relationship between the patron and his client is largely on the personal level. Hence, a patron in a political party is also likely to be a faction leader. However, one important distinction must be made here. The patron-client bond in the party is strong as long as both have needs which the other can fulfil. The bond will become fragile or even be lost when the patron no longer needs the client's support, or cannot provide the client with the benefits or status they require as a reward. Should this happen, the client will simply switch support, becoming a client of another patron within the same party, or even within a different party altogether.

A powerful patron within the party would have the support of several small or one large faction, made up of mini-patrons who control a sizeable proportion, or even the majority, of members in the party. These factions seek to protect and advance their own and their faction's interest within a single political party. However, when the party is under threat, for example during elections, all the factions do work together to achieve electoral success.

The SUPP

In the heterogeneous population of Sarawak, SUPP has had to operate within certain constraints. First, it is not the major party in a dominant party semi-competitive political system. It is eclipsed by PBB, the dominant party within Sarawak. Furthermore, Sarawak (and Sabah) are overshadowed in the Malaysian federation politically (power is concentrated in the federal government), geographically (the federal government is located in Kuala Lumpur in the peninsula), and demographically (Sarawak and Sabah account for less than one-fifth of Malaysia's total population). So the political clout of the Sarawak component of the BN within in the federal BN might be described as peripheral.

Secondly, while endeavouring to project itself as a multiracial party, SUPP has been regarded for the most part, in the Malaysian communal style of politics, as a Chinese-oriented political party. Its early experiment in multiracialism (discussed later) gave way to a more communal style of politics when other political parties played the racial card, and when it joined the ruling coalition. Since the 1970s, most of its ranking office bearers are Chinese and the popular perception among Sarawak voters is that 'SUPP is the voice of Sarawak Chinese'. This has essentially made the SUPP in all but rhetoric, and excepting one or two non-Chinese candidates, an ethnically based political party. Despite this the party has received some support from the Dayak community.

Thirdly, because of patron-clientism, regionalism, and Chinese dialect groupings, SUPP is (and will probably always be) split into various factions. The major network within the party consists of its elected representatives and other members of the party's upper echelon. The minor networks within SUPP consist of committee members of various branches, middle echelon leaders, and full-time office staff.

Although SUPP shares many characteristics with other Chinese-based political parties in Malaysia, it has one unique characteristic. It was an anti-establishment party throughout the 1960s before it became part of the establishment by joining the state coalition government in 1970. While the change in political orientation is not in itself unique, the fact that SUPP has continued to hold the Chinese votes, despite this change, is. Traditionally, Chinese-based parties in the establishment, such as MCA and Gerakan, have not been able to get Chinese votes, surviving instead on a solid bloc of Malays who tend to vote for the BN because of UMNO.

The other unique feature of SUPP, compared to peninsular Chinese politics, is that it is able to push for Chinese interests at state level without competition within the state establishment. In Peninsular Malaysia, both the MCA and Gerakan can claim the right to represent the Chinese in the various state BN. As MCA and Gerakan face increasing pressure from the peninsular Chinese community to serve their interests, as well as pressures from DAP and restrictions within the BN due to UMNO, they have both turned their frustrations upon each other. This has happened during elections and internal party squabbles.¹⁷ The end result is

that UMNO's position is strengthened as MCA and Gerakan outdo each other in trying to be the 'Chinese voice' in the BN. The Malay élite has been able to manipulate this situation to ensure that its position is unchallenged. UMNO's supremacy in the BN has also spread to internal Chinese party politics, as evidenced during MCA's leadership crisis in the mid-1980s, when a senior UMNO official was accepted by both camps as a mediator.¹⁸ SUPP, on the other hand, has always been the only Chinese-based establishment party in Sarawak.¹⁹ Although some of its internal party disputes have been manipulated by its BN partners, by and large these conflicts have mostly been resolved without major external intervention.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA

SUPP has been chosen as a single case-study because it is a prime example of a typical, ethnic, immigrant-based political party in a racially segmented society within a rapidly developing country.²⁰ This development, usually economic, brings with it social change which often conflicts with the culture and heritage of the indigenous people. Ethnic, immigrant-based parties, like SUPP, face a political system that is alien, usually a colonial legacy, and dominated by the indigenous people. The behaviour of such a party, with its base support among an immigrant community (in SUPP's case, the Sarawak Chinese) is crucial to an understanding of how political systems in racially divided societies survive, change, and develop.

Other major reasons why the SUPP was chosen are its unique position as a Chinese-based establishment party and the relative lack of scholarly work done on Sarawak's (and Sabah's) political parties.²¹ This is in contrast to several studies that have been devoted to political parties in Peninsular Malaysia.²²

The framework for analysis will thus concentrate on two areas: the external political arena and the internal party politics. The starting point is to regard ethnicity or racial status as the most salient selling point for political parties in Sarawak, including SUPP. This is especially so when examining in detail all the elections SUPP has participated in, on its own, as a member of the Sarawak coalition government, and later of the BN. Other aspects considered are party politics, factions, and conflicts within SUPP. In essence, ethnic politics can largely explain the behaviour of political parties in Sarawak, particularly SUPP. For instance, it explains why, since the 1970s, SUPP has increasingly behaved as a Chinese party whenever it comes under attack over Chinese issues from Chinese-based opposition parties such as the DAP in Sarawak. This would indicate that Horowitz's hypothesis on the direction of ethnic political parties is correct. However, the study will be an attempt to understand why SUPP has been singularly successful in retaining the votes of the Sarawak Chinese community at the state level.

SUPP has published a book to commemorate its thirtieth anniversary,²³ but being a party publication, its scope and discussion is naturally limited.



While some areas of this study will overlap with some of the events described in the party's publication, it will attempt to look at the party in a more objective manner.

The primary sources of empirical data are published sources: local newspapers, party publications, government publications, and news magazines. Another important source of information are the interviews with knowledgeable persons. Close to 50 interviews were held; the majority, naturally, with SUPP members. Two types of interviews were conducted: elite and non-elite. Elite interviews were held with SUPP upper echelon leaders, especially the elected representatives. The rationale behind this is that party leaders are usually the only people who can provide crucial information about political events. All interviews were held in an unscheduled mode to provide flexibility.²⁴ Other (non-elite) interviewees were mostly people from other political parties, academics, and other knowledgeable persons.

The main way that political parties test their support is through the ballot-box, and SUPP is no exception. Thus a large part of this study, especially from the 1970s onwards, is concerned with SUPP's electoral performance. For this study, SUPP constituencies are divided into two categories: parliamentary and state constituencies. State constituencies are further subdivided into three separate categories: Chinese-majority constituencies, SUPP Dayak-majority constituencies, and SUPP mixed constituencies. Election results will be analysed by looking at the majorities (or losses) of SUPP candidates, and comparing them with previous elections. This will gauge the strength of support enjoyed by SUPP, as well as give an indication of the swings (for or against) the party.

The structure of this study is fairly straightforward. Chapters are organized in chronological and thematic order with a historical, descriptive-analytical approach taken. Besides the historical background of Sarawak discussed in Chapter 2, the study starts from 1959 and ends after the 1991 state election. A separate chapter will also be devoted to some aspects on the internal workings of the SUPP.

The Malaysian Electoral System

In Malaysia, universal suffrage is extended to all citizens over the age of 21. Elections are conducted under the British 'first-past-the-post' system. When a person registers to vote, his ethnic status is recorded. Because ethnicity and voting patterns are so closely related, the ethnic percentages of each constituency are not officially available. The various Election Commission reports pointedly omit the racial composition of seats for both state and parliamentary elections.²⁵ However, unofficial compilations by organizations such as the press and political parties themselves are available, and these have been used for this study.²⁶

First some brief comments on the distribution of constituencies. Revisions undertaken by the Election Commission have traditionally been used to strengthen Malay hold on the political system. A study done by S. Rachagan identifies three major flaws in the Malaysian electoral

system.²⁷ The distortion in communal representation is one. In each successive election, the percentage of Malay voters has been higher than the Malay percentage of population, with the non-Malays being under-represented. A second flaw is the inherent characteristic of the electoral system to exaggerate the strength of the ruling coalition. In successive elections, the BN coalition has managed to control more than two-thirds of the seats in Parliament despite obtaining less than two-thirds of the total votes. Third, the procedures adopted in constituency apportionment and delineation have been used to create more Malay-majority constituencies, thus indirectly allowing the Malays to dominate the political system.

Changes in the composition of ethnic voters in each constituency happen in two ways. The first is quite obvious—ethnic composition of a constituency can change after each annual registration exercise undertaken by the Election Commission to update its electoral roll. New voters qualified, other constituents moved on to other places or died in the interim.

The second is when the Election Commission decides on a delineation exercise. In 1979, the Election Commission, besides modifying the border of some constituencies, also renamed some including those in Sarawak. In the Kuching area, Kuching Timur, Kuching Barat, and Sekama became, respectively, Padungan, Stampin, and Satok. Other areas renamed were: Bau, which became Tasik Biru, Semeriang (Petra Jaya), Simanggang (Sri Aman), Ulu Ai (Batang Air), Binatang (Meradong), Sibu Luar (Seduan), Sibu Tengah (Maling), and Song (Katibas). However, this delineation exercise did not significantly alter the racial composition of the constituencies. A more significant delineation exercise took place from 1984 to 1986. It brought the number of state seats from 48 to 56, an increase of eight, and increased parliamentary seats by three, from 24 to 27.²⁸ Hence for 18 years, from 1970 to 1988, Sarawak had held the same number of seats.

After the 1984–6 delineation, the Dayaks still constituted the largest bloc of voters in 24 out of 56 constituencies, one less before the delineation (Table 1.1). However, this time they had an absolute majority in all 24 constituencies. Malay/Melanau majority seats increased from 15 to 18, and this group has an absolute majority in all of them. The ethnic Chinese were now strongest in 11 constituencies, again having an absolute majority in all of them. Thus, the major beneficiaries of the delineation exercise were the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese communities who increased their majority seats by six and three respectively. The distribution of the eight new constituencies was: five Malay/Melanau-majority and two Chinese-majority. The last new constituency was mixed with no particular ethnic group constituting a clear majority.

From Table 1.1, it can also be observed that although the Chinese formed about 30 per cent of the electorate, they controlled only about 20 per cent of the seats.²⁹ One reason for this imbalance was the disparity in voter numbers between urban and rural constituencies. This rural weightage bias means that the number of voters in Chinese-majority

TABLE 1.1
Sarawak: State Legislative Assembly Seats and Voter Percentage
by Ethnic Group and Year

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Seats</i>			<i>Voter Percentage</i>
	<i>1969</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1991</i>
Dayaks	28 (58)	25 (51)	24 (43)	40
Malays/Melanaus	12 (25)	15 (31)	18 (32)	26
Chinese	8 (17)	8 (17)	11 (20)	34
Mixed	–	–	3 (5)	
Total	48 (100)	48 (100)	56 (100)	100

Sources: Malaysia, Election Commission; SUPP records.

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages; these may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 1.2
Sarawak: Comparison of Selected State Constituencies by Size, 1991

<i>Large Constituency</i>	<i>Number of Voters</i>	<i>Status^a</i>	<i>Small Constituency</i>	<i>Number of Voters</i>	<i>Status^a</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
Piasau	30,557	C	Belaga	5,235	D	1:5.8
Pending	23,873	C	Pakan	6,400	D	1:3.7
Lambir	22,554	C	Serdeng	7,324	M	1:3.0
Batu Lintang	21,292	C	Nyemah	7,418	D	1:2.8
Bengoh	20,682	D	Katibas	7,716	D	1:2.6
Bukit Assek	20,459	C	Sejingkat	7,748	M	1:2.6
Padungan	19,101	C	Berlawai	7,778	M	1:2.6
Dudong	18,619	C	Semera	7,918	D	1:2.4
Seduan	18,637	C	Kakus	7,884	M	1:2.3
Kidurong	18,336	Mix	Subuyau	8,009	M	1:2.2

Source: SUPP records.

^aC = Chinese-majority; D = Dayak-majority; M = Malay-majority; Mix = Mixed constituency.

seats in urban areas is sometimes two or three times larger than in rural seats.³⁰ The 10 largest (in terms of registered voters) are located in urban, developed areas. Seven out of these 10 are Chinese-majority constituencies (Table 1.2). Contrast this with the 10 smallest constituencies, all located outside urban areas. The ethnic groups that appear to gain most from this disparity are the Malay/Melanau and the Dayak communities.³¹

Chinese-majority State Constituencies

As the primary concern of this study is the Chinese voters, it would be useful to take a brief look at the Chinese-dominated state constituencies in Sarawak. In late 1968, the Election Commission released its long overdue report³² on the delineation exercise.³³ The communal composition of the electorate changed somewhat for the 1969 polls. The net

TABLE 1.3
Sarawak: Changes in Percentage of Chinese Voters in Chinese-majority
Constituencies, 1970 and 1987

Constituency	Chinese Voters		Percentage Change
	1970	1987	
Padungan (Kuching Barat)	92.4	93	+0.06
Stampin (Kuching Timor)	67.6	81	+13.40
Batu Kawa	53.8	57	+3.20
Repok	79.3	75	-4.30
Maling (Sibu Tengah)	84.9	81	-3.90
Seduan (Sibu Luar)	69.4	71	+1.60
Miri	54.9	69	+14.10
Meradong (Binatang)	45.3	49	+3.70

Sources: 1970 figures are from Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 136-7. Figures for 1987 are from *New Straits Times*, 7 April 1987.

Note: Names in brackets are the former names.

effect was the increase of Chinese voters by 4 per cent and the Malay/Melanau voters by 1 per cent, both at the expense of the Dayaks.³⁴ From Table 1.3, it is clear that Chinese-majority seats remained at eight from the 1970 state election until the 1987 election. One interesting observation is that although voter registration is held every year and some constituencies have been altered several times, particularly so before the 1983 state election, the actual percentage of changes within those seats remained fairly constant, with only an average plus or minus change of 5 per cent.³⁵ In fact, the trend is towards a consolidation of the Chinese

TABLE 1.4
Sarawak: Chinese-majority Constituencies, 1991 State Election

New Constituency	Percentage of Chinese Voters	Old Constituency
Padungan	96	Padungan
Pending	92	Stampin
Batu Lintang	88	
Batu Kawa	70	Batu Kawah
Meradong	52	Meradong
Repok	77	Repok
Dudong	65	Dudong
Bukit Assek	97	Maling
Bawang Assan	81	
Seduan	57	Seduan
Piasau	59	Miri

Source: *New Straits Times*, 29 September 1991.

Note: Majority of the area of the new constituency comes from the old constituency after all the boundaries were altered.

majority, as only one seat actually lost a slight percentage of Chinese voters.

As mentioned before, the Election Commission's 1986 delineation exercise added another eight seats, bringing the total number of seats in the state legislature to 56. These new seats were first used in the 1991 state elections. Three extra Chinese-majority seats were also added. These three seats were Batu Lintang in Kuching (carved out of the Pending, Padungan, and Batu Kawa constituencies); Bukit Assek (created from former Igan and Maling constituencies) and Dudong, formerly a Dayak-majority seat (Table 1.4).

It could thus be said that the Chinese-majority seats remained constant at eight from 1970 onwards, and increased to SUPP's advantage after the 1986 delineation. This trend of consolidating voters into one dominant ethnic group in each constituency applies to the whole of Sarawak, and in effect makes the allocation of state legislative assembly seats based on race similar to that in Peninsular Malaysia.

Chinese-majority Parliamentary Constituencies

Traditionally, one parliamentary constituency equates to two state constituencies in Sarawak. Sarawak was given 24 constituencies after joining Malaysia in 1963. This situation remained unchanged until the 1984-6 delineation exercise, which increased its seats by three to 27. Since 1986 each parliamentary constituency in Sarawak has been made up of two state constituencies, except for two, which were made up of three constituencies each.³⁶ From 1970 to 1986, there were only four Chinese-majority parliamentary constituencies: Bandar Kuching, Bandar Sibu, Sarikei, and Lambir (renamed Miri). After 1986, one extra Chinese-majority parliamentary constituency, Lanang, was added. These five Chinese-majority constituencies were first used in the 1990 parliamentary election.

1. P. Viegas and G. Menon, *The Impact of Environmental Degradation on People*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1989; and Gro Brundtland, *Our Common Future: World Commission on Environment and Development*, London: Oxford University Press, 1987.

2. Michael Lipton, *Why the Poor Stay Poor: The Urban Bias in World Development*, London: Temple Smith, 1977.

3. Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968; see also his 'Political Development and Political Decay', *World Politics*, April (1965): 386-430; and 'The Change to Change: Modernisation, Development and Politics', *Comparative Politics*, 3 (April 1971): 283-322.

4. A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies, a Comparative Exploration*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 8-12; Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, pp. 291-364.

5. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, p. 291.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 306-18.

7. See R. K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1980; Karl Von Vorzys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in*

Malaysia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975; and R. S. Milne, *Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States: Guyana, Malaysia and Fiji*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981.

8. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, especially chapters 3, 4, and 5.

9. While Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS) and the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) do allow membership from other ethnic groups (for PAS one has to be a Muslim and for UMNO one has to be a *bumiputera*), the overwhelming majority of the members and the party leadership in both parties are ethnic Malays. Interestingly enough, the Malay élite in UMNO regard multiracial political parties as a threat, as such parties could cut across their electoral base. The consequence of this is that avowed multiracial parties in the Barisan Nasional (BN) like the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan) has had to concentrate on the non-Malay population, in essence moving towards racial politics.

10. See Lee Kam Hing, 'Three Approaches in Peninsular Malaysia Politics: the MCA, the DAP and the Gerakan', in Zakaria Hj. Ahmad (ed.), *Government and Politics of Malaysia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 71–93.

11. I acknowledge the theoretical challenge on the ethnicity perspective posed by scholars adopting a 'class' or Marxist analysis. In general, these scholars dismiss the ethnic dimension and substitute an exclusive concern with class forces and conflict within the different classes, that is, the political and economic élites in Malaysian society versus the poor and powerless. In my view, the 'class' approach is unhelpful because it places considerable stress upon the nature of the capitalist state and analysing all events within a framework of class conflicts and capital accumulation. Ethnic politics, or mobilization along ethnic lines, is suggested to be the manipulation of the ruling class to consolidate their power and influence. In sum, ethnic divisions are regarded as superficial. However, in the context of Malaysian politics, ethnicity is the most powerful political weapon. While I do take note of the 'class' argument as a variable in Malaysian politics, I believe that with regard to this study the ethnic question is more potent than class appeal. This, in my view, could account for the inability of multiracial, class-based political parties in Malaysia to function effectively in mainstream politics. See R. K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society: a Study of Non-Communal Political Parties in West Malaysia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1971. The most articulate scholars adapting a 'class' analysis to Malaysian politics are: Jomo K. S., *A Question of Class: Capital, State and Uneven Development in Malaya*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986; Lim Mah Hui, *Ownership and Control of the One Hundred Largest Corporations in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980; and James Puthuchery, *Ownership and Control in the Malayan Economy*, Singapore: Eastern University Press, 1960.

12. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, pp. 346–8.

13. R. S. Milne, 'Patrons, Clients and Ethnicity: the Case of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia', *Asian Survey*, XIII, 10 (October 1973): 891–908.

14. J. C. Scott, 'Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia', in Steffen W. Schmidt et al. (eds.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: a Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, p. 123.

15. When scholars refer to major networks in the Third World, they usually refer to the military establishment and the bureaucracy. However, I have modified the definition here to suit this study of a political party. See R. Clark, *Power and Policy in the Third World*, 2nd edn., New York: John Wiley, 1982, pp. 100–14; and R. E. Gamer, *The Developing Nations, a Comparative Perspective*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976, pp. 118–31.

16. R. W. Nicholas, 'Factions: a Comparative Analysis', in Steffen W. Schmidt et al. (eds.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: a Reader in Political Clientelism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, pp. 55–73.

17. Both the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Gerakan have sponsored independent candidates against each other in previous elections. It is also common during internal party squabbles for the losers to quit their party and join the other. Gerakan's founder, Lim Chong Eu, was a former president of MCA before he left after an internal MCA power struggle. Current Gerakan President Dr Lim Keng Yaik and senior leaders, like Alex Lee and Paul Leong, were all senior MCA leaders before they were expelled in 1973 after they challenged the MCA leadership. See Lee Kam Hing, 'The Peninsular

Non-Malay Parties in the Barisan Nasional', in Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing, and Michael Ong (eds.), *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 71–93; and Loh Kok Wah, *The Politics of Chinese Unity in Malaysia: Reform and Conflict in the Malaysian Chinese Association 1971–73*, ISEAS Occasional Paper No. 70, Singapore: Institute of South-east Asian Studies, 1982.

18. The former senior UMNO official was Ghafar Baba. See Lao Zhong, *The Struggle for the MCA*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1984; Ho Kin Chai, *Malaysian Chinese Association: Leadership Under Siege*, Kuala Lumpur, 1984; and *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 December 1985.

19. Except for the period 1963–9 when the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) was the main Chinese establishment party, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) has been the only Chinese-based party in the ruling Sarawak BN.

20. A recent study shows that in the majority of developing countries, the largest ethnic group seldom constitutes over 50 per cent of the country's population. Thus, in the majority of developing countries an ethnically heterogeneous society is more evident. See John Stone, *Racial Conflict in Contemporary Societies*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 87.

21. There is very little scholarly work about political development and politics in Sarawak. There have been only three publications on the subject: Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974; Sanib Saib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946–1966: Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985; and Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak, 1970–1976: the Iban Perspective*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983. Another two publications which cover Sarawak within the context of East Malaysia, including Sabah, in their discussions are: R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974; and Margaret Clark Roff, *The Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974.

22. For examples on UMNO and PAS, see J. Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of UMNO and PAS*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980; Clive Kessler, *Islam and Politics in a Malay State: Kelantan 1838–1969*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978; W. R. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974. On the peninsular Chinese/MCA politics see Heng Pek Khoon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988; Chan Heng Chee, 'The Malaysian Chinese Association', MA thesis, University of Singapore, 1966; Margaret Clark, 'The Malaysian Alliance and its Accommodation of Communal Pressure, 1952–1962', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1964; and Loh, *The Politics of Chinese Unity in Malaysia*.

23. Teng Lung Chi et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, Kuching: SUPP, 1989; text in Chinese. A truncated English version appeared as David Teng Lung Chi and Daniel Ngieng, *The Challenges: SUPP in Focus*, Sibul: Think Management, 1990.

24. The possibility of self bias and inaccurate information being given in elite interviews exists. Hence all information obtained was cross-checked for corroboration. Only where information obtained in interviews matched did I place value on them.

25. The Election Commission is required by law to produce a report after every election. Although most voting statistics are given, such as voter turn-out, and votes garnered by each candidate, the most important information—the ethnic make-up of each constituency—is usually missing.

26. In order to minimize bias, every effort was made to cross-check the statistics used.

27. See S. Rachagan, 'Ethnic Representation and the Electoral System' in S. Husin Ali (ed.), *Ethnicity, Class and Development in Malaysia* [Kaum, Kelas dan Pembangunan], Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia, 1984, pp. 124–38.

28. Due to the 1987 state snap elections, the changes were not effected until the 1991 elections. The new 27 parliamentary seats was first used in the 1990 parliamentary elections.

29. This situation goes for the Ibans as well.

30. The 1957 Malayan Constitution restricted the allowance made for the disparity in

any constituency differing from the average size constituency by more than 15 per cent. However, the Alliance government in a constitutional amendment in 1962 removed all restrictions with regard to disparity. The removal of this restriction allowed the Election Commission in 1974 to redraw the electoral boundaries with wide disparities and decisions are arbitrary. For details, see S. Rachagan, 'The Apportionment of Seats in the House of Representatives' in Zakaria Hj Ahmad (ed.), *Government and Politics of Malaysia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 56–70.

31. The pattern before 1991, that is before the delineation exercise, is similar.

32. Michael B. Leigh suggests that the delay was due to political pressures. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 124.

33. Malaysia, Election Commission, *Report of the Election Commission on the Delimitation of Parliamentary and State Constituencies in the State of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1968.

34. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 124.

35. Because of this fairly constant trend, it is possible to compare election results in these Chinese-dominated seats from 1970 to 1987.

36. The two exceptions are: Bandar Kuching (made up of Padungan, Pending, and Batu Lintang state constituencies); and Kuala Rajang (made up of Berlawai, Serdang, and Matu Daro).

2

Sarawak: Human and Historical Settings

Founding of Modern Sarawak

SARAWAK is the largest of the 13 states in the Federation of Malaysia.¹ It occupies approximately 125 000 square kilometres along the north-western part of the island of Borneo. Sarawak and Sabah, the other Malaysian state in Borneo, are collectively referred to as East Malaysia. Their combined area is considerably larger than that of Peninsular Malaysia.

Sarawak was conquered and ruled by the Brunei Sultanate around the seventeenth century. This sultanate extended from the Sulu Sea down to the south-east corner of Borneo, where Sarawak lies. By the early nineteenth century, conflict with the Spaniards had caused decline in the sultanate. The town of Brunei had become a haven for pirates, and its population dropped from 40,000 inhabitants at the height of its glory to around 10,000.² The Spaniards then moved to the Sulu Sea and into North Borneo, the present-day Sabah.

Sarawak was rich in gold and antimony, providing the Brunei overlords with regular revenues. The mines, located mostly in the Bau area (now First Division), were mostly worked by Hakka Chinese who had arrived earlier in the eighteenth century. To control this trade effectively, Kuching, the present-day state capital, was established in the early 1830s. It was ruled by a ruthless and rapacious Brunei nobleman, Pengiran Makota, whose behaviour quickly precipitated a miners' revolt. In 1837, when the revolt threatened the authority not only of the Pengiran Makota but of the Sultan of Brunei, the Sultan quickly dispatched his regent, the Raja Muda Hasim, to Kuching.³

The armed rebellion was to last for another two years. It would possibly have lasted longer if not for James Brooke.⁴ Brooke was an English adventurer who had been a cavalry officer in India. He sailed to Singapore in 1839 after being discharged from the army because of injury. Originally he wanted to develop trade and spread Christianity into the interiors of Borneo, Sulawesi, and Papua New Guinea. As fate would have it, the Governor of Singapore, George Bonham, asked him to deliver a thank-you note to Hasim in Kuching, Hasim having previously saved some shipwrecked British sailors. Brooke handed the note over, and left for

Singapore after Hasim had told him that the rebellion would soon be crushed. When he returned to Sarawak a year later, however, he found the rebellion had not been suppressed. This time, Hasim asked for Brooke's help, offering in return Sarawak⁵ and the title of Rajah. With his superior firepower, Brooke quelled the rebellion and, after much argument and pressure, forced Hasim to keep his promise.

Brooke was installed as Rajah of Sarawak in 1841. He established a system of administration based on the feudal system in Brunei and also on his own British sense of fair play.⁶ This informal system of administration was based upon consultations with local community chiefs, mainly Malays and Ibans, and was primarily aimed at protecting the local people from outside influences.

When Brooke left Sarawak at the age of 60, his nephew Charles Brooke took over as Rajah. Charles, who was born Charles Anthony Johnson, came to Sarawak in 1852 to help his uncle. He was made *Tuan Muda* (Regent) and assumed the throne in 1868, ruling until his death in 1917. During his reign, piracy and headhunting were greatly reduced. Sarawak was also accorded British protection in 1888. Government administration was formalized and some efforts were made to open Sarawak's trade with the outside world, especially Singapore and British North Borneo. By 1890 Charles Brooke had divided Sarawak into four divisions, each with an English resident as head. The resident supervised the assistant residents and district officers. The four residents reported directly to the Rajah.⁷

When Charles Brooke died in 1917, he was succeeded by his son, Charles Vyner. Charles Vyner was not his father's first choice as Rajah; Brooke preferred the younger son, Bertram. However, Bertram had neither the interest nor the personality necessary to succeed his father. During Charles Vyner Brooke's rule, he further streamlined the state administration: a chief secretary was appointed in 1923, followed by a secretary for Chinese affairs in 1929, and a chief justice in 1930.⁸

A written constitution was proclaimed for Sarawak in September 1941, marking the centenary of Brooke rule. In it, Charles Vyner Brooke renounced his autocratic powers, setting up a Supreme Council and a legislature, the Council Negri. The Council Negri had 25 members, met twice a year, and had power over finance. The Rajah henceforth was to rule as Rajah-in-Council, ruling with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council.⁹

But before the constitution could be implemented, the Second World War broke out and Sarawak was overrun by the Japanese in December 1941. When the war ended in 1945, Charles Vyner Brooke decided to cede Sarawak to Britain despite opposition from his brother, Bertram, and his nephew (Bertram's son), the *Tuan Muda* Anthony Brooke. Charles Vyner Brooke made the decision to cede Sarawak because he believed he did not possess the economic resources to finance Sarawak's economic recovery.¹⁰ On 1 July 1946, Sarawak formally became a British colony and remained so until it became part of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963.

The three generations of Brooke rule in Sarawak can best be described as autocratic and feudal. The White Rajahs, especially the first and second, had complete internal autonomy and there was no independent review or check on their actions or policy directions. The third Rajah, Charles Vyner, while promulgating a constitution, was still very much in control of the legislature.¹¹ All powers and influence were ultimately in the hands of the 'White' Rajah.

Political Developments, 1946–1991

Between 1946 and 1963 the number of people representing different ethnic groups in the Council Negri increased, and there was a corresponding decrease in the proportion of government representatives. Many of the European officers who served the Rajah were retained to serve the new crown colony. Sarawak received a new constitution in August 1956 which stipulated a majority of elected members in the Council Negri. From 1959, there was a three-tier system under which members of the district and divisionary advisory councils chose members of the Council Negri from among themselves.¹² At that same year the first indigenous political party was set up. These elections stimulated a greater awareness of self-government among the people. In March 1963, the Council Negri amended the constitution, allowing greater autonomy. Elections held in mid-August 1963 on the basis of the new provisions saw the victory of the Sarawak Alliance coalition. This paved the way for Sarawak's entry into the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. From 1963 to 1966, the state government was formed by the Sarawak Alliance, a coalition of five political parties led by an Iban, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, from the Sarawak National Party (SNAP). In 1966 SNAP was thrown out of the Alliance and Tawi Sli of Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) then led the coalition until 1970. After the 1970 state election, the predominantly Chinese Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) and the predominantly Malay/Melanau Parti Bumiputera, formed the Sarawak coalition government. The coalition was led by Abdul Rahman Yakub of Parti Bumiputera. In May 1973, Parti Pesaka and Parti Bumiputera merged to form the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). SNAP became the main opposition party until it joined the government in 1976.

Rahman Yakub ruled Sarawak as chief minister from July 1970 until 1981. His party, the PBB, became the dominant party in the Sarawak Alliance, and later in the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) which replaced it. The role played by the PBB could be compared to that played by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in Peninsular Malaysia's coalition politics. Rahman Yakub led the Sarawak BN to victory in two state elections: 1974 and 1979. On 26 March 1981, Abdul Taib Mahmud, a nephew of Rahman Yakub, was recalled from the federal Cabinet to take over as chief minister of Sarawak. Rahman Yakub was appointed Yang di-Pertua Negeri (Governor) six days later.

In the 1983 state election, a new party, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), was formed by former SNAP members. After winning six seats,

it was admitted into the Sarawak BN coalition. Rahman Yakub's term as governor expired in April 1985, and Taib Mahmud did not renominate him. In March 1987, 27 members of the Council Negri,¹³ led by Rahman Yakub, signed a letter expressing no confidence in Taib as chief minister.

This attempt to bring down Taib prompted a snap election in mid-April 1987. One camp was headed by Rahman Yakub, who had now formed a new political party, Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS). Together with the PBDS, which was also opposed to Taib, they called themselves Kumpulan Maju. The other camp, called the Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN3), consisted of PBB, SUPP, and SNAP.

Taib Mahmud won the election narrowly, winning 28 out of 48 seats, retaining his post as the chief minister of Sarawak. In the September 1991 state election, Taib consolidated his rule with a landslide victory. His coalition, the Sarawak BN, won 48 out of 56 state seats.

Currently, for administrative purposes, Sarawak is divided into nine divisions, each headed by a resident. Kuching, the capital city, falls into the First Division. The Second Division is administered from Bandar Sri Aman (formerly called Simanggang), the Third from Sibul, the Fourth from Miri, the Fifth from Limbang, the Sixth from Sarikei, the Seventh from Kapit, the Eighth from Kota Semarakan, and the Ninth from Bintulu town. Each division is further divided into districts under the care of a District Officer (DO). Subdistricts are administered by the Sarawak Administrative Officers (SAOs). They report to the DO, who in turn reports to the resident of each division.

The political environment in Sarawak is similar in many respects to that of Sabah.¹⁴ Both states rely heavily on patronage politics, and the politics of both states are essentially driven by money. Money usually comes from the state's natural resources: land and, perhaps more importantly, the timber on it.¹⁵ Since the 1960s, Sarawak and Sabah have also suffered in varying degrees from intervention and interference in state politics by the federal government in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁶

Yet there are important differences. The Kadazans or Dusuns, the largest ethnic group in Sabah, is far more homogenous and united, politically and culturally, than the equivalent Ibans in Sarawak. The social and political histories, too, are very different. Sarawak was essentially ruled by an English family, the Brookes, while Sabah was ruled for over a hundred years by a private trading company, the British North Borneo Company.¹⁷

The political developments in East Malaysia are strikingly different from those of Peninsular Malaysia, which was ruled directly by the Colonial Office for most of the nineteenth century until independence. But perhaps the major difference between the peninsula and East Malaysia is the demographic situation. In Sarawak and Sabah, Malays are not the majority.¹⁸ Rather, the indigenous Dayaks in Sarawak and the Kadazans in Sabah constitute the largest single ethnic grouping in each state. Essentially this means that competition for political power is not based on a strict dichotomy between Malays and non-Malays, as is the case in Peninsular Malaysia.

Population

According to available figures, Sarawak's population in 1990 was approximately 1.7 million. This is composed of many ethnic groupings.¹⁹ From Table 2.1, it can be clearly seen that no one ethnic grouping has a majority, a fact which proves important in the discussion on politics later. The population as a whole can be divided into two categories: the *bumiputera* (literally, 'sons of the soil' or indigenous) made up of Malays, Melanaus, Ibans, Bidayuhs, and other indigenous groups; and the non-*bumiputera* (non-indigenous) which consist overwhelmingly of ethnic Chinese and a very small number of Indians.

TABLE 2.1
Sarawak: Population and Distribution by Ethnic Groups, 1990

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Bumiputera</i>		
Malays	348,000	20.8
Melanaus	96,000	5.8
Ibans	496,000	29.5
Bidayuhs	140,000	8.4
Other Indigenous ^a	91,000	5.5
<i>Non-bumiputera</i>		
Chinese	483,000	28.9
Others	19,000	1.1
Total	1, 673,000	100.0

Source: Sarawak, Department of Statistics, *Annual Statistical Bulletin*, 1992, p. 5.

^aOther indigenous groups include all numerically minor groups such as Bisayahs, Kayans, Kedayans, Kelabits, Kenyahs, Muruts, Penans, Punans, and others.

The Malays and Melanaus

The Sarawak Malays are culturally different from the Malays of West Malaysia.²⁰ There are those who would trace the origins of the Sarawak Malays to the Dayaks.²¹ However, they do share the same religion, Islam, as the Malays in the peninsula. The origins of the Melanaus too are uncertain. Their early settlements can be traced back to the north-west coast of Borneo on the Rejang River and the coastal areas that stretch as far as Miri. They had evolved a subsistence economy based on the cultivation of sago and dry rice grown on the river banks. Although many of them married Malays or converted to the Islamic faith, a sizeable number of them have also become Christians.²² Anthropologists and linguists tell us that there are distinct differences between the Malays and the Melanaus. However, because Melanau political leaders often identified themselves politically with the Malay community, the Melanaus and the Malays are seen as one entity.

Together, these two groups form a total of slightly less than 27 per cent of the population. They are predominantly coastal dwellers, and engage

in mostly agricultural and fishing activities. More than half of the Malay population in Sarawak live in the First and Fifth Divisions.

The Malays, especially those in the First Division, had always been favoured by the Brooke Rajahs who took them in and groomed them for administration. The Brooke Rajahs believed that all the indigenous people were the true owners of Sarawak and that it was their (the Rajahs) duty to bring them into the administration.²³ The Malay/Melanau grouping, more specifically the Melanau Muslims, hold political power in Sarawak. This is so despite the fact that this community comprises slightly more than one-quarter of the population. This group is predominant in the civil service, due to government policy which favours them. Increasingly, too, the Malay/Melanau grouping is entering the field of commerce and business. The political party most closely associated with this grouping is the PBB.

The Dayaks

The indigenous grouping collectively called the Dayak comprises numerous tribes. Dayak is a misleading term, for within the Dayak community there are many tribes or ethnic groups who have very little in common with one another. All these groups have their own unique culture, language, and life-style.²⁴ The two biggest ethnic groups within the Dayak community are the Ibans (sometimes referred to as Land Dayaks) and the Bidayuhs (Sea Dayaks). Since the 1980s, the term Dayak has been used less frequently. The Ibans are simply called Iban, the Bidayuhs are referred to as Bidayuh and so on. However, a new term has also appeared for those who live in the interior of Sarawak. Members of this group typically live in longhouses where they practise subsistence farming (shifting cultivation) and engage in fishing to supplement their diet if they live near a river. This group—which comprises some Ibans and the smaller ethnic groups like Bisayahs, Kayans, Kedayans, Kelabits, Kenyahs, Murut, Punan, Penan, and others—is collectively referred to as the *orang-ulu*, people from the interior or up-river.

Although the indigenous people form the majority of Sarawak's population—slightly less than half of the total—this is not reflected in the political equation. As discussed earlier, this is because the indigenous grouping is not homogenous; rather, it is a collection of diverse tribes-people. The Ibans—the largest with about 30 per cent of the population—have their own political party, PBDS. Before PBDS, most Ibans (and Bidayuhs) supported SNAP. In fact, PBDS was formed by a breakaway faction of SNAP members who left the party in 1983. Even with the birth of PBDS, the Iban vote is still split among the many different political parties.²⁵

All indigenous groups—including Dayaks and Malays/Melanaus—are classified officially as *bumiputera*. As *bumiputera*, they enjoy privileges accorded to them under the Malaysian Constitution.²⁶ In very general political terms, the political divide among the indigenous peoples are: Muslim and non-Muslim *bumiputera*.

The Sarawak Chinese

EARLY CHINESE SETTLEMENTS

It is impossible to determine exactly when the Chinese first came into contact with Borneo. Beads of Chinese origin, dating back 3,000 years have been discovered in Borneo, and coins of the Tsin and Han dynasties (around 200 BC to AD 200) have been unearthed at the mouth of the Sarawak River.²⁷ The first literary account of Borneo written in Chinese was in AD 414 by Fa Hsien. He called Borneo Ye P'o ti, a name subsequently changed to Po-ni by other writers. By AD 414, Chinese merchants were quite active along the coastal areas of modern Sarawak and Brunei. Chinese trading with Borneo declined around the mid-fourteenth century due to the nationalistic policies of the Ming dynasty (1396–1643).²⁸ It was not until the eighteenth century that the Chinese returned as settlers, attracted by the gold-mining along the western coast of Borneo (present-day Kalimantan) near the towns of Sambas and Pontianak. The Chinese miners first settled there around 1740. By 1760, the Chinese gold-miners were rich and powerful enough to set up self-governing concerns, called *kongsi* or company, which paid nominal deference to the local Malay war-lords who ruled the area.²⁹

MODERN CHINESE IMMIGRATION

The modern period of Chinese immigration to Sarawak³⁰ began in the early nineteenth century, when present-day Sarawak was still under the control of the Brunei Sultanate. The first immigrants, who moved into what is now the First Division, did not come directly from China; they were the miners, with their descendants, from the *kongsi* in the Sambas–Pontianak areas.

The Chinese mining settlements at Sambas, Monterado, and Mandar were mainly of the Hakka dialect. At this time, there were about 30,000 Chinese living and working in these areas. Large Chinese mining communities also existed at Pontianak, Mmampawa, and Pamangkat. The autonomy of the Chinese mining communities was disrupted in 1823 when the Dutch began to exert control over these areas. Dutch restrictions, compounded by the depletion of gold deposits by the early 1830s, forced the Chinese to rethink their economic future. They decided to move to another area where gold deposits were largely untapped—Bau.

In 1841, the year James Brooke was proclaimed Rajah of Sarawak, the Sambas *kongsi* moved into Bau and formed an alliance with the few Chinese gold-miners who had come earlier, around the 1820s. In 1850, a large influx arrived from the Monterado *kongsi*, following a quarrel with the Dutch authorities there. Some members of this group, predominantly Hakkas, left the Bau gold-fields to settle in Kuching and a small number started to farm in nearby Batu Kawa. Within a decade, the miners around Bau came under the single leadership of Liew Shang Pang,³¹ who headed a *kongsi* with 11 others. The name of the *kongsi* was San-tiao-Kou, or Twelve Company.

From Bau, the *kongsi* grew in strength and became increasingly turbulent and rebellious. Brooke tried to control them, and in 1857 imposed a tax or fine on the Bau *kongsi* for alleged opium smuggling. This sparked off a rebellion in February 1857.³² About 600 miners attacked and captured Kuching, with the intention of killing Brooke and taking over his government. The insurrection was unsuccessful and Brooke regrouped, with loyal indigenous warriors, to recapture Kuching. The Chinese rebels withdrew into Dutch-held Sambas territory across the border, but many were killed along the way.³³ Brooke had clearly won the political challenge to his rule, and he was to regard the Chinese population with suspicion thereafter.

In many ways the Brooke Rajahs were caught in a dilemma over the position of the Chinese under their rule. On the one hand, they knew the Chinese were needed to open up Sarawak, and this in turn raised tax revenue for their government.³⁴ But on the other hand, the Brookes wanted to protect the indigenous people from exploitation and contact with the outside world, that is, the Chinese.

Despite the set-back suffered by the Bau miners, within a short period Chinese migrants from Sambas had returned to the Bau area, soon to be joined by new immigrants from the Straits Settlements, the states of Malaya, and directly from China. While the mining industry never fully recovered from the failed rebellion, Chinese agriculture and trading communities grew, stimulated particularly by the introduction of gambier and pepper cash crops in the 1870s. With the regular arrival of new immigrants, the Chinese population in Sarawak grew from about 8,000 in 1877 to 45,000 in 1908. By this time, the state of Sarawak had expanded from one to three divisions.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the First Division remained the dominant centre of Chinese settlement. A merchant, trading, and artisan community, consisting mainly of Hokkien and Hakka dialect groups, sprang up. Around the same time, small communities of Cantonese settled near Kuching. They depended mainly on market gardening for their livelihood. Mining in Bau was still in Hakka hands. The Teochius also came in around this time; they were mainly engaged in growing pepper and gambier.

The next major surge in immigration brought the Foochow dialect group. Wong Nai Siong,³⁵ a native of Fukien province in China, visited Sibu around 1900. Whilst there, he made an agreement with the second Rajah, Charles Brooke, to bring in new immigrants to open up the Rejang area. The Rajah, quite desperate to promote economic development, gave Wong a loan to cover the cost of passage for the new immigrants. During 1901 and 1902, about a thousand Chinese arrived at Sungai Merah near Sibu. At first the new immigrants planted rice and vegetables, but crop disasters ended in the deaths of about one-third to a half of the original thousand settlers. Wong, disheartened, resigned and returned to China in 1906. The Revd Lintal Hoover, an American Methodist preacher, took over from him and persuaded the Foochows to switch to pepper and rubber. The rubber crops were successful, and

the Foochows prospered in the early 1910s. During this time many new Foochow immigrants arrived from China and the community spread down river into the Sarikei and Binatang areas.³⁶ Rubber prices fell in the early 1920s, halting Foochow immigration until 1924 when rubber prices recovered and new immigrants began to come to Sarawak once more. There is a close relationship between the spread and growth of the Foochow community in Sibü and its adjacent areas with the growth of the Methodist Church in the region.³⁷

Immigration from China continued right up to the Second World War, migrants tending to remain in the areas to which they first came. The new immigrants moved further and further away from the two main urban centres of Kuching and Sibü, moving gradually into the upper Rejang and Miri areas.

In a landmark survey on the Chinese community in Sarawak, Tien Ju Kang³⁸ found that personal links were paramount in the way the Chinese were recruited and assimilated into the country. Once a new immigrant arrived in Sarawak, he was totally dependent upon the sponsor or guardian, usually a relative or clansman,³⁹ and upon his provincial, dialect, or clan association. More often than not, because the sponsor paid for his passage from China, the new immigrant was expected to work the debt off. Thus, the new immigrant usually learnt the same business as his sponsor, and a pattern was established whereby certain clans or dialect groups monopolized certain professions. Moreover, clansmen accepted only fellow clansmen for apprenticeship or introduction into their professions. However, since the 1970s, this occupational specialization has broken down somewhat, because of general education and government intervention in the economy.

In 1930, the Chinese community as a whole constituted about 25 per cent of the state's total population. It has had a post-war increase of 3.5 per cent per annum, compared to about 2.5 per cent for the rest of the population.⁴⁰ This high increase rate was mainly due to post-war immigration from China. In the late 1980s, the Chinese in Sarawak constituted about 30 per cent of Sarawak's population (Table 2.2). One of

TABLE 2.2
Sarawak: Chinese Population Compared with Total Population, 1876–1986

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1876	128,008	4,947	3.9
1909	400,000	45,000	11.3
1939	485,302	123,626	25.5
1947	546,385	145,158	26.6
1960	744,529	299,154	30.8
1970	976,269	293,949	30.1
1980	1,235,553	360,553	29.2
1986	1,515,000	443,009	29.2

Source: Lam Chee Kheung, 'Chinese Social Structure', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, XL, 16 (new series) (December 1989): 152.

TABLE 2.3
Sarawak: Percentage Distribution of Urban and Rural Population
by Ethnic Group, 1960, 1970, and 1980

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Urban</i>			<i>Rural</i>		
	1960	1970	1980	1960	1970	1980
Chinese	29.4	34.7	38.4	71.6	65.3	61.6
Malays	14.3	17.6	17.8	85.7	82.4	82.2
Ibans	0.9	2.3	4.8	99.1	97.7	95.0
Bidayuhs	1.4	2.5	4.9	98.6	97.5	95.1
Melanaus	4.3	6.7	14.0	95.7	93.3	86.0
Other Indigenous	0.6	2.6	5.3	99.4	97.4	04.7
Total	12.6	15.5	18.0	87.4	84.5	82.0

Source: James Masing, 'The Role of Resettlement in Rural Development', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Monash Paper on Southeast Asia, No. 17, Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1987, p. 57.

the net effects of Chinese migration into Sarawak, and their subsequent venture into commerce, is the high concentration of Chinese in urban areas. A survey done in the 1960s shows that over 30 per cent of the community were living in urban areas, and another 30 per cent within the immediate vicinity of the urban centres. The Chinese made up more than three-quarters of the dwellers in the main urban and commercial centres of Kuching, Sibu, and Miri.⁴¹ Since the 1970s, the Chinese have consolidated their hold on the urban centres (Table 2.3).

MAIN CHINESE DIALECT GROUPS

The overwhelming majority of the Sarawak Chinese came from the south-eastern provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien in China (Map 2.1). This is reflected in the main Chinese dialect groups⁴² found in Sarawak.

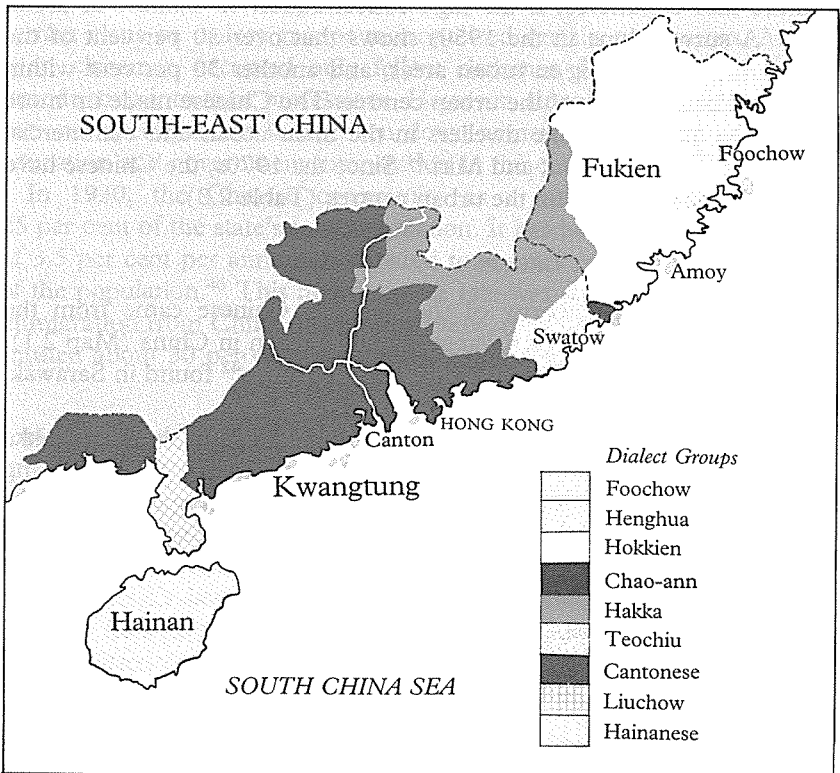
Hakkas (Kuehs). The Hakkas in Sarawak originate from the four Hakka districts in Kwangtung province—Chi-ying (Kei Hsein), Tapu, Kityang (Hoppo), and Huilai (Hailu-feng). The four dialects spoken in these districts are very similar, and can be mutually interchangeable. Hakkas are also called *Kueh* by the Hokkiens and the Teochius. Like those in olden day China, the older generation within the Sarawak Chinese dialect groups regard the Hakkas as lower class, or inferior, compared with the other dialect groups. One of the interesting cultural characteristics of the Hakkas is that they hold women in high regard. For instance, they never took up the traditional Chinese practice of binding their women's feet to make them more desirable. Hakkas were the pioneers in the mining *kongsi* in Bau, but later turned to cash cropping. They are now mostly concentrated in the Kuching and Samarahan areas, with Sri Aman

(Simanggang) and Miri being places where they are still strongly represented.

Foochows. The Foochows originate from Foochow city and its immediate surroundings in the Fukien province. The whole Foochow prefecture consisted of ten *hsien* (counties).⁴³ The counties were situated among generally fertile lands, and most Foochows were peasant farmers. Many Foochows were of the Methodist faith, a fact of important consequence in their migration. Foochows today are mainly found in the lower Rejang area and they dominate life in Sibu town, along the Rejang River. The main area of concentration is the triangular region bordered by Sibu, Bintagor, and Sarikei, sometimes referred to as the Rejang basin. Since the 1980s, large numbers of Foochows have moved into the capital, Kuching, and into upland areas like Limbang, Mukah, and Marudi, mainly for commercial expansion. They have a reputation for dominating the timber trade and being shrewd businessmen. They are also reputed to be the strongest economically among the Chinese dialect

MAP 2.1

The Provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien Showing the Approximate Place of Origin of Different Dialect Groups



Source: Daniel Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier 1841-1941*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 7.

groups in Sarawak. This has earned them the envy of others, especially the Kuching Hakkas and Hokkiens.

Hokkiens (Fukienese). 'This group is from the Amoy area in the southern part of Fukien province.'⁴⁴ The Hokkiens are also known as Fukienese. The Hokkiens were one of the earliest dialect groups to arrive during the Brookes' rule, and have traditionally been found in urban areas. Although the Hokkiens dominated Kuching culturally and economically throughout the 1960s and 1970s, they are now coming under increasing pressure from the economic expansion plans of the Foochows from Sibu.

Chao-anns (Chawans) and Teochius. The Chao-anns originate from the Chao-ann *hsien* in Fukien province, and are aligned, economically and culturally, with the Hokkiens. 'Their small number belies their economic importance ... in places like Dalat, Mukah, Sibuti, and Tatau,'⁴⁵ and their political importance in Kuching. The Teochius come from the Swatow region of north-east Kwangtung and southern Fukien province. They are concentrated mainly in urban areas like Kuching, Sri Aman, Mukah, and Bintulu, and are mostly small traders.

Minor Dialect Groups: Cantonese, Henghuas, Liuchows, Hainanese (Hailam). The Cantonese originate from Macau, Hong Kong, Canton, and from the rest of Kwangtung province. They came to Sarawak in small numbers and settled in the Rejang delta area around Sarikei, being mainly involved in the small logging and pepper business. A small number also settled in Miri, where they worked as labourers in the oil industry. Henghuas come from the Henghua and Sieny *hsien* in Fukien. They have dominated the fishing and bicycle trade in Sarawak.⁴⁶

Liuchow is a dialect spoken in the Liuchow peninsula. The Liuchows formed a very small group in Sarawak and worked mainly as labourers. The Hainan or Hailam dialect group comes from the island of that name in China. They are associated with the coffee-shop business and with the occupations of cooks and sailors.

Foochows and Hakkas form the two largest Chinese dialect groups in Sarawak. Hokkiens come third, while Teochius rank fourth. The other smaller dialect groups make up the rest of the Sarawak Chinese population (Table 2.4).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

Present-day Sarawak Chinese political culture grew out of historical institutions and social systems which developed within this community. These systems and institutions were a response to the competition for power both within the Chinese community and with other ethnic groups. Often they provided mutual aid and protection for members of the Chinese community. They evolved as channels of communication and

TABLE 2.4
Sarawak: Chinese Dialect Groups, 1947-1980

<i>Dialect Group</i>	<i>Population</i>				<i>Percentage Distribution</i>			
	1947	1960	1970	1980	1947	1960	1970	1980
Foochows	41,946	70,125	90,704	126,346	28.9	30.6	30.8	32.8
Hakkas	45,409	70,221	91,610	124,805	31.2	30.6	31.2	32.4
Hokkiens	20,289	28,304	36,518	51,617	14.0	12.4	12.4	13.4
Teochius	12,892	21,952	27,262	33,127	8.9	9.6	9.3	8.6
Cantonese	14,662	17,432	20,694	23,882	10.1	7.6	7.0	6.2
Henghuas	4,356	8,278	10,642	13,097	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.4
Hainanese	3,871	5,717	7,033	7,704	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.0
Others	1,773	7,125	9,557	4,622	1.2	3.1	3.3	1.2
Total	145,198	229,154	294,020	385,200	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Joseph Ko Tee Hock, 'Chinese Dialect Groups, in Sarawak: Composition and Growth Between 1947 and 1983', *Sarawak Gazette*, CXII, 1498 (December 1986): 8-16.

interaction between dialect groups, with the Brookes, with the colonial authorities and, in the post-independence period, with Malay authorities.

The two main areas where politics is often played out within the Chinese community in Sarawak are: (a) in the leadership structure of the community; and (b) within social organizations and education.

Leadership Structure. Leadership in the Sarawak Chinese community is attained through a systematic process. Traditionally, a leader must first have local influence. To achieve this, he must be astute, financially secure (leaders are usually the wealthiest in the community), and senior in age.⁴⁷ The leaders of the old mining *kongsi* in Bau and in the Sambas-Pontianak areas were typical examples of men with such qualities. Thus, leadership is arranged like a pyramid, with a broad base of farmers and labourers at the bottom, small shopkeepers and white-collar workers in the middle, and a small number of *towkay* or capitalists and industrialists at the apex. Not surprisingly, this structure corresponds directly with the economic stratification of the Chinese community in Sarawak which developed the leadership structure in the first place.⁴⁸

At the bottom of the pyramid, the labourers and the farmers had to depend on credit to survive when they first arrived in Sarawak. They needed cash loans and supplies to tide them over until their crops were harvested. They needed credit even more when their harvest failed or did not supply adequate returns. Even those who had worked off their debt needed capital when they decided to start their own businesses.

Because of this, rural shopkeepers (usually the only one with some capital) had great influence on the farmers, so much so that sometimes the farmer was forced to sell his produce at a particular price or to a particular shopkeeper.⁴⁹ The rural shopkeepers thus automatically became instant leaders in their communities, albeit of low rank. This was because

these shopkeepers depended, in turn, on the urban *towkay* (usually of the same clan or dialect group) or the exporters, for credit on the goods supplied, and to act as agents for the sale of the farmers' produce.

The relationship between these three parties: the urban *towkay*, the rural shopkeeper, and the farmer was one of mutual dependence and exploitation. The shopkeeper knew that he could not always collect his total debt because of the high interest rate, and his debtor knew that he (the shopkeeper) could only push him so far.⁵⁰ Thus the links were not strictly on a patron-client basis. The pattern that emerged from this ladder of indebtedness was the transference of economic power from the farmer to the minor *towkay* (rural shopkeeper), and then to the urban *towkay* (capitalist). Because of this rural credit structure, a few individuals, namely the urban *towkay* and the exporters,⁵¹ were able to influence and control the entire Chinese community in Sarawak. Economic power has thus changed into social control and political power.⁵²

Another important effect of the rural credit structure is that the major *towkay* in the urban centres like Kuching and Sibu had every incentive to extend credit because they wanted to control or influence the rural shopkeepers. The rural shopkeepers wanted to extend credit to the farmers because they wanted to control the produce. Often, the same clansmen were involved in the transactions and wished to include an element of mutual aid.⁵³

During the Brooke era, the Rajah employed a system of indirect rule over the Chinese. This system was justified by the argument that no European could ever hope to fully understand the complexity of the Chinese community. In practice, indirect rule meant the appointment of a *Kapitan China* in urban areas and *Kangchew* (area headmen) in the rural areas. These were usually people with the greatest influence over the community or dialect groups, that is, the *towkay*. The *Kapitan China* assumed the role of intermediary between the Rajah and the Chinese community. All ordinary Chinese who dealt with the government had to approach him first. The holders of the *Kapitan China* posts were also appointed advisers to the Rajah on all matters concerning the Chinese. As the *towkay* already held a leadership position in the community, their social prestige was increased by the appointments, which gave them a cloak of official legitimacy.⁵⁴

A Chinese court of justice was set up by Charles Brooke in 1912 to deal with Chinese litigations. He wanted to give the Chinese full autonomy on all non-governmental affairs. Ong Tiang Swee⁵⁵ was appointed head of the court, together with six other deputy magistrates. Three of these represented the Hokkiens and one each for the Teochiu, the Cantonese, and the Hakka communities. All these magistrates were well-known merchants. In fact, when the courts were abolished eight years later, the reason given was that Ong was too preoccupied with his business interests.⁵⁶

In 1929, Charles Vyner Brooke, the third Rajah, established a Chinese protectorate which later became the secretariat for Chinese Affairs. The secretary was a European with a working knowledge of Chinese dialects.

He worked closely with the Chinese leadership of the various clans and associations, made recommendations to the Rajah, and was expected to deal with every aspect of the Chinese community, including education and immigration. The result was that all the *Kapitan China* lost their influence once the Secretariat was established, even though they were still consulted by the secretary.⁵⁷

Social Organizations and Education. The early settlers who arrived in Sarawak strived to retain their customs and life-style. Clan associations, which were instrumental in bringing in new migrants, also helped establish a power structure which was useful in strengthening group and clan identity as well as maintaining solidarity and promoting social and economic welfare. These associations also maintained ties with China. Members frequently relied on them to provide information and aid to their families there.⁵⁸ Often the clan association would collect funds from members to set up a temple for a particular deity. Organizers were usually clan leaders, the original sponsors of many of the clan members. The temple was used for traditional purposes, such as religious ceremonies on occasions of marriages, births, and deaths. It was equally important as a gathering place for clan activities. In fact it could be argued that the temples often doubled as clan association offices. Almost all the early temples were situated in Kuching.⁵⁹

The temple often also functioned as a school for the clan members' children. Education was particularly important primarily due to the interest of the *towkay* in Chinese education. In traditional Chinese societies, the scholar was socially ranked first and the merchants last, but in Sarawak the reverse applied. In order to enhance his prestige, a merchant would often donate money to set up schools. These not only served to educate his own children, but to give him credit for providing educational opportunities for the whole clan, along with the resulting possibility of extending his influence.⁶⁰ Teachers were often recruited directly from China to teach the students in Sarawak.

From the 1920s onwards, the larger schools in urban areas like Kuching were essentially built through donations, and supervised by a board of management. Maintenance of the school was usually guaranteed by a clan, or a group of clans or associations. The members of the school management boards were, not surprisingly, all *towkay*.⁶¹ By 1941, there were well over a hundred Chinese schools, covering all areas of Sarawak, and the Chinese community as a whole was the best educated among the peoples of Sarawak.

Clearly then power was monopolized by a small number of individuals within each Chinese dialect group. These individuals were men who acquired power and social standing basically through their financial strength.⁶² They sought to extend or expand their power base by getting involved in intra-dialect associations like the school boards, and by being appointed by the government as *Kapitan China*. The latter was usually viewed as a form of official recognition.

In sum, early Chinese contact with Borneo was primarily for trade. Large scale immigration and settlements did not occur until the discovery of minerals, gold, and antimony in Bau, which led the first wave of immigrants from across the border in Kalimantan. The second wave came in via the town of Sibü, the new Foochow. From there the immigrants moved into every district of Sarawak, although the bulk of the Chinese population lived close to the major urban centres of Kuching, Sibü, and Miri. The early Chinese settlers concentrated on trading and mining activities, and pretty much kept to themselves. They had little contact with other ethnic groups, relying exclusively on their own clan and dialect groups. Only those Chinese who traded up river or moved into the interior had any degree of contact with the indigenous population.

From these beginnings, the Chinese grew to dominate commercial activity in Sarawak. They moved into cash crops like pepper and rubber, which involved the opening up of new land that had previously belonged to the indigenous people. This caused some tensions. The early Chinese who emigrated to Sarawak were almost exclusively from the south-eastern provinces of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Kwangsi. Their migration was mainly due to population pressure and poverty. The Brooke government, which then ruled Sarawak, had an official policy of segregating the Chinese community from other ethnic groups. The Brookes believed, rightly or wrongly, that the indigenous people were not ready to meet people from outside Sarawak. They believed it was in the best interests of the local ethnic communities if contact with outsiders (mainly Chinese) was kept to a minimum in order to protect them from exploitation. Furthermore, the political challenge posed by the Chinese Rebellion of 1857 left the Brookes, especially the first Rajah, James Brooke, with a bad impression of the Chinese. However, the Brookes needed the Chinese to promote economic development and raise state revenue. Thus, while they always regarded the Chinese community as aliens, the Brookes did nevertheless allow large scale Chinese immigration to Sarawak in order to open up new areas.

The failed Rebellion of 1857 also had an important effect on politics. Before the rebellion, the Chinese could contemplate challenging any outsider who tried to exert political control over them. After the rebellion, however, politics was essentially confined to intra- and inter-dialect groupings among the Chinese. This, coupled with the system of indirect rule over the Chinese community, meant that the Chinese were further isolated from the machinery of government and participation in the political process.

In the years before the Second World War, it was quite clear that Chinese leadership comprised a small, élite group, made up exclusively of prominent *towkay*. This was supported by a broader base of middle-ranking leaders consisting of small urban capitalists and rural bazaar shopkeepers, who asserted control over the rest of the population. The path to leadership was through the acquisition of economic power. This in turn brought some form of political power and legitimacy, through

appointments by the Brooke government. To sum up, wealth and social power went hand in hand.

Economic Structure

Sarawak's economy is largely dependent on agriculture. The timber industry is the major source of income for the majority of its people, especially the rural population (Table 2.5). The agricultural sector employs approximately 73 per cent of the work-force and, between 1960 and 1984, accounted for between 23.7 and 44.1 per cent of the total value of exports from the state. Petroleum, although worth much more and the state's biggest export, is generally not regarded as income by Sarawak's economic planners. Under the Petroleum Development Act (1974), the federal government established a monopoly called Petroleum Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS) to operate and control Malaysia's oil industry. Under this Act, the federal government only needs to pay 5 per cent in royalties for oil found off the coast of Sarawak.⁶³ Thus petroleum does not generate any substantial income for the state government.

The agricultural sector, including the timber industry, does belong to the state and all revenue go into the state treasury. Of the total land area in Sarawak, over 76 per cent is still covered by forests. Agriculture takes up approximately 22 per cent of the land area. In the period 1981–91, revenue from the agriculture and timber industries amounted to 12 per cent of the total state revenue. Thus it can clearly be seen that agriculture is the mainstay of the state's economy. The primary agricultural produce grown as cash crops to generate exports are pepper, rubber, and cocoa. Because Sarawak depends so heavily on primary commodities—agriculture and forest products—its state economy is particularly vulnerable to world fluctuations in commodity prices.⁶⁴

TABLE 2.5
Sarawak: Percentage Share of Gross Domestic Product by Sectors
and by Year, 1965, 1970, 1980, and 1990

<i>Sector</i>	1965	1970	1980	1990
Agriculture (including Forestry)	37.6	37.1	28.8	24.5
Mining, Quarrying (including Petroleum)	1.0	3.5	30.5	27.0
Manufacturing	0	9.4	6.6	17.0
Construction	n.a.	n.a.	4.7	4.1
Services	n.a.	n.a.	30.2	27.4

Source: Sarawak, Department of Statistics, *Annual Statistical Bulletin* (various years).

1. The others are Sabah, Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor, and Trengganu. In addition, there are two federal territories: Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, which are administered directly by the federal government.

2. S. Runciman, *The White Rajahs, a History of Sarawak from 1841 to 1946*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1960, pp. 1–10. For the early history of Brunei, see Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, Brookes, and Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971.

3. Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp. 57–67.

4. The information on James Brooke is taken from: Runciman, *The White Rajahs*; and R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: the End of the White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982.

5. At that time roughly equivalent to the area of present-day First Division.

6. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 3.

7. Colin Crisswell, *Rajah Charles Brooke: Monarch of All He Surveyed*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978; and Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp. 159–218.

8. Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp. 231–42; and Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, chapter 3.

9. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, chapter 4.

10. *Ibid.*, chapters 7 and 8.

11. In the Council Negri, 14 of its 25 members were appointed. Nine were *ex officio* and five were appointed directly by the Rajah. R. H. W. Reece observed that majority of the voting power was always held by the Europeans. See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 80–1.

12. *Sarawak Annual Report*, London: HMSO, 1962, pp. 3–6.

13. The name Council Negri was replaced by Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) in the mid-1970s to reflect the Malaysianization of the state legislature. However, many still refer to the state legislature by its old name.

14. For a comparative look at the evolution of politics between Sabah and Sarawak, see R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974; and Margaret Clark Roff, *Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974.

15. *Ibid.* For an account of timber money flowing into politics in Sabah, see Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah: Chinese Leadership and Indigenous Challenge in the Last Phase of British Rule*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976.

16. A recent example is the federal government's attempt to topple the Sabah state government led by an opposition party. See Audrey R. Kahin, 'Crisis on the Periphery: the Rift between Kuala Lumpur and Sabah', *Pacific Affairs*, 65, 1 (Spring 1992); and James Chin, 'Sabah State Election of 1994: End of Kadazan Unity', *Asian Survey*, 34, 10 (October 1994): 904–15.

17. K. C. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Sabah (North Borneo), 1881–1963*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1965.

18. See the next section on Sarawak's population. The breakdown for the population of Peninsular Malaysia is approximately: Malays 53 per cent, Chinese 35 per cent, and Indians 10 per cent. In Sabah, the Kadazans alone account for about 40 per cent of the state's population. The Malay population in Sabah is less than 20 per cent.

19. For a detailed analysis of Sarawak's demography, see Lam Chee Kheung, 'The Population of Sarawak', Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1984.

20. Tom Harrison, *The Malays of South-West Sarawak before Malaysia*, London: Macmillan, 1970.

21. B. Sandin, *The Sea Dayaks of Borneo*, London: Macmillan, 1967; and T. Babcock, 'Indigenous Ethnicity in Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, XXII, 43 (1974): 191–202.

22. H. S. Morris, *The Oya Melanau*, Kuching: Malaysian Historical Society, Sarawak Branch, 1991.

23. See Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, especially chapters I and IV.

24. The difficulties in classifying the various ethnic/tribal groups is examined in detail in Victor T. King, *Ethnic Classification and Ethnic Relations: a Borneo Case Study*, Centre for

Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 2, Hull: University of Hull, 1979; and Victor T. King, *The Peoples of Borneo*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993.

25. For explanations on why the Iban vote is very fluid, see Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak, 1970–1976: the Iban Perspective*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983; and Jawan Jayum, 'Political Change and Economic Development Among the Ibans of Sarawak, East Malaysia', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1991.

26. Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution made provisions for the 'special positions of the Malays' and other *bumiputera*, allowing for official favouritism and discrimination in all spheres of Malaysian political and social life.

27. Lucas Chin, *The Cultural Heritage of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Museum, 1981.

28. John M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981, chapter 1; and R. Braddell, 'Po-Li in Borneo', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 5 (1949): 5. The state of Po-ni was for many years a vassal of the Chinese empire. The emperor of Po-ni, Maradja Kala, was supposed to have arrived at the Imperial Palace in China in 1408 to pay tribute.

29. Tien Ju Kang with Barbara Ward, 'The Early History of the Chinese in Sarawak', in Tien Ju Kang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: a Study of Social Structure*, Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 12, London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1953. Tien's monograph is a pioneering classic study of the Sarawak Chinese in the 1950s. Richard Outram, 'Sarawak Chinese', in Tom Harrison (ed.), *The People of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Museum, 1959, pp. 115–28.

30. This section on the Chinese in Bau relies heavily on the work by John M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*; Daniel Chew, *Chinese Pioneers on the Sarawak Frontier 1841–1941*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990; and Barbara Ward, 'A Hakka Kongsì in Borneo', *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 1, 2 (July 1954): 358–70. Of these three, Chew gives the most detailed analysis of the Bau *kongsì* and the immigration of the Chinese to Sarawak.

31. Liew Shang Pang, a Hakka, brought a group of Chinese from Sambas sometime in the 1830s to work in Bau. He was killed at Jugan in 1857 by the Rajah's forces for leading the Chinese Rebellion of 1857, which will be discussed later. Today, he has become a *shen* or deity, at a temple in Jugan built in his memory. The temple is thought to be the site where he died.

32. Many writers referred to this incident as the Chinese Rebellion of 1857. Liew Shang Pang, the leader, became 'Rajah' for four days during the Rebellion, from 20 to 23 February 1857, when Kuching was overrun. See Chang Pat Foh, 'Bau Chinese Rebellion of 1857', *Sarawak Gazette*, CXII, 1495 (April 1986): 34–44; see also Craig Lockard, 'The 1857 Chinese Rebellion in Sarawak: a Reappraisal', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 9 (March 1978): 85–98.

33. It was estimated that 3,500 Chinese lost their lives. See Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, pp. 37–9.

34. For example, James Brooke depended heavily on the tax revenues collected from opium, gambling, prawn, and arrack farms which were mainly patronized by the Chinese. For example, in 1859, the farms brought in a revenue of £7,976 against a total revenue of £14,076. See Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, p. 212.

35. Wong Nai Siong was a Methodist preacher, which would in part account for the Rajah's relaxed attitude towards him. Many books have been written about Wong and the pioneer days of the Foochohs in Sibü. For instance, see Lau Tze Cheng, *Wong Nai Siong and the New Foochoh*, Singapore: South Seas Society, 1979 (text in Chinese); Liu Chang, 'Chinese Pioneers AD 1900: the New Foochow Settlements of Sarawak', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 6. (1955): 536–48.

36. See Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, chapter 8; Diu Mee Kuok, 'The Diffusion of Foochow Settlement in the Sibü-Binatang Area, Central Sarawak, 1901–1970', MA thesis, University of Hawaii, 1970.

37. Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, chapter 7.

38. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, chapter 2.

39. In Chinese society, the family is generally the smallest unit of the corporate kin group. The clan is one of the two basic forms of institutions outside the immediate family,

the other being lineage group, basically consisting of all males descended from one common ancestor. The clan, on the other hand, is an artificial kin group, consisting of the deliberate amalgamation of a number of lineages, all bearing the same surname, into a loose federation.

40. L. W. Jones, *Report on the Census of Sarawak 1960*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1962, p. 57.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–6.

42. The information on dialect groups is compiled from Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*; Outram, 'Sarawak Chinese'; Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*; and Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, unless otherwise indicated.

43. The ten were: Minhsein, Liengchiang, Loyuan, Huakwong, Changkok, Fuching, Mintsing, Yungfu, Jutein, and Pingnan. The Foochow dialect from these different counties is reputed to be the hardest to learn among the many Sarawak Chinese dialects.

44. Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, p. 9.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

46. In his work *The Chinese of Sarawak*, Tien claims that in the 1950s, 96 per cent of the fishermen and 84 per cent of bicycle shop owners in Kuching were Henghuas.

47. The Chinese equate old age with wisdom and knowledge. Hence there is great respect for the eldest person in the family or clan.

48. This form of leadership structure is the traditional one, as practised in clan organizations in China. However, in traditional social ranking, scholars came first, then peasants, artisans, and merchants—in descending order. This social ranking never occurred in Sarawak, even among the first wave of direct immigrants from China. Few aristocratic scholars migrated to Sarawak; most of those who migrated were poor peasants and landless farmers in search of a better life. Thus the social ranking in Sarawak has always been, in descending order, merchants, officials, and labourers. See Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, p. 76.

49. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, p. 64.

50. See *ibid.*, especially chapter VIII.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 65, quotes an anonymous Chinese describing the influence of a prominent exporter: 'he has a finger in every business—except that of undertaker'.

52. Tien points out that in the 1950s when his study was conducted, it was impossible for any Chinese individual to advance economically or socially without a 'black mountain' or powerful patron, that is, a big *towkay*. See *ibid.*, p. 9.

53. *Ibid.*, chapter VI; and Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, chapter 5.

54. Tien records that the appointed officials often conveyed the impression to the Chinese population at large that they had a special relationship with the authorities, and that any matter would be solved more quickly and sympathetically if it was brought to them first. See Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, pp. 71–2.

55. Ong Tiang Swee was born in Kuching in 1864 and died in 1950. He was the son of Hokkien pioneer Ong Ewe Hai. Ong succeeded his father as *Kapitan China General* which meant he was officially the paramount leader of the Chinese community in Sarawak. In addition he looked after the family-owned Ong Ewe Hai and Company, one of the oldest Chinese trading houses in Sarawak. Ong was a member of the Kuching Chinese Chamber of Commerce (KCCC) from 1887 and was later its chairman. He was also the first recipient of the award Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the Star of Sarawak, created especially for him by the Rajah, Charles Brooke. He was also made the first Chinese member of James Brooke's Supreme Council (established in 1855) and became a life member. See Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, p. 78; *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 16 June 1891, p. 110; and Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, p. 204 on the set-up of the courts.

56. *Sarawak Government Gazette*, 16 August 1920, p. 181.

57. Chew, *Chinese Pioneers*, p. 205.

58. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, chapter IX.

59. The Foochows in Sibü were mainly Methodists, and the church there was used like the temples in Kuching.

60. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, pp. 72–3.

61. In his work, Tien wrote that '[the] *towkays*' membership in a school board set the seal upon their social power'. See *ibid.*, p. 73.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 74 gives an example of how financial strength is exercised: 'At one association meeting a young Chinese made an impassioned speech concerning the welfare of the association members. The chairman, a wealthy *towkay*, grew impatient. Suddenly he interrupted the young speaker: "How many rubber estates do you own?" The young man answered none. "In that case", said the chairman with a sigh, "since you will have nothing to contribute when the subscription list comes around, you had better cut your speech short".'

63. E. K. Fisk and H. Osman-Rani (eds.), *The Political Economy of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982, chapter 11.

64. See Hamid Bugo, *Economic Development of Sarawak*, Singapore: Summer Times, 1985; and John R. Walton, 'The Economic Structure of Sarawak' in Victor T. King and M. J. Parnwell (eds.), *Margins and Minorities: the Peripheral and Peoples of Malaysia*, Hull: Hull University Press, 1990, pp. 130-46.

3

The Sarawak United People's Party: Foundation Years

The Chinese Community, 1941–1945

SARAWAK was overrun by the Japanese Imperial Army in 1941. Kuching fell on 15 December. There was very little resistance to the Imperial Army. Many of the European officers who worked for the Brookes had already fled to the jungle, trying to make their way to safety in Dutch Kalimantan. Those who did not make it were rounded up by the Japanese and interned together with other arrested officials at various camps around Kuching.¹ Charles Vyner Brooke, the third Rajah, had already escaped to Australia.

At first, the Japanese were quite friendly towards the population, with the exception of the Chinese community. The Japanese thought they could win over the indigenous population, especially the Malays, by promising them independence and liberation from the Brookes. The Chinese community, on the other hand, was singled out for persecution by the Imperial Army and Chinese community leaders were tortured.² This was because many Sarawak Chinese, as with many Chinese throughout the *nanyang*,³ supported China in the war against Japan in the 1930s.⁴ In fact, the Chinese community had sent money to the Kuomintang (KMT) in China during this time.

After liberation in 1945, some members of the Sarawak Chinese community accused others of collaboration with the Japanese. A few prominent Chinese in Kuching were reported to have collaborated with the Japanese.⁵ The war also disrupted ethnic relations because the Chinese saw that the Malay community had suffered less under the Japanese.⁶

The Sarawak Cession Issue and the Chinese Response

The Brookes did not return immediately after liberation. Instead, Sarawak was ruled by the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU). In 1946, Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke realized that he could not afford to rebuild Sarawak and decided to cede it to the British Crown.⁷

The reaction to the proposed cession was mixed. Initially, the Malay leaders in the Supreme Council were in favour. However, the most senior Malay leader, Datu Patinggi Abang Hj Abdillah, later withdrew his

support. He claimed to have been bribed by the Rajah's representative, Gerard MacBryan, to vote for the cession. The cession was to deeply divide the Malay community into the pro- and anti-cessionists.

The only Chinese representative consulted on the cession question was Ong Tiang Swee,⁸ a traditional leader in the Chinese community who was close to the Rajah. MacBryan persuaded him and other principal Chinese association leaders to sign a statement supporting the cession in January 1946.⁹ In return, Ong was given \$42,500 (in Sarawak currency) by the Rajah as post-war reconstruction aid for the Chinese community.

The first public knowledge of Ong's support came when Singapore Radio broadcast an editorial of *The Straits Times*, a Singapore daily, concerning the Malayan Union White Paper. The Paper suggested that Sarawak was to be included in the Malayan Union together with Brunei, Labuan, and North Borneo (Sabah).¹⁰ On 27 January 1946, the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien (Overseas Chinese Youth Association) called a three-day meeting in Kuching which was attended by more than 40 delegates from the various Chinese clans and associations. The meeting passed four resolutions:

1. To choose five delegates to talk to Ong Tiang Swee about the letter of support to the Rajah which he and other Chinese leaders had signed for MacBryan.
2. To ask all those who had signed the letter of support to send a telegram to the Colonial Office indicating that the letter did not represent the wishes of the whole [Chinese] community.
3. To establish the Overseas Chinese Committee 'for the promotion of democratic politics'.
4. To organize a body that would represent the whole Sarawak Chinese community.¹¹

Ong Tiang Swee wrote to the *Sarawak Tribune* on 26 February defending his actions. He said his cable thanking the Rajah for the money was misinterpreted as a bribe. He said he had sent the cable thinking that the future of Sarawak was still under the Rajah and that the Rajah was returning to resume power. Leaders like Ong believed that Sarawak would be better off as a colony, as the state revenue would not be enough for post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation. They believed that only Britain had the money for capital reconstruction. Even Hua Kheow Tshin Nien representative Lim Kong Nam concurred with this view, and said the Chinese community would be better off as a colony.¹² The *Kapitan China* of Sibiu, Teo Lo Cheng, told the British Members of Parliament (MPs) he supported the cession, and presented claims for war damage compensation.

In general, the cession controversy was mainly debated by English-speaking Chinese through the Chinese-owned English daily, the *Sarawak Tribune*. The Chinese papers did not editorialize on the subject. When two British MPs visited Sarawak to gather views on the cession, representatives of two Chinese dailies, the *Chung Hua Journal* and the *Chung Hua Jih Poh* (Chinese Daily News), said the Chinese community had no

right to take sides in the controversy.¹³ Chinese opposition to the cession ultimately did not come to anything as the bulk of the Chinese saw it as a non-Chinese issue. The Chinese leaders, principally the *towkay*, generally supported the cession, primarily because it meant greater economic opportunities and a strengthening of their political status and representation.

For the same reason, the Malays opposed the cession, fearing a loss of the political preference they had enjoyed under the Brookes. The Brookes had always favoured the Malays in their recruitment of indigenous officers for their administration. The Ibans and other indigenous groups supported the cession provided it was desired by the Rajah and that certain rights like *adat lama* (indigenous customs and laws) were protected.

In sum, the cession was not a controversy for the Chinese. Those Chinese leaders who supported cession did so for economic reasons. The opposition was not successful because they could not mobilize the Chinese community, which was generally apathetic towards the 'white men's' politics. Moreover, the *towkay* class, the core power holders in the Chinese community, supported the cession. Only the Malays were split, while the other indigenous groups were more or less agreeable to the cession as long as it was in accordance with the Rajah's wishes. Sarawak became a crown colony when the Cession Bill was passed in the Council Negri on May 1946.

Chinese Political Consciousness and Orientation

The Emergence of Political Awareness

Right up to the Second World War and the period immediately after, the Chinese in Sarawak did not really perceive a need to involve themselves in local politics. Even when the Dayak and the Malay communities developed political consciousness over the cession issue, the majority of the Chinese saw it as an economic, not a political, choice. Only a small minority was moved politically by the cession issues. This group was primarily English-educated and hence was not perceived as mainstream Chinese.

The majority of the Sarawak Chinese rather saw Sarawak as a place to make their fortune before they returned to retire in China. They called themselves *huaqiao* or the overseas Chinese. As the name implied, they were still Chinese but overseas, temporarily. Their political orientation was thus towards China and internal Chinese politics. They only seriously reoriented their politics towards their newfound homeland in the mid-1950s. There were two basic reasons for this situation.

First, under the Brookes, the Chinese were clearly treated as an alien community. This was evident in the way the Chinese community was administered through indirect rule. In the 1941 Constitution of Sarawak, the Chinese were categorized as non-natives and termed officially as aliens.¹⁴ The situation of the Sarawak Chinese community was akin to a country within a country whereby the Chinese had their own education

system and regulated their own communities to preserve their culture and economic interests.

The Japanese invasion of China during the Second World War further fuelled interest in their homeland among *huaqiao* all over the *nanyang*. The civil war between the KMT and the communists under Mao Tse Tung brought internal Chinese politics into sharp focus for the Sarawak Chinese. When the Japanese seized Manchuria in the 1930s, the Chinese in Sarawak organized a boycott of Japanese goods, and a China Distress Fund was set up in 1937.¹⁵ The Chinese community also openly celebrated the KMT national day each year.¹⁶ Exhibitions and carnivals were held to raise funds for the KMT. Such activities kept the political orientation of the Sarawak Chinese focused on China. Even when China fell to the communists in 1949, many Chinese in Sarawak still saw China as the motherland to which they could someday return.

The first overt Chinese political organization was the KMT, which set up a consulate in Kuching in 1948. But the KMT presence in Sarawak started earlier, in 1946, when a branch was set up under the name of Kuching Overseas Chinese Club.¹⁷ This club was supported strongly by the Cantonese and the Teochius in Kuching. This could be attributed to the fact that the leadership of the KMT in China was also dominated by the Cantonese.¹⁸

The request for the KMT consulate came about after visits from the Chinese Consul-General in Singapore and a special commissioner from KMT headquarters in Nanking. These two visits resulted in the recruitment of KMT members who set up the Kuching Overseas Chinese Club mentioned above.¹⁹ By 1947, there were about 60 KMT members in Kuching.²⁰ The Consul, Dr Chan Ying-Ming, arrived in Kuching in January 1948.²¹ The Chinese community strongly supported the Consul, providing for his residence, car, and other material needs. In return, the Consul was expected to represent the Sarawak Chinese in its dealings with both China and the Sarawak government. He was also expected to 'give face' to the Chinese community by attending community functions. However, the British never fully recognized the power of the Consul to represent the Sarawak Chinese, arguing that the majority of the Sarawak Chinese were in fact British subjects.²²

Besides the KMT, another political organization appeared, albeit covertly because it was made unwelcome by the colonial authorities, who later declared it an unlawful society. This was the communist organization. Again, this reflected the orientation of the Sarawak Chinese towards political rivalry in China, *vis-à-vis* the competition between the nationalist KMT under Chiang Kai Shek and the communists under Mao Tse Tung.

The communist movement in Sarawak dates back to the Japanese occupation.²³ Organized activities were mostly attended by the poorer farmers attracted by the socialist and classless society ideals the movement espoused. These people were mainly the Hakka farmers living in the Batu Kawa areas just outside Kuching.

The movement spread its ideology mainly through the Chinese schools and the labour unions. Students and workers were prime targets for recruitment and as agents of influence.²⁴ Any political competition between the KMT and the communists in Sarawak was greatly intensified with the communists' victory in China in 1949. In February 1950 the colonial authorities closed down the KMT consulate, citing the British government's decision to recognize the new government in Peking. In the same year, six Chinese labour unions and trade guilds asked the Kuching Chinese Chamber of Commerce (KCCC) to celebrate the Chinese communist national day which is on 1 October instead of the KMT national day which was observed on 10 October (the Double Ten) each year. The only dialect group to go against this decision was the Cantonese, who comprised the majority of the pro-KMT organization, the Kuching Overseas Chinese Club. Together with the Cantonese Association they quietly celebrated the Double Ten.²⁵

The emerging political consciousness was also a result of the proliferation of Chinese-language newspapers. Between 1945 and 1962, 13 Chinese newspapers appeared but few had any long-term success.²⁶ Many of these papers were later proscribed by the government for taking an anti-government or communist stance. The papers carried both international and local reports, the international reports naturally focusing on China. The most influential among them was probably the *Chung Hua Jih Poh*, started in 1945 and owned by a Kuching Teochiu concern. Its circulation in the 1950s was about 600. Prior to 1950, its editorial policy was biased towards the KMT, but it became more moderate and pro-Sarawak government, concentrating on local social news after the KMT's fall in 1949. Its stablemate was the English-language *Sarawak Tribune*, also started in 1945, and aimed at English-educated Chinese.²⁷

Chinese Schools in Sarawak

Chinese schools fostered Chinese culture and were a direct link to the Chinese community in China. Whereas before the war the *towkay* or clan leaders controlled the schools through a dialect-based schooling system, after the war the situation changed dramatically. In 1951, the clan leaders decided to replace the dialect-based schooling system with a uniform school system based on Mandarin. The Chung Hua Schools were established and opened to children of all dialects and races. All the schools came under a central authority, the Chung Hua Schools Board of Management (CHSBM). The Board, called the Committee of Thirteen, comprised representatives of each of the nine dialect associations, along with one nominee from each of the four major Chinese commercial organizations.²⁸ The Board's main function was to raise funds to maintain the schools, recruit teachers and staff, and establish a curriculum. The funds collected were substantial and in addition, the KCCC collected a surcharge on export duties to support the Chung Hua Schools.²⁹

Although the medium was Chinese, English was offered as a single subject.

Due to the curriculum, Chung Hua graduates were very conscious of their 'Chineseness' and concentrated most of their interests on events in China. With the victory of the communists, the socialist ideology proved attractive to students. This trend so alarmed the colonial government that it banned Chung Hua students, who left to further their studies in China, from returning to Sarawak. Often more than 100 would leave for China annually. The colonial government also outlawed a student organization at Chung Hua in 1951, calling it subversive. Student unrest was reported and the responding government crack-down included the proscribing of two youth organizations, one of which was the said student organization. In 1954, the colonial government deregistered a Chinese school on the outskirts of Kuching, accusing it of promoting communist ideology.

However, the most serious challenge posed to the established Chinese leadership occurred in Kuching itself when over 1,100 of the 1,300 Chung Hua students went on strike in April 1955.³⁰ The problem started earlier, on 26 February, and involved Wang Chock Yin, a student prefect in the secondary school. The class prefect and other student leaders were elected by the students themselves before the term started. Wang criticized a maths teacher, Chai Yun Chee, over his teaching methods during normal class. Chai ignored Wang, who, with the vice-prefect, then approached the Master of Studies. When Chai found out, he threatened to expel Wang for stirring up trouble.

The principal arrived at the school on 10 March and the students took the opportunity to further criticize Chai. Other students watching the proceedings supported the criticism. The next day the principal punished Wang and two others by registering black marks against them. On 14 March, the students wrote and complained about the affair to the CHSBM. On 15 March, the Board heard directly from eight student leaders but rejected their petition on the unfair treatment meted out to Wang and two others. On 17 March, the Board announced that it was supporting the principal's decision to expel the three students. However, the student representative asked the Board for assurances that the three expelled students would not be punished again for the same matter; that the eight student representatives would not be punished for approaching the Board; and that the other students would not be unreasonably punished for supporting the boycott. The Board gave the assurance that it considered the matter closed.

The students returned to the school and decided to hold a meeting to dissolve the representative body on 18 March. By that evening the principal decided that he no longer had any control over the school and informed the teachers that he would no longer be working there. On 27 March, the principal told the Board that he would return only if the students were punished. He wanted two students expelled, 13 temporarily suspended, and 16 to write letters of apology. The Board agreed and notices were posted in the local Chinese papers stating that the Chung Hua Schools would reopen on 30 March. However, on 29 March, the students' representative wrote to all the 13 associations making up the

students would boycott the reopening of the school. The next day, only 157 students, out of 1,300, turned up for class.

Faced with this impasse, the Board decided to set up a special committee to deal with the affair.³¹ The committee was made up of 14 members: 12 from the Chinese community associations and two from the KCCC. The most prominent members of the committee were Ong Kee Hui from the KCCC and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze from the Hakka Association. The special committee's report came down on the side of the students and the principal had to resign³² together with the chairman of the Board, Ong Kwan Hin.

This incident is important because of the roles played by Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong. These two were later to be the prime movers of Sarawak's first political party. It was also politically important for it showed that the students in the Chung Hua Schools would no longer accept the decisions taken by the Board, which was representative of the old Chinese élite. Ong Kwan Hin, the chairman of the Board, was the eldest son of Ong Tiang Swee, the most prominent and senior Chinese leader among the old Chinese *towkay* élite. Ong Kee Hui was the grandson of Ong Tiang Swee and the son of the chairman of the Board. The students' action demonstrated the extent to which socialist ideals had a hold on them, and showed that their Mandarin education had transcended their dialect identity. These events indicated that the Chinese schools were politically explosive from the 1950s onwards.

The Communists and the Chinese Community

Communism³³ came to Sarawak through the close contact maintained by the Chinese community with those in China. The direct link was forged when Chinese students in Sarawak went to Chinese schools that followed a Chinese curriculum. The teachers too were mostly communist sympathizers, and some Chinese papers were leftist in orientation. After the communist victory in 1949 over the KMT, communist ideology gained a stronger foothold in Sarawak. The first proper communist organization, according to the colonial government, was the Sarawak Overseas Chinese Democratic Youth League (SOCDYL) which was formed on 21 October 1951.³⁴ The SOCDYL concentrated its efforts almost exclusively on the Chinese students. It was also a satellite organization of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM). The colonial government claimed a Sarawak Chinese was sent to Singapore to establish contact and seek guidance from the CPM, signifying that the early Sarawak communists were in touch with their counterparts in South-East Asia. The SOCDYL disbanded when the authorities discovered their activities. But in March 1954, the Sarawak Liberation League (SLL) was formed in its stead. By 1956, the SLL was absorbed by the Sarawak Advanced Youths Association (SAYA). The SAYA was officially called the Clandestine Communist Organization, or CCO.

The policy of the CCO was to establish a 'new democratic society followed by a socialist society and finally a communist society'.³⁵ The communist state was to be based on the teachings of Marx, Lenin, and

Mao.³⁶ The structure of the party was based on the pyramid concept of small cells. Each independent cell was joined with three or more to form a branch. A certain number of branches formed a district committee. This structure eventually led to the top central committee. Recruitment was made by careful evaluation of the potential candidate's background, and involved a lengthy process, including a self-confession. Training of the members (cadres) was carefully planned and involved self and group studies of books and articles selected by the leadership. The propaganda included articles published in the Chinese newspapers like *Sin Wen Pao* (Kuching), *Min Chong Pao* (Sibu), and *Sa Min Pao* (Miri). These newspapers would often print columns written by party members such as 'Burning Stove' in the *Min Chong Pao* and 'Food Column' in the *Sin Wen Pao*.

Both *Min Chong Pao* and *Sa Min Pao* were offshoots of *Sin Wen Pao* in Kuching. These three papers provided the communists with a strategic network of newspapers that covered the main urban areas of Sarawak with a high Chinese population. Great efforts were made to bring these newspapers to Chung Hua Schools. Their combined circulation was estimated to be 6,000, a very high circulation bearing in mind that readership was confined to the Chinese community. All these three newspapers were proscribed by the colonial government in December 1962.³⁷

The CCO targeted four main groups for influence and recruitment purposes. They were the labour movement, the farmers or peasants, the students, and a nascent political party representing communist interests. It achieved considerable success in penetrating Chinese trade unions. The main instrument of indoctrination was the Trade Union Free Night Schools, which offered adult education evening classes for union members. The formation in 1961 of the First Division Trade Union Congress was an attempt by the CCO to centralize control over the unions.³⁸ The CCO was not quite successful with the farmers and peasants. In August 1961, the colonial government refused to register the First Division Farmers' Association, claiming in a subsequent White Paper that it was a CCO front organization. Another organization, the Sarawak Farmers' Organization (SFO) was later banned for the same reason.³⁹

Because of the emphasis on studying communist literature, which was almost all printed in Chinese, the CCO was highly successful in the recruitment of young Chung Hua School students.⁴⁰ However, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, it appeared that the CCO lost control of the students to extreme left-wing student leaders, and that the students were mounting too many challenges to the school authorities and the colonial government. This was against the wishes of the CCO, which did not want to draw too much attention to itself.⁴¹

The CCO was considering the formation of an open front political party as early as 1958. According to a document entitled 'On the Formation of an Open Political Party and the Struggle of Independence' written in early 1959, 'the revolution is now at a low ebb ... What can

be done about it? ... the only way open to us now is to form an open political party'. On the organization of the party itself, the document stated:

Whilst farmers and the workers are the most numerous it is also true that the propertied class commands more influence and it is, therefore, likely that the propertied class will play the leading role in the early stages ... as long as the party is not controlled by the right wing of the propertied class ... we can co-exist.⁴²

There is very little doubt that the embryonic Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) was targeted by the CCO to represent its interests as the open political party. The above document was published in early 1959 and SUPP was registered on 10 June 1959. A CCO booklet issued in August 1960 entitled 'Conclusive Report on the Political Party during the Past Year' stated that before 16 June 1959, the CCO had carried out propaganda work for SUPP. It said that 'some pioneer progressive elements in Kuching managed to establish two sub-branches in Kuching, after which more and more people joined [SUPP]'.⁴³ From captured CCO documents, the SUPP was referred to by its code name XT. In 1961, a cadre's monthly report stated:

The Sarawak United People's Party ... is led by the propertied class. We should make use of these prominent figures to deceive the British imperialists... We should support it [SUPP] as a base for the development of our work... We must carry out education work amongst members of the party and unite all who can be won over.⁴⁴

All this suggests that from the 1950s onwards, the communists were highly successful in recruiting Chinese students and trade unionists as its cadres. It also shows clearly that the communists were supporting the formation of SUPP in order to deceive the colonial authorities, and had planned to use SUPP as their political party when the timing was right. The majority of SUPP's ordinary members were recruited by the CCO.

Regional Political Developments

The formation of the People's Action Party (PAP) in Singapore in 1954 with its left-wing politics impressed the Left in Sarawak. They were keen to find out more about the PAP, especially about its student and labour movements. The PAP's anti-colonialist aims and its pro-independence stance left a mark on some sections of the Chinese community in Sarawak. The formation in 1948 of the then Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) also impressed the leaders of the Chinese community in Sarawak, including future SUPP leaders like Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong.⁴⁵

A development that shook the Chinese community and forced it to look inwards instead of to China occurred in 1955 when China changed its policy on overseas Chinese. During the Bandung Conference in 1955, Chinese Premier Chou En Lai reiterated that the Peking government respected the laws of other countries, and urged overseas Chinese to take up citizenship in their countries of residence.⁴⁶

Prior to this, China and Indonesia concluded an agreement on dual nationality, offering Indonesian Chinese a choice between Chinese or Indonesian nationality. The significance of this agreement was that for the first time, Peking allowed ethnic overseas Chinese to opt for a different citizenship. In a speech given to overseas Chinese in Rangoon, Chou confirmed China's new policy on overseas Chinese, regarding them as non-Chinese if they took up local citizenship.⁴⁷

China's decision forced the Sarawak Chinese community to think seriously about reorienting their outlook and attitudes towards their adopted homeland.

The Colonial Government's Role

Until the late 1950s, the Colonial Office continued to suppress political movements in Sarawak. However, faced with the prospect of inevitable independence for Sarawak because of the 'East of Suez' policy, the colonial government instituted a policy change from suppression to encouragement of political movements. Not all Sarawakians were able to benefit from this reversal of official policy. Indeed, the only person known to have benefited from this policy change was Ong Kee Hui. Ong received private encouragement from the Governor, Sir Anthony Abell, and Chief Secretary J. H. Ellis issued an internal government memorandum which suggested that should a political party be formed, Ong should lead it because he was perceived to be on friendly terms with the government.⁴⁸

Ong was the grandson of Ong Tiang Swee, the most senior *Kapitan China* during the Brooke era, and had received an English education at St Thomas, an Anglican mission school. This meant he came from a family line that had a certain legitimacy in the Chinese community, as well as proven loyalty to European authorities. Moreover, Ong got along well with the governor when he was appointed to the Supreme Council (Sarawak's state Cabinet).⁴⁹

The Formation of SUPP

In 1956, a year after the student boycott, Ong Kee Hui tried to form a political party with Stephen Yong Kuet Tze,⁵⁰ whom he had worked with during the student crisis, and two Singaporean lawyers, S. K. Reddi and T. G. Dunbar.⁵¹ Dunbar and Yong had a legal practice together. Hence, of the four, three were practising lawyers and Ong was then a member of the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) and a member of the Supreme Council.

The plan for a new party initially went awry, however, when the Malay National Union (MNU) and the Sarawak Dayak Association refused to join, telling Ong and Yong that they should form a Chinese-based party first, instead of the multiracial one envisaged.⁵²

The four had clearly wanted to form a political party in preparation for the first municipal elections later that year.⁵³ Before 1956, the municipal government had been based on communal representation,

each ethnic group having an appointed representative. In 1956, the colonial government decided to let the major towns be self-governing entities, through the introduction of direct local elections. Governor Abell proposed this change as early as 1952 but the constitution was finally changed only in 1956.

The Council Negri was to have 45 members consisting of the following: 24 elected members (unofficial), 14 *ex officio* (official), 4 nominated, and 3 standing members. The 14 official members were government officers while the 4 nominated were hand-picked by the governor.⁵⁴ The Supreme Council now consisted of three *ex officio* members (chief secretary, financial secretary, and Attorney-General), two nominated, and five Council Negri members, elected by the members from among themselves.⁵⁵

Of the 25 unofficial Council Negri members, 21 came from the five administrative divisions, and the remaining three came from the KMC, the Sibuan Urban District Council (SUDC), and the Miri District Council.⁵⁶ The result of this change was that for the first time, the unofficial Council Negri members outnumbered the official members.

For electoral purposes, the Kuching municipality was divided into seven wards. The Chinese population dominated in three wards and the Malays in two. The results of the election confirmed that the electorate had voted on communal lines. Chinese candidates won in Chinese-dominated wards and Malays in predominantly Malay wards.⁵⁷ Among the councillors who were elected into the KMC were: Charles Linang, Ong Kee Hui, Song Thian Cheok, Teo Kui Seng, Henry Ong Kee Chuan, and Chan Siaw Hee; all later became founding members of SUPP. Ong Kee Hui was elected the vice-chairman of the KMC, chosen as its representative in the Council Negri, and appointed as a member of the Supreme Council. He served as KMC councillor and as a member of the Supreme Council from 1957 until 1963.

Although Ong and Yong were not successful in forming a party in 1956, the local elections in Kuching that year saw that their supporters were able to win seats on local councils and organize themselves as an unofficial entity. More importantly, the election gave Ong the opportunity to enter the Supreme Council and experience politics firsthand. It also gave him, perhaps more importantly, a chance to work closely with the governor.

Three years later, Safri Awang,⁵⁸ a young Malay teacher with aristocratic roots,⁵⁹ wrote a commentary entitled 'Democracy, National Unity, People's Party: Essential Ingredients'.⁶⁰ In it, Safri suggested that the different races in Sarawak were ready to participate in politics and that

we may eventually find ourselves in a single party which must be the People's Party.... We cannot quarrel over where our ancestors came from. That is immaterial. What concerns us now is to be together and fight for our existence as one solid body—The Sarawak Nation.... To be frank it is not our [Malay] wish to be separate from the Chinese ... we would like them [Chinese] to seek union with us on a generous plan ... that you concerned citizens would rally round for the formation of People's Party for National Unity.

The article was taken by people like Ong and Yong as a signal that Malay and indigenous support would be assured if a non-racial political party could be formed. Together with another Chinese elite, Song Thian Cheok,⁶¹ they publicly announced their plans to form a party in March 1959.⁶² They (Song, Ong, and Yong) told the press that the proposed party would be 'non-communal in character with emphasis on loyalty to Sarawak and unity of all races'. This move also received covert support from the colonial government and from Anthony Brooke,⁶³ who wrote to the MNU supporting the formation of a political party.

Reaction to the press announcement was generally mixed. Ikhwan Hj Zainie, editor of the leading Malay newspaper *Utusan Sarawak*, and general secretary of the MNU of Sarawak, was reported to have said, 'it would be much better for each community to form a National Union, such as the Chinese, Malay, Dayak and Indian National Unions, and eventually merge to form an Alliance like that in the Federation of Malaya'.⁶⁴

Mohd Hj Bakri, president of the MNU, was fully supportive of the proposal and emphasized that if necessary the MNU would join the party as one unit. Edward Bradah, the president of the Sarawak Dayak National Union, said it was still too premature to form political parties: 'At this stage we should concentrate on the education for our younger generation and the raising of standards of living for all communities.'⁶⁵ Other Dayak leaders, such as Temenggong Jugah⁶⁶ and Pengarah Montegerai, did support the proposal after consulting the governor.

The Chinese community was more supportive because the proposed party was led by ethnic Chinese. Other Chinese saw the formation as a chance to gain independence, which meant more economic opportunity. Stanley Wong Cheng Ting⁶⁷ from Sibu met Chan Siaw Hee⁶⁸ in Kuching. Chan, a Chao-ann, was heavily involved in the Chinese associations while Wong was heavily involved in the Foochow associations in Sibu. Both these men then discussed the formation of the proposed party with Tan Hsiao Tong,⁶⁹ Kho Choon Hui,⁷⁰ Weng Ming Chyuan,⁷¹ and others in Kuching. They all planned that the new party would be centralist albeit with a leftist slant, would be non-communal, and would push with Brunei and Sabah for independence. Chan then met with Ong and Yong. Ong stated that the governor was to be consulted before a party could be formalized. In the meantime, Yong and Chan were given the task of drawing up the proposed party constitution.

Ong then contacted other indigenous members of the Council Negri seeking their opinions and support. Chan and Ong also sought support from all the Chinese associations and trade unions. Yong went to Sibu twice to meet the two co-ordinators from the Third Division, Wong and Tieu Sung Seng.⁷² The three key movers (Yong, Ong, and Chan) also met on most Sundays at Ong's residence to monitor the progress of the proposed party.

In May, the plan to formally launch the party was stalled when Governor Abell gave a speech in Miri which in part read:

It is ... essential that party politics should not cause further divisions in our community but should have a unifying and binding effect. If a party tends to be dominated by one race or class ... it may have a disintegrating effect on our community. ... I frankly doubt if political parties at the present stage of development will spell faster progress in this small country [Sarawak].⁷³

This speech was taken by the Malay and the Dayak leaders to mean that they should have nothing to do with any political party without the blessing of the colonial government. The governor apparently retracted his earlier support for Ong to form a political party as the police started to uncover documents from the communist movement, naming SUPP as the party to support and subvert in early 1959.⁷⁴ As the Dayak and the Malay leaders were mostly on the government payroll and their official titles were issued by the government, it was inevitable that these leaders had to withdraw their support.

Yong was taken aback by the governor's strong statement so much so that he wrote to the *Singapore Times*⁷⁵ arguing that only the formation of a political party could serve the interests of Sarawak, and that political parties are for uniting the people and 'not for mud slinging'.

Setting Up the Party

A meeting was held on 4 June 1959 at the residence of Stephen Yong Kuet Tze.⁷⁶ It was attended by 34 people from the First, Second, and Third Divisions. This meeting, chaired by Ong Kee Hui, agreed to call the party the Sarawak United People's Party, and agreed to the party constitution which had been drafted earlier by Stephen Yong and Chan Siaw Hee. The aims of the party were:⁷⁷

1. To seek political advancement for the people of Sarawak by constitutional means with the eventual aim of securing independence;
2. To secure and maintain the establishment of a government based on parliamentary democracy;
3. To promote and ensure the economic and cultural advancement of all races and particularly to improve the economic conditions of all workers and those who were economically backward, and;
4. To maintain the racial harmony and unity of all races and to inspire the people of Sarawak with a spirit of self-reliance and endeavour.

These four aims embraced the views of both the English-educated, moderate members of the party and the largely Chinese-educated leftist members. For example, the first aim, regarding independence, was advocated by both groups. The second aim, a commitment to democracy, appeared to reflect the world-view of the moderates more than that of the leftists. The third aim, espousing economic improvement for the lower classes, was probably reflective of the left-wing's views, while the final aim appeared to have been inserted to reflect the multiracial character of the party's proposed membership and the reality of Sarawak's plurality. The meeting also saw the line up of the first Central Committee.⁷⁸

Chairman	Ong Kee Hui
Vice-Chairmen	Jonathan Bangau ak Renang ⁷⁹ Francis Umpi ak Rantai ⁸⁰ Awang Drahman bin Una ⁸¹ Wan Abdul Rahman ⁸²
Secretary-General	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze
Assistant Secretary-General	Stanley Wong Cheng Ting Wan Mohdzar bin Tuanku Mahmud
Treasurer	Charles Linang ⁸³
Assistant Treasurer	Song Tian Cheok
Committee members	William Hardin ⁸⁴ Vincent Gerkard Bandong George Seah Kim Seng ⁸⁵ Teo Kui Seng ⁸⁶ Chan Siaw Hee Yeo Cheng Hoe ⁸⁷ Ong Guan Cheng ⁸⁸ Liaw Ee Lee ⁸⁹ Kho Choon Hui Tieu Sung Seng Ngu Ngieng Hieng ⁹⁰

The application to the Registrar of Societies was successful and SUPP was registered on 12 June 1959. Official approval for the party was communicated on the morning of 18 June 1959. Stephen Yong held a press conference in Sibü when he received news that the party had been approved. Three days later, on 21 June, the Sibü branch was formed with Jonathan Bangau as its chairman and Tieu Sung Seng as secretary. The Kuching branch was formed on 29 June 1959,⁹¹ with Song Tian Cheok as its chairman and Bong Kee Chock⁹² as secretary. By the mid-1960s, the SUPP had established more than half a dozen branches, including one as far away as Miri.⁹³

The reaction to the actual formation was a mixture of fear and optimism. Even before the party was officially approved, an anonymous letter dated 11 June 1959 was sent to Yong. It read: 'If your Sarawak people's party is registered we shall form an indigenous revolutionary party to finish all of you.'⁹⁴ It would appear that someone, probably from one of the indigenous groupings, was worried about the formation of a multiracial party. Anti-SUPP posters also appeared in Kuching around this time.⁹⁵ However, a letter to a newspaper dated 14 July 1959 and signed by a 'Tuanku Sharif Nationalist, Brunei Town,' congratulated SUPP's founders on establishing the party.⁹⁶

It was apparent that right from the first meeting on 4 June, SUPP was a Chinese-based party. Of the 34 founder-members, there were 24 (70.59 per cent) Chinese, five (14.7 per cent) Ibans, two (5.9 per cent) Bidayuh, two Melanaus (5.9 per cent), and one (2.9 per cent) Malay.⁹⁷ This pattern is reflected in the composition of the first Central Committee members. Out of 20 members, 13 were Chinese and 7 non-Chinese,

translating into a 65:35 per cent Chinese/non-Chinese ratio. Hence it can be assumed that when a vote was taken, if the Chinese members in the Central Committee voted together, they would win a majority every time.

It was also apparent that CCO elements played a major role in the formation. For example, communists such as Tan Hsiao Tong, Kho Choon Hui, Weng Ming Chyuan, and Bong Kee Chock were all consulted before the party was launched. Typical of the CCO tactic of lying low, these men, with the exception of Kho, did not seek election to the Central Committee but rather worked behind the scenes. Weng and Bong virtually ran the Kuching branch. Besides the communists, other left-wingers who believed in socialism but were not members of the CCO, like Chan Siaw Hee, Liaw Ee Lee, Ngu Ngeing Hieng, and Tieu Sung Seng were all strategically placed in the Central Committee.

In sum, the formation of the SUPP saw three distinct groups coming together. The first group was the traditional Chinese élite, the *towkay* class (symbolized by people like Ong Kee Hui, Song Thian Cheok, and Stanley Wong). The second group consisted of professionals who became leaders of the Chinese community primarily due to their education (like Stephen Yong) and finally, the third group consisted of the leftists and communist sympathizers who had extensive grass-roots connections (such as Tan Hsiao Tong, Kho Choon Hui, and Weng Ming Chyuan). The 1956 attempt to form the party had failed basically because the first group was unable to gain the support of the third group.

The First Electoral Test

SUPP had its first chance to test its strength in the local municipal elections in Kuching and Sibu in 1959. At this time, the party was barely four months old and its organizational machinery was not yet ready to run an effective campaign. Fearing that it would fare dismally in the polls, Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze decided that candidates from the party would stand as independents, but with overt party backing.⁹⁸ Party members were used to publicize and support these independents.

The campaign for the KMC elections was fairly mundane. When the elections took place on Sunday 15 November, the SUPP independents took 15 out of 27 seats.⁹⁹ The SUPP members who won again¹⁰⁰ were Henry Ong Kee Chuan, Song Thian Ho, Tan Han Boon, Ong Kee Hui, Chan Siaw Hee, Stephen Yong, and Weng Ming Chyuan. Again, as in 1956, voting was along communal lines.¹⁰¹ In practical terms, the KMC was more or less run by the SUPP as they had a majority. One month later, at the SUDC elections on 16 December, SUPP-backed independents took only 9 of the 21 seats. Among those independents who were also founder-members were Tieu Sung Seng, Ting Chew Hin, and Ting Chew Huat. In both the KMC and SUDC, the SUPP-backed independents managed to secure the chairman and vice-chairman's posts.

SUPP attached great importance to securing the municipal councils for they were a powerful base from which to strengthen the party. The municipal councils had the authority to dispense public works contracts, set zoning policies, and exert local influence on a day-to-day basis.

The other reason why SUPP wanted to dominate the municipal councils was because many of the SUPP members elected were also businessmen who hoped to profit from their political positions. In sum, on all the committees and other bodies, especially in the area of finance and public works, SUPP councillors dominated or were in control.¹⁰² These local bodies also elected one of their members to the Council Negri.¹⁰³ The municipal councils were a great source of political patronage and the SUPP took full advantage of these.

Conclusion

The formation of SUPP can in a sense be seen as a natural progression in the political development of a rapidly changing community and state, aided by internal and external factors. The Chinese community had been in Sarawak for more than a hundred years and had never really had to deal with any matter of political significance. During the Brooke era, the Chinese were treated as aliens and dealings with the Brookes were through the traditional power holders in the community. These power holders, almost all of whom came from the mercantile class (*towkay*), were not able to sustain control over the Chinese community during the invasion and occupation by the Japanese during the Second World War. During this period (1941–5), the Chinese suffered at the hands of the Japanese, but a small number became rich by collaborating with the invaders. Hence a new group of *towkay* was born.

After the war, the Chinese community was further politically awakened by two events, one internal the other external. The former was the cession issue which deeply divided the Sarawak Malay community. While the Chinese for the most part stayed on the sidelines, they eventually supported the cession because they thought it would bring more economic opportunities. It is almost certain that the political fight mounted by the Malay anti-cessionists left a deep impression on the Chinese leaders.

The external event was the fall of the KMT in China in 1949. Before this, the Sarawak Chinese, especially the traditional leaders, had supported the KMT quite openly but when the KMT fell, the whole issue of communists versus KMT followers came out in the open and the Sarawak Chinese realized that China might no longer be their home. The emergence of many new Chinese newspapers, often left-wing, which reported extensively on political events in China, added to the emerging political awakening of the community. The fall of the KMT also resulted in the élite *towkay* class looking at Sarawak as their home since they knew they could not go back to communist China. It is argued here that these two issues, cession and the fall of the KMT, principally caused the emergence of political consciousness among the Sarawak Chinese.

At the same time the communist movement took root among the Chinese community in Sarawak. The CCO was successful in penetrating trade union movements and Chinese school; so successful was the CCO that it galvanized the students to challenge the traditional leaders.

Another factor was the emergence of a new generation of educated Sarawak Chinese, almost all of whom had had a Western education at the tertiary level. That education no doubt exposed them to the political system in the West, which influenced their political thinking.¹⁰⁴ When the first attempt to form SUPP was made in 1956, three (Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, T. G. Dunbar, and S. K. Reddi) out of the four men involved were lawyers. When the second attempt was made in 1959, the two key players were Stephen Yong and Ong Kee Hui. Yong was trained in London while Ong, although not a lawyer, received training in agricultural science in Malaya, in a British colonial setting. Moreover, Ong was in Malaya when the Chinese community was already quite active in various political controversies such as those over the Malayan Union, and participation in the colonial government. After all, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed in 1948. Another key factor was the fact that the Sarawak government had made it quite clear that it intended Sarawak to eventually become fully independent. This message was conveyed through such things as the Local Government Act of 1948, which gave some urban dwellers a chance to participate directly.

By the mid-1950s, a small group of English-educated Chinese had more or less made up their minds to form a political party. Their enthusiasm was further reinforced by the formation of the PAP party and government in Singapore, and the activities of the MCA in Malaya.¹⁰⁵ Chou En Lai's statement in 1955 that the overseas Chinese should not see China as their homeland and should instead assimilate into their adopted countries, was seen by the *nanyang* Chinese community (including those in Sarawak) as a call for them to participate actively in local affairs, including local politics.

All these factors led the Sarawak Chinese to believe that a political party based on the principle of multiracialism was possible. Ong was initially singled out by the colonial authorities as one who should be encouraged to form a political party. The first attempt in 1956 proved unsuccessful because they could not secure mass support from the Chinese community or, for that matter, indigenous support. This taught them to ensure that they did get the support of these two groups next time around. The inclusion of indigenous members, principally the Ibans, was done in order to project the multiracial image. However, going by the results of the voting pattern of the KMC elections in 1956, it is clear that the leaders were well aware that the trend was communal voting.

The communist movement helped in the process of establishing SUPP by ordering its influential grass-roots cadres to whole-heartedly support this venture. As a result, the colonial government withdrew its support for the new party. This withdrawal had the effect of making

true indigenous participation impossible, cementing the perception of SUPP as a CCO front.

By 1959, the momentum created by Ong, Yong, and others made it difficult for the colonial authorities to stop the formation of SUPP. From the start, the public perceived SUPP as a Chinese venture geared principally towards Chinese issues and interests. Ong and Yong were heavily involved with Chinese business and education interests. The voting pattern of the KMC and the SUDC elections of 1959 shows quite clearly that SUPP independent candidates won in predominantly Chinese areas only. Moreover, the simple statistical analysis done on the founding-members and the first Central Committee suggests that the odds were stacked against the non-Chinese.

By the end of 1959 it was clear that SUPP was a Chinese-based party despite its reassurances that it stood for multiracialism. In addition, a new generation of Chinese leaders of humble origins like Stephen Yong were now able to climb politically to the top of the Chinese community by working together with old Chinese élites from the *towkay* class, like Ong Kee Hui and Song Thian Cheok. This also suggests that they were able to cross dialect lines to cement co-operation for political gains. Finally, communist influence extended to the top of the SUPP although the communists were careful to allow people like Ong to be the leader and hence, the public face. However, it must be emphasized that moderates like Ong and Yong must have known about left-wing and communist sympathizers in the party. They did not act on this knowledge, suggesting that their first priority was to build up the party at all costs, or that they thought they could control or limit the influence of the communists.

1. For details on internment camps, see Agnes Keith, *Three Came Home*, Boston: Little Brown, 1947.

2. Liew Yung Tzu, *Sarawak under the Japanese*, Sibiu: Hua Ping Press, 1956 (text in Chinese); R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982. Reece also gives an account of the Japanese invasion.

3. *Nanyang* is a term widely used to describe the Chinese community in South-East Asia. See Wang Gungwu, *China and the Overseas Chinese*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991, pp. 240–57.

4. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 156.

5. See Craig Allen Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia 1820–1970*, Athens: Ohio University, 1987.

6. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, pp. 232–43.

7. Moreover, the Rajah had personal financial problems which he hoped the British could solve. The definitive work on the cession is Reece, *The Name of Brooke*. This section is based mainly on his work unless otherwise indicated.

8. See n.55 in Chapter 2.

9. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 201.

10. For details on the Malayan Union see Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy 1924–1948*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991.

11. *Overseas Chinese Daily News* (Sibu), 6 February 1956, cited in Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 207.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
14. See Sir Charles N. A. Clarke, 'Note on Development of Local Government in Sarawak (Article 18)', typescript, 1947. Found in the State Archives, Kuching.
15. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 141.
16. Chinese national day which marks the founding of the Republic of China under Sun Yat Sen, commonly referred to in Mandarin as 'Double Ten'.
17. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 June 1946, 28 August 1948; Tien Ju-Kang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: a Study of Social Structure*, Monographs on Social Anthropology, No. 12, London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1953, p. 86; Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 168. Reece, *The Name of Brooke*, p. 98 states that a Kuomintang (KMT) branch was formed briefly in the 1920s in Kuching, but does not indicate his source.
18. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 168.
19. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, p. 86, writes that the Chinese community was so excited by the visit of the Consul-General, almost \$50,000 (in Sarawak currency), then a considerable sum, was spent on entertainment for him.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 January 1948.
22. On the Consul, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 8, 9, 26 January and 9 March 1948; *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 April 1948. Tien, *The Chinese of Sarawak*, p. 86, reported that the Consul left for America shortly after arriving in Kuching. Since Dr Chan was a former Consul in San Francisco, it can be assumed that he went back there after the defeat of the KMT in China.
23. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 168–9.
24. The communist movement will be dealt with in detail later.
25. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 15, 17 September 1951, 3 October 1953.
26. John M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 108.
27. The *Sarawak Tribune* was for many years, and still is, the leading English daily. Because of this, its owners and editors had to be careful with its contents. During the 1950s and 1960s it was run by Dennis Liaw, described as a 'Queen's Chinese'. See Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 170 and Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, pp. 106–10.
28. The nine dialect associations were: Hokkien, Hakka, Chao-ann, Teochiu, Foochow, Henghua, Luichew, Chew, and Khang Chew. The four major Chinese commercial organizations were: Kuching Chinese Chamber of Commerce (KCCC), Kuching Chinese Grocers Association, United Merchants Association, and Rubber Exporters Association.
29. *Sarawak Vanguard*, 4, 6 August 1954; Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 170–1.
30. The account given here is based on a report on the incident made by a special committee, published partly in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 April 1955, and fully in the *Chinese Daily News*, 30 April 1955.
31. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 April 1955.
32. *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 April 1955.
33. This section is based primarily on two sources: Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, Council Negri Occasional Paper No. 3 (White Paper), Kuching: Government Printer, 1960; and Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within: a History of the Clandestine Communist Organisation in Sarawak*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1963. The main difficulty in dealing with an analysis of the Sarawak communist movement is the lack of independent materials. Almost all the materials relating to communists in Sarawak are government documents, and a vast majority of these are still held by the Special Branch and are unlikely to ever be released. Even important Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) party documents, written during the party's founding years, are still held despite SUPP's attempts to have them returned. The author was told that from 1960 to 1968, when a vast number of SUPP members and supporters 'went into the jungle' to take up arms against the government, the Special Branch took away everything from the SUPP headquarters in Kuching. Apparently the Special Branch wanted information on members who joined the communists in the jungle. Hence very few party records of SUPP's early years are available.

34. Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, p. 1; Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 2.
35. Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 4.
36. Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, p. 2; Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 4.
37. Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, p. 2; Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 37.
38. Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 16.
39. A 17-year-old rubber tapper was found guilty in Sibü for being a member of the Sarawak Farmers' Organization (SFO). See *Sarawak by the Week*, No. 4/63, 20–26 January 1963, p. 21; and Sarawak Information Service, *Communism and the Farmers*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1961.
40. For example, the Sarawak Information Service received a letter from the communists demanding 'the release of four students by order'. See *Sarawak by the Week*, No. 28/61, 9–15 July, 1961.
41. Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, p. 3; Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 23.
42. Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, pp. 25–7.
43. Sarawak Council Negri, *Subversion in Sarawak*, p. 3; Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 29.
44. Sarawak Council Negri, *The Danger Within*, p. 28.
45. For example, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze praised the Singapore People's Action Party (PAP) government under Lee Kuan Yew as 'honest and sincere'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 July 1959. Moreover, the changing political patterns in Singapore were faithfully reported by the press. The impact of this change was expressed by editorials in, for example: *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 February 1956; *Utusan Sarawak*, 11 September 1957. Even the colonial governor, Anthony Abell, acknowledged this impact. See Minutes of the Council Negri, December 1957.
46. See G. T. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference, Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956.
47. See Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking's Changing Policy, 1949–1970*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, Chap. 6 'Self-determination, Nationality and Peaceful Coexistence: 1954–1956', pp. 102–15.
48. Interview with Ong Kee Hui.
49. Ong was first educated at St Thomas' school in Kuching, then St Andrews' in Singapore, before proceeding to Serdang Agricultural College in Malaya. From 1936 to 1946 he was attached to the Department of Agriculture and was stationed at Kapit. He later became the English secretary of the KCCC, and helped organize petitions against increased trade fees. He was also involved in the Woodhead Report on Chinese education, and the Chung Hua Middle School students' boycott. Married to the daughter of wealthy Wee Kheng Chiang, he was, while chairman of SUPP, bank manager for a period at the Wee family-controlled Bian Chiang Bank. A member of the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) since 1953, he became its president in 1956 and represented the KMC in the Council Negri from that year. He concurrently served as a member of the Supreme Council, where he established a close rapport with Governor Abell.
50. Stephen Yong comes from humble Hakka origins. His father was a shopkeeper in Simunjan. He was educated at St Thomas' in Kuching, and worked as a teacher before gaining a scholarship to pursue law in Nottingham, England.
51. S. K. Reddi came to Sarawak after he represented some Singaporean workers at a British base. T. G. Dunbar was closely associated with the Left in Singapore.
52. During a press conference in 1959, Ong said: 'The idea of forming a political party in Sarawak has been pursued by us [Ong, Song Thian Cheok, and Stephen Yong] (since) as long as three years ago. Discussions took place between us and leaders of other communities, but unfortunately there was a lack of enthusiasm on the part of some sections of the community, and it was decided ... wiser to wait.' See *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1959.
53. Interview with Ong Kee Hui.

54. *Sarawak Annual Report*, London: HMSO, 1955, p. 5; Michael B. Leigh, *Council Negeri, Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak, Malaysia's Oldest Legislature*, Kuching: Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak, 1992, pp. 38–9.

55. *Sarawak Annual Report*, London: HMSO, 1956, p. 5.

56. For a graphic representation of the three-tier system of voting, see Figure 4.1.

57. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 187–8.

58. Safri Awang belongs to the Sarawak Malay aristocratic class whose roots can be traced back to Brunei. After the article appeared, he was quietly and quickly given a scholarship by the colonial government to study politics at Victoria University of Wellington. After returning to Sarawak, despite attempts to recruit him to enter politics, he remained in the Sarawak Administrative Service. He was secretary to Abdul Rahman Yakub and later became deputy state secretary, the second highest civil servant in Sarawak. He currently sits on the board of several state statutory bodies such as the Yayasan Sarawak (Sarawak Foundation).

59. Sarawak Malays with the names 'Awang', 'Abang', and 'Wan' ('Dayang' for females) are considered descendants of the aristocratic Malay class, mostly from the Brunei Sultanate.

60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 March 1959.

61. Song Thian Cheok, like Ong Kee Hui, came from the traditional élite *towkay* class. He was the son of Song Kheng Hai, a powerful *towkay* from the Hokkien dialect group. Song was educated at St Thomas' and trusted by the colonial authorities. He was also a prominent member of the *towkay* club, the KCCC. He later became president of the KMC. An account of *towkay* élite in Sarawak and their extensive links to the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Kuching Chamber of Commerce can be found in Craig A. Lockard, 'Leadership and Power Within the Chinese Community of Sarawak', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 2, 2 (September 1970): 195–217.

62. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 4–6 March 1959.

63. Anthony Brooke was the *Tuan Muda* who lost his claim to the Brooke crown when Sarawak was ceded to Britain in 1946. He supported the anti-cessionists in the Malay community and was looked upon as the unproclaimed Rajah. Thus his advice carried some weight in the Malay and indigenous communities.

64. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1959.

65. *Ibid.*

66. There is some controversy over the actual nature of Temenggong Jugah's support for the formation of SUPP. According to his biography, Jugah 'agreed to support it, he did not interpret the agreement as a commitment to join the party [SUPP]'. Ong Kee Hui stated that Jugah was never a member and instead nominated Jonathan Bangau as his representative in the SUPP. Vinson Sutlive argues that in the early stages, the colonial authorities encouraged Jugah to join, or at least support the formation of the new party. Then fearful that SUPP might not be as pro-government as initially thought, the same authorities instructed Jugah not to join. See Vinson Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1992, pp. 140–1.

67. The late Stanley Wong was a Foochow from Sibü. As his father was one of the rubber barons in Sibü, he was thus from the *towkay* class too. He left for further studies at St John's University in Shanghai, China, before the Second World War. He was selected as a key member because after the war he was one of the few educated men in Sibü who could represent the Third Division Foochows in the proposed party as he was from the old élite class. The information on these men and others who made up the founding Central Committee of SUPP comes from interviews with several older SUPP members.

68. Chan Siaw Hee is one of SUPP's more colourful and enduring characters. Educated at St Thomas' in Kuching, he is a descendant of Chao-ann pioneer Chan Ah Koh, and was the left wing's unofficial spokesman during the 1960s. He became a key man in the Kuching and First Division branch of SUPP because he controlled the Sarawak Transport Company and was seen to be the most Chinese in aspiration among the early SUPP leaders. He was in close contact with the more Western-oriented leaders like Ong

Kee Hui and Stephen Yong. He was detained by the authorities in August 1968, but managed to regain and maintain his influence when he was released after 14 months.

69. Tan Hsiao Tong was a China-born communist who came to Kuching in the 1920s when he was on the run from the KMT in China. He ran a bookstore before becoming the editor of *Sin Wen Pao*, a Chinese newspaper that was later proscribed. In 1962, he was detained and deported to China by the colonial authorities for being a communist. He still resides in China.

70. Kho Choon Hui was a Kuching-born communist. He was very active in the trade unions, trying to bring the Kuching unions under communist control. He later went into the jungle to lead a group of the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO), and was killed by security forces near Miri in 1969.

71. Weng Ming Chyuan was also a Kuching-born communist who worked for *Sin Wen Pao*. He was detained and deported in 1962, and now lives in China.

72. Tieu Sung Seng was a prominent member of the party's left wing and chairman of the Sibuan District Council (SUDC). He was detained over the Brunei revolt in 1962, and held for 12 years until 1974.

73. The speech was reported in full on the front page of the *Sarawak Tribune* on 28 May 1959, and reproduced in the government-owned *Sarawak by the Week*, No. 21, 24-30 May 1959, p. 3.

74. See above section on the communist party.

75. The letter also appeared on p. 2 of the *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 May 1959.

76. In a highly unusual move, the *Sarawak Tribune* printed a page one story on 3 June 1959, entitled 'Political party taking shape: Meeting to be convened'. It reported that 'a group of people will convene a meeting on Thursday afternoon ... a proposed People's Party'. It also reported that Temenggong Jugah had talked with leaders on the formation of a party. It would appear that the meeting was an 'open' secret.

77. These four declarations were later printed in full by the *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 June 1959; *Chinese Daily News*, 22 June 1959.

78. The list of Central Committee (CC) members was published by the *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 June 1959.

79. At that time, Jonathan Bangau ak Renang was a member of the Supreme Council and Council Negri. He came from the Third Division and was a leader from the Iban ethnic group.

80. Francis Umpi ak Rantai from the Second Division was at that time chairman of the Saratok District Council and a member of the Council Negri.

81. Although Awang Drahman's name was submitted to the Registrar of Societies, it was later crossed out and replaced by Wan Abdul Rahman.

82. Wan Abdul Rahman, at the time of joining, was chairman of the Sarikei District Council. He left SUPP shortly afterwards.

83. An Iban who left SUPP in 1970.

84. He was a Sibuan Melanau.

85. George Seah Kim Seng, also from Sibuan, was a magistrate. He later became a member of the Supreme Court. He was forced to retire from the bench over the Tun Salleh Abbas controversy in 1989.

86. Teo Kui Seng, was a Kuching Teochiu. He was manager of the Sarawak Steamship Company. He later left SUPP to join the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) and was appointed Minister of Natural Resources in the first state Cabinet under Stephen Kalong Ningkan.

87. The late Yeo Cheng Hoe was a teacher in the Chung Hua Middle School who later became an SUPP Council Negri member and played a prominent role in the Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC).

88. Related to Ong Kee Hui.

89. Liaw Ee Lee, a Kuching goldsmith, was a member of the left wing in SUPP.

90. Ngu Ngieng Hieng was a trade unionist who was detained over the Brunei revolt in 1962. He was subsequently released in 1964 and is currently working at a timber firm owned by Sibuan Foochows in Kuching.

91. *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 July 1959.

92. Bong is a Kuching-born ex-communist.

93. On the Miri branch, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 April 1960, 16 October 1960.

94. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 June 1959.

95. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 June 1959.

96. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 July 1959.

97. Calculated by the author using SUPP records.

98. Interview with Ong Kee Hui.

99. The 15 were: Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, Ong Kee Hui, Song Thian Cheok, Tan Tak Seng, Song Thian Ho, Ho Aik Chew, Tan Tan Boon, Chan Khiok Leng, Francis Tan Eng Chong, Wee Ching Hong, Ee Ghim Yam, Henry Ong Kee Chuan, Yeo Cheng Hoe, Chan Siaw Hee, and Weng Ming Chyuan.

100. 'Won again' because they were elected before in the first municipal elections of 1956, albeit as real independents.

101. Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, p. 188.

102. For example, five out of the six KMC councillors who were serving in the First Division Advisory Council were SUPP members. All the different finance committees had at least two SUPP members. See *KMC Annual Report*, 1959.

103. Which, as mentioned, was Ong Kee Hui.

104. Western education is broadly defined here, and includes students of Christian mission schools in Sarawak. In fact, more than half of the 34 founder-members were educated at St Thomas' in Kuching.

105. It was no coincidence, and it was significant, that in the first attempt in 1956, two Singapore lawyers who were involved in political action in Singapore were part of the effort, along with Yong and Ong.

The Formation of Malaysia

Introduction

SARAWAK was thrown into the Malaysian federation with little support or opposition from the majority of Sarawakians. Those who were vocal in support of federation were basically educated urban dwellers who understood the socio-political consequences of entering into a federation with the more advanced polities of Malaya and Singapore. Generally speaking, support for the federation came from the Malay communities in Kuching while opposition came from the Chinese-supported Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). The bulk of the population, the Ibans, were too inexperienced in politics to understand the true meaning of a federation and were consequently liable to be manipulated by all sides. The British colonial authorities, once they had decided to withdraw from the South-East Asian region, wanted a federation with as little fuss as possible. Thus, they approved of Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaysia proposal. It meant the British could withdraw within a year or two and only one new state—Malaysia—would be formed instead of the many new states that would emerge if independence were to be granted separately to North Borneo, Singapore, Sarawak, and Brunei.

The Formation of Political Parties in Sarawak

By 1960, after Sarawak's first political party had been formed, a new mood had set in. The next two years saw the formation of five political parties set up to break the monopoly enjoyed by SUPP in the political arena. The first of these was formed in April 1960, when SUPP was less than a year old. Party Negara or PANAS was formed as a direct Malay response to the Chinese SUPP. It was led by the Datu Bandar, Abang Hj Mustapha,¹ the most senior Malay leader, with his brother, Abang Othman, as its Secretary-General.² While professing to be multiracial, appointing a Chinese, William Tan,³ as its vice-chairman, its support none the less came mainly from the Malay community in the First Division.

Because of its First Division somewhat urban Malay political base, PANAS looked towards the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) as its ideological soul mate and mentor. In fact, the Datu

Bandar publicly asked UMNO to come to Sarawak and absorb PANAS members to form a branch of UMNO in Sarawak.⁴

The next party to appear was the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), which was registered in March 1961. It was formed by a group of Ibans, all former employees of Shell, principally led by Stephen Kalong Ningkan.⁵ It generally drew support from the Iban and other Dayak communities in the Second, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions. It also professed to be multiracial, but in its formation years its membership was confined mainly to the Ibans.⁶

Sarawak's third political party was the Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak or Berjasa. It was formed in December 1961 and consisted mainly of Malays who were opposed to the Datu Bandar and PANAS.⁷ It was led by Datu Tuanku Hj Bujang bin Tuanku Othman, a senior Sibuan Malay leader who had clashed with the Datu Bandar on the cession issue. However, its effective day-to-day control was left to two Melanau, Abdul Rahman Yakub and Abdul Taib Mahmud, who also ensured Melanau support for the party. It merged with PANAS in 1967 to form Parti Bumiputera.⁸

Two more political parties appeared in 1962. The Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) was formed in July 1962. It was set up by *towkay* from the Sibuan Foochow and Kuching Teochiu communities, both of which had been somewhat marginalized in the SUPP power structure. Among its leaders was William Tan, who had switched from PANAS, and later Ling Beng Siew, a Foochow timber tycoon. The SCA was modelled after the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). Its constitution was almost exactly the same as that of the MCA, and MCA representatives were on hand to help launch the party. It was Sarawak's first expressly communal political party—only ethnic Chinese could join.

The second party to appear in 1962 was Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak or simply Pesaka, which was registered in August of that year. Formed mainly by Ibans from the Rejang area, it was led by Temenggong Jugah, the paramount chief of the Ibans, and Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, the leader of the *orang-ulu*. Jonathan Bangau ak Renang, the former SUPP vice-chairman from Sibuan, joined soon after it was formed. It later merged with Parti Bumiputera in 1973 to form Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

So at the time the debate on the Malaysia proposal was being held, the formation of these five new political parties meant that the political undercurrents were getting more complex as more parties entered the fray and expressed their views on Malaysia. The formation of these parties also drew support away from SUPP. In fact, many of the Iban leaders in SNAP and Pesaka were former SUPP members. The scene was set for a more communal attitude towards politics as each political party, although expressing multiracialism, targeted certain ethnic groups and drew its main support exclusively from such groups.

Political Developments and the SUPP, 1960–1963

The Party Grows

SUPP celebrated its first anniversary on 4 June 1960. The main event took place at Padungan in Kuching. Eleven resolutions were passed, including one calling for independence. The guest of honour was A. M. Azahari from Parti Rakyat Brunei (PRB). Azahari called for the establishment of a political party 'to unite all the forces of the three British Borneo territories'.⁹ Azahari's presence was significant as it demonstrated that SUPP, although only a year old, had already established ties with other political personalities in the region.

Ong Kee Hui, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, and Charles Linang retained their positions as chairman, Secretary-General, and treasurer respectively. Changes in the Central Committee (CC) and in the Central Working Committee (CWC) were minimal as the members were mostly re-elected.¹⁰

The Secretary-General also reported a membership roll of 7,401.¹¹ By this time, SUPP had reached into the interior, and the Kanowit branch was formed on 9 April 1961. The Kapit and Song branches, both in the deep interior were formed on 15 November 1960, and 28 May 1961 respectively. By the end of 1961, when Tunku Abdul Rahman had made his proposal, SUPP was the most organized among all the political parties in Sarawak, with branches in all the major towns.

Tunku Abdul Rahman's Malaysia Proposal

On 27 May 1961, the then Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, revealed in Singapore that the concept of the Malaysia plan would come about if an understanding could be reached by Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo (Sabah), Brunei, and Sarawak. The Tunku envisaged the Malaysia plan as a union or federation of these states. His original plan was to prepare the way for a merger by first encouraging closer economic and political co-operation among them. Once that co-operation had been established, a new state, Malaysia, could be formed.¹²

SUPP's first public reaction to the Tunku's proposal came when Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was asked to comment by the press.¹³ He said before merger or federation with Malaya could come about, Sarawak should have 'attained a large measure of self government and independence'. He added that 'it is logical that we should work for closer co-operation with North Borneo, with the eventual aim of federation, before we can consider a large federation with Malaya and others'.¹⁴ On 8 June, SUPP issued a press statement formally opposing the Malaysia proposal. It stated that

the objective of SUPP is to achieve self government and ultimate independence for Sarawak so that, together with North Borneo and under equal terms, we could stand on our own feet internationally. Therefore any form of connection that Sarawak has with the federation of Malaya should be deferred until Sarawak could obtain her independence.¹⁵

On the weekend of 8–9 July 1961, Ong Kee Hui met with A. M. Azahari and Donald Stephens¹⁶ in Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu), to discuss the Tunku's proposal. After this meeting, calling themselves the United Front, the three leaders issued a joint statement that the Front would inform the British government that the Tunku's 'Mighty Malaysia Plan' was 'totally unacceptable to the people of the three territories'.¹⁷ On 17 July 1961, Stephen Yong and A. M. Azahari, together with Ahmad Boestaman, chairman of the Parti Rakyat Malaya, issued a joint statement from Kuching, following a meeting in Brunei. The statement asserted that

the people of Malaya faithfully support the efforts and struggles of parties in the colonial and semi colonial countries ... Parti Rakyat Brunei and SUPP support the call of Mr Boestaman to a conference of all socialist parties in Malaya, Singapore and British Borneo territories and Brunei. We hope this conference would bring about constitutional change to Brunei, Sarawak and British North Borneo, whereby the people will be granted self government and independence in the very near future.¹⁸

On 30 July SNAP issued the statement that, although it did not wish to become part of the United Front, it supported its stand against the Malaysia proposal.¹⁹ The only party in Sarawak still in favour of the Malaysia plan was PANAS.

Although SUPP's official call was for Sarawak independence, in reality the leadership was split on the issue. The party's left wing wanted independence as it gave them a better chance to assume power. The moderate wing were excited by the economic prospects Malaysia could offer, but still had reservations, thinking Malaya and Singapore were too economically advanced compared to Sarawak (and North Borneo). What further swayed the moderates towards the Malaysian proposal was the active role taken by Lee Kuan Yew and Stephens after the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference (CPA) in Singapore on 21 July 1961. At the CPA meeting, Lee successfully persuaded Stephens to reconsider his anti-Malaysia stand, and the Tunku invited Stephens and other Sabah leaders to visit Malaya.²⁰ Among members of the Sarawak CPA delegation were Ong Kee Hui and Yeo Cheng Hoe, participating not as SUPP nominees but as members of the Council Negri.

That August, following the CPA meeting in Singapore, Stephens created the Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) to drum up support for the Malaysia proposal. Between 24 August 1961 and 1 February 1962 the MSCC held four meetings, in Jesselton, Kuching, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore. For all four meetings Yeo was leader of the Sarawak delegation and Ong was a member. At the second meeting in Kuching in December 1961, Lee and Ong Yoke Lin, a Cabinet minister, were sent in to convince the Sarawak and Sabah delegations to ensure the success of the Malaysian proposal.²¹ The Sarawak delegation's position was that certain safeguards, regarding issues like religion, administration, and development, must be assured

within the proposed federation. The delegation also argued strongly that Sarawak should attain a degree of independence before joining any federation.²²

Shortly after that meeting the Sarawak government published a pro-Malaysia White Paper.²³ The White Paper said the obvious advantage of the Malaysia proposal would be the way in which Sarawak could easily assimilate with Malaya because of the existing cultural, economic, and historical ties. It added that both London and Kuala Lumpur saw Malaysia as a desirable entity and that a commission of enquiry would be sent to Sarawak (and North Borneo) to ascertain the wishes of the people.²⁴ Hence by the end of 1961, it was abundantly clear that the colonial government in Kuching was gearing up to canvass support for the Malaysia proposal. By the time the final MSCC memorandum was completed, at the final meeting in Singapore in early February 1962, the Sarawak delegation had all but agreed to the formation of Malaysia.²⁵

Neither the contradictory involvement in the MSCC of SUPP party leader Ong and Central Committee member Yeo, nor the party's open anti-Malaysia stand, were lost on the general members. Ong's argument was that he attended the meetings as a member of the Supreme Council. Moreover, he (and Yeo) were there to push for a referendum on the Malaysia proposal.²⁶ During this period, the party's left wing repeatedly came out with statements condemning Malaysia.²⁷ When pro-Malaysia PANAS attacked SUPP for the contradiction,²⁸ Yong's reply was that 'there is no conflict between me and our Chairman Mr Ong Kee Hui. . . . There has been a deliberate attempt to confuse the minds of the people by treating the "Malaysia Concept" as synonymous with "Malaysia Plan". When a distinction is made clear . . . it would be seen that Mr Ong's stand is our Party stand.'²⁹

The contradiction within the leadership over the Malaysia proposal caused some SUPP members to quit the party. Chen Ko Meng, vice-chairman of the Sarikei branch and a Council Negri member, resigned stating that 'the Party's view is to oppose the Plan but I think Greater Malaysia is the way for us to obtain our independence'.³⁰

The Conference of Socialist Parties

Towards the end of January 1962, the socialist parties from Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei held a three-day conference in Kuala Lumpur.³¹ It was convened by the Malayan Socialist Front and attended by seven parties, including SUPP.³² During the conference, the People's Action Party (PAP) was expelled after Lee Kuan Yew was accused of trying to sabotage the proceedings. PAP now was pro-Malaysia, whereas the purpose of the conference was to unite all anti-Malaysia parties.³³

The 17 resolutions passed at the meeting called for the self-determination of all states, anti-colonialism, and opposition to the Malaysia proposal. Stephen Yong also claimed that if a referendum was

held in Sarawak, '80 percent would reject Malaysia'.³⁴ The communiqué at the end of the conference said:

The Conference also notes with regret that little opportunity is given to the people for a genuine expression of their views. Instead there appears to be deliberate effort to by-pass the people ... to rush through a constitutional arrangement for Malaysia.... The Conference ... deplore the conduct of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee for attempting to speak for the peoples of the territories when it has not the mandate or the competence to so do ... the Conference is in support of the views expressed ... by the delegates from Brunei and Sarawak that the three Borneon territories should exercise the right to self-determination before the concept of Malaysia is to be further examined.³⁵

This meeting further demonstrated the contradictory stand taken by SUPP. Party chairman Ong Kee Hui was a member of the Sarawak delegation to the MSCC, while the party's Secretary-General Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was actively working against the Malaysia proposal. The meeting also indicated that SUPP tried to organize a united opposition with other parties outside Sarawak opposed to the Malaysia proposal.

The Cobbold Commission

On 23 November 1961, a joint statement was issued by the British and Malayan governments to the effect that the proposed Federation of Malaysia was desirable, and that a commission would be set up to ascertain the views of the peoples of Sarawak and Sabah. The Commission, headed by Lord Cobbold, a former governor of the Bank of England, had four members. The two appointees of the Malayan government were Wong Pow Nee, the MCA chief minister of Penang, and Mohammad Ghazali bin Shafie, permanent secretary to the Malayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The British side also appointed two members: Anthony Abell, the former governor of Sarawak, and David Watherston, the former British chief secretary of Malaya.³⁶

The Cobbold Commission arrived in Sarawak for a series of hearings throughout February and March 1962. SUPP had already started to mobilize its members to step up the anti-Malaysia campaign to coincide with the Commission's visit. It had been decided at a Central Committee meeting on 28 and 29 December 1961, that a series of anti-Malaysia rallies would be held in towns and places where the Commission would sit.³⁷ The CC also issued a statement that Sarawak should achieve independence before any decision regarding Malaysia could be discussed.³⁸ The colonial authorities, trying their best to suppress SUPP, denied it permission to hold a rally at the Kuching airport on 19 February when the Commission arrived. Instead SUPP held a rally at its headquarters. Because public rallies had to be abandoned, SUPP decided to organize a signature campaign.

At the Commission's first hearing in Kuching, SUPP submitted 21,451 signatures from the Kuching area against the Malaysia proposal.

All in all, the party managed to collect about 114,000 signatures or thumb prints throughout Sarawak against the proposal.³⁹ Besides the signatures, SUPP memorandum submitted to the Commission contained seven resolutions.⁴⁰ The main points of the resolutions were:⁴¹

1. Sarawak should be granted independence in accordance with the Nine Cardinal Principles set out by the Brookes, and Britain should honour its pledge of giving independence to Sarawak should it decide to withdraw;⁴²
2. SUPP objects to the inclusion of constitutional amendments which would discriminate against the non-indigenous, that is, the Chinese, and is worried that the non-indigenous communities will become second-class citizens;
3. Economically and financially, Sarawak is more stable and has better prospects as an independent concern than any merger with Malaya;
4. Islam and Malay are unacceptable as the national religion and language, respectively.

The submission also called for a referendum to be held on Sarawak's future and stated that the majority of Sarawakians were against the Malaysia plan.

SUPP also organized press statements against the Malaysia proposal by organizations with which it had links or which it controlled. For example, the following bodies publicly opposed the Malaysia plan: the Kuching Rural District Council (KRDC),⁴³ the Sibü Urban District Council (SUDC),⁴⁴ the Sibü Chinese Chamber of Commerce and seven other Chinese associations⁴⁵ in Sibü and Miri, the Miri District Council,⁴⁶ and the Miri Chinese Chamber of Commerce,⁴⁷ along with nine other Chinese associations (mostly clan associations). All these organizations were dominated by SUPP members.

In the midst of organizing opposition to the Cobbold Commission, one of the party's indigenous founder-members from Sibü, Jonathan Bangau ak Renang, an Iban, resigned citing communist influence in SUPP. He had tried to put two resolutions to the executive committee of the SUPP Sibü branch to the effect that any party member having communist sympathies, or who had been convicted of subversion, be expelled. The committee rejected the two resolutions outright.⁴⁸ Bangau's resignation was a blow to SUPP as he was the most senior Iban member, holding the vice-chairman's post, and being chairman of the Sibü branch.⁴⁹

The Cobbold Commission released its report in mid-August 1962, concluding that one-third of the population in Sabah and Sarawak were unconditionally in favour of Malaysia, one-third in favour with certain conditions and guarantees, and one-third opposed to it. An observer, in his assessment of the Commission, suggested that its findings were somewhat flawed as 'it did not concern itself with the depth of understanding of those supporting Malaysia' and 'failed to question the representative character of the meetings of chiefs who purported to speak

for 112,000 Ibans'.⁵⁰ Indeed, many of the indigenous representatives did not understand the significance of their appearance before the Commission. One responded to Lord Cobbold, 'Whatever you say, sir'. The Commission itself acknowledged this when it stated that 'there are large sections of the population in the interior who have no real appreciation of the Malaysia proposal'.⁵¹ Another observer argued that the Cobbold Commission could only come up with a pro-Malaysia finding as its members were selected on this basis.⁵²

On SUPP, the Commission found that 'there has recently been a high degree of Communist infiltration and influence in the party'. With regard to the signatures collected by the party, the Commission was 'very doubtful of their value'.⁵³ It was evidently clear that the Commission was biased against SUPP. The bias against anti-Malaysia proponents was also evident from the fact that the appendices of the report contained the two pro-Malaysia papers issued by the North Borneo and Sarawak governments, and the MSCC memorandum.⁵⁴ SUPP naturally did not accept the report. A prominent member of the left wing, Tieu Sung Seng, labelled it 'the mere instrument of the British Imperialist'.⁵⁵

Third Anniversary Celebrations

At the 1st Delegates Conference in 1959, the year the party was founded, SUPP claimed a membership roll of about 7,401.⁵⁶ By 1960, this figure had dramatically increased to 23,151.⁵⁷ In June 1962 the 3rd Delegates Conference was told by the Secretary-General, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, that the party membership roll had increased to 44,767.⁵⁸ The Malaysia plan became the central issue for the Conference, even though the Cobbold Commission had finished its tour of Sarawak.

The Conference, held from 3 to 5 June 1963 and attended by over 300 delegates, passed 11 resolutions. Almost all were rhetoric, dealing with the evils of colonialism, opposition to the Malaysia proposal, calls for immediate independence, and accusations against the colonial government of persecuting SUPP.⁵⁹ Not one of the resolutions dealt with the communist problem or the subversive infiltration of left-wing elements in party affairs. At a rally organized by the party on 5 June 1962, a representative from the United Party in Sabah, Andrew Lim, and a representative from the United Democracy Party of Malaya, Hj Abdul Hamid Hj Ishak, also spoke against the Malaysia proposal. The rally was attended by over 10,000 people.⁶⁰

The Conference also featured fun-fairs and exhibitions, celebrating SUPP's third anniversary. These celebrations showed two things. First, that SUPP was probably the best organized political party in Sarawak in 1962, and was able to mobilize its members effectively. The fact that a conference was attended by over 300 delegates showed a certain amount of organizational ability. Secondly, the presence of representatives of other left-leaning parties from Malaya, Singapore, and Sabah indicated that links with other parties were quite firm by mid-1962.⁶¹

The Colonial Government Crack-down

In early 1962, the colonial authorities decided that a full-scale crack-down on leftist and Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) elements in SUPP was justified. The colonial government had captured communist documents as early as 1959.⁶² These documents clearly showed that the CCO was using SUPP as its front political party to spread its ideology and, if possible, dominate the government and turn Sarawak into a communist state.

When the Malaysian federation was proposed, it was clear to the CCO that they would lose out if the federation was to become a reality. Tunku Abdul Rahman had made it clear that the formation of Malaysia was also intended to prevent the communists from taking over the states in Borneo. The CCO began a programme of propaganda against the Malaysia proposal, a stand shared by SUPP.

The authorities were especially alarmed, after the third anniversary celebrations in June 1962, by SUPP's rapidly increasing membership and open political agitation against the colonial authorities and the Malaysia proposal. In July 1962, less than a month after the anniversary celebrations, the British started a massive crack-down aimed specifically at SUPP.

The authorities used two highly effective pieces of legislation to enforce the crack-down. The first, the Restricted Residence Ordinance (RRO), passed in November 1961, allowed the chief secretary to order a person to be restricted to any area in Sarawak. Such an order was not open to challenge in the courts. SUPP, especially the party's left wing, saw the writing on the wall as it knew that the Ordinance was aimed at them and other CCO elements. On 27 October 1961, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, acting as Secretary-General of SUPP, lodged a submission against the Ordinance to the governor, describing it as undemocratic and stating that

we [SUPP] feel strongly that not only is unrestricted power given to an official, but there is no adequate safeguard in the exercise of that power. The Advisory Appeals Committee can only advise, and has no judicial powers like those of a tribunal. The composition or qualifications of the Appeals Committee are not fully prescribed, and in our view it would not therefore provide an effective safeguard against abuse of the very considerable discretionary powers vested in the Chief Secretary.⁶³

The Ordinance was nevertheless passed on 2 November in the Council Negri, and SUPP held a series of rallies to 'mourn the death of democracy'.⁶⁴ The first rally, held in the compound of SUPP headquarters in Kuching, drew about 4,000 members wearing black armbands to signify mourning. A black coffin with the word democracy written on it was on display. Similar mourning ceremonies were held in Simanggang, Sibul, Miri, and Engkilili.⁶⁵

The second effective weapon used by the authorities was the Public Order Ordinance (POO) 1962, which made it illegal to organize or be involved in a meeting of more than five people at any one time without

the permission of the chief secretary. This ordinance spelled the end of SUPP rallies.

The first wave of detentions of key SUPP officials came after 19 June, when the government released captured CCO documents naming SUPP as the political party marked for infiltration.⁶⁶ Three days later, on 22 June, police arrested seven senior SUPP leaders with communist links. The seven were:⁶⁷ Weng Ming Chyuan, a founder-member of SUPP who at the time of arrest was editor of the left-leaning *Sin Wen Pao*. He was also assistant Secretary-General of SUPP, head of the publicity section, and a CWC member. His wife, Wong Fuk Ing, a teacher at a Chung Hua Primary School, was also detained. Wong Ki Chok, also known as Bong Kee Chok, another assistant Secretary-General of SUPP and central organizing secretary, was arrested along with his wife Lui How Ying, an SUPP Central Committee member. Also rounded up were Chin Shaw Tung, owner of the Tai Kong bookstore; Shim Khim Yam, a proof-reader; and Yeun Choon Toh, a former principal of the 17th Mile Chung Hua School in Kuching, who was employed at the San Tah bookstore at the time of arrest. Chin Shaw Tung, Shim Khim Yam, Yeun Choon Toh, and Wong Fuk Ing were born in China and thus gave the colonial authorities the right to deport them as aliens on 3 July 1962.

The three Sarawak-born Chinese: Weng Ming Chyuan, Bong Kee Chok, and Lui How Ying, were detained under the RRO; however, all three elected to go to China instead. On the day of departure, 27 June, several hundred SUPP supporters were bused to the Kuching airport to give them a 'hero's farewell'.⁶⁸ Stephen Yong was there but not Ong Kee Hui. According to the news report,⁶⁹ some of the chartered buses used for SUPP supporters were owned by the Sarawak Transport Company, which was owned by Chan Siaw Hee, the leading spokesman of the left wing.

A second round of arrests of key SUPP communist members happened on 23 July 1962 when four members were picked up under the RRO.⁷⁰ They were Tan Kheng Aik, the editor of *Min Chong Pao* in Sibü; Lui How Ming, the editor of *Sa Min Pao* in Miri as well as the secretary of SUPP Miri branch, and vice-chairman of the Miri Chung Hua Public School Alumni Association. He was also the brother of Lui How Ying, the wife of Bong Kee Chock, a key CCO figure in Kuching. As *Min Chong Pao* and *Sa Min Pao* were offshoots of the Kuching based *Sin Wen Pao* (whose editor was Weng Ming Chyuan), this move was calculated to stop further propagation of leftist ideology which had brought SUPP many of its grass-roots members.⁷¹ The other two who were arrested were Teo Yung Kiaw, secretary of the SUPP Sibü branch and an official of the Sibü All-Trades Employees Union, and Tin Man Wo, alias Chan Boon Ho, from the Kuching branch. Tin was also secretary of the Kuching Building Workers Union, assistant secretary of the Sarawak First Division Trade Union Congress, principal of the Kuching Trade Union's Free Night Schools, and secretary of the Joint Council of the Sarawak First Division Chinese Schools Board of Management

(CSBM). Tan was restricted to Lubok Antu, Lui to Betong, Teo to Tatau, and Tin to Kapit. All these men were accorded a 'hero's farewell' and received a 'hero's welcome' when they arrived at their place of restricted residence.⁷²

SUPP then set up a committee to agitate for the release of these men, and various press statements and petitions were forwarded to the government. Neither these, nor protest meetings, succeeded in persuading the government to release them.⁷³ The detentions had the effect of destroying the key leftist and CCO elements who were also the main grass-roots organizers in the upper strata of SUPP. Although the left wing suffered a set-back, it was still in control of the party by virtue of its popularity with the majority of SUPP cadres. The crack-down by the colonial authorities was not confined to Chinese CCO members. The Ibans were also extensively harassed by the authorities. Colonial officers such as the residents and District Officers (DOs) in the rural areas were used to intimidate indigenous SUPP cadres. Members were usually taken to the DO's office and asked to leave the SUPP. Anyone who agreed was given a ready-typed letter of resignation addressed to the SUPP headquarters in Kuching. A copy of the letter was also sent to the Information Department and Radio Sarawak for news broadcasts. Anyone who refused was repeatedly called in for questioning.⁷⁴

The Moderates' Move of 1962

The two waves of detentions of key communist SUPP members gave the party's moderates, pro-Malaysia and anti-communist faction, the impetus to submit a resolution 'to urge the conference to condemn communism and to resolve on concrete measures to fight communist's infiltration into the party'.⁷⁵ The moderates wanted the party to condemn communism and to sack or expel any members confirmed by the authorities to be members of the CCO. With the results of the Cobbold Commission already released, they also wanted SUPP to reassess its anti-Malaysia stand. Meanwhile, the left wing also wanted a special Delegates Meeting but for different reasons. With constant harassment from the authorities, they wanted the party to reaffirm its socialist outlook and anti-Malaysia stand. Thus the stage was set for a showdown between the left and the moderate wings of the party. The special Delegates Meeting was held over two days—28 and 29 October 1962.

The leadership differences over the Malaysia proposal came out in the open when Ong Kee Hui made a speech calling for a re-evaluation of the party's anti-Malaysia stance, while Stephen Yong Kuet Tze opposed the call and reaffirmed that stand.⁷⁶ Modified and watered down, the resolution submitted by the moderates was eventually passed as Resolution 14, which stated that SUPP was a socialist party, neither supporting nor condemning communism. Other resolutions condemned the Cobbold Commission as a farce, 'its report not reflecting the true views of the people of Sarawak and deplores its smear on the Party'.⁷⁷ The other resolutions reflected the views of the left wing and confirmed that

SUPP was still against the Malaysia proposal, urging all its members to oppose it. The end result was that the leftists in the party had won a clear victory over the moderates.

Seven key moderates who were behind the original resolution saw no other option but to immediately resign from the party. They were: Teo Kui Seng, Yeo Cheng Hoe, Chan Khiok Leng, Francis Tan Eng Chong, Ee Ghim Yam, Wee Chong Hong, and Sim Kheng Lung.⁷⁸ The first five were all founder-members and had won the 1959 Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) elections based on support from SUPP. Yeo was also a nominated member of the Council Negri and had played a prominent part in the pro-Malaysia MSCC. The party tried to persuade the seven to withdraw their resignations, but was unsuccessful. According to one of the seven,⁷⁹ before the original resolution was given to Secretary-General Stephen Yong, they had already approached him and Ong Kee Hui informally, to discuss the resolution and problems with CCO elements in the party. Apparently, some members of the moderate faction were shown evidence of communist infiltration by the Special Branch. According to the same source, by the time the resolution reached the floor, Yong and Ong had lost control and could do nothing about it. The two leaders decided to go along with the left wing because they feared for their own positions in the party.⁸⁰

The special Delegates Meeting demonstrated several points. First, the key officials in the Kuching branch were still under the control of CCO sympathizers, despite the earlier deportation of its branch secretary, key CCO leader Bong Kee Chok. Second, Ong could not or would not, despite being the party chairman and a moderate, push for reassessment of the party's anti-Malaysia platform. This indicated his awareness of the fact that the delegates who represented the grass roots of the party were under the control of the left wing. To stay at the top, their support was crucial. Third, the fact that the moderates forced the special Delegates Meeting suggests that the two principal factions in the party were at the crossroads, and accommodation was no longer possible.

The Brunei Revolt

Any plans SUPP had for 1963 were shattered when A. M. Azahari, leader of PRB, launched an armed insurrection against the Brunei Sultanate on 8 December 1962. Azahari had been close to the SUPP leadership having issued a joint anti-Malaysia statement with the party in July 1962, right after Tunku Abdul Rahman announced the Malaysia proposal.

In August 1962, the British and Malayan governments had announced that Malaysia could be a reality as early as August 1963.⁸¹ A CWC meeting on 16 August agreed that a delegation should be sent to the United Nations (UN) in New York to present the anti-Malaysia case. By this time, the Cobbold Commission had already delivered its report. The CWC also decided on a statewide door-to-door campaign to explain SUPP's opposition to the Malaysia proposal and to 'expose the

Cobbold Report'.⁸² The campaign, which started on 21 August, was also used to collect subscriptions from party members to send SUPP representatives to the UN.

SUPP received a written notice from the UN stating that the party could present its case in mid-December. The central leadership also agreed to make a joint presentation with the PRB. The SUPP delegation was to be led by Secretary-General Stephen Yong Kuet Tze and three others: Hollis Tini, Tahir bin Hassan, and Tieu Sung Seng. Azahari asked the delegation to meet him in Manila on 8 December before travelling together to New York. The plan hit a snag when Tahir bin Hassan missed his flight from Limbang to Kuching. Stephen Yong then decided that he should wait as Tahir had never been overseas before.⁸³ That night, 8 December, the PRB mounted the armed insurrection with approximately 2,000 of its members. The delay caused by Tahir became a blessing in disguise for SUPP. Had the SUPP delegation been with Azahari in Manila on 8 December, both PRB and SUPP could have been declared illegal insurrectionist organizations.⁸⁴

Whether the colonial authorities feared a similar armed uprising or not, they decided to use the Brunei revolt to crack-down heavily on SUPP. The authorities must have believed, not unreasonably, that SUPP had a hand in the attempted *coup*. The SUPP delegation was denied exit visas,⁸⁵ a state of emergency was declared, and a Preservation of Public Security Ordinance was gazetted. This ordinance allowed the authorities to hold a person for up to two years under preventive detention, without a court appearance or order. The bulk of the preventive detentions and arrests were made among SUPP members. Among the SUPP members picked up were Tan Chong Meng, the Simanggang Council Negri member; Tieu Sung Seng, a Sibu founder-member and a member of the delegation that was supposed to go to the UN; Tan Ching Hoch and Ching May Hua, SUPP leaders in Kuching; Ang King Lee, Wee Chiaw Sung, Ngu Ngieng Hieng, Ling Ching Hua, and Hii Nai Chuong, all senior party figures from Sibu. At the same time the three Chinese newspapers: *Sin Wen Pao*, and its two subsidiaries, *Min Chong Pao* and *Sa Min Pao* were proscribed. This round of crack-downs ensured that SUPP was again without its key organizers and mobilizers. The large number of people involved made a number of SUPP members decide to join the armed struggle in the jungle, which had begun when Indonesia launched its Konfrontasi (confrontation) campaign. Part of the campaign was the arming of Sarawakians who crossed the border into Kalimantan.

The Singapore Arrests

On 2 February 1963, Lee Kuan Yew ordered a massive island-wide crack-down in Singapore which saw 133 communist suspects being detained. Lee wanted to get rid of communist elements that had infiltrated PAP.⁸⁶ Among those caught were many members of the Barisan Sosialis which had supported SUPP on the anti-Malaysia issue.⁸⁷

These arrests were made 'by agreement between the British, Malayan and Singapore governments'.⁸⁸ With both Barisan Sosialis and PRB incapacitated, SUPP lost its key regional allies in its anti-Malaysia stand.

The 1963 State Election

Two months later, in April 1963, the first statewide elections were held. They turned out to be an indirect referendum on Malaysia, as all the political parties concentrated on the Malaysia proposal in their campaign.

Elections were conducted on a three-tier system: first at district level, then at divisional level, and finally, election of members of the Council Negri. Sarawak was divided into 24 district and urban councils. At the district level, 249 councillors were elected. They in turn elected 109 divisional councillors, who sat on the five divisional advisory councils. The five divisional advisory councils then elected from among themselves 36 members of the Council Negri. The party that commanded more than half of the 36 members formed the government and could also nominate three members of the Council Negri. There would also be three *ex officio* members: the Secretary-General, the chief secretary and the financial secretary (Figure 4.1).

The Campaign

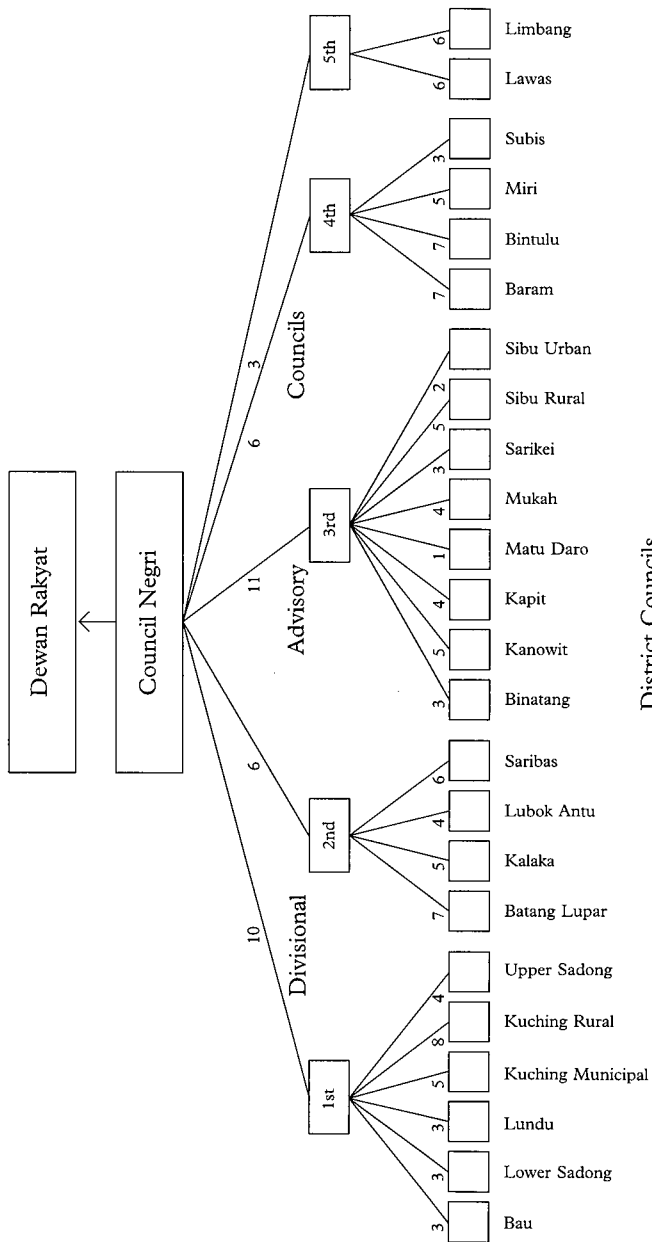
Campaigning started as early as July 1962 when Pesaka and SNAP agreed in principle to form an alliance.⁸⁹ This alliance, the Sarawak United Front (SUF), also consisted of all the other pro-Malaysia parties, like the predominantly Malay-supported PANAS, Berjasa, and the Chinese SCA.⁹⁰ Hence the political choice for the voter was quite straightforward. The alliance represented the pro-Malaysia, the SUPP the anti-Malaysia stand.

SUPP entered the elections with severe handicaps. First, all of its senior and able organizers were either detained, had been deported, or had taken up arms in the jungle. Second, their portrayal by the colonial government as an exclusively Chinese and leftist political party scared away many voters who would otherwise have supported its cause.⁹¹ The authorities took steps to curtail its indigenous support.

However, the fact that SUPP was the only anti-Malaysia party meant that all anti-Malaysia votes, Chinese or otherwise, were going its way, along with any other anti-government protest votes.

SUPP fielded a total of 205 candidates⁹² in almost all areas, with a mixture of mainly Chinese candidates in the Chinese urban areas, and indigenous candidates in the mixed and rural areas. Finding suitable candidates was a problem because many of the party's first choices were either in detention or were scared off by the colonial government. This was overcome, however, by simply accepting candidates who identified themselves with the SUPP manifesto. The manifesto expressed support for the 'Borneoization' of the civil service, the development of vernacular

FIGURE 4.1
Three-tier Electoral System Structure Used in the 1963 Sarawak Election



Source: Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 48.
 Note: 24 selected—need not be members of the Council Negri plus 3 nominated members and 3 *ex officio* members.

education, and the preservation of ethnic culture. On Malaysia the manifesto declared 'it is unfortunate that the Malaysia Plan had given rise not only to internal dissension but has also brought about tension in this part of the world. . . . SUPP would press for a properly conducted plebiscite or referendum under UN supervision or auspices so that the people of Sarawak can truly determine their won future.'⁹³

In effect, the main thrust of the manifesto was that Malaysia was not suitable, and that independence must be achieved before any merger with Malaya could be considered. It was written in socialist rhetoric, reinforcing its left-leaning image but also reflecting the hold the left wing had on the party.

The Alliance, on the other hand, had the partial support of the authorities; it also received the support of political personalities from the Malayan Alliance who had extensive campaign experience from elections held in Malaya in the mid-1950s.⁹⁴ However, barely a month before the polls, PANAS withdrew from the SUF, citing differences.⁹⁵ One British MP, Fenner Brockway, after touring Sarawak, observed in the House of Commons, 'I am very sorry to say this, but I gathered a very strong opinion that the influence of the British officials during the election was quite partial, exerted against the United People's Party . . . I have documents and even a poster which was displayed during the election by the British authority and which said "do not split the vote".'⁹⁶

The 'do not split the vote' warning came from two government-produced booklets entitled *The Countryman's Guide to Politics* and *What You Must Know About the Elections*. Radio Sarawak also started a series on the evils of communism and *Sarawak by the Week* featured many stories on attacks by 'bandits' and the 'CCO' on border towns and rural areas, instilling fear amongst the populace.⁹⁷ SUPP could not counter the government propaganda effectively because, as mentioned, the three Chinese newspapers which had supported SUPP vigorously were all proscribed, thus denying SUPP a major channel of appeal to the community. Ong Kee Hui added that

the British wanted to ensure the victory of the Alliance because they were committed to Malaysia and we opposed it. We lost among the Dayak because of the intimidation by the government and the chiefs—Penghulu, etc.—who are paid by the government. They simply drew a line and said that SUPP was communist and Chinese and made a few arrests. Many Iban had fought in the Malayan Emergency against the communists who were plainly identified as their enemy. There was also chicanery such as the Returning Officer telling SUPP voters to put X against the people whom they do not like.⁹⁸

The Election Results

The polling was staggered over a two-month period from April to June, mainly due to geographical and transport problems in the interior. The polling started off in the rural districts and slowly moved on to the urban areas. While initial results showed the SUF was leading, later results showed the voting was close between SUPP and the Alliance. The SUPP

took all the urban Chinese seats in Kuching, Sibü, and Miri towns, repeating the communal voting patterns of earlier municipal elections.

The results indicated that the people were undecided over the Malaysia proposal, as less than half the votes went to pro-Malaysia parties. The Alliance (Berjasa, Pesaka, SNAP, SCA) received 30.6 per cent and the only other pro-Malaysia party, PANAS, received 15.2 per cent of the total votes cast. Total pro-Malaysia votes were thus only 45.8 per cent. The SUPP took 24.5 per cent, while the rest of the votes went to independents, who took 29.7 per cent (Table 4.1). However, it must be borne in mind that 75 candidates were returned unopposed (SUF 33, PANAS 6, SUPP 5, and independents 28). Some of these independents may have been pro-Malaysia.⁹⁹ The distribution of seats was: SUPP 115, PANAS 59, SUF 138, and independents 117.

Analysis of the 1963 polls shows that voting was generally along ethnic lines. PANAS and Berjasa picked up almost all the Muslim votes while the Ibans voted for the Dayak-based SNAP and Pesaka. SUPP received overwhelming support from the Chinese voters. From Table 4.2, it can be seen that electorates with a high percentage of ethnic Chinese voters correlated with a high percentage of votes for SUPP. The only areas where SUPP did lose out were the urban areas of Kuching, Sibü, and Miri, where it lost between 13 and 18 per cent of the Chinese votes to another Chinese-based party, SCA. However, SUPP could afford to lose some of these votes and still win.¹⁰⁰ It also managed to gain substantial Iban or indigenous support. For example, in Kapit SUPP managed to garner more than 80 per cent of the indigenous votes and in Lubok Antu, the figure was more than 60 per cent. The strong indigenous vote in Kapit could be partly explained by the fact that Ong Kee Hui had served there as an agricultural officer, and that the first all-indigenous SUPP had been set up there. In the case of Lubok Antu, the Chinese pioneers of Sarawak, the Hakka Chinese gold miners,¹⁰¹ had intermarried extensively with Iban and indigenous women there.¹⁰²

The next stage of the elections took place on 15 July when all the divisional advisory councils met to choose from amongst their members the 36 members of the Council Negri. In the interval between the poll results in June and 15 July, all the political parties canvassed intensively

TABLE 4.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1963 State Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Votes Won</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SUPP	45,493	24.5
PANAS	28,242	15.2
Alliance	56,896	30.6
Independents	55,061	29.7
Total	185,692	100.0

Source: *Sarawak Gazette*, LXXIX, 1266 (August 1963).

TABLE 4.2
The 1963 State Election: Percentage of SUPP Votes and Chinese
Voters in the 24 Districts

<i>District</i>	<i>Votes Cast for SUPP</i>	<i>Chinese Voters</i>
Sibu Urban	55.5	73.5
Kuching Municipal	53.0	71.0
Binatang	42.0	47.5
Miri	42.0	55.0
Bau	40.0	34.5
Sarikei	38.0	51.5
Sibu Rural	32.5	50.5
Kuching Rural	30.5	34.5
Lubok Antu	23.0	9.0
Lundu	21.5	22.5
Kapit	17.5	3.5
Upper Sadong	17.0	13.5
Lower Sadong	12.0	10.0
Kanowit	10.0	11.0
Subis	10.0	12.0
Batang Lupar	10.0	10.5
Kalaka	9.0	6.0
Bintulu	8.5	9.0
Saribas	5.5	7.5
Matu Daro	3.5	7.5

Source: Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 63.

for the support of independent councillors. Numbering 117, these independents held the key to the control of individual district councils and hence the divisional advisory councils.

Meanwhile, both PANAS and SUPP decided to form a temporary alliance to try to capture power and to deny the SUF the chance to form the state government.¹⁰³ Although both parties had vastly different political outlooks—one pro, the other anti-Malaysia—they could co-operate on two issues. First, both wanted to deny the alliance a victory. Second, both agreed that a referendum specifically on the Malaysia proposal was needed. Their strategy was simple: control of the First and Third Division Advisory Councils would give SUPP and PANAS together 21 seats in the Council Negri, enough majority to dominate it.¹⁰⁴ An agreement was drawn up with the following main features:¹⁰⁵

1. The allocation of Council Negri seats was to be: 11 SUPP and 10 PANAS.
2. SUPP would nominate the chief minister and PANAS the deputy. Other cabinet portfolios were to be shared equally.
3. In the KMC, the SUPP nominee would retain the chairmanship but a PANAS nominee would be the vice-chairman. In the KRDC, the

reverse would apply—a PANAS nominee would be chairman while SUPP would provide the vice-chairman.

4. If the parties failed to form the government, they would form a joint opposition instead to try to bring down the government.

The agreement was in SUPP's favour as it was allocated the top political office. PANAS did not have a choice in the matter as the party only held 59 seats compared to SUPP's 115. Although SUPP held almost double the number of seats, the party did agree to share Cabinet appointments equally with PANAS and asked for only one extra Council Negri seat. The fact that SUPP was quick to agree to a pact with PANAS suggests that the party's first priority was to capture power. SUPP was willing to co-operate with any party, even one which opposed it on many issues. In the First Division, SUPP controlled the KMC and could command about half of KRDC. PANAS controlled the district councils of Lundu and Lower Sadong, and SUPP's votes gave them control of the First Division Advisory Council. This in turn meant that SUPP and PANAS were able to nominate five candidates each for the First Division's 10 representatives to the Council Negri.¹⁰⁶

With the First Division secured, the crucial contest turned to the Third Division. SUPP won in the SUDC, the Sibu Rural District Council, and the Sarekei District Council. It also won over the sole Matu Daro member in the Third Division Advisory Council. But even then, SUPP only managed to secure 11 councillors in the 27-member Third Division Advisory Council. The alliance had 13 after winning in Kapit, Kanowit, and Mukah. Hence, the election outcome of the Binatang District Council, which held the last three members of the Third Division Advisory Council, was the key to the formation of the state government. Of the 15 councillors in the Binatang District Council, SUPP won seven and the alliance also seven. The remaining one was won by an Iban independent, Jimbut ak Intan. If this independent voted with SUPP, SUPP would then have 14 members in the Third Division Advisory Council. If he voted with the alliance, it would give SUF 16 members in the Council, versus SUPP's 11. SUPP extracted a verbal statement of support from Jimbut immediately after the polls. But unknown to SUPP, the chairman of SCA, Ling Beng Siew, had sent Ting Tung Ming to get the seven SUF councillors and the Iban independent out of Binatang. All eight were taken on an extensive tour of Malaya until the day before the Binatang District Council election to the Third Division Advisory Council.¹⁰⁷

The day before the district council election, 14 July 1963, all eight arrived back in Sibu where they were taken to Ling Beng Siew's residence in Upper Lanang Road. The following day, escorted by alliance officials, they were taken by speedboat to Binatang, where they arrived just half an hour before the district council meeting. Prior to this, SUPP had asked Jimbut's father and wife to wait for him at the Binatang wharf. When Jimbut arrived, his father approached him but the alliance officials pushed Jimbut past his father. The vote was cast, in the alliance's favour.¹⁰⁸

With that vote, SUPP had lost its chance of forming the first Sarawak state government as it could only control the First Division Advisory Council (together with PANAS), which was insufficient. The huge number of independents (117 councillors) who switched their support to one of the political parties meant that the final distribution of seats was: SUPP 123, PANAS 63, SUF 212, and independents 31. The alliance gained most, another 74 councillors, while SUPP gained 8 and PANAS only 4.¹⁰⁹

The failure to capture power also instantly dissolved the PANAS–SUPP alliance although both parties kept their word on sharing the seats from the First Divisional Advisory Council. The final distribution of seats in the Council Negri was: SUF 19, SUPP 5, PANAS 5, and independents 7. The state government was formed by the SUF, with Stephen Kalong Ningkan from SNAP as chief minister.

Although SUPP was outmanoeuvred, as a political party it did extremely well, winning the most votes and the largest number of seats single-handedly. The five SUPP Council Negri members were: Ong Kee Hui, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, Leong Ho Yeun, Chan Siaw Hee, Chong Kiun Kong, and Charles Linang.¹¹⁰

The United Nations Commission

Within the larger South-East Asian political front, Indonesia under Sukarno had launched a policy of *Konfrontasi* against the Malaysia proposal. Sukarno, probably harbouring ambitions of uniting Indonesia, Malaya, and Borneo in a single political unit,¹¹¹ declared that Malaysia was a neo-colonialist plot and vowed to crush it. The Philippines was also unhappy with the Malaysia plan, because of its standing claim to North Borneo.¹¹² The Indonesians and the Filipinos then asked the UN to send a team to Sarawak to ascertain whether Malaysia was the central issue in the election, and whether the polls were conducted properly and without coercion.¹¹³

The decision was a blessing to SUPP, as it was given a second chance to oppose the Malaysia proposal through the world body. The first attempt to oppose the proposal in the UN was cut short by the Brunei revolt. Seeing a last chance to put its views across to the UN, SUPP organized a series of rallies for the benefit of the UN observers who arrived on 16 August 1963. To avoid embarrassment, the colonial authorities decided on 14 August to ban all rallies and demonstrations during the period the UN team was in Sarawak.

On the morning of the UN team's arrival in Kuching, scores of riot police and paramilitary personnel took up positions at Kuching airport and along the roads leading to it. Despite the show of force, the motorcade carrying the UN officials was temporarily stopped at various points by huge crowds, mainly Chinese and SUPP cadres, with placards demanding independence.¹¹⁴ In Sibul, about 3,000 SUPP supporters stormed and rioted outside the Methodist school where the UN officials were receiving submissions.¹¹⁵ Again the demands were for independence

and a referendum. Another demonstration organized by SUPP occurred when the UN Commission reached Miri. This time a demonstrator was shot in the leg by police and several policemen were slightly injured.¹¹⁶

In its submission to the UN Commission, SUPP argued that the 1963 election could not be regarded as a pro-Malaysia vote for four reasons. First, the election was based on local council elections, and thus local and racial issues tended to mask the Malaysia issue. Second, Malaysia was only an issue in towns where SUPP was challenged by SCA. The results in the towns had been overwhelmingly pro-SUPP because of its anti-Malaysia stand. Third, in constituencies where there were no SUPP candidates, voters could not register an anti-Malaysia vote. Fourth, in some constituencies, the SUF and PANAS candidates side-tracked the Malaysia issue and instead attacked SUPP 'with a smear campaign of communist infiltration'.¹¹⁷ The 21-point submission was also highly critical of the political restrictions and suppression by the authorities and called for a plebiscite under the supervision of the UN.¹¹⁸

Although the UN Commission had not made its report yet, Stephen Kalong Ningkan issued a statement that Sarawak would formally enter the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September. Originally, it was to be 31 August but was postponed because of the UN visit. The UN report was issued on 14 September by U Thant, the Secretary-General.¹¹⁹ The report concluded that the majority of people in North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak were in favour of Malaysia. The mission found 'little evidence of articulate and organized opposition to the Federation'.¹²⁰ The UN Commission also stated that the 1963 elections were conducted 'freely and impartially' with Malaysia 'a major issue'. It also found that 'allegations of bias against the authorities organizing and administering the elections, in so far as they were directly related to the Malaysia issue, were not in the opinion of the Mission adequately supported'.

On 4 September the newly elected Council Negri, sitting for the first time, passed a resolution welcoming the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia by 31 votes to 5. All the five 'no' votes came from SUPP.¹²¹ At one minute past midnight on 16 September 1963, Sarawak became a state in the Federation of Malaysia. SUPP and others opposed to Malaysia had lost. Brunei, which was to have been part of the federation, never joined Malaysia.

Conclusion

The Malaysia proposal was a major turning point for SUPP. The character of the party was to change irreversibly because of the formation of Malaysia. Having decided that the Malaysia proposal was to be supported, the colonial authorities went out of their way to suppress SUPP, and so ensure smooth support for the Cobbold and the UN Commissions. The main opponents of the Malaysia proposal were the SUPP's left wing and CCO elements as they, especially the communists, were well aware that Malaysia's success would present a danger to them.

Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew had said openly that the Malaysia proposal was anti-communist in nature.

The anti-Malaysia campaign mounted by SUPP showed how organized the party was. It was able to mobilize people from all parts of Sarawak, especially during the Cobbold Commission's visit in 1962. Unfortunately this phase of mobilization also allowed the authorities to pinpoint the main SUPP organizers. The authorities could thus determine their importance and, in some cases, their links to the CCO.

This precipitated the crack-down by the authorities who, with two rounds of selective arrests and subsequent deportation or internal exile, were able to cripple the main left-wing members of SUPP by depriving them of direct contact with the grass roots. The arrests had the desired effect of benefiting the moderate wing of SUPP, in so far as it gave it the required proof that SUPP was heavily infiltrated by leftist and CCO elements. Hence the special Delegates Meeting in late 1962, and subsequent submission of a resolution by the moderates to condemn and expel all SUPP members with CCO links.

However, instead of a triumph for the moderates, the meeting turned out to be a show of force for the left wing. They not only dominated the proceedings but the resolutions passed showed their unwillingness to compromise with the moderates. The leftists in the party were not only far larger but were also in key control of party mobilization apparatus, and had extensive grass-roots support from the Chinese schools to the trade unions. The Malaysia proposal also highlighted the differences in tactics over this issue between the chairman and the Secretary-General. While Ong Kee Hui was a member of the Supreme Council edging towards a pro-Malaysia line, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was working actively against the formation of Malaysia.

These conclusions are consistent with earlier findings that the two principal factions within SUPP were the moderates and the leftists. The fact that both Yong and Ong backed down and went along with the powerful left wing also suggests that they decided to 'ride the tiger', or use the communists and the leftists to hold on to their positions.

The government crack-down removed the most influential CCO elements in the party machinery. A large number of their supporters then took up armed struggle in the jungle. This meant that by late 1963 the left wing's hold on the party machinery was starting to erode. This also meant that by mid-1963, under constant attack from the authorities and other political parties, the left wing in SUPP was not able to maintain the anti-Malaysia momentum. The left wing had gained from the initial anti-Malaysia stance taken by other political parties such as SNAP but by 1963, they had all become pro-Malaysia.

The creation of many new political parties, most appealing to indigenous groupings, meant that the rural populace who previously supported SUPP had, by the time of the 1963 elections, mostly left SUPP and joined these new parties. In fact, many of the key people in these new parties were former SUPP members. The skilful government campaign to discredit SUPP as a Chinese and communist party meant that more

of the indigenous members were persuaded to leave the party, thus ensuring that SUPP was indeed in danger of becoming an almost exclusively Chinese party.

By the time of the 1963 elections, SUPP was the only party still opposed to Malaysia. It did not win, but came close, taking 23.35 per cent of the total votes for the 429 councillors' posts. Since most of the SUPP-controlled district councils were in urban areas with a high population density, SUPP could claim to represent 294,226 urban dwellers, or 39.52 per cent of the population.¹²² SUPP's results suggest that it had a majority of the Chinese vote, as well as picking up all other anti-Malaysia and anti-alliance votes. The subsequent alliance with PANAS immediately after the elections, in an attempt to control the Council Negri, shows that SUPP's paramount goal was to win power in the 1963 elections.

The formation of a new government by the SUF or the alliance spelt a new era for SUPP. SUPP now had to operate in an environment it had fought so hard against: the Malaysian environment which became a reality when Sarawak joined the federation in September 1963.

In hindsight, it would appear that SUPP never really had a chance in opposing Malaysia. The powers and pressures of the colonial authorities were too great. When Britain decided to push for Malaysia, it was just a matter of time before federation became a reality. The Cobbold Commission was appointed after the British premier, Harold Macmillan, and the Malayan premier, Tunku Abdul Rahman, had agreed on the desirability of the Malaysia plan. In such circumstances, the members of the Cobbold Commission were hardly impartial, as they were all nominated by the British and Malayan governments. The UN Commission, on the other hand, while probably more impartial, was also probably swayed by colonial officials and the elected leadership under Stephen Kalong Ningkan.

The attack which SUPP instigated upon the UN officials undoubtedly contributed to their negative image of SUPP. Moreover, the UN Commission did not encounter much opposition to the Malaysia plan in North Borneo.¹²³ Finally, both the UN and Cobbold Commissions ignored substantial anti-Malaysia submissions.

SUPP's early strategy of gaining international support via solidarity with other anti-Malaysia groups outside Sarawak, like the Barisan Sosialis in Singapore and the PRB, also collapsed. The PRB failed in its *coup* in Brunei, and Lee Kuan Yew's crack-down on Barisan Sosialis, meant that both political entities were impotent. Hence by the time Malaysia came about, SUPP as a political party was isolated within Sarawak, and its international support was destroyed.

If SUPP had won the 1963 direct election and formed the state government, there is every likelihood that Sarawak would be an independent state today.

1. The Datu Bandar was quoted as saying that 'PANAS was formed to oppose SUPP'. See *Sarawak by the Week*, No. 17, 1963, p. 34.

2. On PANAS' formation, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 April 1961; Margaret Clark Roff, *The Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 65; Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 23. For details on the Datu Bandar, see R. H. W. Reece, *Datu Bandar: Abang Hj Mustapha of Sarawak*, Kuching: Sarawak Literary Society, 1993.

3. William Tan is an English-educated Teochiu *towkay* who at that time was the chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC). It is unclear why he did not join the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). In an interview with Ong Kee Hui, he said the reason is that Tan did not want to offend the British. According to Ong, because of this Tan was given a CBE while Ong (for opposing the British) was never given any recognition by them. Leigh suggests that it was because he was a Roman Catholic and educated at St Joseph's.

4. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 February 1962.

5. Stephen Kalong Ningkan worked as a hospital assistant for Shell Brunei from 1950 to 1960. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 34.

6. See also Roff, *The Politics of Belonging*, p. 68; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 32.

7. The Datu Bandar supported the cession, and this caused a large section of the Malay community to hate him. See section on cession in Chapter 3.

8. Details on the merger can be found in Sanib Saib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 107-22.

9. *Sarawak Tribune*, 13, 16 June 1960.

10. A full list of all office holders can be found in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 June 1960. The difference between the Central Committee (CC) and the Central Working Committee (CWC) will be discussed in Chapter 11. Suffice to say here that CWC handles all day-to-day party business.

11. SUPP records. The build-up of SUPP membership will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 10.

12. Tunku Abdul Rahman's plan was reported extensively in the newspapers. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 May 1961; *Chinese Daily News*, 28 May 1961.

13. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 May 1961.

14. Ibid. Interestingly, PANAS also claimed that before federation with Malaya could come about, the three Bornean territories should be 'three separate entities', that is, independent states. SNAP too issued a statement from leader Stephen Kalong Ningkan, stating that 'I wish to make it clear that we do not want Sarawak to be one of the states of Malaya'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 June 1961.

15. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 July 1961.

16. Donald Stephens was a timber tycoon and the most influential man in North Borneo at that time. He later founded North Borneo's first political party, United National Kadazan Organization (UNKO). See Roff, *The Politics of Belonging*, pp. 53-8.

17. *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 July 1961.

18. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 July 1961. In the same issue there was a report that Temenggong Jugah, paramount chief of the Ibans, had, while on an official visit to Sibul, told the Ibans that he would not support the Malaysia plan.

19. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 July 1961.

20. Herman Luping, 'Formation of Malaysia Revisited', in J. G. Kitingan and M. J. Ongkili (eds.), *Sabah 25 Years Later 1963-1988*, Kota Kinabalu: Institute of Development Studies Sabah, 1989, pp. 4-5.

21. James P. Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia 1961-1963*, Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1967, pp. 50-1.

22. For a summary of the Sarawak delegates' position, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 February 1962.

23. Sarawak Information Service, *Malaysia and Sarawak*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1961.

24. *Ibid.*, pp 1-3.
25. Yeo Cheng Hoe signed the final Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) declaration. Ong Kee Hui was said to be 'cool but not openly hostile' at the last MSCC meeting in Singapore. See *The Straits Times*, 25 January 1962; Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1974, p. 153.
26. Interview with Ong Kee Hui.
27. For example, the SUPP distributed leaflets with slogans like 'Condemn reactionary Malaysia Plan', 'We want Independence', 'Wipe out Colonialism', etc. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 February 1962.
28. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 January 1962.
29. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 February 1962.
30. Broadcast of a speech by Chen Ko Meng over Radio Sarawak. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 February 1962. The fact that the colonial government granted him the privilege of discrediting SUPP's anti-Malaysia stand supports the view that the government had already decided favourably on the Malaysia proposal by late 1961.
31. See *The Straits Times*, 27-31 January 1962. Before that, in November 1961, the SUPP issued a joint declaration with the Malayan People's Socialist Front in Kuching, condemning imperialism and colonialism. See text of the communiqué in *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 November 1961.
32. The seven were: SUPP, Workers Party (Singapore), Barisan Sosialis (Singapore), Parti Rakyat Singapore, Parti Rakyat Malaya, Parti Rakyat Brunei (PRB), and Labour Party Malaya.
33. The Singaporean Government later took revenge by banning Tan Chong Meng, an SUPP delegate to the conference, from entering Singapore because he was a 'communist'. Tan was secretary of the SUPP Simanggang branch, and a member of the Council Negri. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 January 1962.
34. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 January 1962.
35. Joint Communiqué of the Malaysian Socialist Conference on Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 28 January 1962. A copy of the Joint Communiqué can be found in J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963-1966*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, Appendix II, pp. 341-2; Teng Lung Chi et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, Kuching: SUPP, 1989, p. 90 (text in Chinese).
36. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 January 1962; Malaya, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry: North Borneo and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1962, hereafter referred to as the *Cobbold Report*.
37. SUPP also distributed leaflets with anti-Malaysia slogans like 'Condemn reactionary Malaysia Plan' to all its members, with instructions to repeat such slogans in front of the Cobbold Commission. The Commission also encountered many anti-Malaysia posters, written in English, Malay, Mandarin, and Iban, throughout Sarawak, including the interior town of Kapit. Kapit is predominantly Iban, which suggests that SUPP had the support of the Kapit Iban community. It was suggested by the press that these posters were the work of SUPP cadres. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 3, 23, and 26 February 1962; 17, 19 March 1962.
38. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 January 1962.
39. *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 February 1962.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Cobbold Report*, pp. 20-1.
42. On the Nine Cardinal Principles, see Appendix B.
43. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 March 1962.
44. *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 March 1962. Sibü Urban District Council (SUDC) councillors such as Teo Kui Seng and Tieu Sung Seng were all SUPP founder-members. In fact one group of pro-Malaysia councillors accused the SUDC of 'domination by SUPP members'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 March 1962.
45. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1962.
46. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 March 1962.
47. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 March 1962.

48. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 7, 8 March 1962.
49. Jonathan Bangau ak Renang later joined Pesaka. Even though the party had lost Bangau, it tried to consolidate Iban support by holding a special meeting of all the branches and sub-branches in the Third Division. Over 400 Iban members, supposedly representing 10,000 Ibans, attended the meeting. The meeting reinforced the Ibans' rejection of Malaysia, condemned Bangau's actions, and asked that he be expelled. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 March 1962.
50. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 41.
51. *Cobbold Report*, p. 13.
52. Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia 1961-1963*, p. 67.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
54. Appendix E of the *Cobbold Report* contained 'Malaysia and Sarawak' published by the Sarawak Government in January 1962, and 'North Borneo and Malaysia' published by the North Borneo Government in February 1962. Appendix F contained the 'Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee Memorandum on Malaysia' dated 3 February 1962.
55. See Tieu's views on the Commission's report in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 September 1962.
56. SUPP records.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.* See also *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 June 1962.
59. SUPP records. The 11 resolutions were reproduced in *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 June 1962.
60. *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 June 1962.
61. Apparently, the PRB was also scheduled to attend, but was unable to do so because their travel papers were issued too late. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 June 1962.
62. See Chapter 3, section on communism.
63. SUPP records; *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 October 1961.
64. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 November 1961.
65. A controversy broke out when a cross on top of the black coffin was burnt at a rally in Miri. Some took it as a sign that the party was attacking Christians. See editorial in *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 November 1961.
66. The revelation became the lead story for the *Sarawak Tribune*, on 20 June 1962.
67. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 June 1962.
68. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 June 1962.
69. *Ibid.*
70. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 July 1962.
71. See Chapter 3, section on newspapers.
72. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 July 1962.
73. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 25, 26, 29 June 1962. According to SUPP, 46 ranking members (41 Chinese, 5 Indigenous) were detained or arrested by the authorities. See Teng et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, pp. 566-7.
74. Leigh gives a transcript of an interrogation of an indigenous SUPP cadre. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 42.
75. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 November 1962.
76. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 November 1962.
77. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 October 1962.
78. The names mentioned here are taken from the *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 November 1962. In SUPP's official history, this incident is referred to as a 'storm in a teacup'. See David L. C. Teng and Daniel K. A. Ngieng, *The Challenges: SUPP in Focus*, Sib: Think Management, 1990, p. 45.
79. The account given here is based on an interview with one of the seven who resigned, Ee Ghim Yam. At the time of the incident, Ee Ghim Yam was part-owner of the *Sarawak Tribune*. This accounts for the fact that the *Sarawak Tribune* did not carry the story of the mass resignation until nearly a week after it happened. Ee also added that he did not contest the 1963 KMC polls as 'there was no point because I could not possibly win without SUPP support'. He was right. Yeo Cheng Hoe, who did contest, lost.

80. *Sarawak by the Week*, a government publication, described the incident as 'the Chinese extremists have been confirmed in their domination: the moderates have been overwhelmed'. See *Sarawak by the Week*, 27 October–4 November 1962.

81. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 August 1962.

82. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 September 1962.

83. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 45.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Nevertheless, the SUPP memorandum to the United Nations (UN) was duly recorded. See Appendix 3.

86. For Lee's version of the crack-down, see Lee Kuan Yew, *The Battle for Merger*, Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1962.

87. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 February, 11 April 1963.

88. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 February 1963.

89. By now, SNAP had changed its position from anti- to pro-Malaysia. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 July 1962.

90. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 October 1962.

91. The colonial authorities used the Sarawak Information Service to 'feed' stories on communism and its close links with SUPP through its publication, *Sarawak by the Week*, and its broadcast arm, Radio Sarawak. The Sarawak Information Service also published a special publication called *The Danger Within*, describing communist links with SUPP, in mid-March 1963, just two weeks before the election. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 March 1963.

92. Figures on the 1963 elections are taken from 'Report on the General Elections of 1963', *Sarawak Gazette*, August 1963.

93. SUPP Manifesto 'What SUPP Stands For'. This was the first political manifesto used for a statewide election.

94. Malayan Minister of Industry and Commerce, Dr Lim Swee Ann, publicly declared during his visit that he was solely responsible for the formation of the Sarawak alliance. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 April 1963.

95. PANAS leader, the Datu Bandar, had an ongoing feud with Berjasa's leadership which was made up mainly of Malays opposed to cession. Datu Bandar's pro-cession stance meant that Berjasa's territory included all the Malays who were against Datu Bandar and anti-cession. At one time, Datu Bandar could not even speak directly with Bujang, the leader of Berjasa; they had to communicate through a third party. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 55; Reece, *Datu Bandar*, Chapter 4.

96. *The Times*, 18 July 1963. Cited in Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 47.

97. See *Sarawak by the Week*, between March and April 1963. See also newspaper accounts during the same period, for example *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 April 1963. This report deals with a curfew in the border town of Tebedu following an attack. The attack was among those conducted by the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU), which was funded and trained by Indonesia as part of Indonesia's Konfrontasi with Malaysia.

98. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 47.

99. See Roff, *The Politics of Belonging*, p. 124; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 56.

100. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 63–4.

101. See Chapter 2.

102. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 63–4.

103. PANAS had its reasons for trying to thwart the alliance's chances of forming the government, the most important being the bad blood between PANAS's leader Datu Bandar and Berjasa's leaders. See n. 98 above. See also R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 83–7; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 73–6. According to Ong Kee Hui, the approach to form an electoral pact was made by the vice-chairman of PANAS, Leong Ho Yuen. See Ong Kee Hui, 'Political Parties in Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, CXIX, 1522, (December 1992): 11.

104. The distribution of the 42 seats in the Council Negri were: First Division 10; Second 6; Third 11; Fourth 6; Fifth 3; and 6 others (3 nominated and 3 *ex officio*).

105. Personal communication from R. H. W. Reece, 1992.

106. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 July 1963.
107. Teng et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, p. 314; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 76.
108. Teng and Ngieng, *The Challenges*, pp. 88–92.
109. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 72.
110. SUPP gained a sixth Council Negri member when PANAS leader Abang Hj Mustapha died in early 1964. He was replaced by SUPP's Sim Kheng Hong.
111. See Mackie, *Konfrontasi*, pp. 103–6.
112. For details on the claim, see Ongkili, *The Borneo Response to Malaysia 1961–1963*, pp. 87–94; M. Leifer, *The Philippine Claim to Sabah*, Zug: Inter-Documentation, 1968; and L. G. Noble, *Philippine Policy Towards Sabah: A Claim to Independence*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press for the Association of Asian Studies, 1977. The Sabah claim has never been officially dropped by the Philippines, even today. But because of its membership in ASEAN, these claims have not been actively pursued. It is also perceived by the Malaysians that raising the issue would only cause ripples in the regional grouping. Hence it is likely that the Filipino claim will remain in limbo for the foreseeable future.
113. Malaya, *United Nations Malaysia Mission Report*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963, p. 2; *United Nations 1963 Yearbook*, New York: UN, Information Office, 1964, p. 107.
114. At 2½ mile Rock Road, a crowd of about 5,000 turned out to block the UN motorcade, and 13 arrests were made. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 August 1963.
115. See 'SUPP Supporters Hurl Stones And Overturn Vehicles', *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1963. Stephen Yong Kuet Tze denied it was the work of SUPP, but an official government statement accused SUPP of engineering the riots in Sibiu.
116. *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 August 1962.
117. *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 September 1963.
118. *Ibid.*
119. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 September 1963.
120. Malaya, *United Nations Malaysia Mission Report*. The mission was led by Lawrence McHelmores, an American. See also United Nations, *Final Conclusions of the Secretary General regarding Malaysia*, Document SG/1583/13, September 1963.
121. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 September 1963.
122. Teng and Ngieng, *The Challenges*, p. 199.
123. As mentioned earlier, Donald Stephens, the main political actor in Sabah and his party, the UNKO, supported the Malaysia proposal whole-heartedly.

The Opposition Years

The First State Government

INITIALLY, after the 1963 polls, the colonial authorities attempted to form a grand coalition, consisting of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), Party Negara (PANAS), and the Alliance (SNAP, Berjasa, and SCA). However, this proposal was rejected outright by the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), especially by its leader, Stephen Kalong Ningkan. Ningkan clearly saw himself as the victor, and the seat of chief minister as his right.¹ Ningkan, who was also Secretary-General of the Alliance, was duly elected chief minister, and he formed the Supreme Council consisting of the following:

Stephen Kalong Ningkan (SNAP)	Chief Minister
James Wong Kim Min (SNAP)	Deputy Chief Minister
Abdul Taib Mahmud (Berjasa)	Minister of Communications and Works
Dunstan Endawie ak Enchana (SNAP)	Minister for Local Government
Teo Kui Seng (SCA)	Minister of Natural Resources
Awang Hipni bin Pengiran Annu (Berjasa)	Minister of State
G. A. T. Shaw <i>ex officio</i>	State Secretary
B. A. Hepburn <i>ex officio</i>	Financial Secretary
P. E. H. Pike	Attorney-General

No Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) member was included as Pesaka wanted its leader, Temenggong Jugah, to be the governor. Hence from the outset, SNAP was in full control. Two ethnic Chinese held important posts. One of them, James Wong Kim Min, from SNAP, became the deputy chief minister and the other, Teo Kui Seng, from the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), became Minister of Natural Resources.²

With Sarawak part of the Malaysian federation, the Council Negri nominated 24 persons to the Dewan Rakyat. The distribution was as follows: Alliance 17, SUPP 3, PANAS 3, and independent 1. The three from SUPP were Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, Song Thian Cheok, and

Charles Linang. Of the three, only Song Thian Cheok was not a Council Negri member; he was a Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) councillor and SUPP Kuching branch chairman.³

Another political party was formed in April 1964, when some non-Malays left PANAS because of the announcement that it might become a branch of UMNO in Sarawak.⁴ The new party's name, Machinda, reflected its multiracial platform: Ma = Malays, Chin = Chinese, Da = Dayaks. It gained some attention as one of the prominent supporters of the Malaysia Solidarity Convention (MSC). However, internal dissent fatally weakened the party, and it was formally dissolved in 1967.⁵

The Land Bill Crisis, 1965

The issue of land has always been a sensitive matter in Sarawak, as in most Third World societies. The Land Bill Crisis of 1965 had its roots in the events of some years earlier. Mindful of the increasing demand for land ownership by the Chinese population, the colonial authorities set up a Land Committee in 1962 to examine all land reform issues.⁶ The Committee recommended that the indigenous groups be allowed to 'dispose of their land' after consultation with and approval by the local resident.⁷

Land was classified as mixed zone, native area, interior area, or reserved. The Chinese community could only legally own and sell land in the mixed zone area. For various reasons, the Chinese owned less than a quarter of the mixed zone land, or less than 3 per cent of the total land area in Sarawak. In 1960, the Chinese owned less than a thousand square kilometres of the approximately 7084 square kilometres under mixed zone classification. By 1962, only 322 square kilometres had been added to the mixed zone land, certainly not enough for the landless Chinese. By 1965, many Chinese were illegally occupying native land, paying the indigenous owners to allow them to do so.⁸ At this time, there were probably 10,000 to 15,000 Chinese families who wanted to acquire land and had the financial resources to do so.⁹

So when Stephen Kalong Ningkan decided to table the Land Bill, he was not only putting the recommendations of the Land Committee into effect, he was also probably trying to entice some Chinese, specifically SUPP, votes by tempting the landless Chinese with a chance to own land. The fact that the minister charged with the draft, Teo Kui Seng, was from the SCA, must not be discounted. The SCA, as has been seen, was not able to capture the Chinese vote in predominantly Chinese urban areas, losing heavily to SUPP. A salient issue like land titles could certainly improve SCA fortunes among the Chinese population. When Ningkan decided to table the Bill in the Council Negri, he allowed Teo to handle the matter.

However, when the proposal was brought before the Alliance Council, Pesaka and Parti Bumiputera opposed it on the grounds that too many of the indigenous owners would just sell their landright for a quick profit. The Bill was suddenly withdrawn from the Council Negri.¹⁰ Two

days later, a Native Alliance was formed consisting of Berjasa, PANAS, and Pesaka. SNAP and SCA were pointedly excluded, as SCA was Chinese and SNAP was 'multi-racial and therefore not qualified'.¹¹ SUPP, watching from the sidelines, could do little. However, before the Land Bill was withdrawn, SUPP had promised support for Ningkan, offering an unconditional six votes for the chief minister against the Native Alliance.¹² SUPP obviously knew that the Native Alliance would not be accommodating towards it on purely racial grounds. Ningkan quickly restored order by expelling the Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Berjasa) and Abdul Taib Mahmud from the Alliance and Cabinet respectively. Kuala Lumpur did not force Ningkan's hand, as he had the backing of Temenggong Jugah and Pesaka.¹³ A new government was formed with three new faces: Abang Tohman bin Abang Hj Moasili (PANAS) as Minister of Welfare, Youth and Culture; Penghulu Francis Umpau (Pesaka), Minister of Land and Mineral Resources; and Tajang Laing (Pesaka), Minister of State.

Although Ningkan had survived, the Land Bill Crisis showed that Kuala Lumpur was increasingly involved in Sarawak's internal politics. However, Kuala Lumpur's influence hinged on its ability to win enough support to manipulate the non-Muslim Dayak parties. Jugah's support for a fellow Iban, Ningkan, meant that an attempt to dislodge him led by Muslim Berjasa could not succeed.

The Malaysia Solidarity Convention

The formation of the Malaysia Solidarity Convention (MSC) was to provide the second opportunity for the moderates in the party to test their strength against the left wing after the failed attempt in 1962.¹⁴ The MSC was a group of pro-Malaysia, anti-Malayan Alliance parties led by Lee Kuan Yew from the People's Action Party (PAP). The MSC was to be Lee's vehicle to secure a Malaysian Malaysia. Given Lee's hostility to the Left, Barisan Sosialis and Party Rakyat Malaya were both excluded.¹⁵ They rightly accused Lee Kuan Yew of using the MSC to score political points for the PAP against the Malayan Alliance. A 20-point MSC declaration¹⁶ on 9 May 1965 acknowledged that Malaysia was a *fait-accompli*, and said the MSC was determined to build a 'Malaysian Malaysia' with no distinction between a *bumiputera* and a non-*bumiputera*. Stephen Yong Kuet Tze and Merican Salleh signed the declaration on behalf of SUPP.¹⁷

Problems immediately arose because they apparently signed without the unequivocal consent of the Central Committee (CC).¹⁸ According to the *Vanguard*,¹⁹ an SUPP press release sent to three newspapers in Kuching said the party had decided there would not be an official SUPP delegation. However, Stephen Yong rang the newspapers concerned and asked them to withhold publication.

When news reached Kuching that Yong and Salleh had signed the declaration on behalf of the party,²⁰ the left wing, which had argued against SUPP participation, was not in a position to move. Its leading

voice, Chan Siaw Hee, was on a study tour of parliamentary democracy in England and had left before the MSC meeting. More than 70 young SUPP stalwarts were at the airport to see off him. When party chairman Ong Kee Hui left for Malaya a few days later, only one senior member, party treasurer Ho Ho Lim, was there to see him off.²¹ It was clear that a split had already occurred.

In spite of this split, Ong and Yong went ahead to the first MSC convention in Singapore on 6 June 1965. SUPP was represented by Ong, Yong, Salleh, and a Kenyah, Tamaweng Tinggung Wan. In his speech, Ong accused the federal government of taking away the people's democratic rights and denying political equality to non-Malays.²²

By now the split between the moderates and the left was in the open.²³ The left argued that Lee should not be forgiven for his attacks on the Barisan Sosialis in Singapore, and claimed that SUPP was helping Lee to use the MSC for his own political gains with the Malayan Alliance. Therefore, they argued, there was no point in SUPP's participation.²⁴ They rejected a proposal to send an official SUPP delegation to the MSC meeting on 6 June 1965. The moderates argued that Malaysia was a political fact and as such, an organized group of all the opposition parties would be more effective against the Malayan Alliance.²⁵ Both sides convened a meeting on 20 June at the SUPP Kuching branch. In an unusually long five-hour meeting, both the moderates and the left wing put forward their views. The strength of the left wing was evident when the meeting eventually resolved to send a nine-person delegation to Ong and Yong asking them to withdraw from the MSC. The meeting also resolved to raise the MSC question at the annual Central Committee Meeting on 25 June.²⁶ The SUPP Miri branch chairman also issued a public statement backing the Kuching branch's opposition to the MSC.²⁷

Before the meeting, the leftists were confident they could pass a resolution condemning SUPP's participation in the MSC. The moderates were also confident that they could win in a show-down with the left wing.²⁸ However, the meeting was postponed for one day to allow for a compromise on the MSC issue.²⁹ On the actual day, posters written in Chinese, Malay, and Iban condemning the MSC were strung all over the party's headquarters.³⁰ Yong, tabling SUPP's annual report, sought to defend the moderates' role. He said that if his views on participation in the MSC were proved wrong, he would be ready to step down.³¹ The threat was seen by the left wing as a tactical ploy.

The show-down occurred on 27 June when two motions were put before the Central Committee. The first, put forward by the chairman of the Pantu branch, Layang ak Ingka, on behalf of the moderates, moved 'that they [SUPP] participate in the Malaysia Solidarity Convention for three months after which it will be subject to a further review'.³² The left wing put forward the second motion, that 'the Malaysia Solidarity Convention's primary duty is to oppose the Alliance regime by constitutional means and to gain support of the other opposition parties'.³³ In other words, the left wing's condition for continued SUPP

involvement was the inclusion of all anti-Malaysia parties, that is, all left-leaning parties. If this were not possible, SUPP should immediately withdraw from the MSC. The key movers for the second motion were trade unionist Lim Kim Seng and Teng Chew Beng.

The vote was taken immediately after the tabling of the two motions. Resolution one received 23 votes, resolution two, 30. Ong and Yong, who naturally supported the first motion, immediately resigned their positions as chairman and as Secretary-General respectively. They were followed by Merican Salleh and Tamaweng Tinggung Wan and Ho Ho Lim. Altogether 16 members resigned from the party.

The left wing, sensing that the loss of Ong and Yong meant they had lost the two legitimate faces that could negotiate with the government,³⁴ asked Barbara Bey, one of its indigenous vice-chairmen, and 13 others³⁵ to negotiate the return of Ong and Yong. Ong and Yong demanded the right to attend the MSC as one of the conditions for returning to the party's fold.³⁶

As negotiations were going on, the party faced another crisis: Operation Hammer. Chinese SUPP supporters, principally those living along the Kuching-Serian-Simanggang Road, were rounded up and put into camps to prevent them from joining or aiding the communist insurrection against the government. Operation Hammer was launched with the goal of putting the entire Chinese population in this area into camps or new villages. This put extra pressure on the left wing as many of those targeted were grass-roots leftist supporters. The government had indirectly aided the moderates.

On 20 July 1965, the CWC agreed to Ong and Yong's conditions. The CWC stipulated, however, that Ong and Yong were also to push for the inclusion of other opposition parties in the MSC, especially the Barisan Sosialis in Singapore and Party Rakyat Malaya. Ong and Yong were officially reinstated to their posts after an absence of about three weeks.³⁷ The left wing had clearly backed down, and lost.

It was clear that in 1965, three years after their first attempt, the moderates still did not command the bulk of SUPP's rank and file. The left wing was still very much in control, although they allowed the moderates a certain degree of autonomy to carry out their activities. The left wing was unwilling to compromise, however, on issues such as its anti-Malaysia stand. Two years after joining Malaysia, the left wing still had not fully accepted the reality of federation or its political consequences. By contrast, the party leadership, principally Ong and Yong, had already decided that Malaysia was a *fait-accompli* and that the anti-Malaysia issue was effectively dead.

Ong and Yong, in resigning over the MSC issue, displayed considerable political acumen. They knew full well it would be difficult to find someone else with their attributes to represent SUPP outside the party. The left wing realized this, and in the end had to compromise on the MSC issue. But before any real progress could be made by the MSC, another crisis erupted.

The Expulsion of Singapore

On 9 August 1965, Tunku Abdul Rahman announced that Singapore had been expelled from the federation. SUPP was shocked by Singapore's expulsion from Malaysia. Donald Stephens, a federal minister from Sabah, resigned in protest.³⁸

SUPP held an emergency meeting and issued a statement calling for a referendum.³⁹ The statement added that 'with Singapore out of Malaysia, the whole set-up of Malaysia has taken a completely different complexion ... and we must re-examine our position ... because Malaysia without Singapore is not the Malaysia of which Sarawak was to become part. Malaysia as it is, is a failure.'⁴⁰ In the Dewan Rakyat on 10 August, Ong Kee Hui attacked the federal government for having little respect for the Constitution and 'making nonsense of democracy'.⁴¹ He added that one of the reasons given for the formation of Malaysia was that it would provide a solution for Singapore, and he asked what justification there now was for Malaysia's continued existence.

The leftists in the party, who always opposed Malaysia and had never really given up hope of gaining independence for Sarawak, quickly urged Sarawak to secede from the federation too. Their spokesman, Chan Siaw Hee, said 'For those who had said "now that Malaysia is established there is no turning back", then Singapore's expulsion proved them wrong.'⁴² Chan was probably taking a shot at the party leadership of Ong and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze who had argued along similar lines in their earlier pursuit of the MSC. Chan also attacked Lee Kuan Yew, saying that he (Lee), as a 'salesman' of Malaysia, had 'pulled us into the water' but now could not care less about independence in Sarawak.⁴³ Speaking in the Council Negri later, Chan said: 'The people of Sabah had the guts to show their dissatisfaction about Singapore's secession. ... Donald Stephens has shown he was not a puppet.'⁴⁴ Chan also engineered a motion from the KMC demanding that a referendum be held.⁴⁵

The expulsion of Singapore was obviously a great morale booster for the left wing, as it proved them right about the incompatibility of the federation, despite Ong and Yong's attempts to work within it. By now, the PAP branch in Malaya was reorganized as the Democratic Action Party (DAP) under Devan Nair, who took over the role of convener of the MSC. On 10 September, SUPP and Party Machinda called for an all-party conference to discuss the Singapore issue, based on the line of the pre-federation Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC).⁴⁶ The DAP tried to revive the MSC when, on 23 March 1966, they held unofficial discussions in Kuala Lumpur on the MSC's future. SUPP and Party Machinda were invited.⁴⁷ Ong Kee Hui, Stephen Yong, Khoo Peng Loong, and Tamaweng Tinggung Wan attended as individuals. However, Chan reiterated his earlier stand that SUPP should not join the MSC, claiming there was no common ground between the two parties.⁴⁸

SUPP: Coping with Crises

The Communist Insurgency and the Creation of Chinese New Villages

After the Brunei revolt of 1962, a series of crack-downs by the authorities saw a number of SUPP members leaving the villages and towns to take up armed struggle in the jungle. Most of these young people went on the orders of the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) and they ended up just across the border in Indonesia, where they were trained and supported by the Indonesian government.⁴⁹ Indonesia had launched an official policy of Konfrontasi against the formation of Malaysia and in addition, the CCO found support in the Parti Komunis Indonesia (PKI), which had, at that time, considerable strength.⁵⁰

By late 1962, the communists had started making minor raids into Sarawak, causing a small number of casualties among the military and police personnel. Home-made bombs caused widespread property damage. The federal government decided that the successful tactics used in the Malayan communist counter-insurgency could be applied to Sarawak. One of the most successful of these was the creation of new villages. Entire Chinese communities in the rural areas would be re-grouped in a single location in order to sever their contacts with the communists.⁵¹ Tun Abdul Razak, then the federal defence minister, declared that in principle, the government was ready to resettle over 50,000 Sarawak Chinese into these new villages.⁵²

The resettlement plan was triggered off by an attack on 28 June 1965 on a police station at the 18th mile on the Kuching Road. Among the policemen shot by the communists was Sergeant Simon Ningkan, the younger brother of Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the chief minister.⁵³

'Operation Hammer' was implemented eight days later, on 6 July 1965. All people living from the 15th to the 24th mile along the Kuching-Serian Road had to report to five marshalling points for resettlement.⁵⁴ The authorities established three new settlements and extended two small bazaars at the 17th and 21st mile. Temporary housing and basic needs like food and water were provided. There was no reported resistance to these forced resettlements, although there is no doubt people suffered from overcrowding and loss of income, not to mention the loss of freedom.

By 8 July about 7,600 people from 1,277 families had been registered in the controlled areas, and school classes resumed on Friday, 9 July.⁵⁵ The next day, 10 July, Operation Letter Box was launched. The entire resettlement area was sealed off and everyone over 14 years of age was issued with a letter asking for information on communist members and arms. Special booths were set up at the settlements and the public was assured that information received would be kept confidential. They were also told that information on known communists could fetch a reward of M\$5,000, a considerable sum in those days. This tactic was again based on the counter-insurgency method used by Gerald Templar at Tanjong Malim in Malaya.⁵⁶

On 15 July 1965 six senior SUPP officials: Chan Siaw Hee, Chong Kiun Kong, Ho Ho Lim, Lim Kim Seng, and Tan Chui Beng, made an inspection visit of the settlements, during which they termed them 'concentration camps'.⁵⁷ They added that the farmers were additionally penalized as they could no longer attend to their farms and were restricted by curfews and blockades. The next day, all six were promptly banned from entering the controlled areas.⁵⁸

The second phase of Operation Hammer was carried out on 7 August 1965. The Minister of Agriculture, Teo Kui Seng, announced that new permanent settlements were to be built at the 17th, 21st, and 22nd mile along the Kuching–Serian Road. He also gave the names of the protected villages as Siburan (*Xin Sheng Cun* or New Life Village); Beratok (*Lai Tuo Cun* or Come and Develop Village); and Tapah (*Da Fu Cun* or Great Wealth/Prosperity Village). In general, each household was allocated about 0.4 hectare of land on which to build a permanent home. A 60-year lease was offered on a small piece of land on time payment terms, and a grant of M\$1,500 was given to the household to defray the cost of the new house. By December 1965, Siburan, Beratok, and Tapah were ready for occupation.⁵⁹ All these new settlements had wire mesh around their parameters, were floodlit at night and were patrolled by 24-hour security. A dusk to dawn curfew was imposed on areas outside these settlements. Every member was required to carry an identity card, and special cards were issued to farmers who had to leave the camp to work on their farms.

On 5 January 1966, under Operation Teacup, resettlement was extended to Tebedu District. Some 700 families from Tebedu were resettled into Beratok and Tapah and provided with houses free of charge. This operation brought the total number of Chinese who were resettled to more than 8,000.⁶⁰

The question of what to do with these detainees became a major issue for SUPP. The party saw them as victims of the authorities' crack-down on ethnic Chinese. Moreover, the party was obligated to do something about the situation as the detainees constituted a major group of SUPP supporters. The problem here was that SUPP, being in opposition, was thus powerless to act on their behalf. As these people were never formally arrested, SUPP could not make strong representations on their behalf. The only area where the party was able to extend assistance was in welfare and some material help.

The Political Detainees' Issue

From the first arrest by colonial authorities of SUPP members in 1962, SUPP had to deal with the status of such members in the party and decide what to do with the many supporters who were held under emergency detention powers. Most of the arrested members were Chinese and had dual membership. Many were members of SUPP and also of CCO bodies like the Sarawak Advanced Youth Association

(SAYA), the Sarawak Farmers' Organization (SFO), and the armed communist-backed guerrilla army, the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU).⁶¹ The majority of the detainees were captured by security forces after skirmishes in the jungle, while others were handed in by the Indonesians.⁶² Most were confined to the State Protective Custody Centre detention camp just outside Kuching. At the height of the detention, there were well over 1,000 prisoners.⁶³

The question of party membership of the detainees caused a headache for the leadership. While the moderates wanted them expelled,⁶⁴ the strength of the left wing meant that it was impossible to do so. The moderates argued that if the party did not expel those with dual membership, the government would use this status as evidence that SUPP was a CCO-front and proscribe the party, as they had already done with several of its branches. The left wing argued that these members were the true patriots who deserved the membership of the party.

The compromise reached was that expulsion from the party could only be carried out if the government proved in court that an SUPP member in detention was a member of a banned organization (thus going against the party's aim of using constitutional means to fight for its objectives), or on members who had disappeared into the jungle.⁶⁵ This compromise allowed the left wing to retain many of its members while allowing the moderates to claim that it was doing its best to deal with the CCO elements in the party, as well as showing the authorities that SUPP did not condone members with CCO links. However, it must be said that the moderates, in any case, would not push this issue too far as the left wing clearly had the numbers; the moderate leadership had too much to lose.

Those in detention usually turned towards SUPP to make representations on their behalf to the government. However, SUPP was not very successful for two simple reasons. First, jurisdiction over political detention rested not with the state government, but with the federal Home Affairs Ministry under Dato' Dr Ismail. Federal leaders regarded SUPP as a front for the CCO and were therefore unwilling to negotiate seriously with it. Second, SUPP was in the opposition. Moreover, SNAP, the party it had most in common with,⁶⁶ was out of government from 1966 onwards when the bulk of detentions took place.

The only effective weapon left to the detainees, since SUPP was largely ineffective, was to stage hunger strikes. One such strike erupted when a 32-year-old inmate, Chung Hung Hua, died suddenly on 6 September 1967.⁶⁷ Fellow inmates then forwarded a 10-point petition to the federal secretary.⁶⁸ They demanded an inquiry into Chung's death, a guarantee that such a death would not occur again, compensation to Chung's family, health checks every six months, immediate release of sick and old prisoners, and permission for representatives to attend Chung's funeral.⁶⁹

The detainees nominated Stephen Yong Kuet Tze to be their legal adviser. Their families also approached him, Ong Kee Hui, and Chan Siaw Hee to negotiate with the federal secretary, Harun Arrifin. Over

600 detainees were involved in the strike, and their families used SUPP's headquarters as their base. Chung's body was taken to the headquarters and his funeral was organized by the party.⁷⁰

Of the five representatives chosen by the detainees, only one attended the funeral. She was Lee Yew Hiong,⁷¹ Chung's sister-in-law, escorted to the funeral by Chan. SUPP also elicited the help of Tan Chee Khoo, the Malayan Labour Party chief, to approach the federal government.⁷² An agreement was reached after 14 days, and the hunger strike was called off.⁷³ Some conditions were improved, but in many cases the federal government simply promised that the issues would be looked into.⁷⁴

Another major hunger strike took place on 6 June 1967 and lasted 15 days. It was precipitated by the government's refusal to unconditionally release two detainees, Ling Yuk Ming and Wong Huang Tiew, both of whom were claimed to be critically ill.⁷⁵ When Chan failed to secure their release, the detainees decided to go on hunger strike. The strike spread and extended to other blocks, and at its peak more than 360 detainees, including 60 women, were involved. Another detainee, Tan Choon Hu, was added to the list of critically ill.

On 14 June, when the strike had entered its eighth day, the government released Ling and Wong on normal conditions, claiming their release was not due to the protest. The government also referred to a medical report which recommended their release. However, for three days prior to the release, the State Secretariat building in Kuching was the target of a sit-down protest by the relatives of those on hunger strike.⁷⁶ Yong, as the detainees' legal adviser, again headed negotiations with the federal secretary. The hunger strike, reported to be the fifth staged by the detainees, ended on 21 June.⁷⁷

SUPP's links with the political detainees were extensive. Besides being their main avenue for legal and other support, many of the detainees were regarded as heroes and enjoyed considerable support among the middle-to-lower ranks. For example, in June 1968 when SUPP held its sixth Annual Central Committee meeting, 15 detainees were elected new office bearers.⁷⁸ The meeting was held in the midst of a hunger strike at the detention centre, which could account for the election of detainees to the Central Committee. The detention of mainly ethnic Chinese young men and women, and the various hunger strikes staged by them, harmed the government and helped SUPP.⁷⁹ SUPP was seen as the only political party willing to help and represent the mainly Chinese detainees. That SUPP could not actually do much was immaterial; the party was seen to be doing as much as it could. There is little doubt that SUPP gained substantial support from its role in the hunger strikes and the deaths of the detainees.

The Proscription of Party Branches

During the period SUPP was in opposition, the government employed several tactics in their efforts to weaken the party. Besides detaining the

ordinary cadres and sympathizers, other methods included closing down its branches, targeting key party grass-roots organizers, and harassing its indigenous supporters.

On 30 May 1965, during the internal MSC crisis, the government banned the 24th mile Simanggang sub-branch, claiming that several of its office holders were communists who had crossed the border into Indonesia. At that same time the government also banned the party's paper, *Saa'ti*.⁸⁰ In September 1965, the Sarikei branch and its sub-branch in Jakar were ordered to close. According to Stephen Kalong Ningkan, these two branches were used by the communists to penetrate the Lower Rejang area.⁸¹ On 4 December 1967, the Engkilili branch was declared unlawful under Section 5 of the Societies Act (1966).⁸² In 1968, the Miri branch was proscribed and five of its members arrested on 15 January.⁸³ The government also restricted dissension by forbidding civil servants from criticizing the government 'policies publicly or privately'.⁸⁴

The First Division Trade Union Congress Ban

A major crisis faced by SUPP in 1966 was the proscription of the First Division Trade Union Congress (FDTUC) on 17 March. The FDTUC was a major grass-roots support organization for SUPP. Its Secretary-General, Lim Kim Seng, was also a Central Committee member of SUPP and a KMC councillor. The FDTUC secretary, Goh Tian Ee, was also an active member of SUPP. Both these men were key players in the party's left wing, and exerted great influence in the Kuching branch. The crack-down meant that the left wing lost another important component, the unions.

The 1968 Arrests

The year 1968 was one of SUPP's worst. Apart from the branch closures, it lost three senior leaders, all from the left wing. On 14 August 1968, Chan Siaw Hee and Lim Kim Seng were arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) and the Preservation of Public Security Regulations (PPSR). A few Iban leaders were also arrested. Chan, who was described as an untouchable,⁸⁵ was arrested at his office. His house was earlier surrounded by the police when mass arrests took place in June.⁸⁶ Lim, who also served as a KMC councillor, had been Secretary-General of the banned FDTUC.⁸⁷

Chan was flown to Kuala Lumpur three days later, the same day that another SUPP Central Committee member, Teng Chiew Beng, was arrested in Miri. Teng, from Kuching, was in the Miri area campaigning when he was detained. He was formerly chairman of the Kuching Employees and Labourers' Union, and ex-vice chairman of the proscribed FDTUC.⁸⁸ By the end of August 1968, 26 SUPP Central Committee members had been arrested or detained. Four of these chose to return to China, one died, and the rest remained in detention.⁸⁹

The net effect of all these arrests was that SUPP had lost the services of some of its key mobilizers in the unions and at the grass-roots level. For the left wing, the arrests, especially of Chan and Lim, meant that their leaders who represented them at the top level of SUPP had disappeared and that the moderates were even more in control.

Deterioration of Indigenous Support

After SNAP formed the government in 1963, one of its priorities was to consolidate Dayak support. It tried to win over Pesaka supporters and also targeted Dayak SUPP supporters. The constant attack on the SUPP indigenous wing meant a significant loss of indigenous support from 1964 onwards. In October 1965, having just recovered from the Land Bill and the MSC crises, SUPP suffered a major set-back when Charles Linang, one of its most prominent indigenous founder-members and party treasurer, crossed the floor to the Sarawak Alliance. As Linang walked across the floor of the Council Negri from the opposition bench to the government side, SUPP members, including Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, shouted 'Traitor! Traitor! Man with no principles.'⁹⁰

Linang had not informed the SUPP leadership of his intentions, and he was expelled from SUPP on the same day he defected. Linang accused the party leadership of neglecting the Iban community, and said SUPP would not have nominated him to be Member of Parliament (MP) had he not confronted Ong Kee Hui. He also added that Ong had broken his promise to him that Linang, Ong, and Yong would be the 'kingpins and key men of the party'.⁹¹

Linang's move from SUPP was the second serious blow for the indigenous wing of the party, after the resignation of Jonathan Bangau ak Renang in 1962.⁹² SUPP employed the same tactics against Linang as it had against Bangau; he was condemned by an emergency meeting of the Simanggang branch held on 21 October, attended by Iban representatives mainly from the Second and Third Divisions.⁹³ Linang's resignation meant that SUPP had lost more of the legitimacy it was seeking from the indigenous groups.⁹⁴

The colonial government had previously pressured many of the indigenous members to abandon SUPP. A common tactic was to use the threat of arrest and accuse SUPP of being a communist front. Police intimidation often took other forms, such as interrogation. This pressure was increased when Sarawak became independent in 1963. The Sarawak Alliance government, especially its indigenous component, Pesaka and SNAP, were in the forefront of attacking SUPP as a CCO front. This was done basically because SUPP was capable of usurping their indigenous support; both SNAP and Pesaka claimed to be the party representing Dayak interests.

The red scare was effectively and skilfully utilized against SUPP. For example, Temenggong Jugah, the leader of Pesaka and Federal Minister of Sarawak Affairs, was reported to have threatened two indigenous SUPP members that they would be sent to Indonesia if they did not join

Pesaka. He charged that all members of SUPP, except Ong Kee Hui, were communists.⁹⁵ In a speech to the Dewan Rakyat, SUPP Kenyah MP Tamaweng Tinggung Wan said:

The people of Sarawak who join SUPP are all marked as communists, but that is the communist routine. The government should point out the ways of communists and the signs of justice on the government side. Only then could the people follow the road of justice in the country, only then could the people escape from the road of communism. But all we hear is talking and talking, about communism only. So we in Sarawak, many have followed SUPP. We are always being suppressed with who joined SUPP are communists. What is communism, it has never been explained—is communism red or green? The government should point out that those who are seen with horns or tails are communist, and tell us. That's what I request. Don't just talk about communist only.⁹⁶

Towards mid-August 1968, a group of 10 Ibans were arrested, five of them *tuai rumah* (longhouse headmen). A government statement said that a number of those arrested openly admitted to being SUPP members, and news reports suggested that one of the reasons for their arrest was precisely that they were SUPP supporters.⁹⁷

The Constitutional Crisis of 1966

By the end of 1965, SNAP was openly courting the Chinese. The party, especially Stephen Kalong Ningkan, believed that SNAP could use multiracialism to broaden its support outside the Dayak community in order to buttress it against another 'native' attack like that of 1965. For example, from early 1966, SNAP began to open a series of branches in urban areas like Kuching.⁹⁸ This was also consistent with SNAP's party campaign theme 'Sarawak for the Sarawakians'. Ningkan stated that 'all Malaysians are sons of the soil. In the role of nation building, no one needs to be reminded constantly of one's racial origin. . . .'⁹⁹ This was an obvious appeal to the Chinese, who were dissatisfied with the federal government promoting the *bumiputera* at their political and economic expense.

However, SNAP had made little impact on SUPP's support base among the Chinese. SNAP was only able to gain SCA supporters, the most prominent probably being Ting Tung Meng.¹⁰⁰ Other prominent Chinese who joined SNAP were James Wong Kim Min¹⁰¹ and Wee Hood Teck,¹⁰² who joined in June 1966. The inclusion of these men was used by Ningkan's enemies to accuse him of being too close to, and subservient to, Chinese interests.

Other issues used against Ningkan were his refusal to implement Malay as the official language in the state, his preference for English, and the perception that he relied too much on expatriate officers, hence abandoning the 'Borneoization' of the civil service.¹⁰³ SUPP supported Ningkan in all these issues, believing it was the Malay/Melanau-based Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Berjasa), with the connivance of federal Alliance leaders, who were behind the attacks on Ningkan. In May 1965,

Stephen Yong Kuet Tze said in the Dewan Rakyat: 'How alarming it is to find the extent to which UMNO in Kuala Lumpur would go—to even topple the [Ningkan] Government headed by an Iban who happened to hold non-racial views ... is Sarawak a colony ... in Malaysia?'¹⁰⁴ It was also clear that SUPP's support for Ningkan was not based on the party's affection for Ningkan or SNAP, but what it saw as the lesser of 'two evils'. SUPP preferred the Ningkan government to the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and Berjasa leaders who, were they to topple Ningkan, would pose a worse alternative to Chinese interests.

By mid-1966 all these factors, combined with an internal split among the Dayak-based parties,¹⁰⁵ meant Ningkan's opponents were ready and able to try to topple him for the second time. They relied again on Kuala Lumpur for political muscle. Of the 32 Alliance Council Negri members, 21 signed a petition of 'no confidence' in Ningkan as chief minister, asking for his removal.¹⁰⁶ It was clear that there was a strong racial overtone to this plot as Chinese members were excluded from the signed petition.¹⁰⁷ Tunku Abdul Rahman then demanded Ningkan's resignation, citing Article 7(1) of the Sarawak Constitution. This states that the chief minister has to go if he ceases to command the majority of the Council Negri members. Ningkan naturally refused to go, and the Tunku dispatched the Minister of Home Affairs, the Inspector General of Police, and the federal Attorney-General to Kuching. There they submitted directly to the governor a new candidate for the post of chief minister.¹⁰⁸

SUPP, watching from the sidelines, knew it was once more witnessing a plot hatched in Kuala Lumpur. It issued a press statement which said:

At the first sign of dissension within the would-be Alliance they scurried to Kuala Lumpur for instructions and advice, paying scant respect to the wishes of their constituents. These truant Alliance members were shepherded back to Kuching from Kuala Lumpur by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Attorney General, the Inspector General of Police and the Director of Special Branch—senior and important shepherds of such an erring flock. They were kept incommunicado at the Astana, making themselves inaccessible to their constituents. In fairness, not all of them were at fault since not all of them have constituents.¹⁰⁹

All the Alliance dissenters then boycotted the Council Negri. Those who supported Ningkan did attend, and included: six SNAP, five SUPP, three SCA, two PANAS, one Machinda, one independent, and three *ex officio* members. Around this time, Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong were pondering whether they should join SNAP to form a new coalition. However, the left wing made demands such as the release of SUPP political detainees and exit from Malaysia as conditions for the proposed coalition, which Ningkan was unable to accept.¹¹⁰

Penghulu Tawi Sli was duly appointed chief minister on 17 June.¹¹¹ The first thing he did was take a trip to Kuala Lumpur, signalling that he was the federal government's man. Tawi Sli's government was

supported by Pesaka, Berjasa, PANAS, and SCA. The new government's line-up comprised:

Penghulu Tawi ak Sli (Pesaka)	Chief Minister
Abdul Taib Mahmud (Berjasa)	Minister for Agriculture and Forestry
Penghulu Francis Umpau (Pesaka)	Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources
Abang Hj Abdulrahim (PANAS)	Minister for Local Government
Awang Hipni bin Pengiran Annu (Parti Bumiputera)	Minister for Welfare, Youth, and Culture
Tajang Laing (Pesaka)	Minister for Communications and Works

Before the Tawi Sli government could get down to business, Ningkan challenged his dismissal in court. In September 1966, the court handed down a verdict in his favour and he was reinstated on 7 September.¹¹² The federal government swiftly declared a state of emergency on 15 September, taking away all of Ningkan's powers. One reason given to justify the state of emergency was that the communists might exploit the situation. The day the emergency was proclaimed, the Malaysian Information Service published a booklet *The Communist Threat to Sarawak*. The federal Home Minister, Dato' Dr Ismail, stated that since Ningkan relied on SUPP to rule, and SUPP was under the control of communists, Ningkan was hence relying on communist aid to rule.¹¹³

On 23 September, after much behind-the-scene manoeuvring by the federal government and the anti-Ningkan group, the Council Negri was convened and a no-confidence motion was passed. Ningkan was dismissed the next day and Tawi Sli was restored as the chief minister.¹¹⁴ The lesson learnt by SUPP and all other Sarawak-based political parties was that internal state politics could be decided by federal intervention,¹¹⁵ and that Sarawak's political autonomy would never be regained. In November 1966, Berjasa and PANAS merged into Parti Bumiputera.¹¹⁶

The new government, although headed by an Iban, was in practice run by Taib Mahmud from Parti Bumiputera. His legal training¹¹⁷ made him the most educated member of the state Cabinet and he controlled the key post of Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. His control over the forests allowed him to grant patronage in the form of timber concessions. Taib's hold on the government was shortened when Pesaka and Parti Bumiputera fought over certain issues and Taib was forced to resign. By 1968 the new Cabinet line-up was:

Penghulu Tawi ak Sli (Pesaka)	Chief Minister
Abang Hj Abdulrahim (Parti Bumiputera)	Deputy Chief Minister
Teo Kui Seng (SCA)	Minister for Communications and Works

Abang Ikwan Zianie (Parti Bumiputera)	Minister for Local Government
Penghulu Francis Umpau (Pesaka)	Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources
Tajang Laing (Pesaka)	Minister for Agriculture and Forestry
Ling Beng Siong (SCA)	Minister for Youth and Culture
Awang Hipni bin Pengiran Annu (Parti Bumiputera)	Minister for Welfare
Sandom ak Nyuak (Pesaka)	Minister for State

Under the Tawi Sli government, expatriate officers were excluded from the decision-making level, and the replacement of top expatriate officers was greatly accelerated. The top three posts of state secretary, state financial secretary, and state establishment officer were all filled by officers born in Sarawak.

The 1966 By-election

In April 1966, the KMC held a by-election after the resignation of George Seah Kim Seng (SUPP).¹¹⁸ The main opponent of SUPP candidate John Fong was the Alliance's Sim Kheng Lung from SCA, while Machinda put up the third candidate. The Alliance placed great emphasis on the by-election, probably because it provided an opportunity to show the population that SUPP could be beaten. Stephen Kalong Ningkan himself campaigned extensively for the Alliance-SCA candidate.¹¹⁹ The government also refused to allow SUPP to hold an election rally.¹²⁰ In an open letter to the electorate, SUPP attacked the Alliance as subservient to the federal Alliance and lambasted the federal government's failure in 'respect [of] the political aspirations of any Sarawakians who are not Malay'.¹²¹ The party also attacked the Alliance on the question of detainees, reaffirmed SUPP as the only anti-colonial and anti-imperialist party,¹²² and charged, correctly, that the SCA was a very ineffective member of the Alliance.¹²³

The SCA candidate in turn claimed that George Seah resigned from his seat due to pressure from the left wing in SUPP, and said that 'it is the extremist group who decide who's who and what's what when they want to, and not the secretary general who likes to think he is the top-dog'.¹²⁴ Sim was obviously referring to Stephen Yong Kuet Tze. SUPP won easily, polling 865 votes out of the total 1,340. The Alliance-SCA took 445 and Machinda polled a mere 30.¹²⁵ With a 31.4 per cent majority, it was obvious that the Chinese still regarded SUPP as their main outlet for political participation.

Two years later, in May 1968, by-elections were called for Wards 6 and 17 of the Kuching Rural District Council (KRDC). SUPP again easily regained both seats. With SNAP staying out, it was a straight SUPP-Alliance contest. In Ward 6, SUPP's Chong Yu Lian polled 690 votes against his Alliance opponent, Cyril John Naming (Pesaka), who managed to get only 204 votes. In Ward 17, SUPP's Chang Yu

convincingly beat his opponent, Yong Khiong Hin (SCA), polling 680 votes to the Alliance's 335.¹²⁶ In both these seats, utilizing the issues of political detainees and new villages in the controlled areas, the SUPP candidate received roughly double the votes of the Alliance opponent. Ward 6, for example, was situated at 17th Mile Kuching–Serian Road, part of the controlled area where the Chinese new villages were located. Ward 17, located within the 3rd Mile Penrissen Road, was close to Kuching where the hunger strikes were a key issue affecting the Chinese community. The SUPP result in Ward 6 also indicated that the party had substantial indigenous support.¹²⁷ Out of 1,757 registered voters in Ward 6, close to 500 were Dayaks.¹²⁸

The 1969 General Election

Prelude

The 1969 election was a direct one, unlike the 1963 polls where a three-tiered system of voting was used. New boundaries for 48 seats and 24 parliamentary constituencies had been drawn up in 1965, based on population as well as geographical considerations. Membership of the State Legislative Assembly was thus increased from 42 to 48 seats. According to the Sarawak Constitution, state elections were supposed to have been held by 3 October 1968, as the Council Negri had a five-year term. But the federal leadership wanted elections in Sarawak to coincide with the national elections.

On 27 September 1968, the Sarawak Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Sarawak Constitution (Consequential Amendment) Bill were passed in the Council Negri. The second of these sought to amend Article 21 of the Sarawak Constitution, to bring it into accord with the provisions of Section 9(3) of the Eighth Schedule to the federal Constitution. The effect was to postpone the dissolution of the Council Negri to a date when the federal Parliament was next dissolved after 9 September 1968.¹²⁹

SUPP was strongly against the amendment, knowing the danger of postponing a general election when the party was already weak. Another delay would further weaken the party. Chong Kiun Kong, an SUPP member of Council Negri, expressed the view that 'by letting the Federal Government do this, the Sarawak Alliance has lost for Sarawak the dignity of our Council Negri. . . . This shows very clearly how spineless the Sarawak Alliance Government is. It has no faith and no trust in its own people.'¹³⁰

The SUPP argument, which was also shared by SNAP since both were in the opposition, was that if elections were to be held as scheduled, that is, before October 1968, the Alliance would probably lose as constant internal bickering would split the Alliance vote. By late 1968, the Election Commission released its long overdue report¹³¹ on the delineation of the constituencies.¹³² The communal composition of the electorate changed somewhat for the 1969 polls. The net effect was

the increase of Chinese voters by 4 per cent and the Malay/Melanau group by 1 per cent, both at the expense of the Dayaks.¹³³

Campaign Issues and Tactics

Nomination day was on 5 April 1969. The polling date was set for 10 May for Peninsular Malaysia. For Sarawak, polling was staggered over four weeks, from 10 May to 7 June.

From March 1969, SUPP had already decided to contest almost all state and parliamentary seats. At a meeting held in Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's house on 23 March 1969, SUPP's First Division Election Committee announced that it would contest all 14 state and 7 parliamentary seats in the First Division. SUPP election committees were also set up in the other divisions.¹³⁴ By 3 April, two days before nomination day, SUPP announced that it had finalized the list of candidates for all 48 state seats and 21 out of 24 parliamentary seats.¹³⁵ However, on nomination day, the party only managed to field 43 candidates for the state seats. Of these, 21 were indigenous candidates. It also fielded 21 candidates for parliamentary seats, of which 13 were indigenous. The selection of such a large number of indigenous candidates suggests that SUPP was keen to protect its multiracial image despite government pressure on its indigenous wing.

The party made a serious attempt to retain and expand its indigenous vote, an attempt reflected in the party manifesto. For example, to allay the indigenous' fear that the party was still against Malaysia it declared: 'Since the formation of Malaysia, SUPP has continued to work for the people of Sarawak constitutionally within the framework of Malaysia.'¹³⁶ On indigenous' rights, the manifesto added 'SUPP respects the rights and customs of all native races and will ensure that such rights and customs are not interfered with'. The party promised that the laws relating to land would be revised to enable the indigenous groups to hold individual titles: 'This will eliminate the constant land disputes which take place among them, and also enable them to raise the necessary capital they require to develop their land.' Although land law revision was beneficial to the indigenous groups, it was far more beneficial to the Chinese community as individual indigenous title-holders could presumably sell their land to the non-indigenous, that is, the Chinese. Hence, it could be argued that the promise on land law revision was inserted explicitly to entice Chinese voters for whom access to land was always a central issue.

Other issues close to the heart of the Chinese such as the status of the political detainees, the conditions in the controlled areas, and Chinese education also received attention. The manifesto pledged to 'see to it that those who are now detained . . . [are] given the right to clear themselves of any charges. . . . SUPP will make every effort to improve the present conditions under which the people in the controlled areas are now living with a view to removing all the restrictions.' On Chinese education, the manifesto said 'SUPP will encourage and foster the free and

unhampered development of language and culture of all races in Sarawak ... no restrictions should be placed on the use of ... English, Chinese, Iban'.

A significant part of the manifesto was a statement that SUPP supports the concept of Malaysia: 'The SUPP supports the concept of Malaysia. Our party believes that as a small country Sarawak should seek regional cooperation and eventual merger with common cultural, economic and political ties so as to become part of a bigger and stronger nation.'

An observer¹³⁷ argued that the SUPP decision to explicitly recognize Malaysia was in response to Tunku Abdul Rahman's query to Stephen Yong on whether the party had abandoned its fight over the recognition of Malaysia in February 1969. The Tunku wanted Yong's answer in writing, and in return promised not to detain SUPP candidates during the campaign. While the Tunku's threat of arrests may have been a factor, it could also be argued that Yong probably wrote the letter partly to head off any challenge on the Malaysia issue from the left wing, which was still bitterly anti-Malaysia. In so doing, Yong more or less set the party's policy on Malaysia and deprived the leftists of a chance to put forward its well-known opposition. In any case, Yong's letter was probably a reaffirmation by the moderates that Malaysia was a reality. However, despite its pledge on Malaysia, the manifesto also promised to 'review the terms of entry of Sabah and Sarawak into Malaysia If elected and entrusted with the Government of Sarawak'.

SUPP's overall campaign message was extremely simple: the Alliance had been in government for six years already and was a dismal failure. For the Chinese community, SUPP argued that it was the only party that could represent the Chinese, since the SCA (in the Alliance) was a total failure. Both these points were clearly summarized by Yong in a radio campaign broadcast on 8 May 1969:

Alliance ... has been holding reins of power ... for nearly six years For over two years out of the six, SNAP ... was also running the Sarawak government Now Sarawak Alliance is in name only ... it is not a united force The SCA claims to represent Sarawak Chinese in Sarawak. In its election manifesto it pledges to do many things for the Chinese, including giving land to the landless, raising the standard of Chinese education, and agitating for the adoption of Chinese as one of the official languages. Are these proposals ... empty promises to catch the votes ... ? The answer is simple. SCA has been in government for six years and done nothing about these things People are not fools and will not be hoodwinked.¹³⁸

Among the Alliance parties, the infighting over the allocation of seats resulted in Tun Abdul Razak's temporary suspension of this Alliance and allowing each component party to use its own symbol.¹³⁹ In general, all the Alliance components attacked SUPP as a Chinese and communist front organization. The main Chinese voice in the Alliance, SCA, stated in its political radio broadcast that

the opposition SUPP is basically a Chinese political party. Though it had, in its early days, popular support of the people, owing to its infiltration by subversive

elements ... it has lost the support ... SUPP preaches one set of propaganda in the Chinese dominated towns while another set is preached among the rural natives.¹⁴⁰

SNAP also played the red card against SUPP. Its press statement said: 'We take this opportunity to once again appeal ... [to] Chinese and others who have not yet forsaken SUPP ... [to] withdraw their support from a party of which many of the rank and file are riddled with misguided communists and CCO sympathisers.'¹⁴¹

Consistent with this line of attack, on 9 April 1969 the government called a press conference to announce that a ranking communist, Yap Choon Hau, had been killed by Indonesian troops on 25 March in Songkong, Indonesia. The government gave prominence to the fact that Yap was a former SUPP Central Committee member and a reporter with the proscribed newspaper *Sin Wen Pao*.¹⁴² At the same press conference, two female communist guerrillas said that some members of the Pasokan Guerrilla Rakyat Sarawak (PGRS), the communist-backed guerrilla army fighting the government, were SUPP members. Despite the constant red-scare tactic, it was generally accepted that SUPP was strong in the Chinese-majority areas.¹⁴³

SUPP was not without advantage. The infighting within the Alliance, especially the fight for Dayak votes between Pesaka and SNAP, saw many of their members gravitating towards SUPP in Miri.¹⁴⁴ In mid-April 1969, a controversy broke out when the federal Minister of Education, Khir Johari, made a statement in Kuching to the effect that Sarawak would meet the same fate as Kelantan if the people did not return the Alliance to power.¹⁴⁵ Kelantan had been ruled by the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) since 1959, and the federal government cut off aid and reduced financial allocation to hurt the Kelantan state government. This move backfired. To this threat Stephen Yong replied:

If ... Johari's intention is to campaign for the Sarawak Alliance to win in the coming election, he should first have a good look at the present state of the Sarawak Alliance. It has broken in such a way that there is no Sarawak Alliance now. If any ... Alliance members wants to come to Sarawak and campaign, he will certainly be branded as taking sides in favour of certain parties within the Sarawak Alliance.¹⁴⁶

On 13 May, before polling in Sarawak could take place, the federal capital of Kuala Lumpur was engulfed in racial riots. A curfew was immediately imposed and two days later the general elections were suspended.¹⁴⁷ The nation was placed under emergency rule and all forms of political activity were banned. A National Operations Council (NOC) headed by Deputy Premier Tun Abdul Razak was set up. Although Tunku Abdul Rahman was still the Prime Minister, effective emergency powers were held by his deputy and the NOC. How well the SUPP would have done in the election will never be known.



Conclusion

From 1964 to 1969, SUPP was dominated by two issues: the first concerned the Chinese population locked up in controlled areas, the second dealt with the political detainees who were, for the most part, ethnic Chinese and SUPP members. These detainees were a source of embarrassment to the moderate leadership as many of the detainees were communists too. However, both the left wing and the moderates did not clash heavily on this issue as they knew neither would gain significantly. Both these issues pushed the party further towards a racial position, for both basically concerned the Chinese population only. But, in a sense, they also served to save the party. It was obvious that the great majority of Chinese in the controlled areas, as well as the political detainees, looked to SUPP as their political and legal voice in negotiations with the government. In these negotiations SUPP cemented its political legitimacy with the Chinese.

It is also clear that during this period there was an unofficial division of political work among the top two leaders—Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze. Ong spent most of his time working with the indigenous wing and on national issues, while Stephen Yong stayed with mainly local Chinese issues such as those regarding the detainees and the new villages. Ong was never directly involved with the political detainees issue, other than asking in the Dewan Rakyat and the Council Negri for the detainees to be freed or tried in court. This caused a rift between these two men.

Within the party, rivalry between the left wing and moderates continued. While the moderates were able to remain on top during the MSC crisis in May 1965, they were none the less forced to play their last card, resignation.¹⁴⁸ Yong and Ong's resignations were a calculated move on their part to push the moderates' agenda at the risk of nearly causing the party to collapse or become totally leftist. Although the left wing eventually had to agree to Yong and Ong's demands for their return to the leadership, they did not completely back down; Ong and Yong had to agree to work towards the inclusion of socialist parties in the MSC. Although the split between the left wing and the moderates was serious, both sides knew the boundaries after the MSC crisis. Their differences over party positions never really affected their unity when the party was faced with an external event, threat, or crisis.¹⁴⁹

After the MSC crisis, the left wing knew they needed the moderates for the 'public face' of SUPP, while the moderates learnt that pushing the left wing too far would provoke an open revolt. The left wing gained considerable grass-roots support from the issues concerning the controlled areas and the political detainees.

The other issue on which the left wing was able to capitalize was the expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia. The left wing had always argued that Malaysia would never work, and Singapore's expulsion was seen by many in the party as a vindication of that view.

Overall, the period from 1964 to 1969 was characterized by constant harassment from the authorities. The left wing lost many of its key leaders, including Chan Siaw Hee. The closure of many branches controlled by leftist and communist sympathizers probably affected their organizational ability and strength. The left wing's armed members in the jungle suffered a set-back with the ending of the Konfrontasi, while the CCO also suffered similarly after the failed PKI *coup* in Indonesia. For SUPP's indigenous wing, this period saw the doubling of efforts by the government to suppress their support for SUPP. The constant association of the words CCO, communist, and terrorist, with SUPP membership must have scared off a good number of potential indigenous SUPP members.

Of more significance was the sudden resignation of Charles Linang. His accusation that SUPP subordinated indigenous' interests was more damaging than many of the government's accusations. The proliferation of other indigenous-based political parties like Pesaka and SNAP drew away a significant number of SUPP supporters; in fact, many of the Pesaka and SNAP leaders were former SUPP members.¹⁵⁰

Although the Alliance was in disarray for most of the time from 1966 onwards due primarily to infighting, SUPP was unable to capitalize on this to gain political mileage. This was probably due to two factors, one internal, the other external. The internal problem was the split between the left wing and the moderates. Timing was also important; the fight between the left wing and the moderates over the MSC erupted around the same time as the Land Bill crisis. The political detainees issue took centre stage during the constitutional crisis.

The external factor which hindered SUPP's effectiveness as an opposition party was the constant arrest and detention of its key members by the Special Branch.¹⁵¹ Ironically, efforts by the Special Branch to weaken the party, through arrests and signed confessions, were probably counter-productive as it gave the left wing the impetus to argue that it was useless to work within the constitutional means espoused by the moderates. The arrests and detentions of SUPP members probably had more effect on the indigenous wing as it reinforced the 'red' tag on the SUPP.

By the time the election was held in 1969, it was generally believed that SUPP had the support of the majority of the Sarawak Chinese, as well as some indigenous support. SCA, supposedly SUPP's chief rival, was never really able to widen its support from the few Chinese *towkay* who needed the party's access to the Sarawak Cabinet to further their business opportunities. Also, Teo Kui Seng's withdrawal of the Land Bill in 1965 was probably seen by the Chinese community as the SCA's failure to meet the most basic of Chinese needs—land. The SCA's support for the Alliance's policies on such issues as political detainees, and language probably also alienated a substantial number of Chinese.¹⁵²

The basic thrust of the 1969 message from SUPP to the electorate was simple—the Alliance, after six years in office, was incapable of ruling.

They had faced two crises, including the sacking of the SNAP chief minister, and Alliance parties were looking towards Kuala Lumpur for political support. Moreover, the Alliance could not even agree to the allocation of seats, and thus their political components had to use their own individual symbols. Like SNAP, SUPP used the interference from Kuala Lumpur to incite anti-federal feelings. However, SUPP did not want to push as hard as SNAP on the anti-federal sentiment. Detentions without trial and the forced re-settlement in the new villages were all under the jurisdiction of the federal home ministry. SUPP needed to negotiate with the federal government over these issues, and too much anti-federal incitement would make further negotiations difficult.

The biggest threat to SUPP in the 1969 election was probably SNAP, which also exploited the multiracial theme. However, with the suspension of the 1969 polls, all bets were off.

1. In an interview, Stephen Kalong Ningkan said he was going to be the chief minister because he was 'nearly a lawyer'. Ningkan attached great importance to the fact that he was the most educated among Sarawak National Party's (SNAP) Iban leadership. He was in his final year of a correspondence law course when he decided to devote himself to SNAP. He also made the interesting observation that it was he (Ningkan) who gave Abdul Rahman Yakub and Abdul Taib Mahmud their start in politics. Rahman Yakub lost Ward 5 Kuching in the 1963 polls but Ningkan, as chief minister, could nominate three Council Negri members, two of whom were Rahman Yakub and Taib Mahmud. Both Rahman Yakub and Taib were later key instigators of Ningkan's downfall.

2. Teo Kui Seng was a former Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) member who left the party in 1962 during the moderates challenge. See previous chapter. One *ex officio* member of the Supreme Council, B. A. Hepburn, was replaced by John Pike in 1964.

3. *Sarawak by the Week*, no 43/63, 20-26 October 1963.

4. UMNO or United Malays National Organization, as the name implies, only admits Malays as members. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 7, 23 October 1963.

5. See Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 85; *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 February 1964; 18 April 1964.

6. Sarawak, *Report of the Land Committee 1962*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1963.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 4. It must be noted that unlike many other places, land availability is not a problem in Sarawak. Sarawak's total land area is actually larger than Malaya and with a population of slightly over a million in the 1960s, land density was very low.

8. In 1961, over 1,600 cases of unlawful occupation of land were recorded and this is believed to be a conservative figure. See *Sarawak Annual Report 1961*, London: HMSO, 1962, p. 35.

9. R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, p. 217.

10. See *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 12-15 May 1965.

11. Taib was one of the key instigators of the opposition to the bill together with Rahman Yakub. Quoted in *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 May 1965; Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 87.

12. In an interview with Ningkan, he said that after the Land Bill had failed, SUPP continued to support him against the native alliance. See also Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 87.

13. *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 May 1965.

14. See previous chapter.

15. Even if Barisan Sosialis were invited, it could not possibly have taken part after Lee ordered the crack-down on it in 1962. See previous chapter.

16. A copy of the 20 points was reproduced in full by the *Vanguard*, 11 May 1965. It is interesting to note that the Malaysia Solidarity Convention (MSC) news item was not reported in the *Sarawak Tribune* at all.

17. Others who signed were the People's Progressive Party and the United Democratic Party from Malaya, Party Machinda from Sarawak, and the People's Action Party (PAP) from Singapore. See *Vanguard*, 10 May 1965.

18. Ong Kee Hui was to say later that the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) Central Working Committee (CWC) had authorized the participation of SUPP in the MSC. See *Vanguard*, 20 June 1965.

19. *Vanguard*, 8 May 1965.

20. Incidentally, when the crisis erupted, the Ningkan government was embroiled in the Land Bill Crisis. For example, the Land Bill was abruptly withdrawn on 11 May 1965. See section on the Land Bill Crisis.

21. See *Vanguard* letters on 9, 11 May 1965.

22. *Vanguard*, 7 June 1965.

23. The split was reported in *The Straits Times*, 10 June 1965. Ong Kee Hui denied it in the *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 11 June 1965.

24. Chan Siaw Hee, on his return from England, was reported to have said this about the MSC, 'The SUPP is a socialist party. It is opposed to colonialist and Malaysia. It is opposed to Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his cliques because they are opportunists. As one of the prime movers of the [proposed] Malaysia, Mr Lee knew that he will turn the Singapore people into 2nd class citizens if they join Malaysia. Yet he encouraged its formation because it was for his personal interests.' See *Vanguard*, 18 June 1965; *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 June 1965.

25. Stephen Yong Kuet Tze also denied there was a split at that time. He also stated that the party had agreed on his and Merican Salleh's participation in the MSC. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 May 1965. The split was reported by the *Sarawak Vanguard* and its English sister paper, the *Vanguard*. See both papers dated 6 May 1965.

26. See *Vanguard*, 22 June 1965. Among the nine are Chan Siaw Hee, Lim Kim Seng, Phang Siang Seng, Su Mei Sin of Serian, Ting Chew Ming, and an unnamed executive member of the 10th mile branch. All the above-named were from the party's left wing.

27. But the split did not stop Ong Kee Hui from getting re-elected as the Kuching Municipal Council's (KMC) president on 22 June 1965. In fact, he was supported by Chan Siaw Hee. See *Vanguard*, 23 June 1965.

28. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 25 June 1965.

29. *Vanguard*, 25, 26 June 1965. See also a letter in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 June 1965 stating that a split in the SUPP was 'inevitable'.

30. *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 June 1965.

31. *Vanguard*, 27 June 1965.

32. *Vanguard* and *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 June 1965.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Ong and Yong were always friendly on the personal level with Ningkan and other government figures. The fact that both received English education at the tertiary level, as opposed to Chinese education as was the case of the majority of the left wing members meant that communications with the political élites was easy as English was the medium in all political negotiations. Chan Siaw Hee admitted openly that 'it is difficult for the party to find better open leaders [than] Mr Ong and Mr Yong'. See *Vanguard*, 28 June 1965.

35. Among the 13 were Chan Siaw Hee, Teng Chew Beng, and Sim Kheng Hong.

36. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 June; 1, 4 July 1965. It is interesting to note that the Sibul branch was backing the stand taken by Yong and Ong.

37. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 14, 23 July 1965.

38. Donald Stephens handed his resignation letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman during a game of golf in Jesselton. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 August 1965. In an interview with Ong, he said he was personally shocked as the Malaysian Constitution made no provision for the states to secede from the federation. The SUPP had wanted this clause to be added.

39. Party Machinda which also held an emergency meeting issued a similar demand. See *Vanguard*, 10 August 1965. The call was rejected by Ningkan in Kuala Lumpur the

next day. See *Vanguard*, 10 August 1965. Temenggong Jugah, the leader of Pesaka and the federal Minister of Sarawak Affairs also rejected the idea of a referendum. See *Vanguard*, 17 August 1965.

40. *Vanguard*, 10 August 1965.

41. *Vanguard*, 11 August 1965.

42. *Vanguard*, 12 August 1965.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 August 1965.

45. See *Vanguard*, 19, 25 August 1965.

46. *Vanguard*, 11 September 1965.

47. *Vanguard*, 16 March 1966.

48. *Vanguard*, 29 March 1966.

49. *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 December 1962.

50. J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963-1966*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 201.

51. On the conditions of the new villages in Malaya see J. Strauch, *Chinese Village Politics in the Malaysian State*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

52. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 February 1965.

53. *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 29 June 1965. The police argued that the raid was conducted to coincide with the Afro-Asian Conference in Algiers to show that Sarawakians were not happy in Malaysia.

54. *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 8, 9 July 1965. The police claimed more than 5,000 people were in protective custody by day one of the operation.

55. *Ibid.*

56. See *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 11-25 July 1965.

57. *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 July 1965. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* also called the camps 'concentration camps'. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 July 1965.

58. *Vanguard*, 18 July 1965.

59. See *Sarawak by the Week*, No 49/65, 1-7 December 1965, p. 6. See also Leslie V. Porritt, 'The Dynamics of the Politics of Enforced Resettlement in Sarawak in 1965', BA thesis, Murdoch University, 1991.

60. *Sarawak by the Week*, No 3/66, 9-15 January 1966. One interesting aspect of the resettlement programme in Sarawak was that these new settlements, unlike those in Malaya, were never officially referred to or called by the press as 'new villages'. Rather the term used was 'C' areas or controlled areas. These new settlements still exist today as bazaars but without any form of restriction or security.

61. Many recruits used SUPP badges as 'passports' to cross the border into Indonesia to join the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU). See Justus Van der Kroef, 'Communism in Sarawak Today', *Asian Survey*, VI, 10 (October 1966): 574.

62. The Indonesians started to help the Malaysian security forces in fighting the communists after 1965, when the military took power after the failed communist *coup* in Indonesia, especially after Indonesia formally dropped its Konfrontasi campaign with the signing of the Bangkok Agreement in June 1966. See Mackie, *Konfrontasi*, p. 318.

63. In an interview with an ex-detainee, he said the roll number of detainees had reached over 6xxx, indicating that over 6,000 people had passed through the camp. This camp still exists today, although now it is used to rehabilitate drug addicts. It is located directly opposite Kuching airport. For an account by some inmates of conditions in the camp, see 'Centre of Protective Custody, 6th mile Kuching-Serian Road, Kuching, Sarawak', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 17, 2 (1977): 444-7.

64. This was the basic cause of the First Moderates Challenge described in the last chapter.

65. Interview with Ong Kee Hui. He also said the moderate leadership believed that many of the Chinese youth who joined the communists in the jungle were led astray by the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) and thus deserved help by SUPP.

66. In an interview, Ningkan said that when he was chief minister, he refused to consent to the detention of SUPP leaders like Chan Siaw Hee, Stephen Yong, and Ong Kee Hui.

67. *Vanguard*, 11 September 1967. Chung Hung Hua was a Central Committee member and an assistant secretary of the SUPP Kuching branch who was detained on 6 December 1966. The SUPP press release described him as a 'good warrior, good comrade, and good son of the people'. It added that 'how could we not be provoked! Our party strongly appeal; since Comrade Chung was detained unreasonably, his safety was in the hands of the Alliance. Now he died a sudden unexpected death, so the Alliance Government should bear full responsibility.' See *Vanguard*, 13 September 1967. Chung's wife, Lee Jew Kien, was also detained. She was released on 13 September, four days after her husband's death, 'on compassionate grounds' on the orders of Tun Abdul Razak, the then deputy Prime Minister. See *Vanguard*, 14 September, 1967. Chung's inquest returned a verdict of natural death by 'cardiac failure'. See *Vanguard*, 29 September 1967; 5 October 1967.

68. The federal secretary is Kuala Lumpur's main administrative representative in Sarawak. He is in charge of all federal officers posted to Sarawak as well as all federal government departments.

69. *Vanguard*, 13, 20 September 1967.

70. One report said over 15,000 people joined Chung's funeral procession. See *Vanguard*, 21 September 1967.

71. Upon her release from custody in March 1968, she accused the SUPP of using Chung's funeral to 'instigate people's ill feeling ... towards the government'. She also denied that she attended the funeral on behalf of the detainees. See *Vanguard*, 21 March 1968.

72. *Ibid.*

73. The agreement was signed by the federal secretary and the deputy commissioner of police; Stephen Yong and Chan Siaw Hee from SUPP; and Mdm Lee Soon Kaw and Mdm Ng Say Chin from the detainees' families. See *Vanguard*, 23 September 1967.

74. *Vanguard*, 22 September 1967.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Vanguard*, 13 June 1968.

77. *Vanguard*, 20 June 1968.

78. The 11 resolutions passed at the meeting, which also celebrated SUPP's ninth anniversary, called on the government to hold general elections immediately and restore freedom to the people of the controlled areas. It reaffirmed the party's belief in the principle of socialism, condemning the killings of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, and the American policy in Vietnam. See *Vanguard*, 10 June 1968.

79. In fact the *Sarawak Tribune* accused the SUPP of playing up the racial card by emphasizing that the detainees involved in the hunger strike were mostly Chinese, and by using the Chung funeral as a rallying point for SUPP supporters. See *Vanguard*, 26 September 1967.

80. *Vanguard*, 31 May, 1 June 1965.

81. *Vanguard*, 23 September 1965.

82. *Vanguard*, 10 December 1967.

83. *Vanguard*, 20 January 1968. Among the five were Anthony Sia Tiew Liang and Tan Sik Ping, both SUPP councillors at the Miri District Council. See *Vanguard*, 10 April 1968.

84. *Vanguard*, 26 March 1968.

85. The *Vanguard* reported that 'it is generally believed that Mr Chan would never be arrested because he is so prominent as a Council Negri member'. His arrest apparently shocked Ong, Yong, and other senior leaders. Chan was alleged by the government to have received a personal copy of a directive from the CCO. See *Vanguard*, 15 August 1968.

86. *Vanguard*, 27 August 1968.

87. *Ibid.* See also *Vanguard*, 18 March 1965.

88. *Vanguard*, 16 August 1968.

89. A list of the 26 members is given in *Vanguard*, 17 August 1968.

90. See *Vanguard*, 20 October 1965.

91. Charles Linang's full statement on his resignation can be found in the *Vanguard*, 26 October 1965.

92. See previous chapter.
93. *Vanguard*, 26 October 1965.
94. Linang later joined SNAP.
95. Jugah was also reported to have refused to shake hands with an indigenous leader 'because he belongs to SUPP'. He was further quoted as saying to two indigenous leaders visiting him in Kuching, 'If you don't go to Indonesia, you better go and stay with Ong Kee Hui in Kuching.' See *Vanguard*, 9 June 1967. Jugah was described by his biographer as a 'relentless opponent' of the CCO. See Vinson Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1992, pp. 220-2. However, it must be stated here that the CCO was not an entirely Chinese operation. An important Iban communist, Ubong, operated in the Kanowit area as recently as 1971. He has since joined the Democratic Action Party (DAP). Jugah at one time even suggested that Chan Siaw Hee should leave Sarawak because of his 'pro-communist line'. See *Vanguard*, 11 November 1967. Jugah probably regarded Ong as a non-communist because both he and Ong knew each other from the Council Negri. Moreover, due to his background as an agriculture officer in Kapit (Jugah's home base), Ong had worked more closely with the indigenous members of SUPP than other leaders like Stephen Yong and Chan Siaw Hee. Ong speaks Iban fluently.
96. *Vanguard*, 28 June 1968.
97. *Vanguard*, 18 August 1968. A day earlier the paper reported that more than 30 pro-SUPP Ibans, 19 of them *tuai rumah*, were arrested. See *Vanguard*, 17 August 1968.
98. *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 June 1966.
99. *The Straits Times*, 17 November 1965. See also his statement on 16 November before an UMNO delegation that *bumiputera* must include all ethnic groups. See *Vanguard*, 17 November 1965.
100. Ting Tung Meng was a Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) nominee but was seen as more aligned with SNAP's objectives. His role in Binatang cost SUPP the control of the Third Division Advisory Council after the 1963 election. See previous chapter.
101. James Wong Kim Min is the longest serving Council Negri member to date. At that time, he was heavily involved in the timber business. He is one of the very few non-Foochow who has succeeded in the logging business.
102. Wee Hood Teck comes from an élite *towkay* class family. He is a Hokkien and a managing director of Ban Ching Bank. He used the bank to support SNAP and provide personal financial support for Ningkan. Ong Kee Hui was a bank manager in Ban Ching Bank in the 1950s before he was replaced by Wee, and Ong was also married to Wee's sister. Hence the bank was used to finance two parties, SUPP and SNAP.
103. These issues against Ningkan are outside the scope of this book. Suffice to say that, constitutionally and under the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) Agreement (1962) which contained Sarawak and Sabah's safeguards in the proposed Malaysian federation, Ningkan's action was within the rights contained in the IGC. For a full discussion see Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 94-107; Margaret Clark Roff, *The Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 135-8; Malaya, *Malaysia Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee 1962*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1963.
104. The full text of Stephen Yong's speech in Parliament was reproduced in the *Sarawak Tribune* on 31 May 1965.
105. Unlike the 1965 Land Bill Crisis, this time round, Jugah and Pesaka refused to support Ningkan thus sealing his fate. Ningkan and SNAP/Dayak politics lie beyond the scope of this study. For details on the split, see Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak 1970-1976: The Iban Perspective*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 36-45.
106. The 21 were: all 15 Pesaka members, all 5 Berjasa members, and 1 from PANAS. Those who did not sign were: all 6 SNAP members, 3 SCA, and 2 from PANAS.
107. Ningkan argued that many of those who signed did not know the implications of their act. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 June 1966.
108. *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 June 1966.
109. Cited in Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 103.

110. Even if Ningkan had accepted the demands, it would have been impossible for him to carry it out. Political detainees come under the federal Ministry of Home Affairs as did the army.

111. Tawi Sli was a former SNAP member who left for Pesaka in early 1966. In 1963 he and Ningkan were the two SNAP candidates vying for the chief minister's post. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 105.

112. See *Vanguard* and *Sarawak Tribune*, 6–8 September 1966.

113. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 110–11.

114. *Vanguard* and *Sarawak Tribune* 24, 25 September 1966.

115. See the Land Bill Crisis in 1965 when Pesaka refused to support Kuala Lumpur's attempts to topple Ningkan, and Ningkan survived.

116. A detailed account of the merger can be found in Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak 1946–1966: Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 107–22.

117. Taib obtained a law degree from Adelaide University in 1960.

118. Founder-member of the party. See previous chapter.

119. *Vanguard*, 23 April 1966.

120. *Vanguard*, 15 April 1966.

121. The open letter was published in the *Vanguard*, 16 April 1966.

122. *Vanguard*, 12 April 1965.

123. *Vanguard*, 17 April 1965.

124. *Ibid.*

125. *Vanguard*, 18 April 1965.

126. *Vanguard*, 24 June 1968.

127. *Ibid.*

128. It was reported that many indigenous voters openly supported the SUPP candidate. See *Vanguard*, 24 May 1968.

129. See Sarawak, *Council Negri Debates*, 1968.

130. *Vanguard*, 28 September 1968.

131. Leigh suggests that the delay was due to political pressures. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 124.

132. Malaysia, *Report of the Election Commission on the Delimitation of Parliamentary and State Constituencies in the State of Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1968.

133. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 124.

134. *Vanguard*, 24 March 1969.

135. *Vanguard*, 4 April 1969. On the same page the *Vanguard* also printed a story that Chan Siaw Hee had released a letter through Stephen Yong, his brother-in-law, stating that he was not standing in the coming elections. He was still in detention then.

136. SUPP manifesto 'What SUPP Stands For'.

137. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 130.

138. Transcript can be found in the *Vanguard*, 8 May 1969.

139. *Vanguard*, 27 March 1969. The problems associated with the Alliance parties is dealt with in detail in Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 127–31; and Roff, *The Politics of Belonging*, pp. 138–40.

140. See the text of the SCA radio talk in the *Vanguard*, 4 May 1969. Again, like the 1963 campaign, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) sent over a team to help the SCA in its campaign. It was headed by Bernard Lu, the political secretary to Tan Siew Sin, the president of MCA. See the *Vanguard*, 22 February 1969.

141. *Vanguard*, 14 May 1969.

142. *Vanguard*, 9 April 1969. It is almost certain that the press conference was timed to damage SUPP's campaign. By linking SUPP to the CCO, the authorities hoped to use the 'red scare' against potential SUPP voters.

143. *Vanguard*, 5 April 1969.

144. *Vanguard*, 2 April 1969.

145. *Vanguard* and *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 April 1969.

146. *Vanguard*, 15 April 1969. It must be noted here that SNAP also reacted strongly to the Johari statement.

147. See *Sarawak Tribune* and *Vanguard*, 14–16 May 1969. The 13 May incident is dealt with in almost every work on Malaysia's contemporary history and politics. For an informed account, see Goh Cheng Teik, *The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971; and J. Slimming, *Malaysia: Death of a Democracy*, London: John Murray, 1969. The official account is given in *The May 13 Tragedy: A Report of the National Operations Council*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1969.

148. Ironically this was the same tactic used by the moderates who challenged the left wing in 1962. See previous chapter. Then it did not work because Stephen Yong and Ong Kee Hui elected to stay with the party.

149. For example, during the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) presidential election of 1965, held in the midst of the power struggle over the MSC issue, Ong Kee Hui's nomination to be KMC president was seconded by Chan Siaw Hee, the leading spokesman for the left wing. The left wing and the moderates also came together on the detainees' issue, trying their best to help although they disagreed over the detainees' SUPP membership status.

150. Several veteran SUPP members interviewed said, with pride, that SUPP was the best 'political training school' in Sarawak, alluding to the fact that many of its founding members went on to form other parties.

151. As noted earlier, by late 1968, 26 Central Committee (CC) members had been arrested, detained, or deported.

152. For example, the SCA minister Teo Kui Seng said in a speech that communism in Sarawak was 'entirely a Chinese problem'. His stand on the Malay language was that Chinese must learn the language as citizens and Malay must be regarded as the national language, which was of course taken as a direct attack on Chinese education. See *Vanguard*, 3 March 1968.

6

The Sarawak United People's Party Joins the Government

The 1970 General Election

IN January 1970, Chan Siaw Hee was released from custody after 14 months in detention. The signed letter of confession that was a condition of his release was, unlike many others, worded in such a way that he did not have to give up active politics. In fact, almost immediately, he rejoined the Sarawak United People's Party's (SUPP) Central Working Committee (CWC) and was able to regain some of his old influence. Chan was no longer the leading spokesman for the party's left wing, but neither was he in the moderate's camp now. Essentially, he was no longer as far left as he had been before his arrest and detention.

As the whole nation was under the restrictions imposed by the National Operations Council (NOC), no political activity was allowed. In late 1969, Tun Abdul Razak had met with representatives of political parties in Sarawak who urged him to resume the election, citing the fact that Sarawak had not experienced racial riots and that there had been no serious communal disturbances in the state. The government subsequently agreed to resume the election in June 1970 (see election results in Tables 6.1 and 6.2), but under strict conditions. All votes that had been cast in May 1969 were destroyed and new ballot papers were

TABLE 6.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1970 State Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SUPP	12	72,196	28.8
SNAP	12	61,210	24.4
Bumiputera	12	36,992	14.8
Pesaka	8	34,351	13.7
SCA	3	26,676	10.7
Independents	1	19,108 ^a	7.6
Total	48	250,533	100.0

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aTotal votes received by all independents.

TABLE 6.2
Sarawak: Results of the 1970 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Votes Polled</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
SUPP	5	72,751	30.2
SNAP	9	64,583	26.8
Bumiputera	5	41,835	17.4
Pesaka	2	30,765	12.8
SCA	2	10,520	4.4
Independents	1	20,514 ^a	8.5
Total	24	240,968	100.0

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 due to rounding.

^aTotal votes received by all independents.

printed. No open campaigning was allowed and candidates were only allowed to distribute posters featuring their pictures and political symbols.

However, these conditions tended to favour the governing Alliance as ministers were able to campaign under cover of official ministerial business. Ministers and their entourage, which almost always included their campaign agents, could declare a new project open and give 'on the spot' minor rural-project grants which were, in effect, political bribes. For SUPP, campaigning had to be done surreptitiously, in the form of house visits and coffee-shop talks. How successful these were in maintaining SUPP's election momentum will never be known.

The Election Results

RESULTS IN THE SUPP STATE CONSTITUENCIES

In the eight Chinese seats (Kuching Timur, Sekama, Batu Kawah, Sibul Tengah, Sibul Luar, and Miri) SUPP lost only one—Miri, by a mere 5 per cent. The percentage-majority in Kuching Timur, Batu Kawah, Sibul Tengah, and Sekama was 30 per cent or more, indicating a clear majority. In Repok, Sibul Luar, and Binatang, SUPP candidates faced quite a strong challenge from Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) candidates, winning by only about 10 per cent of the majority votes. Nevertheless, SUPP clearly had the support of the Chinese community. In the Kuching Barat and Binatang seats, where the Chinese electorate made up at least 40 per cent of the eligible voters, SUPP lost Kuching Barat but won Binatang. In Igan, where the Chinese comprised 38.3 per cent of eligible voters, the SUPP candidate also lost. In Miri, SCA candidate Chia Chin Shin won with a small majority of only 365 votes. Although the Chinese commanded a majority of voters there (54.6 per cent), their vote was split when Sarawak National Party (SNAP) nominated a popular Chinese candidate, John Leong. Consequently, perhaps, SUPP was denied a chance to beat SCA's Chia.¹ SUPP also lost Chinese votes to SNAP in Kuching, Sekama, Sibul, Miri, Semariang, and Semera

constituencies. The SCA gained some Chinese votes in Binatang and Repok.

In the Malay/Melanau constituencies, SUPP performed disastrously. All nine of its candidates lost. The worst defeat was probably the Kuching Barat seat, where party chairman Ong Kee Hui lost to SCA's Cheng Yew Kew.² But Cheng's win was not due to SUPP's lack of command of Chinese votes. Rather, Cheng was supported by a solid bloc of Malay voters, who made up 52.6 per cent of eligible voters in the electorate. This is evident from Cheng's majority of 1,307 votes or about 12 per cent, suggesting that SUPP still commanded the majority of Chinese votes. Parti Bumiputera and United Malays National Organization (UMNO) Alliance members like Tun Abdul Razak campaigned heavily in Kuching Barat, reminding the voters that although Cheng was Chinese he represented the Sarawak Alliance (meaning Parti Bumiputera), and not solely Chinese interests.³ Parti Bumiputera's hold over the Malay/Melanau voters can be clearly seen from Table 6.3. In eight out of the nine Malay/Melanau constituencies, the SUPP candidates lost to Parti Bumiputera.⁴

In Dayak-majority Igan, SUPP lost to SCA's Ling Beng Siong, brother of SCA president Ling Beng Siew. Lim's victory was expected as he was a prominent businessman and state Cabinet minister, and had used these positions to ensure that his constituents were well looked after, making his re-election easier.⁵ Moreover, his opponent was not a typical SUPP candidate. Wong Tong Kwang was a timber tycoon, like Ling, who joined SUPP shortly before the election. Wong was in competition with Ling Beng Siew and so stood as a candidate against his brother, Ling Beng Siong. Wong was believed to have given a substantial donation to SUPP campaign funds to secure the party's nomination for Igan.⁶ In other Dayak-majority constituencies, SUPP candidates won mainly on Dayak votes. In nearly all the rural seats won by SUPP, the party's share of votes was significantly higher than the proportion of Chinese voters. However, although the party was able to get some Dayak support, its overall record in the Dayak seats was not good. Only 6 out of the 23 candidates it put up in the Dayak constituencies won, a success rate of just 26 per cent. In almost all cases, SUPP lost to the two Dayak-based parties, Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) and SNAP.

It can be seen that in general, the voting pattern was communal, with Chinese votes going to SUPP and SCA, Malay/Melanau votes going to Parti Bumiputera, and Dayak votes going mostly to Pesaka and SNAP. Overall, the percentage of SUPP votes received rose from 21.4 per cent in 1963 to 28.9 per cent in 1970. SUPP votes rose in all but 7 of the 40 seats it contested.⁷ SUPP polled the highest total vote of 72,196 (28.9 per cent). SNAP came in second with 61,210 (24.5 per cent), and Parti Bumiputera a distant third with 36,992 (14.7 per cent) (see Table 6.1).

TABLE 6.3
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in State Constituencies,
1970 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>	<i>Lost to</i>	<i>SUPP Candidate</i>
Chinese-majority			
Kuching Timur	6,571 (+70) ^a		C ^b
Sekama	2,199 (+29)		C
Batu Kawah	2,098 (+30)		C
Repok	612 (+12)		C
Binatang	918 (+13)		C
Sibu Tengah	2,372 (+32)		C
Sibu Luar	708 (+12)		C
Miri	-365 (-5)	SCA	C
Malay/Melanau-majority			
Kuching Barat	-1,307 (-12)	SCA	C
Semariang	-2,262 (-38)	Bumiputera ^c	I
Sebandi	-2,245 (-35)	Bumiputera	I
Muara Tuang	-702 (-17)	Bumiputera	C
Semera	-2,595 (-54)	Bumiputera	I
Kuala Rejang	-1,330 (-27)	Bumiputera	I
Matu Daro	-2,854 (-55)	Bumiputera	I
Balingian	-699 (-14)	Bumiputera	C
Oya	-1,042 (-20)	Bumiputera	C
Dayak-majority			
Lundu	221 (+4)		C
Bau	677 (+9)		C
Bengoh	264 (+6)		I
Simanggang	634 (+9)		I
Igan	-769 (-12)	SCA	C
Dudong	241 (+5)		C
Belaga	84 (+4)		I
Marudi	-2,176 (-42)	SNAP	I
Tarat	-1,069 (-20)	SNAP	I
Tebakang	-949 (-15)	SNAP	I
Gedong	-1,235 (-27)	Bumiputera	I
Lingga-Sebuyau	-974 (-16)	Pesaka	I
Engkilili-[Skrang]	-125 (-4)	Pesaka	C
Ulu Ai	-403 (-14)	SNAP	I
Krian	-2,109 (-46)	SNAP	I
Machan	-870 (-20)	Pesaka	C
Ngemah	-368 (-12)	Independent	I
Song	-410 (-10)	SNAP	I
Pelagus	-320 (-9)	Pesaka	I
Baleh	-1,147 (-22)	Pesaka	I
Tatau	-513 (-11)	Bumiputera	C
Kemena	-633 (-14)	Pesaka	C
Subis	-308 (-6)	SNAP	C

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bC = Chinese; I = Indigenous.

^cBumiputera = Parti Bumiputera.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

For the 24 parliamentary seats, SUPP fielded 19 candidates: 2 Malays, 7 Chinese, and 10 Dayaks (Table 6.4). However, the party only managed to win in five constituencies: Bau-Lundu, Bandar Kuching, Padawan, Bandar Sibü, and Rajang. Three of the winners were Chinese and the other two Dayaks. The Chinese candidates who won were Ong Kee Hui in Bandar Kuching (a compensation for losing the state seat of Kuching Barat), Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in Padawan, and Khoo Peng Loong in Bandar Sibü. All three won again primarily because SUPP was able to win the majority of Chinese votes, combined with some Dayak votes. The Dayak candidates who won, Siyum ak Matit in Bau-Lundu and Tribuoh ak Rantai in Rajang, secured their positions on the same combination of Chinese and indigenous votes, but with a significantly higher number of Dayak votes.

However, SUPP did lose in Chinese-majority areas like Sarikei. Its candidate there, Lo Pek Ung, was defeated by SCA candidate Chen Ko Meng. However, Chen's win was not surprising, given that he was the SUPP Council Negri member for that area before defecting to SCA over SUPP's anti-Malaysia stand; he was also generally regarded as popular in the area.⁸

TABLE 6.4
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary
Constituencies, 1970 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>	<i>Lost to</i>	<i>SUPP Candidate</i>
Bau-Lundu	806 (+6) ^a		I ^b
Bandar Kuching	12,126 (+77)		C
Santubong	-660 (-5)	Bumiputera ^c	C
Samarahan	-2,990 (-28)	Bumiputera	I
Padawan	2,447 (+22)		C
Serian	-2,008 (-15)	SNAP	C
Batang Lupar	-1,504 (-0.01)	SNAP	I
Lubok Antu	-387 (-7)	SNAP	I
Saratok	-2,836 (-30)	SNAP	I
Sarikei	-704 (-7)	SCA	C
Payang	-1,814 (-153)	Bumiputera	I
Bandar Sibü	4,095 (+31)		C
Rajang	1,621 (+16)		I
Mukah	-2,264 (-22)	Bumiputera	I
Kanowit	-488 (-7)	Independent	C
Ulu Rajang	-1,371 (-20)	Pesaka	I
Bintulu	-1,458 (-17)	SCA	I
Miri-Subis	-499 (-5)	SCA	I
Baram	-3,237 (-37)	SNAP	I

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bC = Chinese; I = Indigenous.

^cBumiputera = Parti Bumiputera.

SUPP's record in Dayak-majority parliamentary seats, as in the state seats, was poor. Out of the ten Dayak candidates, only one was successful, a mere 10 per cent success rate. The two SUPP Malay candidates never really had a chance given the strong communal voting pattern among the Malay/Melanau community. In general, the communal voting pattern in the state election was repeated in the parliamentary polls. SUPP Dayak candidates mostly lost to Dayak-based SNAP and Pesaka. In terms of actual votes cast for SUPP, the result correlates with its state votes. SUPP took 72,751 votes, which is close to the 72,196 votes it received for the Council Negri (see Table 6.1 and Table 6.2).

The 1970 polls reaffirmed SUPP's popularity among the voters in Sarawak. In 1963, it had received the highest percentage of votes. This was repeated in 1970. There were other similarities with the 1963 elections. First, SCA, SUPP's main Chinese political opponent, again depended on Malay/Melanau votes to win; two out of the three SCA state seats were won on Parti Bumiputera supporters' votes.⁹ Second, SUPP's main rival for Dayak votes was again SNAP. In fact, it could be strongly argued that had SNAP not existed, SUPP would have won a majority of the rural seats it was contesting. This would be especially true for parliamentary seats. Third, on both occasions SUPP entered the elections under difficult conditions. In 1963, it was portrayed as the anti-Malaysia party and the colonial authorities took action against them, for this stand and for alleged communist subversion. In the 1970 election, SUPP was again portrayed as a communist front organization. Malaysian authorities continued their crack-down, harassing and detaining SUPP members, and closing down branches. Yet in spite of this, SUPP was able to hold on to the Chinese votes as well as gain a substantial number of Dayak votes. But in 1970, as in 1963, SUPP was unable to lure votes from the Malay/Melanau community which tended to support Parti Bumiputera.¹⁰

Holding the Balance

From the outset it was clear that no party could hope to rule Sarawak alone. Among the main parties, Parti Bumiputera and SNAP held 12 seats each, SUPP 11,¹¹ and Pesaka 8. The magic figure was 25 seats, a simple majority in the 48-seat Council Negri. So even if one of the three main parties were to join Pesaka, it would still lack a majority. The ideal solution would be a coalition of two of the main parties, and the enticement of SCA or the independents.

Before the full election results were known, Tun Abdul Razak had already announced that the Sarawak Alliance of Parti Bumiputera, Pesaka, and SCA would form the government. However, problems surfaced as Pesaka's position in the Sarawak Alliance was ambiguous. After all, it was Pesaka who insisted on using its own symbols during the polls instead of the Sarawak Alliance's symbol. Moreover, Pesaka had insisted that its nominee, Thomas Kana (an Iban), be made the chief minister. This, of course, was unacceptable to Parti Bumiputera leader

Abdul Rahman Yakub. First, he felt that Pesaka was in no position to make demands as the party only held 8 seats compared to Parti Bumiputera's 12.¹² Secondly, Rahman Yakub had the clear support of the UMNO leadership¹³ which wanted a Malay/Melanau leader as the chief minister.

The central issue facing the SUPP leadership immediately after the election was whether to remain in the opposition or to form a coalition and, if the latter, with whom. The choices for a coalition partner were crystal clear: SNAP with 12 seats, or Parti Bumiputera with 15.¹⁴ Both questions, however, were difficult to answer. The moderate leadership, in particular Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, felt that the party should not be in the opposition any longer. This was especially true of Ong, a former state Cabinet minister who had tasted power and understood national politics. Moreover, at the meeting in late 1969 with Tun Abdul Razak (over the resumption of elections), Razak had urged Ong to join the establishment so that he could contribute.¹⁵ Stephen Yong also felt that the party was at a dead-end as long as it was without influence in the opposition.

The left wing in the party, still harbouring anti-Malaysia and anti-colonial feelings, was split on this issue. On the one hand, they were excited about the prospect of what being in the government would mean for their comrades under detention. On the other hand, joining a coalition government would mean acknowledging Sarawak as a state in Malaysia.

Before the left wing could establish its position, the leadership started to negotiate with SNAP and Pesaka on the formation of a state government without Malay/Melanau participation or, more precisely, without Rahman Yakub. Both the SUPP moderates and the left wing regarded Rahman Yakub as an ultra-Malay nationalist, a view which prevailed among the largely non-Muslim leaders in SNAP and Pesaka. However, all knew that a government without Malay/Melanau participation would be untenable due to the federal factor.

On the evening of 6 July 1970, SUPP held a meeting with Stephen Kalong Ningkan and James Wong Kim Min from SNAP, and Wan Alwi and Kana from Pesaka.¹⁶ Ong and Yong told SNAP and Pesaka that a government without Malay (meaning Parti Bumiputera) participation would be unstable as there would be interference from Kuala Lumpur, as in the time of Ningkan's government. SUPP leaders were especially mindful of the fact that should racial conflict such as the 13 May incident erupt again, the Chinese community would be the first to pay and suffer.

Thus, SUPP entered into negotiations with Chinese interests paramount. After discussions, a memo was drafted agreeing that a coalition be formed.¹⁷ Wan Alwi wanted SUPP to sign the memo immediately, presumably so that it could be taken to the governor, but Yong argued that he could not sign without the consent of the Central Working Committee. Thus, no agreement was reached. Yong, however, agreed to give SNAP and Pesaka an answer by 10 a.m. the following morning.

Unknown to SNAP and Pesaka, SUPP had met with Tun Razak on Sunday, 5 July, to discuss the possibility of forming a state government under Rahman Yakub. Yong, therefore, could not sign an agreement with Pesaka or SNAP as SUPP was running parallel negotiations with Rahman Yakub. The problem was, an SUPP-Parti Bumiputera government would mean a government without Dayak participation, thus creating a destabilizing factor. Another concern for SUPP was Tun Razak's unwillingness to drop SCA from the proposed coalition,¹⁸ even though Rahman Yakub was personally willing to do so. SUPP was also warned by the federal leadership that any SUPP-SNAP government was unacceptable and that emergency rule would not be lifted if such a government were to be formed.¹⁹

Initially, SUPP's position was that Rahman Yakub was unacceptable given his ultra-Malay image. At a subsequent meeting on the afternoon of 6 July, Yong suggested that Rahman Yakub nominate someone else from Parti Bumiputera to be the chief minister with himself as a minister.²⁰ Rahman Yakub refused, saying he could not be just an ordinary state minister as he was already a federal minister. He also emphasized the point that Tun Razak had nominated him to deal with the communist problem in the state.²¹

Besides the issue of chief minister, the discussions were dominated by SUPP's demands on Cabinet posts, the status of political detainees, access to land by the non-indigenous groups, Dayak participation in the state government, and the exclusion of the SCA. Rahman Yakub agreed to equal sharing of Cabinet posts, promised to get the Dayak into the government,²² and to take full responsibility with Tun Razak²³ for SCA's non-inclusion.²⁴ Regarding other SUPP demands, Rahman Yakub agreed that both parties should look into the issues. The sensitive issue of the chief ministership was solved when Rahman Yakub told Yong that SUPP had nothing to lose as he (Rahman Yakub) was willing to accept a six-month trial period. If, at the end of that period, SUPP was still unhappy with his leadership, he would quit and return to Kuala Lumpur. No agreement was reached and Yong again promised to give an answer the following morning.

On Monday night and early Tuesday morning after the meetings with SNAP, Pesaka, and Parti Bumiputera, SUPP leaders had a meeting with some CWC members, mostly from the First and Second Divisions. This meeting reviewed the options on the two proposed coalition governments and decided that a coalition with SNAP and Pesaka would be unstable because there was a lack of real Malay representation.²⁵ The threat that emergency rule would not be lifted in Sarawak and the possible repercussions of this action on the Chinese community were enough to swing the votes in favour of Parti Bumiputera, despite Rahman Yakub's ultra-Malay image. Moreover, Ong and Yong were also predisposed to the Parti Bumiputera option as Tun Razak had invited them to join the government in August 1969. The leaders were also leaning towards Parti Bumiputera after a Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) leader, Khaw Kai Boh, convinced them that Parti

Bumiputera was the best option.²⁶ Rahman Yakub's promise of a six-month trial period also helped sway the minds of the cynics.

On the morning of Tuesday, 7 July, SNAP and Pesaka leaders were waiting at Temenggong Jugah's house for SUPP's favourable reply. At around 9 a.m. they received a call from Yong saying that SUPP had decided to reject the proposed SNAP-SUPP-Pesaka coalition. Unknown to SNAP and Pesaka, Ong, Yong, and Sim Kheng Hong had already signed the agreement to form the state government with Parti Bumiputera. Although many details were verbally agreed upon, the agreement that was drawn up (by Rahman Yakub and Yong, who were both lawyers) did not include all these details. Instead, the full text of the agreement consisted of only four items.

Points of Understanding

The full text of the agreement²⁷ is as follows. The signatories representing the respective parties have agreed to abide by the following points of understanding for the establishment of a clean and efficient government of Sarawak:

1. A nominee of Parti Bumiputera shall be the chief minister, a nominee of the Sarawak United People's Party shall be the deputy chief minister and one elected member of the Iban race shall be the other deputy chief minister;

2. Major issues and matters involving government policy and measures affecting the interest of the state and parties hereto shall be agreed to mutually before decision can be made;

3. Appointment of other State ministers and allotment of portfolios shall have the unanimous decision of the signatories hereto;

4. The pledges made by the parties hereto during the election as far as possible shall be implemented by the State government.

The significance of this agreement was its extreme flexibility; it did not record all the details agreed upon, an indication that both sides were still mutually unsure about each other. The agreement also permitted SUPP, via clause 3, to exclude SCA from the government. Clause 4 was worded in such a way as to enable SUPP to claim that it was working towards the fulfilment of the promises made in its 1969 election manifesto.

SUPP's decision to go with Parti Bumiputera was due to two crucial factors. First, the role played by NOC head Tun Abdul Razak, who had threatened that emergency rule would continue if a government without Kuala Lumpur's approval were to be formed, that is, a government without Parti Bumiputera. The second was the role played by Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze. On 20 August 1969, when Tun Razak met representatives from Sarawak's political parties in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the suspension of Parliament, he privately impressed upon Ong that SUPP could play an important role in government instead of just being in the opposition. Ong had previously served in the state Cabinet and thus understood that those outside the government could not hope

to influence policy.²⁸ Stephen Yong was swayed by Tun Razak's argument as at that time he was heavily involved with the detainees issue²⁹ and knew full well that future decisions would be made at federal level.³⁰

In summary, it would appear that SUPP joined a coalition government because it wanted to be in power after being in opposition for 11 years. Moreover, the two key leaders were personally swayed by Tun Razak. Timing was crucial; the negotiations being completed in three days denied the left wing any real chance of mounting an opposition to the leadership's decision to enter into a coalition government. The short period also allowed SUPP to negotiate, in secret, with both sides.

After the agreement had been signed, Rahman Yakub successfully persuaded two Pesaka Council Negri members to switch sides and support his coalition, thus giving him the 'Dayak face' in the government. The new state government line-up in July 1970 was:

Abdul Rahman Yakub (Parti Bumiputera)	Chief Minister
Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (SUPP)	Deputy
Simon Demak Manja (Pesaka)	
Abang Ikhwan Zainie (Parti Bumiputera)	Ministers
Penghulu Abok ak Jalin (Pesaka)	
Sim Kheng Hong (SUPP)	

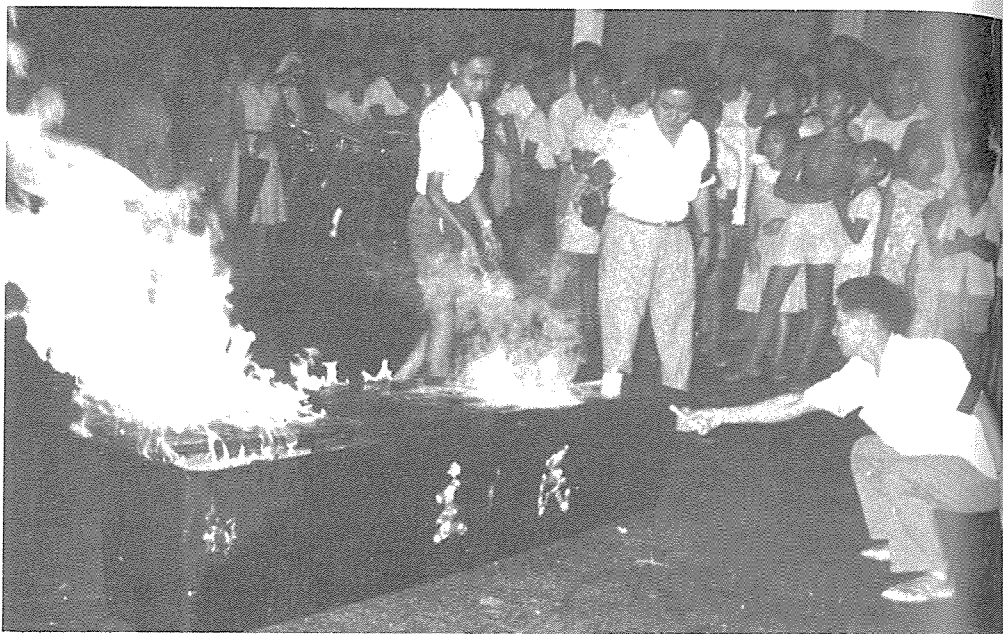
As the full CWC did not formally meet to endorse SUPP's participation in the coalition government, the five SUPP parliamentarians found themselves in an awkward position. SUPP had joined a coalition government with Parti Bumiputera, not the national UMNO-led Alliance which controlled the Dewan Rakyat. The question arose as to whether SUPP was to continue to behave as an opposition party at the federal level, even when it was part of the government at state level. The issue came to a head on 11 February 1971 when Ong was invited by Tun Razak to join his Cabinet.³¹ Razak needed Ong in the Cabinet as the five SUPP parliamentary votes were needed by the national Alliance to get its two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat.³² Ong accepted Tun Razak's offer without consulting the CWC, and initially the party did not raise any objections. In accepting, Ong promised 'so far as the matters affecting national interest are concerned and given prior consultation, our members would not oppose the Alliance'.³³

However, at an informal meeting of senior SUPP members in Kuching on 17 February 1971, Chan Siaw Hee said no decision had been made, and that SUPP was still an opposition party at the federal level. The party had not endorsed SUPP's participation in the national Alliance. Despite this statement, Chan was careful not to comment on Ong's decision to join the Cabinet as Minister of Technology, Research, and Local Government.

When Parliament reconvened in early 1971, the federal government (with the bare two-thirds majority, thanks to SUPP) quickly made amendments to the Constitution prohibiting any questioning or criticism



1 The founder-members of the SUPP. Chan Siaw Hee and Stephen K. T. Yong can be seen on the front row (*second and third from right respectively*) while Ong Kee Hui is the tenth person (*from right*) at the back. (Courtesy SUPP)



2 An SUPP-organized rally in the mid-1960s to protest the 'death of democracy' when the British government began to use the Restricted Residence Ordinance and the Public Order Ordinance to crack down on the SUPP. (Courtesy SUPP)



3 A. M. Azahari of Parti Rakyat Brunei giving a speech at SUPP's first anniversary celebration in 1960. (Courtesy SUPP)



4 The anti-Malaysian rally organized by the SUPP in Sibuluan during the visit of the UN Commission of Inquiry in 1963. (Courtesy SUPP)



5 Stephen K. T. Yong with family members of political detainees at the office of the Federal Secretary during a hunger strike staged by inmates. (Courtesy SUPP)



6 Sarawak's first chief minister, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, returning from a trip to Kuala Lumpur, 1964. (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)



7 Bong Kee Chock, a former key communist organizer in SUPP who was later rehabilitated. This photo was taken in the 1960s when he was assistant secretary of SUPP Kuching branch. (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)



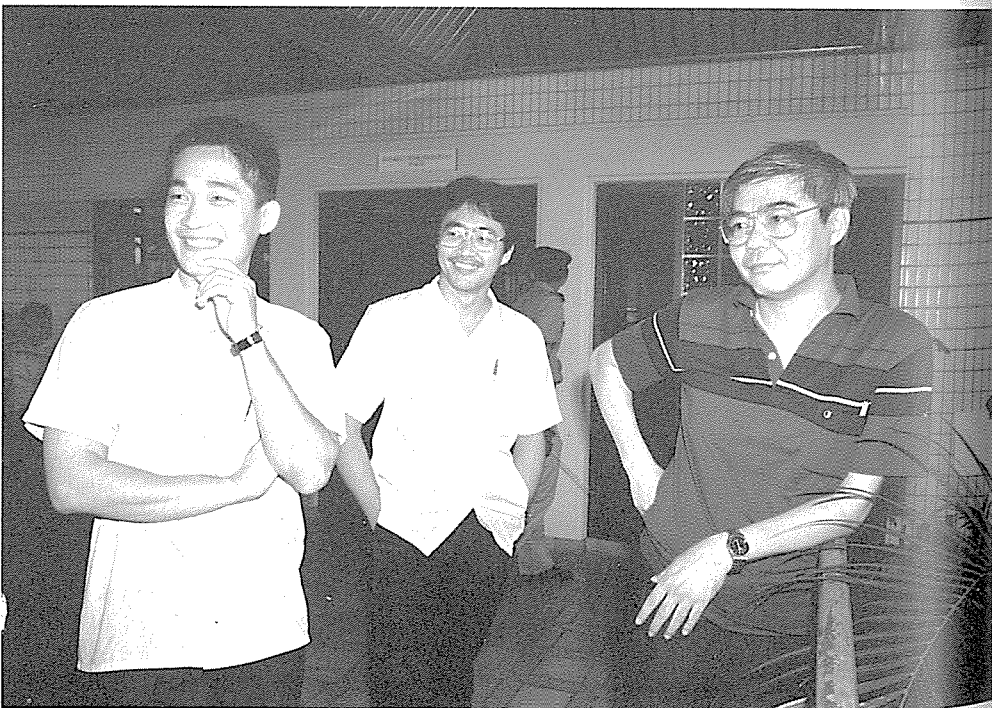
8 SUPP members on the campaign trail with Ong Kee Hui and Stephen K. T. Yong (*second and third from right respectively*) during the 1974 election. (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)



9 Sim Kheng Hong (*left*) and Song Swee Guan (*right*) during the 1979 state election. (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)



10 An election billboard put up by PERMAS in the 1987 election. This one claims that Taib relied on a *bomoh* (shaman) to secure his rule. (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)



11 Three Sarawak DAP leaders: grass-roots organizer See Chee How (*left*), DAP Youth leader Dominic Ng Kim Ho (*centre*), and Sim Kwang Yang (*right*). (Courtesy John Chan)

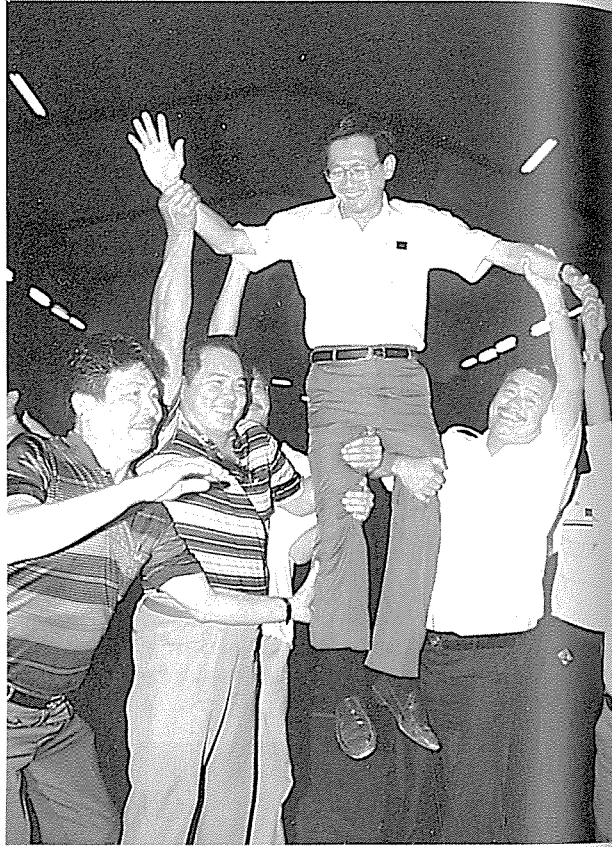


12 Two key players in SUPP SibU politics: Robert Lau Hoi Chew (*left*) and Tiong Hiew King (*right*). Photo taken at an SUPP function in 1994. (Courtesy SUPP)



13 Key key players in SUPP Miri politics: Peter Chin Fah Kui (*left*) with George Chan Hong Nam (*second from left*) and Chia Chin Shin (*right*). (Courtesy Sarawak Information Service)

- 14 Chan Seng Khai, the SUPP candidate for the Batu Lintang state constituency, being carried by supporters when it was announced officially that he had beaten DAP's Sim Kwang Yang in the 1991 state elections. (Courtesy John Chan)



- 15 Leaders of the Sarawak Barisan Nasional: (from left) Leo Moggie, president of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), Alfred Jabu, deputy president of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), Taib Mahmud, president of PBB and chief minister of Sarawak, Wong Soon Kai, president of Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), and James Wong Kim Min, president of Sarawak National Party (SNAP). Photo taken at the launch of the BN manifesto during the 1995 parliamentary election. (Courtesy T. H. Lu)

of all topics considered as sensitive, such as the special position of the Malays, the status of Malay as the national language, and citizenship rights granted to immigrants. Even Members of Parliament (MPs) could not refer to these matters in Parliament.³⁴

The Seventh Delegates Conference

As mentioned earlier, the left wing was never fully consulted on SUPP's decision to join a coalition government. They were even more incensed at Ong Kee Hui's decision to take up the federal ministership, again without fully consulting them. The left wing initially intended to confront the leadership on these two issues at the 7th Delegates Conference which was due to be held in December 1970. Sensing trouble, Abdul Rahman Yakub, as the State Operations Council (SOC) director, refused to issue a permit for the conference, claiming communists and extremist elements in the party would use the occasion to attack the government.³⁵ This cancellation almost certainly helped the moderates to avoid a showdown with the left wing, and accordingly the moderates agreed with the SOC's assessment.³⁶

The conference was finally held almost a year later, in September 1971. By then, the two problem issues, SUPP's participation in the coalition and Ong's federal ministership, were somewhat subdued. Nevertheless, the government took no chances, and five delegates from SUPP's First Division were detained for a few days just before the conference. To prevent any open rifts from becoming public knowledge, the press and party members who were not delegates were, for the first time, barred from the proceedings.³⁷ Moreover, only two-thirds of the 225 delegates attended.³⁸ The moderates were clearly intent on making sure that they dominated the conference.

To fend off any argument from the left wing about SUPP's 'sell out' to the Sarawak Alliance, the leadership argued that SUPP did not join Alliance but entered a coalition with Parti Bumiputera as co-equals.³⁹ Despite the attempt by the moderates to dominate the two-day conference, the left wing maintained its strength and the 19 resolutions passed suggested a compromise between the two factions. This was reflected in the first resolution:

1. The Conference fully supports the decision of forming the Sarawak Coalition government and re-affirms the Party's desire to fulfil its aims and promises stated in the Party's election manifesto on the following principles:
 - (h) In the event of the Party failing to achieve the foregoing even with participation in the coalition government, the Party shall withdraw from it.⁴⁰

In other words, the moderates received the formal endorsement on the coalition government while the left wing got the qualification on the endorsement it wanted. Compromises can also be seen in the other resolutions. For example, resolution no. 3 reflected the moderates' stand on using 'constitutional means' to fight for SUPP's political objectives: "The

Conference condemns political opportunists ... and calls on members not to consort with anti-national elements.'

And the left wing prevailed in the next resolution on SUPP's commitment to socialism: 'The Conference calls on the members to be loyal ... and to uphold the Party's stand on anti-imperialistic and anti-colonial principles and on the building up of a domestic and socialist society.'

Other resolutions dealt with common areas of concern: political detainees, access to land, and the Chinese new villages. The top three positions of chairman, Secretary-General, and publicity chief were all retained by Ong, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, and Chan Siaw Hee. Chan's return to his former position marked his formal reinstatement since his detention and subsequent release in 1970.

The conference was thus a significant victory for the moderates. They were helped by the absence of the party's more radical elements who were either in detention or in the jungle. However, the fact that the left wing was still able to force a compromise on the resolutions indicates that it still had considerable support among the grass roots and that the moderates could not totally dismiss them.

By-elections: Bau-Lundu and Rajang

The first electoral test for SUPP as a coalition partner came when one of its parliamentarians, Siyium ak Matit, a Bidayuh, was forced to resign from the Bau-Lundu seat. SUPP had asked Siyium to sign an undated letter of resignation before he could be nominated for the 1970 elections. That same letter was later used to vacate the Bau-Lundu seat. Siyium accused the SUPP of neglecting its Bidayuh supporters as well as of ignoring him.⁴¹

SUPP nominated another Bidayuh, Joseph Valentine Cotter; this provided continuity and acknowledged the Bidayuh majority in the Bau-Lundu seat.⁴² The opposition SNAP fielded Lee Yan Choi, the same SNAP candidate as in 1970. An independent, Jacob Ridu, also entered the fray, but was persuaded to withdraw and support the SUPP candidate.⁴³ SUPP was allowed to use its 'three rings' symbol instead of the Sarawak Alliance's 'sailboat' symbol.⁴⁴ The symbol was important for SUPP supporters, especially those who did not support the idea of SUPP in coalition with Parti Bumiputera. It also underlined the moderate leadership's argument that SUPP did not join the Sarawak Alliance but was only in coalition with Parti Bumiputera.

The election result was: SUPP 4,651, SNAP 3,712, and Ridu 424, so SUPP won by a majority of only 939 votes. Turnout was only 61 per cent.⁴⁵ The 1971 by-election showed quite clearly that SUPP was already losing ground. SNAP capitalized on the fact that it was the only opposition party, hence it collected all the anti-establishment votes, along with all the protest votes of SUPP supporters who opposed SUPP's coalition move.

The same trend showed at the Rajang parliamentary seat by-election held in January 1974.⁴⁶ SUPP's candidate, Jawan Empaling, an Iban,

defeated the SNAP candidate only by a 684 vote majority, despite SNAP's lack-lustre presence in this Dayak-majority constituency. SUPP polled 3,951 votes to SNAP's 3,267 votes. Turnout was a low 53.9 per cent.⁴⁷

The 1974 General Election

Several important manoeuvres occurred before the 1974 elections. At the national level, the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition was formed by Tun Abdul Razak. The BN replaced the old national Alliance between UMNO, MCA, and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). Membership was expanded to include Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan), Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS), People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA); in Sarawak, SUPP and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) both joined. The formation of the BN reinforced UMNO's pre-eminence and Malay hegemony in federal Malaysian politics.⁴⁸ Tun Razak also announced that he wanted a national government drawn from all communities, and that it was up to the non-Malays to vote for non-Malay BN candidates.⁴⁹

At the state level, the most important development after 1970 was Abdul Rahman Yakub's total domination in both the politics and administration of the state.⁵⁰ Even though it was supposed to be a coalition government, Rahman Yakub in effect governed without consulting SUPP despite the fact that one of the terms of the coalition was that all important decisions were to be approved by SUPP.⁵¹ Rahman Yakub also consolidated his own position by out-manoeuvring Pesaka to the extent that by mid-1971, 10 Pesaka members were supporting his government. He also engineered the defection of two SNAP members. All this meant that his government had a clear majority in the Council Negri with 38 (Parti Bumiputera 13, SUPP 12, Pesaka 10, SCA 3),⁵² out of 48 seats. This meant that even without SUPP, Rahman Yakub had the support of 26 Council Negri members, a simple majority in the 48-seat Council Negri. SUPP's ability to threaten the downfall of Rahman Yakub's government was thus non-existent, and Rahman Yakub took advantage of this fact to marginalize SUPP. However, Rahman Yakub's real political *coup* was executed on 5 January 1973 when he successfully merged Parti Bumiputera with Pesaka, forming Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).⁵³ SUPP was automatically relegated to a weaker position, as PBB overshadowed it with 23 seats versus 12.⁵⁴ In addition, the three SCA seats were in the hands of the chief minister.

In state administration, Rahman Yakub was able to dominate the bureaucracy by making sure that appointees were personally loyal to him. He did this by appointing one of his trusted lieutenants, Abang Yusof Puteh, as the establishment officer of the civil service. Rahman Yakub also set up a Political Studies Centre for civil servants, further blurring the line between the civil service and political leadership. The government created many quasi-government institutions and statutory bodies, like the Sarawak Economic Development Corporation, Sarawak

Land Development Board, and the Sarawak Foundation. These allowed Rahman Yakub to extend his powers to both economic and political patronage. Rahman Yakub was lucky, too, in that he assumed power during the launch of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971, which gave him the legislative authority to grant economic resources to the indigenous, based not on merit but on ethnicity. There is very little doubt that he used the NEP to consolidate his hold on the Malay and *bumiputera* votes by granting economic favours, especially timber concessions, to those who supported him, and to cement ties with influential people.

The control of the state's resources also allowed Rahman Yakub to create a pool of rich *bumiputera* who could be relied upon to contribute campaign funds during elections, reducing his need to depend on the Chinese *towkay* (Chinese capitalists). Rahman Yakub also extended his control over the press, especially the English and the Malay press. He assumed control of the *Vanguard*, an English daily owned by Leong Ho Yuen, after a successful civil defamation suit.⁵⁵

Just before the election was held in late August 1974, there were four events of political importance to the Chinese community. These were: Operation Judas, Operation Sri Aman, the normalization of China–Malaysia ties, and the dissolution of the SCA.

Operation Judas

In September 1973, 29 persons including timber tycoons, prominent businessmen and professionals were rounded up in 'Operation Judas'. Among them were Ling Beng Siew, the former president of SCA; Ding Jack Sung, timber *towkay*; Wong Tong Kwang, timber *towkay* and the SUPP candidate for Igan in 1970; Wee Hoe Soon, the SUPP vice-chairman of the Sibü Urban District Council (SUDC); and Ting Tung Ming, a former SCA member and a former political secretary to Stephen Kalong Ningkan.⁵⁶ Rahman Yakub alleged that all 29 had provided financial and material support to the Sarawak Communist Organization (SCO) operating in the Sibü and Rejang area, but that they had done so under threat.⁵⁷ He arrested them and forced them to issue a public confession, expressing remorse and promising not to help the SCO any more.⁵⁸ Although Rahman Yakub's actions were primarily aimed at cutting off support for the SCO, the political ramifications were probably more important. Rahman Yakub's arrests put the Chinese *towkay* élite, especially the timber *towkay* in Sibü and elsewhere, on notice that if they did not support his government, they could be picked up and detained at any time. Some of them were SUPP supporters, thus the message was that Rahman Yakub, not SUPP, was in full control.

Operation Sri Aman

Operation Sri Aman was probably Abdul Rahman Yakub's most important *coup* in gaining legitimacy in the eyes of the Sarawak Chinese. Operation Sri Aman was an agreement between the state government

and an armed unit of the SCO called Pasokan Rakyat Kalimantan Utara (PARAKU). The unit was led by Bong Kee Chok, a former assistant secretary of SUPP Kuching branch. Bong left Sarawak in 1962⁵⁹ but returned to Borneo later that year with Weng Ming Chyuan. He and Weng settled just across the border in Kalimantan with the intention of building up an armed struggle that would take over Sarawak. At that time, Sukarno and the powerful Parti Komunis Indonesia (PKI) protected Bong. However, when the PKI *coup* failed in 1965, Bong was forced to abandon his base and flee into Sarawak territory.⁶⁰ PARAKU was formed at a meeting of top communist leaders at Weng's home in Pontianak, held from 17 to 19 September 1965. It was created as one of two military units⁶¹ of the SCO, and Bong became its director and political commissar.⁶² PARAKU began to operate in areas around the First Division from 1968 onwards.

By July 1973, the government had successfully killed or destroyed many of PARAKU's members and sub-units.⁶³ On 13 October 1973, Bong wrote a letter, addressed to both Rahman Yakub and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, asking for a meeting. The meeting took place, in secret, on 18 October in Simanggang.⁶⁴ Three days later, on 21 October, a memorandum of understanding (peace agreement) was signed. By the time the Sri Aman agreement was announced, on 4 March 1974, about 482 guerrillas had come out of the jungle, with about 200 still remaining.⁶⁵

Although Bong's initial letter was addressed to both Rahman Yakub and Stephen Yong, Yong did not play an active part in the peace negotiations as he was in New York attending a United Nations (UN) meeting. When the agreement was signed, it contained only the signatures of Rahman Yakub and Bong, despite the issue's importance to SUPP and the Chinese community. This shows how little power SUPP exercised in the coalition government. The Sri Aman peace agreement meant that the communist threat was dramatically reduced. This brought prestige, especially in the eyes of the Chinese, to Rahman Yakub and his government. Rahman Yakub could now release more political detainees. It must be said, however, that small batches were released throughout 1972–3. SUPP's role in these releases is not clear.⁶⁶

Despite the lessening of the security threat, the agreement was a major set-back for SUPP. Most of the members of the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) were Sarawak Chinese, so SUPP could no longer use the 'red' card to gain concessions from Rahman Yakub.⁶⁷ Moreover, SUPP could no longer claim that Rahman Yakub ignored the Chinese community's political demands, or warn that disaffected Chinese would go into the jungle to take up arms against his government.

Normalization of Ties with China

On 31 May 1974, the People's Republic of China and Malaysia agreed to establish diplomatic relations. SUPP issued a statement that said: 'This is a great event which brings great joy to the people of our

country.⁶⁸ SUPP capitalized on this normalization of ties because it offered the Sarawak Chinese community real hope that some of them could legally travel to China to visit their relatives. Previously, this was impossible as there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries. In a way, it also validated SUPP's call for the Sarawak Chinese to consider themselves as Sarawakians, and not regard China as their home. The normalization of ties meant that China accepted Malaysia's sovereignty, and could not actively support the CCO's activities in Malaysia.

The Dissolution of the SCA

The SCA was dissolved in late June 1974, just two months before the elections. The exact date is not known, as there was some dispute among members who initially refused to dissolve the party. A newspaper report said that at an SCA Central Delegates Meeting in Kuching on 3 May 1974, Ling Beng Siong and Chia Chin Shin, SCA Council Negri members of Igan and Miri respectively, tendered their resignations which were accepted. However, a proposal to dissolve the party was not adopted at the same meeting.⁶⁹ The other SCA Council Negri member, Cheng Yew Kiew, had earlier resigned to take up the position of Speaker of the Council Negri; his seat was later won by the PBB in a by-election.

Ling and Chia later joined SUPP and stood as SUPP candidates in the 1974 elections. The dissolution of the SCA was engineered by Abdul Rahman Yakub as he knew it was a spent political force. He also believed that it was better for the Sarawak Chinese to be united under SUPP, the Malay/Melanau group under PBB, and the Ibans under SNAP. This aligning of ethnic groupings with particular political parties was consistent with the West Malaysian political structure where the main parties like UMNO, MCA, and MIC represented the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities under the umbrella of the BN.

Although SUPP was supposed to admit SCA members,⁷⁰ this did not happen and in fact SUPP only took in former SCA members who were of use to the party. To be fair, there were also former SCA members who refused to join SUPP on the grounds that both parties had been extremely hostile to each other for the past decade.

Campaign Issues and Tactics

The 1974 election campaign officially started in July when it was announced that the election was to be held during the three-week period from 23 August to 15 September 1974. As in 1970, the parliamentary and state elections were to be held concurrently. The main opposition party to the Sarawak BN was SNAP. As in previous elections, a host of independents and minor parties also entered the fray but they were never taken seriously by the electorate.

In 21 out of 24 parliamentary seats and 40 out of 48 state seats, it was a straight fight between SNAP and the Sarawak BN. For the first time,

SUPP did not publish its own manifesto. All BN parties in Sarawak came under one manifesto, and all stood under the BN *dacing* (scale) symbol. Seat allocation between SUPP and PBB began early, in mid-1974. It was agreed that SUPP be allocated 16 state constituency and 9 parliamentary seats. PBB got 32 and 15 respectively. This meant that, compared to 1970, SUPP 'lost' 23 state seats and 10 parliamentary seats. However, it must be noted that in almost all the constituencies that SUPP 'lost' to PBB, its candidates had not won the same seats in 1970 and SUPP's chances there were slim.

The 16 state constituencies allocated to SUPP were: Kuching Timur, Sekama, Batu Kawah, Repok, Binatang, Sibul Tengah, Sibul Luar, Miri, Bengoh, Simanggang, Dudong, Belaga, and Marudi. The first eight were Chinese-majority and the rest Dayak-majority. The nine parliamentary seats were: Bandar Kuching, Miri-Subis, Sarikei, Bandar Sibul, Bau-Lundu, Rajang, Serian, Padawan, and Baram. The first four were Chinese-majority and the others Dayak-majority. Among the prominent new faces in the SUPP line-up for the 1974 election were: Wong Soon Kai, a medical doctor popular among constituents in Sibul Luar⁷¹ and Chong Siew Chiang, a lawyer in Repok. Chia Chin Shin and Ling Beng Siong, who won their seats under SCA in 1970, were renominated under SUPP this time around.

The BN election manifesto promised, among others, to end unemployment by 1980, to open up more land, and to provide more educational opportunities. It also promised to 'make Sarawak a leading model state in Malaysia'.⁷² SUPP, augmenting the BN manifesto in the Chinese press, claimed credit for:

1. Restoring peace through the Sri Aman Accord;
2. Releasing more political detainees;
3. Helping to establish diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China,⁷³ and
4. Reducing arrests or political detentions during the SUPP/Parti Bumiputera coalition rule compared with the previous SNAP administration.

The election itself was dominated by four issues. First, allegations that ministers were leading privileged life-styles. Second, the claim that SUPP had sold out in 1970, and was subservient to Abdul Rahman Yakub. Third, allegations that Pesaka had sold out Iban interests by merging with Parti Bumiputera. Fourth, James Wong Kim Min, the deputy president of SNAP, was accused of being disloyal and of conspiring with Brunei to take over Limbang.⁷⁴ The BN also entered the campaign with a near total domination of the press and radio,⁷⁵ and support from government agencies such as the Sarawak Information Service. Just before the election SUPP was accused of publicly reviling the *International Times*, a Chinese-language daily that was proscribed in October 1973, in order to promote its standing.⁷⁶

The Election Results

Voting was staggered over the election's three-week period. The Election Commission wanted the rural seats to be polled first, and to announce their results as soon as counting was finished. This meant that rural results would be made public before voting finished in the urban areas. The state government reversed the recommendation as Abdul Rahman Yakub had correctly calculated that SNAP's main support would be in the rural areas, and news of SNAP's victories in the rural areas might create a bandwagon effect against the coalition in the urban areas. Instead, urban results were announced first. In the first two weeks, results were announced for the 42 state and parliamentary seats. In only three of these were the incumbents SNAP members. In contrast, the 1970 election results showed SNAP candidates elected to 18 of the last 30 rural seats to be counted.⁷⁷

The Election Commission was reported to have said that the 'election campaign has been all but clean'.⁷⁸ The chairman of the commission alleged that campaigning had not stopped on the eve of polling, 23 August, but had carried on via religious gatherings, the press, and radio.⁷⁹

The Sarawak BN won 30 state seats (SUPP 12, PBB 18) and SNAP took the other 18 (Table 6.5). Within the PBB, the Pesaka wing won only 3 seats, while Bumiputera won 15. In the parliamentary contest, the national BN took 135 of the 154 Dewan Rakyat seats, thus securing the all-important two-thirds majority. In Sarawak, the BN took 15 (SUPP 6, PBB 9) and SNAP the other 9 seats (Table 6.6). Thus SNAP immediately became the strongest opposition party not only at state level but also at the federal level.⁸⁰

Among the surprises in the election was the strong showing by SNAP against PBB's Pesaka wing. Observers generally agreed that the majority of the Dayaks abandoned Pesaka.⁸¹ Pesaka's Leonard Linggi Jugah, son of the party's co-founder, lost to Jonathan Sabai Ajing of SNAP in Jugah's hometown of Kapit. Another Pesaka candidate and co-founder, Thomas Kana, lost to SNAP's Leo Moggie, who also won a parliamentary seat. Ironically, SNAP's founder, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, lost both his state and parliamentary seats. SNAP's deputy president, James Wong Kim Min, lost his Miri-Subis parliamentary seat to SUPP, but won re-election of the Limbang state seat. Arguably, the biggest surprise was SNAP's victory in the Kuching Timur state constituency over SUPP!

SUPP AND THE CHINESE CONSTITUENCIES

Of the 16 state seats SUPP contested, it won 12, the same number as in 1970. Of the eight Chinese constituencies, the party won all but one—Kuching Timur. This political upset was particularly serious as the defeated incumbent was Stephen Yong Kuet Tze⁸² who lost to a political unknown.

While the Chinese community voted overwhelmingly for SUPP in 1963 and 1970, the party probably lost more than half of its Chinese

TABLE 6.5
Sarawak: Results of the 1974 State Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
BN		30 (38)
PBB		
Pesaka wing	3 (10) ^a	
Bumiputera wing	15 (13)	
SUPP	12 (12)	
SCA	– (3)	
SNAP	18 (10)	18 (10)
Total		48 (48)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent 1970 election results.

TABLE 6.6
Sarawak: Results of the 1974 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
BN		15 (14)
PBB	8 (7) ^a	
SUPP	7 (5)	
SCA	– (2)	
SNAP	9 (9)	9 (9)
Total		24 (23)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent 1970 election results.

voters in 1974. This is very clear from an analysis of the voting pattern in the eight Chinese-majority seats. In only three constituencies (Binatang, Sibuluar, Miri) did the majority percentage go up, while in four others (Kuching Timur, Sekama, Batu Kawah, Sibutengah) it went down drastically. The difference in Repok was not significant given that it was only a 5 per cent gain. It is interesting to note that Wong Soon Kai, a relative newcomer, was able to increase the majority of Sibuluar significantly from 12 per cent in 1970 to 26 per cent in 1974. Taking into account the fact that the substantial SCA vote in seats like Sibuluar, Sibutengah, and Miri was supposed to have gone to SUPP, it is clear that SUPP lost a major portion of the Chinese vote to SNAP (Table 6.7). In the first two constituencies, the SUPP vote did not increase correspondingly. The only constituency where SUPP successfully picked up SCA votes was in Miri, where the SUPP candidate, Chia Chin Shin, had won on a SCA ticket in 1970. This could also account for Chia's increase in his majority percentage.

As mentioned earlier, Stephen Yong was defeated in the Chinese-majority seat of Kuching Timur (92.4 per cent Chinese, 5.7 per cent Malays, 1.2 per cent Dayaks), by an unknown SNAP candidate,

TABLE 6.7
Comparison of SCA and SUPP Votes, 1970 and 1974 State Elections

Constituency	1970		1974	
	SCA	SUPP	SUPP	Difference
Kuching Timur	989	7,560	4,228	-4,321
Sekama	2,236	4,435	4,728	-1,943
Batu Kawah	1,534	3,748	4,283	-999
Repok	1,787	2,399	2,667	-1,519
Binatang	2,130	3,048	4,494	-684
Sibu Tengah	2,098	4,470	4,038	-2,530
Sibu Luar	2,261	2,969	3,220	-2,010
Miri	2,876	2,511	5,495	-108
Igan	3,264	2,495	3,583	-2,176

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Note: The assumption here is that since SCA was dissolved in 1974 and SUPP was supposed to be the party to 'take over' its members and hence voters, SUPP votes in 1974 should be in the region of SUPP plus SCA votes in 1970. The tabulation here does not take account of the natural growth in the number of registered voters nor voter turnout in each constituency. If the difference is negative, it means SUPP did not pick up any 'SCA vote' and vice versa.

Lo Foot Kee.⁸³ Lo polled 5,663 votes against Yong's 4,228, winning by a majority of 1,435. In 1970, Yong won the seat on the SUPP ticket with 7,560 votes while his nearest rival, Lo Yik Fong of the Sarawak Alliance, polled only 989 votes, giving Yong a majority of 6,571 (Table 6.8). Yong's drop in majority percentage, from a high of more than 70 per cent in 1970 to a low of minus 14 per cent in 1974, amounted to a major rejection of Yong personally and SUPP generally.

One reason for Yong's defeat (and for SUPP's poor results overall) was the massive anti-SUPP vote among the Kuching Timur Chinese who were dissatisfied with SUPP's decision to join the coalition government in 1970. Many felt the party had 'sold out' and that its leaders were entirely self-serving. An article written by disgruntled SUPP members entitled 'The Sacred Vote be Cast for SNAP'⁸⁴ expressed the general feeling that 'several SUPP leaders have become officials in the coalition government and have been conferred with Datuk⁸⁵ honours. They have enjoyed both fame and gain. But what has happened to us supporters?'

Another major reason for SUPP's loss of Chinese votes was the role played by the Chinese-language newspaper, the *Sarawak Vanguard*, owned by SNAP's parliamentary candidate for Kuching, Leong Ho Yuen. The *Sarawak Vanguard* was used against SUPP very effectively, giving SNAP an outlet in the otherwise pro-Barisan press. Leong, as mentioned earlier, had already lost control of the English-language sister paper, the *Vanguard*, after a defamation suit by Abdul Rahman Yakub. Leong was so successful in using the *Sarawak Vanguard* to consistently run down SUPP, its leaders, and Barisan in general, that it was shut

TABLE 6.8
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Chinese Constituencies,
1970 and 1974 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>	
	1970	1974
Kuching Timur	6,571 (+70) ^a	-1435 (-14)
Sekama	2,199 (+29)	1155 (+13)
Batu Kawah	2,098 (+30)	1503 (+19)
Repok	612 (+12)	818 (+17) ^b
Binatang	918 (+13)	1852 (+24)
Sibu Tengah	2,372 (+32)	666 (+9)
Sibu Luar	708 (+12)	1419 (+26) ^b
Miri	-365 (-5)	1821 (+19) ^c

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidate fielded in these constituencies.

^cIn 1970, Miri was won by Chia Chin Shin under SCA; in 1974 he won again, this time under SUPP.

down by the state government on 28 August, in the middle of the elections.⁸⁶ No doubt this action brought additional anti-SUPP votes.

However, there were also specific factors unique to the Kuching Timur seat which help explain Yong's defeat. One was the intrusion into Sarawak waters by foreign fishermen. They adversely affected the earnings of Chinese fishermen in the Bintawa fishing village, part of the Kuching Timur seat. The local fishermen turned to Yong, the deputy chief minister,⁸⁷ and Ong Kee Hui, a federal minister, to help them get rid of the foreign competition. But the local fishermen were incensed when a detained Thai trawler was subsequently released. They blamed Yong for failing to take a hard line towards the foreign fishing vessels.

Another was the re-routing of traffic along Padungan and Abell Roads, in Kuching, where a majority of small Chinese shopkeepers were situated. Turning Padungan and Abell Roads into one-way streets resulted in a loss of business. The decision to re-route was taken by the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC), a local government body long controlled by SUPP. Shopkeepers blamed SUPP for the decision.⁸⁸

A third factor was the personal attack on Yong for his stubbornness and aloofness.⁸⁹ He was said to be unapproachable,⁹⁰ and his wife was criticized for acting too much like a 'Datuk's wife'.⁹¹

The net result of losing the bloc votes of fishermen and shopkeepers, both traditionally SUPP grass-root supporters, meant that Yong had already lost a major portion of Chinese votes in the Kuching Timur constituency. Combined with those who voted against Yong as a protest against SUPP's joining the coalition, his defeat was inevitable. In total, Yong lost more than half the SUPP votes he got in the 1970 polls, ensuring his defeat at the hands of SNAP.

SUPP AND THE DAYAK CONSTITUENCIES

As has been observed in the 1963 and 1969 elections, SUPP was able to capture a major portion of the Dayak votes. But in 1974 SUPP lost a large portion of the Dayak votes to SNAP.

SUPP fielded candidates in eight Dayak-majority electorates but won only in five: Lundu, Bengoh, Simanggang, Igan, and Belaga. All these, except for Lundu, were won by Dayak SUPP candidates. In Lundu, Bengoh, Simanggang, and Marudi, it would appear that SUPP gained Dayak votes (Table 6.9). However, a closer analysis shows SUPP actually gained Malay/Melanau votes, which in 1970 went to Parti Bumiputera. Simanggang, where SUPP's Hollis Tini was able to win with a majority of 542 votes after losing in 1970, is a case in point. In 1970, Parti Bumiputera captured 1,048 votes in Simanggang and Pesaka took 718; independents took 687. In 1974, it was a straight fight between SNAP and SUPP. Given that the Parti Bumiputera and Pesaka votes were to go to SUPP because they were part of the BN, it is not surprising that SUPP was able to garner 3,726 votes. This trend was repeated in other Dayak seats where SUPP was able to pick up votes from Parti Bumiputera and Pesaka supporters.

In the case of Igan, SUPP won the seat not because of a massive swing in its favour, but because of its candidate, Ling Beng Siong. Ling was the SCA incumbent but joined SUPP shortly before the 1974 polls. A man with extensive business interests, he was able to make sure that

TABLE 6.9
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Dayak Constituencies,
1970 and 1974 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>	
	1970	1974
Lundu	221 (+4) ^a	991 (+17)
Bau	677 (+9)	-909 (-10)
Bengoh	264 (+6)	417 (+9)
Simanggang	-634 (-8)	542 (+7)
Igan	-769 (-12)	1,730 (+30) ^b
Dudong	241 (+5)	-147 (-3) ^c
Belaga	84 (+4)	37 (+1)
Marudi	-2,176 (-42)	-1,210 (-19)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Note: SUPP contested the Bau, Kuching Barat, Semariang, Sebandi, Muara Tuang, Tarat, Tebakang, Semera, Gedong, Lingga-Sebuyau, Engkilili-[Skrang], Ulu Ai, Krian, Kuala Rejang, Matu Daro, Dudong, Balingian, Oya, Machan, Ngemah, Song, Pelagus, Baleh, Tatau, Kemena, and Subis constituencies in 1970 but gave up these seats to PBB in 1974.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bThe Igan candidate in 1974, Ling Beng Siong, stood and won the seat in 1970 as an SCA candidate.

^cNew SUPP candidate fielded.

his constituents were well looked after. Thus, the victory was a personal one. Although Ling was expected to pick up both SCA and SUPP votes in 1974, this did not happen (see Table 6.7). His 1974 vote of 3,583 was only slightly more than his 1970 vote of 3,264, indicating that SUPP voters in 1970 turned against the party in 1974. It was also an indication that Ling would have won regardless of whether he was on an SUPP ticket or stood as an independent.

The decline of Dayak support for SUPP was probably due to several reasons, principally SUPP's position in the coalition government.

Peter Searle⁹² argues that there were three basic reasons why the Dayaks supported SUPP. These were: a) to secure immediate gain or reward; b) to side with the party of 'protest' or to cast an anti-establishment vote; and c) to maintain SUPP as a neutralizing factor *vis-à-vis* Parti Bumiputera and its push for Malaysianization and Islamization.

After SUPP joined the coalition, it was unable to provide immediate rewards for its Dayak supporters. Abdul Rahman Yakub's stranglehold on the state bureaucracy and its economic resources meant that SUPP was not responsible for development projects given to Dayak areas. Rather, they were for Rahman Yakub's own political gain, for Parti Bumiputera, and, after 1973, for PBB's Dayak wing, the former Pesaka.⁹³ Because SUPP was now part of the coalition, the Dayak protest vote against the government could no longer go to SUPP's 'three rings' symbol. The party was now campaigning under the BN's *dacing* symbol, and was no longer in the opposition. That role was taken over by SNAP which thus picked up all the anti-establishment vote.⁹⁴

Those Dayaks who had supported SUPP as a neutralizing force were also disillusioned. Rahman Yakub's total control over the government and the coalition meant that issues Dayaks were most worried about, like retention of the English language and employment opportunities in the civil service, could not be promoted by SUPP.⁹⁵

Perhaps SUPP's biggest set-back, in the eyes of the Dayaks, was that it entered the 1970 coalition as a multiracial party but mainly representing the 'Chinese voice' in government. Moreover, from 1970 until the 1974 elections, Rahman Yakub's style of government left little doubt that racial politics were at the core of the BN, and that SUPP was not able to concurrently promote Chinese and Dayak interests. This was a deliberate policy on the part of Rahman Yakub, who wanted all Dayaks to consolidate their support behind the Pesaka wing of the PBB. In such an environment, the Dayaks turned away from the SUPP.

SUPP PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

Of the nine parliamentary seats SUPP contested, it was successful in seven (Table 6.10). The voting pattern was quite similar to that of the state seats. Again, SUPP lost ground in the Chinese and Dayak communities, but was helped by PBB voters.⁹⁶ This is best illustrated by the Bandar Kuching parliamentary seat, where Ong Kee Hui⁹⁷ retained his seat but with a substantially reduced majority. In 1970, Ong won the seat

12,126 votes clear of his nearest rival.⁹⁸ In 1974, when he went up against SNAP's Leong Ho Yuen, his majority was reduced to a mere 2,683.⁹⁹

Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, surprisingly, won the Padawan parliamentary seat. As Stephen Yong had lost in Kuching Timur, how was he able to win Padawan? Part of the answer lies in the three 'controlled area' new villages of Siburan, Beratok, and Tapah which fall within the Padawan constituency boundary. The Chinese voters here were all staunch SUPP supporters, having to rely on SUPP as their main representative to the government for such things as relaxation of curfews and upgrading of infrastructure.¹⁰⁰ Hence, Yong's win was based on this bloc vote from the three villages. However, even here, some Chinese abandoned SUPP. In the 1970 polls, Yong won the seat with a majority of 2,447 in a four-cornered fight. In the 1974 election, he won a straight fight with SNAP with only a 2,040 majority despite picking up PBB (Parti Bumiputera) votes.

A good example of SUPP's losing Dayak votes is the Bau-Lundu seat.¹⁰¹ SUPP retained Bau-Lundu in a by-election in October 1971, with a reduced majority of 939 votes. But by 1974, it lost to SNAP, which won the seat by 183 votes. The 1974 result was: SNAP 6,949 and SUPP 6,766. The Dayaks made up more than 50 per cent of the eligible voters.

SUPP was able to gain votes in Serian and Sarikei due to the presence in those places of Parti Bumiputera and SCA supporters, respectively. In the 1970 elections, SUPP obtained 3,993 votes while Parti Bumiputera garnered 3,737. If we assumed that these votes went to the *dacing* symbol, then SUPP's 213 vote majority in 1974 meant, in reality, a loss of votes to SNAP. In Sarikei the same thing happened. In the 1970 election, SCA got 4,041 votes and SUPP 3,337. The combined vote was 7,378, close to SUPP's 6,420 votes garnered in 1974. SUPP managed to increase its votes in the Rajang parliamentary seat. It was also successful in winning the Miri-Subis seat from SNAP's James Wong Kim Min, an ethnic Chinese who won the seat in 1970 with a 499 majority.

The 1974 general election saw SUPP losing a major share of its Chinese support to the opposition SNAP. The latter was able to garner all the Chinese anti-coalition and other anti-establishment votes. SNAP was also able to gain almost all the Dayak votes because Pesaka joined Parti Bumiputera in 1973 to form PBB. This was a sign to the Dayak community that Pesaka was subservient to Abdul Rahman Yakub and had, in effect, sold out Dayak interests. SNAP's position in the 1974 election was very similar to SUPP in the 1963 polls. Then, SUPP was the main opposition party and was able to get all the protest votes against the pro-Malaysia parties, including Pesaka and SNAP.

The 1974 polls also marked the first time that SUPP did not contest under the 'three rings' symbol which held great appeal for voters. Because SUPP was in the coalition, it was unable to test its support in the electorate, for it had to share the 48 state and 24 parliamentary constituencies with PBB. In 1974, this meant that SUPP was given 16 state

TABLE 6.10
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary Constituencies,
1970 and 1974 Elections

Constituency	Margin of Victory/Loss	
	1970	1974
Bau-Lundu	939 ^a (+11) ^b	-183 (-1)
Bandar Kuching	12,126 (+77)	2,863 (+13)
Padawan	2,447 (+22)	2,040 (+16)
Serian	-2,008 ^c (-15)	213 (+1)
Sarikei	-704 ^d (-7)	3,446 (+35)
Bandar Sibü	4,095 (+31)	1,131 (+9)
Rajang	684 ^e (+7)	1,406 (+13)
Miri-Subis	-499 ^f (-5)	1,615 (+9)
Baram	-3,237 (-37)	1,823 (-17)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Note: SUPP contested Santubong, Samarahan, Batang Lupar, Lubok Antu, Saratok, Payang, Mukah, Kanowit-Ulu Rajang, and Bintulu constituencies in 1970 but gave up these seats to PBB in 1974.

^aMajority obtained in the Lundu by-election, October 1971.

^bFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^cWon by SNAP in 1970.

^dWon by SCA in 1970.

^eMajority obtained in the Rajang by-election, January 1974.

^fWon by SNAP in 1970.

seats and 9 parliamentary seats to contest. This is in stark contrast to 1970, when SUPP contested 30 state seats and 19 out of 24 parliamentary seats. Also, as SUPP had to stand under the *dacing* symbol, along with PBB, it will never be known how much electoral support there was for each individual party.

In general, the 1974 polls indicated the following: first, the majority of the Dayaks abandoned Pesaka in favour of SNAP. Secondly, SNAP was able to pick up almost all the anti-establishment votes, including a substantial number of Chinese votes. Thirdly, PBB managed (through its Parti Bumiputera wing) to consolidate the Malay/Melanau vote, as it did in the 1970 election.

SUPP's loss of votes among the Chinese cut across all Chinese dialect groups. The major reason for this loss appears to be the strong resentment felt by the Chinese who had supported SUPP as an opposition party in the 1970 polls, only to see it join a coalition government, a betrayal in their eyes. What was worse was that the coalition partners were not equal, with Rahman Yakub dominating and SUPP unable to exert itself more rigorously on behalf of the Chinese community. This was despite the fact that in the 1971 party resolution it was clear that SUPP could leave the coalition if it was not happy.

Conclusion

From the moment it was clear that no party alone could form a state government after the 1970 elections, SUPP knew that it was in the position to play the role of political kingmaker. SNAP and Parti Bumiputera could not form a coalition, as Parti Bumiputera's leader, Abdul Rahman Yakub and SNAP's Stephen Kalong Ningkan could not get along personally. It was also clear that SUPP wanted to be in the next state government as the top leadership felt that 12 years in the opposition wilderness was long enough. The leadership was influenced by Tun Abdul Razak's approach in late 1969 and probably felt it was better to have a 'little say' within government than 'no say' at all on the opposition benches. The question then was: who should SUPP form a government with—Parti Bumiputera or SNAP/Pesaka?

SUPP therefore negotiated with both sides, without the knowledge of the other side. The crunch came when Tun Razak came to Kuching and impressed upon SUPP's leadership that any government formed without Parti Bumiputera participation (that is, Malay/Melanau participation) was unacceptable to Kuala Lumpur. The threat that the federal government would not lift emergency rule in Sarawak was enough to silence SUPP's misgivings.

SUPP's decision to team up in a coalition with Rahman Yakub caused it to lose much credibility as both parties (SUPP and Parti Bumiputera) were at each extreme of the ethnic and ideological spectrum. The moderate leadership also lost more credibility among the party's left wing, as the decision was made without referring to them or to the full CWC. The party's left wing not only felt betrayed, but probably felt (correctly) that SUPP had sold out its interests to a Malay leadership. They also felt that the SUPP leadership was more worried about its own position than the community it was supposed to represent.

This view was subsequently confirmed when it became clear that Rahman Yakub dominated the state government despite the agreement that SUPP was to be an equal coalition partner. When major decisions were taken which were not in the Chinese community or SUPP's interests, SUPP appeared unable to do anything about it and this further damaged its credibility. Rahman Yakub's masterful political skill showed itself in 1973 when he successfully merged his Parti Bumiputera with Pesaka to form PBB. He also caused the demise of the SCA and successfully moved its elected Council Negri members into SUPP.

In the 1974 elections, the Chinese community's loss of confidence in SUPP was best symbolized by their rejection of Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in the Chinese-majority seat of Kuching Timur in favour of an unknown candidate from an Iban-dominated party. SUPP lost votes to SNAP among all sections of the Chinese community and among Dayak voters. SNAP was able to pick up all the anti-establishment votes simply because it was the only viable opposition party left in Sarawak. This was the case for SUPP in 1963, when it picked up the votes from all ethnic groups and sections opposed to the formation of Malaysia, and again in

1970 when it was able to pick up anti-Alliance votes. However, it must be made clear that the Chinese who supported SNAP voted for it as a protest vote against SUPP, for the reasons outlined above.

SUPP's Dayak supporters, on the other hand, abandoned SUPP not as a protest vote, but in the belief that SNAP was the only party capable of defending Dayak/Iban interests. This was because, in the eyes of the Dayaks, Pesaka sold out Dayak interests when it merged with PBB. SUPP, for its part, had become a party increasingly concerned with Chinese interests and needs, and thus had sold out Dayak interests too.

By 1974, SUPP became and behaved more and more like an ethnic political party. This was due to the fact that it entered the coalition government in 1970 primarily as the 'Chinese voice'. This impression was reinforced by Rahman Yakub's tactics, such as dissolving the SCA and forcing almost all establishment Chinese politicians into SUPP. The BN formula, which encourages racial political parties, also played a role.

Within the party, the moderates had the upper hand but the left wing was still strong. The decision taken by the moderate leadership to join the coalition government without consulting the left wing was a masterstroke that relegated the left wing to the background. The left wing's attempt to censure the moderate leadership over this issue failed when the government, in which the moderates were well represented, refused SUPP a permit to hold its 7th Delegates Conference. By the time the conference was finally held, one year later, it was clear that the moderates were in control and able to extract a compromise from the left wing. By the 1974 election, the left wing was considerably weakened and the moderates clearly in charge.

1. Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 139.

2. Cheng Yew Kew was a Muslim convert who later became the Council Negeri Speaker.

3. In an interview with Ong Kee Hui, he said Tun Abdul Razak's endorsement of the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) candidate was the deciding factor in his defeat.

4. The Kuching Barat seat, although won by an SCA candidate, is counted here as a win for Parti Bumiputera because SCA won on Parti Bumiputera's votes.

5. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 138.

6. R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, p. 328.

7. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 138.

8. See Chapter 3.

9. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 142.

10. In 1963, the Malay/Melanau votes went to two Malay-based parties: Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Berjasa) and Party Negara (PANAS), which merged to form Parti Bumiputera. Hence, the continuity in Malay/Melanau voting patterns.

11. The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) only won its twelfth seat a few days later.

12. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 142.

13. Abdul Rahman Yakub, although a Melanau, successfully pushed through many pro-Malay policies when he was a federal minister, thus ensuring that federal leaders would see him as one of their own.

14. Parti Bumiputera actually won only 12 seats, but it was quite clear that SCA would fall in with Parti Bumiputera, not only because it was the staunchest supporter of the Sarawak Alliance, but also because of the realization that SCA's win was due to Parti Bumiputera support and votes.

15. Ong Kee Hui was generally seen as someone who had national ambition and who did not involve himself in internal SUPP Chinese politics if he could avoid it.

16. *Vanguard*, 8 July 1970. Wan Alwi, a lawyer, was the only Malay political leader in Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka). Unlike other prominent Malays, he did not join Parti Bumiputera because of differences with its leaders.

17. Vinson Sutlive, *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1972, p. 276. The memo was drafted by Leonard Linggi and Wan Alwi from Pesaka and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze from SUPP. All three were lawyers.

18. SCA was part of the Alliance that used the sailboat symbol during the election. Its leaders had always played a role similar to the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and thus could be trusted by Tun Razak and the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). Because of this Tun Razak was initially unwilling to abandon them.

19. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 143.

20. Interview with Abdul Rahman Yakub. See also interview with Rahman Yakub in Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, p. 275.

21. Interview with Rahman Yakub.

22. Unknown to SUPP, Rahman Yakub had secretly and successfully enticed Simon Demak Maja and Penghulu Abok ak Jalin away from Pesaka.

23. Rahman Yakub could agree to these terms as Tun Razak had already left for Kuala Lumpur and had told Rahman Yakub that he could negotiate on his behalf. Interview with Rahman Yakub.

24. Teng Lung Chi et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, Kuching: SUPP, 1989, p. 330; David L. C. Teng and Daniel K. A. Ngieng, *The Challenges: SUPP in Focus*, Sibul: Think Management, 1990, p. 102

25. Wan Alwi from Pesaka, although a Malay, was not seen as genuine Malay participation as he was in a Dayak-based party.

26. Teng et al., *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, pp. 337–8.

27. SUPP records.

28. Teng and Ngieng, *The Challenges*, p. 99.

29. See Chapter 4.

30. Stephen Yong emphasized this point in an interview. In the official SUPP history, he was quoted as saying 'we were unable to carry out many of our plans and objectives in the opposition simply because the government simply rejected our proposals. Moreover many of our comrades were either arrested or intimidated.' See Teng and Ngieng, *The Challenges*, p. 100.

31. Ong claimed that the invitation was a personal one from Tun Razak, confirming the earlier assertion that the SUPP leadership had ambitions in government. See Ong Kee Hui, 'Political Parties in Sarawak', *Sarawak Gazette*, CXIX, 1522 (December 1992): 17.

32. The two-thirds majority was needed by the Alliance so that it could change the constitution. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 145.

33. *Vanguard*, 18 July 1970.

34. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*, 2nd edn., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, pp. 401–4.

35. *Vanguard*, 15 December 1970.

36. In a press statement, Stephen Yong stated, 'The Chairman and I have taken advantage of the invitation to examine the documentary evidence on which the decision of SOC to withhold permit for SUPP to hold the Delegates' Conference as scheduled. We are satisfied that in the circumstances the conference should be postponed.' See *Vanguard*, 18 December 1970.

37. *Chinese Daily News*, 4 September 1971.

38. *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 September 1971.

39. Text of speech by Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong given at the 7th Delegates Conference, 4 September, 1971.

40. SUPP records.
41. See letter by Siyium ak Matit in *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 October 1971.
42. The eligible voters were made up of 19.45 per cent Malays, 53.6 per cent Dayaks, and 26.75 per cent Chinese. The constituency had 15,424 voters.
43. Jacob Ridu withdrew on the 'advice of the Chief Minister'. See *Chinese Daily News*, 14 October 1971. Because Ridu withdrew at the eleventh hour, his name was still on the ballot paper.
44. *Sarawak Vanguard*, 20 September 1971.
45. *Sarawak Vanguard*, 15 October 1971. In the 1970 election, the result was SUPP 4,539, SNAP 3,733, Parti Bumiputera 2,655, and Pesaka 2,164, with an 89.7 per cent turnout. SUPP won by an 806 majority in a four-cornered fight.
46. The sitting SUPP Rajang MP had died.
47. See editorial, 'The People Confident in the Coalition Government', *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 14 January 1974.
48. Diane Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional: Coalition Government in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Marican Publications, 1983, pp. 95–6.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
50. An account of the political environment before the 1974 polls can be found in Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, pp. 147–96. Only points that are relevant to the Chinese community and SUPP are covered here.
51. Leigh argues that SUPP was unable to exert itself because Rahman Yakub had access to Special Branch files on all the top leadership of SUPP. See Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?', in James C. Jackson and Martin Rudner (eds.), *Issues in Malaysian Development*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979, pp. 339–74.
52. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 148.
53. For a detailed explanation of why Pesaka joined Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), see Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, p. 283; and Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak, 1970–1976: The Iban Perspective*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 149–51.
54. Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?', p. 348.
55. The court awarded Rahman Yakub RM90,000 with costs. See *Sarawak Vanguard*, 18, 29 August 1971. Shares in *Vanguard* worth RM90,000 were transferred to Rahman Yakub's nominee. However, Leong Ho Yuen managed to retain control of the Chinese edition, the *Sarawak Vanguard*, which he used very effectively in the 1974 election. Leong was a founder of the defunct Party Machinda, and had a personal feud with Rahman Yakub dating from the 1960s.
56. During interviews, it was alleged that Wong Soon Kai's name was also on the list but he was overseas when the operation began. He apparently wrote a letter to Rahman Yakub, who then spared him. See also Rahman Yakub's open letter to Wong in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1987.
57. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 October 1973.
58. See 'After Operation Judas', *See Hua Daily News*, 18 October 1973.
59. Bong elected to go to China together with two other ranking communists, Weng Ming Chyuan and Bong's wife Liu How Ying, after being arrested by the colonial authorities. See Chapter 3 for details.
60. Weng left for China before the Indonesian authorities could get hold of him. He is still alive in China and worked for the Overseas Propaganda Department for a time.
61. The other unit was called Pasokan Guerrilla Rakyat Sarawak (PGRS).
62. See *The Origins and Development of the Sarawak Communist Organization (SCO)*, p. 3. This undated manuscript, found in the State Archives, was, judging by its detailed descriptions, most probably written by the Special Branch sometime in the 1970s.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
64. Since renamed Sri Aman in honour of the agreement.
65. Sarawak, *Sri Aman: Peace Restored in Sarawak*, Kuching: Government Printer, 1974, pp. 2–3. A few hundred of the Sri Aman returnees later returned to the jungle to resume the armed struggle. No information is available on this.
66. In an interview with Rahman Yakub, he said SUPP played very little role but according to Stephen Yong, SUPP was the key. The truth is probably somewhere in between.

67. SUPP used to tell Rahman Yakub that if he wanted to stop the CCO, he ought to release more land to the Chinese and give government money to Chinese schools, etc., otherwise the Chinese youths would join the CCO.

68. *Chinese Daily News*, 1 June 1974. See also the editorial in the same newspaper on 4 June 1974.

69. *Chinese Daily News*, 18 May 1974. The *Sarawak Vanguard*, on the same day, reported a denial by the party secretary Chen Ko Ming that the party had approved the resignations of Ling Beng Siong and Chia Chin Shin.

70. In several interviews, it was said that Rahman Yakub and Yong had agreed that once SCA was dissolved, SUPP would take in all SCA members.

71. Wong Soon Kai was a reluctant candidate. The SUPP had already decided on him because he was a popular general practitioner in Sibul. He was finally persuaded to join by an SUPP delegation which went to his house during the 1974 Chinese New Year celebrations. Interview with a senior SUPP figure who was part of the delegation.

72. The Barisan manifesto was printed several times during the campaign. See, for example, *Vanguard*, 6 August 1974; see also 'Achievements of the Sarawak Coalition Government in 1510 days', *Vanguard*, 18 August 1974.

73. During SUPP's campaign in the urban areas, a short film on Tun Razak's trip to Beijing, which included some SUPP ministers, was shown.

74. Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?', p. 352. James Wong Kim Min was arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on 30 September 1974.

75. Radio is still very important in Sarawak, especially in the interior, where it provides the only news outlet for the indigenous people who are illiterate. Moreover, transport problems mean that newspapers are not readily available, and in any case, arrive a few days late.

76. See *Sarawak Vanguard*, 15 August 1974.

77. Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?', p. 353; and Searle, *Politics in Sarawak, 1970-1976*, p. 175.

78. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 September 1974; and Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?', p. 352.

79. *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 September 1974.

80. Within the opposition ranks, both the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) held the largest number of seats: 9 parliamentary seats each but SNAP's James Wong was elected opposition leader. See *Sarawak Vanguard*, 12 September 1974.

81. See Searle, *Politics in Sarawak*; and Leigh, 'Is there Development in Sarawak?'

82. Interestingly enough, Ong Kee Hui had lost the nearby Kuching Barat state seat in 1970.

83. *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 August 1974.

84. *Sarawak Vanguard*, 17 August 1974.

85. The writers were probably referring to Ong and Yong, who were both awarded their *datukship* after entering the coalition in 1970.

86. See *Chinese Daily News*, 29 August 1974.

87. See 'Are Datuk Ong Kee Hui and Datuk Stephen Yong Concerned about the Fishermen in their Constituencies?', *Sarawak Vanguard*, 16 August 1974. The article was written by Michael Bong, SNAP parliamentary candidate for Padawan, where Stephen Yong was standing. See also Bong's follow up article on the same problem in *Sarawak Vanguard*, 17 August, 1974.

88. See article by Bong in *Sarawak Vanguard*, 19 August 1974.

89. Interviews with several SUPP 1974 election campaign workers.

90. Based on information gathered from interviews, many SUPP members and supporters who approached Yong for his signature for applications for government documents such as passports, were often turned away. Yong's signature was needed for such documents as he was the deputy chief minister.

91. Stephen Yong's wife was said to have scolded SUPP members who came to Yong's residence at night, and behaved rudely towards civil servants at government functions. Based on information gathered from interviews.

92. Searle, *Politics in Sarawak*, pp. 159–61.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

95. *Ibid.*

96. Because each parliamentary seat is made up of two state seats, SUPP was able to gain many PBB votes. For example, the Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency was made up of Kuching Barat and Kuching Timur state constituencies. Kuching Barat is dominated by Malay voters

97. Ong did not stand for a state seat.

98. The 1970 election results for Bandar Kuching were: SUPP 13,140 votes; independent (Kenneth Lau) 1,284; and another independent (Kai Yan) 972.

99. Leong owned the Chinese-language *Sarawak Vanguard* newspaper. The election results were: SUPP 11,534 votes; SNAP 8,851.

100. See previous chapter on the new villages and the issue of political detainees.

101. The 1970 election results were: SUPP 5,583 votes, SNAP 3,136, Pesaka 1,203, and independent 1,145.

Sarawak Under Abdul Rahman Yakub

Aftermath of the 1974 Polls

DESPITE the near electoral disaster in 1974, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) again found itself holding the balance of power, with 12 seats. Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) and the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) each held 18 seats, and SUPP's support was thus crucial to the formation of the state government. This was a repeat of what happened in 1970. SUPP could have fallen in with SNAP to form a new government but it decided, for reasons of continuity, to fall in with PBB again,¹ and nominated Sim Kheng Hong to fill the deputy chief minister's post, made vacant by Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's defeat. Wong Soon Kai, a newcomer to politics, was also made a minister. His selection was due to two factors. First, Abdul Rahman Yakub personally wanted him to serve in his Cabinet;² second, the Rejang basin SUPP complained that the Kuching-side SUPP was unfairly dominating SUPP and that one of their representatives should be the SUPP nominee to the Cabinet.³

Stephen Yong initially wanted to regain the deputy chief minister's post through a by-election; the plan was for one of the successful SUPP state assemblymen to resign his seat so that Yong could contest and win the by-election, and thus be eligible again.⁴ However, Rahman Yakub, as the state chairman of the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN), refused. Rahman Yakub cited two justifications for this refusal.⁵ First, the polls had clearly indicated a loss of support for SUPP generally, and for Yong himself in particular. SUPP simply could not guarantee that Yong would win a by-election in any constituency in the Kuching urban area.⁶ Second, Rahman Yakub could not risk a by-election as his government held only 30 seats against SNAP's 18. The loss of one more seat to SNAP would be an ominous sign.

Another, perhaps a more important factor, was that Rahman Yakub was glad that Yong was no longer in his Cabinet. Yong had increasingly challenged Rahman Yakub on many issues, particularly on infrastructure development priorities. SUPP felt that Rahman Yakub was developing PBB areas at the expense of SUPP constituencies. The relationship between Rahman Yakub and Yong understandably soured further after

Rahman Yakub's refusal to hold a by-election. SUPP's next demand was for all government proposals in the Cabinet to be sent to SUPP party headquarters before Cabinet meetings. Rahman Yakub again refused, arguing that Cabinet papers were government secrets and could not be given to anyone outside the state Cabinet.⁷ From this period onwards, the relationship between PBB and SUPP was noticeably strained, primarily due to the personal feud between Rahman Yakub and Yong.⁸

State Politics, 1975–1977

SNAP's Entry Into the Coalition

There was little chance of reconciliation between Abdul Rahman Yakub and SUPP as long as Stephen Yong Kuet Tze remained SUPP's Secretary-General. Rahman Yakub accordingly employed two tactics to ensure his political survival. First, he turned his attention towards SNAP, co-opting it to join his coalition government. SUPP's hold on the balance of power was thus eliminated.

Initially, Rahman Yakub faced problems in trying to get SNAP into the Sarawak BN. He could not get along with the two established SNAP leaders, Stephen Kalong Ningkan and James Wong Kim Min. Ningkan had not forgiven Rahman Yakub for influencing the federal leaders to oppose him during the constitutional crisis of 1966. Ningkan also had other grudges against Rahman Yakub such as the controversial national education policy, which imposed Bahasa Malaysia on Sarawak, and his undermining of SNAP's attempt to forge a coalition with SUPP after the 1970 elections.⁹ However, Ningkan's influence in SNAP was somewhat diminished when he was defeated in 1974 by a PBB candidate (from the Pesaka wing), Alfred Jabu. A greater obstacle to better relations with SNAP was its deputy president, James Wong. Wong, a formidable opponent in the Council Negri and then opposition leader in the federal Parliament, had been against Rahman Yakub's getting the chief ministership in 1970. When he proved unresponsive to Rahman Yakub's advances after 1974, Wong found himself detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA). The never proven charge was that Wong received secret funding from a foreign power, presumably Brunei, during the 1974 polls, and that he had never opposed Brunei's claim to Limbang which lies just next to Brunei.¹⁰ Wong's detention not only removed a major obstacle to Rahman Yakub's attempts to entice SNAP into his government, it also weakened SNAP considerably as Wong was one of the party's main financial backers.¹¹

Rahman Yakub then proceeded to negotiate SNAP's entry into the coalition with the new SNAP Iban leaders like Leo Moggie, the new Secretary-General, and Dunstan Endawie. The terms of the entry were never publicly released although it is known that one condition was Wong's release.¹² An agreement was announced in November 1975, and SNAP officially became the third coalition party of the Sarawak BN

in March 1976. Dunstan Endawie was made a deputy chief minister while Leo Moggie was given a minor portfolio.

SUPP's position in the entire episode was basically that of spectator. When Rahman Yakub devised his scheme for SNAP's entry into the coalition, SUPP was almost certainly not informed or consulted. Its reaction, had it been consulted, would have been far from favourable, as SNAP's entry meant that SUPP would automatically lose its status as holder of the balance of power, which was what Rahman Yakub intended.¹³ By the time SUPP was informed of the plan to bring SNAP into the government, negotiations between SNAP and Rahman Yakub were already at an advanced stage. The agreement signed by Parti Bumiputera and SUPP in 1970 clearly stated that all matters affecting the coalition would be discussed between them. Despite this, Rahman Yakub was able to work behind SUPP's back and bring SNAP into the coalition. In other words, SUPP was seen as weak and not considered an equal partner. With SNAP in the BN coalition there was, in theory at least, no political opposition to Rahman Yakub in Sarawak.

Curtailing Stephen Yong

The second tactic Abdul Rahman Yakub employed to ensure his political survival was to cultivate certain key leaders in SUPP, especially those in Kuching, in order to undermine and curtail Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's influence in the party. Rahman Yakub concentrated on Kuching because he deduced, correctly, that Stephen Yong's support base was there. One important leader that he cultivated was Sim Kheng Hong. Sim, a Chao-ann, was one of the earliest members of Kuching SUPP. He was also an active member of the Chao-ann Association and, together with others like Chan Siaw Hee and Sim Geok Tee, controlled the association for many years. Primarily Chinese educated, Sim was also actively involved with the Chinese schools. He was also chairman of the SUPP-controlled Kuching Rural District Council (KRDC) from 1967 to 1970 when he was appointed a minister. After the 1974 polls, Sim Kheng Hong suddenly found himself made the deputy chief minister. Sim's easygoing, some say obsequious, manner and attitude towards Rahman Yakub and his policies endeared him to the chief minister.¹⁴ Although Yong and his allies strongly criticized Rahman Yakub, Sim never made a public stand against him. Sim's power base in the party was his position as party treasurer, which gave him immense power and made him the undisputed head of one of the SUPP factions in Kuching. His source of patronage, from his office as deputy chief minister, meant he was quite independent of the party.¹⁵ Since all major local projects needed the approval of the state government, many found it convenient to go to Sim (in his capacity as deputy chief minister), and this increased his hold over the constituents and the party. Any financial resource channelled to SUPP from Rahman Yakub also passed through Sim, which meant that he could use party money to further enhance his patronage network both within and outside the party machinery.

Rahman Yakub's various favours and concessions to Sim meant the latter had every incentive to remain neutral, at the very least, between Yong and Rahman Yakub. This, of course, made Yong and his allies all the more determined to get rid of Rahman Yakub. How successful Sim was in checking sentiments against Rahman Yakub is difficult to assess, although the indications are that without Sim, Rahman Yakub would have been under more pressure from SUPP.

Abdul Rahman Yakub Under Pressure: SUPP and PAJAR

Although Abdul Rahman Yakub's position was temporarily secured by SNAP's entry into the coalition government, by late 1977 he was again under threat. With parliamentary polls expected in 1978, he found himself under siege. One reason was SUPP's attempt to get rid of him via federal pressure; another was the formation of a political party directly pitching for his main constituents, the Malay/Melanau community.

SUPP's deteriorating relationship with Rahman Yakub, largely due to an internal party campaign by Stephen Yong Kuet Tze and Rahman Yakub's increasingly autocratic tendencies meant that by mid-1977 some branches¹⁶ were openly passing resolutions calling on SUPP to leave the Sarawak BN coalition if issues like more land for non-indigenous farmers could not be accommodated by the state government.¹⁷ Another resolution called on the party to use its 'three rings' symbol at future elections. At a meeting of the Central Committee (CC) in late 1977, 43 members voted to remain in the BN, but 11 others voted to leave the BN if the party was denied the right to use its own symbol in future elections.¹⁸

SUPP then complained to the BN chairman, Prime Minister Hussein Onn, that they had lost confidence in the chief minister and wanted him to pressure the chief minister into resigning. At the very least, SUPP wanted Hussein Onn to offer Rahman Yakub a federal Cabinet post and remove him from Sarawak. SUPP complained about Rahman Yakub's high-handed, non-consultative style of government, using the land issue as an example. Unfortunately for Rahman Yakub, Hussein Onn, who had only assumed the prime ministership in April 1976 after Tun Abdul Razak's sudden death, took SUPP's complaints seriously. His predecessor had always looked benignly upon Rahman Yakub, and had forgiven many of his excesses. Tun Razak was close to Rahman Yakub, whom he got to know when the latter served in the federal Cabinet prior to his return to Sarawak in 1970. Moreover, Tun Razak was instrumental in helping Rahman Yakub secure the chief ministership in July 1970, and after that, had given him a free hand in governing Sarawak's internal affairs. Rahman Yakub's pro-Malay and pro-federal policies, and his success in fighting the communists—especially in Operation Sri Aman—enhanced his standing in Tun Razak's eyes.

Hussein Onn, on the other hand, did not tolerate Rahman Yakub's style. At about the same time as SUPP made its complaint, Hussein Onn received information that Rahman Yakub was conspiring to take

Sarawak out of Malaysia.¹⁹ This threat was taken seriously as Tun Mustapha Harun in neighbouring Sabah had also tried to take Sabah out of Malaysia in 1975.²⁰ When Rahman Yakub heard of this accusation, he made a hard-hitting speech in the federal Parliament professing his loyalty to Malaysia, blaming the 'gang of seven' for the strained federal-state relations, and accusing the federal government of discrimination in matters of indirect taxation and federal development assistance.²¹ Although Rahman Yakub never named any of the 'gang of seven', Stephen Yong and Senawi Sulaiman were almost certainly among them.²²

The formation of the Parti Anak Jati Sarawak (PAJAR) further undermined Rahman Yakub politically. PAJAR was led by a Kuching Malay, Alli Kawi,²³ who prior to forming the party was head of the Sarawak Special Branch. His background in the Special Branch also allowed him direct access to Rahman Yakub, who was the director of state security. Thus both men knew each other well. PAJAR's registration in February 1978 meant the Malay community had another political vehicle besides the PBB. Instead of appealing to the multiracial population of Sarawak, Alli Kawi cleverly used PAJAR to cultivate votes from the Malay/Melanau community only. PAJAR's political campaign was aimed almost exclusively at Rahman Yakub himself;²⁴ PAJAR implied that Rahman was corrupt, and circulated a typed sheet listing all business shareholdings owned by him, his family members, and his nominees. PAJAR further implied that it had federal support to take over power from Rahman Yakub.²⁵ PAJAR's strength lay in the First Division Malay community which enthusiastically backed Alli Kawi in an attempt to install the first Malay chief minister.²⁶

SUPP's reaction to PAJAR was basically one of indifference. PAJAR never reached out to the Chinese, and hence posed no direct threat to SUPP's dominance among the Chinese electorate. However, SUPP's anti-Rahman Yakub faction was probably happy to see PAJAR undermining the authority of the chief minister in the Malay/Melanau community.

SUPP Politics, 1976–1978

The SUPP SibU Branch Crisis

In 1976, SUPP's SibU branch suffered a major split. The origins could be traced back to the influence of the anti-Malaysia and Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO) elements in the party during the late 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, the SibU branch, like many other branches, was under the control of the party's left wing. That control was short-lived because of the colonial, and later the Malaysian, governments' crack-down on the party's leftist members in the SibU area.²⁷ Among those detained was a key organizer from the Rejang basin, Tieu Sung Seng, who was detained for more than a decade. On his release, he was immediately appointed a political secretary. He then set about to wrest back control of the SibU branch which, during his

long absence, had elected a new crop of office bearers. The group that now controlled the Sibü branch immediately saw Tieu as a threat to their own positions.²⁸

At the Sibü branch delegates' meeting in 1976, hostilities erupted during elections for branch office bearers. The old faction, representing Tieu and his allies,²⁹ and the incumbent branch office bearers like Lai Han Yu, Wee Hoe Soon, and Law Hieng Ding,³⁰ had earlier agreed on a compromise list of candidates for the election of new branch office bearers, divided more or less equally between the two competing factions. However, when the final list was drawn up, the incumbents accused the old faction of altering the compromise list, and immediately withdrew all its names from the nomination. Of the 73 candidates on the list, 43 suddenly withdrew.³¹ About 30 branch executive members were needed, so the withdrawals left a shortage of potential office bearers as well as the embarrassing exclusion of incumbents. Realizing the danger of the split, party headquarters intervened and sent in a mediation team. By this time, Wee Hoe Soon, the SUPP Member of Parliament (MP) for Bandar Sibü, and Law Hieng Ding, a parliamentary secretary, were no longer SUPP branch executive members as they had both withdrawn their names from nomination.³² To resolve the crisis, party headquarters forced a compromise whereby some of the executive seats were given to incumbent members of the branch.³³ Another feature of the compromise was the promotion of Wong Soon Kai to branch chairman. Tieu was made branch secretary.³⁴ Thus Tieu, despite his forced absence for more than a decade, won back control of the branch. The Sibü split had important repercussions later in 1977, when several incumbents left the party and stood as independents in the 1978 parliamentary elections.

Formation of the SUPP Youth and Wanita Sections

On 15 May 1977, the party announced that a Youth section would be formed. The idea was that it would attract and recruit younger people, especially professionals, into the party. The 1974 defeat cut across racial borders, and many youths (Chinese and Dayaks) abandoned SUPP in favour of opposition SNAP. The Central Working Committee (CWC) decided that Wong Soon Kai be appointed its first Youth leader for a term of two years. The Youth Central Secretary-General post went to Tieu Sung Seng. Wong's appointment was also another indication of his 'rising star' status in the party. In addition to being SUPP Youth leader, he was also the Sibü branch chairman, state assemblyman for the Sibü Luar seat, and a state Cabinet minister.

Wanita SUPP (women's section) was formed about a year later, in March 1978.³⁵ Chi Mei Si was appointed its first leader. Chi was already active in SUPP but felt that many women's issues were being ignored by the mostly male leadership. Her proposal to establish a women's section was accepted because it was felt that it would entice many more women into the party.³⁶

The Dissidents' Challenge

In the 1978 polls a number of senior SUPP members, including Chong Siew Chiang and Wee Hoe Soon, turned against the party. Also in this group were Chieng Hie Kwong, Lai Han Yu, Yong Ping Kuai, and Lim Kwang Ming. Chieng was a prominent Sibu banker, president of the Third Division United Chinese Association, and president of the Sibu Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. In the 1970 polls, Chieng was the Sarawak Chinese Association's (SCA), candidate for the seat of Sibu Tengah.³⁷ Lai was the mayor of Sibu and a former chairman of the SUPP Sibu branch while Wee was Sibu's SUPP MP and deputy mayor. Wee and Lai were also involved in the 1976 SUPP branch split. Lim was special assistant to the chief minister.³⁸

One of the group's more prominent leaders was Chong who was then the SUPP state assemblyman for the Repok constituency. However, Chong fell foul of SUPP leadership when, in the Council Negri on 14 December 1977, he questioned Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's use of government facilities.³⁹ By that time, Chong had more or less severed his ties with SUPP, and he was subsequently expelled from the party in early 1978.

These party dissidents were either linked to the now defunct SCA,⁴⁰ or the losing side in the 1976 SUPP Sibu branch split. Another member of this group, who was not linked to any political party, was Ling Sie Ming. Ling was a Sibu Foochow who was at that time president of the Sarawak Taiwan Graduates Association, and heavily involved in fund-raising activities for Chinese schools in Sibu. All these men came from the Rejang basin (or the 'Foochow triangle', the area delineated by the towns of Sibu-Sarikei-Bintangor).

Together with others, Chong organized a series of meetings in Sibu and Sarikei to discuss forming a formal organization to oppose SUPP. They had two choices: form a new political party, or join an existing one. Originally, the idea was to transform the Sarawak United Chinese Association (SUCA)⁴¹ into a new political party. This idea was dropped when some members objected.⁴² Moreover, there was not enough time to register SUCA as a political party prior to the 1978 elections.⁴³ Hence, for the coming parliamentary elections, members of this dissident group decided to stand as independents against SUPP candidates. Three who stood as independents were: Chong Siew Chiang, Chieng Hie Kwong, and Yong Ping Kuai.

SUPP regarded the formation of this group as another of Abdul Rahman Yakub's attempts to weaken its base of support among the Chinese population. The involvement of Chong and Lim was seen as evidence that Rahman Yakub had set up this group.

The 1978 Parliamentary Election

Prelude to the Election

When Hussein Onn came to Kuching in April 1978, he probably intended to prepare the Sarawak BN for the approaching election. The Prime Minister wanted the state elections to be held concurrently, but he found that Abdul Rahman Yakub was not keen on the idea. Crucial to the matter were disagreements over the state seat allocations. The allocations issue had been complicated by SNAP's becoming the third coalition partner. SUPP wanted to 'claim back' some of the seats it had lost to SNAP in the 1974 polls. Rahman Yakub himself (along with PBB) was not eager for the state polls either as PAJAR was building up a ground swell of support in the Malay community. SNAP, too, was unhappy, as it was asked to give up some of the constituencies it had won in 1974.

SUPP then proceeded to tell the Prime Minister, in his capacity as BN chairman, that the party was not happy with Rahman Yakub's rule or the seat allocation issue. SUPP's other complaint once again concerned the lack of land available to non-indigenous farmers, although it also raised the issue of timber concessions given to those close to Rahman Yakub. SUPP informed Hussein Onn that the party wanted to contest the forthcoming parliamentary election using its own 'three rings' symbol. It believed that if the coming election was a free for all contest,⁴⁴ then SUPP could recover ground lost in the 1974 polls. Hussein Onn informed SUPP that the matter would be raised for discussion at the BN Supreme Council at a later stage.⁴⁵ In the end, however, the Prime Minister convinced SUPP that it would be better to stick to the BN symbol. He also allowed Sarawak to defer the state elections to 1979. At that time Hussein Onn could not afford any more instability within the BN as he had yet to resolve the internal splits within UMNO and the problems in Sabah and Kelantan.⁴⁶

SUPP was allocated seven parliamentary constituencies: Bandar Kuching, Sibu, Sarikei, Rajang, Lambir, Padawan, and Serian. The incumbent Sibu MP, Wee Hoe Soon, who had now joined the SUPP dissident group, was dropped from the line-up of SUPP candidates. The Miri-Subis MP, Yang Siew Siang, was also dropped in favour of the Miri state assemblyman, Chia Chin Shin. All the other SUPP MPs were retained. The seven parliamentary constituencies allocated to SUPP were two less than in the 1974 polls, when it was given nine. This was due to the inclusion of SNAP in the coalition government which then meant that seat allocation had to be divided among all three component parties: PBB, SUPP, and SNAP. Moreover, BN seat allocation rule was that component parties were automatically given the constituencies they had won in the previous election. Since SUPP had won seven out of the nine constituencies it contested in 1974, it could only be allocated seven this time round.

Three other minor parties that participated in the 1979 polls were: United Malaysia Timur Party (UMAT), founded and led by Nelson Kundai Ngareng; Peace Party, founded and led by a Malay; and Sarawak People's Organization (SAPO), led by Raymond Szetu Mei Thong. Both Nelson Kundai Ngareng and Raymond Szetu were former SNAP members. Ngareng was elected under the SNAP banner in 1970 before switching to Parti Bumiputera while Szetu quit SNAP in 1976 in protest at the party's decision to join the coalition government.⁴⁷

On nomination day, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze won the Padawan seat unopposed. Also unopposed were Luhut Wan (SNAP) in Baram and Racha Unong (PBB) in Bukit Mas. In other words, one candidate from each of the Sarawak BN coalition partners won their seats uncontested.

Campaign Issues and Tactics

While Abdul Rahman Yakub was preoccupied with PAJAR, SUPP's main electoral battle was with the group of party dissidents who now stood as independents in the Rejang basin and the Lambir constituencies in Miri.

In the Bandar Kuching constituency, the contest between Ong Kee Hui and independent Leong Ho Yeun became a 'no contest' when Leong announced that he was withdrawing and urged support for Ong.⁴⁸ Leong said he made the decision after talks with Rahman Yakub, in which the latter promised that he would help Leong secure a permit to publish his *Sarawak Vanguard* newspaper again. Moreover, according to Leong, had he beaten Ong, 'SUPP might collapse'.⁴⁹ In the Rejang basin, the three SUPP dissidents—Chong Siew Chiang, Chieng Hie Kwong, and Yong Ping Kuai—stood in the constituencies of Sarikei, Bandar Sibul, and Rajang, respectively. For the Sarikei and Bandar Sibul constituencies, it was a straight fight between these independents against SUPP. Chiong Tiong Kai was the Sarikei SUPP candidate, while Wong Soon Kai stood for the party in Bandar Sibul. In the Rajang constituency, it was a three-cornered fight: Jawan Empaling (SUPP); Yong Ping Kuai (independent); and Jaga ak Buan (independent).

The three dissident independents adopted a united strategy and campaign. Their main slogan was that SUPP had lost direction and abandoned the Chinese. In their manifesto the three promised to seek recognition of degrees from Taiwanese and Chinese-medium universities, to safeguard Chinese education, provide more Chinese programmes on television, and of course to fight for equal political and economic rights for the Chinese.⁵⁰ The trio was backed by the SUPP state assemblyman for Igan, Ling Beng Siong.⁵¹ Ling made a series of statements that damaged SUPP's Rajang candidate, Jawan Empaling.⁵² In the middle of the campaign, Democratic Action Party (DAP) political bureau director and Kuala Lumpur MP, Lee Lam Thye, tried to enter Sarawak, presumably to help the three independents. He was denied entry.⁵³

SUPP hit back at the three independents, accusing them of betraying their comrades in SUPP⁵⁴ and of wanting to destroy Chinese unity. Each

of the independents was also individually targeted. Chieng, in particular, was targeted on the issue of Chinese education. Because Chieng was a bank manager, he was attacked for not taking in more employees with a Chinese education.⁵⁵ The SUPP campaign satirized the independents' 'three keys' symbol as: '(a) The first key is to lock the banks and timber, and reserve other wealth for the rich; (b) the second key is used to squeeze the poor further and create more wealth for the rich; and (c) the third key is to lock the poor so they would remain poor forever.'⁵⁶ SUPP also claimed that voting for the independents might cause an anti-Chinese backlash and the re-imposition of curfew.⁵⁷ Non-Chinese voters were warned that the Chinese independents would agitate for Mandarin as a national language.⁵⁸

In the Lambir constituency, SAPO's only candidate and party founder, the young Chinese lawyer, Raymond Szetu Mei Thong, was initially not taken seriously by SUPP's Chia Chin Shin. SAPO, after all, was formed just a few months before the election and had no real organizational or electoral machinery to speak of. Moreover, Chia was a political heavy-weight, having already won the Miri constituency twice; in 1974, Chia's majority was 1,821. This was a comfortable margin which he thought could be carried over into the forthcoming election. However, it became increasingly clear towards the end of the campaign that Chia was in danger, as Raymond Szetu cleverly used three local issues to undermine SUPP. These were: the squatter problem, oil revenue, and unemployment.⁵⁹

At that time, the town of Miri was beset by severe problems with squatters and unemployment. SAPO charged that there were too many federal officers serving in Sarawak, thus depriving locals the chance of promotion or other opportunities. With regard to oil revenue, Szetu attacked the state government for its inability to get a fair share of the petroleum proceeds from the federal government.⁶⁰ SAPO's argument was that the Sarawak government should have asked for at least 50 per cent of the oil revenue. This struck a chord with many Miri residents.⁶¹

The Election Results

Overall the BN performed quite adequately nation-wide. It took 130 of the 154 parliamentary seats, thus easily securing the two-thirds majority again. However, the opposition made gains as well. DAP increased its parliamentary seats from 9 to 16, including, for the first time, a Sabah constituency. The Sarawak BN performed even better. It won 23 out of 24 parliamentary seats (Table 7.1). PAJAR's challenge to PBB did not materialize, and the challenge from the three independents in the Rejang basin was also unsuccessful. The only loss sustained was that of SUPP's Chia Chin Shin to SAPO's Raymond Szetu Mei Thong in Lambir.

The election results indicated that the Chinese community was still voting for SUPP (Table 7.2), despite a strong challenge from the dissident independents. Of the three constituencies where the dissidents

TABLE 7.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1978 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sarawak BN		23 (24)
PBB	8 (8) ^a	
SNAP ^b	9 (9)	
SUPP	6 (7)	
Independent	1 (-)	1
Total		24 (24)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent 1974 election results.

^bIn 1974 SNAP was in the opposition.

TABLE 7.2
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary Constituencies,
1970, 1974, and 1978 Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	<i>1970</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>1978</i>
Bandar Kuching	12,126 (+77) ^a	2,863 (+13)	14,813 (+57)
Padawan	2,447 (+22)	2,040 (+16)	Unopposed
Serian	-2,008 ^b (-15)	213 (+1)	2,476 (+15)
Sarikei	-704 ^c (-7)	3,446 (+35)	1,388 (+10)
Bandar Sibü	4,095 (+31)	1,131 (+9)	6,753 ^c (+33)
Rajang	684 ^d (+7)	1,406 (+13)	2,157 ^e (+18)
Lambir (Miri-Subis) ^f	-499 ^b (-5)	1,615 (+9)	-872 ^c (-4)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bWon by SNAP in 1970.

^cWon by SCA in 1970.

^dMajority obtained in the Rajang by-election in January 1974.

^eNew SUPP candidate.

^fFormer name of constituency.

contested, they were only able to make an impression in the Sarikei constituency. This was reflected by SUPP's majority there of only 1,388 whereas in 1974 its majority was 3,446 (or a plunge from a 35 per cent majority vote to a mere 10 per cent). This decrease in SUPP's majority was probably due to Chong Siew Chiang's personal following. Chong, the Council Negri member for the area, was a full-time lawyer who had undertaken free legal work for some of his constituents. But in Bandar Sibü, Wong Soon Kai successfully increased the SUPP majority from 1,131 in 1974 to 6,753 in this election. The majority percentage increased from 9 per cent in 1974 to 33 per cent in 1978. In effect, Wong managed

to win back almost all the protest votes that went to the then opposition, SNAP, in 1974. This pattern was repeated in the nearby constituency of Rajang, and in Bandar Kuching. In 1974, the SUPP candidate's majority in Rajang was 1,406; in 1978 this increased to 2,157. In Bandar Kuching, Ong Kee Hui's majority of 14,183 was close to the 12,126 majority he won in 1970. In 1974, Ong's majority was reduced to 2,863. But with the 1978 results, it showed quite clearly that Ong had regained lost ground.⁶²

Despite his stature in the Miri community, Chia Chin Shin lost by 872 votes. In 1974, the then SUPP candidate, Yang Siew Siang, had won with a 1,615 majority. SAPO's winning margin of more than 800 votes indicated a swing (against SUPP) of slightly more than 10 per cent.

In the predominantly Bidayuh constituency of Serian, Richard Dampeng successfully consolidated the SUPP hold, from a 213 majority in 1974 to 2,476 in 1978 or from a 1 per cent majority vote to 15 per cent.

Overall, SUPP's record in the 1978 polls was quite good. It managed to recover almost all the electoral ground it had lost to SNAP in 1974. SUPP managed to win six out of seven seats, a success rate of more than 85 per cent.

Abdul Rahman Yakub's Resignation Announcement

After the 1978 parliamentary polls, the SUPP Youth wing again called for the party to use its 'three rings' symbol instead of the *dacing* symbol. This call was made in anticipation of an early state election.⁶³ It was felt that by using SUPP's own symbol, it could show its electoral strength as well as express its unhappiness with Abdul Rahman Yakub.⁶⁴ By August 1978 the relationship between Rahman Yakub and SUPP was close to breaking point. The issue of the fate of the Sarawak BN coalition came to a head on 12 September 1978, when Rahman Yakub announced that he was going to resign⁶⁵ due to SUPP's constant undermining of his position. What had happened was that in May 1978 an SUPP delegation led by Stephen Yong Kuet Tze met the Prime Minister, Hussein Onn, and asked him to get rid of Rahman Yakub. When the Prime Minister inquired who would replace Rahman Yakub in the event he got rid of him, Yong immediately suggested Abdul Taib Mahmud.⁶⁶

A month after the resignation announcement, the Prime Minister called for a meeting with PBB, SNAP, and SUPP leaders to discuss Rahman Yakub's position. The night before the meeting, SNAP asked Stephen Yong and SUPP for their support in selecting a SNAP leader, presumably Dunstan Endawie ak Enchana, as the next chief minister. However, at the meeting the next morning, to Yong's shock, the SNAP delegation said that if Rahman Yakub changed his mind about his resignation, SNAP would respect it. Someone then suggested it might not be a good move to change the chief minister at this time when a state election was near. Endawie agreed with this suggestion, and the whole idea of unseating Rahman Yakub was dropped.⁶⁷ By mid-October 1978, after SUPP's unsuccessful attempt to get rid of him via Kuala Lumpur,

Rahman Yakub announced his intention to stay on for 'the time being'. A fortnight earlier, the DAP Secretary-General, Lim Kit Siang, arrived in Sarawak for a tour of the party's branches.⁶⁸

Chong Siew Chiang and the DAP's Entry into Sarawak

The DAP's arrival in Sarawak⁶⁹ can be traced to the group of SUPP dissidents who put up independent candidates in the Rejang basin in 1978. After their election loss, this group felt that joining DAP would be the easiest option as the majority of the group subscribed to DAP's ideology of a Malaysian Malaysia.⁷⁰ Moreover, some felt it was important to be part of a national political organization instead of just being a local Sarawak-based political party. After deciding that the DAP was the preferred option, Chong Siew Chiang and Ling Sie Ming flew to Kuala Lumpur to meet DAP's Secretary-General, Lim Kit Siang. Before the trip, Chong rang Abdul Rahman Yakub to inform him that he intended to bring the DAP into Sarawak. Lim Kit Siang had previously been denied entry into Sarawak by Rahman Yakub, so Chong wanted the chief minister's assurance that Lim would not be barred from Sarawak on this occasion.⁷¹ Rahman Yakub told Chong that Lim would be permitted to enter Sarawak if there was a DAP branch there; otherwise, he would still be barred as Lim would have no political interests in Sarawak. By the end of August 1978, DAP had established branches in Sarikei, Sibul, and Kuching. With Chong as a founding member of Sarawak DAP, the party had instant representation in the Council Negri.

The formation of the Sarawak DAP could be attributed to the coming together of three distinct groups. The first was a small group of influential SUPP members who could not get along with the SUPP leadership. Chong Siew Chiang is the prime example. In the second group were SUPP members who were sidelined after the Sibul branch crisis in 1976. The third group comprised former SCA members looking for an opportunity to start a political party to challenge SUPP; these former SCA members had never forgiven SUPP for indirectly causing the demise of their party in 1973.

DAP's entry into Sarawak naturally confirmed the suspicions of the SUPP leadership that Rahman Yakub was out to destroy or weaken their party. After all Rahman Yakub had the power, which he had used previously, to refuse DAP leaders entry to Sarawak. This suspicion was reinforced by the establishment of the three new DAP branches which were conveniently located in the major urban areas where the Chinese predominated and where the bulk of SUPP supporters were found. In other words, SUPP saw DAP's entry as nothing more than Rahman Yakub's attempt to split the Chinese vote, and accordingly weaken SUPP.

The 1978 Delegates Meeting

The 1978 Delegates Meeting, held in December that year, turned out to be a stormy affair.⁷² Many were angry with the leadership's inability to stop DAP's entry into Sarawak, its ineffectiveness over the land issue, and the strained relations between PBB and SUPP. The more radical members were incensed at the party's backdown over the SUPP's 'three rings' symbol, and the Merdeka University issue.⁷³

However, the issue that erupted into open conflict was the election of a Youth leader to succeed Wong Soon Kai who had completed his two-year term. The Youth leadership contest was between Anthony Teo Tiao Gin and Lim Lai Tek. Anthony Teo was the state assemblyman for Binatang while Lim had been deputy Youth leader under Wong. Before voting began, a compromise list of candidates for the executive members of SUPP Youth Central, was agreed upon by most of the branches. However, during the actual voting, the Kuching, Binatang, and Kanowit branches did not abide by the earlier agreement, and instead supported only their own candidates. The other branches—Miri, Sibul, and Sarikei—thus lost out. These branches then decided not to recognize Anthony Teo as Youth leader. In addition, delegates from these branches accused the leadership of Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze of covertly supporting Teo, thus aggravating the split.⁷⁴

Party delegates were also unhappy with the leadership which seemed incapable of dealing with Abdul Rahman Yakub and promoting SUPP's interests. When they voted for the leadership of the party, Ong and Yong barely scrapped into the top ten, with the top five vote getters belonging to another group.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Ong and Yong retained their respective positions of chairman and Secretary-General. The vote was meant as a signal to the leadership that delegates were unhappy with them.

The 1979 State Election

State of Parties before the Election

In March 1979, a by-election was held in the renamed Padungan (formerly Kuching Timur) state constituency. The post had been vacant since January when the incumbent, SNAP's Lo Foot Kee, died. Sensing an opportunity to test its electoral strength and regain this Chinese-majority seat, SUPP decided to back an independent, Chua Kock Meng. Chai Ching Fea, acting chairman of SNAP's Padungan branch, was the Sarawak BN's official candidate. When the results were announced on 17 March, SUPP had successfully regained the constituency: Chua polled 8,122 votes to Chai's 2,385, giving him a majority of 5,737.⁷⁶ This was close to the 6,571 majority won by Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in the 1970 polls before he lost in 1974. However, the result did not mean that the Chinese voters in Padungan had swung their support back to

SUPP. Rather it meant that the Chinese voters in Padungan knew that both candidates were on the side of the government and thus, in the absence of a real opposition, the Chinese voters decided that Chinese-based SUPP was preferable to the Dayak-led SNAP.

Considering the strained relations between SUPP and PBB, it was not surprising that the 1979 polls were difficult for all concerned. PBB, especially Abdul Rahman Yakub himself, was again under threat from PAJAR.⁷⁷ SNAP, the third coalition partner, was also unhappy with Rahman Yakub. This dissatisfaction stemmed from the Cabinet posts given to SNAP after it joined the coalition in 1976. SNAP felt, correctly, that these were posts of little importance and influence.⁷⁸ In addition, SNAP felt it was being squeezed from both sides in the increasingly bitter fight between SUPP and PBB. SUPP was also unhappy towards SNAP over the attempt to get rid of Rahman Yakub in 1978, while the SNAP leadership had not forgotten SUPP's 'betrayal' in July 1970.⁷⁹

For SUPP, the coming election was perhaps the most difficult yet, as it faced threats from two sides. It knew that on the one hand, DAP could challenge SUPP in the Chinese-majority seats. On the other hand, there was every possibility that PBB would sponsor independents to bring down SUPP. These independents would either split the Chinese votes, ensuring a win for DAP, or win the constituencies outright.

After much haggling within the Sarawak BN over the issues of seat allocation and symbols, both were solved to the satisfaction of none. It was agreed that all parties in the Sarawak BN would still contest under the *dacing* symbol. The Sarawak BN would field candidates in all the 48 constituencies and SUPP would be allocated 12, that is, four less than in the 1974 polls. PBB and SNAP each got 18 constituencies. Thus, all three BN parties were allocated the same number of seats that they had won in 1974. This was consistent with the rule that component parties were given first preference in defending their seats. Unhappy with the number of constituency allocation due to this rule, SUPP decided to field independents. The most obvious of these was Tan Meng Chong in Padungan.⁸⁰ SUPP felt that Padungan should have been allocated to them, since Chua, the SUPP-backed independent, had just won the seat. Other SUPP-backed independents were in the constituencies of Limbang and Tasik Biru.⁸¹

The 12 constituencies contested by official SUPP candidates were: Stampin, Batu Kawah, Repok, Meradong, Maling, Seduan, Miri, Igan, Sri Aman, Bengoh, Lundu, and Belaga. The first seven were Chinese, the last five, Dayak-majority seats. SUPP introduced two newcomers, David Teng Lung Chi and David Tiong Chiong Chu.⁸² Stephen Yong, who could not return to his old constituency of Padungan as it was officially allocated to SNAP, decided to stand in the relatively safe Bidayuh-majority constituency of Bengoh.

On the opposition side, PAJAR led the field with 17 candidates. DAP fielded 11 candidates,⁸³ SAPO 5, and UMAT 1. There were also 53 independent candidates.⁸⁴

Campaign Issues and Tactics

Campaign issues once more differed between racial groups. For the Malay/Melanau community, PAJAR's personal attacks on Abdul Rahman Yakub again dominated political discussions.⁸⁵ For the Chinese community, the key issue was the presence of the DAP, which in turn raised Chinese issues. PAJAR did not make much impact on the Chinese voters.⁸⁶

In the Padungan seat, SNAP's candidate was Hj Shahbuddin Cheng Yew Kiew. In addition, there was the SUPP-backed independent, Tan Meng Chong,⁸⁷ two other independents, and DAP's Sim Kwang Yang.⁸⁸ Even before the campaign got under way, general opinion had it that the real fight was between SUPP and DAP.⁸⁹ Because SNAP's candidate was a Chinese Muslim convert, he simply did not stand a chance in this overwhelmingly Chinese constituency.⁹⁰

The perception that SUPP would have its main fight with DAP is reflected in the other seven Chinese-majority seats; with the exception of Batu Kawah, there was a DAP candidate in each of the others.⁹¹ With immigration restrictions lifted, DAP also brought in its national leaders, such as Lim Kit Siang and Lee Lam Thye, for the campaign.⁹² In the other constituencies around Kuching, SUPP's Sim Kheng Hong and Chong Kiun Kong were well entrenched in their Stampin and Batu Kawah constituencies. Sim, the deputy chief minister, had built up a powerful patronage network in his constituency. DAP's challenger to him was a political novice, Chan Kay Heng, who was the DAP Kuching branch chairman and a lawyer by profession. In his constituency, Chong Kiun Kong was never in danger as the independent candidate there, Angga ak Soret, was never taken seriously by the electorate.

In the Rejang basin, the DAP challenge was again led by Chong Siew Chiang. He stood as the incumbent for the Repok constituency. SUPP decided to field another lawyer, David Teng Lung Chi,⁹³ against Chong. In Maling, Wong Soon Kai⁹⁴ faced Ling Sie Ming, the DAP Sibu branch secretary. It was a straight fight between SUPP and DAP in both these constituencies. In the other two Chinese constituencies in the Rejang basin, Seduan and Meradong, Ting Ing Mieng and Anthony Teo Tiao Gin were renominated by SUPP.⁹⁵ However, neither of these was a straight fight between DAP and SUPP; in Seduan there was one independent, while in Meradong there were three.

DAP's 25-point manifesto stressed the Barisan's monopoly on politics and the consequent need for an opposition. In one of its campaign open letters DAP claimed that

the choice confronting the people in the 1979 state general election, is the life or death of democracy in Sarawak. We in DAP are convinced that if the one-party monopoly of Sarawak politics is allowed to continue, the BN will eventually repress and stifle all channels of expressing people's discontent. Without a strong fearless opposition to serve as a watchdog against government maladministration, democracy will die a natural death in our state.⁹⁶

Another issue raised by DAP in the Chinese constituencies was government discrimination against the non-*bumiputera*, especially in education. DAP was referring to a plan by some Chinese educationalists to set up Merdeka University, a university that would use Mandarin as the medium of instruction. Another issue was section 21 of the Education Act 1961, which empowered the government to forcefully convert any Chinese primary school into a national type school. The decreasing quota for non-*bumiputera* in tertiary institutions, to less than 40 per cent in the 1970s, was also used to show that SUPP's 'participation in government' had been a 'complete failure', as far as representing and promoting Chinese interests was concerned.

SUPP, as a member of the ruling BN, attacked DAP not so much on its political rhetoric but on the fact that DAP was an 'outsider', coming into Sarawak to disrupt Chinese unity. This was a clear reference to DAP's foundation in Peninsular Malaysia.⁹⁷

The other Chinese constituency that generated much interest was Miri, where SUPP's Chia Chin Shin was defending his seat against SAPO's Raymond Szetu Mei Thong. Raymond Szetu had defeated Chia in the parliamentary election about a year earlier. This time the Miri SUPP machinery went on the counter-offensive. They attacked Szetu on his inability to resolve problems such as the squatters issue since his election as MP. Szetu himself had successfully used this issue in the 1978 parliamentary polls. SUPP now reminded Miri voters that Chia was the one responsible for the resettlement schemes for squatters.⁹⁸ The voters were also reminded that only the SUPP-elected representatives had access to the minor-rural-project funds which could directly benefit constituents.

In the SUPP Dayak constituencies, Bengoh and Belaga generated the most interest. In Bengoh, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was challenged by a PBB-backed independent⁹⁹, Wilfred Nissom, and a DAP candidate, Shyu Li Hua. Shyu was not taken seriously in this predominantly Bidayuh constituency.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, Wilfred Nissom posed a real threat to Stephen Yong when he made a communal appeal to the Bidayuh to support him as he was one of their own.¹⁰¹ Yong's decision to stand in Bengoh had also displaced the incumbent, an SUPP Bidayuh, and Nissom described this action as discarding 'even what little there was of SUPP token recognition and respect for the Bidayuhs'.¹⁰²

In Belaga, the SUPP candidate, Nyipa Batok, was opposed by his relative, Tajang Laing, the same candidate he had faced in 1974. Tajang then lost by a mere 37 votes in a straight fight. In the 1979 polls, Tajang was seen to have an edge over Nyipa Batok as he was more popular with the constituents. Shortly before the election, Tajang was organizer of a popular local regatta. His wife and daughter, who were talented cultural dancers, had enhanced his status in the Dayak electorate.¹⁰³

The Election Results

RESULTS IN THE SUPP CHINESE CONSTITUENCIES

In the Padungan by-election in March 1979, the 5,737 majority obtained by the SUPP-backed independent, Chua Kock Meng, was due to the absence of a strong opposition candidate. Had there been a formidable opposition contender in Padungan, it is unlikely that he would have achieved this high majority (Table 7.3). During the state elections, however, the Chinese electors in Padungan had a real opposition candidate in DAP's Sim Kwang Yang, who managed to poll 5,877 votes. SUPP-backed independent, Tan Meng Chong, managed to win by a reduced majority of 2,164. However, the majority percentage remained unchanged, with SUPP still holding about 15 per cent lead over its opponents.

In all eight Chinese constituencies (see Table 7.3) it can clearly be seen that SUPP's attempt to recover the Chinese vote it lost in 1974 was only partially successful. In three of these constituencies (Stampin, Batu Kawah, and Maling), SUPP increased its majority, both in outright

TABLE 7.3
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Chinese Constituencies,
1974 and 1979 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>	
	<i>1974</i>	<i>1979</i>
Padungan (Kuching Timur) ^a	-1,435 (-14) ^b	2,164 ^c (+13)
Stampin (Sekama)	1,155 (+13)	5,737 ^d (+15)
Batu Kawah	1,503 (+19)	7,115 (+46)
Repok	818 (+17)	5,162 (+54)
Meradong (Binatang)	1,852 (+24)	339 ^e (+4)
Maling (Sibu Tengah)	666 (+9)	939 (+12)
Seduan (Sibu Luar)	1,419 ^c (+26)	1,730 ^e (+10)
Miri	1,821 (+19)	1,638 ^c (+20)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aNames in brackets are the former constituency names.

^bFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^cMajority polled by SUPP-backed independent, Tan Meng Chong.

^dMajority obtained by SUPP-backed independent, Chua Kock Meng, in the March 1979 by-election.

^eNew SUPP candidates.

^fSUPP candidate for Seduan, Ting Ing Mieng, lost the Dudong constituency which is located next to the Seduan constituency, in the 1974 polls. The Dudong constituency is not among those given above.

votes and in majority percentage. The most significant gains were made in Stampin and Batu Kawah (5,960 and 3,663 votes respectively). In Stampin, this gain was due primarily to the patronage network of Sim Kheng Hong. In Batu Kawah, Chong Kiun Kong had the advantage of facing an unknown independent. The increased majority in Maling, although not significant in terms of majority percentage, was due to Wong Soon Kai's personal popularity. In nearby Seduan, however, the increase on the 1974 majority was not significant—only 219 votes—and SUPP's majority percentage reduced by about 6 per cent. This drop was probably due to the SUPP candidate who was a newcomer to the constituency.

In the other four seats (Padungan, Repok, Meradong, and Miri), the SUPP majority decreased. This was especially so in Repok, where SUPP's David Teng Lung Chi had to fight off a strong challenge from DAP's Chong Siew Chiang. Here, SUPP's majority percentage dropped three-quarters to just 4 per cent. DAP's strong performance could be attributed to Chong's incumbency and personal following. The SUPP majority in Meradong was also significantly decreased by half, although the anti-SUPP votes did not all go to the DAP candidate. Rather, the anti-SUPP vote was shared between the DAP candidate, Tang Ling Tung, and an independent, Teo Siang Hai. Anthony Teo Tiao Gin (SUPP) polled 3,126 votes, Tang (DAP) 2,187, and Teo (independent) 1,831. It could be argued that had Meradong been a straight fight between DAP and SUPP, DAP would have taken the independent's votes and won the seat.

Despite the fact that this was DAP's first electoral contest in Sarawak, the party managed to poll a respectable 32,893 votes, about 10.3 per cent of all valid votes.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, these votes constituted 30.9 per cent of the total valid vote cast in the 11 constituencies where DAP fielded candidates. This is highly significant considering that 7 of these 11 constituencies were urban, Chinese plurality seats. The strong showing by DAP in the 1979 state election heralded a significant long-term change in the character of Sarawak Chinese politics.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP DAYAK CONSTITUENCIES

Although SUPP won four of its five Dayak-majority constituencies, a closer look at the majorities obtained suggests there was a further erosion of Dayak support for the party (Table 7.4). In three of the Dayak constituencies won by SUPP, the candidates' 1974 majorities actually dropped substantially.

In Lundu, SUPP's majority was cut from 991 to a paltry 7, while in Bengoh the majority was halved. The swing against the SUPP candidate was even more substantial in the Belaga constituency, where the candidate lost by more than 700 votes. This significant anti-SUPP swing gave credence to the SUPP's allegation that in each of these constituencies, one of the independents was backed by another political party, probably the PBB.¹⁰⁵

TABLE 7.4
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Dayak Constituencies,
1974 and 1979 State Elections

Constituency	Margin of Victory/Loss	
	1974	1979
Lundu	991 (+17) ^a	7 (+0.01)
Bengoh	417 (+9)	221 ^b (+3)
Sri Aman	542 (+7)	1,282 (+15)
Igan	1,730 (+30)	272 ^b (+5)
Belaga	37 (+1)	-760 (-23)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidates.

In Igan, the majority obtained was just one-sixth of that won in 1974. This was due to two factors: first, the incumbent, Ling Beng Siong, had campaigned against SUPP. Ling still retained his influence and credibility among the electorate despite the fact that he had earlier been expelled from SUPP.¹⁰⁶ Second, DAP had made an impact on the Chinese voters, who made up about 35 per cent of the electorate. These two factors combined resulted in the low vote for SUPP.

The Electoral Performance

The 1979 polls were held under difficult conditions for SUPP. DAP's participation meant Chinese voters had a choice of two Chinese-based parties. In addition, because of the infighting among the Sarawak BN component parties, there were well-founded accusations of fake 'independents' affecting SUPP's electoral performance. These 'independents' made an impact on at least three constituencies and even won in one of them.

To be fair, however, SUPP also secretly backed some independents. The most obvious case was in the Padungan constituency, where the only successful SUPP-backed independent candidate stood. The other two such independents, in the Limbang and Tasik Biru constituencies, did not win, although the Tasik Biru independent did make a mild impact.¹⁰⁷

Officially, SUPP managed to win 11 out of the 12 constituencies it was allocated by the Sarawak BN. In reality, however, the Padungan win effectively gave the party 12 Council Negri members. This was a gain of one, as the party entered the election with only 11.¹⁰⁸ SUPP's 12 seats were the same number it won in the 1970 and 1974 polls, hence the party did not make any direct gain compared to previous state elections. More satisfying to SUPP was the fact that it managed to hold all Chinese constituencies against DAP. The 1979 state election confirmed that despite DAP's inroads into the Chinese community, it was unable to dislodge SUPP in all the Chinese-majority seats.

As for the other parties, PBB managed to win all its 18 seats. SNAP had to be content with only 16 with a loss of 2 seats. The formal state of the parties was thus: PBB 18, SNAP 16, SUPP 11, and independents 3. In reality, SUPP had one extra Council Negri vote from the Padungan independent, while PBB could probably rely on the support of the other two. A more realistic picture of the Council Negri was: PBB 20, SNAP 16, and SUPP 12.

Aftermath of the 1979 Polls

Before the 1979 election, SUPP Youth had put up a resolution calling on the party to nominate Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (if he won a state seat) to be the deputy chief minister again. Abdul Rahman Yakub knew of this. Thus when he appointed members to the state Cabinet—strictly the chief minister's prerogative—he pointedly omitted Stephen Yong and picked Sim Kheng Hong, Wong Soon Kai, and Chong Kiun Kong from SUPP. All three had served in the previous Cabinet and Sim was useful in countering Yong's influence in the SUPP Kuching branch. For Stephen Yong, the state election was both a win and a loss: he had successfully made a come-back to state politics by winning the Bengoh constituency, but was unable to regain the deputy chief ministership he coveted.¹⁰⁹

By not selecting Yong, Abdul Rahman Yakub ensured the continuing friction between himself and SUPP, while Yong and his allies waited for an opportunity to get rid of him. As the conflict with SUPP increasingly became public, Rahman Yakub found it more difficult to govern Sarawak. SUPP undermined him at every opportunity, both at state and at federal level. Rahman Yakub's tactic of playing SNAP off against SUPP did not work anymore as SNAP too was unhappy with him. SNAP believed that PBB had supported two successful independents against official Sarawak BN-SNAP candidates in the recent election.

In addition to his political problems, Rahman Yakub's health was failing and he underwent a bypass operation in London in early 1981.¹¹⁰ All these factors no doubt contributed to his decision to relinquish the post he had held for more than a decade. Rahman Yakub then arranged for his nephew, Abdul Taib Mahmud, to be his successor, with himself elevated to the post of Yang di-Pertua Negeri.¹¹¹

Although SUPP played no direct part in selecting Taib Mahmud for the chief ministership, the party was delighted. During the meeting with Hussein Onn in 1978, Yong himself had suggested Taib as Rahman Yakub's successor as he was seen as less Machiavellian than his uncle. Moreover, he did not have any feud with any of the top SUPP leaders. On 26 March 1981, Taib, who had resigned his federal Cabinet post and won a by-election in a state constituency a month earlier, formally took over as chief minister of Sarawak. Rahman Yakub was installed as the Yang di-Pertua Negeri six days later. SUPP had finally succeeded in getting rid of Rahman Yakub. Rahman Yakub's rule had ended, at least formally.

Conclusion

The period from the aftermath of the 1974 polls until March 1981 was turbulent in the party's history. The main cause of this was SUPP's continuing attempts to bring Abdul Rahman Yakub down. This campaign to unseat Rahman Yakub began for two reasons. First, sections of the party blamed the poor 1974 electoral showings not only on SUPP's decision to join the coalition government with Parti Bumiputera, but also on its consequent failure to assert itself as an equal partner in the coalition. They blamed Rahman Yakub personally for this state of affairs and felt that if SUPP had been able to assert itself and promote its interests, the party would not have lost heavily to SNAP in 1974. They further blamed Rahman Yakub for SUPP's inability to rebuild its support base among the voters, especially the Chinese, given his pro-PBB, pro-*bumiputera*, and pro-Islam policies which alienated many ethnic Chinese.

Second, the blame for Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's failure to get back into Cabinet after 1974 was also placed solely on Rahman Yakub. Many of Stephen Yong's supporters in the party felt that Rahman Yakub wanted to exclude Yong because the latter was the only SUPP minister capable of standing up to him in Cabinet. Yong's key position as SUPP Secretary-General meant he was able to mobilize a cross-section of the party against Rahman Yakub. Thus the personal animosity between them also became SUPP's bad relationship with Rahman Yakub. This set the stage for SUPP's repeated attempts to bring Rahman Yakub down, from asking him to resign to demanding his resignation from the Prime Minister. Although some sections of the party wanted SUPP to withdraw from the coalition, the party leadership was aware that if SUPP were to leave the coalition, it would lose whatever advantages it enjoyed as a member of the ruling body. It could be argued that SUPP's experiences as an opposition party in the 1960s¹¹² caused the leadership to shy away from this course of action. Rahman Yakub saw this as their Achilles' heel and quickly tried to weaken SUPP by promoting individuals in the party to counter the Secretary-General's influence. The PBB also tried to weaken SUPP by putting up 'independents' during the 1979 state elections. Rahman Yakub's chances of political survival were greatly boosted when he engineered SNAP's admission into the Sarawak BN in 1976, eliminating SUPP's ability to hold the balance of power in the Council Negri. The 12 SUPP state seats were suddenly no longer essential to the survival of Rahman Yakub's government. DAP's entry into the Sarawak political arena in late 1978 was a further attempt to weaken SUPP. It gave the SUPP's main constituents, the Sarawak Chinese, an opposition party that articulated Chinese issues and offered a credible alternative to SUPP. Although DAP failed to win any seats, its presence did make a significant impact, and split a segment of the crucial Chinese vote. But more importantly, DAP's presence permanently altered the voting pattern of the Chinese community.

Within SUPP itself, several crises, especially from 1976 to 1978, saw major changes and challenges to the party. The Sibuan branch split caused

a comprehensive change of personnel in the branch, and saw the emergence of Wong Soon Kai as the key power broker in the Rejang basin. The split also led indirectly to the formation of the Sarawak DAP. Another internal split over the selection of the Youth leader, at the 1978 Delegates Meeting, caused some agitation within the party ranks. However, the formation of its Youth and *Wanita* sections helped to strengthen the party.

After the 1979 state election, it was clear that relations between Rahman Yakub and Yong, and by extension between PBB and SUPP, were strained beyond the point of reconciliation. Coupled with problems from SNAP and his failing health, Rahman Yakub found it convenient to exit from the chief minister's office in 1981, but not before he nominated his successor and elevated himself to the position of Yang di-Pertua Negeri.

The two elections held over this period, the 1978 parliamentary election and the 1979 state election, offer some interesting observations. In particular there emerged the trend among the Sarawak BN component parties to use 'independent' candidates for constituencies they were not allocated under the Sarawak BN. For SUPP, the election results, especially in the Dayak constituencies, showed that it never recovered lost ground among its Dayak supporters who went over to SNAP in 1974. The 1979 election result of the SUPP Dayak constituencies were certainly of no comfort to SUPP. More satisfying for SUPP was its ability to hold on to the majority of Chinese voters. While DAP did manage to get a hold of about 10 per cent of the votes, this was not enough for DAP to dislodge any SUPP candidates.

This difficult period for SUPP ended when Rahman Yakub stepped down as chief minister in March 1981. Unknown to SUPP, this was not the end of Rahman Yakub's active career in Sarawak politics.

1. There were widespread rumours that the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) would form a coalition government with the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) but Stephen Yong Kuet Tze consistently denied it. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 August 1974.

2. Interview with Abdul Rahman Yakub.

3. Interview with a senior SUPP member from the Rejang basin.

4. The SUPP state assemblyman was probably Sim Kheng Hong, who had won in the constituency of Sekama. Interview with Chong Siew Chiang, an SUPP Council Negri member who won in 1974. This account was repeated in an interview with Rahman Yakub.

5. Interview with Abdul Rahman Yakub.

6. Rahman Yakub said that Sim Kheng Hong was personally popular with the Sekama constituents, while Stephen Yong's support among them was uncertain. Moreover, Rahman Yakub felt that Yong should accept defeat as 'it was the people's will'. (Ibid.)

7. Interview with Rahman Yakub. Stephen Yong, in an interview, denied these allegations.

8. Rahman Yakub, in an interview, stressed that he never had problems with SUPP itself, just with Stephen Yong.

9. Interview with Stephen Kalong Ningkan.
10. The charge read that James Wong Kim Min was detained for 'acts prejudicial to the security of the state' and 'had revealed their complicity with foreign powers against Malaysian interests'. For James Wong's own account of the entire episode, see James Wong Kim Min, *The Price of Loyalty*, Singapore: Summer Times, 1983; see also *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 November 1974.
11. At that time, James Wong was one of the few wealthy businessmen involved with SNAP.
12. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 February 1976.
13. SNAP had 18 seats compared to SUPP's 12. In an interview with a senior SUPP minister, he said the party had wanted to nominate another minister (for the Welfare portfolio, which was eventually given to SNAP in 1976) immediately after the 1974 polls. Rahman Yakub refused, saying that there was no hurry. With hindsight, this SUPP minister believed Rahman Yakub had already 'reserved' that portfolio for SNAP's eventual inclusion in his government.
14. In an interview with Rahman Yakub, he said he never had any problems with Sim Kheng Hong and found him better to work with than Stephen Yong.
15. In interviews with senior SUPP officers, it was claimed that from 1976 onwards more than 400 people in and around Kuching were receiving 'one or two hundred' dollars each month directly from Sim's office. Some of these people were also SUPP members, but their loyalties always lay primarily with Sim.
16. For example, the SUPP Miri sub-branch and the SUPP Miri Youth section both passed resolutions in September 1977, calling for 'the party to review its role' in the coalition government. See *International Times*, 16 October 1977.
17. See *International Times*, 20 September 1977.
18. David L. C. Teng and Daniel K. A. Ngieng, *The Challenges: SUPP in Focus*, Sibul: Think Management, 1990, p. 116.
19. The allegations were made in an affidavit by Senawi Sulaiman, who had to retract it when he was sued by Rahman Yakub in 1978.
20. Tun Mustapha Harun apparently put out a discussion paper on the question of Sabah's future in Malaysia to his United Sabah National Organization (USNO) party. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 August 1975.
21. According to Rahman Yakub, a group of seven allegedly led by Senawi Sulaiman tried to hand the federal Home Minister a letter, which was (supposedly) about Rahman Yakub's plans to mobilize help from Kalimantan in the event he took Sarawak out of the federation. See the lead story 'Plot against me, says Rahman Yakub', *New Straits Times*, 15 November 1977; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 November 1977. For the Kuching reaction see *See Hua Daily News*, 23 November 1977.
22. See the denial by Senawi Sulaiman as one of the 'seven' in *World Special Edition*, 29 November 1977.
23. Alli Kawi quit Parti Anak Jati Sarawak (PAJAR) just after the 1979 state election. He was accused of accepting RM1 million from Rahman Yakub. See *Asiaweek*, 4 September 1981. An account by Alli Kawi himself on the formation of PAJAR and its activities can be found in Alli Kawi, *It Has Been Worth the Pain*, Kuching: Sarawak Publishing House, 1988.
24. When asked if PAJAR's attacks were a personal vendetta against him, Rahman Yakub replied 'What else is it?', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 June 1978. See also Michael B. Leigh, 'Sarawak at the Polls', in Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing, and Michael Ong (eds.), *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 245; Sanib Saib, *Malay Politics in Sarawak, 1946-1966: Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 127.
25. See PAJAR's statement that it supported Hussein Onn as premier, *New Straits Times*, 5 July 1978.
26. There has never been a Malay chief minister in Sarawak. Rahman Yakub is a Melanau while Stephen Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli are both Ibans.
27. See Chapter 5 on the crack-down by the authorities.

28. Interview with a senior member of the SUPP Sibuluan branch who was involved in the split.

29. Two of Tieu Sung Seng's most important allies were Ting Ing Mieng, the SUPP state assemblyman for Dudong, and Wong Soon Kai, a state minister.

30. Law Hieng Ding is one of the longest serving SUPP activists. He joined the party in the mid-1960s, was heavily involved in organizing the SUPP in the Rejang basin region, and made it into the Central Working Committee (CWC) from late 1971. Law became a parliamentary secretary after he was appointed a senator in the mid-1970s. He accepted the position of senator after his wife was detained in 'Operation Judas' in 1973 (see Chapter 6). He thought, correctly, that if he took up the position, his wife would be released. Interview with Law Hieng Ding.

31. Interview with two senior SUPP officials who were executive committee members of the Sibuluan branch in 1976. See also *International Times*, 9 June 1976.

32. *Chinese Daily News*, 18 June 1976.

33. *International Times*, 25, 28 June 1976. Law Hieng Ding was one of the incumbents who was asked by party headquarters to go back into the executive committee. Had Law not done so, it is likely that his political career would have been cut short then.

34. See *Hua Daily News*, 30 June 1976.

35. The proposal to form the women's section was actually approved in 1977. *Special Edition*, 18 September 1977.

36. In an interview with Lily Yong Lee Lee, the present *Wanita* leader, she said that before Chi Mei Si formally set up the SUPP *Wanita*, the Chinese press carried a series of articles highlighting women's issues. In these articles, Chi urged women to join her in forming a group to help solve these problems. The present SUPP *Wanita* leader was then recruited into the formation group that launched SUPP *Wanita*.

37. *Special Edition*, 3 June 1978.

38. See 'Reader's Forum' in *Special Edition*, 25 June 1978.

39. According to Chong Siew Chiang, he made the speech after learning that Stephen Yong had written a confidential letter to Rahman Yakub accusing Chong of criticizing Rahman Yakub. According to SUPP's version, Chong fell out with the leadership after he was passed over for a post in the Cabinet, which was given to Wong Soon Kai instead, after the 1974 polls. Interview with Chong Siew Chiang and senior members of SUPP.

40. Former SCA members were unhappy with SUPP because they felt that SUPP had not honoured the agreement to take in all former SCA members when the party was dissolved prior to the 1974 elections. Others felt betrayed by the SCA leadership for dissolving the party without much consultation. See previous chapter.

41. A body created to promote and preserve Chinese education in the Third Division.

42. Some members of the Sarawak United Chinese Association (SUCA) were also SUPP members.

43. See 'The rocket lands in Sarawak', *People's Tribune*, 22 August 1978. The rocket is the party symbol of the Democratic Action Party (DAP).

44. See 'SUPP's move after PM Hussein Onn's visit to Sarawak', *Special Edition*, 5 May 1978.

45. *Special Edition*, 12 May 1978.

46. Hussein Onn's internal problems with the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) started with Harun Idris, the UMNO Youth leader, who was charged and found guilty of corruption. Hussein Onn then sacked him from UMNO, and a campaign to readmit Harun immediately started among Harun's supporters. Hussein Onn inherited the Sabah 'problem'—Tun Mustapha—from Tun Abdul Razak. Mustapha was becoming more and more independent and dictatorial. Tun Razak had tried, unsuccessfully, several times to expel him from Sabah. In Kelantan, the Barisan Nasional (BN) was under heavy pressure from the fundamentalist Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS) which wanted to sack the Kelantan *Menteri Besar* (chief minister). This in turn led to a state election in early March 1978. On both these problems, see Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics: the Second Generation*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 54–76.

47. Interview with knowledgeable persons.

48. Leong Ho Yuen was the SNAP candidate against Ong Kee Hui also in the Bandar Kuching constituency in the 1974 polls. With SNAP in the coalition, Leong had to stand as an independent.

49. *Chinese Daily News Sunday Edition*, 25 June 1978. The *Vanguard* was used very effectively against the BN. In particular, its sister Chinese edition, the *Sarawak Vanguard*, campaigned against SUPP during the 1974 elections. It was proscribed just a few days before the 1974 polling day. See previous chapter, and *International Times*, 28 June 1978.

50. *Malaysian Daily News* (Sibu), 28 June 1978.

51. Ling Beng Siong, a timber tycoon, first won the Igan constituency in 1970 on the SCA banner, and won re-election in 1974 under the SUPP banner. However, his 1974 win was based on his personal following (see previous chapter). By 1977, he had fallen out with the top leadership in SUPP, whom he accused of harbouring 'anti-Malaysia' elements, while expelling 'pro-Malaysia' people like himself. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 30 July 1978.

52. Ling accused Jawan Empaling of not allocating the full amount of the minor-rural-project fund to the Rajang constituency. This is a slush fund given to every BN Member of Parliament (MP) and state assemblymen for minor projects in their constituency. See *Hua Daily News* (Sibu), 11 July 1978; *Special Edition*, 13 July 1978.

53. *Special Edition*, 22 July 1978.

54. The SUPP Binatang branch, which forms part of the Sarikei parliamentary constituency, published an open letter calling Chong Siew Chiang a 'traitor' to SUPP. See *International Times*, 12 July 1978.

55. See a letter from a 'neutral' voter, in *World Special Edition*, 12 July 1979. The letter also claimed that Chieng Hie Kwong did not even bother to send his children to Chinese schools.

56. *Special Edition*, 13 July 1978.

57. The Rejang area was a hotbed of communist activity from the late 1960s until the early 1980s. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, curfew was regularly imposed on this region.

58. *Malaysian Daily News*, 13 July 1978; *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 December 1978.

59. See *Hua Daily News* (Miri), 29 June 1978.

60. Miri is known as the 'oil town' of Sarawak, as there are several large oilfields located off its coast. Under the Petroleum Development Act (1974), the federal government only needs to pay 5 per cent in royalties to the Sarawak government for oil found off its coast. See Chapter 1.

61. One of the more effective election materials used by the Sarawak People's Organization (SAPO) was a cartoon depicting a fat cow chewing Miri grass and depositing her milk in Kuala Lumpur. This metaphor was meant to show that the 'federal cow' was taking oil out of Miri and depositing its proceeds in the federal capital, thus denying the locals a fair share of the oil proceeds. Interview with Peter Chin, SUPP Miri branch vice-chairman.

62. However, it must be noted here that Ong Kee Hui's huge majority was aided in part by the withdrawal of the independent candidate, Leong Ho Yuen. Nevertheless, this analysis is valid since Leong's name was still on the ballot paper (he withdrew about halfway through the campaign). Thus the voters could still have lodged a protest vote against Ong.

63. The five-year term of the Council Negri was due to expire in October 1979.

64. *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 24 August 1978.

65. See *Hua Daily News* and *Special Edition*, 15 September 1978. See also Leigh, 'Sarawak at the Polls', p. 248.

66. Abdul Taib Mahmud was apparently willing to give up his federal Cabinet post to take over as Sarawak's chief minister. See lead story 'I'll take over if asked, says Taib', *New Straits Times*, 24 September 1978.

67. According to several of those interviewed, it was Ong Kee Hui who said there should not be a mid-stream change of leadership. According to Ong, it was the Prime Minister who said there should not be a leadership change. No published record of this meeting is available. The following is an account reconstructed from interviews with Ong Kee Hui, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, and Law Hieng Ding.

68. *International Times*, 26 September 1978.

69. DAP is one of the main opposition parties in Malaysia. It started off as a remnant of the People's Action Party (PAP) when Singapore was thrown out of the Malaysian federation in 1965. Since then, it has consistently contested all parliamentary and state elections as an opposition party. Although it professes to be a multiracial party, its membership and interests are mainly geared towards the Chinese community.

70. The ideology of a Malaysian Malaysia is a country where all Malaysians are equal and no group is given preferential treatment. It was very similar to Lee Kuan Yew's 'Malaysian Malaysia' in the Malaysia Solidarity Convention of 1965. See Chapter 5.

71. Under the terms of entry into the Malaysian federation, Sarawak and Sabah retained autonomy over immigration, thus allowing both states to deny entry to outsiders, including Malaysians from other states, and even denying Sarawakians from Sabah and vice versa. Rahman Yakub had used this power to bar Lim Kit Siang from coming to Sarawak during the 1974 election. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 September 1974. During the 1978 polls, DAP's Lee Lam Thye was also denied entry. This was the main reason why DAP did not spread into Sarawak before 1978. After Chong Siew Chiang and Ling Sie Ming were formally accepted into DAP, Lim Kit Siang wrote to Rahman Yakub informing him that he intended to visit the DAP branches in Sarawak. See *Chinese Daily News*, 24 August 1978; see also *New Straits Times*, 25 September 1979.

72. Reporters were barred from the 1978 Delegates Meeting and very little information is available from the newspapers. The information here is based on interviews. A short article on the meeting can be found in *See Hua Daily News* (Sibu), 7 January 1979.

73. The Merdeka University issue will be covered in the next chapter, as it had a direct bearing on the 1982 election.

74. The CWC tried to resolve the fight over the SUPP Youth leadership by appointing a mediator team under Wong Soon Kai. Nothing much came about and the Youth Central was paralysed until 1981 when Chua Chin Geh, from the Sibu Youth section, was elected as the party's third Youth leader, thus ending the boycott.

75. According to Rahman Yakub, a group of SUPP Kuching Youth leaders met him several times to ask him to help or to stay neutral as they tried to get rid of Yong and Ong in 1978. See also Rahman Yakub's article 'Part 8: SUPP young Turks and election incidents' in 'Abdul Taib: The Inside Story', *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 April 1987.

76. *New Straits Times*, 18 March 1979; see also *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 August 1979.

77. Despite his public dismissal of PAJAR's strength, in private Rahman Yaakub took PAJAR's political threat seriously enough to move from his constituency of Kuala Rejang to the much safer constituency of Matu Daro. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 August 1979.

78. Leigh, 'Sarawak at the Polls', p. 243.

79. Refer to Chapter 6.

80. SUPP, of course, was not the only one who backed independents. PBB and SNAP also fielded them. Twenty-two state constituencies underwent minor delineation in 1976, and 13 of these were renamed for the 1979 polls. See Chapter 1 for details.

81. In both these constituencies, the official BN candidates came from SNAP. In Limbang, the SNAP candidate was James Wong Kim Min, SNAP's deputy president who openly accused his independent opponent of being backed by SUPP. See *Borneo Post*, 22 September 1979. According to Stephen Yong, at a BN meeting attended by the Prime Minister, held on 10 September 1979, Padungan and Sri Aman were declared 'special constituencies', thus allowing SUPP to support an independent in Padungan just as SNAP was supporting an independent against the official SUPP candidate in Sri Aman. See Teng and Ngieng, *The Challenges*, p. 128.

82. SNAP had two newcomers, while the PBB had seven.

83. Interestingly, even though this was the first electoral outing for the DAP, it nominated a Chinese woman candidate. SUPP has yet to put up a female candidate.

84. Malaysia, Election Commission, *Laporan Pilihanraya Umum Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak 1979*, p. 22.

85. According to Rahman, Yong and PAJAR had an understanding that if PAJAR won enough seats in the state election, they would join together and form the next state government. See Rahman Yakub, 'Part 8: SUPP Young Turks and election incidents', *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 April 1987. Whether this is true is debatable, but in any case, PAJAR was not in a position to help SUPP after the 1979 polls.

86. For an account of PAJAR's campaign see Kawi, *It Has Been Worth the Price*, pp. 143–62. In the middle of the campaign, Rahman Yakub accused Kawi of asking for RM1 million to dissolve PAJAR. Even this 'bombshell' did not have much impact on the Chinese community. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 September 1979.

87. It must be noted that SUPP was very open about Tan Meng Chong's status as an SUPP-backed independent in Padungan. See newspaper article headlined 'SUPP man to contest Padungan as an independent', *Sarawak Tribune*, 27 August 1979.

88. Sim Kwang Yang was a founder-member of the DAP Kuching branch as well as its branch secretary then. Coming from humble beginnings, he was educated in Canada and was a small-time businessman before entering politics.

89. In an interview with a national newspaper just before the election, Rahman Yakub said 'The battle in Padungan is now between the DAP and the Independent Tan Meng Chong', *New Straits Times*, 13 September 1979.

90. Hj Shahbudin Cheng's selection as a candidate came as a surprise to many SNAP members as they knew he did not stand a chance simply because he is a Muslim convert. In fact, before the election, an observer said Cheng needed a miracle to win. He was beaten so badly in the polls that he lost his election deposit. Cheng was a member of the SCA and also a Speaker of the Council Negri from 1973 to 1976. See *New Straits Times* and *Borneo Post*, 28 August 1979.

91. Out of the 11 DAP candidates, nine stood in constituencies where the official BN candidate came from SUPP.

92. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1979.

93. David Teng Lung Chi was at that time the SUPP Sibuluan Youth leader. Before entering politics, he started out as a school teacher in Sibuluan, then studied law in Britain before returning to serve as a magistrate from 1971 until 1977 when he set up his practice in Sarikei. He joined SUPP shortly afterwards. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 August 1979.

94. Wong Soon Kai won the Sibuluan Luar (renamed Seduan) constituency in 1974. He moved to Maling (formerly Sibuluan Tengah) for the 1979 polls.

95. Ting Ing Meng had lost the Dudong seat in 1974 and was moved to Seduan in 1979.

96. DAP open letter, issued by DAP Sarawak Kuching branch, 1979.

97. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 September 1979, for Lee Lam Thye's statement on this issue. The view that DAP was a disruptive outsider was reinforced when a widely circulated anonymous letter accused DAP of receiving RM1.2 million from the Russians for the Sarawak election! See *Borneo Post*, 19 September 1979.

98. See 'Land for Miri Squatters', *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 August 1979. Chia Chin Shin also made an election list of promises which included building more low cost housing, a new hawk centre, and providing land for farmers. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 9 September 1979.

99. In an interview, Stephen Yong openly accused the independent, Wilfred Nissom, of being backed by Rahman Yakub to make sure he (Yong) did not make a come-back in state politics.

100. Shyu Li Hua was the DAP Kuching branch treasurer and DAP's only female candidate. She was also Sarawak's first female Chinese candidate in an election.

101. See letter entitled 'Bidayuh unity', *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 August 1979. The writer argued that supporting Bidayuh candidates can only promote Bidayuh interests. See also letters, 'Make way for Bidayuh in Bengoh', *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 August 1979; 'Bidayuh candidates', *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 August 1979.

102. *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 September 1979.

103. *New Straits Times*, 7 September, 1979. Tajang Laing was a PBB member before he resigned, just before the 1974 election, in order to stand as an independent against

BN-SUPP's Nyipa Batok. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 August 1979.

104. Malaysia, Election Commission, *Laporan Pilihanraya Umum Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak 1979*, p. 24.

105. See also Rahman Yakub's denial that the Lundu independent was backed by the PBB. See *People's Tribune*, 6 September 1979. Interestingly, the SNAP-backed independent in Sri Aman did not make an impact on SUPP's majority.

106. Reasons for Ling's popularity are given in Chapter 6.

107. In the Limbang constituency, the SUPP-backed independent lost so badly that he also forfeited his election deposit. In the Tasik Biru constituency, the SUPP-backed independent, an SUPP branch secretary, lost to another independent by 2,452 votes. In 1974, the official BN-SUPP candidate lost by 909 votes. The winner in Tasik Biru, Patrick ak Uren, was widely seen as a PBB-backed independent as he had won the 1978 parliamentary elections as a BN-SNAP candidate. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 August 1979. After the election, all the three successful independents—Tajang Laing in Belaga, Tan Meng Chong in Padungan, and Patrick ak Uren in Tasik Biru—applied to join the BN. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 September 1979.

108. Two assemblymen left SUPP (Chong Siew Chiang and Ling Beng Siong) before the election, leaving SUPP with only 10 state assemblymen. However, SUPP gained one when it won the Padungan by-election in March 1979.

109. The SUPP's split over Sim Kheng Hong's appointment as deputy chief minister was so serious that on the day the new state Cabinet was sworn in, Ong Kee Hui had to release a public statement that 'SUPP had unanimously agreed' on the new Cabinet list. He added that SUPP members should not 'be misled by rumours'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 September 1979.

110. In an interview, Rahman Yakub said that after the operation he suffered from lapses of memory, and found it increasingly hard to concentrate, and remember promises he had made to people. In 1978, he had also suffered a mild heart attack.

111. 'Part 7: Abdul Taib's return to Sarawak', in 'Abdul Taib: The Inside Story', *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 April 1987.

112. See Chapter 5.

The Sarawak United People's Party During the Taib Administration

The Changing of the Guard

ABDUL TAIB MAHMUD became chief minister of Sarawak after he won, unopposed, the Sebandi state constituency by-election in March 1981.¹ Taib Mahmud's accession was welcomed by the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) as the party saw him as more amenable than his predecessor and uncle, Abdul Rahman Yakub. Coincidentally, Taib's accession was followed by a change in the federal leadership. Hussein Onn retired after a bypass operation in early 1981. He was formally succeeded as Prime Minister by Dr Mahathir Mohamad in July. Musa Hitam was made deputy after winning the post during United Malays National Organization (UMNO) party elections.² This change in federal leadership was an advantage for Taib as he had previously served in the federal Cabinet, and knew he could count on support from the new federal leadership.

The 1982 Parliamentary Election

A general election in April 1982 was called by Dr Mahathir Mohamad less than a year after assuming office. He wanted to win a personal mandate and to exploit the positive mood of the nation towards the new administration, nicknamed the 2M (for Mahathir and Musa) Administration.³ Unlike the states in Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak (and Sabah) did not hold the state election concurrently.

In the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN), the nomination process went smoothly for Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) and SUPP. However, three incumbent Sarawak National Party (SNAP) Members of Parliament (MPs), Edmund Langgu, Edwin Tankun, and Patrick ak Uren, were dropped after an internal power struggle. The final seat allocations were: PBB 8, SUPP 7, and SNAP 9. SUPP was allocated the seven parliamentary seats it had won in the last parliamentary election in 1978: Bandar Kuching, Sibul, Sarikei, Rajang, Lambir, Padawan, and Serian. Three new SUPP faces were introduced: Loke Yik Ping for Bandar Kuching, Law Hieng Ding for Sarikei, and George Chan Hong Nam in

Lambir. On the opposition side, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) led with five candidates, followed by Parti Anak Jati Sarawak (PAJAR) and Sarawak People's Organization (SAPO) with one each. There were also 26 independents including former SNAP MPs Langgu and Tankun. On nomination day, the Sarawak BN won six constituencies unopposed while four were won by PBB and the other two by SNAP.⁴

Campaign Issues and Tactics

The BN campaigned under the extremely effective slogan of *Bersih Licin dan Cekap* (Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy). As in 1978, public rallies were banned, with only indoor *ceramah* allowed. This of course proved disadvantageous to the opposition. Besides having to use the BN slogan, SUPP also had to augment this with direct communal appeal for the Chinese to back them, as the party knew that its main opponent was the DAP. Four of the five DAP candidates were standing in Sarawak BN-SUPP constituencies: Bandar Kuching, Bandar Sibu, Sarikei, and Lambir.⁵ The DAP entered the campaign confident that it would win at least one seat.⁶ Privately, the DAP expected to win in at least two constituencies: Sarikei and Bandar Kuching.

SUPP's candidate in Bandar Kuching was Ong Kee Hui's political secretary, Loke Yik Ping. Loke, a lawyer, faced Sim Kwang Yang from the DAP in a straight fight. Sim had stood, and lost, against an SUPP-backed independent, Tan Meng Chong, in the 1979 state election. In Bandar Sibu, Wong Soon Kai faced Ling Sie Ming, again in a straight fight. Wong had won at their previous encounter in 1979. In Sarikei, the SUPP candidate was Law Hieng Ding, who resigned from his appointed post of senator to run for a seat in the Dewan Rakyat. His opponent was Chong Siew Chiang, the DAP candidate who had lost by a slim majority of 399 in Repok in 1979. The DAP was confident that Chong could beat Law as the Repok state constituency formed half of the Sarikei parliamentary constituency. Two other candidates in Sarikei were Ling Tung Leh of SAPO, and Nyandang ak Lenang, an independent. The DAP candidate caused a mild controversy when he charged that SUPP had 'brought' SAPO into Sarikei to split the vote.⁷ The accusation stemmed from the fact that SAPO's founder and Secretary-General Raymond Szetu Mei Thong, who had won the Lambir parliamentary seat in 1978 against an SUPP candidate, did not seek re-election. In a highly unusual move for an incumbent, SAPO did not even put up a candidate for Lambir and nominated only one candidate for Sarikei, located quite a distance away. Ling was not only unknown in Sarikei, but SAPO had no known support or branches in the constituency.⁸ In Lambir, the SUPP candidate was George Chan Hong Nam, a relative newcomer who had only joined SUPP in the late 1970s. George Chan was well known in the Miri area as he had been in private medical practice there for more than a decade before entering politics. At the time of his nomination, he was also the SUPP Miri branch vice-chairman, and chairman of the Miri Municipal Council (MMC).⁹ This

post gave him a distinct advantage over his opponents as it brought him into extensive contact with Miri residents and businesses. The DAP candidate in Lambir, Peter Hwang, was the DAP Igan branch secretary. In the 1979 state election, Hwang had lost the Igan seat to an SUPP candidate.¹⁰ There were also three other independents vying for the Lambir seat.¹¹

SUPP's main theme against the DAP was very similar to the one the party successfully used in 1979. They portrayed the DAP as an outsider out to split Chinese unity in Sarawak, and argued that only SUPP's participation could bring progress. In one of its open letters it stated that 'although SUPP contests for only 7 Parliamentary seats, the results of the election will determine the role and influence of our party within the Barisan Nasional . . . for continuing peace, harmony, and prosperity, for a clean, efficient, and trustworthy government, vote for SUPP candidates.'¹²

This message was reinforced when Abdul Taib Mahmud warned that if the Chinese community did not support SUPP there would come a time when there would be no Chinese representation in government.¹³ In Sibul, the message was delivered bluntly by the incumbent SUPP MP for Seduan who was quoted as saying: 'All of us in Sibul can forget about further development of our town if Datuk Dr Wong Soon Kai is not returned for parliament.'¹⁴ The MP added that two major projects for the town of Sibul, a new airport and a hospital, which were announced during the election, hinged on electoral support for the government.

In addition, DAP was accused of *khalwat* with Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS). This implied that DAP and PAS had a secret agreement on the forthcoming election.¹⁵ The charge was used to scare the Chinese community as PAS's platform was to turn Malaysia into an Islamic state. The DAP's campaign message was also identical to that of earlier election campaigns. This basically concerned the grievances of the non-Malay communities towards the government's discriminatory policies favouring the *bumiputera* in the country's social and economic arenas. The DAP also cleverly exploited two issues which were of major concern with the Chinese constituents; both related to education.

MERDEKA UNIVERSITY

The first was the Merdeka University issue.¹⁶ Merdeka University was planned by Chinese guilds and associations throughout Malaysia as a private university which would use Mandarin and English as its medium of education. It had its roots in the late 1960s when the federal government announced that it intended to impose a Malay language condition, in implementation of the national language policy, for students who wanted to further their education overseas. This mainly affected the Mandarin-educated students, who looked towards Taiwan and Singapore to further their education. The issue assumed greater significance as many Chinese students were frustrated in their attempts to enter the local tertiary institutions after the New Economic Policy

(NEP), which imposed strict limits on non-*bumiputera* entry, was introduced in 1971.¹⁷

When the Merdeka University proposal was first mooted, almost all the Chinese guilds and associations (including those in Sarawak and Sabah), and all the Chinese-based political parties in Malaysia, were enthusiastically supportive of the setting up of this private tertiary institution. However, with language a highly sensitive political issue (due to UMNO), all the Chinese-based political parties in the BN had to back off from the idea. In a compromise worked out by the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the government decided to approve the setting up of a private college, the Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman (commonly referred to as TAR College), to be administered by the MCA, and designed to meet the needs of Chinese school leavers. However, the Chinese educationists, principally the Jiao Zong (United Chinese School Teachers Association of Malaysia) and the Dong Zong (United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia), refused to support this compromise. They instead submitted a memorandum to the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong (King) seeking his approval for the establishment of Merdeka University.¹⁸ The SUPP and DAP were among the 4,234 Chinese organizations who signed this memorandum in early 1978. The MCA and Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan) refused to sign. The federal government, knowing that this issue could create an electoral disaster for the BN's Chinese-based component parties, decided to announce its rejection of the memorandum only after the 1978 parliamentary election.¹⁹

Hoping to capitalize on this issue, the DAP introduced in September 1978 an amendment to the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) to make it meet the requirement of Merdeka University. The six SUPP members of the Dewan Rakyat, together with other Barisan MPs, voted against this motion. For this, many SUPP members, including several key leaders in the Kuching branch, criticized their leadership for its failure to back the proposal. The condemnation was so serious that the Central Working Committee (CWC) had to convene a special meeting to discuss the issue just prior to the Delegates Meeting in late December 1978.²⁰ The CWC meeting did not resolve the basic question, but agreed to write to the proponents of the university, stating SUPP's reasons for not supporting the amendment. The letter stated that, among other reasons, the amendment proposed by Lim Kit Siang was not made in accordance with procedure, as Lim did not wait for the King's decision. Furthermore, even if all the Chinese MPs supported the amendment, the number would still fall short of the two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat required for a constitutional amendment to be successfully passed.²¹ This letter further alienated many Chinese members and supporters who felt the party had abandoned Chinese education for political expediency. Others felt that it proved once again that SUPP's participation in government was severely limited as long as UMNO and the Malays were dominant in the BN, and that, in reality,

SUPP could not promote Chinese issues. Many left SUPP after this and switched their support to the DAP.

The proponents of Merdeka University then filed a suit against the federal government in 1981, arguing that it had no legal power to reject the proposal. A Queen's Counsel was engaged, and Chinese associations and guilds throughout the nation staged fund-raising activities to fund the court challenge.²² In November 1981, after a month-long trial, the High Court ruled that the federal government had acted within its rights in rejecting the establishment of Merdeka University.²³ Undaunted, Merdeka University supporters lodged an appeal in the Federal Court in February 1982. In July, the Federal Court turned down the appeal by a 4:1 majority decision.²⁴ Hence, at the time of the 1982 parliamentary election, the bitterness generated by the court case was still fresh in the minds of most Chinese voters. The DAP became the major beneficiary of this resentment.

THE 3M SYLLABUS

The second issue relating to education was the federal government's introduction of a new curriculum a few months prior to the 1982 election. This curriculum affected the way Mandarin was taught in Chinese-medium primary schools throughout Malaysia. Called the 3M System, the syllabus placed emphasis on three core areas: reading, writing, and mathematics. Many Chinese educationalists were incensed with the 3M, claiming that it was the government's way of undermining Chinese education. They argued that Mandarin competency would decline as the 3M did not place sufficient emphasis on the learning of the language. Many Chinese parents thus became alarmed about their children's education.²⁵

The DAP used this issue to gain great political mileage, calling the 3M system '*Main, Minum, Makan*' (play, drink, and eat). They argued that SUPP's powerless position in the federal BN was reflected in its inability to throw out or simply to amend the 3M system, even though the federal Education Minister was a PBB appointee.²⁶ SUPP candidates found themselves on the defensive, and could only promise to make changes after the election.²⁷ Ong Kee Hui said in a campaign speech that SUPP had requested a review of the implementation of the 3M system.²⁸ This tacit admission that SUPP was unhappy with the 3M system was seized upon by the opposition as an open admission that the 3M system could hurt Chinese education and that SUPP, despite being in the government, was unable to do anything about it.

In an attempt to sideline the issue, SUPP pointed to the fact that several prominent Chinese educationalists in Peninsular Malaysia had endorsed the BN's government policies on Chinese education by standing as Gerakan candidates in the forthcoming election.²⁹ During his campaign stop in Kuching, Dr Mahathir Mohamad also issued an assurance that the 3M system would not change the characteristics of

the vernacular schools in the country.³⁰ However, such assurances could not stem the tide of criticism generated by former senior SUPP party members and Chinese educationalists like Sim Geok Tee,³¹ who openly attacked SUPP on the 3M and the Merdeka University issues, and actively campaigned for the DAP.³²

Local issues also affected voting behaviour. A number of voters in Bandar Sibü voted against Wong Soon Kai because they thought that he would be Ong's replacement in the federal Cabinet. They felt that Wong could do more for Sibü residents as a state Cabinet minister than as a federal minister.³³ In Bandar Kuching, SUPP candidate Loke Yik Ping was politically damaged when the DAP directly attacked Mahathir for his racist ideology contained in his book *The Malay Dilemma*.³⁴ This attack was effective amongst the more sophisticated, urban, middle class made up largely of English-educated Chinese who were fearful that Mahathir would translate his ideas into public policy to the further detriment of the non-Malays.³⁵

Due to staggered voting, the results in Peninsular Malaysia were already announced while Sarawakians had yet to vote. The results shocked the Chinese community, as DAP was heavily defeated by MCA and Gerakan candidates. The extent of the DAP's loss was symbolized by the defeat of its president, Chen Mah Hin, who lost to MCA president Lee San Choon in a straight fight in Seremban. This contest had generated much interest among the nation's Chinese electorate, as senior MCA candidates had traditionally stood in 'safe' seats, constituencies with a high percentage of Malay voters who vote *en bloc* any BN candidate. But Seremban was not only a Chinese-majority seat, it had also been held by Chen for the past three terms.³⁶ One factor that contributed to the MCA's victory, in which an unprecedented 24 out of its 28 candidates were elected, mostly at the DAP's expense, was the support given by some Chinese educationalists in Peninsular Malaysia.

DAP's defeat in the peninsula gave an unexpected boost to the Sarawak DAP. Lim Kit Siang and several other federal DAP leaders flew into Sarawak immediately and made an emotional appeal to the Chinese to 'save Malaysia's democracy'.³⁷ This last minute appeal brought sympathy votes during the last day of polling. Many young Chinese first-time voters also swung to the DAP during the last days of the campaign.³⁸

The Election Results

Overall, the BN performed well nation-wide. It took 132 out of 154 seats, a comfortable margin above the all important two-thirds majority. The opposition, especially the DAP, suffered its worst defeat, seeing its representation slip from 16 to 9, despite having increased its share of the popular vote. The MCA made major inroads into the Peninsular Malaysia Chinese community at the DAP's expense.

In Sarawak, the BN won 19 of the 24 parliamentary seats (Table 8.1). It lost three constituencies to independents and the other two to the

TABLE 8.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1982 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sarawak BN		19 (24)
PBB	8 (8) ^a	
SNAP	6 (9)	
SUPP	5 (7)	
Opposition		2
DAP	2 (-)	
Independents	3 (-)	3
Total		24 (24)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets are the 1978 election results.

DAP. The three independents who won were the three incumbent SNAP MPs who were dropped by the party before the polls.³⁹ Given that these three independents were not really against the BN, the net loss of the Sarawak BN was two constituencies to the DAP.

The election results suggest a severe rebuke of SUPP by the Chinese community. In four Chinese-majority seats (Bandar Kuching, Sarikei, Bandar Sibul, and Lambir) the swing against SUPP was so strong that the party was actually defeated in two constituencies and almost lost another. Only in Lambir was SUPP able to gain strongly (Table 8.2).

DAP's Sim Kwang Yang beat SUPP's Loke Yik Ping convincingly, with a 3,557 majority in Bandar Kuching. In 1978, Ong Kee Hui had won this constituency with a majority of more than 14,000 or 57 per cent majority.⁴⁰ This means that the anti-SUPP swing in 1982 was highly

TABLE 8.2
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary Constituencies,
1974, 1979, and 1982 Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	<i>1974</i>	<i>1978</i>	<i>1982</i>
Bandar Kuching	2,863 (+13) ^a	14,813 (+57)	-3,577 ^b (-10)
Padawan	2,040 (+16)	Unopposed	5,123 (+44)
Serian	213 (+1)	2,476 (+15)	2,864 (+17)
Sarikei	3,446 (+35)	1,388 (+10)	81 ^b (+0.4)
Bandar Sibul	1,131 (+9)	6,753 ^b (+33)	-141 (-0.5)
Rajang	1,406 (+13)	2,157 (+18)	1,692 (+16)
Lambir	1,615 (+9)	-872 ^b (-4)	13,213 ^b (+51)
(Miri-Subis)			

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidate.

significant, in the region of at least 15,000 votes. In Bandar Sibu, Wong Soon Kai's defeat, by 141 votes, to DAP's Ling Sie Ming indicated an actual swing of more than 6,500 votes, given that in 1978 Wong had won the seat with a 6,753 majority. Hence, it would appear that in both Kuching and Sibu many voters, both new and old, chose the opposition DAP.⁴¹

In nearby Sarikei, the SUPP candidate, Law Hieng Ding, won by the slimmest majority of 81 votes or less than 1 per cent majority. It could be argued that if either SAPO or the lone independent had not participated, the DAP would have been able to win with a margin of slightly more than 100 votes. Only in Lambir was SUPP able to win over the Chinese voters: George Chan Hong Nam won this seat back for the party with a handsome majority of more than 13,000 or 51 per cent majority, the largest majority in Sarawak.

SUPP's performance was not much better in its three Dayak constituencies. In Bidayuh-dominated Padawan, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze polled nearly double the votes obtained by his opponent. Given that Stephen Yong won Padawan unopposed in 1978, it would be highly speculative to gauge the swing there in 1982.⁴² In nearby Serian, SUPP's Richard Dampeng appears to have just retained his support. The nearly 400-vote increase of his majority was not significant, as the number of voters in Serian had grown by more than 3,000.⁴³ This is reflected in the slight change in his majority percentage from 15 in 1978 to 17 in 1982. In Rajang, SUPP's Jawan Empaling had his 1978 majority reduced by more than 450, but again this was not significant—merely a drop of 2 per cent majority.

Overall, SUPP's record in the 1982 parliamentary polls was poor. It lost the support of the Chinese community and only just held on to its Dayak vote. SUPP managed to win six out of the seven constituencies it contested in 1978 (or more than 85 per cent), but this time it only managed to win five out of seven (or only 71 per cent). However, the loss was more significant than the statistics show, for two reasons.

First, SUPP had lost part of its main ground to another Chinese-based party, the DAP.⁴⁴ Second, Wong Soon Kai's defeat was totally unexpected as he had a comfortable 33 per cent majority in 1978. At that time, he was also deputy chairman of the party, a state minister, and a 'rising star' from Rejang basin SUPP. His defeat meant that plans for him to replace Ong Kee Hui at the federal level had to be discarded.⁴⁵ When Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced a new Cabinet line-up, the post of Minister for Science and Technology was left vacant.⁴⁶ The party had yet to decide who would replace Ong as they had not expected Wong's defeat. Two candidates later emerged: Stephen Yong and Law Hieng Ding. However, it was obvious that Yong, being the senior one, would take over from Ong.

The Bengoh By-election

When Stephen Yong Kuet Tze became federal Minister of Science and Technology in July 1982, he had to vacate his Bengoh state seat.⁴⁷ SUPP decided to replace him with a Bidayuh, William Tanyuh ak Nub, then a law lecturer at a government institution near Kuching. Tanyuh won easily in a straight fight with an independent, Chong Kuet Bui @ Robert Abuis, as the opposition parties did not put up a candidate. SUPP received 4,195 votes to Abuis' 3,719.⁴⁸ Tanyuh's victory margin of 476 votes was also larger than Stephen Yong's 1979 majority of 221. However, this was an insignificant increase as the number of voters had increased from 9,740 in 1979 to 12,063 in 1982—or 2,323 new voters.⁴⁹

The Twelfth Delegates Conference

SUPP held its 12th Delegates Conference in September 1982. Ong Kee Hui, who had earlier announced his intention to retire and not stand for re-election in 1982, formally handed the SUPP chairmanship over to Stephen Yong Kuet Tze. In his retirement speech, Ong made it clear that the political environment had changed drastically since he became chairman in 1959. In part, his farewell speech stated that

the main constraint to my mind ... is that of finance. We need to face the fact that the days are gone when we can rely on voluntary service of our party cadres as we were able to do so in the early years when we started the party. ... We now have to employ fulltime party workers. Politics is no longer a pastime but a profession. ... It is not a game for amateurs to play.⁵⁰

This open admission by the chairman that circumstances had changed and that the party needed to recruit more professionals was reflected in changes at the upper echelons of the party. The top two positions of chairman and Secretary-General both changed. Stephen Yong took over from Ong as chairman, while Wong Soon Kai took over as Secretary-General. Yong, Secretary-General for the past 22 years since SUPP's formation, was the obvious heir while Wong's ascent reflected the need to keep a regional balance, that is, power sharing between the Kuching and the Rejang basin SUPP. George Chan Hong Nam became deputy chairman while the publicity post, which had been held for more than two decades by Chan Siaw Hee, was taken over by David Teng Lung Chi. The only senior leader whose position was unaffected was Sim Kheng Hong, who retained the powerful post of party treasurer. Thomas Hii King Hiong was elected the Central Youth leader when the incumbent, Chua Chin Geh, did not seek re-election. Chi Mei Si was re-elected as SUPP *Wanita* leader.⁵¹

The net effect of these changes was that the Rejang basin SUPP made major gains in the party's upper echelons. The Secretary-General's post, arguably the most important one in the party, went to this group as well as the posts of Publicity, Central Youth, and Central Youth Secretary.⁵² Another characteristic of the new office bearers was that they were

mostly professionals who were also bilingual. Most had some form of Chinese education followed by English tertiary training.⁵³

In other words, the 12th Delegates Conference signalled a change at the very top of the party hierarchy. This change was prompted by two factors. First was the success of the DAP in the parliamentary election and second, the emergence of the young professionals who successfully argued that the party could only move forward if they were given a more prominent role. Most of those who gained in the shake-up were SUPP leaders from the Rejang basin.

The change in leadership resulted in major changes in the party's internal structure. The new Secretary-General formed several committees to look into ways of strengthening party structure and management.⁵⁴ Besides this, a new executive secretary, Law Hua Khoo, was appointed in 1983.⁵⁵ One of the more prominent changes after the reorganization at the top was the setting up of service centres. Service centres are usually constituency offices which offer help to constituents.⁵⁶ The first service centre was set up in Sibul, despite the fact that Wong had been voted out by its residents. It was aimed at regaining support in opposition-held areas.

State Politics, 1981–1983: The SNAP Crisis

From early 1982, state politics was dominated by a split in one of Sarawak's oldest political parties, SNAP. Established in 1961 and predominantly Iban, it was always led by one until 1981. In that year, James Wong Kim Min, a Chinese, won the triennial internal party election for the party presidency over a young professional Iban, Leo Moggie.⁵⁷ Two factions had emerged before the election. One believed that since indigenous Dayaks made up the majority membership of SNAP and the bulk of its electoral support, the party should be led by a Dayak. The other faction basically backed James Wong, argued that SNAP's multiracial philosophy must be preserved. In the 1982 parliamentary elections, three veteran SNAP elected representatives were dropped from the official Sarawak BN–SNAP line-up, presumably because they backed Moggie. These three eventually stood and won as independents.⁵⁸ Shortly after that, in June 1983, SNAP Deputy Chief Minister Daniel Tajem was sacked from the party for supporting the independents in the 1982 campaign.⁵⁹ Despite this, Tajem refused to resign from the state Cabinet. By August 1983, Moggie, who was then in the federal Cabinet, decided to fall in with the rest of his supporters and officially launched a new exclusively Dayak-based party: Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), with himself as president. Tajem was made his deputy and some Dayak SNAP Council Negeri members switched their support to PBDS.⁶⁰

PBDS then applied to join the Sarawak BN, but its application was rejected when SNAP cast a veto vote. In order to resolve this crisis facing his government, Abdul Taib Mahmud proposed the 'Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN3) Plus' formula. This was that PBDS be affiliated

with the Sarawak BN but not as part of the three original component parties: PBB, SUPP, and SNAP.

PBB and SUPP's reaction to SNAP's internal drama was one of indifference on the one hand, and glee on the other. Strictly speaking, neither PBB nor SUPP had anything to gain from SNAP's internal squabble. Any Council Negri members lost by SNAP went over to PBDS. In fact, PBB had something to lose, as an exclusively communal party like PBDS could be used to unite all the Dayaks and thus pose a threat to PBB's supremacy in Sarawak politics. Dayaks easily make up the majority of Sarawak's population, at more than 40 per cent, and could conceivably form a government in their own right if only they were united under a single political vehicle such as PBDS.⁶¹

However, the split in SNAP and the subsequent formation of PBDS, could also be seen as favourable to PBB and SUPP. Any further split in SNAP's ranks would give both parties the chance to win some SNAP constituencies via independents. In addition, any splits in the Dayak political community merely reinforced the *status quo*. Taib Mahmud's formula of BN3 Plus government could thus be seen as an attempt to further split the Dayak vote and consolidate the *status quo* of PBB as the backbone of the Sarawak BN. Additionally for SUPP, SNAP's internal crisis meant that SUPP became the second largest component party in the Sarawak BN coalition in terms of Council Negri members.⁶² When SNAP joined the coalition in 1976, it had 18 Council Negri members compared to SUPP's 12. After the 1979 state election, the *status quo* was retained when SNAP again had 18 and SUPP 12.⁶³ With the split and the formation of PBDS, it appeared likely that neither SNAP nor PBDS could command more than 10 Council Negri members each.

The 1983 State Election

In November 1983, amid the ongoing SNAP-PBDS crisis and signs of dissent in PBB,⁶⁴ Abdul Taib Mahmud decided to call an early state election. In 1981, when he became chief minister, he did so without a personal mandate. Taib Mahmud probably felt that the time had come for him to seek a personal mandate directly from Sarawak's electorate. Polling was fixed at end of the year, 28–29 December. With SNAP and PBDS both claiming the same Dayak seats, it was impossible for Taib to accommodate both. Both sides were unwilling to compromise over the 18 constituencies concerned.⁶⁵ In the end, the Sarawak BN Supreme Council decided to allow both the PBDS and SNAP to face each other, using their own party symbols, in these constituencies. This compromise was accepted with little hesitation by both parties. Both sides calculated that the only way to test their strength among the Dayaks was to use their respective party symbols. In reality, this decision meant that contesting in the 18 constituencies became a free-for-all. Given this, it is therefore not surprising that the other BN3 partners, PBB and SUPP, also supported this decision as it allowed them to field 'independents' too.

Of the remaining 32 constituencies, PBB was officially allocated

20 while SUPP was officially allocated 12:⁶⁶ Padungan, Stampin, Batu Kawa, Repok, Meradong, Maling, Seduan, Miri, Igan, Sri Aman, Bengoh, and Lundu.⁶⁷ The first eight were Chinese-majority constituencies, the last four Dayak-majority seats. SUPP introduced three newcomers: Thomas Hii King Hiong in Meradong, Song Swee Guan in Padungan, and Ramsay Noel Jitam in Lundu constituency. The party also fielded 'independents' in Engkilili, Dudong, and Belaga.⁶⁸

On the opposition side, the DAP led with seven candidates⁶⁹ and Parti Demokratik Bersatu (Bersatu) with four.⁷⁰ There was also an unusually high number of independents—80 altogether. This represented an increase of more than 49 per cent as compared to the 1979 state elections, where there were only 53 independents.⁷¹ This merely confirmed the perception that many independents were secretly backed by one of the Sarawak BN component parties.

On nomination day, SUPP's George Chan Hong Nam won unopposed in Miri when the DAP candidate's nomination papers were rejected on minor technicalities.⁷² The PBB's candidates from the Oya and Matu Daro constituencies also won unopposed.

Campaign Issues and Tactics

The campaign centred on the PBDS-SNAP rivalry, with each side telling the Dayak voters that they were the 'true' representative of the Dayaks in the Sarawak BN. With a free-for-all political environment, all the four major parties: PBB, SUPP, SNAP, and PBDS, found themselves facing independents backed by one or more of their coalition partners. This was especially true of PBB's Pesaka wing, which found itself facing independents supported by PBDS and SNAP, so much so that PBB president Abdul Taib Mahmud openly accused SNAP of meddling in PBB areas, and added that 'SNAP now, I regret to say, is pretending to be our friend but is stabbing us from behind'.⁷³ SNAP president, James Wong Kim Min, denied Taib Mahmud's accusation but did admit that some party members were standing as independent candidates without their sanction. In an unusually frank open-letter reply to Taib, James Wong defended his party's record in the Sarawak BN and, in turn, accused PBB of supporting independents against SNAP candidates.⁷⁴ SNAP fielded 18 candidates under its own symbol, including candidates in Padungan and Tasik Biru constituencies, which had been officially allocated to SUPP and PBB respectively. The relationship between SNAP and PBB became so strained that during the campaign the PBB Youth wing openly called for the expulsion of SNAP from the Sarawak BN.⁷⁵

For SUPP, the situation was quite similar to PBB as its candidates in Dayak-majority areas had to face many dubious independents. However, SUPP leaders were more concerned by the threat posed by the DAP in the Chinese-dominated seats around the capital, Kuching, and in Sibü. The DAP's strong showing in both these urban areas just a year earlier meant that it entered the race with high morale, confident of beating

SUPP candidates in Chinese-majority areas. The DAP's fielding of six of its nine candidates in Chinese-majority constituencies against SUPP candidates reflected this.⁷⁶ Thus SUPP entered the 1983 campaign with expectations that its marginal seats were in Padungan, Repok, Maling, and Lundu.⁷⁷

The slogan adopted by SUPP was 'Support SUPP in the Government', the central argument being that Chinese interests could be best defended by being represented inside the government where SUPP could help to shape government policies. The electorate was told bluntly that if SUPP were to lose out to the DAP, SUPP's bargaining weight within the government would be considerably weakened.⁷⁸ The DAP again tried to exploit the Chinese education issue, in addition to the usual accusation that SUPP had sold out Chinese interests. In its 10-point manifesto, the DAP urged voters to choose them as 'a Council Negri without strong opposition is not healthy'. It pointed to the fact that despite SUPP's claim to participation, official government policies still favoured the *bumiputera*. The DAP also attacked SUPP for supporting federal policies such as the 'one language (Malay), one culture (Malay), one religion (Islam)' policy. The Islamization policy pursued by Dr Mahathir Mohamad was specifically used to prove that SUPP was unable to influence government policy.⁷⁹ The manifesto urged voters to help create a Malaysian Malaysia and to help abolish money politics in Sarawak. Since the election coincided with the controversial Bumiputera Malaysia Finance (BMF) loan scandal, the DAP tried to capitalize on that too.⁸⁰ In essence, the central thrust of the DAP argument was that in its 13 years of participation in government, SUPP had achieved little and it was time for the DAP to take over the Chinese mandate.

In the three Chinese constituencies located in the capital, Kuching, SUPP fielded Song Swee Guan in Padungan, and incumbents Sim Kheng Hong and Chong Kiun Kong in Stampin and Batu Kawa, respectively. The DAP fielded its Bandar Kuching MP Sim Kwang Yang in Padungan and Yong Seng Chan in Stampin. SUPP was never under any real threat in Stampin and Batu Kawa, as both Sim and Chong were well entrenched in their respective constituencies. Both men had served as Council Negri members for these constituencies since the 1960s. Moreover, the DAP candidate in the Stampin constituency was a political novice.

The only threat to SUPP was in Padungan where its candidate was a first-timer compared to the DAP candidate who was a veteran of two previous elections and the incumbent MP for the constituency.⁸¹ However, the SUPP candidate was not without advantage; Song was the chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC), or mayor of Kuching,⁸² and had an impeccable background, being the direct descendant of Song Thian Chock, a Chinese pioneer and member of the old *towkay* class. Song was also head of the SUPP Kuching Youth section.⁸³ The third candidate in Padungan, SNAP's John Shek Kwok Bun, a lawyer, was not taken seriously as he was being seen as a 'plant' by SNAP, intended to split the vote for the benefit of the DAP.⁸⁴ The

DAP initially took the lead by attacking Song for his lack of Chinese education credentials. Song had primary level Chinese education, while Sim had been educated in Chinese up to secondary level.⁸⁵ However, towards the end of the campaign period, SUPP warned that if the Padungan residents rejected Song, the Kuching mayorship (which had been controlled by a Chinese SUPP appointee since the early 1960s) might be at risk, and that the state government might appoint a Malay instead.⁸⁶ This scare tactic was extremely effective in turning the Padungan Chinese voters towards SUPP, because they wanted the Kuching mayorship to remain with the Chinese.

In the Rejang basin, the contest in Maling was a rerun of the 1979 and 1982 elections. Even the candidates were similar: the SUPP candidate was Wong Soon Kai, and his only opponent was DAP's Ling Sie Ming. Wong had defeated Ling in the 1979 state election, but was defeated in turn by Ling in the 1982 parliamentary election. Hence both candidates were more or less equally matched when the campaign began. Ling's campaign was given a boost early on when his party's Secretary-General, Lim Kit Siang, campaigned extensively. Lim challenged the SUPP to support the setting up of a Christian university in Sibul⁸⁷ to prove that SUPP could protect and advance the non-Muslims' interests.⁸⁸ SUPP's tactic was to concentrate on Ling, portraying him as an ineffective parliamentarian. Ling's poor command of the Malay language and his lack-lustre performance as an MP were effectively used against him.⁸⁹ Sibul voters were also repeatedly reminded that Ling's prediction on the demise of Chinese education, due to the introduction of the 3M System, had not come true. Ling had successfully used this claim to get elected in 1982, but Mandarin had remained widely used in Sibul and the nation. The service centres set up in early 1983 also proved popular with the Sibul electorate.

In Repok, SUPP's David Teng Lung Chi once more faced DAP's Chong Siew Chiang. In 1979, Teng had beaten Chong by a mere 339 votes; this time it was again a straight fight. In nearby Meradong constituency, SUPP's candidate was its recently elected Central Youth leader, Thomas Hii King Hiong. Hii's opponents were DAP's Ting Yii Hiep, a bank officer, and two independents: Teo Siang Hai and Joseph Salang. The DAP's challenge to SUPP never got off the ground after SUPP discovered that Ting was a Muslim convert.⁹⁰ When SUPP distributed a campaign leaflet showing Ting's certificate of conversion, the DAP campaign collapsed.⁹¹ Ting was used extensively by SUPP outside Meradong to show that the DAP was not serious about opposing Islamization, as it had picked a Chinese Muslim as one of its candidates.⁹²

In the SUPP Dayak constituencies, there were no major controversies or issues. The Lundu candidate was Ramsay Noel Jitam, who resigned as state deputy commissioner of police to contest the seat. Jitam had to face five independents, making it a six-cornered contest.⁹³ In Bengoh, SUPP's main opponent was an independent, Wilfred Nissom, who had also been SUPP's main opponent in 1979. Then, Nissom lost to Stephen Yong Kuet Tze by a slim majority of 221 votes.⁹⁴ Nissom again

resorted to narrow ethnic appeal, urging the predominantly Bidayuh electorate to vote for him simply because he was a Bidayuh. Nissom argued that the SUPP candidate, William Tanyuh ak Nub, although a Bidayuh, could not be effective as SUPP was only interested in serving Chinese interests. In Sri Aman, SUPP's Hollis Tini was confident as he had held the constituency since 1974.

The only other six-cornered contest in the 1983 election was in the Engkilili constituency. There, the SUPP-backed independent, Sim Choo Nam, faced candidates from SNAP and PBDS, and three other independents, including a former state minister.⁹⁵ In Dudong, SUPP-backed independent Wilfred Kiroh was actively aided in his campaign by the SUPP MP for Rajang, Jawan Empaling.⁹⁶ In Belaga, the SUPP-backed independent, Nyipa Batok, encountered the official PBB candidate, Tajang Laing, and another independent, Stanley Ajang Batok.⁹⁷ Nyipa Batok and Tajang Laing were related, and had confronted each other in every state election since 1970 and so the electoral contest was seen as a family feud. According to Stephen Yong, 'there is family pride involved and party politics is very much secondary to the candidates concerned ... we had tried to persuade him [Batok] not to contest the election but he choose to resign from the party'.⁹⁸

The Election Results

RESULTS IN THE SUPP CHINESE CONSTITUENCIES

Table 8.3 shows that SUPP candidates increased their majorities in all constituencies except for Meradong. This does not, however, mean that there was an outright swing back to SUPP. In terms of majority percentages, only five constituencies registered an increase while two decreased. In the three constituencies located in the state capital (Stampin, Padungan, Batu Kawa), the biggest gain in outright votes (1,595) was made by Sim Kheng Hong who further consolidated his hold over the Stampin constituency. However, due to larger voter turnout,⁹⁹ the majority actually dropped by 7 per cent. Interestingly, the new SUPP candidate in Padungan, Song Swee Guan, also gained more votes (1,380) than in 1979. However, he only managed to increase his majority by 4 per cent to 17 per cent. In Batu Kawa, although Chong Kiun Kong gained only 914 votes more than in 1979, his majority increased by 5 per cent to 59 per cent. Given that voter turnout increased by only 692, this was a significant increase and indicated a clear swing to SUPP.¹⁰⁰

In the Rejang basin, Wong Soon Kai increased his majority by 14,490 votes. His opponent, DAP's Ling Sie Ming, who had beaten him only 20 months earlier in the parliamentary election, polled just a quarter of Wong's total valid votes. The DAP's performance was very much worse than in 1979, when Ling was also involved in a straight fight with Wong. In 1979, Ling polled 8,109 votes to Wong's 9,839. Between 1979 and 1983, the Maling constituency voters increased

TABLE 8.3
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Chinese Constituencies,
1974, 1979, and 1983 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	1974	1979	1983
Padungan (Kuching Timur) ^a	-5,737 ^b (+15) ^c	2,164 (+13) ^d	3,544 (+17) ^e
Stampin (Sekama)	1,155 (+13)	7,115 (+46)	8,710 (+39)
Batu Kawa (Batu Kawah)	1,503 (+19)	5,162 (+54)	6,076 (+59)
Repok	818 (+17)	339 ^e (+4)	726 ^e (+7)
Meradong (Binatang)	1,852 (+24)	939 (+12)	897 ^e (+10)
Maling (Sibu Luar)	1,419 ^e (+26)	1,730 (+10)	16,220 (+59)
Seduan (Sibu Tengah)	666 (+9)	1,638 (+20)	5,558 (+60)
Miri	1,821 (+19)	1,536 (+9)	unopposed ^e

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aNames in brackets are the former names.

^bMajority obtained by SUPP-backed independent Chua Kock Meng in the 17 March 1979 by-election.

^cFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^dMajority obtained by SUPP-backed independent Tan Meng Chong in the 1979 election.

^eNew SUPP candidate.

by more than 10,000.¹⁰¹ This meant the DAP not only failed to hold on to its 1979 votes but in fact also lost almost all its support gained in the 1982 parliamentary election. This would account for the dramatic jump in Wong's majority, from a mere 10 per cent in 1979 to 59 per cent in 1983. In the other three Chinese constituencies in the Rejang basin, the SUPP increased its majorities in Repok and Seduan but its majority in Meradong decreased by 42 votes. The gains made in Repok, 389 votes, was not significant, indicating that DAP's Chong Siew Chiang still retained a personal following there.¹⁰² A more significant gain was made in Seduan where the SUPP candidate, Ting Ing Mieng, increased his majority by 3,920 votes, which in turn saw his majority percentage quadruple to 60 per cent in 1983. In Meradong, although the SUPP did not face any strong challenge, the decreased majority could be explained by the fact that its candidate was a newcomer and that there were three opponents who each took a segment of the vote.¹⁰³

Although it was not successful in any constituency, the DAP with only seven candidates managed to poll 31,246 votes or 8.66 per cent of total votes.¹⁰⁴ This was almost similar to the 32,893 votes or about 10.3 per cent of total votes it gathered in its first electoral outing during

the 1979 state election.¹⁰⁵ However, it must be noted that in 1979, the DAP fielded 11 candidates while this time it only had 7. Moreover, since the four DAP candidates standing in Chinese-majority areas got almost all the DAP votes, this confirmed that the core supporters of the party were found in urban, Chinese seats.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP DAYAK CONSTITUENCIES

The SUPP won three out of its four official Sarawak BN allocated Dayak constituencies. It also won two out of the three Dayak seats where it fielded independents. A closer look at the majorities obtained suggest that Dayak support for SUPP had increased somewhat (Table 8.4). In two out of the four Dayak constituencies where official SUPP candidates won, their majorities substantially increased compared to the 1979 results.

In the Lundu constituency, the majority obtained by the SUPP candidate increased from a mere 7 in 1979 to an astounding 2,054. In terms of majority percentage, this represented a huge jump from less than 1 per cent in 1979 to 27 per cent in 1983. However, this increase did not indicate Dayak support. The thin majority obtained in 1979 was due to a PBB-backed independent.¹⁰⁶ This time, the wider margin was due to the large numbers of candidates, six altogether, vying for this constituency which split the vote. The total votes of the other five independent candidates were 3,362, while Ramsay Noel Jitam obtained almost 800 more at 4,146.

TABLE 8.4
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Dayak Constituencies,
1974, 1979, and 1983 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	<i>1974</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>1983</i>
Lundu	991 (+17) ^a	7 (+0.09)	2,054 ^b (+27)
Bengoh	417 (+9)	476 ^c (+6)	-1,126 ^b (-11)
Sri Aman (Simanggang) ^d	542 (+7)	1,282 (+15)	1,440 (+17)
Igan	1,730 (+30)	272 ^d (+5)	1,886 (+41)
Belaga ^e	37 (+1)	-760 (-23)	-639 ^f (-17)
Engkilili	-g	-g	418 ^{bf} (+8)
Dudong	-g	-g	175 ^{bf} (+2)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidate.

^cMajority obtained by SUPP in the August 1982 by-election.

^dNames in brackets are the former names.

^eThe SUPP candidate lost Belaga in the 1979 state election; in 1983 the same candidate stood, now an SUPP-backed independent.

^fSUPP-backed independents.

^gNo SUPP candidates.

In Sri Aman, SUPP's Hollis Tini was able to increase his majority from 1,282 to 1,440 votes. However, this increase was not significant as this represented a mere 2 per cent increase in majority. In Igan, the SUPP was able to reverse the trend set in 1979 and increased its majority to 1,886 votes in 1983. This also meant that the percentage majority increased substantially from 15 to 41 per cent. The upward vote was due to two factors. First, unlike the 1979 election, SUPP's David Tiong Chiong Chu did not have a strong opponent as the DAP did not put up a candidate in Igan in 1983. Moreover, in 1979, David Tiong was hurt by criticism from Ling Beng Siong, an influential timber tycoon. Second, Tiong was no longer a 'new boy' as he had served one term already and had the advantage of being the incumbent.

SUPP's loss in Bengoh was not really a surprise given that at the by-election for the same constituency in August 1982, the SUPP was able to win by a majority of only 476 votes which was not a significant increase over the 1979 majority.¹⁰⁷ Also, unlike the by-election where SUPP faced a relatively unknown candidate, in 1983 the party was up against seasoned campaigner Wilfred Nissom, who came in a close second to Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in the 1979 state polls. His overtly communal appeal to the Bidayuh in Bengoh was enough to secure his victory over SUPP's William Tanyuh ak Nub, with a 17 per cent majority.¹⁰⁸

In the Belaga constituency, the loss by SUPP-backed independent, Nyipa Batok, was again not a surprise. Going by the voting trend, the same candidate lost by more than 700 votes in 1979; this time his loss was again in the same region—639 votes. However, in terms of majority percentage, Batok performed better in 1983 than in 1979.

While Batok was unsuccessful, the two other SUPP-backed independents, Wilfred Kiroh in Dudong and Sim Choo Nam in Engkilili, were successful due primarily to two factors. The first factor was SUPP's ability to command almost all the Chinese votes in these two constituencies. In the absence of a viable, alternative, Chinese-based opposition, the Chinese voters threw their support behind the SUPP-backed candidates. The DAP did not put up candidates in either constituency. The rest of the Chinese candidates were either independents or, in the case of Dudong, a SNAP candidate. With SUPP already holding the Chinese votes, the SUPP-backed candidates only had to gain a fraction of the Dayak votes in order to win. This split in the Dayak vote, which was the second factor, contributed considerably. In Engkilili, for example, there were six candidates of which four were Dayaks. Both PBDS and SNAP were represented and the PBB is believed to have backed an independent.¹⁰⁹ Taken together, these three Dayak party candidates polled a total of 2,486 votes, which is a thousand votes more than the SUPP-backed independent's vote of 1,461.¹¹⁰ This situation was repeated in Dudong. The combined votes of the PBDS and SNAP candidates was 5,082, which was 2,000 votes more than the SUPP-backed independent's vote of 2,870.¹¹¹

In sum, the results in the SUPP Dayak constituencies indicated that while SUPP was able to regain a measure of Dayak support in two

constituencies (Lundu and Igan), it lost the support of one (Bengoh) and maintained it in the last one (Sri Aman). In the other three 'unofficial' SUPP Dayak constituencies, the SUPP made a minor gain in one (Belaga) and won in two (Engkilili and Dudong) based on splits in the Dayak vote.

Post-election Politics

Officially, the results of the election were: PBB 19, SUPP 11, SNAP 7, PBDS 7, and independents 4. SUPP had won 11 out of its 12 allocated seats. PBB won all its 19 allocated seats, retaining its position as the backbone of the Sarawak BN. The big losers were inevitably SNAP and PBDS, which won seven seats each after splitting the Dayak vote. This split in the Dayak vote also allowed four independents to win in former SNAP constituencies. In reality, due to the backing received by all four independents, the state of the parties (or power) were as follows: PBB 20, SUPP 13, SNAP 7, and PBDS 8. Hence, the 1983 election gave SUPP one of its best electoral performances. It had entered the election with 12 seats and lost one, but gained two at the expense of SNAP. More gratifying was SUPP's ability to retain all the Chinese constituencies against DAP. The state election confirmed that, despite DAP's inroads into the Chinese community at parliamentary level, it was unable to dislodge the SUPP at state level.

After the election, PBDS was formally admitted to the BN, both at the federal and state level.

Conclusion

The period under study, from 1981 until 1983, was a period of change for the SUPP both in the external political arena and internally. Externally, a change of guard took place when Abdul Taib Mahmud replaced Abdul Rahman Yakub as chief minister. A similar change at the federal level followed shortly when Dr Mahathir Mohamad took over from Hussein Onn. Internally, the party also saw changes at the top with the retirement of Ong Kee Hui. Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was his natural successor and Wong Soon Kai took over as Secretary-General. Other changes at the top generally benefited the Rejang basin SUPP. Another group that benefited from this mood of change were the urban professionals.

The 1982 parliamentary election showed how in Sarawak, the voting trend among the Chinese community did not necessarily reflect the national trend. While the DAP was nearly wiped out in Peninsular Malaysia, the Chinese voters in Sarawak went against the trend and voted for the DAP instead. The loss of two constituencies to the DAP seriously eroded SUPP's confidence, especially since both were Chinese-majority constituencies. Moreover, one of the casualties was Wong Soon Kai. The defeat prompted the party to adopt a more aggressive political stand.

The change at the top and at the bottom in the party's internal structure proved successful for SUPP in the 1983 state election. Not only was SUPP able to deny the DAP a foothold in the Council Negri, but the split in Dayak votes allowed SUPP to take two extra seats through supported independents. The 1983 election also started a voting pattern among the Chinese community: a vote for the SUPP at state level to ensure the party's continued active role in the state government, and a vote for the opposition DAP at parliamentary level to signify discontent over the discriminatory policies pursued by the federal government.

1. The sitting member for Sebandi, Sharifah Mordiah, was asked to make way for Abdul Taib Mahmud. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1981.

2. See Fred R. Von Mehden, 'Malaysia in 1981: Continuity and Change', *Asian Survey*, 22, 2 (February 1982): 212-15.

3. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics: the Second Generation*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 86. For a survey of the peninsular campaign, see H. Crouch, *Malaysia's 1982 General Elections*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982.

4. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 April 1982. The six were: Samarahan, Santubong, Bukit Mas, Kapit, Ulu Rejang, and Lubok Antu.

5. The fifth Democratic Action Party (DAP) candidate stood in Kanowit against Sarawak National Party (SNAP)'s Leo Moggie.

6. See interview with Chong Siew Chiang, in *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 April 1982.

7. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 16, 19 April 1982. In an interview with Chong, he made the same accusation.

8. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 April 1982.

9. The chairmanship of the Miri Municipal Council (MMC) is equivalent to being the mayor.

10. *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 April 1982. The Lambir parliamentary constituency in 1982 had an electorate of 39,387 made up of: Chinese 19,200 (48.74 per cent), Malays 11,700 (29.70 per cent), Ibans 8,130 (20.64 per cent), and others 357 (0.90 per cent).

11. One of these independents, Hussein Abdul Rahim, initially posed a serious threat to the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), as he made a strong communal and religious appeal to the Malay voters in Lambir. He also claimed to have the support of the Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). However, this claim was seriously eroded when Abdul Taib Mahmud and senior leaders of the PBB campaigned actively for George Chan Hong Nam in the Malay areas. See *Miri Daily News*, 12, 13 April 1982.

12. A copy of this open letter was published in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 April 1982.

13. Taib Mahmud made these remarks during a campaign speech in Binatang. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 April 1982.

14. *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 April 1982.

15. For example, see *New Straits Times*, 10 April 1982. *Khalwat* is an Islamic term to describe the illegal 'close proximity' between a male and a female.

16. A succinct account of the Merdeka issue can be found in Kua Kia Soong, *A Protean Saga, The Chinese Schools of Malaysia*, 2nd edn., Kuala Lumpur: Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, 1990, especially Chapter 9, 'Merdeka University'.

17. For example, in 1970, the student population at Universiti Malaya, the country's premier tertiary institution, was made up of 40 per cent *bumiputera* and 49 per cent Chinese. By 1975, barely four years after the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the ratio had dramatically changed, to 57.3 per cent *bumiputera* and 35.8 per cent Chinese. See Kua, *A Protean Saga*, p. 135.

18. Under the University and University Colleges Act 1971, any proposal for a university or college had to get first the approval of the King, then Parliament.

19. Musa Hitam, then Education Minister, candidly admitted that the government had delayed the announcement so that the issue could not be exploited by the opposition. See *New Straits Times*, 18 September 1978.

20. See previous chapter.

21. David L. C. Teng and Daniel K. A. Ngieng, *The Challenges: SUPP in Focus*, Sibuh Think Management, 1990, p. 124.

22. The fund, called 'Merdeka University \$1 per head legal fund campaign', received enthusiastic support in Sarawak. By June 1980, even without SUPP's support, the fund managed to raise nearly RM280,000. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 13 June 1980.

23. Kua, *A Protean Saga*, p. 146.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 156. See also Kua Kia Soong, 'Merdeka University: A University that Failed to Take Off', *Southeast Asian Journal of Educational Studies*, 19/20 (1985): 3-16.

25. Many Chinese parents had to pay relatively high private school fees, compared to those of the government schools, for their children to be educated in their mother tongue, in order 'to preserve Chinese culture and language'. Thus, these parents were especially sensitive to charges that the government was tampering with their children's education.

26. The Education Minister then was PBB's Sulaiman Daud. The PBB is SUPP's coalition partner in the Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN).

27. For example, SUPP's Bandar Kuching candidate promised that the party would take up the issue after the election. See *International Times*, 14, 18 April 1982.

28. *International Times*, 21 April 1982.

29. See statement released by SUPP Sibu branch in *Special Edition* 15 April 1982 and comments made by an SUPP Youth leader in a campaign speech in *International Times*, 21 April 1982, see also *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1982.

30. This statement was given extensive coverage in the Chinese newspapers. See also *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 April 1982.

31. Sim Geok Tee was a key leader in SUPP Kuching and the Chao-ann Association. He is also known as a lifelong defender of Chinese education in Sarawak. Because of his uncompromising stand towards the Merdeka University issue and Chinese education in general, he was gradually pushed out of the SUPP Central Working Committee (CWC), and by early 1981 had more or less severed his links with the party. In an interview, he blamed his lifelong friend in the Chao-ann Association, Chan Siaw Hee, for pushing him out of SUPP by ensuring that he lost his position in the Chao-ann Association, which meant he could not be nominated by the association to the top echelon of SUPP. Sim's problem with Chan started when, at a First Division United Chinese Association (UCA) meeting, Chan withdrew a motion in support of the Merdeka University legal fund on behalf of the Kuching Chinese Chamber of Commerce (KCCC). This action led to a split in the First Division UCA and the SUPP Kuching branch which led to a special SUPP CWC meeting in December 1980. For more details on the split in the First Division UCA, see *Chinese Daily News*, 14 June 1980; and *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 16 June 1980. For Sim Geok Tee's own account of the split, see his article, 'Who should be responsible for the split of the Chinese community in the First Division', *See Hua Daily News*, 18 June 1980.

32. See *Hua Daily News*, 15 April 1982; *Miri Daily News*, 22 April 1982.

33. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 18 April 1982.

34. The book was banned after its first publication in the early 1970s, and the restriction was not lifted until shortly after Dr Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister in 1981. The book sets out Mahathir's political philosophy and his analysis on the racial problem in Malaysia. It argues strongly for Malay political and economic supremacy, and the assimilation of the non-Malay population by interracial marriages. See Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma*, Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1970.

35. See Sim Kwang Yang's open letter in *See Hua Daily News*, 10 April 1982.

36. The DAP's defeat was given extensive coverage and analysis by all the major Sarawak Chinese newspapers. See editorial in the *Miri Daily News*, 8 April 1982; and editorial in *Special Edition*, 24 April 1982.

37. This appeal was carried on the front pages of *Chinese Daily News* (Sunday edition), *Berita Petang Sarawak*, and *Malaysian Daily News*, 25 April 1982.

38. Interview with Sim Kwang Yang.

39. SNAP president James Wong Kim Min accused Patrick ak Uren, the successful independent in the Mas Gading constituency, of being backed by the PBB. See his remarks in *See Hua Daily News*, 13 April 1982. Interestingly enough, the SUPP Council Negri member for Lundu, which forms part of the Mas Gading parliamentary constituency, also accused the PBB of backing Patrick ak Uren despite the fact that SUPP had no direct interest in Mas Gading. See *Malaysian Daily News*, 21 April 1982.

40. It could be argued that Ong Kee Hui's huge majority was due to the lack of a real opposition as his main opponent pulled out during the 1978 campaign. See previous chapter.

41. In a post-election interview, Taib remarked that young voters numbering 9,000 in Kuching and 8,000 in Sibu had voted for the DAP. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 April 1982. The number of new voters in 1982 compared to 1978 was 10,674 in Bandar Kuching and 10,513 in Bandar Sibu. Figures compiled from SUPP records.

42. A comparison of the 1982 and 1974 results indicates that Stephen Yong Kuet Tze also doubled his majority in 1982. But this does not mean much as in 1974 there were only 15,318 registered voters in Padawan. In 1982 there were 26,453, or an increase of more than 70 per cent.

43. In 1982, there were 25,483 registered voters. In 1978 there were only 22,052.

44. The DAP, with only five candidates, managed to get 48,623 votes or 18.15 per cent of all valid votes cast.

45. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 May 1982.

46. This was the ministry traditionally given to SUPP.

47. Under the federal Constitution, a federal minister could not concurrently be the sitting member of a state constituency. This rule was changed in 1993 after an amendment was made to the federal Constitution.

48. *New Straits Times*, 16 August 1982.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Text of Ong Kee Hui's farewell address at the 12th SUPP Delegates Conference on 25 September 1982.

51. For press coverage on the 12th SUPP Delegates Conference, see *International Times*, *See Hua Daily News*, *Chinese Daily News*, 23-27 September 1982; *Sarawak Tribune*, 25-27 September 1982.

52. The Youth secretary was Stephen Tang. His predecessor, David Tiong Chiong Chu, also from the Rejang basin, did not seek re-election.

53. For example, David Teng Lung Chi was a lawyer by training, while Thomas Hii King Hiong was an accountant. Both also received Chinese education up to secondary school level before switching over to English education at tertiary level.

54. *International Times*, 29 September, 1982.

55. The executive secretary runs the party machinery on a day-to-day basis.

56. Details in Chapter 11.

57. See *New Straits Times*, 7 December, 1981.

58. See above section on the 1982 parliamentary polls.

59. See *Sarawak Tribune* and *Borneo Post*, 20 June 1983.

60. *New Straits Times*, 15 September 1983.

61. Generally speaking, the Dayaks were first politically united under SNAP in the early 1960s with the result that Sarawak's first chief minister was an Iban, Stephen Kalong Ningkan. Only after the Dayaks were divided into factions and Kuala Lumpur intervened was Dayak political power transferred to the Malay/Melanau group under Rahman Yakub. The Malay/Melanau group consolidated their hold over Sarawak politics when a Dayak Party, Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) decided to merge with Rahman Yakub's Parti Bumiputera to form PBB in 1973. The other time the Dayaks were united under SNAP was in the 1974 elections, when SNAP came dangerously close to forming a government on its own (see Chapter 6). Since then, the Dayak vote has been split among three parties: the Pesaka wing of PBB, and the Dayak wing of SUPP and of SNAP.

62. This point was stressed several times during an interview with a senior PBDS leader.

63. See previous chapter on the 1979 polls.

64. The PBB dissension will be covered in detail later.

65. Interview with several SUPP and PBDS leaders.

66. *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 December 1983.

67. Strictly speaking, Padungan 'belonged' to SNAP as it was given to SNAP in the 1979 election. However, SUPP was able to win this seat twice with SUPP-backed independents (see previous chapter) and with the ongoing SNAP-PBDS crisis, SNAP was in no position to make a strong claim on Padungan. James Wong Kim Min, however, reiterated SNAP's 'rights' to these two constituencies after the seat allocation arrangement had been made by the Sarawak BN Supreme Council. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 December 1983.

68. Belaga constituency originally 'belonged' to SUPP but in the 1979 state election, its candidate lost to an independent who subsequently joined PBB. Hence in 1979, PBB successfully claimed Belaga as one of its constituencies.

69. Originally, the DAP had planned to field nine candidates, but two of them, in Miri and Subis, had their nomination papers rejected on minor technical grounds. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 December 1983.

70. Parti Demokratik Bersatu (Bersatu) is actually the former Parti Anak Jati Sarawak (PAJAR) party.

71. It must be noted that about 10 of these were veteran independent candidates who had stood at least once as independents in previous elections.

72. The DAP candidate was to be Wong Keng Tiong.

73. *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 December 1983. Taib's animosity towards SNAP was understandable, given that his opponent in the Sebandi state constituency was the chairman of SNAP Sebandi branch. Taib also alleged that SNAP had 'planted' 13 independents against official BN-PBB candidates. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 December 1983; *New Straits Times*, 10 December 1983.

74. The open reply to Taib was printed in *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 December 1983. Wong named six PBB-backed independents, one of which was an independent in Limbang constituency where Wong was the incumbent.

75. See statement issued by PBB Youth in *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 December 1983.

76. It should be noted that if the Miri DAP candidate's nomination papers were not rejected, then the DAP would have been facing SUPP in seven out of the eight Chinese-majority constituencies.

77. *New Straits Times*, 27 December 1983.

78. See Stephen Yong's campaign speech, reported in *See Hua Daily News*, 27 December 1983.

79. See *Hua Daily News*, 25 December 1983. See also the open letter by Lim Kit Siang to Sarawak voters in *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 26 December 1983.

80. See Lim's call in Sibul for a royal commission into the Bumiputra Malaysia Finance (BMF) affair, in *See Hua Daily News*, 17 December 1983. The BMF loan scandal centred on a RM1.7 billion loan given by Bank Bumiputra Finance (Hong Kong), a subsidiary of the government-owned Bank Bumiputra, to a speculative investment company in Hong Kong. Much of the loan was approved without normal procedures and several senior Malay politicians were believed to have been involved. When the Hong Kong company collapsed, almost all the money was lost, causing the parent bank to be technically insolvent. Bank Bumiputra was set up as a by-product of the NEP, and thus was an important political symbol of the United Malays National Organization's (UMNO) commitment to help Malays in business. Because of its political significance, Petronas, with its huge reserves from oil sales, was roped in by the government to rescue Bank Bumiputra by purchasing nearly all of its share capital. For further details see Hassan Abdul Karim, 'BMF—the People's Black Paper', in Jomo K. S. (ed.), *Mahathir's Economic Policies*, Kuala Lumpur: INSAN, 1988, pp. 90–118.

81. Padungan state constituency formed half of the Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency, the other half being the Stampin state constituency.

82. Song Swee Guan took over the chairmanship of the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) in 1982 when Stephen Yong relinquished it, on his appointment as a federal minister.

83. In an interview, Song said he was recruited into the upper echelon of SUPP after being active in several social organizations.

84. See feature article 'SNAP ruining Barisan's chances in Padungan?' in *Sarawak Tribune*, 15, 16 December 1983.

85. Interview with Song Swee Guan. One of the DAP's slogans in Kuching was 'Mr Song does not know Chinese and hence he cannot safeguard Chinese education'. Song, while able to converse in Mandarin, could not read Chinese. See also *Chinese Daily News*, 28 December 1983.

86. Interview with Sim Kwang Yang. See also *See Hua Daily News*, 23 December 1983.

87. *Malaysian Daily News*, 20, 23 December 1983.

88. Sibü always had a strong Christian (Methodist) tradition. See Chapter 2.

89. See *Malaysian Daily News*, 22 December 1983. Ling Sie Ming's poor command of the Malay language meant that he could hardly speak in Parliament where all debates and speeches were conducted in the national language.

90. According to Ting Yii Hiep, he was going to convert to Islam when he was told that as a Chinese Muslim, he was eligible for land and would be accepted for the teacher's training college. However, he changed his mind and did not go through with the conversion ceremony. See *Malaysian Daily News*, 23 December 1983.

91. Interview with Thomas Hii King Hiong. Interestingly, in the 1979 state election, the SNAP candidate in Padungan lost his election deposit when the electorate turned against him because he was also a Chinese convert (see previous chapter). These two incidents highlight the fact that religion, especially the issue of Chinese converts to Islam, is still a very sensitive political issue in Sarawak and Malaysia generally. For a general discussion, see Raymond Lee, 'The State, Religious Nationalism, and Ethnic Rationalization in Malaysia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 13, 4 (October 1990): 482-502.

92. See *Hua Daily News*, 28 December 1983. In an interview with Sim Kwang Yang, he said Ting never disclosed the fact that he tried to convert to Islam, indicating that the DAP would not have selected him had they known he was a convert.

93. Halfway through the campaign, one of the independents, Ahmad Som withdrew and threw his support behind Ramsay Noel Jitam. Interestingly, three of the independents facing Jitam were also former police officers.

94. In the 1979 contest, Wilfred Nissom was also widely believed to be backed by Rahman Yakub and the PBB in a bid to stop Stephen Yong from winning a state seat. After the election, he was quietly accepted into the PBB. See previous chapter on the 1979 state election. When Bengoh was not allocated to PBB in 1983, Nissom had to stand as an independent. Because of this, he was expelled from the PBB. See Taib's remarks on Nissom's expulsion in *International Times*, 22 December 1983.

95. The former state minister who stood as an independent was Simon Demak Maja. James Wong alleged that he was backed by the PBB.

96. *Malaysian Daily News*, 22 December 1983.

97. Stanley Ajang Batok was believed to have the backing of SNAP as SNAP MP, Luhät Wan, who was also then federal deputy Minister of Agriculture, actively campaigned for him so much so that the PBB-led state government denied him access to all government facilities during the campaign period. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 December 1983. Luhät Wan in turn charged that the PBB was supporting independents in the Baram area against SNAP candidates. See *International Times*, 16 December 1983.

98. Quoted in *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 December 1983.

99. In 1979, turnout was 15,363 voters; in 1983 this had increased significantly to 22,417.

100. In 1979, turnout was 9,552 voters; in 1983 this had increased slightly to 10,244.

101. In the 1979 state election, there were 23,096 registered voters in the Maling constituency. In 1983, this had increased to 34,853.

102. The gain was not significant given that turnout had grown from 8,927 in 1979 to 10,959 in 1983.

103. Interview with Thomas Hii.

104. Malaysia, Election Commission, *Laporan Pilihanraya Umum Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak 1983*, p. 24.

105. Malaysia, Election Commission, *Laporan Pilihanraya Umum Dewan Undangan Negeri Sarawak 1979*, p. 24.

106. See previous chapter.

107. See above section on the Bengoh by-election.

108. In a post-election interview, Stephen Yong candidly admitted that racial prejudice was the key factor in William Tanyuh ak Nub's defeat. See *International Times*, 30 December 1983. Nissom was allegedly backed by local PBB elements.

109. The independent was Simon Demak Maja.

110. The results in Engkilili were:

Sim Choo Nam (independent-SUPP)	1,461
Jonathan Narwin ak Jinggong (PBDS)	984
Simon Dembab ak Maja (independent-PBB)	495
Wilson Allie ak Banyie (SNAP)	1,043
Kua Siang How (independent)	29
Richard Tawan Ak Sedu (independent)	921

According to the *New Straits Times*, 31 December 1983, Sim Choo Nam took about 500 Dayak votes. The ethnic breakdown of the constituency was: Dayaks 5,490 (84.44 per cent), Chinese 903 (13.89 per cent), Malays 107 (1.64 per cent), others 1 (0.01 per cent).

111. The results in Dudong were:

Wilfred Kiroh (independent-SUPP)	2,870
Joseph Tang (SNAP)	2,695
Sabang ak Lambong (PBDS)	2,387

Fracture at the Centre

The Thirteenth Delegates Conference

THE 13th Delegates Conference was held in September 1984 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP). The entire 23-member Central Working Committee (CWC) was elected by acclamation. No major changes occurred and the top three positions of chairman, Secretary-General, and treasurer were retained by the incumbents. The only significant change was in the Youth and *Wanita* sections. Chan Seng Khai (from Kuching), took over from Thomas Hii King Hiong (from Rejang basin) as Youth leader, while *Wanita* leader Chi Mei Si bowed out to Kho Hui Kheng, the *Wanita* section's secretary. Other significant moves were the decision to change the frequency of the Delegates Conference, from a biennial to a triennial event, and a proposal to revamp the entire organization. This revamp included the re-registration of all members, and the computerization of membership lists. A more structured organization was envisaged, together with better terms and conditions for party workers who worked full time for the party. The net effect of these changes was to produce a leaner and more efficient party machinery. Staff morale was also generally higher, after a salary revision plan was put into practice.

Most of the resolutions passed at the conference were similar to ones passed in previous years and one specifically called on the federal government to end the differentiation between *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* after the 1990 expiry date of the New Economic Policy (NEP), some six years away.¹

State Politics, 1983–1986

Challenges to Abdul Taib Mahmud

When Abdul Taib Mahmud took over the chief minister's post in 1981, he assumed an office that was decisively shaped by his predecessor and uncle, Abdul Rahman Yakub. Rahman Yakub had also hand-picked Taib Mahmud to take over the presidency of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) (which brings with it the position of chief minister). Thus, when Taib took over, he found himself in a political office where many of his uncle's appointees were still holding senior government posts.² This

situation was also reflected in the PBB where, although Taib was the president, many in the ranks owed their positions to Rahman Yakub.

For the first two years, although Taib was in charge, there was no real change in policy substance. Rahman Yakub, now in the supposedly politically neutral post of Yang di-Pertua Negeri, was still very much the power behind the throne and on occasion many found it more convenient to see Rahman Yakub over state policies or to request for political favours. Taib, being his own man, naturally resented his uncle's interference in state affairs which rightly should be under his purview. This tension between the two men was public knowledge although no newspapers, in Sarawak or nation-wide, dared to comment on it.

The tension boiled over when Rahman Yakub, in his capacity as governor, made a public speech against the federal government at a gathering in Bintulu in 1985. He criticized the federal government for not developing Sarawak and for not meeting some of the earlier promises made on infrastructure projects. Taib responded to these criticisms by walking out midway through Rahman Yakub's speech. By this time, Rahman Yakub's loyalists in the PBB had already started a campaign to undermine Taib. The main complaint against Taib was his leadership style—he was described as 'inaccessible, irreligious, and dictatorial'.³ Taib was also accused of being pro-Chinese, or specifically too pro-SUPP. The criticism stemmed from SUPP's strong support for him.

In April 1985, when Rahman Yakub's term as governor expired, there was intense lobbying to persuade Taib to reappoint him for a second term.⁴ Knowing the consequences of reappointing him, Taib instead recommended Ahmad Zaidi Aduce. Zaidi was another lifelong PBB politician, but one who knew his proper role as a non-political governor. At the same time, Taib continued appointing his people to all the key posts in government and statutory bodies. A Cabinet reshuffle in mid-1985 saw Taib and his nominees controlling all the important posts. Taib himself assumed control of the newly created Ministry of Resource Planning, which in turn took control of the issuing of timber concessions—the main source of political patronage in Sarawak.

Within PBB, there was a major purge to remove all of Rahman Yakub's influence. Two PBB vice-presidents were hastily removed and the party began to register its members officially, a process that allowed Taib to stack PBB with his supporters and deny membership to those who supported his uncle. Rahman Yakub's supporters then tried to form another political party called the United Sarawak Natives Association (USNA). In April 1986, one of Rahman Yakub's staunchest supporters and former deputy Secretary-General of PBB, Salleh Jafaruddin, resigned from the Council Negri in order to precipitate a by-election. Although the by-election was not going to affect the control of the state government, the Oya by-election was seen by both sides as a virtual referendum on Taib's rule.⁵ Salleh stood as an independent, while the PBB nominated its deputy Secretary-General Wan Madzihi Wan Mahdzar.⁶ Massive government and Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) resources were poured into the constituency, and Taib personally took control of the campaign.⁷ The chief minister's critics had high hopes that the Oya

polls would turn into another 'Tambunan'.⁸ Rahman Yakub himself openly campaigned for Salleh. The results were never in doubt, given that the massive resources of the BN allowed them 'control of the air'.⁹ This was a distinct advantage as it allowed the Sarawak BN to cover almost the entire constituency, even reaching voters in the remote long-houses located in the inaccessible interiors of the constituency. Wan Madzihi defeated Salleh by a majority of 1,755. He obtained 4,215 votes to Salleh's 2,460.

SUPP Support for Abdul Taib Mahmud

One of the persistent criticisms of Abdul Taib Mahmud was that he was too pro-Chinese (meaning pro-SUPP). For example, the appointment of Chinese as chairmen (mayors) of the municipal councils of Kuching, Sibuan, and Miri. Given that all the appointees were SUPP nominees, this was taken as a direct attack on Taib Mahmud for yielding to SUPP in return for their support.¹⁰ The Democratic Action Party (DAP) also attacked SUPP for its support of the chief minister.¹¹ The strong support shown by the party towards Taib and his administration was, given the circumstances, not surprising. SUPP had as far back as 1978 nominated Taib as the successor to Abdul Rahman Yakub when it tried to get rid of the chief minister through federal pressure. Although SUPP played no direct part in nominating Taib for the chief ministership in 1981, it was clear that the party was pleased with the decision, and thus worked actively in support of his administration. During the first few years of his administration, Taib turned to SUPP for political support when certain of his decisions brought him into conflict with Rahman Yakub.¹²

SUPP basically supported Taib against Rahman Yakub because of the enmity from the 1970s. The feud between Rahman Yakub and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, now the chairman of SUPP, had not healed even after Rahman Yakub had stepped down as chief minister. Yong, a federal minister, was also instrumental in mobilizing support for Taib at federal as well as state level. Wong Soon Kai, who had served in Rahman Yakub's Cabinet, also threw his support firmly behind Taib, finding Taib a more amicable chief minister.¹³ Taib was also more acquiescent to SUPP's interests and proposals. In 1985, when Taib came under increasing pressure from within PBB, SUPP played a key role in mobilizing large crowds to rally in support of him.¹⁴ In the crucial Oya by-election described above, SUPP's support was the key factor in the PBB candidate's getting nearly 600 Chinese votes.¹⁵

The 1986 Parliamentary Election

In July 1986, with only a year to go on his five-year mandate, Dr Mahathir Mohamad called for elections the following month. With a downturn in the economy and rumblings about his leadership in the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Mahathir probably decided it was the best possible time to renew the mandate before the economic recession worsened and his critics got more strident.¹⁶

In Sarawak (as in Sabah) only the parliamentary elections were held. In both these states, the state governments still had some time to go on their terms: Sarawak held its state election in 1983, Sabah's was held in 1985. The allocation of parliamentary seats in the Sarawak BN was as follows: PBB 9, SUPP 7, SNAP 5, and PBDS 4. SUPP's usual seven parliamentary seats were: Bandar Kuching, Sibü, Sarikei, Rajang, Lambir, Padawan, and Serian. Only two SUPP newcomers were introduced: Chan Seng Khai for Bandar Kuching and Tieu Sung Seng for Bandar Sibü. Both of these parliamentary constituencies had been lost to the DAP in 1982.

On the opposition side, DAP put up five candidates and a minor labour party, Parti Buruh Sarawak (PLUS), put up two. United Sarawak Natives Association (USNA), yet to be registered as a political party, put up at least two candidates who stood as independents.¹⁷ USNA's protem president, Wan Mohamad Zain Mohdzar, stood in Samarahan and its Secretary-General, Salleh Jafaruddin, stood in Mukah. Both these constituencies were in PBB areas. On nomination day in July, PBB won two constituencies, Santubong and Paloh, unopposed.

Campaign Issues and Tactics

While USNA concentrated its attacks on Abdul Taib Mahmud and the PBB,¹⁸ in the SUPP constituencies the threat came from the DAP. Four of the five DAP candidates stood against SUPP candidates: in Bandar Kuching, Bandar Sibü, Sarikei, and Lambir.¹⁹ With the DAP expected to hold on to Bandar Kuching and Bandar Sibü, SUPP concentrated its efforts in these two areas. This proved to be a miscalculation.

In Bandar Kuching, SUPP's candidate Chan Seng Khai got into trouble even before the campaign got underway. The son of Chan Siaw Hee, one of the most influential members from Kuching, Chan's nomination was not supported by his father²⁰ even though at the time of his nomination he was also the SUPP Youth leader. The father felt that his son was not politically strong enough to face the incumbent DAP candidate, Sim Kwang Yang. Thus, contrary to press reports, Chan's nomination did not go smoothly.²¹ Chan also faced opposition from within the SUPP Kuching branch which felt that he was riding on his father's prestige to get the nomination. Chan had only joined SUPP in late 1981, and by 1982 was appointed a Kuching Municipal Council (KMC) councillor. In 1984, he was elected SUPP Youth head.²² This rapid rise in less than five years caused resentment and suspicion that Chan had been hand-picked by the leadership and did not have to work his way up the party ranks. This resentment was translated into a half-hearted campaign for him by SUPP cadres at the grass-roots level. Chan's nomination was also opposed by the Kuching section of SUPP *Wanita* which felt that the party should have given one of their members a chance.²³

Selecting a candidate for Bandar Sibü did not go smoothly either. Wong Soon Kai, the SUPP candidate, had lost to DAP's Ling Sie Ming by a mere 181 votes in the 1982 polls. It was widely expected that Wong

would avenge this defeat in 1986 as he had won the 1983 state election against Ling, in the same constituency,²⁴ by a majority of more than 16,000 votes. However, a political crisis that broke out before the 1986 polls made this impossible.

In July 1984, SUPP supported the repeal of the Rent Control Ordinance.²⁵ Given that the majority of those affected by the repeal of the ordinance were Chinese, this issue became an instant political 'hot potato' for SUPP. Several meetings were organized by the tenant associations of Kuching, Sibuluan, and Sarikei, over this matter. What really infuriated the affected residents was that SUPP had tabled the motion.²⁶ A group from the Sibuluan Tenants' Association publicly threatened to campaign against Wong at the next election if he did not postpone the implementation of the repealed ordinance.²⁷ By early 1986, Wong had decided not to stand in Bandar Sibuluan, and instead threw his support behind an old party hand and SUPP Sibuluan branch secretary, Tieu Sung Seng.²⁸ Tieu's nomination was generally well regarded by the older generation SUPP members as he was commonly referred to as 'hero of the 60s', a reference to the active political work which had seen him detained for more than a decade.²⁹

In Sarikei, the incumbent Law Hieng Ding once again faced DAP's Chong Siew Chiang. Unlike the 1978 parliamentary election, this time it was a straight fight.³⁰ Chong had lost in 1978 by only 81 votes, and Law expected a difficult campaign this time around. In Lambir, George Chan Hong Nam did not seek re-election but gave way to Peter Chin Fah Kui, also from the Miri branch and generally regarded as a strong ally of Chan.³¹ Lambir was generally regarded as a safe seat for SUPP despite the presence of a DAP candidate, Wong Ho Leng, and a Malay independent. In 1982, George Chan had won Lambir with a comfortable 13,213 vote majority or 51 per cent majority.

In general, many of the same issues utilized in earlier elections were again used by both SUPP and DAP in this election. DAP campaigned under the slogan 'Enough is Enough! No more two-thirds majority!' Its manifesto emphasized the *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* divide in Malaysian society, and called for the termination of the NEP after 1990. It also pledged to fight the controversial section 21 (2) of the Education Act,³² and aimed for a Malaysian Malaysia where ethnic status did not equate with special privileges. It also listed all the BN's broken promises made during the 1982 campaign.

SUPP campaigned under the BN's slogan of 'Unity, Prosperity, and Harmony', under the leadership of Dr Mahathir Mohamad. DAP was again portrayed as a party out to split Chinese unity in Sarawak and working in cohorts with Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS). Just before the election PAS had set up a Chinese Consultative Council (CCC), in an attempt to reach out to non-Muslims, mainly Chinese voters. SUPP argued that DAP's 'no more two-thirds majority' could only be achieved if DAP won at least 60 parliamentary seats. This, SUPP argued, was unrealistic, given that Chinese-majority seats in the country totalled less than 60, or less than one-third of the total Dewan Rakyat seats. The

only way for DAP to deny the BN's two-thirds majority was to form an electoral pact with PAS, thus proving that DAP was actively supporting the creation of a 'fundamentalist Islamic nation'.³³

Local issues, of equal importance in Sarawak, were also used. In Bandar Kuching, the DAP focused on Chan Seng Khai's inexperience and privileged background. Apart from a mild controversy over a poster,³⁴ Chan was never really in a position to challenge Sim Kwang Yang. Even a BN campaigner was quoted in a national broadsheet as saying, 'BN has no chance at all. The trend among the urban Chinese here is to vote for the opposition.'³⁵ DAP successfully argued that the voters needed Sim more than they needed Chan, taking advantage of the general feeling among the urban Kuching Chinese that Sim was doing a good job articulating the grievances of the Chinese community in Parliament. By voting DAP, it was claimed, the voters could still expect help from SUPP. The rationale was quite simple: whatever the outcome, Chan could still be relied upon to help Kuching constituents through his post as a councillor in the KMC, but if Sim were to lose, he would no longer be in a position to take up issues for the public. The logic was succinctly summarized by a Kuching voter, 'SKY is of the people and for the people ... Chan Seng Khai has a public position already. If I need his help I can still get it from him because he is a KMC councillor. I decided that I don't want to "waste" Mr Sim because he is good political material.'³⁶

In Sibü, SUPP used Ling Sie Ming's past record—especially his performance in Parliament—against him. This same issue was successfully used against Ling in 1983. SUPP redoubled its efforts, mobilizing thousands of paid workers on polling day to 'assist' voters. More than 2,000 election workers were hired, including all the taxi drivers in Sibü town, to ferry voters to and from polling booths. The cash-strapped DAP simply could not counter SUPP's efforts, and had to rely on a handful of volunteers.³⁷

In the Dayak constituencies, SUPP fielded the three incumbents: Richard Dampeng in Serian, Jawan Empaling in Rajang, and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in Padawan. In Serian and Padawan, it was a straight fight with independents Lainus Andrew Luak and Barnabas Kulor ak Kaos, respectively. In Rajang, there were two independents: Dr Nicholas Munong and Siew Chee Kiong. All the independents attacked SUPP for ignoring Dayak interests. In Serian and Rajang, Luak and Munong were believed to have been backed by the Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS).³⁸ In Serian and Padawan, SUPP came under heavy criticism from the Dayak independents, especially Lainas Andrew Luak, who repeatedly charged SUPP with 'stealing' indigenous lands for Chinese farmers. Certain farmers in the Balai Ringin region, within the Serian parliamentary constituency, had been given titles to land supposedly held under native custom laws.³⁹ With land a highly sensitive matter for both Chinese and indigenous voters, SUPP found itself on the defensive. In Serian, the SUPP incumbent, Richard Dampeng, got into further trouble when his branch refused to support him whole-heartedly.



The branch had recommended that Dampeng be replaced by another candidate but the idea had been rejected by the party leadership. Stephen Yong and George Chan were sent down to Serian to reinstate Dampeng as the party candidate.⁴⁰

In Rajang, Jawan Empaling could not stem the tide of Dayak consciousness. The appeal to the community not to support an Iban in Chinese-based SUPP proved only too effective.

The Election Results

The BN performed quite adequately nation-wide. It took 148 out of 177 seats, again securing the all-important two-thirds majority. The opposition DAP recovered most of the ground it had lost to the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) in 1982, and increased its number of seats from 9 to 24, including an unprecedented five from East Malaysia.⁴¹ PAS was the big loser, being able to win only one seat, compared to five in 1982.⁴²

In Sarawak, the BN won 19 of the total 24 parliamentary seats (Table 9.1). It lost three constituencies: to independents in Serian and Rajang, and to DAP in Bandar Kuching. The two independents, however, had links with PBDS, and thus were not really against the BN. Hence, the net loss of the Sarawak BN was only one constituency.

In Bandar Kuching, Sim Kwang Yang beat Chan Seng Khai convincingly, gaining a 7,974 vote majority (Table 9.2). In 1982, Sim had beaten another SUPP candidate by 3,557 votes. Thus, there was a clearly increased majority, from 10 to 17 per cent. This consolidation of the DAP vote was probably due to disunity in the SUPP, as well as the protest vote tendency of the Chinese at parliamentary elections. One pleasant victory for SUPP was Tieu Sung Seng's win in Bandar Sibul, when he defeated the DAP incumbent, Ling Sie Ming, by 546 votes. This indicated a swing back to SUPP. In 1982, Ling (and Sim in

TABLE 9.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1986 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
BN ³		21 (19)
PBB	8 (8) ^a	
SNAP	5 (6)	
SUPP	4 (5)	
PBDS ^b	4	
Opposition		1 (2)
DAP	1 (2)	
Independents	2 (3)	2 (3)
Total		24 (24)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent 1982 results.

^bPBDS did not exist in 1982.

TABLE 9.2
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary Constituencies,
1979, 1982, and 1986 Elections

Constituency	Margin of Victory/Loss		
	1979	1982	1986
Bandar Kuching	14,813(+57) ^a	-3,577 ^b (-10)	-7,974 ^b (-17)
Padawan	Unopposed	5,123 (+44)	7,908 (+36)
Serian	2,476 (+15)	2,864 (+17)	-1,420 (-7)
Sarikei	1,388 (+10)	81 ^b (+0.4)	519 (+2)
Bandar Sibü	6,753 ^b (+33)	-141 (-0.5)	546 ^b (+1)
Rajang	2,157 (+18)	1,692 (+16)	-153 ^b (-1)
Lambir	-872 ^b (-4)	13,213 ^b (+51)	5,553 ^b (+19)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidate.

Kuching) had won Bandar Sibü on the Chinese education issue, and on sympathy votes for DAP.⁴³ Without a specific issue to campaign on, and with SUPP's persistent personal attacks, Ling could not hold on to the anti-establishment vote, which was in any case too small (only 0.5 per cent) to hold against any swing. Tieu's massive mobilization on polling day appeared to have worked. In nearby Sarikei, the incumbent SUPP candidate, Law Hieng Ding, increased his majority from 81 to 519. Being a straight fight, this was a significant win for SUPP and thus a clear victory. In 1982, there had been three opposition candidates (DAP, SAPO, and an independent), who split the vote and allowed Law to win by a slender majority of only 81. Although it was a clear win for Law, his 2 per cent hold then was still weak. In Lambir, where SUPP was confident of winning, its new candidate, Peter Chin, surprisingly gained less than half of the party's 1982 majority, slipping to 5,553. SUPP saw its majority percentage vote slip from more than 50 per cent to only 19 per cent. Chin lost many votes on local issues, especially on his performance as chairman of the Miri Municipal Council (MMC). MMC resettlement schemes for hawkers caused SUPP to lose support among the small businesses.⁴⁴

In three out of the four SUPP Dayak-majority constituencies, Dayak support basically collapsed. The beneficiaries were Dayak independents. The only exception was in Bidayuh-dominated Padawan, where Stephen Yong Kuet Tze was able to increase his majority by more than 2,500 votes. However, this increase was not significant given that this constituency had an increase of more than 5,000 new voters since 1982.⁴⁵ The new voters were probably split between Stephen Yong and the independent candidate. Moreover, Yong's status as federal minister gave him access to extra development funds and this factor probably contributed to his better showing. In nearby Serian, SUPP's Richard Dampeng lost by 1,420 votes to a PBDS-backed independent. In the

1982 parliamentary election, the SUPP candidate just managed to retain his seat and support; thus his increased majority in 1982 was not significant. This was again borne out in 1986. In 1982, Dampeng received 8,419 votes. In 1986, he received 8,451, almost the same number, even though turnout had increased by more than 2,000.⁴⁶ The issue of indigenous land proved to be effective with the mainly new Dayak voters, and almost all the new votes went to the successful PBDS-backed independent. In addition, Dampeng's loss could be attributed to the low turnout of Chinese voters who normally voted for SUPP.⁴⁷

In Rajang, SUPP's Jawan Empaling lost to another PBDS-backed independent by 153 votes. In 1982, Empaling received 5,733 votes. In 1986, he received just slightly more, that is, 5,960 votes. It would appear that the anti-SUPP swing in Rajang was in the region of 400 votes. Empaling's loss was certainly not surprising given that in 1982 his 1978 majority had already been cut by more than 400. In addition to the swing against SUPP, the Chinese independent candidate split the Chinese vote, polling 634 votes and causing Empaling to lose by 153. It could be argued that, had there been no Chinese independent candidate, SUPP could have retained Rajang with a majority of just less than 500.⁴⁸

Overall, SUPP's performance in 1986 was worse than in 1982. It only marginally regained the support of the Chinese community, and its Dayak support was further eroded. In 1982 SUPP managed to win five out of the seven constituencies it contested (85 per cent), but this time it only managed to win four out of seven (57 per cent).

The election result had important repercussions for SUPP, both externally and internally. Externally, the loss of three constituencies meant a further weakening of SUPP at the federal level. Before the polls, it had five MPs; after that, it was left with four. The result also meant that, within the Sarawak BN, SUPP was the weakest in terms of the number of MPs. PBB had eight, SNAP five, and PBDS four. Given that two independents were backed by PBDS, PBDS effectively had six MPs. Moreover, all the other Sarawak BN component parties—PBB, PBDS, and SNAP—scored a 100 per cent success rate.

Internally, the result, understandably, had a demoralizing effect on the party. To make matters worse, its multiracial image had been severely tarnished. All the four successful SUPP parliamentary candidates were ethnic Chinese, while its three Dayak candidates were all beaten. Their loss was primarily due to the party's overall loss of Dayak votes, thus further undermining SUPP's claim to multiracialism. The only consolation was that it was able to retake Bandar Sibul from the DAP.

The Rise of Dayak Political Identity

After the 1986 parliamentary elections, Abdul Taib Mahmud's critics decided that since the Chinese (specifically SUPP) had fallen in with Taib Mahmud, the only other group capable of toppling him was the Dayak. Although the Dayaks could be found predominantly in the three parties—Pesaka wing of the PBB, SNAP, and PBDS—an alliance with

the first two was not possible. PBB was out of the question for obvious reasons, while the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) was seen as losing Dayak support to the PBDS. Thus PBDS appeared to be the only viable option.

At this time, PBDS was also in favour of toppling the chief minister. A new generation of Dayaks who were leading PBDS felt that their people had been on the losing end of Sarawak politics since the fall of the Ningkan government in the 1960s. From the 1970s on, they were dominated by the Malay/Melanau group under Abdul Rahman Yakub and Abdul Taib Mahmud. Additionally, they felt that Taib Mahmud was more receptive to Chinese than to Dayak demands. Under Taib, the first two positions in the coalition belonged to PBB and SUPP, with SNAP and PBDS relegated to the bottom two positions in the BN3 Plus coalition. In the 1970s, SNAP, the Dayaks' main political vehicle, had more political weight, given its number of seats and the fact that SUPP was at loggerheads with Rahman Yakub and the PBB. This situation changed after PBDS broke away from SNAP, and when, in the early 1980s, SUPP became the main backer of Taib. The new breed of Dayak intellectuals were of the opinion that the Dayaks, through PBDS, could move up the political ladder only if they were united and built an alliance with one other major ethnic group. Coalition with SUPP was out of the question. But the possibility existed with Taib's critics who were seen to have the ability to take a few Malay/Melanau votes. Hence, by the end of 1986, two disenfranchised groups—the Malay/Melanau group opposed to Taib, and PBDS—were ready to take on the chief minister, given the right opportunity.

The 1987 State Election

In early March 1987, a group of carefully screened Council Negri members were flown to Kuala Lumpur.⁴⁹ All the 27 state assemblymen were housed at the Ming Court Hotel (hence the Ming Court Affair), where it was revealed that the purpose of the meeting was to unseat Abdul Taib Mahmud. Among those in attendance were Abdul Rahman Yakub and Leo Moggie, the leader of PBDS. Also present were four state ministers and three assistant ministers. Calling themselves the Kumpulan Maju (Progressive Group), the 27 Council Negri members signed a statement to the effect that they had lost confidence in Taib Mahmud and that, as the 27 signatories constituted more than half of the members in the Council Negri, Taib should resign. Four SUPP Council Negri members were among those involved: David Tiong Chiong Chu, Hollis Tini,⁵⁰ Sim Choo Nam, and Wilfred Kiroh.

Back in Kuching, BN3 was caught completely off guard. Although the split between Rahman Yakub and Taib was public knowledge, PBB and SUPP leaders did not foresee a political *coup* coming from outside Sarawak, or coming so soon after USNA's disastrous performance in the 1986 parliamentary election.⁵¹ Wong Soon Kai and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, who were not in Kuching when the news broke,⁵² returned

immediately and convened an emergency meeting of the CWC on 11 March. At the meeting, the four SUPP assemblymen who had switched allegiance were expelled. Wong and Yong took the view that SUPP would 'sink or swim' with Taib. This decision, although highly dangerous,⁵³ was probably the only option available, for two reasons.

First, SUPP's almost unconditional past support of Taib meant that the party's current leadership would be totally unacceptable to Rahman Yakub. Second, while Stephen Yong remained party chairman, SUPP's chances of cutting a deal with Rahman Yakub were extremely slim, because of mutual antagonism. In addition, Wong's own relationship with Rahman Yakub was by now lukewarm, to say the least. Wong's strong public endorsement of Taib's rule, and his hints that the Chinese had been far worse off during Rahman Yakub's years in power were certainly not endearing him to Rahman Yakub.⁵⁴

A delegation of PBB, SNAP, and SUPP leaders met Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad the day after the 'coup'. After the meeting, Taib announced that he would exercise his constitutional right to dissolve the Council Negri and call for a snap election, with polling in mid-April 1987.⁵⁵

With the crisis precipitated by PBDS and Rahman Yakub, the state of the parties immediately before the polls was one of confusion. In the first place, Kumpulan Maju did not expect Taib to call for a snap election.⁵⁶ They had expected the chief minister to back down or, at the very least, to come to some sort of interim agreement, before power was to be transferred to Rahman Yakub and the PBDS. The second problem was the status of PBDS. PBDS was officially still a member of the BN. Efforts by BN3 to get PBDS expelled from the federal BN were thwarted by Mahathir, chairman of the BN. Instead, the BN Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur decided that all four BN component parties in Sarawak (PBB, SUPP, SNAP, PBDS) were entitled to campaign under the BN's *dacing*.⁵⁷ The PBDS had wanted all four parties to contest under their own symbol so that no BN component party could gain an advantage by using the potent *dacing* symbol. Now, if PBDS agreed to use the *dacing* symbol, the party also had to agree to the BN's formula for the allocation of seats—something that would defeat PBDS's attempts to increase its number of seats.⁵⁸ The decision by the BN Supreme Council, being advantageous to SUPP, PBB, and SNAP, was naturally supported by them. PBDS, with little choice, then decided to withdraw from the Sarawak BN but not from the federal BN.⁵⁹

With only three parties left in the Sarawak BN, the seat allocation was as follows: PBB 23, SUPP 14, and SNAP 11. Thus SNAP made the biggest gain in the allocation of seats—primarily from constituencies that would otherwise be allocated to PBDS. PBB also gained while SUPP was allocated one extra.⁶⁰ In an unusual move, SUPP also agreed to 'loan' one of its members, Nyipa Batok, to PBB for the Belaga constituency.⁶¹

The 14 constituencies allocated to SUPP were made up of the eight Chinese-majority seats (Padungan, Stampin, Batu Kawa, Repok, Meradong, Maling, Seduan, Miri) and six Dayak-majority seats (Igan,

Sri Aman, Bengoh, Lundu, Engkilili, and Dudong). The party nominated four new candidates: Louis Nigel Gines in Bengoh, Wong Soon Koh in Igan, Intai ak Rentap in Engkilili, and Michael Pilo in Sri Aman. In the Dudong constituency, SUPP's candidate was Jawan Empaling, a former MP who had lost in 1986.⁶² In all these four constituencies, Engkilili, Sri Aman, Igan, and Dudong, the party had to put up new candidates as the incumbent SUPP members had defected to Kumpulan Maju.

On the opposition side, Rahman Yakub had now secured the registration of a new political party—the Parti Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak or PERMAS.⁶³ Together with PBDS, they fielded 42 candidates or 21 each. DAP fielded 11, while Sarawak Demokratik Bersatu fielded only 1. The number of independent candidates went down to 16, from 79 in 1983. However, for the first time since 1974, many of these independents were truly independent, in the sense that they were not secretly backed by any one of the major political parties as the political demarcation line was now clearly drawn between the pro-Taib and pro-Rahman Yakub camps. Also for the first time since 1974, the press was relatively free, but partisan. The *Sarawak Tribune*, owned by interests close to Rahman Yakub, became the central mouthpiece for Kumpulan Maju. The *People's Mirror*, on the other hand, which was set up specifically to voice the views of Taib and to counter the *Sarawak Tribune*, was used to run down Kumpulan Maju. The other English daily, the *Borneo Post*, was initially quite balanced in its coverage, but in the latter part of the campaign swung noticeably to the Taib side.⁶⁴ The Chinese dailies, in almost all cases 'sister' papers to the English dailies, were slightly more neutral in their coverage, although in general, they followed the trend of their English-language counterparts.⁶⁵

Campaign Issues and Tactics

The overriding issue in the 1987 polls was: did the voters want a return to Abdul Rahman Yakub's rule or a continuation under Abdul Taib Mahmud? PERMAS and PBDS adopted the strategy of dividing up their campaign between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities, the former being basically left to PERMAS. PERMAS attacked Taib Mahmud's leadership style, accusing him of dividing the Muslim community, of indulging in 'bomohism' (shamanism), and of being vindictive towards those who disagreed with him.⁶⁶ In the Dayak community, PBDS's main battle cry was Dayak ethnic identity dubbed 'Dayakism'. PBDS appealed for Dayak unity so that they could be catapulted into political power. A favourite metaphor used was that it was time for the Dayaks to be 'generals' instead of being mere 'soldiers'.⁶⁷ Kumpulan Maju did not bother to field any candidates in the Chinese-dominated areas for two reasons. First, SUPP was already facing a credible opposition in the form of DAP. Secondly, even if Kumpulan Maju were to field candidates, it would not make a serious impact. It was seen as unlikely that Chinese voters would vote for a candidate standing for a group that represented, for the most part, the Malay/Melanau and

Dayak communities. The only Chinese candidates that stood on the PERMAS ticket were David Tiong Chiong Chu, who defected from SUPP, and Eric Lee, a political unknown. Both stood in the Dayak-majority constituencies of Igan and Seduan, respectively.

On the Sarawak BN side, the campaign was centred on Taib's push to prevent Sarawak from being overwhelmed by the 'politics of timber'.⁶⁸ Taib had earlier frozen more than 20 timber concessions linked to the Rahman Yakub group. This action was calculated to prevent funds for the coming election from reaching Kumpulan Maju. Taib also took the opportunity to reveal a list of concessions linked to companies controlled by Rahman Yakub and his nominees.⁶⁹ In turn, Rahman Yakub revealed a list of timber concessions linked to Taib.⁷⁰

SUPP's immediate threat was not PERMAS or PBDS, even though Kumpulan Maju had a real possibility of winning the election. SUPP's main opponent was still DAP. Out of DAP's 11 candidates, 8 stood against SUPP candidates, in other words, in all the Chinese-majority constituencies. Kumpulan Maju's threat to SUPP existed only in Dayak-dominated seats, where the PBDS, because of its explicit appeal to the Dayak community, was expected to give SUPP a real challenge.

SUPP's basic thrust in the Chinese community was twofold. On the one hand, it stressed the need for the Chinese to support it so that it could be returned to power with PBB and SNAP. It warned the Chinese community about Rahman Yakub and his anti-Chinese attitude; it also stressed that Dayakism was akin to racism, and that PBDS would discriminate against the Chinese community if it got into power with PERMAS. On the other hand, they attacked DAP for colluding with Kumpulan Maju, and argued that if DAP was willing to co-operate with Rahman Yakub, then it had effectively sold out the Chinese, as Rahman Yakub and PBDS were anti-Chinese. Wong Soon Kai summarized SUPP's campaign when he said, 'In my opinion, the choice is clear for all to see whether we want to go back to a power corrupted government under Tun Rahman or opt for the moderate government under Datuk Patinggi Taib.'⁷¹

SUPP's strategy of painting Rahman Yakub as anti-Chinese was extremely effective amongst the Chinese community which feared a further erosion of its already limited political and economic rights. This fear was reinforced by PBDS's call for more Dayak rights, which was characterized by SUPP and BN3 as a racist ideology. The Chinese community was warned that if Rahman Yakub was returned to power, PBDS would almost certainly demand that economic resources and opportunities be diverted to the Dayak community. The intention was to portray the PBDS (and PERMAS) as racist parties bent on promoting the Dayaks at the expense of every other ethnic group. SUPP gave the example of how PBDS leaders drank red cordial during a PBDS function; the red colour was meant to symbolize PBDS drinking 'Chinese blood'.⁷² The SUPP strategy was so effective that both Rahman Yakub and PBDS were repeatedly put on the defensive. PBDS's leader, Leo Moggie, was forced to issue a statement specifically on this issue. In part, the statement read

I have many Chinese friends and so do other PBDS leaders. Some PBDS leaders are married to Chinese. Those who know us know that we are not extremists... As far as the Chinese and Dayak are concerned, we have had a long history of co-operation and harmony. Should we allow SUPP leaders to poison our minds? Is it wrong for the Dayak community to ask for betterment? Is that racialism? If we are racialist, ... we can make amends. Otherwise SUPP should stop frightening the people... To all of you I say, there is nothing to fear.⁷³

The campaign became more personal when Rahman Yakub himself was prompted to publish 'an open letter' to Wong, which read in part,

You said there was no development when I was Chief Minister compared to now when Abdul Taib is in charge... But weren't you Minister for Agriculture and Community Development... Wasn't Kheng Hong Minister for Development as well? What were the SUPP ministers doing all the time? *Makan gaji buta kah?* ... I'll tell you something else I don't understand Soon Kai: Now you say I am anti-Chinese... If this is true, why did you serve in my government? You were elected to protect Chinese rights and how could you do that by supporting someone who was anti-Chinese? So why did you stay in my cabinet? Because of the big *gaji* and *pangkat*? ... Are you and other SUPP leaders willing to sacrifice Chinese political interests just for the sake of Abdul Taib? If you are, then you are the people who are anti-Chinese.⁷⁴

In his reply, Wong wrote, in part,

In 1977 you instigated a few SUPP members to create havoc within the party and this caused a split in the SUPP then... In the 1978 Parliamentary election, you fielded these dissident members of SUPP as independent candidates to fight against the SUPP... In 1979 you collaborated with Chong Siew Chiang and brought DAP into Sarawak for the sole purpose of attacking SUPP... You must know that in this six-year term as Chief Minister, Datuk Taib had allocated more than six times of the development funds that you had allocated in your 11-year period as Chief Minister ... you know too well that Sibu town did not get [its] fair share of development in your time... You talk of freedom of worship but during your term you never allocated funds for other religious bodies... Datuk Taib has been more liberal and sympathetic towards the other religious denominations than you, Tun!... How many non-Malay (Chinese, Ibans, etc.) were enticed by you one way or another to become Muslim converts when they came to you applying for licence?... Under your mastery, the Chinese community has been split into 2 opposite camps; the Dayak community was also in 2 groups ... even the Malay/Melanau community was divided into two: one for Taib and the other one for you!⁷⁵

Wong's accusation that Rahman Yakub had neglected the Chinese areas and excessively promoted Islam⁷⁶ probably had more impact on the Chinese than Rahman Yakub's open letter. Rahman Yakub was also condemned by SUPP for behaviour unbecoming of a head of state.⁷⁷

For the DAP, the split between the Melanau élite created perhaps the best opportunity for them to win a state seat. The party had expected to win at least two constituencies: Meradong and Kuching. In Meradong, Chong Siew Chiang was expected to easily beat SUPP's Thomas Hii King Hiong. DAP also had high hopes that its Bandar Kuching MP,

Sim Kwang Yang, would unseat SUPP's Sim Kheng Hong. DAP's confidence was not without foundation. It calculated that with the Malay/Melanau vote split, the SUPP candidates could not expect solid backing from these voters in Chinese-majority constituencies.⁷⁸ DAP's electoral strategy lay in presenting itself as a real alternative to SUPP. It argued that since SUPP had fallen in completely with PBB, the Chinese community would effectively have no representation in the government if Kumpulan Maju were to form the next state government. By voting for DAP, the Chinese could be assured that their interests would be promoted and protected. DAP also made much of the fact that SUPP's much repeated slogan of 'participation in government' was meaningless, given that SUPP had itself claimed that during Rahman Yakub's rule, SUPP could not really promote Chinese interests. Since SUPP's 11 years (1970–81) in government were a failure, the Chinese should give DAP a chance to prove itself. The electorate was thus called to help make DAP the 'third force' in Sarawak politics. However, DAP made a strategic mistake when it hinted that as the 'third force', it was willing to participate in a Kumpulan Maju government. Lim Kit Siang said, 'If the election produces a situation where there is no one group which could on its own to form an effective and legitimate state government, either because it did not have the 25 assembly seats or meaningful representation from all racial groups, then the Sarawak DAP is prepared to consider and negotiate the formation of a coalition government.'⁷⁹

This hint was exploited to the fullest by SUPP which argued that DAP's willingness to join Kumpulan Maju was akin to siding with the anti-Chinese political forces.⁸⁰ Furthermore, SUPP argued that this confirmed its accusation that DAP was involved in an 'unholy alliance' with Kumpulan Maju. SUPP also pointed out the fact that PERMAS generally stayed away from Chinese-majority areas, thus indirectly endorsing DAP. SUPP claimed that DAP was hypocritical as it had always attacked SUPP for 'participation' but was now willing to 'participate' itself. At a Chinese unity night function, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze made this point abundantly clear: 'By wanting to be in government, DAP has confessed its own wrong doing by accusing the SUPP then of sharing power in the Barisan Nasional government.'⁸¹

In the SUPP Dayak-majority constituencies, the PBDS was its main opponent. Among SUPP's six Dayak constituencies, PBDS candidates could be found in four (Bengoh, Engkilili, Sri Aman, and Dudong) while the other two (Igan and Seduan) had PERMAS candidates. The PBDS had shown that it was a capable opponent, given that, via independents, it had wrested seats from SUPP in 1983 and 1986.⁸² In the Dayak-majority constituencies, SUPP played to different audiences. The message given to Chinese voters was basically the same as in the urban Chinese-majority constituencies, that is, if Kumpulan Maju succeeded the Chinese would be at the losing end in the face of Dayak assertiveness. This message was effective in consolidating the Chinese vote. Appealing to the Dayak electorate, SUPP accused Kumpulan Maju, especially PBDS, of being racists who were trying to wreck the harmonious relationships

amongst the different ethnic groups in Sarawak. The slogan here was 'for racial harmony, oppose racial extremism'. SUPP argued that it was not against Dayak rights (after all, the party was multiracial) but rather, it opposed the way PBDS was used by Rahman Yakub in his attempt to make a political come-back. SUPP also argued that voting for 'Dayakism (that is, PBDS) did not mean that the Dayaks could expect a better deal under the Kumpulan Maju, given that the real power lay with Rahman Yakub, a Melanau Muslim. The campaign stressed that during Rahman Yakub's 11 years in power, the Dayaks had suffered. SUPP also pointed to Leo Moggie's decision not to stand as proof that PBDS was without power in Kumpulan Maju as even if PBDS (and PERMAS) were to win, the PBDS leader would still not be made chief minister, thus the Dayaks would still be worse off.

The Election Results

When the results were announced, BN3 had lost its two-thirds majority in the Council Negri (Table 9.3). BN won a total of 28 seats: PBB 14, SUPP 11, and SNAP 3. Kumpulan Maju took the remainder: PBDS 15 and PERMAS 5. Although the results were the closest since the 1970 state election, they still gave BN3 a simple working majority. The biggest loser was SNAP, which saw its number of assemblymen dwindle to a mere three. Although Kumpulan Maju took the other 20 constituencies, the results indicated PERMAS's inability to loosen PBB's hold over the Malay/Melanau community. This was best symbolized by the fact that PERMAS's and Kumpulan Maju's leader, Abdul Rahman Yakub was himself beaten by a political unknown, another Melanau Muslim, Wahab Dollah. While the performance of PERMAS was dismal, PBDS swept almost all the Dayak constituencies and came close to winning a few others. The 'Dayakism' factor worked, but due to the failure of its partner, PERMAS, this factor alone was not enough to propel PBDS into political power. Ironically, despite 'Dayakism', Daniel Tajem, PBDS's most senior leader who stood as a candidate, lost.⁸³ DAP was comprehensively beaten again, and no independents were successful.

TABLE 9.3
Sarawak: Results of the 1987 State Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sarawak BN		28
PBB	14	
SUPP	11	
SNAP	3	
Kumpulan Maju		20
PERMAS	5	
PBDS	15	
Total		48

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP CHINESE CONSTITUENCIES

SUPP won 11 of the 14 constituencies it contested in. This result was a cause for celebration, as 8 of the 11 were in Chinese-majority constituencies. In other words, SUPP again won all the Chinese seats. However, a closer look at the results suggests that SUPP lost some ground to the opposition. Compared to the most recent state election in 1983,⁸⁴ SUPP's majority in four out of seven Chinese constituencies was reduced, sometimes significantly. In 1983, only one out of seven Chinese constituencies registered a reduced majority (Table 9.4).

In the three constituencies located in Kuching, only one (Padungan) saw an increased majority, by 2,417 votes and an increase in majority percentage from 17 to 25, for SUPP. This increase was significant given that the number of new voters was in the region of 2,600.⁸⁵ In the other two constituencies, Stampin and Batu Kawa, the SUPP majority vote decreased significantly. This was reflected in the majority percentage; in Stampin this dropped to 26 from 39 per cent and in Batu Kawa, this dropped to 45 from 59 per cent. In Stampin, the reduced majority was probably due to the prestige of the DAP candidate, Bandar Kuching MP Sim Kwang Yang. DAP was not only able to reduce SUPP's majority vote by more than 1,500 votes, but the anti-SUPP swing probably in the region of 3,000 votes also contributed to this.⁸⁶ At first glance, SUPP appears to have had a majority of more than 5,800 votes in Batu Kawa; however, a closer examination suggests the actual majority was much lower. This is because the opposition vote was split between DAP and PERMAS: DAP polled 2,041 and Permas 2,407. If these two anti-establishment votes were combined, Chong Kiun Kong's majority would only be 3,780. The swing against SUPP in Batu Kawa was probably due to the presence of DAP and PERMAS, both of which

TABLE 9.4
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Chinese Constituencies,
1979, 1983, and 1987 State Elections

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	<i>1979</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>1987</i>
Padungan	2,164 ^a (+13) ^b	3,544 ^a (+17)	5,961 (+25)
Stampin	7,115 (+46)	8,710 (+39)	7,066 (+26)
Batu Kawa	5,162 (+54)	6,076 (+59)	5,821 (+45)
Repok	339 ^a (+4)	726 ^a (+7)	915 (+7)
Meradong	939 (+12)	897 ^a (+10)	1,237 (+13)
Maling	1,730 (+10)	16,220 (+59)	9,381 (+32)
Seduan	1,638 (+20)	5,558 (+60)	4,692 (+46)
Miri	1,536 (+9)	unopposed ^a	8,273 (+40)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aNew SUPP candidate.

^bFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

were seen as credible parties. In 1983, DAP did not have a candidate, and PERMAS was not then in existence.

In the Rejang basin, Wong Soon Kai's majority was almost halved, from 1983's 16,220 to 9,381. His opponent, DAP's Ling Sie Ming, benefited from this swing, made up mainly of first-time voters, of about 7,000 votes. In nearby Seduan, SUPP's Ting Ing Ming also saw his majority drop from more than 5,500 in 1983 to 4,692. Despite the decreased majority, Ting was never in danger, as the combined opposition vote was still less than what would have been needed for the constituency to fall into opposition hands.⁸⁷ In Repok and Meradong, both the SUPP candidates managed to increase their majorities. David Teng Lung Chi increased his by 189 votes, not a significant climb as his majority percentage was still the same. What was significant was the fact that DAP's Jason Wong Sing Nang, standing in Repok for the first time, managed to increase the DAP vote from 5,065 in 1983 to 5,564, or an increase of 499 votes.⁸⁸ In Meradong, SUPP's majority increase of 340 votes was significant. Unlike 1983, when the DAP campaign collapsed when it was revealed that its candidate was a Muslim convert, this time the DAP candidate was Chong Siew Chiang, generally regarded as a political 'heavyweight', having been a candidate in seven previous parliamentary and state assembly elections in the area.⁸⁹ Chong's confidence was also boosted by his performance, just a year earlier, in the Sarikei parliamentary election, when he polled more than 10,000 votes.⁹⁰

Although it was not successful in any constituency, DAP, with 11 candidates, managed to poll 51,341 votes, or 11.38 per cent of total votes. DAP's failure to win any seat or to dislodge SUPP despite the favourable political environment was primarily due to two factors. First, by announcing that it intended to join a minority Kumpulan Maju government if the situation so warranted, DAP lost much of its appeal among the urban Chinese who expected the party to perform its traditional role of being the 'fearless' opposition and political 'watchdog'. Second, the apprehension among Chinese voters was heightened by SUPP's successful portrayal of Kumpulan Maju as anti-Chinese. DAP's announcement was also seen as confirmation that it was involved in some sort of an 'unholy alliance' with Abdul Rahman Yakub.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP DAYAK CONSTITUENCIES

SUPP won in three of its six Dayak constituencies. A closer look at those seats suggests that Dayak support for SUPP had slipped further (Table 9.5). In two constituencies, Igan and Engkilili, the swing was large enough for SUPP's defeat. In two of the three Dayak constituencies where SUPP candidates won, their 1987 majorities decreased compared to 1983.

In Lundu, SUPP's majority decreased from 2,054 to 1,329. This swing against incumbent Ramsay Noel Jitam was not, however, significant, given that the PERMAS candidate was not able to pick up the 900 new

TABLE 9.5
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Dayak Constituencies,
1979, 1983, and 1987 State Elections

Constituency	<i>Margin of Victory/Loss</i>		
	1979	1983	1987
Lundu	7 (+0.09) ^a	2,054 ^b (+27)	1,329 (+16)
Bengoh	221 (+3)	-1,126 ^b (-11)	-219 ^b (-2)
Sri Aman	1,282 (+15)	1,440 (+17)	816 ^b (+8)
Igan	272 ^b (+5)	1,886 (+41)	-23 ^b (-0.5)
Belaga ^c	-760 (-23)	-639 ^d (-17)	'loaned' to PBB
Engkilili	- ^e	418 ^d (+8)	-1,778 ^b (-29)
Dudong	- ^e	175 ^d (+2)	311 ^b (+3)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^bNew SUPP candidate.

^cSUPP lost Belaga in the 1979 state election; in 1983, SUPP backed the same candidate, this time as an independent. In 1987, SUPP 'loaned' Nyipa Batok to the PBB to contest Belaga.

^dSUPP-backed independents.

^eNo SUPP candidates.

voters.⁹¹ In 1983, the total non-BN vote was 3,235. In 1987, the PERMAS candidate, Noor Tahir, a PBB minister who defected to PERMAS, polled 3,561. The SUPP candidate, Noel Jitam, polled 4,890 in 1987; in 1983 he polled 4,146. In Sri Aman, new candidate and ex-resident Michael Pilo won with a decreased majority, from 1,440 in 1983 to 816 in 1987. Unlike Lundu, the swing of more than 1,000 votes was significant, given that an extra 2,000 votes were cast in 1987.⁹² The reduced majority was expected, however, as PBDS candidate Hollis Tini had been SUPP assemblyman for Sri Aman since 1970, before he became the highest ranking SUPP member to defect to PERMAS, being then an assistant Minister of Welfare.

In Dudong, SUPP's Jawan Empaling was the only SUPP Dayak candidate who went against the trend and increased SUPP's majority from 175 to 311 but his increase was not significant given that the majority increased by only one percentage point. SUPP polled 4,717 to PBDS's 4,406, which was an increase of 1,847 votes compared to 1983. In 1983, SUPP had won Dudong because the Dayak vote had been split between PBDS and SNAP.⁹³ This time SUPP won primarily among SNAP voters who were split. In 1983, the SNAP vote was more than 2,500. Assuming that half of SNAP's supporters voted for BN3 in 1987 (and the other half for PBDS), then SUPP only had to pick up a few hundred more votes from the new voters to reach the 4,717 votes polled in 1987. Turnout in 1987 was 1,449 more than in 1983.⁹⁴

In the three SUPP Dayak constituencies where SUPP lost, two were lost to PBDS and one to PERMAS. In Bengoh, SUPP's Louis Nigel Gines' loss to PBDS's Sora ak Rusah by a majority of 219 was expected.

Given that in 1983 SUPP had lost Bengoh by more than 1,000 votes, the 1987 result indicated that there was a pro-SUPP swing of about 900 votes. In Engkilili, PBDS's candidate, Sim Choo Nam, was a cross-over candidate who had won in 1983 as an SUPP-backed independent. In 1983, Sim's win was due primarily to the split in Dayak vote between the PBDS and SNAP. In 1987, Sim took the 1983 PBDS votes and probably held on to about 2,000 SUPP Dayak votes as well.

The result in Igan, where another SUPP cross-over candidate, David Tiong Chiong Chu, won by a slim majority of only 23, indicated that SUPP was unable to retain its 1983 vote of 2,813. In 1987, PERMAS polled 2,425 while SUPP's Wong Soon Koh polled 2,402. A third candidate, an indigenous independent, took only 81 votes. One reason for SUPP's failure to retain its 1983 vote, which would have allowed it to retain Igan, was disunity within its ranks. Wong, a relative of Wong Soon Kai, was a comparative newcomer to the SUPP Sibuluan branch and his candidature caused resentment among older party members who felt that he was not democratically selected, rather having been hand-picked by Wong Soon Kai. These members then secretly campaigned against Wong Soon Koh, and as a result, David Tiong was able to retain his seat.⁹⁵

In sum, the 1987 election gave a mixed signal to SUPP. Its performance in the Chinese constituencies was better than expected, when it won all the Chinese-majority seats. However, the result from the SUPP Dayak constituencies indicated that it lost many of its supporters to PBDS.

Post-election Politics: The BN3 Government

Among the BN3, SUPP could claim to be the best performer. It won 11 of the 14 seats it contested (78.5 per cent). PBB only managed to win 14 out of 23 seats (60.8 per cent) while SNAP came close to electoral disaster, as only 3 out of its 11 candidates won (27.2 per cent). More importantly, PBB's dependence on SUPP members for the survival of Abdul Taib Mahmud's government meant that SUPP once more became firmly entrenched as the balance of power. The 11 SUPP winners were needed to give PBB the 25 votes needed to form the simplest majority in the 48-seat Council Negri.

In the post-election government, Taib Mahmud's gratitude for SUPP's backing and its ability to deliver the Chinese votes was reflected in the allocation of full ministerial posts: PBB 5, SUPP 3, and SNAP 1. Thus SUPP gained one extra ministerial portfolio when George Chan Hong Nam was promoted to full minister. The new government also had to rule, with only 28 assemblymen, without a two-thirds majority for the first time since 1970. There were several anxious moments in the first few months of the new government, as the BN3 was vulnerable to the 'poaching' of its assemblymen from Kumpulan Maju.⁹⁶ However, by the end of 1987, the situation had reversed; eight assemblymen who had won under PBDS's banner crossed the floor to the BN3. It was

obvious to these eight that only those in power had access to patronage and other benefits and that their political career depended on their ability to acquire these privileges as well. The major beneficiary of this cross-over was PBB and by 1988 the BN3 could count on the support of 36 Council Negri members, enough to secure the all-important two-thirds majority. With this majority, an 'anti-hop' bill, which forced a mandatory by-election if an assemblyman switched party affiliation, was promptly passed and written into the state Constitution.

The Fourteenth Delegates Conference

The 14th Delegates Conference was held in late September 1987, a few months after the state election. All the incumbents were re-elected without much fanfare. With the leadership basking in glory at SUPP's performance in 1987, the party was content with its leadership.

However, while the top leaders were secure in their posts, the SUPP Youth and *Wanita* sections witnessed a major tussle. Both the incumbent Youth leader, Chan Seng Khai, and the *Wanita* leader, Kho Hui Kheng, were seeking a second three-year term. The fight over the Youth presidency turned into a regional and ethnic split when it was alleged that the challenger, Robert Lau Hoi Chew, was a Foochow 'plant' from the Sibuluan branch, and was alleged to have the covert support of Wong Soon Kai.⁹⁷ Chan came from the Kuching side of the party. Thus, the contest was seen as a challenge from the Rejang basin, led by Foochows, against the non-Foochow Kuching side. The challenger argued that Chan should step down as his credibility had dropped after his electoral defeat as an SUPP candidate in the 1986 election.⁹⁸ When the votes were counted, Chan won a second term, albeit by a small majority.

The challenger for the top *Wanita* post was Lily Yong Lee Lee, the SUPP Kuching branch *Wanita* leader. Here the fight was basically between two competing factions within the SUPP Kuching branch. Kho, the incumbent, was alleged to be backed by Sim Kheng Hong's faction, while Yong was alleged to have been covertly supported by sections of the Foochow and Hakka factions. Lily Yong eventually won, but not without drama. During the voting, the incumbent, together with some members of the Stampin branch, staged a walk-out, and Yong won without a real ballot.⁹⁹ The fight over the top *Wanita* post was so bitter that Stampin branch's *Wanita* section refused to acknowledge Yong's leadership for a few years after the party polls in 1987.

Conclusion

Sarawak politics, from 1984 until 1987, was dominated by the tussle between Abdul Rahman Yakub and Abdul Taib Mahmud for control of the state government. The 1983 state elections did not solve this problem within the Malay/Melanau élite, which was deeply divided between the two men. SUPP, now under the leadership of Stephen

Yong Kuet Tze and Wong Soon Kai, threw its support solidly behind Taib Mahmud. The split became very open just before the 1986 parliamentary election, when Rahman Yakub campaigned actively against the PBB in the Oya by-election. Unfortunately for the PBB dissidents, their candidate failed to win the by-election. The next tussle occurred in the 1986 parliamentary election when USNA tried to win the Malay/Melanau constituencies. SUPP, however, perceived the electoral threat in 1986 as coming from DAP rather than USNA. This was a miscalculation. While SUPP concentrated on the Chinese constituencies, and did win back Bandar Sibu, rising Dayak consciousness saw PBDS-backed independents unseating two incumbent SUPP Dayak MPs.

The loss of the Dayak MPs was symbolically significant, as it meant that SUPP did not have a single Dayak MP after the election. With the Dayak rejection of SUPP, the party's claim to multiethnic support was vacuous and SUPP's claim to the politics of multiracialism was severely dented. In the Chinese areas, DAP's political assaults meant that SUPP had to assert its 'Chineseness' to hold on to the Chinese votes. In the Dayak areas, this 'Chineseness' caused Dayak support for SUPP to weaken considerably. The combined pressures from PBDS and DAP invariably led the SUPP to be seen as becoming more and more 'Chinese'.

A few months after the parliamentary polls, Rahman Yakub precipitated a political crisis, the Ming Court Affair. This time Rahman Yakub had the support of the 'rising star' of Sarawak politics, PBDS. When the demand for the chief minister's resignation was met with the dissolution of the Council Negri, the 1987 state election was seen by both sides as a 'winner-take-all' confrontation. For SUPP, the snap poll caused great uncertainty as it was forced to put all its eggs in one basket by backing Taib. If Rahman Yakub had won, there was a real possibility of SUPP being relegated to the opposition benches. However, the party had no choice, as chances of reconciliation with Rahman Yakub appeared remote while Yong and Wong remained at the party's helm.

The 1987 poll results firmly established SUPP as the Chinese voters' choice in Sarawak. Although the party lost some ground in the Chinese constituencies, it managed to keep all eight seats. This meant that, despite all the circumstances favouring the opposition, DAP was shut out. SUPP's strategy of portraying the opposition as 'anti-Chinese' and 'racists' worked and confirmed earlier voting trends that Chinese voters were unwilling to abandon SUPP at state level politics.

In the SUPP Dayak constituencies, the results meant a further deterioration of Dayak support. Although the party managed to hold on to three Dayak seats, its majorities decreased significantly in two. Overall, SUPP's win in 13 out of 14 seats contested meant that it was the best performer among the BN3 parties. But more importantly, SUPP's 13 seats allowed it to entrench itself firmly as the political kingmaker once more. Without SUPP's support, the Taib government would have fallen in the Council Negri, as the opposition *Kumpulan Maju* held 20 seats. The strong support given by SUPP was rewarded with extra ministerial posts and influence within the coalition.

Within the party, the 1987 result also firmly consolidated the leadership of Yong and Wong. While the leaders were under no threat from internal party manoeuvrings after the successful poll showing in 1987, underlying tensions remained. Despite the apparent success of the leadership at state politics level, internal party politics were marred by the fight over Youth and *Wanita* leaders' posts in the 14th Delegates Conference. The leadership could not, or would not, contain the old rivalries based on dialect groups and regions within the party.

1. SUPP records; see also *Sarawak Tribune*, 23, 14 September 1984; *Special Edition*, 21–24 September 1984.

2. Michael B. Leigh, 'Money Politics and Dayak Nationalism: the 1987 Sarawak State Election', in M. I. Said and J. Saravanamuttu, *Images of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia, 1991, p. 181.

3. See *Borneo Post*, 18 May 1985.

4. In Sarawak, as in Sabah and the peninsular states where there are governors, the position is based on the recommendation of the chief minister.

5. The *New Straits Times* described the Oya by-election as follows: 'The voters and the people of Sarawak have no illusion that the contest is really a trial of strength between Datuk Taib and his uncle Tun Rahman.' See *New Straits Times*, 23 April 1986.

6. Ironically, Wan Madzihi Wan Mahdzar was Salleh Jafaruddin's cousin. Thus both candidates were nephews of Abdul Rahman Yakub, lending credibility to critics who argued that the fight between Abdul Taib Mahmud and Rahman Yakub was nothing more than a 'family feud' or a 'Melanau feud'.

7. According to one report, Taib virtually removed himself from Kuching and transferred the seat of the state government to Oya for the by-election. Taib stayed aboard the state yacht *Sri Sarawak* throughout the campaign period. See *New Straits Times*, 4 July 1986.

8. The Tambunan by-election in December 1984 saw voters in this Sabah state constituency re-electing Joseph Pairin Kitingan by a landslide, even though he resigned from the ruling Berjaya party. Like the Oya by-election, the two contestants in the Tambunan by-election were related. This landmark election also saw the birth of Kadazan ethnic identity and the rise of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) which went on to oust the Berjaya state government in April 1985. Taib's critics had hoped to repeat PBS's strategy in Sarawak. For more information on the Tambunan by-election and the rise of PBS, see Tan Chee Khoo, *Sabah: A Triumph for Democracy*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1986; and Bala Chandran, *The Third Mandate*, Kuala Lumpur, 1986.

9. Six helicopters owned by Hornbill Skyways where Wan Madzihi was the managing director were commandeered for the election. In addition to these, a helicopter from Sabah Air was sent by Sabah's Chief Minister Joseph Pairin Kitingan and was added to the six. See *New Straits Times*, 4 July 1986.

10. See *International Times*, *Chinese Daily News*, *Borneo Post*, *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 18 March 1984.

11. The Democratic Action Party (DAP) circulated an 'open letter' signed by Sim Kwang Yang and Yong Seng Chan in May 1985, accusing Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) Council Negri members of being more interested in defending the chief minister against his 'PBB dissenters than defending the rights of the people'. See *Borneo Post*, 30 May 1985; and *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 May 1985.

12. Interview with Stephen Yong Kuet Tze.

13. In interviews, Wong Soon Kai described Taib as more moderate than Rahman Yakub, and also mentioned that there were much more discussions in Taib's Cabinet than in Rahman Yakub's. See also Wong's description of Taib's critics as 'most unkind, unfair to CM', in *Borneo Post*, 18 May 1985. Wong went on to say that 'having been his minister

in the State cabinet over the past four years, one can vouch that he has in fact upheld the principle of democracy, consultations, and collective leadership in the government, and it has certainly been practised much more so during his tenure of office than previously'.

14. For example, when Taib came back from an overseas vacation in January 1985, the rally at Kuching airport to welcome him was largely organized by and made up of SUPP supporters. The *Sarawak Tribune*, then controlled by Rahman Yakub loyalists, charged that in return for SUPP support, Taib had given SUPP land in all the state divisions to build its branches. See 'SUPP and the Chief Minister', *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 September 1985; see also *New Straits Times*, 14, 15 January 1986.

15. *New Straits Times*, 4 July 1986.

16. The recession was due generally to a world downturn. Dr Mahathir Mohamad's problems in the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) started with the sudden, and totally unexpected, resignation of his deputy, Musa Hitam, in February 1986. Musa's resignation caused a sensation as he was the first deputy premier to resign due to policy and personal differences. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was also mobilizing support among UMNO officials. See Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics: the Second Generation*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 174–6; Chung Kek Yoong, *Mahathir Administration: Leadership and Change in Multi-racial Society*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1987, p. 66.

17. Because United Sarawak Natives Association (USNA) supporters were nominated officially as independents, the exact number of candidates put up by USNA cannot be ascertained. According to the *New Straits Times*, 31 July 1986, USNA fielded 11 independents in the 1986 election. Others suggest that USNA fielded 16 independents. See Yu Loon Ching, *Sarawak: the Plot that Failed*, Singapore: Summer Times, 1987, p. 11.

18. One USNA supporter was quoted as saying: 'We are not against Barisan Nasional. We agree with the Prime Minister and the BN's policies and manifesto. We're only against Taib and his cronies. We know that it's better to fight within the party but Taib can't stand criticism. So we have no alternative but to form a new party that will take care of our interests. We have no intention of fighting the Malay leaders, we respect them.' Quoted in *New Straits Times*, 31 July 1986.

19. The other DAP candidate stood against a BN–Sarawak National Party (SNAP) candidate in Bintulu.

20. This information was provided by three SUPP members who were in the SUPP Central Working Committee (CWC) during the 1986 election. In a separate interview with Chan Seng Khai, he confirmed that his father did not support his nomination in 1986.

21. In a report in *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 July 1986, Chan was described as the SUPP's 'first choice' for Bandar Kuching, with *Wanita* SUPP's deputy leader, Lily Yong Lee Lee as the 'second choice'.

22. Chan's background before formally joining SUPP is perhaps more indicative of his political leanings. Chan joined the underground in the late 1960s, and was involved in an armed unit fighting the government. In early 1972, after a deal negotiated in part by senior SUPP officials, he 'surrendered' and in 1974 was packed off to England to further his education. Unlike others who surrendered, he was never asked to sign a statement promising not to take part in political activities. He was only asked to sign a statement professing loyalty to Malaysia. He came back from England in early 1981 with a degree in mechanical engineering, and was immediately hired as an executive with the Sarawak Transport Company (STC), a company partly owned by his father.

23. *Wanita* SUPP argued strongly that the time had come for SUPP to put up its first female candidate in 1986. However, the male leadership felt that the Kuching voters were not ready for a female candidate. Shortly after Chan's nomination, Lily Yong, the *Wanita* SUPP nominee for Bandar Kuching, left for an extended world tour. Her departure was seen as a sign of no-confidence in Chan Seng Khai. Yong, in an interview, said plans for the world trip had been made in early 1986, and that it was too late to cancel them.

24. In the 1983 election, Wong Soon Kai met Ling Sie Ming in a straight fight in the Maling constituency. Maling forms half of the Bandar Sibul parliamentary constituency.

25. The Rent Control Ordinance was a law covering buildings in Sarawak completed or built before the end of 1954, covering mostly shop houses in Kuching, Sibu, and Sarikei. Under the ordinance, tenants occupying buildings defined under the Rent Control Ordinance enjoyed a degree of protection from rent increases. With the passing of the repealing ordinance, tenants occupying 'rent control' buildings would no longer enjoy a degree of protection from rent increases.

26. The DAP also became embroiled in the controversy when its state chairman, Chong Siew Chiang, was involved in a libel suit over the matter. The suit started over a newspaper report in which an SUPP official condemned Chong for allegedly inciting tenants to violence over the repeal of the ordinance. Chong at that time was a legal adviser to the Sarawak United Tenants' Association (which comprised the Kuching, Sibu, and Sarikei tenants' associations).

27. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 28 May 1985.

28. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 March 1986. In the same article, the newspaper also stated that another reason that Wong decided not to stand was that he was losing support among the 'kampung folks'.

29. *People's Mirror*, 20 March 1986.

30. In the 1978 polls, the Sarawak People's Organization (SAPO) fielded a candidate.

31. Peter Chin joined the SUPP Miri branch in the late 1970s, roughly the same time as George Chan Hong Nam. A lawyer by training, he took over the post of chairman of the Miri Municipal Council (MMC) or mayor of Miri from George Chan in 1984, when the latter was appointed a state assistant minister.

32. This section gave the federal Education Minister the discretionary right to convert Chinese medium primary schools to national-type schools. This issue was repeatedly used by the DAP when it attacked the Barisan Nasional (BN) over its 'one language', that is, Bahasa Malaysia, policy. In Peninsular Malaysia, this controversy also spread to the Tamil primary schools. See *New Straits Times*, 11 July 1986.

33. Open letter to Kuching voters dated 24 July 1986, issued by the SUPP Bandar Kuching Election Committee.

34. The controversy erupted over a poster, written in Chinese, that could be interpreted as depicting the Malays as 'dogs and snakes'. SUPP blamed DAP for the poster and vice versa. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 1, 2 August 1986; see also *International Times* and *Chinese Daily News* on the same dates.

35. *New Straits Times*, 3 April 1986.

36. A hawker quoted in *Sarawak Tribune*, 6 August 1986. SKY is the popular acronym for Sim Kwang Yang.

37. *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 August 1986. One of the DAP supporters remarked that 'people's power' had been defeated by 'money power'.

38. In March 1987, some six months after the parliamentary election, both Lainus Andrew ak Luak and Dr Nicholas Munong were admitted into Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) and elected vice-presidents. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 2 March 1987.

39. After the election, Sarawak's Land and Survey Department (LSD) quietly retracted 253 native land titles in Balai Ringin, most of which were issued to Chinese farmers. The LSD claimed that the titles were mistakenly issued. See *Borneo Bulletin*, 13 September 1986.

40. *Sarawak Tribune*, 8 August 1986.

41. One from Sarawak and four from Sabah. The four seats in Sabah were all in Chinese-majority areas.

42. Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS) lost mainly because of its Chinese Consultative Committee (CCC), which tried to establish support among the non-Muslim Chinese voters. For a detailed account on the opposition performance in 1986, see Khong Kim Hong, 'How the opposition fared in the 1986 Parliamentary Election', in M. I. Said and J. Saravanamuttu (eds.), *Images of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sains Social Malaysia, 1991, pp. 162-79.

43. See earlier section on the 1982 parliamentary election. Interestingly, Ling was also the only DAP incumbent to lose in the nation.

44. Interview with Peter Chin.

45. In 1982 there were 26,453 voters in the Padawan constituency. In 1986, this had increased to 31,553, an increase of 5,100. Turnout in 1982 was 18,931 (71.6 per cent) and in 1986 it was 22,149 (70.2 per cent). See SUPP records.

46. In 1982 there were 25,483 voters in the Serian constituency. In 1986 this had increased to 29,063, an increase of 3,580. Turnout in 1982 was 16,840 (66.1 per cent) and in 1986 it was 18,975 (65.29 per cent). See SUPP records.

47. As mentioned earlier, Richard Dampeng did not receive the full backing of the SUPP Serian branch; consequently, many stayed away on polling day.

48. This argument rests on the assumption that the Chinese independent got mostly ethnic Chinese votes, which, in the absence of such a candidate, would have gone to SUPP.

49. Different Council Negri members were given different reasons as to why they were asked to go to Kuala Lumpur. Some were told that a meeting was arranged with the deputy Prime Minister, others that an important meeting of all Council Negri members was to take place. Those invited to attend were told that all arrangements, including expenses, would be taken care of. See also Leigh, 'Money politics', pp. 188-9.

50. Then a state assistant minister.

51. Wong Soon Kai, in an interview, said that while they (PBB and SUPP) suspected that Rahman Yakub would move against Taib, they did not expect him to mount a challenge so soon after the USNA defeat, and did not expect the challenge to be mounted from outside Sarawak. In interviews with several other SUPP leaders, they said that just two days before, David Tiong Chiong Chu was with other SUPP leaders at an official ceremony in Mukah, near Sibul. After the ceremony David Tiong left for Kuching, en route to Kuala Lumpur. Other SUPP assemblymen stayed behind for the night without suspecting that the *coup* was already under way.

52. The story broke in the *Sarawak Tribune* on 10 March 1987. At that time, the paper was run by Rahman Yakub loyalists.

53. Dangerous because, if Taib's government had fallen, Rahman Yakub and PBDS would almost certainly not have invited SUPP to join their government. The 'Chinese' face of the new government would probably be filled by David Tiong and Sim Choo Nam.

54. Although both Wong and Yong were strongly behind Taib, there was some suspicion that Sim Kheng Hong would not back Taib wholeheartedly. Sim, who always had a good relationship with Rahman Yakub, was believed to be undecided until he realized that the majority of the party backed the pro-Taib policy. Towards the end, he also supported Taib when it became clear that Taib had the upper hand in the campaign. He was also persuaded by the fact that his own people and allies all backed Taib. Interview with Sim Kheng Hui, Sim Kheng Hong's personal assistant.

55. *International Times*, 12 March 1987.

56. Kumpulan Maju had earlier sent a telex to the governor requesting that he ignore any request from Taib to dissolve the Council Negri. The telex was sent together with the ultimatum to Taib to resign. See *New Straits Times*, 12 March 1987.

57. *People's Mirror*, 2 April 1987.

58. As stated earlier, the BN formula for allocation is based on allocation and performance at previous elections. Under such circumstances, PBDS could only realistically be allocated seven seats.

59. The fact that PBDS was allowed to do this, and Leo Moggie was not asked to give up his federal Cabinet post, has been suggested by some to mean that Mahathir did not back Taib wholeheartedly. A more plausible explanation is perhaps that Mahathir knew he could not afford to ignore Dayak sentiments in Sarawak, judging by events in Sabah. In 1985, Sabah's Berjaya government was toppled in a poll by the Kadazan-based PBS. The Kadazan is the main ethnic group in Sabah. Mahathir had backed Berjaya totally before the 1985 election and was humiliated when Berjaya was almost decimated at the polls.

60. Although SUPP officially won only 11 seats in 1983, SUPP also backed two successful independents, thus making a total of 13 seats.

61. Nyipa Batok was the SUPP Belaga Assemblyman for two terms: 1970 and 1974, before losing to Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB)-backed independent, Tajang Laing, in

1979. In 1983, Nyipa Batok stood as an independent against Sarawak BN-PBB candidate Tajang Laing, and again lost. In 1987, Laing switched to PERMAS, thus creating a vacancy in the PBB. Although Nyipa Batok was a 'loan' candidate, after 1987 he decided to stay with PBB permanently.

62. See above section on the 1986 parliamentary election.

63. *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 March 1987.

64. The cautious approach taken by the *Borneo Post* reflected the ownership of the paper. The majority shares were (and still are) held by the Foochow Lau family in Sibulau. The Lau family are extensively involved in the logging business. In fact, one of the Lau family members is president of the Sarawak Timber Association (STA). The choice facing the owners in 1987 was simply this: if they supported Rahman Yakub openly, then Taib would almost certainly create problems or freeze all the timber concessions owned by the Lau family; if they supported Taib openly and Rahman Yakub won the election, then the Lau's business interests would come under threat. The rational thing to do was to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and this was exactly what the owners did. When the campaign momentum swung to Taib's advantage, the editorial content of the paper did too.

65. See *Hua Daily News* is the sister-paper of *The Borneo Post*. *Chinese Daily News* is the sister-paper of *The Sarawak Tribune*.

66. See letter published by Rahman Yakub addressed to Taib in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 April 1987.

67. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 April 1987.

68. See article 'Timber freeze sparks "war"', *New Straits Times*, 10 April 1987.

69. The list was published in *People's Mirror*, 12, 13 April 1987.

70. The list was published in *Sarawak Tribune*, 11, 12 April 1987.

71. *Borneo Post*, 6 April 1987.

72. See statement 'Political intrigues in Sarawak', written by the SUPP Stampin branch election committee, *Borneo Post*, 13 April 1987.

73. Front page of *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 April 1987. This was the first of many denials by the PBDS that it was racist. For example, see article 'Moggie says it again—we are no racists', *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1987.

74. The letter was published on the front page of *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1987, just three days before polling. *Makan gaji Buta kah*, loosely translated, means 'sitting pretty for the salary and turning a blind eye'; *gaji* means salary and *pangkat* refers to status. See also a front page article entitled 'Who says Tun Rahman is anti Chinese', *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 April 1987.

75. *Borneo Post*, 15 April 1987.

76. See also Wong Soon Kai's comments on Rahman Yakub's plans to build a multi-million dollar mosque. See *Special Edition*, 11 April 1987. Given the urban Chinese community's resentment of increasing Islamization, the issue of forced conversion probably helped SUPP gain almost all the Chinese Christian votes in the 1987 election.

77. During a campaign speech in Bintulu, Rahman Yakub was interrupted by a broadcast of a taped speech by Taib. Rahman Yakub then proceeded to tear down the speakers' wires, causing a commotion. See *Borneo Post*, 3 April 1987. For Rahman Yakub's own account see *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 April 1987.

78. Although the Malay/Melanau votes in the Chinese majority constituencies are usually small—anywhere from 4 per cent in Padungan to 13 per cent in Stampin—the Malay/Melanau voting pattern is consistently pro-BN. These votes helped SUPP, in previous elections, to secure a larger majority than otherwise possible.

79. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 April 1987.

80. See letter entitled 'DAP the political opportunist', *Borneo Post*, 14 April 1987.

81. *Borneo Post*, 12 April 1987.

82. See above section on the 1986 parliamentary elections. These two successful independents joined PBDS just before the Ming Court Affair. See *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 2 March 1987.

83. For a discussion on the significance of the 'Dayakism' factor in voting trends, see James Chin, 'Sarawak's 1987 and 1991 State Elections: An Analysis of the Ethnic Vote', *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 26 (1995): 3-24.

84. Only seven comparisons between the election results of 1987 and 1983 are possible, as in 1983 SUPP won the Miri state constituency unopposed.

85. Turnout in 1983 was 20,968 (77.76 per cent) and in 1987 it was 23,629 (74.90 per cent), an increase of 2,661. In 1983 there were 26,966 voters in the Padungan constituency. In 1987 this had increased to 30,882, an increase of 3,916 voters.

86. Turnout in 1983 was 22,417 (77.14 per cent) and in 1987 it was 26,745 (76.55 per cent), an increase of 4,328. DAP claimed that SUPP's 'dirty tricks' caused them many votes in Padungan and Stampin. They accused SUPP of planting its supporters among its voluntary workers on election day. These 'volunteers' would then confirm to voters that there was a 'secret pact' between DAP and PERMAS. In Stampin, the voters were told that if Sim Kheng Hong lost, then a Foochow, Wong Soon Kai, would take over the deputy chief ministership, which in turn would mean a Foochow business 'invasion' of Kuching. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 April 1987.

87. SUPP polled 7,023. The total opposition vote was only 3,170 (DAP 2,331; independent 155; PERMAS 684).

88. Turnout in 1983 was 10,959 (79.92 per cent), and in 1987 it was 12,140 (77.03 per cent), an increase of 1,181. In 1983 there were 13,712 voters in Repok. In 1987 this had increased to 15,760, an increase of 2,048 voters.

89. Chong stood in the elections of 1974, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1983 and 1986—all within the Sarikei-Bintagor area.

90. See above section on the 1986 election. Meradong, together with the Repok state constituency, forms the Sarikei parliamentary constituency.

91. In 1983 there were 10,003 voters in Lundu. In 1987 this had increased to 10,910, an increase of 907. Turnout in 1983 was 7,699 (76.67 per cent) and in 1987 it was 8,540 (78.28 per cent). See SUPP records.

92. In 1983 there were 13,073 voters in Sri Aman. In 1987 this had increased to 14,391, an increase of 1,318. Turnout in 1983 was 8,631 (66.02 per cent) and in 1987 it was 10,531 (73.18 per cent), an increase of 1,900. See SUPP records.

93. See Chapter 8. The result of the 1983 election (Dudong constituency) was:

Wilfred Kiroh ak Jeram (independent-SUPP)	2,870
Joseph Tan Chok Tiong @ Joseph Chock	
Chung Tang (SNAP)	2,695
Sabang ak Lambong @ Raymond (PBDS)	2,387

94. Turnout in 1983 was 8,064 (71.56 per cent), and in 1987 it was 9,513 (70.22 per cent), an increase of 1,449. In 1983 there were 11,269 voters in Dudong. In 1987 this had increased to 13,548, an increase of 2,279.

95. SUPP sent show cause letters to several SUPP Sibul branch members, including a few senior ones, on why they should not be expelled for campaigning against Wong Soon Koh in Igan. A disciplinary sub-committee under George Chan Hong Nam subsequently expelled 14 members. See SUPP, *Report of the Central Committee*, September 1984–September 1987, p. 4.; See also *International Times*, 30 April 1987.

96. *Special Edition*, 4 May 1987.

97. *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 July 1987. See Wong Soon Kai's denial in *Borneo Post*, 16 July 1987.

98. Chan Seng Khai lost to DAP in the Bandar Kuching parliamentary election. See above.

99. Interview with Lily Yong.

Maintaining the Chinese Vote

The 1990 Parliamentary Election

THE 1990 election was held amidst high expectations that the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition would not be returned with its two-thirds majority. Since its inception in 1974, the BN had never lost its two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat due to a fragmented opposition. Now the BN had to face a united opposition challenge in the form of Semangat 46 (Spirit of 46, or simply S46), a party that was formed by a break-away group from the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and led by Dr Mahathir Mohamad's arch rival, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah. Tengku Razaleigh's most impressive feat was to line up the two main opposition parties, Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Partai Islam Se Malaysia (PAS), under his leadership. Hence, DAP and PAS, which normally agreed on nothing, came together in an alliance called Gagasan Rakyat (People's Might).¹

In both Sarawak and Sabah, only the parliamentary elections were held as both state governments still had some time to go in their terms.² The parliamentary election in Sarawak was a quiet affair, the opposition consisting only of the DAP and some independents. The two-party issue did not catch on readily, as neither Semangat 46 nor PAS had branches in Sarawak. The effect of the two-party debate was only felt in the urban areas, where the voters were better educated and more sophisticated. The Sarawak BN's only real opposition came from the remnants of the 1987 Kumpulan Maju: Parti Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS), Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), and DAP. PERMAS was seen primarily as a Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) problem, and with Abdul Rahman Yakub quietly leaving the party, there was serious doubt as to its ability to fight PBB in the Malay/Melanau areas. More threatening to the Sarawak BN were PBDS and DAP (who, in any case, were only really after Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) seats), and independents, who were secretly backed by one of the BN coalition parties.

Since this was the first election following the rise of Dayak ethnic identity in 1987, Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN3) and PBDS were both looking for clues as to whether the 'Dayak fire' was still burning bright three years after being lit. As in all federal elections, the final decisions on seat allocations were made in Kuala Lumpur. PBDS, being a

member of the BN at federal level, was thus included in the BN seat allocation equation. Due to the 1984–6 delineation exercise, there were now 27 parliamentary constituencies in Sarawak, an increase of 3.³ The final seat allocations were: PBB 10, SUPP 8, SNAP 5, and PBDS 4. SUPP, which had been allocated seven constituencies in 1987, had gained one. BN3 and PBDS, opponents at state level, hurriedly set about undermining each other, each planting independents against the other. On nomination day, 11 October 1990, PBDS won the Lubok Antu seat unopposed.

PERMAS led the opposition side with nine candidates, followed closely by DAP with eight. There were also 25 independents, with one third not bona fide. PERMAS also aligned itself with Semangat 46, and thus, indirectly, with DAP as well.

The seven SUPP constituencies were: Bandar Kuching, Lanang (formerly Sibü), Sibü (formerly Rajang), Sarikei, Miri (formerly Lambir), Padawan, and Serian. SUPP introduced five new faces in 1990, the largest number of new candidates at parliamentary level since the early 1970s. The five were: Yong Khoo Seng for Padawan, William Stephen Aham for Serian, Robert Lau Hoi Chew for Sibü, and Jerome Runggol for the new constituency of Selangau. The large number of new faces was due to the party's loss of three constituencies in 1986. The other three incumbents were: Stephen Yong Kuet Tze for Bandar Kuching, Law Hieng Ding for Sarikei, and Tieu Sung Seng for Lanang.

The selection of a candidate for Bandar Kuching caused a mild internal controversy. All three SUPP branches located in Kuching: Stampin, Batu Lintang, and Kuching, nominated one of their members as the candidate. *Wanita* SUPP also lobbied hard for one of its members to be the candidate, arguing that 'since the men had failed three times' to win back Bandar Kuching, it was time for a woman to try.⁴

While haggling took place between these four competing groups, Stephen Yong indicated that he would stand in Bandar Kuching instead of defending his seat of Padawan. Yong's rationale was that he was the only neutral candidate acceptable to the three branches and *Wanita* SUPP. Yong also wanted to stand in Bandar Kuching for sentimental reasons. He had started his political career in the then Kuching Timur constituency before losing to a SNAP candidate in 1974. Now getting on in years, he wanted to win Kuching one final time before retirement.

Besides this, there was another reason why Stephen Yong had to move from the safe seat of Padawan. His political secretary, Yong Khoo Seng, had threatened to resign if he was not nominated as the candidate there. Khoo Seng had been Yong's secretary for many years, and said that he had waited patiently for his turn and further claimed that Stephen Yong had promised him the seat after the 1986 election.⁵ Thus, for Stephen Yong, the Bandar Kuching seat provided an opportunity for him to leave Padawan without risking an embarrassing resignation and possibly a defection. Stephen Yong's decision to stand in Bandar Kuching caused uneasiness among the leadership which advised Yong not to stand, knowing that the Kuching voters would

likely re-elect the popular incumbent DAP Member of Parliament (MP).⁶

In sum, Stephen Yong's decision to go ahead was based on a number of motives: to avoid a split with Yong Khoon Seng, to return to his geographical political roots, and to eliminate the infighting between the three Kuching branches and *Wanita* SUPP. He had also received information suggesting that he could win Bandar Kuching, based on his prestige as party leader and federal Cabinet member.

Campaign Issues and Tactics

While PERMAS concentrated on the Malay/Melanau areas, DAP focused on the urban Chinese population. Six of its eight candidates stood in SUPP constituencies. Serian was the only SUPP constituency where there was no DAP candidate. The six constituencies where SUPP would be facing DAP were Bandar Kuching, Padawan, Lanang, Sibul, Sarikei, and Miri. SUPP was worried about the first three, but was confident about Miri.

Being a member of the BN, SUPP fought the campaign under the BN's slogan of 'Peace, Stability and Prosperity'. The manifesto pledged, as in previous elections, to uphold democracy and the rule of law, maintain independence of the judiciary, create better economic opportunities for all races, and maintain freedom of religion. It also promised there would be no interference in the vernacular schools.⁷ The BN also attacked the 'unholy alliance' between the DAP, Semangat 46, and PAS, arguing that this alliance could only be a 'marriage of convenience' as PAS's avowed aim of creating an Islamic state and DAP's aim of a multiracial, multireligious Malaysia were totally incompatible.⁸

SUPP once more emphasized the importance of its parliamentary seats, arguing that DAP 'can only shout and shout' but 'cannot get things done'. Thus, voting for DAP would be a waste. SUPP argued that, contrary to what the voters might think, it played an important role in the federal government. The often quoted example was the fact that although SUPP had only four parliamentary seats (won in 1986), it had been given a full ministry, with one federal Cabinet minister, and an assistant federal minister. Therefore, the people had much to gain by voting for increased SUPP representation this time round.

DAP's campaign centred on the two-party issue and urged voters to create an alternative coalition in order to strengthen democracy and save Malaysia. According to the DAP, the forthcoming election was an historic opportunity for the people to set up a two-party system and create a real democracy. DAP also attacked SUPP over the new draft of the Education Act. The draft of the Act had been shrouded in secrecy, and DAP claimed that this was proof that its contents were not favourable to Chinese schools, maybe even leading to 'the abolition of the mother-tongue education'.⁹ SUPP countered DAP's criticism by stating that if the new Education Act went against the character of Chinese-medium schools, the party would leave the BN.¹⁰ DAP also

exploited the usual theme that SUPP was a 'tycoon party' and supported government discrimination against the non-Malay population.

Halfway into the campaign, BN's confidence was severely jolted when Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), the ruling party in Sabah, pulled out of the BN and announced that it was supporting the opposition alliance. PBS claimed that Gagasan Rakyat's promise to protect the special state rights of Sabah (and Sarawak) was more in line with the wishes of the people of East Malaysia.¹¹ The pull-out immediately boosted the opposition by suggesting to the electorate that the seemingly invincible BN could possibly be beaten or, at the very least, denied its two-thirds majority. The reaction of the federal BN (specifically UMNO) was to change its campaign strategy. No longer emphasizing BN's moderate image, it mounted an overtly racial campaign based on Malay political hegemony and Islam. UMNO leaders told Malay voters that if they voted for Semangat 46, Islam would be under threat as PBS, a Christian-led party, would then play a major role.¹² They also claimed that the Malays' current privileged position would also come under threat.¹³

In Sarawak, the pull-out of PBS had an added implication. Many voters, especially the Dayaks, shared PBS's anti-federal feelings and saw its act as an audacious stand against Kuala Lumpur. DAP tried to persuade the Sarawak voters to emulate PBS, and vote against the BN.¹⁴ SUPP's leadership faced a dilemma in the wake of the pull-out. As a component of the BN, the party was obliged to attack PBS, but it also knew that it could not attack PBS too harshly as the pull-out was popular among the often anti-federal electorate. If SUPP attacked PBS too heavily, it ran the serious risk of causing a swing against SUPP candidates among the 'fence sitters' and the undecided who harboured anti-federal sentiments. The leadership finally decided to pursue a middle line. The party argued that while it could understand PBS's 'dissatisfaction with the Federal Government' and the party's right to quit the BN, the pull-out nevertheless meant that the nation was heading towards political instability, which ultimately would be detrimental to the entire Chinese community. Therefore, the Chinese voters should more than ever 'pool their strength' and vote SUPP, so it could strengthen its federal representation and protect the interests of the Sarawak Chinese. Moreover, SUPP also argued that Sarawak was better treated by Kuala Lumpur than Sabah was, and so there was no legitimate reason for Sarawakians to follow the action of the Sabahans.¹⁵

In Bandar Kuching, despite the fact that his opponent was the SUPP chairman, DAP's Sim Kwang Yang was under no real threat. Since 1982, DAP had beaten SUPP in the Bandar Kuching constituency in two successive elections, nearly doubling its majority in 1986. Additionally, the DAP candidate was personally extremely popular with the Kuching electorate, which generally felt that he deserved to be in the Dewan Rakyat to voice the grievances of the non-Malay community. Stephen Yong Kuet Tze's campaign also suffered from poor co-ordination and charges that party cadres were not wholeheartedly enthusiastic about his candidature.¹⁶

SUPP was fairly confident of retaining Padawan as Yong Khoon Seng was well known in the area, having worked there as Stephen Yong's political secretary for many years. In contrast, DAP's Cheng Hui Hong, a Kuching-based lawyer, was relatively unknown in the area.

In the Sibu town area, SUPP had two Chinese-majority parliamentary constituencies to fight for. In Lanang (formerly Sibu), SUPP's Tieu Sung Seng defended his seat in a straight fight against DAP's Jason Wong Sing Nang. Jason Wong, who had established himself as a clean and young politician, used Tieu's age and state of health, as well as the issues discussed above, in his campaign. Tieu, who suffered from ill health and could not actively campaign in person, was described as old and 'incapable of working for the people'.¹⁷ Sibu town's air pollution problem received considerable attention from DAP, as SUPP was in charge of the federal ministry that dealt with environmental matters.¹⁸ In Rajang constituency, SUPP's Robert Lau Hoi Chew faced veteran DAP candidate Ling Sie Ming. Although Ling was initially seen as the front runner, Lau's extensive family business links meant he could count on the substantial business vote.¹⁹ Lau was also actively involved in running SUPP's service centres which served many ordinary people in the Sibu constituency. The third contender, Tang Lung Chiew, from the minor party Parti Buruh Sarawak (PLUS) was not taken seriously.²⁰ In Sarikei, Law Hieng Ding faced DAP's Chiam Pao Koh. Law's status, as a deputy federal minister and incumbent for two previous terms, gave him an advantage over his relatively unknown opponent. In Miri, SUPP's Peter Chin Fah Kui was confident of a win, as he had won in 1986 with a comfortable 5,553 vote majority. Moreover, his opponents were unknowns: DAP's Lo Yung Tee and PERMAS's Sarbini bin Morni. With the anti-establishment vote split between PERMAS and DAP, SUPP was never under threat in Miri.

However, the party was under no illusions regarding its two Dayak constituencies. In 1986 and 1987, it had lost the Dayak vote decisively to the PBDS,²¹ and the party knew that PBDS would once more be its main nemesis. Officially, SUPP faced independents in both constituencies, but it was common knowledge that these independents were PBDS-backed. While PBDS adopted BN's manifesto for their campaign in BN-allocated PBDS constituencies, the real PBDS campaign took place in four other constituencies: Serian, Selangau, Baram, and Hulu Rajang, where there were PBDS-backed independents. In Serian and Selangau, the BN candidates came from SUPP; in Baram and Hulu Rajang, they came from the Sarawak National Party (SNAP).²²

The PBDS-backed independents adopted the strategy of combining long-term Dayak grievances, such as their second class *bumiputera* status and lack of access to wealth and development, with local issues, such as the lack of basic infrastructure and the lack of Dayak parties holding Dayak-majority seats. In Serian, SUPP's William Stephen Aham faced an uphill battle. In 1986, SUPP lost Serian to another PBDS-backed independent, by a fairly wide margin of 1,420 votes. This time, the PBDS-backed independent was a former teacher, Richard Riot. Riot

was personally popular in this predominantly Bidayuh area, so much so that he was widely believed to have the ability to win the seat on his own, with or without party affiliation.²³ SUPP's candidate in the new Selangau constituency, Jerome Runggol, also found it hard to fight the PBDS-backed independent, Joseph Mauh. The Dayak electorate in the constituency had already rejected incumbent SUPP MP Jawan Empaling in Rajang²⁴ in favour of a PBDS-backed independent in 1986.

SUPP's campaign in the two Dayak seats suffered a major blow in the last week of the campaign when PBS pulled out of the BN and supported the opposition instead. The PBS declaration that Kuala Lumpur was ignoring state rights and the interests of the Kadazan (who formed the bulk of PBS), struck a chord with many Dayaks who felt the same way.²⁵ Thus, this act was seen as a courageous one by many of the Dayaks. Although PBDS did not follow PBS's lead, opting instead to stay in the federal BN,²⁶ the PBS pull-out nevertheless had the effect of consolidating the Dayak votes in the two SUPP Dayak constituencies behind the PBDS-backed independents.

The Election Results

When the results were announced, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's ruling coalition won convincingly, taking 127 seats in the 180-member Parliament and winning 10 of the 11 state legislative assemblies. The only state the BN lost in was Kelantan, where the opposition coalition of Semangat 46 and PAS swept to victory in all the seats.

In Sarawak, the Sarawak BN did well, winning 21 out of 27 seats (Table 10.1). The six seats lost were: two to DAP in Bandar Kuching and Lanang constituencies, and the four Dayak seats lost to PBDS-backed independents. PBB and PBDS won all their allocated seats. SNAP lost two, while SUPP lost four. Given that the four independents were PBDS-backed, PBDS effectively had eight MPs, and the Sarawak BN's net loss was just two seats.

TABLE 10.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1990 Parliamentary Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sarawak BN		21
PBB	10	
SUPP	4	
SNAP	3	
PBDS	4 (8) ^a	
Opposition		2
DAP	2	
Independents	4	4
Total		27

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aWith the four PBDS-backed independents, the PBDS had effectively 8 MPs.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP CONSTITUENCIES

In Bandar Kuching, Sim Kwang Yang beat Stephen Yong Kuet Tze with a 6,164 majority. DAP's 1986 majority of nearly 8,000 was reduced (Table 10.2), which could possibly be attributed to Stephen Yong's personal prestige.²⁷ In Padawan, SUPP won with a reduced majority. Given that voter turnout was about 4,000 more than in 1986, this indicated a swing against SUPP of about 2,000 votes.²⁸

One surprise defeat for SUPP was in the Lanang seat, where DAP newcomer Jason Wong Sing Nang defeated Tieu Sung Seng by 3,973 votes. However, this did not indicate a clear swing to DAP, whose win was probably also due to the delineation exercise. In 1986, the Sibü parliamentary constituency had 51,925 voters. As a result of delineation, the 'new' Lanang constituency had only 39,078 voters, or about 10,000 less. Similarly, turnout was lower. In 1986, turnout was 37,738 (72.70 per cent) compared to 1990's turnout of 22,208 (70.1 per cent). Thus, it could be argued that after delineation more DAP, rather than SUPP, core supporters were left in the constituency. In the Sibü constituency, however, the DAP appeared to have been adversely affected by the delineation. SUPP's Robert Lau Hoi Chew won with a 2,008 majority over his better known DAP opponent. In 1986, Rajang (as Sibü constituency was then called) had 20,338 voters. As a result of delineation, Rajang increased its voters by about 10,000 to 32,271. As mentioned above, Lanang lost about 10,000 voters in the delineation exercise. Turnout in 1986 was 13,207 (64.05 per cent), compared to 1990's turnout of 22,208 (70.10 per cent). It could be argued that many

TABLE 10.2
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Parliamentary Constituencies,
1982, 1986, and 1990 Elections

Constituency	Margin of Victory/Loss		
	1982	1986	1990
Bandar Kuching	-3,577 ^a (-10) ^b	-7,974 ^a (-17)	-6,164 ^a (-14)
Padawan	5,123 (+44)	7,908 (+36)	6,161 ^a (+23)
Serian	2,864 (+17)	-1,420 (-7)	-2,685 ^a (-14)
Sarikei	81 ^a (+0.4)	519 (+2)	4,612 (+22)
Lanang (Sibü) ^c	-141 (-0.5)	546 ^a (+1)	-3,973 (-15)
Sibü (Rajang)	1,692 (+16)	-153 ^a (-1)	2,008 ^a (+9)
Selangau	did not exist		-1,205 ^a (-11)
Miri (Lambir)	13,213 ^a (+51)	5,553 ^a (-19)	8,181 ^a (+25)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aNew SUPP candidate.

^bFigures in brackets represent percentage gain or loss.

^cNames in brackets are the former names.

of SUPP's supporters from the former Sibü (Lanang) parliamentary constituency were 'moved' into Rajang, helping SUPP to beat DAP. The voting was also influenced by the electorate 'wanting it both ways'; since Sibü town had two seats, it was only fair to give one each to SUPP and DAP.

In nearby Sarikei, the incumbent SUPP candidate, Law Hieng Ding, increased his majority from 519 to 4,612. In terms of majority percentage, Law expanded from a marginal 2 per cent to 22 per cent. This was a significant win for SUPP, reflecting Law's hold on the constituency and the status of the politically unknown DAP candidate. In Miri, Peter Chin Fah Kui won, as expected, by an increased majority of 8,181 votes. In terms of majority, Chin increased the gap from 19 to 25 per cent. However, the results also indicated that DAP held onto its votes. In 1986, its candidate polled 10,380 votes; in 1990 it polled an almost similar figure of 10,723.

In both the SUPP Dayak-majority constituencies, Dayak support basically collapsed, with the same pattern emerging as in 1986. Then SUPP lost three out of its four Dayak constituencies to PBDS-backed independents. In 1990, both its Dayak constituencies were lost in the same way. In Serian, SUPP lost by 2,685 votes. This was twice the margin of defeat of 1986, a highly significant result given that voter turnout was similar. In 1986, the turnout was 18,975 (65.25 per cent); in 1990 it was 18,516 (67.15 per cent). The majority percentage doubled exactly, from 7 per cent in 1986 to 14 per cent in 1990. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the SUPP's Dayak vote further deteriorated. In Selangau, the situation was comparable. The PBDS-backed independent beat SUPP's candidate by 1,025 votes in this constituency where the Ibans made up 93 per cent of the voters.

Overall, SUPP's performance in the 1990 parliamentary elections was worse than in 1986 and 1982. It marginally regained the support of the Chinese community, but its Dayak support collapsed. The party managed to win only half of its seats. In 1986 it had won four out of seven constituencies, in 1982, five out of seven. In numerical terms, SUPP suffered the worst defeat among the Sarawak BN component parties, losing four of the eight seats it contested.

For several reasons, the blow was even worse than the figures would indicate. First, SUPP's party chairman was defeated. The defeat must have been a great personal blow to Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, a veteran who had started his political career in Kuching almost four decades earlier. It was also a profound symbolic defeat, as Stephen Yong was a federal minister for two terms. This defeat was aggravated by the fact that Bandar Kuching is an overwhelmingly Chinese-dominated constituency.²⁹ Despite the fact that SUPP clearly identified itself as the 'voice' of the Sarawak Chinese, the defeat indicated that the urban Chinese voters clearly preferred DAP as their 'voice' at the federal level. Third, as in 1986, SUPP saw all its Dayak candidates defeated; its four elected MPs were all ethnic Chinese. This meant that, after two successive parliamentary elections in which its Dayak candidates were

defeated, SUPP's claim to a multiracial brand of politics sounded more hollow than ever. Finally, the results confirmed that SUPP was the weakest party among the Sarawak BN components at parliamentary level. PBB and PBDS won their allocated seats, while SNAP lost two out of its five allocated seats. The results also indicated that 'Dayakism' was still strong, and that PBDS was, again, its major beneficiary. PBDS was able to retain all its allocated seats and won another four by backing independents.³⁰

SUPP: Changes in the Party

Stephen Yong's Resignation

Immediately after his defeat, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze resigned from his position as chairman of SUPP and announced his retirement from active politics. Stephen Yong felt that with the voters' rejection, he had no choice but to retire. After more than four decades in politics, he also felt it was time to take a back seat. He had wanted to retire on a high note—winning back the Bandar Kuching parliamentary seat and defeating DAP's Sim Kwang Yang.

Fights over the resulting top-level reshuffle began the moment Stephen Yong announced his resignation. Various factions, aligned with the Kuching side, tried to persuade Yong to postpone resigning until more of their prospective leaders had risen through the party hierarchy. Yong and Sim Kheng Hong were the only remaining senior SUPP leaders from the Kuching side. With Sim incapacitated by illness, Yong was effectively the only SUPP leader from Kuching deemed sufficiently influential enough to stop the SUPP Rejang basin Foochows and their allies from taking complete control of the party. Sim's position in the party would also be threatened if Yong were to resign immediately. The Kuching side was backed by factions from the Miri branch which felt that the rise of Rejang basin SUPP would impede their own ambitions in the party.³¹

In any event, the Kuching side could not prevent Wong Soon Kai, the most senior leader from Rejang basin SUPP, from taking over the chairmanship. There were three basic reasons for the Kuching side's failure. First, the Kuching side lacked a politician of Wong's stature who could have been an alternative candidate. Wong had more than 15 years' experience as a full state Cabinet minister. The most senior state assemblyman from Kuching (excepting the incapacitated Sim Kheng Hong), was Chong Kiun Kong, who had held the Batu Kawa state constituency for more than two decades. However, Chong lacked experience. He had never served as a full state minister and had been only an assistant minister.³² Chong was more of a background player for most of his political career, and was regarded as unsuitable for the high profile post of leader of the party. The other SUPP assemblyman from Kuching, Song Swee Guan, could not even be considered. He had only been elected in 1983, and lacked experience.³³

Second, Kuching side SUPP simply did not have the numbers to fight the Rejang basin SUPP. The former had only three state assemblymen: Sim Kheng Hong, Chong Kiun Kong, and Song Swee Guan. The Rejang basin had four: David Teng Lung Chi, Thomas Hii King Hiong, Wong Soon Kai, and Ting Ing Ming. In terms of federal representation, the difference was even more pronounced. The Kuching side had only one MP, Yong Khoo Seng, while the Rejang basin had two, Law Hieng Ding and Robert Lau Hoi Chew.³⁴

Finally, the Kuching side was not wholly united. Some supported Wong Soon Kai, believing his ascension to be in the best interests of the whole party.³⁵ Moreover, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, Foochow businessmen had aggressively moved into the Kuching business scene.³⁶ These businessmen not only had a large stake in Kuching business activity, but also made their presence felt in Kuching SUPP. Many of the Kuching SUPP factions were beholden to the Foochows or had interests in their businesses, and thus could not push the anti-Foochow line too far.

The Ascendancy of the Foochows

SUPP held its 15th Delegates Conference in early December 1990, about a month after the parliamentary elections. In his retirement speech, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze highlighted the issue that had caused the disenfranchisement of the Chinese in Sarawak (and Malaysia), that is, the system of racial quota espoused in the New Economic Policy (NEP). He called on the government to scrap or modify the quota for non-*bumiputera* in tertiary institutions, as well as that imposed on Chinese businesses.³⁷ He was, undoubtedly, directly referring to the continued loss of urban Chinese votes at parliamentary elections. The conference itself passed 36 resolutions, including the usual ones calling on the government to repeal section 21 (B) of the Education Act; build more Chinese primary schools; replace the NEP with a new policy not based on race; employ more non-*bumiputera* in the civil service; and set up a university in Sarawak.³⁸

The conference saw the formal transfer of the chairmanship from Stephen Yong to Wong Soon Kai (Table 10.3). In a move to avoid further splits over the chairmanship issue,³⁹ Chong Kiun Kong from Kuching side was given the deputy chairman's post (a post supposedly ranked second to the chairman) while George Chan Hong Nam from Miri was made the Secretary-General. Hence, all the major SUPP power centres—Kuching, Sibul, and Miri—were represented, and there was no contest between them for any individual post. Sim Kheng Hong retired along with Stephen Yong, and the key post of treasurer was given to David Teng Lung Chi, another SUPP Rejang basin assemblyman. To balance this, Kuching's Loke Yik Ping was made deputy treasurer.

In the Youth wing, the incumbent Chan Seng Khai from Kuching did not seek re-election. Instead his deputy, Patrick Embol, faced Vincent Goh Chung Siong. This contest was seen as a Kuching–Rejang tussle.

TABLE 10.3
The SUPP 17th Central Working Committee

Chairman	Wong Soon Kai
Deputy	Chong Kiun Kong
Vice-Chairmen	Law Hieng Ding
	Jawan Empaling
	Peter Chin Fah Kui
Secretary-General	George Chan Hong Nam
Deputy	Ramsay Noel Jitam
Assistant Secretary-General	Chua Ching Geh
Treasurer	David Teng Lung Chi
Deputy	Loke Yik Ping
Youth Central leader	Vincent Goh Chung Siong
<i>Wanita</i> SUPP leader	Lily Yong Lee Lee
Organizing Secretary	Thomas Hii King Hiong
Assistant Organizing Secretary	Toh Heng San
Publicity and Information	Song Swee Guan
Assistant Publicity and Information	Yong Khoon Seng
Committee Members	Sim Teck Kui
	Sim Kheng Hui
	Tan Chong Meng
	Michael Pilo
	Tieu Sung Seng
	Ting Ing Mieng
	Soon Choon Teck

Source: SUPP records.

Embol was widely seen as 'planted' by Kuching, while Goh was the assistant secretary of the SUPP Rajang branch. Consistent with moves to avoid an open contest, Embol was offered the deputy Youth leader's post. However, he declined the offer, and was then beaten soundly; Goh polled 112 votes to Embol's 58.⁴⁰ In the *Wanita* section, Lily Yong Lee Lee was returned unopposed for a second term.

The 1990 Delegates Conference, despite the show of unity at the top, reflected the ascendancy of the Rejang basin SUPP, principally of the Foochows. Members from the Rejang group took the posts of chairman, treasurer, organizing secretary, Youth leader, and two of the three vice-chairmen's posts. Out of the 23 members of the CWC, the highest decision-making body in the party, 11 came from the Rejang basin, and three more were allied with the branch.⁴¹ The conference was also significant in that all the top positions, and more than three-quarters of the CWC, were made up of members who had joined the party after 1970.

The 1991 State Election

The 1991 state election took place under new electoral boundaries. In 1985 and 1986, the Election Commission had undertaken a delineation exercise which significantly changed the boundaries of the constituencies. An additional eight seats were created, raising the number from 48 to 56. The major beneficiaries of the delineation exercise were the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese communities, who increased their number of majority seats by five and three, respectively. Thus, SUPP had gained three 'new' Chinese-majority constituencies: Batu Lintang, Bawang Assan, and Dudong.⁴²

When Abdul Taib Mahmud dissolved the state assembly and called for elections in September 1991, it was a reflection of the strength of his PBB and the weakness of the opposition. Due to the defections by PBDS and PERMAS assemblymen, the state of the parties before the 1991 polls was very much in Taib Mahmud's favour. In the two preceding months, three key personalities in PERMAS: two state assemblymen (from the Oya and Gedong constituencies), and a former deputy minister of education, resigned from the party and announced they were supporting the PBB. Four of the five PERMAS candidates who were successful in the 1987 polls did not defend their seats in 1991.⁴³ BN3 had a total of 37 Council Negri members: PBB 21, SUPP 11, and SNAP 5.⁴⁴ The opposition had only 11 seats: PBDS 7 and PERMAS 4.

Seat allocation did not go smoothly for the BN3 in 1991. SNAP demanded 17 seats, almost all the seats it lost to the PBDS in 1983 and 1987.⁴⁵ PBB, clearly the dominant party and the one that gained from the PBDS and PERMAS defections, was not about to give up its newly acquired seats. It claimed at least 32 of them.

SUPP's first priority was the 11 Chinese majority seats. In addition, the party asked for six more seats (Simanggang, Bengoh, Tanjung Datu, Engkilili, Tamin, and Kidurong), or 17 constituencies altogether. SUPP felt that with its newly acquired strength, gained from its good showing in the 1987 polls, it was in a position to demand more seats. Moreover, it felt that it had a right to these six seats, having been allocated the first four in 1987. Dispute centred on the last two constituencies. Both were new seats created by the delineation exercise. Tamin was a Dayak-majority seat, while Kidurong⁴⁶ was a mixed seat, with an equal number of Dayak and Chinese voters.

SNAP, then, was left with between five and seven seats. SNAP leaders were understandably angry over this, and publicly stated that PBB's claim to 32 seats meant that, if PBB were to win them all, it would not need to form a coalition. The 32 seats constituted more than the required simple majority of 29 seats out of the 56-seat legislature. It further claimed that SNAP had 'lost' nine seats even before the actual polls.⁴⁷ PBB leaders then warned SNAP that if it continued to raise the seat allocation issue in public, the BN3 Supreme Council would simply allocate the seats in the following way: PBB 32, SUPP 17, SNAP 5. In the end, SNAP was in no position to bargain and had to back down.

SUPP was allocated the 17 seats it asked for, PBB would contest 31 seats, and SNAP was left with eight constituencies. In reality, SNAP was only allocated seven seats as one of the eight SNAP candidates, in the Bukit Begunan constituency (formerly Lingga), was a 'loan' candidate from the PBB.⁴⁸

The 17 SUPP seats consisted of the 11 Chinese seats (Padungan, Stampin, Batu Lintang, Batu Kawa, Repok, Meradong, Bukit Assek, Bawang Assan, Dudong, Seduan, and Piasau (formerly Miri)); and the five Dayak seats (Simanggang (Sri Aman), Bengoh, Tanjung Datu (Lundu), Engkilili, and Tamin). The last seat allocated to SUPP was the new, 'mixed' Kidurong constituency. SUPP fielded three new candidates: Toh Heng San in Engkilili, Soon Choon Teck in Dudong, and Michael Sim in Kidurong.

Candidate selection in the Batu Lintang, Kidurong, and Bawang Assan constituencies did not go smoothly. The Batu Lintang candidate, Chan Seng Khai was seen as a sure loser, having been beaten by the same DAP candidate in 1986. When his name was submitted for approval by Sarawak BN chairman Taib Mahmud, the party was apparently told to nominate someone else. His candidature was only approved on the party's insistence that there was no other suitable candidate.⁴⁹ There was also discontentment in the party that Chan was 'pushed' in because of the influence of his father, Chan Siaw Hee.⁵⁰

In Bawang Assan, Wong Soon Koh faced similar problems. Wong is related to party chairman Wong Soon Kai, and had lost to a PERMAS candidate in 1987. In Kidurong, local branch members wanted to nominate a 'local' boy in place of Michael Sim, a former senior civil servant. Although Sim did not originally come from Kidurong, he had served there and Bintulu was his wife's hometown. Party leaders had to impose his candidature on the local branch.⁵¹

On the opposition side, PBDS fielded 34 candidates, including seven Chinese. PERMAS, no longer in alliance with PBDS, fielded 11 (all in Malay/Melanau areas), and DAP 18. One hitherto dormant party, Parti Negara Rakyat Sarawak (or Parti Negara) fielded 28 candidates, and there were 14 independents.

Despite the large number of candidates, the real fight was between PBDS and the BN3, and between DAP and SUPP. PERMAS and Parti Negara were not seen as credible contenders. All PERMAS candidates, except one, were political unknowns.⁵² Parti Negara was mocked by the press and BN3 as a 'mosquito' party. Its credibility was seriously eroded when its president, a former state minister in the 1960s, had to go to court because of doubts about his legal standing as Parti Negara's president. In addition to its legal problems, nine of Parti Negara's candidates 'disappeared' on nomination day.⁵³

Campaign Issues and Tactics

DAP was again SUPP's main nemesis in the Chinese seats. The party had candidates in 10 of the 11 Chinese-dominated constituencies. BN3 basically campaigned on the issue of continuity of policies. In its

manifesto, the BN3 pledged 'a better future for all', and concluded 'let us continue to achieve more development for a better future'. As in previous elections, with its overwhelming superiority in terms of money and resources, the BN3 electoral machinery easily outperformed the opposition, and benefited from the media's bias towards it.

SUPP augmented BN3's message with its often-used slogan on the 'importance of Chinese participation in government'. SUPP also attacked DAP for co-operating with PAS, and warned of the dangers of further Islamization if DAP were to win. DAP was labelled as a *semananjung* (peninsular) party, with Lim Kit Siang manipulating the Sarawak Chinese community. SUPP's portrayal of DAP as an outsider was reinforced by the news that Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was coming to Sarawak to campaign for DAP and other opposition parties.⁵⁴ SUPP also argued that strong support for BN3 was needed to stop the racists in PBDS. For example, in one of its campaign leaflets it stated:

1. We cannot support DAP because it is a party from West Malaysia; DAP only takes orders from its big boss Mr Lim Kit Siang;
2. We cannot support PBDS because as a communal party, PBDS is striving for interests of Dayaks only;
3. We must support SUPP because it helps bring about racial harmony in Sarawak . . . it can help to bring about political stability . . . it helps bring about development and progress.⁵⁵

DAP based its campaign on getting the voters 'to break the egg', and stressed 'zero breakthrough'. The 'egg' in Mandarin denotes a 'zero'. This metaphor was meant to remind the Chinese voters to return at least one DAP candidate, thus symbolically 'breaking the egg'. In addition, DAP raised the issue of SUPP as a *towkay* party, which only served the interests of big business. It claimed SUPP had become 'arrogant'.⁵⁶ DAP further argued that SUPP's 'Chinese chauvinism' was dangerous to the Chinese community as it alienated the Chinese from the other races.⁵⁷ In addition, DAP accused the BN3 government of corruption, highlighting the need for an opposition presence in the Council to provide 'checks and balances'.

DAP had high hopes for the 1991 state polls. Its confidence was reflected by its choice of 18 candidates, the largest contingent of DAP candidates in a state election.⁵⁸ The large number of candidates can also be attributed to its strategy of 'Go Rural', which saw many of its candidates standing in rural Dayak seats.⁵⁹

DAP was optimistic that it would win in at least two constituencies, located in the Chinese-dominated towns of Kuching and Sibu.⁶⁰ This can be attributed firstly to the racial make up and boundaries of the two constituencies, and secondly to the DAP candidates themselves.

Batu Lintang and Bawang Assan, the seats where DAP was confident of victory, were both new constituencies. More importantly, both were overwhelmingly populated by Chinese voters: in Batu Lintang, the Chinese constituted 83.81 per cent, and in Bawang Assan 81.64 per cent.⁶¹ In addition, both these seats fell within the electoral boundaries of parliamentary seats held by DAP. The Batu Lintang

seat fell within Bandar Kuching, while the Bawang Assan seat was shared between the Lanang and Sibu parliamentary boundaries.

Bandar Kuching was held by DAP's Sim Kwang Yang who was also the Batu Lintang candidate. Sim, known by the acronym SKY, was quickly seen to have the upper hand. First, Sim had defeated the then SUPP chairman Stephen Yong Kuet Tze in the 1990 parliamentary election. Secondly, the SUPP candidate, Chan Seng Khai, had been beaten by Sim in the 1986 parliamentary election. Thirdly, the voters in Batu Lintang were made up of mostly middle class Chinese, the bulk of whom had voted for the opposition in previous elections.⁶²

Although Chan was initially trailing Sim, he gained the upper hand in the last week of the campaign. What changed the minds of many Batu Lintang voters was a government pledge that a RM60 million upgrading of the drainage system was in the pipeline.⁶³ The ever-practical Chinese constituents decided that development was more important than having an opposition in the state legislature. The swing from DAP towards SUPP can also be attributed in part to Chan Seng Khai's campaigning much harder than the DAP candidate. Chan visited almost all the houses in residential estates in the Batu Lintang constituency, and also held a series of 'karaoke picnics' which proved effective in drawing voters to his political gatherings. Some Batu Lintang voters were also persuaded by the argument that, since Sim already had a platform in the Dewan Rakyat, the people should give SUPP the state seat. In other words, SUPP was using the 'wanting both ways' argument.⁶⁴

There were three other Chinese seats around Kuching. Of these, SUPP was confident about Pending and Batu Kawa but considered Padungan a potential risk. Although the SUPP candidate in Padungan, Song Swee Guan, had won the seat twice already and was popular as Kuching's mayor, delineation had 'shifted' about 10,000 voters out of the constituency.⁶⁵ SUPP calculated that the majority of these were its own supporters.⁶⁶ With core DAP voters numbering about 6,000, SUPP felt that Padungan was 55:45 in their favour. The only clear advantage Song enjoyed was that the DAP candidate, Dominic Ng Kim Ho, was a virtually unknown first timer.⁶⁷

In Pending, Sim Kheng Hong's old seat (Stampin) was transferred to his relation, Sim Kheng Hui. DAP's candidate was lawyer Cheng Hui Hong. Sim Kheng Hui was never in any danger of losing as he had inherited Sim Kheng Hong's powerful network. He had been Hong's private secretary for a long time and had virtually assumed full responsibility for the constituency when Hong was incapacitated by illness from the late 1980s onwards. Hui also capitalized on the fact that he had been executive secretary of SUPP, a political secretary, and a political detainee.⁶⁸

In Batu Kawa, Chong Kiun Kong faced DAP's Yong Seng Chan. Having held Batu Kawa for more than two decades, Chong did not have to campaign very hard in this predominantly Hakka dialect constituency. There was also one independent candidate, Chong Ju Siaw.⁶⁹ In all the other constituencies around Kuching (Pending, Batu Lintang,

Padungan), it was a straight fight between DAP and SUPP. The other constituency where DAP thought it stood a better than average chance of winning was Bawang Assan, located in the Rejang basin. Part of Bawang Assan falls within the Lanang parliamentary constituency, where DAP's Jason Wong Sing Nam had beaten an SUPP candidate just a year earlier. Although Jason Wong did not stand in Bawang Assan, the DAP candidate there, Ling Sie Ming, was a well-known veteran. Ling had also served from 1982 to 1986 as the DAP MP for the Sibul parliamentary constituency. The SUPP candidate was Wong Soon Koh, a relative newcomer, who had lost in the 1987 state polls.

Wong's loss in 1987 was partly due to his failure to receive the party's full support. Many believed that because he was related to Wong Soon Kai, he had been hand-picked.⁷⁰ This time, Wong Soon Koh once again touted the standard SUPP message that only the government could carry out its pledges. DAP could only 'bark like a dog and make empty promises'. Unlike the 1987 state election, local SUPP officials were now united behind Wong Soon Koh. Wong had worked hard, performing community services in Bawang Assan despite losing in 1987. Ling, from DAP, was hurt by many of the same issues successfully used against him in 1986 and 1987.⁷¹

In the Rejang basin area, SUPP faced DAP candidates in all six constituencies, except Meradong. There the party faced a PBDS candidate. In this constituency and in Repok, the local PBDS and DAP officials struck a deal whereby DAP would put up a candidate in Repok and PBDS would stand in Meradong.⁷² However, attempts between PBDS and DAP to co-operate like this in other constituencies failed because of PBDS's status as a federal BN member.⁷³ In Meradong, SUPP's Thomas Hii King Hiong faced PBDS's Sim Lai Ann and a candidate from Parti Negara. Sim, a former Immigration Department officer, concentrated his efforts on Chinese votes since the PBDS affiliation meant he was assured of PBDS Dayak support. In Repok, David Teng Lung Chi faced veteran DAP candidate Chong Siew Chiang. Parti Negara also had a candidate, but the real fight, as always, was between SUPP and DAP. David Teng was accused by DAP of using his position to acquire land and properties in the constituency. In retaliation, Teng published a list of his achievements. This consisted of 14 completed infrastructure projects, and contained a promise of 10 other major projects if he were elected.⁷⁴

In Dudong, SUPP's candidate was vice-chairman of the Sibul branch, Soon Choon Teck. Soon, a medical doctor, was also actively involved in the SUPP Lanang Road Service Centre. He faced candidates from both PBDS and DAP. The PBDS candidate, Paul Kong Pak Nam, was an accountant and former SNAP Kuching branch member. DAP's candidate was Joseph Tan Chok Tiong. In Bukit Assek, DAP's candidate was Jason Wong Sing Nang, who had won the Lanang parliamentary seat in 1990. Bukit Assek forms one-half of the Lanang seat (the other half being Bawang Assan). In Seduan, Ting Ing Mieng faced DAP's Sibul parliamentary secretary Ma Teck Kong. Ting's ability to win was

never in doubt, given that he had already won the seat for three consecutive terms. Moreover, his 1987 margin of victory was close to 5,000 votes.

George Chan Hong Nam was expected to win handsomely in Piasau as there was no pressing issue DAP could use against him. His 1987 majority, which exceeded 8,000 votes, meant that DAP never really stood a chance without a highly significant local issue to campaign on. In the new mixed seat of Kidurong, Michael Sim had expected a tough fight because of the racial breakdown of the constituency. Half of the voters were Dayaks and PBDS candidate Ting Ling Kiew⁷⁵ was expected to win a major portion of their votes. The Chinese vote was not solidly behind SUPP, as DAP's Chiew Chiu Sing had a strong following in the area. Prior to switching to DAP, Chiew had been a popular SUPP leader there.⁷⁶

SUPP went into the elections as the underdog in its Dayak seats, knowing from the results of the 1990 parliamentary elections that 'Dayakism' was still burning bright. Similarly, PBDS entered the election with confidence, hoping for a repeat of the 'Dayakism' factor of 1987, which would enable it to win the same number of seats—15. There was also another reason for PBDS's optimism. In 1990, it had launched its ambitious *Ketua Menteri Sarawak 1992* (KMS '92 or Project Chief Minister 1992), in anticipation of state elections being held in 1992. The implied message was that the next election would sweep the PBDS into power. The PBDS resorted to the usual political rhetoric, that only Dayaks could promote Dayak interests, and that the Dayaks had been victimized for more than two decades by the ruling clique of Malay/Melanau and Chinese political élites. PBDS also campaigned against what it said was excessive logging under the BN3 government, calling for more rights for the Dayaks and for BN3 to respect native land laws.

However, PBDS made a significant change in its campaign strategy for 1991. In the 1987 and 1990 elections, the party suffered from accusations that it was racist and bent on promoting exclusively Dayak interests. This had cost PBDS perhaps 90 per cent of the Chinese votes.⁷⁷ This time, the party tried to soften its image by fielding seven Chinese candidates, some in Dayak-majority seats. Knowing that non-Dayak, especially Chinese, voters could decide the outcome of marginal constituencies, the party attempted to broaden its base by establishing a Chinese Affairs Consultative Committee (CACC), supposedly to give the Chinese community a direct input to the decision-making process.⁷⁸ The PBDS dangled another carrot in front of the Chinese community by promising in its manifesto to allocate not less than RM5 million annually to Chinese independent schools.⁷⁹

However, neither of these strategies were successful. In the first instance, PBDS's constitution did not allow non-Dayaks to be members; they could only become 'associate members'.⁸⁰ Hence BN3, especially SUPP, reminded the Chinese that voting for PBDS was useless, as Chinese could not even be members of the party and consequently had

no real influence. According to SUPP, Chinese who supported PBDS were 'second class cadres'.⁸¹

SUPP reiterated that it was the only party that could promote Chinese interests and 'stop the racists'.⁸² Among its Dayak supporters, SUPP reaffirmed its commitment to multiracialism. In the second instance, the mass media, especially the printed media, launched a very successful campaign against PBDS on this issue. It emphasized that PBDS's ethnic membership requirement clearly showed it to be a racial party only interested in promoting Dayak interests at the expense of the non-Dayaks.⁸³ The credibility of KMS '92 came into question when PBDS President, Leo Moggie, decided not to resign his federal post to spearhead the campaign as a candidate. This was used by the BN3 to suggest that KMS '92 was a myth as the 'Iban general' was not even 'fighting the battle'. PBDS also made a mistake by not announcing who their nominee for the post of chief minister would be if they won the election. This added credibility to the BN3 argument that the KMS '92 was a myth and a political ploy.⁸⁴

The visit of the Prime Minister and other senior federal ministers to help campaign for the BN3 also undermined PBDS's image as a member of the federal ruling coalition. Without directly naming PBDS, Dr Mahathir Mohamad made it clear that it would be a gross mistake to vote for the 'opposition', which in this case could only mean PBDS, DAP, and PERMAS.⁸⁵

Of its five Dayak constituencies, SUPP was concerned about Bengoh, Engkilili, and Tamin. In Tanjung Datu and Simanggang, SUPP's Ramsay Noel Jitam and Michael Pilo were quite secure. Noel Jitam had already held the Tanjung Datu seat for two consecutive terms while Pilo had won the Simanggang (Sri Aman) seat with an 8 per cent majority in 1987. Tanjung Datu's PBDS candidate was the party's executive secretary, Sidi Munan, while in Simanggang it was Ngu Piew Seng, a former SUPP member who defected just before the election.⁸⁶ SUPP was also confident about these two seats as the Malay/Melanau and Chinese voters constituted more than 45 per cent of the electorate.⁸⁷ With these two groups expected to vote for the BN candidate, SUPP would only need a small portion of Dayak support to win. There was also one Parti Negara and one independent candidate in both Tanjung Datu and Simanggang, but none were taken seriously.⁸⁸

SUPP faced difficulties in Bengoh and Engkilili, both constituencies having been lost to PBDS in 1987. In Bengoh, SUPP nominated William Tanyuh ak Nub, who had held the seat before in the 1982 by-election but lost it in the 1983 state election. PBDS's candidate was Wilfred Nissom, the man who had beaten Tanyuh as a PBB-backed independent in 1979. Nissom went on to beat Tanyuh again as an independent in Bengoh in the 1983 state election.⁸⁹ Hence, Tanyuh was up against a candidate who had already beaten him twice. There were also two other candidates, from Parti Negara and an independent.

In Engkilili, SUPP's Toh Heng San faced PBDS's Sim Choo Nam. Sim had won as an SUPP-backed independent in 1983, and won

re-election as a PBDS candidate in 1987. Toh was assistant organizing-secretary of the party as well as a political secretary at the time. The two men not only knew each other well but both were also involved in the underground movement in the 1960s. The third candidate came from Parti Negara. In the new Tamin constituency, SUPP's Jawan Empaling faced PBDS's Joseph Entulu Belaun and one independent. Empaling had won the Dudong seat in 1987 but was moved into Tamin to make way for Soon Choon Teck. Moreover, delineation had changed Dudong from a Dayak seat into a Chinese-majority one.⁹⁰ With Tamin forming one-half of the Selangau parliamentary constituency which SUPP lost, in 1990, to a PBDS-backed independent, Empaling had very little chance in this 94 per cent Iban constituency.

The Election Results

Pundits who thought that BN3 would lose up to 15 seats in Dayak-majority seats, and two urban Chinese-majority seats, were surprised by its landslide win. BN3 had made a clean sweep of all but seven seats (Table 10.4). Neither PERMAS, Parti Negara⁹¹ nor the independents posed a threat to BN3. The seven opposition seats were all won by PBDS.⁹²

RESULTS IN THE SUPP CHINESE CONSTITUENCIES

The results confirmed that SUPP had again managed to hold on to the Chinese votes, as it won all 11 Chinese-dominated constituencies. A closer look suggests that SUPP actually strengthened its position in the Chinese constituencies.⁹³ Of the four constituencies located in Kuching, Batu Kawa appeared to have been least affected by the delineation. Padungan and Stampin each lost about 10,000 voters to the new

TABLE 10.4
Sarawak: Results of the 1991 State Election

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>Total</i>
BN3		49
PBB	27	
SUPP	16	
SNAP	6	
Opposition		7
PBDS	7	
DAP	0	
PERMAS	0	
Parti Negara	0	
Independents	0	0
Total		56

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

constituency of Batu Lintang (Table 10.5). Despite the loss, however, SUPP registered significant wins in both constituencies.

In Padungan, SUPP won by a majority of 4,190, or 1,771 votes less than in 1987. This represented about a 30 per cent drop. However, the majority percentage increased from 25 per cent in 1987 to 31 per cent in 1991. A fairly similar picture emerged in Pending. Even though turnout dropped by 36 per cent, the majority-percentage increased from 26 in 1987 to 33 per cent in 1991. Thus it could be argued that SUPP strengthened its position by widening the majority percentages. In Batu Kawa where delineation had scarcely altered the voter population,⁹⁴ the results were consequently similar to 1991. SUPP won the seat in 1987 with a 45 per cent majority, and slightly increased this to 47.

Of greater interest was the new constituency of Batu Lintang, where the DAP candidate was thought to have had a chance. Again, the results here were consistent with 1987. Although, surprisingly, SUPP won the seat by nearly 25,000 votes, the majority percentage was only 17 per cent, suggesting that it was a close fight. That 17 per cent was the lowest majority percentage of the four Kuching constituencies, again suggested that the electoral contest was a close finish.

In the six Rejang basin Chinese constituencies, SUPP also strengthened its hold over the Chinese vote. In Repok, where there was virtually no change in the number of voters, David Teng Lung Chi increased his majority from 915 in 1987 to 1,403. This was reflected in the majority percentage, from 7 in 1987 to 12 per cent in 1991. In nearby Meradong, where delineation had very little effect, Thomas Hii King Hiong increased his majority from 13 to 21 per cent.

In Dudong, changed by delineation from a Dayak to a Chinese-majority seat, a dramatic change can be observed. In 1987, SUPP's Jawan Empaling took the seat with only a 3 per cent majority. This time, Soon Choon Teck's majority was 46 per cent. In Bukit Assek, where delineation had a major effect, the same trend was present, although to a lesser extent. Wong Soon Kai's majority dropped by about 3,000 votes, but his hold on the seat actually tightened. In 1987, his majority percentage was only 32; in 1991 this increased to 43 per cent. In Bawang Assan, the other seat where DAP had thought it had a chance, SUPP was able to win by close to 3,000 votes, with a comfortable margin of 31 per cent. In Seduan, where delineation had little effect,⁹⁵ the results confirmed this. In 1987, SUPP won with a 46 per cent majority; in 1991 this increased slightly to 49 per cent.

In Piasau, George Chan Hong Nam not only won as expected, but by a bigger margin even with a lower voter turnout. In 1987, he had won by an 8,273 vote majority (40 per cent) based on a turnout of 20,585. In 1991, he won by 9,063 votes (49 per cent) with a lower turnout of 18,403 voters.

TABLE 10.5
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Chinese Constituencies,
1987 and 1991 State Elections

Constituency	1987			1991		
	Electorate	Voter Turnout	Margin of Victory/Loss	Electorate	Voter Turnout	Margin of Victory/Loss
Padungan	30,882	23,629 (75) ^a	5,961 (25) ^b	19,101	13,549 (71) ^a	4,190 (31) ^b
Batu Lintang		did not exist		21,291	14,072 (67)	2,434 ^c (17)
Pending (Stampin) ^d	34,937	26,747 (76)	7,066 (26)	23,873	16,893 (71)	5,537 ^c (33)
Batu Kawa	17,455	12,810 (73)	5,821 (45)	20,682	14,121 (69)	6,616 (47)
Repok	15,760	12,140 (77)	915 (7)	15,543	11,772 (76)	1,403 (12)
Meradong	12,919	9,612 (74)	1,237 (13)	12,773	9,126 (71)	1,905 (21)
Dudong ^e	13,548	9,513 (70)	311 (3)	18,619	13,209 (71)	6,031 ^c (46)
Bukit Assek (Maling)	40,648	29,298 (72)	9,381 (32)	20,459	14,884 (73)	6,353 (43)
Bawang Assan		did not exist		13,734	9,393 (68)	2,892 ^c (31)
Seduan	14,626	10,259 (70)	4,692 (46)	18,637	12,116 (68)	5,912 (49)
Piasau (Miri)	31,786	20,585 (65)	8,273 (40)	30,557	18,403 (60)	9,063 (49)

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

^aFigures in brackets in this column represent percentage voter turnout.

^bFigures in brackets in this column represent percentage gain or loss.

^cNew SUPP candidates.

^dNames in brackets are the former names.

^eThis was a Dayak seat before the delineation in 1991.

RESULTS IN THE SUPP DAYAK CONSTITUENCIES

SUPP won four of its five Dayak-majority constituencies (Table 10.6). While a direct comparison is again not possible, some general observations can be made and trends noted. In Tanjung Datu, delineation and natural increase saw more than 3,000 voters move into this former Lundu constituency. The net effect of this was to increase Dayak voters from about 48 per cent in 1987 to about 56 per cent in 1991.⁹⁶ With the combined effect of less Chinese and more Dayak voters, it is not surprising that the 1991 majority was reduced to 794, as the PBDS candidate was able to pick up most of the Dayak, as well as some Chinese, votes. More serious was the fact that SUPP's majority percentage was halved, dropping from 16 to 8 per cent.

SUPP retained Simanggang, where it had been confident of victory, but nevertheless saw a major swing against its candidate. Delineation had shifted more than 1,000 voters, or about 6 per cent of the electorate, out of the constituency. Michael Pilo's majority dropped by about 75 per cent, from 816 votes in 1987 to 197. This was reflected by the majority percentage, which dropped from 8 to less than 2 per cent. The anti-SUPP swing occurred despite the fact that the proportion of Chinese and Malay/Melanau voters had increased, with a corresponding reduction in Dayak voters.⁹⁷ Hence it can be assumed that the swing against Pilo was across the board. The PBDS Chinese candidate must have polled a portion of the non-Dayak votes, in addition to a major portion of the Dayak votes. In fact, it could be argued that had it been a straight fight between SUPP and PBDS, PBDS might have taken the Parti Negara and independent votes, and beaten SUPP.⁹⁸

In Bengoh, the increase of over 3,000 voters allowed SUPP to win with a slim majority. What is interesting is the fact that SUPP's margin of victory, 221 votes, is almost identical to the 219 votes lost by the party in 1987. Again, as in Simanggang, the split in the opposition allowed SUPP to win. The combined votes of the Parti Negara and independent candidates came to more than 400, which, if transferred to PBDS, would have easily allowed Nissom to win Bengoh. SUPP's precarious win was reflected by the less than 2 per cent majority. The increase of about 1,000 voters in Engkilili seemed to have benefited SUPP's Toh Heng San. SUPP was able to win Engkilili back from PBDS by a respectable 405 votes. With very little change in the make-up of the constituency,⁹⁹ the Dayak vote appeared to have swung from PBDS incumbent Sim Choo Nam back to SUPP. The swing against Sim was more than 1,500 votes, indicating that the Dayaks voted for SUPP. In the new Dayak Tamin constituency, SUPP lost Dayak support. As mentioned, Tamin comes under the Selangau parliamentary seat (which is divided into the Tamin and Kakus state constituencies), which was lost by SUPP to a PBDS-backed independent in 1990.

In the mixed seat of Kidurong, SUPP was able to win by 1,350 votes. However, SUPP's win, like its victory in Bengoh and Simanggang, was the result of a split in the opposition vote. The combined votes of DAP

TABLE 10.6
Comparison of SUPP Majorities in Dayak and Mixed Constituencies,
1987 and 1991 State Elections

Constituency	1987			1991		
	Electorate	Voter Turnout	Margin of Victory/Loss	Electorate	Voter Turnout	Margin of Victory/Loss
Tanjung Datu (Lundu) ^a	10,910	8,540 (78.3) ^b	1,329 ^{cd}	13,167	9,880 (77.7) ^b	794 ^c
Bengoh	15,021	11,743 (76.4)	-219 ^{cd}	18,578	13,457 (72.4)	212 ^{cd}
Simanggang (Sri Aman)	14,391	10,531 (73.2)	816 ^{cd}	13,553	9,799 (72.5)	197 ^d
Engkilili	7,382	6,041 (81.8)	-1778 ^{cd}	8,209	6,249 (76.2)	405 ^{df}
Tamin		did not exist		9,052	6,588 (72.8)	-512 ^{cd}
Kidurong		did not exist		18,363	12,947 (70.6)	1,350 ^{df}

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Note: Belaga is not shown here as former SUPP member Nyipa Barok had decided to remain with PBB permanently.

^aNames in brackets are the former names.

^bFigures in brackets in this column represent percentage voter turnout.

^cDayak SUPP candidates.

^dNew SUPP candidate.

^eFigures in brackets in this column represent percentage gain or loss.

^fChinese SUPP candidates.

and PBDS was 7,036. Had that vote not been split the SUPP candidate would have lost by 1,326 votes, a figure similar to its margin of victory.¹⁰⁰

The 1991 results reaffirmed SUPP's hold over the Chinese vote. The party won a total of 16 seats altogether: 11 Chinese constituencies, 4 Dayak, and 1 mixed. However, among the Dayak seats, SUPP could only claim to have won two (Tanjung Datu and Engkilili) on its own. It won the other two (Bengoh and Simanggang) because of the fractured opposition. The disarray in the opposition also allowed the SUPP to win the mixed seat of Kidurong.

The 1991 elections were another disappointment for DAP. The party failed to unseat any SUPP candidates, and some of its rural candidates lost their deposits. In Batu Lintang and Bawang Assan, where DAP thought it stood a chance, the results were not even marginal. SUPP won Batu Lintang with a 2,434 majority and Bawang Assan by 2,892 votes. These wide margins indicated that the Sarawak Chinese were not willing to vote for the DAP at state level, and reaffirmed the Chinese logic of 'wanting it both ways' in the political spectrum—in government and in opposition. As long as the Sarawak Chinese community held this belief, the DAP's chances of gaining a seat in the Sarawak legislative assembly were slim. DAP's defeat in the Chinese seats was echoed throughout the state, with not one DAP candidate being successful. DAP's share of the total vote actually decreased slightly, from 11.38 per cent in 1987 to 9.69 per cent in 1991.¹⁰¹ This is significant because in this election DAP fielded the largest number of candidates, 18, since its first state electoral outing in 1983. The party fielded 7 candidates in 1983, 11 in 1987. Yet, despite the increase, its total share of the vote decreased.

The only bright spot for DAP was in the urban seat of Padungan, where it put up a relatively unknown candidate from its Youth wing, Dominic Ng Kim Ho. Although Ng was a political unknown, he still gained slightly more than half the SUPP votes.¹⁰² This indicated that there was a core group of about 4,000 DAP voters in that constituency, and, had DAP put up a better known candidate, Padungan could easily have turned into a marginal seat.

Post-election Politics

When it was clear that BN3 was headed for a landslide victory, the PBDS leadership said it was willing to rejoin the Sarawak BN 'without pre-conditions'.¹⁰³ PBDS's decision to seek re-admission was a public back down, and an acknowledgement that the party could not carry 'Dayakism' until the next state election.¹⁰⁴ With the party re-admitted to the Sarawak BN, its role in championing the rights of the Dayak would be severely restricted. There were 16 Dayak candidates who successfully stood under BN3, and thus could claim to speak on behalf of the Dayak as well as PBDS.¹⁰⁵

SUPP could again claim to be the best performer in the BN3. It won 16 out of the 17 seats contested (94 per cent). PBB only managed to

win 27 of the 32 seats contested (84 per cent), while SNAP won six out of seven (85 per cent). In 1987, SUPP had won 11 out of 14 seats contested (78 per cent); PBB 14 out of 23 (60.8 per cent); SNAP only 3 out of 11 (27 per cent). So, while SUPP could claim to be the best performer, SNAP could claim to have 'risen from the dead'.¹⁰⁶

However, despite its good showing, SUPP lost its position as a political kingmaker. A simple majority in the Council Negri requires 29 seats. With PBB holding 27, it only needed an extra two seats to rule; seats that could easily come from SNAP. But for PBB to retain its two-thirds majority in the state assembly, it would require 38 seats. Hence, SUPP's 17 seats would still be needed. If and when PBDS joins the Sarawak BN, SUPP's position would be seriously eroded. PBB, SNAP, and PBDS together hold 41 seats. Thus, SUPP's future role and influence in the Taib administration depends on the relationship between the leadership of PBB and SUPP. In the short term, however, SUPP's role as one of the two senior partners in the Sarawak BN remains.

The clearest post-election winner was Abdul Taib Mahmud. In the early years of his rule, Taib Mahmud's political authority was undermined by his uncle, Abdul Rahman Yakub, a process which culminated in the 1987 Ming Court Affair.¹⁰⁷ The 1987 snap election saw the opposition doing dangerously well, with a win of 20 seats; but with BN3 winning 49 seats in 1991, Taib's political authority was now firmly established in Sarawak. PERMAS, PBB's main opposition, had been relegated to the status of a 'mosquito' party, and was unlikely to challenge Taib for some time to come. With PBDS returning to the fold, Taib once again had no opposition to face in the state assembly.

Conclusion

When the 1990 parliamentary election was called in October of that year, it generated great interest among Malaysian political observers. The excitement was due to the expectation of an opposition alliance that would be a match for the BN. However, in the Sarawak BN, the preoccupation was not with a credible opposition alliance. Rather, in Sarawak people were looking towards the election for clues on whether 'Dayakism' was still simmering below the calm political surface. With state elections due in 1992, all the political parties were watching to see what the voting pattern would be three years after 'Dayakism' had swept across the Dayak constituencies in the 1987 state elections. The electoral battle itself was basically an internal fight between PBDS and BN3.

For SUPP, there was an added dimension. It not only had to compete with dubious independents in the Dayak constituencies, it also had to face DAP in the urban, predominantly Chinese areas. The end result was that SUPP performed disastrously. It lost half of the seats it contested—two to PBDS-backed independents and another two to DAP. SUPP's disastrous performance was symbolized by the fact that its party leader and federal minister, Stephen Yong Kuet Tze, was defeated by a respectable margin in a Chinese-majority constituency.

Following Stephen Yong's defeat, it was only a matter of time before the Rejang basin SUPP assumed control of the party. The ascendancy of this group, consisting mainly of Foochows, can also be seen as a natural progression to political prominence for the Foochow dialect group. The Foochows have dominated commerce in Sarawak since the late 1970s, and it was only a matter of time before their commercial and financial power was translated, via SUPP, into political power.

Apart from the 'Dayakism' factor, there was another element to the 1991 state election—the delineation changes. Because of delineation, SUPP was fighting DAP in 11 Chinese seats, as well as one mixed and five Dayak seats. It entered the election facing challenges similar to those it had faced in the parliamentary polls a year earlier: to engage DAP in urban constituencies, and with dubious independents in the Dayak areas.

The results were perhaps better than the leadership had anticipated. Of the 17 seats it contested, SUPP won 16, thus becoming, as in the 1987 state polls, the best performer in the BN3. SUPP had managed to hold on to its main constituents, the Chinese.

1. On the 1990 elections in Peninsular Malaysia, see Khoong Kim Hoong, *Malaysia's General Election 1990: Continuity, Change and Ethnic politics*, Research Notes and Discussion paper no. 74, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991. On the impact of Semangat 46 on Malay votes, see Hari Singh, 'Political Change in Malaysia: the Role of Semangat 46', *Asian Survey*, 31, 8 (August 1991): 712–28.

2. Sarawak's last state election was held in 1987, while Sabah last went to the polls in July 1990 where the ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) won 36 out of the 48 seats. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 July 1990.

3. For details on the delineation exercise, see chapter 1.

4. Interview with Lily Yong Lee Lee, Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) *Wanita* leader. Although Yong did not mention it, it was obvious that one of the reasons *Wanita* pushed hard was because Yong was the nominated candidate from *Wanita*.

5. Interviews with four senior SUPP officials confirmed that Yong Khoon Seng had threatened to resign.

6. In interviews, both Wong Soon Kai and George Chan Hong Nam said they tried to persuade Stephen Yong Kuet Tze not to stand in Kuching. There were also those who argued that Stephen Yong was set up by the party, and his selection 'was calculated to remove him from the party leadership'. See Jawan Jayum, *The Iban Factor in Sarawak Politics*, Serdang: Universiti Pertanian Malaysia Press, 1993, p. 51. The rationale behind this conspiracy theory was that Yong was 'not stupid enough' to remove himself from a 'safe seat'. In an interview with a Central Working Committee (CWC) member, the author was told that Yong was not set up by the leadership but by 'his own people' who 'fed him wrong information that he stood a good chance in Kuching'. Stephen Yong himself said in an interview that he said he was asked to reconsider his decision by the SUPP leadership, but went ahead as 'politics is about taking risks and principles'.

7. See Barisan Nasional (BN)'s 1990 manifesto.

8. See Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech in the *New Straits Times*, 13 October 1990.

9. See Sim Kwang Yang's description of the election as the 'battle of life and death of mother-tongue education', *Berita Petang Sarawak*, 11 October 1990; see also *International Times*, 16 October 1990.

10. See 'Yong: SUPP will leave BN if the new Education Act goes against Election Manifesto', *International Times*, 20 October 1990.

11. *Star*, 13 October 1990.
12. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO)-controlled Malay-language newspaper *Utusan Malaysia* ran a front page picture of Tengku Razaleigh using a Kadazan headgear with a design that resembled a Christian cross, suggesting that he had sold out his religion and race. The same item was broadcast repeatedly on government-owned television stations.
13. Khoong, *Malaysia's General Election 1990*, p. 24.
14. See 'Ling Sie Ming: PBS's Decision is to Save Democracy', *Malaysian Daily News*, 17 October 1990.
15. See SUPP statement on the PBS's pull out in *Chinese Daily News*, 18 October 1990; *International Times*, 18 October 1990.
16. In an interview, a SUPP *Wanita* leader, who was in charge of the Padungan area voters said the feedback she got from the residents was 'negative' towards Stephen Yong. She also alleged that Yong's men did not trust her and had sent in their own 'foot soldiers' to check that she had campaigned for Yong in the Padungan area. She further added that of the three Kuching branches, only one supported Yong wholeheartedly while the other two were less than enthusiastic. In interviews, two members of the SUPP Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency election committee confirmed that co-ordination was poor, hampered by what one described as 'old warriors in the party'. The term 'old warriors' generally referred to SUPP members who were around in the 1960s, when SUPP was in the opposition. Many of these 'old warriors' were also connected to the underground movement and held a grudge against Stephen Yong for 'selling-out' in 1970 and not doing enough to secure their release or for helping those who were released from detention.
17. Interview with an SUPP official who was a co-ordinator on Tieu Sung Seng's campaign team.
18. See *Hua Daily News*, 31 October 1990.
19. Lau's family is one of Sibü's most prominent business families, with interests in the timber industry, merchandising, and newspaper publishing. The Lau family-controlled See Hua Group publishes the Chinese *See Hua Daily News* and its English-daily stablemate *Borneo Post*.
20. As the Parti Buruh Sarawak (PLUS) candidate gained only 162 out of the 22,208 votes cast, he lost his election deposit. Incidentally, this was Tang Lung Chiew's second attempt. In 1986 he stood as a PLUS candidate in the Sibü parliamentary constituency and also lost his deposit.
21. See previous chapter.
22. To be fair, there were also allegations that Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN3) also 'planted' independents in official Barisan Nasional (BN)-Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) constituencies. For example, Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) was accused of backing an independent in Kanowit, the seat held by Leo Moggie, PBDS president. Nevertheless, Moggie won with a handsome majority. See *Borneo Post*, 16 October 1990. A Sarawak National Party (SNAP) vice-president also resigned just before nomination day to contest against the PBDS candidate in Julau. He lost and was subsequently readmitted to SNAP.
23. Interview with Sim Kwang Yang. According to Sim, DAP did not put up a candidate in Serian as the grass-roots survey showed that Richard Riot would win on his own. In an interview, an SUPP state assemblyman also echoed the same opinion.
24. A part of which became the Selangau constituency.
25. The PBS assertion that Kuala Lumpur was the 'new colonial master' was a feeling shared by many in Sarawak.
26. In fact there were rumours to the effect that PBDS had agreed to pull out with PBS. Senior PBDS leaders interviewed by the author denied this suggestion, and said they were always behind the BN, for they could not afford to 'cut the link with Dr Mahathir'. See also *New Straits Times*, 17 October 1990 and *Straits Times*, 13 October 1990. The idea of pulling out was an attractive one. The parliamentary seats of Sabah and Sarawak (51 altogether) were important in helping the BN regain its two-thirds majority, given that the opposition, under Semangat 46, could deny the BN a clean sweep in Peninsular Malaysia. Thus, if Sabah and Sarawak were to pull out of the BN, there was the likelihood

that they could play the role of political kingmaker between Semangat 46 and the BN. See *Business Times* (Singapore), 12 October 1990.

27. It is interesting to note that despite the high profile of both candidates, one the SUPP chairman and the other Democratic Action Party (DAP)'s best-known politician in Sarawak, voter turnout actually dropped. In 1986, turnout was 45,544 (72.81 per cent) while in 1990 it was 45,227 (70.45 per cent). This could be attributed to what has been argued already, that (a) the voters in Kuching were going to vote DAP regardless of the SUPP candidate; and (b) Yong may not have received the full support of the different SUPP branches and factions in Kuching.

28. In 1986 there were 31,553 voters in Padawan constituency. In 1990, this had increased by 7,707 to 39,260. Turnout in 1986 was 22,149 (70.20 per cent) and in 1990 it was 26,262 (68.52 per cent).

29. The ethnic composition (in percentage) of the voters in Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency in 1990 was:

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Malays/Melanaus	5
Chinese	91
Dayaks	4
Total	100

30. The four independent MPs: Richard Riot (Serian), Joseph Mauh (Selangau), Harrison Ngau Laing (Baram), and Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang), were later admitted to the PBDS but not into the BN. BN rules restrict entry of elected representatives who win their seats against the official BN candidate. Moreover, the Sarawak BN had put up a protest to BN president Dr Mahathir on the admission of these four. See *Borneo Post*, 26, 28 October 1990; 1 November 1990. Jayum argues that the Dayaks made a mistake in supporting these PBDS independents. Not being official BN Members of Parliament (MPs), they could not access government funds for development purposes, and therefore could not help their constituents. See Jayum, *The Iban Factor in Sarawak Politics*, p. 55.

31. Interviews with several SUPP assemblymen from both the Kuching and Sibü factions.

32. In an interview with a Kuching SUPP assemblyman, Chong Kiun Kong was also described as lacking the 'mettle' to be leader.

33. Song Swee Guan's only public office experience was as the mayor of Kuching.

34. SUPP Dayak state assemblymen and MPs were not counted because they were marginalized on this issue of leadership. The choice was always going to be a Chinese. The Dayak state assemblymen and MPs were only consulted.

35. In interviews, it was said that one Kuching side state assemblyman had backed Wong Soon Kai in the leadership stakes.

36. In interviews with senior SUPP leaders from Kuching side, they often enviously mentioned that the Foochows easily command half of the Chinese share in Sarawak's economy. While there are no figures to prove this assertion, several Foochow SUPP leaders from the Rejang basin side also proudly reiterated this figure. For a discussion on why the Foochows have been able to dominate commercial activities, see Michael B. Leigh, 'The Spread of Foochow Commercial Power Before the New Economic Policy', in R. A. Cramb and R. H. W. Reece (eds.), *Development in Sarawak*, Monash Paper on Southeast Asia no. 17, Melbourne: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1987, pp. 170-90.

37. Text of speech by party chairman Stephen Yong on 1 December 1990 at SUPP's 15th Delegates Conference in Kuching. For press coverage, see *International Times*, 2 December 1990; *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 December 1990.

38. SUPP records. See also *International Times*, 3 December 1990.

39. In a speech before SUPP Youth and *Wanita* sections, just a day before the conference, Stephen Yong called on the delegates to refrain from infighting over positions as 'our

fight is not against ourselves but against the opposition parties'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 December 1990.

40. *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 December 1990. It was obvious that Patrick Embol did not stand a chance as he was an indigenou. In interviews, the author was told that his nomination was meant as a signal that the Foochows should not expect a walk-over.

41. Figures given were calculated after discussions with knowledgeable persons.

42. A detailed discussion on the delineation exercise can be found in Chapter 1.

43. Salleh Jafaruddin won as a PERMAS candidate in 1987 in the Subis constituency. In 1991, he lost when he moved and stood in the Belawai constituency.

44. *New Straits Times*, 29 September 1991.

45. SNAP took the highly unusual step of publishing the party's submission to the Sarawak BN on seat allocation in its party organ, although it was two years after the election. See *Sarawak Digest*, March 1993.

46. Kidurong was also claimed by SNAP. See *Sarawak Digest*, March 1993.

47. See 'SNAP Unhappy with Seat Allocation', *Borneo Post*, 11 September 1991. During the campaign, the Vice-President of SNAP, Dr Patau Rubis, a Bidayuh, said that because he raised the seat allocation issue, a component party of BN3, presumably PBB, had put up an independent to fight him in the polls. Nevertheless, he won by a convincing margin.

48. The 'loan' candidate in question was Donald Lawan, a former SNAP member who 'ran away' to PBB. See *Borneo Post*, 8, 12 September 1991.

49. This was confirmed, in interviews, by two senior SUPP leaders who were part of the selection committee. Chan Seng Khai, however, denied this when interviewed, insisting that he never encountered any difficulties in the selection process.

50. Chan Seng Khai's father supported his candidature for Batu Lintang and even campaigned for him. This was a reversal of his father's attitude in 1986. See Chapter 9.

51. Interviews with senior SUPP officials. The Bintulu branch wanted Nicholas Tang Eng Hui instead of Michael Sim. See also *Borneo Post*, 5 September 1991; *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 September 1991.

52. The exception, as mentioned, was Salleh Jafaruddin.

53. See 'No Show Candidates: Negara to Investigate after Polls', *Borneo Post*, 18 September 1991. According to the party's Secretary-General, the nine had each been given a RM3,000 election deposit. There was also speculation that Parti Negara Rakyat Sarawak (Parti Negara) received secret financial backing from PBS, the opposition party that ruled the neighbouring state of Sabah. See *Borneo Post*, 5 September 1991; *New Straits Times*, 16 November 1991. Parti Negara President, Nelson Kundau Ngareng, denied that he received any money from Sabah, but refused to disclose his sources of finance. A newspaper editor told the author that the money for Parti Negara actually came from PBB via a middle man based in Sabah. PBB's alleged motive was to split the vote. There is no evidence to substantiate this claim.

54. In the end, however, this did not happen, as Abdul Taib Mahmud refused Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah entry into Sarawak. See *Borneo Post*, 24 September 1991.

55. Campaign leaflet, 'Why you should support SUPP in this state election'.

56. See the open letter by Sim Kwang Yang in *Borneo Post*, 26 September 1991. Sim ended the open letter with 'Give the DAP a chance'.

57. See Sim's letter 'No DAP trick in SUPP's dead end', *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 September 1991.

58. In 1983, it fielded 7 candidates and in 1987 it had 11.

59. The 'Go Rural' strategy was based on the DAP's belief that it had to win the support of the rural people, mainly Dayaks, to rid itself of the Chinese label. It would also blunt SUPP's charge that DAP is a *semananjung* party.

60. Interview with Sim Kwang Yang.

61. SUPP records.

62. The bulk of these Chinese were civil servants who opposed the government because they felt that its pro-*bumiputera* policy had hindered their promotion and opportunities for advancement, such as overseas study. Chan Seng Khai said at the start of his campaign that almost 80 per cent of the Chinese civil servants were against him. See Chan's special

appeal to Chinese civil servants in *Lintang Express* 9/91, Newsletter of the SUPP Batu Lintang Branch.

63. See 'Multi-million projects lined up for Batu Lintang', *Borneo Post*, 22 September 1991; '\$60m grant for Batu Lintang', *Borneo Post*, 26 September 1991. Voters living in the Batu Lintang constituency had long complained of poor drainage which led to small floods and low water pressure. One SUPP official was quoted as saying, 'You can reach for the SKY or you can be down-to-earth', meaning that at local level only SUPP could deliver services and development. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 September 1991.

64. One of the SUPP billboards in the Batu Lintang constituency said 'With DAP in Parliament, give State votes to SUPP'.

65. In 1987, Padungan had 30,882 voters. In 1991 this was reduced to 19,101.

66. Interview with Song Swee Guan. See also 'Padungan is no "sure win"', says Lily Yong again', *Borneo Post*, 22 September 1991.

67. Dominic Ng Kim Ho was not DAP's first choice for Padungan. The party wanted to field a Dayak candidate with a doctoral degree. However, for two reasons, this did not happen. First, this Dayak did not want to stand in Kuching as he was from the Bau area. Second, DAP felt that a non-Chinese candidate would find it impossible to win Padungan. See 'DAP Undecided Who to Field in Padungan', *Borneo Post*, 7 September 1991; 'DAP's Ng spends too much time on introducing himself', *Borneo Post*, 24 September 1991.

68. Sim Kheng Hui was detained for four years, from 1968 to 1972, for involvement in the underground. He is from the Chinese-educated wing of the SUPP, holding a degree from Nanyang University in Singapore. Interview with Sim Kheng Hui. See also campaign newsletter 'Voice of Pending'.

69. Chong Ju Siaw, a former DAP member, worked as a translator in *See Hua Daily News*. His candidature was seen as such a nuisance that even his employer refused him time off for campaigning. He received only 100 votes and lost his deposit.

70. See previous chapter on the 1987 polls.

71. See previous chapter for details.

72. See 'No to Meradong means votes in Repok: DAP', *Borneo Post*, 19 September 1991. DAP and PBDS met each other in two SUPP seats: Dudong and Kidurong.

73. In interviews with PBDS and DAP officials, both said the idea of not splitting the opposition vote among DAP and PBDS, by putting up only one candidate from either party in one constituency, was seriously debated by the leadership of both parties. The DAP leadership was very much in favour of this arrangement. However, PBDS could not proceed when the BN chairman, Mahathir, made it clear that 'under no circumstances was the PBDS to co-operate with DAP'.

74. See SUPP leaflet 'Comparison between YB David Teng (SUPP) and Chong Siew Chung (DAP) for the last five (5) years (1987-1991)'. The DAP candidate's achievements totalled zero!

75. Ting Ling Kiew was formerly a SNAP MP for the Bintulu constituency (1974-90), before defecting to PBDS.

76. According to Chiew Chiu Sing, he left SUPP because the party leaders were not interested in helping the Bintulu residents, especially the Chinese farmers. See Chiew's letter 'DAP Secretary: Why I join the opposition', *Sarawak Tribune*, 17 August, 1992; and interview with Chiew in *Sarawak DAP's 15th Anniversary Magazine*, Kuching: DAP, 1993. According to Wong Soon Kai, Chiew left the party because he was impatient. Chiew had wanted to be an SUPP candidate in 1987, but the party refused and promised him instead that he would be the Kidurong candidate once the new seat was created. Chiew left the party soon afterwards and stood as the DAP candidate for the Bintulu parliamentary constituency in 1990. He lost. See Wong Soon Kai's account of Chiew's departure from SUPP in *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 August 1992.

77. Interview with PBDS Senior Vice-President.

78. The Chinese Affairs Consultative Committee (CACC) was headed by Sim Choo Nam, who won the 1987 state election in the Engkilili constituency. Sim, who speaks Iban fluently, won the Engkilili seat in 1983 as an SUPP-backed independent candidate. In the 1991 election, he lost to a Chinese SUPP candidate in this predominantly Iban constituency.

79. The idea for the annual grant probably came from the PBS who had previously used it successfully to entice the Chinese voters in Sabah.

80. The PBDS's constitution was changed in March 1993 to allow non-Dayaks to join.

81. See 'Open letter to associate members of PBDS' issued by SUPP Sibiu branch.

82. For example, SUPP election publicity printed a leaflet entitled 'Distinguish the real racist appearance of PBDS'.

83. For example, headlines such as 'PBDS stirring up racial issues', *Borneo Post*, 26 September 1991, and 'CACC won't help shed PBDS's racial tag', *Borneo Post*, 9 September 1991. Other papers ran articles such as 'Sign of cracks in PBDS'. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 24 September 1991.

84. See *New Straits Times*, 14 September 1991. The PBDS committed the same mistake in 1987 when Leo Moggie did not stand for election. In an interview with the PBDS senior vice-president, he said the party agreed that Moggie should not stand as his ties with Mahathir at federal level were too important to be severed. The author took this to mean that Mahathir had refused Moggie's request to stand.

85. *New Straits Times*, 14 September 1991; *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 September 1991.

86. Ngu Piew Seng was the deputy Youth leader of SUPP's Simanggang branch. He was also a Sri Aman district councillor, a post given to SUPP nominees. Hollis Tini, SUPP's former state assemblyman for Sri Aman who defected to PBDS in 1987, supported SUPP's Michael Pilo in 1991.

87. The ethnic composition (in percentage) of voters in the Simanggang and Tanjung Datu constituencies was:

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Simanggang</i>		<i>Tanjung Datu</i>	
	1987	1991	1987	1991
Malays/Melanaus	19	24	35	30
Chinese	21	23	17	14
Dayaks	60	53	48	56
Total	100	100	100	100

88. All four lost their election deposits.

89. In the 1987 election, William Tanyuh ak Nub was not a candidate while Wilfred Nissom lost as a PBDS candidate in Tasik Biru. Bengoh was won by PBDS's Sora ak Rusah in 1987. However, Sora later defected to the PBB.

90. The ethnic composition (in percentage) of voters in the Dudong constituency was:

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	1987	1991
Malays/Melanaus	3	7
Chinese	16	65
Dayaks	81	28
Total	100	100

91. In fact the majority of Parti Negara candidates lost their election deposits.

92. They were: Batang Air, Bukit Begunan (formerly Lingga), Pelagus, Tamin, Baleh, Kakus, and Ngemah. All these are Iban-majority constituencies. Surprisingly, senior PBDS leaders and founding members like Jawie Masing (Pakan) and Edmund Langgu (Krian) were both defeated by political unknowns from BN3. However, PBDS Deputy President Daniel Tajem won back the seat of Bukit Begunan, which he had lost in 1987. Two PBDS candidates who were elected in 1990, environmentalist Harrison Ngau and former teacher Richard Riot, lost this time round. The only consistent performer among the PBDS candidates was party Senior Vice-President James Masing, who increased his majority in his

interior constituency of Baleh; the only successful Chinese candidate was in Pelagus. The candidate, a Chinese businessman, probably won because of the unpopularity of the PBB candidate. The PBB candidate, Alexander Linggi, is the grandson of Jugah, who hails from the constituency and was the founder of Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka). Pesaka was an Iban-based party that merged with Parti Bumiputera in 1973 to form PBB. Many Ibans felt that the Jugah family had neglected the region in recent years. See Peter Searle, *Politics in Sarawak, 1970–1976: the Iban Perspective*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 180; and James Chin. ‘The 1991 Sarawak Election: Continuity of Ethnic Politics’, *South East Asia Research*, 4, 1 (1996): 21–38.

93. A direct comparison of results in some constituencies with the 1987 election results is not possible because of the delineation exercise. However, some observations can still be made by looking at the majority percentage.

94. Between 1987 and 1991, registered voters increased by 1,311, suggesting that the increase could be due to natural increase as much as delineation.

95. Registered voters increased by 4,011 between 1987 and 1991, suggesting that, like Batu Kawa, the increase could be attributed to natural increase as much as delineation.

96. See n. 87 above.

97. The ethnic breakdown (in percentage) of voters in the Simanggang (Sri Aman) constituency was:

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	1987	1991
Malays/Melanaus	19	24
Chinese	21	23
Dayaks	60	53
Total	100	100

98. The Simanggang results were:

Michael Pilo ak Gangga (BN-SUPP)	4,818
Ngu Piew Seng (PBDS)	4,621
Haji Azmi Haji Lamat (independent)	165
Simong anak Naga (independent)	62
Banic ak Laba (Parti Negara)	39

99. The ethnic composition (in percentage) of voters in the Engkilili constituency was:

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	1987	1991
Malays/Melanaus	2	2
Chinese	14	13
Dayaks	84	85
Total	100	100

100. The results of the Kidurong mixed-constituency were:

Michael Sim (BN-SUPP)	5,710
Ting Ling Kiew (PBDS)	4,360
Chiew Chiu Sing (DAP)	2,676
Menjang ak Mawar (Parti Negara)	94

101. In the 1983 state election, DAP received 31,246 votes (8.66 per cent of the total votes cast), in 1987, 51,341 votes (11.38 per cent) and in 1991 it was 46,549 votes (9.69 per cent).

102. Song Swee Guan received 8,836 votes while Dominic Ng Kim Ho received 4,646.

103. See *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 September 1991; *New Straits Times*, 30 September 1991.

104. The next state election has to be held before October 1996. The 1991 election left PBDS holding seven seats, the same as before the election. Ironically, PBDS also won just

seven seats in its first electoral outing in the 1983 state election. Although PBDS failed to win all the Dayak majority constituencies, it was able to win in the Iban constituencies. Moreover, PBDS actually steadily increased its share of the total votes at every state election, from 9.34 per cent in 1983 to 17.63 per cent in 1987, and to 21.48 per cent in 1991. The 1991 polls also put an end, at least temporarily, to PBDS's attempt to use 'Dayakism'.

105. BN3 has accepted 'in principle' PBDS's readmission to the Sarawak BN. Initially, SNAP objected to PBDS's readmission, but Taib was keen to take PBDS back. Taib cannot afford to ignore a party that has the support of slightly more than 20 per cent of Sarawak voters, and perhaps more importantly, the Prime Minister has made it clear that all federal BN component parties must also be members of the BN at state level. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 October 1991, p. 19. For a detailed discussion on PBDS's impact on Sarawak politics, see James Chin, 'PBDS and Ethnicity in Sarawak Politics', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 26, 4 (1996): 512-26.

106. SNAP, with six seats, is still regarded as the junior partner as it has only five legislators to PBB's 27 and SUPP's 16. Unless SNAP is able to increase its number of state assemblymen in the next election, it will not be able to regain its past reputation. However, this is extremely unlikely, as PBB and SUPP will not give up any of their constituencies to SNAP. Moreover, with PBDS back in the Sarawak BN, there will be no vacant constituencies. In the 1960s, SNAP was the strongest party and formed the first state government after joining Malaysia in 1963. It came close to toppling the Sarawak BN by winning 18 seats in the 1974 state election.

107. See Chapter 9.

The Sarawak United People's Party: The Political Organization

The Indigenous Wing

THROUGHOUT this study, the emphasis has been on the Chinese within the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP).¹ The reason for this is that, despite its multiracial platform, the SUPP is primarily a political party controlled by the Chinese and espousing interests and issues affecting this ethnic group.² This can be seen clearly from its much-used slogan 'Chinese participation in government' and the fact that more than three-quarters of its seats are Chinese-majority constituencies.

However, the party had always maintained an unofficial indigenous wing³ consisting mainly of its Dayak supporters and elected representatives. In the early days, the indigenous wing was more prominent. During the party's formative years, there were almost as many indigenous members as Chinese members in the party.⁴ Today, the indigenous membership is roughly less than one-quarter of the total party membership. The indigenous wing began to deteriorate after the formation of Dayak-based parties such as the Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) and the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), and the crack-down on indigenous membership by the authorities from the early 1960s. The 1983 formation of PBDS has also meant that Dayak membership has diminished further.

The Dayak wing also suffered a severe set-back when SUPP joined the coalition government in 1970. In the 1970 election, SUPP contested in 23 Dayak-majority constituencies but many of these seats were given up to PBB in the 1974 elections. In the 1974 election, SUPP contested in only eight Dayak constituencies, a decrease of 15 seats. The loss of these 15 seats meant that even if potential Dayaks were identified, there was simply not enough Dayak seats to go around. When SNAP joined the coalition, SUPP Dayak seats again decreased, from eight to just five.

The increasing insignificance of the indigenous wing is best indicated by looking at the number of SUPP Dayak elected representatives over past elections. Even during the 1960s when Dayak membership was close to half of overall membership, Dayaks never had more than one-quarter of the party's elected representatives in the State Legislative Assembly. The highest percentage achieved by the Dayak wing was in

TABLE 11.1
Comparison of Number of SUPP Dayak and Chinese
Council Negri Members, 1963–1991

<i>Election</i>	<i>Dayaks</i>		<i>Chinese</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1963	1	27	5	83
1970	2	17	10	83
1974	3	25	9	75
1979	1	8	11	92
1983	3	23	10	77
1987	3	25	9	75
1991	3	19	13	81

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

1963 when its only member, out of 5 SUPP Council Negri members, accounted for 27 per cent (Table 11.1). In real terms, the SUPP had never had more than three Dayak Council Negri members at any election. In the parliamentary seats, the situation is quite similar, although the percentage is slightly higher. The Dayak had up to 40 percentage share of SUPP Dewan Rakyat seats after the parliamentary elections in 1970 and 1982. However, since 1986, no Dayak has been successfully elected to the Dewan Rakyat under the Barisan Nasional (BN)–SUPP ticket. In other words, the Dayak share is zero (Table 11.2).

The fact that SUPP did not allocate ‘safe’ seats to its indigenous candidates was one of the reasons why it was unable to broaden and consolidate its support among the Dayaks. Because so few of its elected representatives were from the Dayak community, this has exposed SUPP to charges of neglecting its indigenous supporters, and of using the indigenous members as ‘window dressing’ for its multiracialism. This was the accusation made by the senior Iban leader in the party,

TABLE 11.2
Comparison of Number of SUPP Dayak and Chinese
Dewan Rakyat Members, 1963–1990

<i>Election</i>	<i>Dayaks</i>		<i>Chinese</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1963	1	33	2	67
1970	2	40	3	60
1974	2	29	5	71
1978	2	33	4	67
1982	2	40	3	60
1986	0	0	4	100
1990	0	0	5	100

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission.

Charles Linang, when he quit in 1965.⁵ Other important SUPP indigenous leaders who have left since then, like Jonathan Bangau and Hollis Tini, all made the same accusations. These charges have been used ever since by SUPP opponents on its Dayak supporters.

Another reason why SUPP's multiracial image has had a limited impact on the Dayak population is that while all the Chinese-majority constituencies always have Chinese candidates, this rule does not apply to SUPP Dayak-majority constituencies. Instead, SUPP has always had a mixture of Chinese and indigenous candidates in its Dayak-majority seats, thus opening itself up to charges that its concept of multiracialism was being practised in one direction only.

Notwithstanding the withering away of Dayak members and SUPP Dayak constituencies, the biggest problem facing the SUPP's Dayak wing since the 1970s is the quality of its Dayak members. Strictly speaking, the SUPP Constitution does not prohibit a Dayak from holding the top party office of chairman, but in reality it would take an exceptional event or Dayak individual to gather enough votes from the predominantly Chinese delegates to be elected to this post. As a consequence, many capable and potential Dayak political aspirants have joined Dayak-based political parties instead of SUPP. This has in turn reinforced the belief that no Dayak will ever get to the top of the SUPP hierarchy. Those Dayaks who do join SUPP are seen by other indigenous as opportunists. The low quality of indigenous membership is recognized by the leadership. The party leader has openly stated that, 'our support from the Dayak community is still not solid. The quality of our Dayak members and leaders should also be reinforced. Our past efforts in this direction has not been very successful. We need more and better Dayak leaders who will ask "how much can I do for the Party and people", rather than "how much can the Party do for me".'⁶

In this no-win situation, the SUPP leadership has adopted an unofficial positive-discrimination policy of appointing Dayaks to all levels of the party hierarchy. Even then, this does not help the party build up a strong group of potential Dayak leaders as the party does not have a good pool of qualified indigenous members to begin with. From the 1980s onward, Dayak leaders have been recruited directly into the leadership from outside.⁷

The other problem with Dayak membership is that SUPP traditionally does not control many Dayak constituencies. Apart from a brief period after the 1963 election when Dayak SUPP councillors were elected in quite a number of Dayak-majority district councils, from the 1970s onward the party has never controlled more than half-a-dozen Dayak constituencies. The bulk of the Dayak-majority constituencies are won and controlled by Parti Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) or SNAP, and in the 1980s by Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) as well. The party that wins a Dayak-majority constituency is usually the most prominent party in the area and could easily recruit Dayak members as it could provide local populace patronage through its local state assemblyman. Besides normal representation and liaison with government machinery, the state

assemblyman could also access the minor-rural-project fund and appoint the party supporters to positions such as *ketua masyarakat* (village headmen). Hence, with SUPP controlling few Dayak areas, it cannot significantly expand its Dayak membership. SUPP branches in non-SUPP constituencies also often suffer discrimination which hamper the growth of Dayak membership in these constituencies. For example, one SUPP Dayak Central Committee member from a branch situated in a non-SUPP constituency complained that, 'the discrimination against SUPP Iban members being appointed Community leaders still exists. This has profound effects on the morale of our party members. Most of these appointments go to PBB members.'⁸

Another Dayak Central Committee member, also from a non-SUPP constituency, echoed the same sentiment: 'Appointments of SUPP members as community leaders in rural areas will definitely enhance the image of and confidence in SUPP. May party leaders pay special attention to the Government's discrimination against appointing SUPP members.'⁹

Leadership and Factions

The SUPP is basically a cadre party, in which power is concentrated in the leadership and members do not participate in the policy making. Once a decision is taken, instructions are passed from the top down. Because of the vertical lines of control, many branch leaders have little or no contact with other branches and have to depend on the leadership for guidance. This also makes the leadership of the party quite a secure position as the branches interact with the party's Central Committee (CC) through a patron-client relationship based on reciprocal political and economic ties. Control of the party is vested in the Central Committee, made up of members selected at the Delegates Conference. From these among the members of this group, a smaller number is elected to the Central Working Committee (CWC) which manages the daily workings of the party. Although, theoretically, the CC is the highest decision-making body in the party, in practice it is the CWC which often makes fundamental decisions regarding party policies and direction.

The main reason for the CC's weakness lies in the number of its members as well as their geographical locations. While the number of CC members in the early years numbered more than 60, membership now number over 100. With almost every branch represented by at least one CC member, this makes meetings of the CC cumbersome. In the early years when the transport infrastructure in Sarawak was still undeveloped, CC members from the rural branches had difficulties travelling to Kuching for a meeting. For many years, the CC only met once a year. Hence, any political crisis which needed immediate attention and decision was dealt with by the CWC.

At the local branch level, the highest post is branch chairman. However, the secretary of the branch is often more influential than the

branch chairman as he deals with the day-to-day administration of the party as well as handling all official communications with party headquarters.¹⁰ The branch secretary is also responsible for a branch's election and is often a key player on the candidate's election committee. In general, at the branch level, the branch secretary is given a good deal of autonomy in all his dealings within general rules set by the party headquarters in Kuching.

In an influential essay written on Malayan Chinese politics in the early 1970s, Wang Gungwu argued that the basic split in Malayan Chinese politics is between the Chinese-educated and English-educated leaders.¹¹ This split is evident too in the SUPP which was formed with a combination of English-educated leaders and Chinese-educated members. While this split was serious in the 1960s when the Chinese-educated left wing was more influential, by the mid-1970s power had shifted noticeably to the English-educated group. Since the mid-1980s, the English-educated group has been very much in control and entrenched.¹² Given that government business and elite political negotiations with other parties are all done in English, this situation is perhaps inevitable.

However, the demarcation between the English-educated and Chinese-educated is not clear-cut and straightforward. Although most of the leadership received their tertiary education in English (hence English-educated), most also have a rudimentary command of Chinese (Mandarin). Most of this bilingual group had Chinese education up to primary level, before switching over to English-medium schools at the secondary and tertiary levels.¹³

After the introduction of the New Education Policy in the 1970s in Sarawak, most of the second echelon leaders are now also conversant in Bahasa Malaysia. Although the differences between the Chinese-educated and English-educated have narrowed since the mid-1970s, they still exist. The Chinese-educated group regards the English-educated group as 'half-Chinese', referring to them as 'bananas' (yellow skin but white mentality). On the other hand, the English-educated group considers the Chinese-educated group as too overtly and unnecessarily chauvinistic about its Chineseness and incapable of leading SUPP in multi-party negotiations crucial within coalition politics in the BN. A curious phenomenon has also emerged in which an English-educated leader will actually do more than his Chinese-educated counterpart in promoting the *causa sine qua non* of the Chinese-educated group, that is, the continued existence of the independent Chinese schools in Sarawak. Almost all English-educated leaders in SUPP support without question the existence of the Chinese schools regardless of his or her own personal beliefs.¹⁴ Not backing the most important symbol of Chinese culture (its language) can easily lead to charges that one is 'less' Chinese.

Closely related to the Chinese-educated and English-educated dichotomy is the dominance of professionals in the upper echelon of the SUPP. Traditional Chinese leadership was vested in the mercantile community or those with wealth, not in the professionals. Although

SUPP has always had links with Chinese business élites,¹⁵ businessmen do not seem to dominate the upper echelons. In the early years, there was a good balance between businessmen and professionals in the leadership. In the 1960s and 1970s, the two most important posts were in the hands of Ong Kee Hui (an agriculturalist, banker, and member of a prominent mercantile family) and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (lawyer and non-mercantile family background). However, since the early 1980s, leadership has clearly shifted to the professional group. When Stephen Yong took over the chairmanship in 1982, Wong Soon Kai (a medical doctor) assumed the Secretary-General's post. When Wong assumed the chairman's post in 1990, another medical doctor, George Chan Hong Nam, took over the Secretary-General's post. Moreover, the composition of the CWC since the mid-1980s has shown a larger number of professionals than non-professionals. The bias towards professionals from the 1980s is also reflected in the party's elected representatives. In 1970, of 17 SUPP elected representatives, only two were professionals (11.76 per cent).¹⁶ In 1979, 5 out of 12 were professionals (41.67 per cent). By 1987, 8 out of 11 SUPP state assemblymen were professionals (72.72 per cent). In 1991, this figure was even more striking—of the 16 successful candidates, 13 were professionals (81.25 per cent).¹⁷

The preference for professionals at the top echelon has caused some resentment among ordinary party cadres who feel they do not stand a chance of selection if they do not hold a tertiary qualification, especially a Western one. The other cause of general discontent among the ordinary cadres is the way the leadership has been able to promote people with little experience in the party. The most quoted example is Wong Soon Kai, who was named candidate less than a year after he joined SUPP in 1973. Among those who were selected as candidates almost immediately after joining SUPP were Ramsay Noel Jitam, Song Swee Guan, Michael Pilo ak Gangga, and Michael Sim. At various times, the party leadership has also imposed outside candidates over locally selected candidates. For example, the candidate for Kidurong in the 1991 election was imposed on the branch and the candidate for Serian in the 1986 parliamentary election was also imposed by the leadership.¹⁸

The other schism within the party is drawn along regions and dialects. Both are inter-related. For the first decade after its formation, the SUPP was dominated by leaders from the Kuching region. Within the Kuching side, power was concentrated in a small group made up of the Hakka, Chao-ann, and Hokkien dialect groups. This caused resentment from the Rejang based SUPP, who were mostly made up of the Foochow dialect group. There were two reasons why the Kuching side was able to dominate the SUPP in the early years. First, the Kuching side had prominent and influential leaders like Ong Kee Hui, Stephen Yong, and Chan Siaw Hee. Second, many prominent Foochow leaders at the time were not in SUPP; instead they joined the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) whose president was an influential Foochow business tycoon, Lim Beng Siew. The situation changed when SCA was dissolved in

1973 and the Foochows began moving into SUPP.¹⁹ Moreover, the prominent SUPP leaders in Sibü during the 1960s and early 1970s like Khoo Peng Loong, Wee Hoe Soon, and Lai Han Yu were all non-Foochows.

Since the late 1970s, power has been more evenly distributed among the regional and dialect groups. During this period, the Rejang based Foochows made some inroads and this process accelerated during the 1980s when Wong Soon Kai took over as Secretary-General in 1982. The Miri side, which united under George Chan Hong Nam in the early 1980s, was also able to exert some influence.

The redistribution of power was unavoidable. The growth and expansion of the Foochow businesses beyond Sibü into Kuching, Miri, and the newly created urban areas like Bintulu, meant that the power structure in SUPP had to change to accommodate this new financial muscle. The rise of the Rejang based Foochow has naturally caused some resentment from the Kuching side. The ascendancy of the Rejang based SUPP culminated in Wong Soon Kai's installation as the chairman of SUPP in 1990.²⁰ Both regionalism and factionalism along dialect lines are openly recognized by the leadership. Wong Soon Kai had stated that 'SUPP has been called many names in the past, such as that it is the Party of the Kuching Divisions or of the Sibü Divisions or of a particular dialect group. Much has been said about the undesirability of factionalism within a Party.'²¹

This situation is unlikely to be resolved soon. Regionalism is a natural phenomenon while the various dialect groups are still too clannish to allow this to go away. Moreover, both these issues have been used to consolidate support as well as engender solidarity within the various party factions based along these lines. In sum, the party leadership sees both regionalism and dialect groupings as natural occurrences which cannot be solved, only managed.²²

While the existence of factions divided by dialects, regions, education, and professions is well known, it does not mean a formal factional structure exists. In fact, members of internal factions are highly flexible and the strength of a faction depends on a combination of the above mentioned factors along with the strength of the faction leader. The ability of the faction leader to create a patron-client network among individual members of the faction holds the key to faction cohesiveness and discipline. Even then, members of factions are still relatively free to interact with members of other factions or to side with opposite factions on specific issues. For example, the nomination of a candidate for the Bandar Kuching parliamentary seat in 1986 and 1990 saw the Kuching side split into various factions, each trying to promote its own nomination. Contrast this with the party chairman's election in 1990 when almost all the Kuching side factions united in an attempt to prevent the chairmanship from being taken over by the Rejang based SUPP.

At the most fundamental level, the creation of a faction usually entails the control of branches (and its delegates votes) by a powerful and senior party figure who can be a patron. The next step would be to promote a

client from the branch to an important central party position and hopefully from there, into an SUPP electoral candidacy. If this is successfully done, then the newly elected state assemblyman will in turn create his own patronage network which will in turn enhance the main patron's network.

Patronage

In the early years of its formation, SUPP as a party could not provide any material benefits for its members. During its period in the opposition (1963–9), membership in SUPP carried negative connotations as the authorities saw the party as a front for subversive activities and members were thus suspect. Since the 1970s, senior party members and leaders have recognized that the day of the ideologically motivated member is long over and the vast majority of members who joined after 1970 expect some sort of patronage or favour from the party. Within the context of the party, patronage ranges from the simple 'jobs for the boys' to appointments in government-owned companies and statutory boards.

The simple 'jobs for the boys' type of favour is usually not granted by the party directly. Rather, it is up to the individual SUPP state assemblyman or Member of Parliament (MP) who when approached by individual members tries to help secure employment. In almost all such cases, the help given is based on the assemblyman's or MP's personal contact in the private sector. Hence this form of low-level patronage depends very much on the influence of the individual SUPP leader. Another form of low-level patronage granted to members directly by the SUPP is representation using the party's name. This is usually applicable to members from the lower socio-economic class who need the party for protection when they encounter economic, legal, or personal problems. A good example are hawkers and petty traders. Laws relating to hawkers and petty traders are enforced by local municipal councils. In Kuching South, Sibü, and Miri, the municipal councils come under SUPP control and one of its nominees is the chairman of the council (or mayor). Hence when hawkers and petty traders encounter problems like harassment from enforcement officers or difficulties in securing the necessary trading permits, their SUPP membership allows them to approach their own branch for a recommendation letter to the SUPP nominees on the municipal councils. Sometimes the problem can be solved by a telephone call to the 'right' person in the council.²³ Other forms of low-level patronage entails the party's help in securing places in low-cost housing projects and in obtaining land titles for farmers.

Most of the low-level patronage is also available to non-party members who come to SUPP service centres. Here constituents can expect simple help or access to higher authority via the SUPP state assemblyman or MP as well as encouragement to join the party. Service centres were created after Wong Soon Kai was defeated in the 1982 election.²⁴ Despite the defeat, and perhaps because of it, service centres were set up in the Bandar Sibü parliamentary constituency to serve the constituents

although the seat was held by the opposition. The service centres have proved popular with constituents. The party has set up service centres in Kuching and Miri, and plan to expand it to all the SUPP constituencies in the coming years.

Another highly valued form of patronage by the party are appointments to municipal and district councils, statutory bodies, and quasi-government bodies. Although, strictly speaking, such appointments are vetted by a committee reporting to the CWC, in reality these appointments are often given to those close to the SUPP leader who holds public office, such as a minister, who has the authority to make such appointments. Hence such appointments have been used by senior SUPP government figures to build up a personal patronage network within the party. Needless to say, such networks are essential during factional disputes when numbers often count more than sound arguments.

The most highly prized appointments are the posts of political secretary and senator. Political secretaries²⁵ posts are highly prized because they receive almost the same remuneration and benefits as an elected state assemblyman although they are not accountable to the electorate. These posts are often given to senior party organizers and those who will be SUPP candidates in future elections. Both Sim Kheng Hui and Toh Heng San who were actively involved in state-wide SUPP organizational development were nominated by the SUPP to be political secretaries.²⁶ Later, both were selected and elected as SUPP state assemblymen in 1991. In some cases, political secretaries posts are given to party stalwarts who lose at elections. Jerome Runggol was appointed a political secretary after he was defeated in the 1990 polls; SUPP *Wanita* leader Lily Yong Lee Lee was given a similar post after she was passed over as a candidate for the 1990 polls.²⁷

In the 1970s, the SUPP could nominate two senators. However, when Law Hieng Ding gave up his senator's post in 1982 to contest a seat in the Dewan Rakyat, the SUPP was left with only one. Throughout the 1980s, this post was monopolized by the Tiong family from Sibu.²⁸ The Tiong family is prominent in the timber industry and controls arguably one of Sarawak's biggest logging company, Rimbunan Hijau. This company controls directly (or indirectly) one-third of all logging operations in Sarawak. The family also has extensive interests in newspaper publishing²⁹ and is also extensively involved in the logging industry in Papua New Guinea. The exact amount the Tionsgs have financially contributed to SUPP cannot be ascertained but it is widely believed to be substantial.³⁰

Membership and Recruitment

Political party statements and claims on membership figures are normally suspect for obvious reasons. In its first decade, SUPP claimed a membership of approximately 60,000 which observers have considered as quite accurate.³¹ This meant that SUPP was a fairly widely based organization. The support given to Sarawak's first political party by Chinese workers' unions, guilds, associations, and business leaders,³²

who became office bearers, immediately drew a large proportion of the membership of the unions, guilds, and associations.

One interesting feature of early membership was the large number of indigenous members. Indigenous members equalled or exceeded its Chinese members during the first decade of the party's existence.³³ The indigenous support mainly came from Ong Kee Hui's extensive contacts with the indigenous population which he had built up during his years as an agricultural officer and as an 'unofficial' in the Council Negri.³⁴

It would be fair to say that members in the early years were made up mostly of genuine ones in the sense that people joined the SUPP because they believed in what the party was fighting for and not for its patronage.³⁵ A small but influential minority did join the party based on instructions from the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO). However, this happened only during the foundation years when CCO leaders like Weng Ming Chyuan were active in the party.³⁶ After the authorities' crack-down from the early 1960s onwards, most of those connected with the underground were either arrested and interned or had gone into the jungle to wage guerrilla warfare. The crack-down in the 1960s also saw a huge drop in indigenous membership from which the party has still not recovered. Ironically, the crack-down also drew new support for the SUPP. Chinese peasants harassed by the security forces turned towards the SUPP. Those detained by the authorities for subversive activities and their families also turned towards the SUPP for help and legal representation. The 'new villages' along the Kuching-Serian road also became a source of SUPP membership.³⁷

The change in the structure and composition of membership started after the SUPP joined the government in 1970. Throughout the 1970s, SUPP membership stood in the region of 40,000–50,000 to with more than three-quarters of the members Chinese. In the 1980s, membership did not increase significantly. However, it must be noted that looking at party membership figures alone could be highly misleading. Before the re-registration of members in the late 1980s, a significant proportion of the members were not active. Many had joined because their friends submitted their names, or in other cases, many employees joined when their employer become an office holder of the local branch.³⁸ The actual number of party membership also fluctuates, with numbers going up during internal party election years.³⁹ Membership figures are also unreliable because there have been cases of local branch officials refusing to recruit new members for fear that their own positions would be jeopardized, but this type of incidents only happened from the late 1970s.⁴⁰

Broadly speaking, the bulk of party members are from the lower socio-economic group: white-collar wage earners, farmers, fishermen, factory workers, hawkers, craftsmen, and small businessmen. Only a very small group could be classified as professionals or from the *towkay* class. This pattern has not changed significantly since the party's inception. Most professionals are still found in the middle and upper echelons of the party.

Although the SUPP has tried to appeal to the professionals from the early 1980s, by and large, it has failed. Party insiders cite the Chinese middle-class professionals' preference for making money.⁴¹ Many Chinese professionals also feel disenfranchised by a political system that actively discriminates against non-Malays. For the most part, they feel that the non-Malay parties in the BN cannot hope to promote Chinese interests, and thus joining SUPP would be a fruitless exercise. Consequently, most devoted their time to pursuing their economic interests, hopefully acquiring enough money for migration to other countries. The majority of professionals who do join SUPP do so hoping to profit from their membership. Others join hoping that their professional status will allow them to play a prominent role or gain leadership in party affairs.

The SUPP has more success recruiting members from the business community, especially the *towkay* group. With SUPP controlling the major urban municipal councils, small businesses regard membership as a form of protection from local authorities.⁴² Prominent businessmen or *towkay* join SUPP, or have links with the party for similar reasons. The *towkay* know that they can also profit from SUPP in terms of government contracts given that SUPP traditionally controls the ministry responsible for infrastructure projects and finance.⁴³

Election Machinery

Urban Constituencies

From the foundation years right up to the early 1970s, the SUPP relied on party cadres to undertake grass-roots mobilization during elections. These 'foot soldiers' undertook all the major tasks, like door-to-door canvassing, registration of new voters, doing the groundwork, and preparation of visits from the party candidate. More importantly, these cadres also provided much of the political intelligence on the feelings of the voters as well as the tactics of other parties.

Most of these SUPP cadres were not paid but were marginally compensated by way of food and drink vouchers, and perhaps some petty cash to cover incidentals. In addition, many of these grass-roots organizers were from the Left, that is, those sympathetic to the underground movement and had some links with the CCO. They were extremely effective in mobilizing the people, perhaps due to the training in the communist 'study cell' system which emphasized the mobilization and organization of ordinary people. The effectiveness of these left-leaning party cadres was also recognized early on, so much so that they formed the bulk of party members who were under constant harassment and put under detention by the authorities in the 1960s.

Since the 1970s, this situation has changed somewhat as SUPP became part of the establishment. Volunteer party cadres who used to work for free became harder to find as most now expect some sort of remuneration. Many felt that with the SUPP in government, the party could now afford to be more generous. By the early 1980s, party cadres

who worked voluntarily during elections were extremely hard to find. Only the most dedicated or those especially close to the candidates themselves were willing to volunteer without reward. Even then, these cadres expect favours after the candidates win the elections.

Another change is in the use of party outsiders during the campaign. Many are hired for two simple reasons. First, hiring these people is probably the cheapest way to buy their votes.⁴⁴ Cash bribes are not popular among candidates as they do not get anything overtly in return. By hiring them, the candidates can at least expect some open expression of support such as putting up posters, distributing flyers, and other related tasks. Moreover, many of these non-party helpers also reside and vote in the constituency, hence their help can have a positive psychological effect on the constituents. Most candidates like to have grass-roots people from the neighbourhood following them. It implies that the candidate has close rapport with those he seeks to represent. Second, hiring outsiders can impede the opposition. This is especially so in the urban areas like Kuching and Sibü. Several SUPP candidates and assemblymen have openly admitted hiring 'bad hats' during election so that they will not sabotage their campaigns.⁴⁵

In the early years, mobilization during elections included mass rallies but since the government banned this form of campaigning since the 1978 parliamentary elections, most campaigns now centre on door-to-door visits and *ceramah*. This has meant that more election workers are needed compared to previously as the SUPP cannot rely on one or two rallies to get the message across. Costs have also escalated as *ceramah* are usually held in hired halls or coffee-shops which have to be booked. The ban on open rallies has also meant that SUPP candidates have to spend a considerable amount of time on their campaigns. For party leaders who are also expected to campaign for the less-known party candidates or new candidates, this has meant almost constant travelling and the hiring of more help to make sure that, even if he is physically not present, his representatives are.

Although the SUPP has a reputation of possessing one of the most efficient and disciplined election machineries among political parties in Sarawak, this is only partly true. A great deal depends on the candidates themselves and the local branch. This reputation is only deserved if the candidate is well known in his constituency, has some leverage in the party, has funds and most importantly, has the services of a united, hardworking, and energetic branch. While printed propaganda is done by party headquarters, almost everything else will have to be done by the candidates and the local branches.

Before an election, most candidates and their campaign managers will map out a strategy. Preliminaries such as tabulating the electoral roll are usually the first step. The roll is broken into ethnic groups, age groups, and sex, and a socio-economic profile of the voters is drawn up. Ethnic groups are important. Malay voters are often seen by candidates as solid and dependable as past elections have shown that this group has, for the

most part, voted solidly for the BN. Dayak voters, while important, are harder to predict⁴⁶ and are usually not high on the priority of voters unless the seat is a marginal one where the Dayak votes could decide the outcome.⁴⁷ The detailed profile of the Chinese voters is of most interest to the candidates. Younger voters (first timers and those under 30 years of age) are generally seen as anti-establishment and pro-DAP. Female voters are seen as more stable while men are often referred to as 'undecided until the last minute'.

The constituency's socio-economic profile is also scrutinized in some detail. Areas with lower-class or economically disadvantaged Chinese are seen as manageable as this group can be persuaded with government grants and infrastructure projects. For example, the Batu Kawa bridge project has been repeatedly used to win votes for the SUPP. Other forms of persuasion include promises of future projects or government assistance in matters like land titles. This is especially effective in urban areas where there is a squatter problem. For example, the squatters in Attapah in the Stampin (now Pending) constituency have been promised land titles and access to low-cost housing projects by SUPP during successive elections.

At the top end are the Chinese middle and affluent classes.⁴⁸ These voters present the biggest problems for candidates as they are better educated and cannot easily be swayed by government grants or small infrastructure projects. Nor do direct threats of government retaliation on opposition held constituencies work on this group of voters. Slogans almost always count for nothing and election materials are of limited use. The problem with this group is that most have higher expectations and are concerned with issues like democracy, ethnic discrimination, access to tertiary education and opportunities, the economic performance of the country, religious freedom, and the future political role of the Chinese. In other words, they espouse middle class values. House-to-house visits and small gatherings are often seen as the most effective means of persuasion. Here the SUPP candidates are sometimes forced to admit the party is impotent on the issues mentioned above in a political system dominated by non-Chinese. The standard answer given by SUPP is that the situation for the Chinese would be worse if the party 'did not participate'. Examples are also given of the Chinese communities in nearby countries such as Indonesia and Brunei to show that the Sarawak Chinese are 'far better off'. Interestingly, in recent times, especially from the time the DAP appeared in 1979, comparison with the Chinese community in Peninsular Malaysia has also been quite extensively used. The Chinese in Sarawak are reminded that Chinese symbols such as road signs with Chinese characters (which are banned in Peninsular Malaysia) are still used. The near total domination of the political and economic life by Malays in Peninsular Malaysia is also used to show what would happen to the Sarawak Chinese if they rejected the SUPP.⁴⁹ Land and government grants for the building of churches and temples are also used to show that the Sarawak Chinese is the most

privileged Chinese community in Malaysia.⁵⁰ Hence, while the SUPP is not able to answer (let alone solve) many of the criticisms raised by the middle class and affluent Chinese, they are able to convince some of these voters that without SUPP, things would be much worse or even catastrophic.

Once all the background materials have been gathered, candidates and their campaign managers have to identify 'loyalists' in the constituency. The ideal situation is to have at least one party cadre in every street. If that is not possible, outsiders or non-party helpers are hired, so that almost every street has at least one 'foot soldier'. These 'foot soldiers' are then given rudimentary instructions on campaign basics such as how to distribute posters and campaign literature on their street, how to check that the electoral roll is correct as to the number of voters listed on their street and how to make some sort of subjective assessment of the 'pro-SUPP' or 'pro-DAP' households. They are also expected to relay the problems or worries of the residents to the local branch so that the candidate can prepare answers or solutions before going on the door-to-door campaign. The 'foot soldiers' are also expected to facilitate these visits by following and introducing the candidate to his or her neighbours. Door-to-door campaigns are usually undertaken by lesser known or first-time candidates. Candidates who are long-term incumbents or ministers generally do not campaign door-to-door but attend one or two *ceramah*. Usually these incumbents have built up a strong network of party workers and 'foot soldiers' from previous elections and they are reactivated during the campaign period.⁵¹

Support and endorsements from community groups, such as the Hakka or the Hokkien association, used to be an important deciding factor in election outcomes but with rapid social change and economic growth, these groups have lost much of their influence over the voting preference of their members. While open support and endorsements are welcomed by the candidates, they are not seen as essentials. Many of these organizations and guilds have lost their prominent place in the Chinese community as the younger generation seek other forms of social interactions.⁵²

The amount spent by a candidate during election depends on (a) the size of the constituency, and (b) its socio-economic profile.

Before 1970, most candidates had to depend on their own financial resources. Since the formation of the BN coalition, SUPP candidates (as well as other candidates standing under the BN) can expect a fixed sum from the BN general election fund. On top of this fund, the party sometimes contributes another amount. This amount is not fixed and depends on the 'leverage' of the candidates with party leaders. Another consideration is how marginal the constituency is. Again, the candidates themselves will have to raise funds to make up any shortfalls from these two sources.⁵³ Most of the money is used for party workers and other helpers, and the rest is spent on campaign expenses such as hiring halls and coffee-shops for *ceramah*, buying food and drink, hiring cars to ferry voters to and from polling booths, and other related expenses.

Rural Constituencies

The situation in rural constituencies is somewhat different from their urban counterpart. The rural constituencies are basically Dayak in ethnic composition and are generally less developed than the urban areas. Because of this economic backwardness, government grants and minor-rural-projects funds for basic infrastructures are highly effective. Direct cash gifts are also highly compelling⁵⁴ and for this reason, the expenditure in rural constituencies is almost always at least one-third higher than in urban constituencies. Besides this, costs escalate because the amount involved in visiting the interior longhouses is quite exorbitant. Once in the longhouse, candidates must pay for some sort of feast for the entire community.⁵⁵ A special cash award must also be given to the *tuai rumah* (longhouse head or village chief) to ensure that his influence is used to channel votes to the candidate. This special award is also given to stop the opposition from campaigning in the same longhouse or community.⁵⁶

In sum, patronage seems to be the key to SUPP's success in the rural areas, while in the urban areas, it is a combination of patronage, that is, SUPP's ability to deliver 'some goods and services' from the government and the Chinese community's fear that it will have no representation in the state government.

1. The official structure is covered in some detail in Teng, et al. *SUPP's 30 Years in Retrospect*, Kuching: SUPP, 1989, pp. 124–60. Text in Chinese.

2. Much of the material contained in this chapter is based on extensive interviews with both the party élites (elected representatives and office holders) as well as constituency party cadres (branch officials and full-time party workers). As such most of what follows will not be ascribed to individuals unless the information is specific.

3. The party does not recognize the indigenous wing officially because of its avowed aim of multiracialism. Although the majority of indigenous Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) members are Dayaks, the term 'indigenous' is used instead of 'Dayak wing' because the SUPP always had a small number of Malay members, even until now. In the 1960s, SUPP tried to promote a local Sarawak Malay, Marican Salleh, as a political leader by giving him various positions, including membership in the Central Working Committee (CWC), in order to attract the Malay votes. However, Marican Salleh was never able to appeal to his ethnic group who saw him as a Malay token in a Chinese party. Nevertheless, the overwhelming number of its indigenous members are of Dayak origin.

4. R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, p. 75.

5. See Chapter 5.

6. Keynote speech by Wong Soon Kai at the Annual Central Committee meeting, 8 December 1991.

7. Examples from this group include Ramsay Noel Jitam, an ex-senior police officer recruited to stand as a candidate in 1983 and Michael Pilo ak Gangga, a former resident recruited just before the 1987 election.

8. Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the 16th Central Committee held at Sarawak Country Club, Kuching, 24 September 1989.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Michael B. Leigh makes the observation that in the formative years, although Dayaks were appointed to the post of chairman in predominantly Dayak rural branches,

the post of branch secretary was usually held by a Chinese. See Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 17.

11. Wang Gungwu, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', *China Quarterly*, 43 (July–Sept 1970): 1–30.

12. The English-educated group is made up of those that received their tertiary education in English or in English-medium tertiary institutions. The dominance of the English-educated group can be seen in the composition of the 11 SUPP Council Negri members from the 11 Chinese-majority seats. Of the 11, only one is Chinese-educated. The English educated are: Wong Soon Kai, Song Swee Guan, Chan Seng Khai, Thomas Hii King Hiong, David Teng Lung Chi, Wong Soon Koh, Soon Choon Teck, and George Chan Hong Nam. The sole Chinese-educated member is Sim Kheng Hui.

13. Those in the bilingual group include: David Teng, Thomas Hii, Wong Soon Kai, Wong Soon Koh, and Soon Choon Teck.

14. One second echelon SUPP leader in Kuching confessed in an interview that he did not send his children to Chinese schools despite the fact that he sits on the management board of the Chinese schools. He argued that reality dictated that his children be educated in national government schools. As his children are going to make Sarawak their home, not knowing Mandarin will not hurt their future, but failure in Bahasa Malaysia will definitely hurt their careers. A pass at credit level in Bahasa Malaysia is a prerequisite for government and statutory board jobs. It is also a prerequisite for entrance into government tertiary and other post-secondary educational institutions. Children in Chinese schools generally do poorly in Bahasa Malaysia with many failing to secure even a Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (high school certificate) due to a failing mark in the national language paper. This particular leader also argued that his children can always pick up Mandarin later in life if they want to learn their mother tongue.

15. As mentioned before, Wee Boon Ping, a prominent businessman in Kuching was highly influential in SUPP despite not being a formal member. Other well-known businessmen in SUPP were Chan Siaw Hee, Ho Ho Lim, Khoo Peng Leong, and members of the Ong family.

16. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 205.

17. Of the 11 successful candidates for the Chinese-majority constituencies in the 1991 state election, 9 are professionals. The nine are: Song Swee Guan, Sim Kheng Hui, Chan Seng Khai, David Teng, Thomas Hii, Wong Soon Kai, Wong Soon Koh, Soon Choon Teck, and George Chan.

18. See Chapters 10 and 11 for details on this.

19. See Chapter 6.

20. The failure of the Kuching side to stop Wong Soon Kai is covered in Chapter 10.

21. Text of the keynote speech by Wong Soon Kai at the Annual Central Committee meeting, 8 December 1991.

22. This is similar to Wong Soon Kai's views expressed in an interview with the author.

23. Interview with an SUPP nominee to the Kuching Municipal Council (KMC).

24. See Chapter 8.

25. Strictly speaking all the appointees are political secretaries to the chief minister. However in practice, each Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) component nominates candidates.

26. Sim Kheng Hui was the executive secretary of SUPP while Toh Heng San was a former assistant Secretary-General.

27. Lily Yong Lee Lee herself confirmed in an interview that she was given the political secretary's post after she was passed over, for the second time, as a candidate. She added that she was also given the post because the leadership did not want to be perceived as anti-women.

28. Tiong Hiew King has been senator as well as vice-chairman of SUPP. Before that his brother, Tiong Thai King, was the senator.

29. For example, the Tiong family controls the Peninsular Malaysian Chinese daily, *Sin Chew Jit Poh*.

30. The Tiong family paid for the printing of SUPP's bulletin 'Suara Rakyat'. See 'Report on the work performed by SUPP Central Publicity Office in 1991'.

31. Milne and Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation*, p. 425, n. 14.
32. The business leaders here are basically those of the Chao-ann, Hakka, and Hokkein dialect groups. The more prominent Teochiu and Foochow business leaders were to form the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) in 1962. See Leigh, *The Rising Moon*, p. 22. However, by and large, the majority of small business, from all dialect groups, supported the SUPP.
33. Milne and Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation*, p. 75.
34. During the Brookes' administration, European officers were designated as officials while the 'unofficials' were locals selected by the Rajah to represent their ethnic group.
35. Patronage was of course not possible because the SUPP was in the opposition.
36. How many of these actually joined the SUPP cannot of course be ascertained.
37. See Chapter 5.
38. For example, many Sarawak Transport Company employees were members of SUPP because of Chan Siaw Hee.
39. In interviews with staff in the membership office, it was said that some moribund branches 'suddenly come alive' just before the Delegates Meeting. As the number of delegates (and votes) depends on the number of members, ambitious leaders have to register many new members in these branches so that their supporters qualify as delegates. The sudden jump in membership can go as high as twice the existing membership of the branch.
40. In the 1991 Central Committee Report dated 2 December 1991, submitted by central organizing secretary Thomas Hii it states that 'potential cadres faced resistance from the olds. . . . The old cadres . . . fear of being replaced.'
41. Interviews with several party leaders.
42. For example, during the 1991 state election, all the pork sellers (basically a one-man business) in Kuching closed their business on polling day as a sign of support for the SUPP. One of the SUPP candidates in Kuching was also the chairman of the Kuching South City Council, the local authority that regulates pork sellers. See *Borneo Post*, 25 September 1991.
43. The position of state minister in charge of infrastructure development was held by Stephen Yong Kuet Tze and Sim Kheng Hong, both from Kuching side, during Abdul Rahman Yakub's era and Wong Soon Kai, from the Rejang basin, during Abdul Taib Mahmud's administration.
44. An election 'helper' during the 1991 state election could expect to be paid up to RM40 a day. The amount is larger in the rural SUPP constituencies.
45. In an interview, one SUPP assemblyman said that during elections, well-known gangsters would approach him, and asked for 'work'. The assemblyman would oblige and give these gangsters a 'few hundred dollars' to 'guard SUPP posters' and to 'harass opposition campaigners in the area they control'. When asked if he got his money's worth, he replied that most of the SUPP posters in his constituency were intact throughout the election while a few Democratic Action Party (DAP) posters were torn down.
46. This is due to the formation of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) and the urban socialization of the Dayak voters (better education, more interaction with other ethnic groups, and others.)
47. Even this is questionable as several SUPP assemblymen have stated that Dayak voter turnout in urban Chinese-majority seats are low.
48. This section is based on interviews with all the three assemblyman who represent the three state constituencies based in urban areas in Kuching.
49. Perhaps with the exception of the 1982 parliamentary election, the Chinese-based Barisan Nasional (BN) parties in Peninsular Malaysia—Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan)—generally do not perform well among Chinese voters compared to the DAP, although both the MCA and Gerakan claim to speak on behalf of the Malaysian Chinese.
50. See the special briefing notes given to SUPP party officials in 1991 entitled 'Several Problems of State Election' written by Then Joh Kiong.
51. A well-known example of this was the late Sim Kheng Hong. Sim never had to campaign very hard in person. In fact, Sim's network of 'foot soldiers' was so extensive in

his constituency of Stampin that the DAP referred to him as the *Cek Kong* (a favourite uncle).

52. Several SUPP and DAP candidates concur with this observation. In fact, one SUPP candidate complained openly that 'the old men' who run these organizations are 'out of touch' with the voters. Moreover, according to the same assemblyman, these guilds and organizations expect 'favours, donations, or government grants' in return for their open support and endorsement.

53. Although precise figures are not available, the author has been told that the SUPP spent an average of RM200,000 per urban constituency in the 1987 state election and RM250,000 in 1991. These figures must be treated with great caution as differences in constituencies are quite wide. Also, the figures given here do not include contributions by individual candidates or monies raised by the candidates themselves.

54. The irony of this is that several assemblymen have complained that it is too successful, so much so that a cash-gifts dependency syndrome has emerged in the rural areas. Before a candidate can even ask for electoral support or do any sort of campaigning, the amount of cash gifts must be settled.

55. A colourful description of these activities can be found in Milne and Ratnam *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation*, pp. 204–8.

56. In an interview with several DAP candidates, they cited how some longhouses draped the BN's flag prominently on the verandah, both to symbolize the political affiliation of the longhouse and also to warn the DAP that it was not welcome.

12 Conclusion

THE preceding analysis of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) in particular, and Chinese politics in general in Sarawak, has been structured in such a way as to show not only its changing forms and nature but also how it has responded to a hostile external political arena, characterized by colonial government rule (1959–63); Iban dominance (1963–69) and Malay/Melanau control since 1970; all within an ostensible power sharing formula.

It is abundantly clear from this study that the SUPP has succeeded in transforming itself from a left-leaning party, vehemently opposed to government, into an establishment party. The most remarkable feat in this process was its ability to retain its electoral support from the Chinese community in Sarawak despite this near total turnabout.

In its early years, from its foundation in 1959 to 1970, there was little doubt that the party was dominated by left-wing elements linked to the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO). The formation of the party itself was made possible by the merger of three distinct groups: (a) the traditional Chinese *towkay* élite class; (b) an emerging generation of Chinese leaders who came to prominence due primarily to their advanced English education; and (c) left-wingers, either communists or socialists with extensive grass roots reach and potential.

Each group contributed a vital component to the new political party. The traditional *towkay* élite provided political legitimacy in the eyes of the British as well as in other communities, while the left wing provided the mass mobilization needed for the successful launch of the new party. The new Chinese leaders were the link between these two groups. The result was that the traditional élite and the new Chinese leaders were given the top positions in the party, while the left wing retained control at the grass-roots level.¹

By the time the Malaysia proposal came about, the strain between the traditional élite, who were often moderate and accommodating in their views, and the left wing, who saw Malaysia as an end to their dream of an independent communist state, reached a breaking point. The moderates' 1962 attempt to expel all left-wingers proved futile as they simply did not have the numbers in the party.² The attempt also led to divisions in the moderate leadership, with some toeing the leftist line in order to keep their positions in the party while others left SUPP. Despite this,

SUPP performed credibly in the 1963 election when it was the only political party in the electoral landscape against the Malaysian proposal. Although as a political party SUPP won the highest number of seats, the three-tiered electoral system diluted this lead and SUPP (and Party Negara (PANAS)) lost out when they were unable to control the Third Divisionary Advisory Council which nominated candidates to the Council Negri. Thus the pro-Malaysia parties won and Sarawak became a state in the Federation of Malaysia.

Although Malaysia became a reality, the left wing maintained its anti-Malaysia and anti-colonial stand setting the stage for confrontation with the moderate leadership which wanted to work within the new political environment. When the moderates took part in the Malaysia Solidarity Convention (MSC) which explicitly recognized Malaysia, the left wing tried to reprimand the leadership. This time, both Ong Kee Hui and Stephen Yong Kuet Tze were in agreement and resigned, leaving a vacuum that the left wing could not hope to fill. The left wing backed down and Ong and Yong were reinstated. The moderate leadership had shown that it was indispensable to the party.³

The left wing lost its remaining hold on internal party politics when the moderates engineered SUPP's entry into a coalition government in 1970. More importantly, it joined the government as the 'Chinese voice' and since then, the party has firmly established itself as the 'voice' of the Sarawak Chinese. Although SUPP lost some Chinese votes in the 1974 polls, it still retained all the state Chinese constituencies. The major consequence of the 1970 decision was that it lost the Dayak vote in 1974. Since then the Dayaks have increasingly turned away from SUPP.⁴

Despite repeated attempts by party dissidents in the 1970s and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) since the late 1970s, SUPP has successfully held on to the Chinese vote. The only area where SUPP lost Chinese votes was at the parliamentary level where the DAP was able to capitalize on the secondary position of the Chinese community in Malaysia. However, SUPP did not entirely lose the Chinese vote at parliamentary level; the Chinese voters made sure that SUPP won some of its parliamentary seats as well. Thus the Chinese electorate have the best of both worlds; they have representation in the opposition as well as in the government. It is this attitude that has prevented the DAP or any other Chinese-based opposition from weakening SUPP's hold on the Chinese seats at the state level. Ironically, this has also probably ensured that some form of Chinese opposition will always be elected at parliamentary elections. It is therefore possible that in the future, the Sarawak Chinese will vote for a Chinese-based opposition at both the state and federal levels. However, this will depend as much on SUPP's inability to meet the Chinese electorate's expectations at the state level as well as the Chinese-based opposition's credibility.

In the introduction, the stated aim of this study was to identify the factors that could account for SUPP's success in maintaining the Chinese vote. It has been successful in spite of the fact that it has changed its outlook almost completely; and this at a time when, generally speaking,

Chinese-based parties in the Barisan Nasional (BN) were losing ground among the Chinese voters to the opposition.

The first factor is the diversity of Sarawak's population, whereby no one ethnic group can command more than 50 per cent of the population. In political terms, this has meant that the Chinese, accounting for about 30 per cent of the population, has through SUPP, been able to play the role of political kingmaker or power broker in various degrees since the 1970s. Although SUPP lost this role in 1976 when the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) was admitted to the Sarawak BN, it quickly regained it seven years later in 1983 when SNAP fragmented and Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) was founded. SUPP's ability to hold on to the 8, and now 11, Chinese seats meant that the party was able to extract economic and political concessions from the Malay/Melanau élite. Although Abdul Rahman Yakub had his difficulties with SUPP, he was shrewd enough not to push SUPP into the opposition and so he granted concessions to SUPP, albeit to certain personalities in the party. Abdul Taib Mahmud in turn granted concessions to SUPP, and is generally regarded by SUPP as more sympathetic to its interests than Rahman Yakub. Taib Mahmud's concessions to SUPP increased somewhat after the Ming Court Affair in 1987 when SUPP's 14 seats meant the survival of his government.⁵ These concessions in turn strengthened SUPP's position within the Sarawak Chinese community and reinforced the belief that SUPP is their 'voice'.

Second, the geographical layout of Sarawak has meant that there is a strong sense of regionalism or provincialism among Sarawakians, including the Chinese.⁶ This sense of regionalism has been carefully and actively harnessed by SUPP. The party has successfully and consistently called the Sarawak DAP a *semenanjung* party to reinforce the strong sense of regionalism. This regional sentiment has also meant that SUPP cannot hope to expand outside Sarawak, or merge with other parties outside Sarawak that preach multiracialism like Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan). This strong sense of regionalism is linked to Sarawak's (and Sabah's) different political development.⁷

Third, SUPP has benefited from the increasing national trend towards total Malay (and Islamic) political hegemony. This trend is clearly evident in peninsular Malaysian politics where Chinese-based Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Gerakan have been forced to the political periphery. The fear among the Sarawak Chinese electorate that they could face a similar predicament has pushed them to back the SUPP in order to ensure that their relatively privileged position, compared to their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia, does not erode further.

Although SUPP is under no immediate political threat in Sarawak, there is a realization among its leadership that the political environment can change swiftly. In a dominant party semi-competitive political environment, the process of change towards greater control has led, in reality, towards greater Malay (meaning United Malays National Organization (UMNO)) political hegemony and control. This has happened already in Peninsular Malaysia where the non-Malay BN

parties are already marginalized, with dim prospects of influencing government policies affecting the communities they represent. Although this process in Sarawak (and Sabah) has been slower, the federal government (meaning UMNO) has nevertheless shown it intends to impose its style of politics and political hegemony on the two East Malaysian states.

This has already happened in Sabah. UMNO went in after the ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) withdrew from the BN in 1990.⁸ Although PBS won the February 1994 Sabah state election, an UMNO Sabah-led coalition gained a respectable 23 out of the 48-seat Sabah State Legislative Assembly. Within three weeks, the PBS state government fell when its legislators defected, helping UMNO to take control of the Sabah government.⁹ In the case of Sarawak, UMNO and its allies have basically taken a 'hands-off' approach. However, this *status quo* is only likely to last as long as the Sarawak BN coalition is in control and does not challenge UMNO's domination of the federal BN. Sabah's ruling PBS made this crucial mistake in 1990 with the result that UMNO has now gained a firm foothold in Sabah politics. With the Sarawak BN clearly in control, in the short term there is little likelihood that UMNO will spread its wings into Sarawak.

One likely scenario is that the Sarawak Chinese will want to hang on to the existing political arrangement in the Sarawak BN. In maintaining the *status quo*, the Sarawak Chinese are assured of continued SUPP representation in government and of economic prosperity. However, this also entails accepting the reality of Malay/Melanau political domination in Sarawak politics.

Ironically, the Melanau élite also share the Chinese fears of political dominance from Peninsular Malaysia. Malay purists would argue that the Melanau cannot hold Sarawak's highest political office. This would cost the Melanau their pre-eminent position in Sarawak's economic and political sphere. The other main political actor, the Dayaks, also share this fear as peninsular Malaysian style of politics would spell the end of their dream of putting an Iban/Dayak back in the chief minister's post. It is this common fear that has made Kuala Lumpur wary of direct intervention in Sarawak politics. It has also ensured that all the major political protagonists in Sarawak do not incite anti-federal sentiments too far so as not to give UMNO an excuse to come to Sarawak.

In summary, the politics of the Chinese community in Sarawak has traversed two distinct phases. The first phase covered the period from the nineteenth century when the Chinese migrated into Sarawak. At that time, politics was essentially the politics of survival in a politically hostile environment in which the indigenous feared the Chinese and vice versa. In those early days, political attention was centred on China until Beijing increasingly tightened restrictions on *huaqiao* from 1955 onwards. The Chinese in Sarawak then tried to establish an independent political entity for the state where they would be treated as equals. But this failed through the external interventions of the British, Malayan and Singaporean governments. These governments wanted a federation and Malaysia

became a reality. The second phase of Chinese politics in Sarawak starts from the post-Malaysia period, especially after the 1969 riots when Malay political supremacy was established, until the present. The main feature of politics in this phase is the politics of fear—fear of being excluded, marginalized, forced to assimilate, and treated as second-class citizens; also the fear of being powerless to decide the outcome of the community's own future. This fear factor has been the mainstay of Chinese politics in Sarawak ever since.

1. See Chapter 3.
2. See Chapter 4.
3. See Chapter 5.
4. See Chapter 6.
5. See Chapter 9.
6. This feeling is also very strong among Sabahans and explains why Kuala Lumpur has not been successful in assimilating Sarawak and Sabah into the federation. Both the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) and the Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) have used regionalism to reinforce Iban/Dayak solidarity. See also Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia, *Bonding of a Nation: Federalism and Territorial Integration in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: ISIS, 1980.
7. See Chapter 1.
8. See Chapter 10.
9. See James Chin, 'Sabah State Election of 1994: End of Kadazan Unity', *Asian Survey*, 34, 10 (October 1994): 904–15.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Sarawak: Councillors Elected June and July 1963

Unless otherwise indicated, the following electoral data come from Election Commission Malaysia.

APPENDIX TABLE 1.1
Councillors Elected June 1963

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Councillors Elected</i>					<i>Alliance Councillors by Component Party</i>			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>SUPP</i>	<i>PANAS</i>	<i>Indep</i>	<i>Alliance</i>	<i>BARJ^a</i>	<i>SNAP</i>	<i>PES^b</i>	<i>SCA</i>
1st Division	116	48	39	10	19	7	11	-	1
Lundu	12	2	5	2	3	-	3	-	-
Bau	16	7	1	2	6	5	1	-	-
Kuching Municipality	27	21	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kuching Rural	34	14	15	3	2	2	-	-	-
Upper Sadong	15	2	4	3	6	-	5	-	1
Lower Sadong	12	2	8	-	2	-	2	-	-
2nd Division	72	8	14	10	40	14	26	-	-
Batang Lupar	19	1	5	2	11	-	11	-	-
Lubok Antu	15	4	-	2	9	9	-	-	-
Saribas	20	2	7	2	9	1	8	-	-
Kalaka	18	1	2	4	11	4	7	-	-
3rd Division	148	46	1	45	56	12	-	42	2
Sarikei	17	8	1	7	1	-	-	1	-
Binatang	15	7	-	1	7	2	-	5	-
Matu Daro	13	1	-	5	7	6	-	1	-
Mukah	19	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-
Sibu Rural	22	11	-	7	4	1	-	3	-
Sibu Urban	21	16	-	1	4	3	-	1	-
Kanowit	24	3	-	5	16	-	-	16	-
Kapit	17	-	-	-	17	-	-	15	2
4th Division	63	13	5	29	16	5	10	1	-
Bintulu	14	2	3	1	8	1	6	1	-
Subis	13	1	-	10	2	-	2	-	-
Miri	19	10	2	1	6	4	2	-	-
Baram	17	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 1.1 (continued)

District Council	Councillors Elected					Alliance Councillors by Component Party			
	Total	SUPP	PANAS	Indep	Alliance	BARJ ^a	SNAP	PES ^b	SCA
5th Division	30	—	—	23	7	6	1	—	—
Limbang	15	—	—	14	1	—	1	—	—
Lawas	15	—	—	9	6	6	—	—	—
Total	429	115	59	117	138	44	48	43	3

Source: Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 70.

Note: Councillors grouped according to party allegiance.

^aBARJ = Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Berjasa).

^bPES = Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka).

APPENDIX TABLE 1.2
Councillors Elected July 1963

District Council	Councillors Elected					Alliance Councillors by Component Party			
	Total	SUPP	PANAS	Indep	Alliance	BARJ ^a	SNAP	PES ^b	SCA
1st Division	116	50	43	2	21	9	11	—	1
Lundu	12	3	6	—	3	—	3	—	—
Bau	16	7	2	—	7	6	1	—	—
Kuching Municipality	27	21	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kuching Rural	34	15	16	—	3	3	—	—	—
Upper Sadong	15	2	5	2	6	—	5	—	1
Lower Sadong	12	2	8	—	2	—	2	—	—
2nd Division	72	8	14	2	48	17	30	1	—
Batang Lupar	19	1	5	1	12	—	12	—	—
Lubok Antu	15	4	—	—	11	11	—	—	—
Saribas	20	2	7	1	11	2	9	—	—
Kalaka	18	1	2	1	14	4	9	1	—
3rd Division	148	49	1	8	90	26	9	51	4
Sarikei	17	10	1	1	5	3	—	2	—
Binatang	15	7	—	—	8	2	—	6	—
Matu Daro	13	1	—	2	10	9	—	1	—
Mukah	19	—	—	2	17	7	9	—	1
Sibu Rural	22	12	—	1	9	2	—	6	1
Sibu Urban	21	16	—	1	4	3	—	1	—
Kanowit	24	3	—	1	20	—	—	20	—
Kapit	17	—	—	—	17	—	—	15	2
4th Division	63	16	5	5	37	10	18	9	—
Bintulu	14	2	3	—	9	1	7	1	—
Subis	13	2	—	1	10	5	5	—	—
Miri	19	10	2	1	6	4	2	—	—
Baram	17	2	—	3	12	—	4	8	—

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 1.2 (*continued*)

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Councillors Elected</i>					<i>Alliance Councillors by Component Party</i>			
	<i>Total</i>	<i>SUPP</i>	<i>PANAS</i>	<i>Indep</i>	<i>Alliance</i>	<i>BARJ^a</i>	<i>SNAP</i>	<i>PES^b</i>	<i>SCA</i>
5th Division	30	—	—	14	16	11	5	—	—
Limbang	15	—	—	8	7	3	4	—	—
Lawas	15	—	—	6	9	8	1	—	—
Total	429	123	63	31	212	73	73	61	5

Source: Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 71.

Note: Councillors grouped according to party allegiance.

^aBARJ = Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Berjasa).

^bPES = Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka).

APPENDIX 2
Sarawak: Election Results, 1970–1991

Unless otherwise indicated, the following electoral data come from Election Commission Malaysia.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.1
Sarawak: Results of the 1970 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P121 Bau–Lundu	Siyium ak Matit (SUPP)	4,531	798
	Lee Nyon Choi (SNAP)	3,733	
	Layor ak Nyibai (Parti Bumiputera)	2,635	
	Lawrence Kureng ak Lasif (Pesaka)	2,164	
P122 Bandar Kuching	Ong Kee Hui (SUPP)	13,410	12,126
	Kenneth Lau Ah Lah (Independent)	1,284	
	Ong Khai Yan (Independent)	972	
P123 Santubong	Awg Wal b Awg Abu (Parti Bumiputera)	6,404	660
	Ho Ho Lim (SUPP)	5,744	
	Ngu Kuang Kee (SNAP)	1,421	
P124 Samarahan	Abdul Taib b Mahmud (Parti Bumiputera)	5,842	2,990
	Wazir Mohamad Khan (SUPP)	2,852	
	Abg Anwar b Abg Hj Junaidi (SNAP)	1,837	
P125 Padawan	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (SUPP)	5,583	2,447
	Nichols Cyril (SNAP)	3,136	
	Ranggok Minah (Pesaka)	1,203	
	John ak Turing (Independent)	1,145	
P126 Serian	Rahun ak Dabak (SNAP)	6,001	2,008
	Peter Ng Eng Lim (SUPP)	3,993	
	Andrew Dago ak Randan (Parti Bumiputera)	3,737	
P127 Simunjan	Bojeng b Andot (Parti Bumiputera)	4,920	1,844
	Jubang ak Tawi (SNAP)	3,076	
	Tk Bujang b Hj Amin (Independent)	1,142	
P128 Batang Lupar	Edwen ak Tangkon (SNAP)	4,751	1,504
	Hollis ak Tini (SUPP)	3,247	
	Yaman b Mohd Tahir (Pesaka)	3,142	
	Abg Hj Hamid b Abg Hj Salam (Parti Bumiputera)	1,800	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.1 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P129 Lubok Antu	Jonathan Nawin ak Jinggong (SNAP)	1,867	290
	Unah ak Dudong (Pesaka)	1,577	
	Bauk ak Lang (SUPP)	1,480	
	Buda ak Ulan (Independent)	620	
	Belon ak Ubak (Independent)	585	
P130 Betong	Andrew Mara ak Walter Unjah (SNAP)	3,816	1,375
	Abg Hj Hood b Abg Hj Suhaimi (Parti Bumiputera)	2,441	
	Langi ak Jilap (Pesaka)	1,611	
	Umpang ak Lima (Independent)	1,007	
P131 Saratok	Langgu ak Saga (SNAP)	3,968	1,432
	Antony Nibong ak Linggang (Pesaka)	2,536	
	Hj Mohd Su' aut b Hj Mohd Tahir (Parti Bumiputera)	1,792	
	Bauk ak Buma (SUPP)	1,132	
P132 Sarikei	Chen Ko Ming (SCA)	4,041	704
	Lo Pek Ung (SUPP)	3,337	
	Wong Yuk Peng (SNAP)	1,389	
	Then Kwan Long (Independent)	960	
	Ching Ting Chiok (Independent)	114	
P133 Payang	Abdul Rahman b Yakub (Parti Bumiputera)	5,839	1,814
	Nyandang ak Linang (SUPP)	4,025	
	Abuseman b Merais (Pesaka)	1,394	
	Yu Chee Chiong (SNAP)	884	
P134 Bandar Sibu	Khoo Peng Loong (SUPP)	7,655	4,095
	Ting Tieng Tong (SCA)	3,560	
	Joseph Tang Chock Chung (SNAP)	1,212	
	Lim Ung Chiew (Independent)	519	
	Peter Hwang Tiong (Independent)	398	
P135 Rajang	Tibuoh ak Bantai (SUPP)	4,217	1,621
	Peng Poh ak Peng Kaya (Pesaka)	2,596	
	Alexandar ak Seli (SNAP)	1,540	
	Anyau ak Bakit (Independent)	1,423	
	Salleh ak Garasi (Independent)	573	
P136 Mukah	Latip b Hj Dris (Parti Bumiputera)	3,632	1,332
	Ugil ak Unchong (SNAP)	2,300	
	Stephen Kule (Pesaka)	1,892	
	Hanya Richard (SUPP)	1,368	
	Jawan ak Kapong (Independent)	896	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.1 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P137 Julau	Pengarah Panyang (Pesaka)	2,330	63
	Salang ak Siden (SNAP)	2,267	
P138 Kanowit	Joseph Unting (Independent)	2,020	488
	Chua Ka Siang (SUPP)	1,530	
	Bujang ak Manja (Pesaka)	949	
	Mandoh ak Badin (Independent)	787	
	Blaja ak Angkin (SNAP)	686	
	Jarit Meluda (Independent)	463	
	Lee Chin Ching (Independent)	257	
P140 Ulu Rajang	Temenggong Jugah ak Bareng (Pesaka)	2,795	1,367
	Sibat ak Tagong (SNAP)	1,428	
	Rabong ak Langgot (SUPP)	1,424	
	Kuha ak Kanyan (Independent)	1,107	
P141 Bintulu	Ting Ming Kiong (SCA)	2,919	736
	Jilan ak Nyeggang (Pesaka)	2,183	
	Ismail b Hj Sebli (SNAP)	2,038	
	Tedong ak Taboh (SUPP)	1,461	
	Jubin ak Magah (Independent)	96	
P142 Miri-Subis	James Wong Kim Min (SNAP)	4,391	499
	Ekoon b Bantar (SUPP)	3,892	
	Peng Guyang ak Nisau (Independent)	1,189	
P143 Baram	Luhah Wan (SNAP)	5,100	3,227
	Tamaweng Tinggung Wan (SUPP)	1,863	
	Penghulu Gau Jua (Pesaka)	1,795	

Note: SUPP constituencies only; Parti Bumiputera and the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) were part of the Sarawak Alliance.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.2
Sarawak: Results of the 1970 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
S1 Lundu	Chong Kim Mook (SUPP)	1,496	221
	Sidi Munan (Pesaka)	1,275	
	T K Su'ud b Udin (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,198	
	Charles Robston Linang (SNAP)	1,105	
	Jimmy Sim Moh Ruat (Independent)	82	
	Peter Chin Nam Fuh (Independent)	67	
S2 Bau	Ong Ah Khin (SUPP)	2,902	667
	Michael Sadin (SNAP)	2,225	
	Guing ak Nyangu @ Aloysius Dom Nagok (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,257	
	Gabriel Dan Nyanjau (Pesaka)	818	
	Ong Guan Cheng (Independent)	579	
S3 Kuching Barat	Cheng Yew Kiew (Alliance)	5,410	1,307
	Ong Kee Hui (SUPP)	4,103	
	Hj Mohd Alli b Ahmad (SNAP)	1,076	
	King Shih Fan (Independent)	192	
S4 Kuching Timor	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (SUPP)	7,560	6,571
	Lok Yik Fong (Alliance-SCA)	989	
	Lim Thian Huat (SNAP)	641	
	James Teo Sing Chiu (Independent)	124	
	Kenneth Lau Ah Lah (Independent)	81	
S5 Semariang	Ajibah bt Abol (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	3,233	2,262
	Abdul Kadir Merican (SUPP)	971	
	T K Shukri b T K Mahidi (Independent)	954	
	Abg Bueng b Abg Amin (SNAP)	526	
	Hj Ben b Jomel (Independent)	250	
S6 Sekama	Sim Kheng Hong (SUPP)	4,435	2,199
	Clarence Tan (Alliance-SCA)	2,236	
	Paul F. Kueh Jee It (SNAP)	738	
	Chai Kuet Sung (Independent)	180	
S7 Sebandi	Ikhwan b Abg Hj Zainie (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	3,765	2,245
	Sauidi b Hj Arshad (SUPP)	1,530	
	Abg Hj Adenan b Abg Hj Azahari (Pesaka)	1,069	
S8 Muara Tuang	Mohamad b Musa (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,934	702
	Chung Kok Chiong (SUPP)	1,232	
	Dato Abg Othman b Hj Moasili (SNAP)	717	
	Arthur Ernest Muda (Independent)	294	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
S9 Batu Kawah	Chong Kiun Kong (SUPP)	3,748	2,098
	Lim Soo Leong (SNAP)	1,650	
	Shii Dai Seng (Alliance-SCA)	1,534	
S10 Bengoh	Sigus ak Ginyai (SUPP)	1,796	264
	Asu Akui (SNAP)	1,532	
	George Si Ricord (Pesaka)	498	
	Mohamed b Hj Bakeri (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	231	
	William Nais (Independent)	230	
S11 Tarat	Nelson Kundai Ngareng (SNAP)	3,160	1,069
	Teo Kui Seng (Alliance-SCA)	2,091	
	Nyadang ak Nador (SUPP)	2,062	
S12 Tebakang	Michael Ben ak Panggi (SNAP)	2,869	949
	Richard Dampeng ak Laki (SUPP)	1,920	
	Ahan ak Engkoyong (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	1,606	
S13 Semera	Lee Thian Kee (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	3,092	1,852
	Wan Alkap Tuanku Esim (SNAP)	1,240	
	Salleh b Zen (SUPP)	497	
S14 Gedong	Hj Abg Abdulrahim b Hj Moasili (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,757	110
	Liew Ming Chung (SNAP)	1,647	
	Andrew Jika Landau (Pesaka)	600	
	Entri ak Tusan (SUPP)	522	
S15 Lingga-Sebuyau	Penghulu Tawi Sli (Pesaka)	2,135	219
	Augustine Mercer ak Jangga (SNAP)	1,915	
	Barbara Bay (SUPP)	1,160	
	Awg Morni b Awg Jaya (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	698	
	Sydney Sentu ak Larok (Independent)	98	
S16 Simanggang	Liap ak Kudu @ Nelson (SNAP)	2,515	634
	Hollis ak Tini (SUPP)	1,879	
	Rabaie b Ahmad (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	1,048	
	Jimbai ak Maja (Pesaka)	718	
	Awg Johari b Pengiran Azid (Independent)	279	
	Joshua Janggan Enpen (Independent)	192	
	Goh Tiau Choon (Independent)	143	
	Anthony Jiram Sabu (Independent)	73	
S17 Engkilili-[Skrang]	Simon Dembab Maja (Pesaka)	1,101	125
	Chang Shui Foh (SUPP)	976	
	Pengeran ak Bilang (SNAP)	946	
	Legan ak Narok (Independent)	225	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
S18 Ulu Ai	David ak Jemut (SNAP)	934	45
	Tutong ak Ningken (Pesaka)	889	
	Rabit ak Nanang (SUPP)	531	
	Penghulu Manau ak Bagi (Independent)	351	
	Ebai ak Inyang (Independent)	86	
	Ahmad b Ibrahim @ Leek (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	80	
S22 Krian	Dunstan Endawi ak Enchana (SNAP)	2,933	2,061
	Albans Meling ak Jan (Pesaka)	872	
	Jelimin ak Telajan (SUPP)	824	
S23 Kuala Rajang	Abdul Rahman Yakub (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	2,161	1,330
	Drahman b Karia (SUPP)	831	
	Anie b Dhoby (SNAP)	743	
	Then Kwan Long (Independent)	656	
	Biliang ak Tinggi (Pesaka)	371	
	Majidi b Subaili (Independent)	103	
S24 Repok	Khoo Peng Loong (SUPP)	2,399	612
	Chen Ko Ming (Alliance-SCA)	1,787	
	Ngo King Huong (SNAP)	844	
	Ching Ting Chiok (Independent)	58	
S25 Matu Daro	Awang Hipni b Pengiran Anu (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	3,360	2,795
	Hamid Awg Mansor b Awg Laga (Pesaka)	565	
	George b Haji Drahman (SUPP)	506	
	Waini b Hj Sahari (Independent)	429	
	Sia Siong Yung (Independent)	136	
	Abang Hj Abdul Razak b Abg Abd (SNAP)	124	
	Hj Rosli b Kiok (Independent)	46	
S26 Binatang	Anthony Teo Tiao Gin (SUPP)	3,048	918
	Luk Tai Lik (Alliance-SCA)	2,130	
	Sandom ak Nyuak (Pesaka)	1,077	
	Teng Tun Hsin (SNAP)	849	
S27 Sibn Tengah	Chew Kim Poon (SUPP)	4,470	2,372
	Chieng Hie Kwong (Alliance-SCA)	2,098	
	Yap Siew Hoe (SNAP)	493	
	Lim Ung Chiew (Independent)	380	
S28 Sibn Luar	Wong Kah Sing (SUPP)	2,969	708
	Tai Sing Chii (Alliance-SCA)	2,261	
	Joseph Tang Chock Chung (SNAP)	562	
	Peter Hwang Tiong Siung (Independent)	135	
	Ngu Teck Sing (Independent)	92	
Jamal b Hj Dris (Independent)	75		

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
S29 Igan	Ling Beng Siong (Alliance-SCA)	3,264	769
	Wong Tuong Kwang (SUPP)	2,495	
	Gelanggang ak Mujan (SNAP)	213	
	T R Ampi ak Matari (Independent)	75	
	Jawi ak Sureng (Independent)	46	
	Penghulu Pengabang ak Impak (Independent)	35	
S30 Dundong	Kong Chung Siew (SUPP)	1,675	241
	Jonathan Bangau ak Renang (Pesaka)	1,434	
	Sandah ak Penghulu Jarrow (SNAP)	1,138	
	Galau ak Kumbong (Independent)	195	
	Langai ak Abol (Independent)	119	
S31 Balingian	Mohd Pauzi b Hamdani (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,555	699
	Ho Thian Ting (BN-SUPP)	856	
	Jang ak Kendawang (SNAP)	827	
	Noh b Hamdan (Independent)	606	
	Sipuk b Ani (Pesaka)	523	
	Tampang ak Basik (Pesaka)	267	
	Tang Yong Dee (Independent)	231	
S32 Oya	Vincent Ferrer Suyong (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,510	171
	Sim Boon Liang (SNAP)	1,339	
	Aleh ak Jueng (Pesaka)	702	
	Augustine Druce (Pesaka)	618	
	Ting Ung Pang (SUPP)	468	
	Ibrahim b Takong (Independent)	396	
	Song Ing Huo (Independent)	200	
S33 Pakan	Mandi ak Sanar (Pesaka)	748	71
	Lau Mee Ee (Independent)	677	
	Dundang ak Ibi (SNAP)	667	
	Laiyau ak Boleng (Independent)	305	
S35 Machan	Thomas Kana (Pesaka)	2,459	870
	Kong Foh Kim (SUPP)	1,589	
	Stephen Mapang ak Sanggau (SNAP)	327	
S36 Ngemah	Lias ak Kana (Independent)	796	136
	Umpau @ Francis ak Empam (Pesaka)	660	
	Jarau ak Serit (SNAP)	603	
	Guntok ak Bana (Independent)	539	
	Ansi ak Anyau (SUPP)	428	
	Ungai ak Sempon (Independent)	47	
Ujok ak Andeng (Independent)	33		
N37 Song	Ngelambong ak Bangau (SNAP)	1,614	320
	Mangai ak Lajang (Pesaka)	1,294	
	Tingai ak Unjom (SUPP)	1,204	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
S38 Pelagus	Leonard Linggi Jugah (Pesaka)	1,389	320
	Jugah ak Lassah (SUPP)	1,069	
	Francis ak Nyuak (SNAP)	716	
S39 Balch	Kenneth Kanyan ak T'gong Koh (Pesaka)	1,953	425
	Ajan ak Nabau (SNAP)	1,528	
	Kulleh ak Semda (SUPP)	806	
	Pengarah Sibak ak Semada (Independent)	492	
S40 Belaga	Nyipa Kilah @ Nyipa Batok (SUPP)	772	84
	Tajang Laing (Pesaka)	688	
	Penghulu Matu Puso (Independent)	606	
	Lisut Tinggang Uma Langat @ Anyic (SNAP)	67	
S41 Tatau	Awg Ismail b Pg Zainuddin (Alliance-Parti Bumiputera)	1,340	149
	Nanang ak Entigai (SNAP)	1,191	
	Goh Ngiap Joon (SUPP)	827	
	M Julaihi Hanaffie (Independent)	571	
	Peng Angkalom ak Latib (Pesaka)	415	
	Lim Chung Yen (Independent)	125	
S42 Kemena	Penghulu Abok ak Jalin (Pesaka)	1,366	211
	Asghar Khan (Alliance- Parti Bumiputera)	1,185	
	Ting Ling Thung (SNAP)	884	
	Png Tai Yok (SUPP)	733	
	Medan ak Suhang (Independent)	212	
S43 Subis	Francis Loke (SNAP)	1,728	308
	Lee Foung Chew (SUPP)	1,420	
	Hashim b Hj Ladis (Independent)	1,387	
	Jackie Yong @ Joseph Leo (Pesaka)	832	
S44 Miri	Chia Chin Shin (Alliance-SCA)	2,876	365
	Yang Siew Siang (SUPP)	2,511	
	John Leong Chee Yun (SNAP)	1,256	
	Kepol Samat (Independent)	166	
	Lau Siu Wai (Independent)	142	
S45 Marudi	Edward Jeli ak Belayong (SNAP)	3,134	2,176
	Tamaweng Tinggung Wan (SUPP)	958	
	Bayak Malang (Pesaka)	910	
	Penghulu Arin ak Jampi (Independent)	110	

Note: SUPP constituencies only; Parti Bumiputera and the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) were part of the Sarawak Alliance.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.3
Sarawak: Results of the 1974 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P131 Bau-Lundu	Patrick ak Uren (SNAP)	6,949	183
	Joseph Valentine Cotter (BN-SUPP)	6,766	
P132 Kuching	Ong Kee Hui (BN-SUPP)	11,534	2,683
	Leong Ho Yean (SNAP)	8,851	
	Ng Eng Lim (Independent)	457	
P135 Padawan	Stephen Yong (BN-SUPP)	7,072	2,040
	Michael Bong Thiam Jun (SNAP)	5,032	
P136 Serian	Richard Dampeng (BN-SUPP)	6,716	213
	Rahun Dabah (SNAP)	6,503	
	Bong Kim Yuk (Independent)	892	
P142 Sarikei	Chieng Tiong Kai (BN-SUPP)	6,420	3,446
	Wong Siong Kwong (SNAP)	2,974	
P144 Sibü	Wee Hoe Soon (BN-SUPP)	6,861	1,101
	Tang Cheok Chung (SNAP)	5,730	
P145 Rajang	Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP)	5,690	1,406
	Dato ak Param (SNAP)	4,284	
P152 Miri-Subis	Yong Siow Siang (BN-SUPP)	8,949	1,615
	James Wong Kim Min (SNAP)	7,334	
P153 Baram	Luhät Wan (SNAP)	6,050	1,823
	Joseph Weng Tinggan (BN-SUPP)	4,227	

Note: SUPP constituencies only; PBB and SUPP were part of the Sarawak BN.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.4
Sarawak: Results of the 1974 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N1 Lundu	Chong Kim Mook (BN-SUPP)	3,150	991
	Michael Bong (SNAP)	2,159	
N2 Bau	Lee Nyan Choi (SNAP)	4,301	909
	Ong Ah Khin (BN-SUPP)	3,392	
N4 Kuching Timur	Lo Foot Kee (SNAP)	5,663	1,435
	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (BN-SUPP)	4,228	
N6 Sekama	Sim Kheng Hong (BN-SUPP)	4,728	1,153
	Sim Pan Chi (SNAP)	3,575	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.4 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N9 Batu Kawah	Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP)	4,287	1,503
	Chin Poh Luke (SNAP)	2,784	
	Augustine Sirau (BISAMAH)	147	
N10 Bengoh	Segus ak Ginyai (BN-SUPP)	2,286	417
	Bernabas Kulur Kaos (SNAP)	1,869	
	William Nais (BISAMAH)	203	
N16 Simanggang	Hollis ak Tini (BN-SUPP)	3,726	542
	Nelson Liap Kudu (SNAP)	3,184	
N24 Repok	Chong Siew Chiang (BN-SUPP)	2,667	818
	Ngo King Huong (SNAP)	1,849	
N26 Binatang	Anthony Teo Tiao Gin (BN-SUPP)	4,494	1,852
	Salang ak Gadam (SNAP)	2,642	
N27 Sibul Tengah	Chew Kim Poon (BN-SUPP)	4,038	666
	Aloysius Tan (SNAP)	3,372	
N28 Sibul Luar	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	3,220	1,419
	Tay Aik Loong (SNAP)	1,801	
N29 Igan	Ling Beng Siong (BN-SUPP)	3,583	1,730
	Pao Kiew King (SNAP)	1,853	
N30 Dundong	Sandah ak Penghulu Jarrow (SNAP)	2,164	147
	Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP)	2,017	
	Kong Siew Yong (Independent)	115	
N40 Belaga	Nyipa Kilah (BN-SUPP)	1,419	37
	Tajang Laing (Independent)	1,382	
N44 Miri	Chia Chin Shin (BN-SUPP)	5,495	1,821
	Chiew Choon Lim (SNAP)	3,674	
N45 Marudi	Edward Jeli ak Belayong (SNAP)	3,438	1,210
	Chan Choon Kay @ Michael Babu (BN-SUPP)	2,228	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.5
Sarawak: Results of the 1978 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P132 Bandar Kuching	Ong Kee Hui (BN-SUPP)	19,902	14,813
	Leong Ho Yuen (Independent)	5,089	
P135 Padawan	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (BN-SUPP)	Unopposed	
P136 Serian	Richard Dampeng (BN-SUPP)	7,050	2,476
	Johnny Ruch (PAJAR)	4,574	
	Nelson Kundai Ngareng (UMAT)	3,313	
P143 Sarikei	Chieng Tiong Kai (BN-SUPP)	7,760	1,388
	Chong Siew Chiang (Independent)	6,372	
P144 Bandar Sibn	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	13,525	6,753
	Chieng Hie Kwong (Independent)	6,772	
P145 Rajang	Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP)	6,584	2,157
	Yong Ping Kuai (Independent)	4,427	
	Juga ak Buan (Independent)	933	
P152 Lambir	Raymond Szetu Mei Thong (SAPO)	10,150	872
	Chia Chin Shin (BN-SUPP)	9,278	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.6
Sarawak: Results of the 1979 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N1 Lundu	Chong Kim Mook (BN-SUPP)	2,861	7
	Mohamed Shamsuddin b Mokhtar (Independent)	2,854	
	Andrew Jipem ak Nayok (Independent)	920	
	Jonathan Saban (Independent)	290	
N2 Tasik Biru	Patrick ak Uren (PBB-Independent)	5,127	2,452
	Ku Fut Nam (SUPP-Independent)	2,675	
	Lee Nyan Choi (BN)	1,518	
	Aloysius Dom Nagok (Independent)	543	
N3 Padungan	Tan Meng Chong (SUPP-Independent)	8,041	2,164
	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	5,877	
	Cheng Yew Kiew (BN)	1,861	
	Tan Tak Seng (Independent)	174	
	Sieh Tzu Tsing (Independent)	59	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.6 (*continued*)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N4 Stampin	Sim Kheng Hong (BN-SUPP)	10,924	7,115
	Chan Kay Heng (DAP)	3,809	
	Junaidi b Samail (Independent)	293	
	Peter Ng Eng Lim @ Bujang Singka (Independent)	164	
N9 Batu Kawa	Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP)	7,208	5,162
	Anga ak Soret @ John Lawrence (Independent)	2,046	
N10 Bengoh	Stephen Yong (BN-SUPP)	4,115	221
	Wilfred Nissom (Independent)	3,894	
	Shyu Li Hua (DAP)	159	
N16 Sri Aman	Hollis Tini (BN-SUPP)	4,502	1,282
	Thomas ak Kawan (Independent)	3,220	
	Bruce ak Matong (DAP)	641	
N25 Repok	David Teng Lung Chi (BN-SUPP)	4,601	339
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	4,262	
N26 Meradong	Anthony Teo Tiao Gin (BN-SUPP)	3,126	939
	Tang Ling Tung (DAP)	2,187	
	Teo Siang Hai (Independent)	1,831	
	Robinson Nyanggau ak Nanang (Independent)	449	
	Mohd Zain b Su'ip (Independent)	194	
N27 Maling	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	9,839	1,730
	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	8,109	
N28 Seduan	Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP)	4,873	1,638
	Sia Chiew King (DAP)	3,235	
	Abang Latip b Abdul Haron (Independent)	191	
N29 Igan	David Tiong Chiong Chu (BN-SUPP)	2,455	272
	Huang Teck Nai (DAP)	2,183	
	Harry Kiroh Rayon (PAJAR)	399	
N40 Belaga	Tajang Laing (Independent)	1,966	760
	Nyipa Bato (BN-SUPP)	1,206	
N44 Miri	Chia Chin Shin (BN-SUPP)	9,036	1,536
	Raymond Szetu Mei Thong (SAPO)	7,500	
N47 Limbang	James Wong Kim Min (BN-SNAP)	5,021	4,278
	Lim Cheong Heng (SUPP-Independent)	743	
	Hasbollah bin Majid (Independent)	623	
	Francis Mabong ak Jeruka (Independent)	442	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.7
Sarawak: Results of the 1982 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P132 Bandar Kuching	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	19,200	3,577
	Loke Yik Ping (BN-SUPP)	15,623	
P135 Padawan	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (BN-SUPP)	11,640	5,123
	George Si Ricord (Independent)	6,517	
P136 Serian	Richard Dampeng ak Laki (BN-SUPP)	8,419	2,864
	Nelson Kundai Ngareng (Independent)	5,555	
	Vernon Nyana ak Juram (Independent)	1,360	
	Tan Yam Hui (Independent)	734	
P143 Sarikei	Law Hieng Ding (BN-SUPP)	8,389	81
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	8,308	
	Nyandang ak Lenang (Independent)	449	
	Ling Tung Leh (SAPO)	178	
P144 Bandar Sibü	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	14,432	141
	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	14,291	
P145 Rajang	Jawan ak Empaling (BN-SUPP)	5,733	1,692
	Tuni @ Tony ak P. Poh (Independent)	4,041	
P152 Lambir	George Chan Hong Nam (BN-SUPP)	17,898	13,213
	Wong Teck Nai @ Huang Teck Nai (DAP)	4,685	
	Hussein b Abdul Rahim (Independent)	1,794	
	Richard Frederick ak Welliam Juing (Independent)	503	
	Jonathan Saong ak Mamat (Independent)	329	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.8
Sarawak: Results of the 1983 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N1 Lundu	Ramsay Noel Jitam (BN-SUPP)	4,146	2,054
	Mohamad Shamsuddin b Mokhtar (Independent)	2,092	
	Jehim ak Milos (Independent)	891	
	Ahmad b Som (Independent)	208	
	Hasan @ Hassan b Mawi (Independent)	127	
	Winston Tujang ak Pata (Independent)	44	
N3 Padungan	Song Swee Guan (BN-SUPP)	11,665	3,544
	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	8,121	
	Alexander John Shek Kwok Bun (SNAP)	1,058	
N4 Stampin	Sim Kheng Hong (BN-SUPP)	15,429	8,710
	Yong Sen Chan (DAP)	6,719	
N9 Batu Kawa	Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP)	7,517	6,076
	Peter ak Nuab (Independent)	1,441	
	Anga ak Soret @ John Lawrence (Independent)	984	
N10 Bengoh	Wilfred Rata Nissom (Independent)	5,720	1,126
	William Tanyuh ak Nub (BN-SUPP)	4,594	
	George Si Ricord (Independent)	96	
N16 Sri Aman	Hollis ak Tini (BN-SUPP)	4,101	1,440
	Ngu Piew Seng (Independent)	2,661	
	Abg Hj Taha b Dt Abg Hj Zain (Independent)	1,527	
	Shamsuddin b Abdullah (Independent)	136	
N17 Engkilili	Sing Cho Nam (SUPP-Independent)	1,461	418
	Wilson Allie ak Banyie (SNAP)	1,043	
	Jonathan Narwin ak Jinggong (PBDS)	984	
	Richard Tawan ak Sedu (Independent)	921	
	Simon Dembab ak Maja (Independent)	495	
	Kua Siang How (Independent)	29	
N25 Repok	Teng Lung Chi (BN-SUPP)	5,791	726
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	5,065	
N26 Meradong	Thomas Hii King Hiong (BN-SUPP)	3,857	897
	Joseph Salang ak Gandum (Independent)	2,960	
	Ting Yii Hiep (DAP)	2,095	
	Wan Zainalabidin b Wan Kassim (Independent)	101	
	Teo Siang Hai (Independent)	33	
N27 Maling	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	21,803	16,220
	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	5,583	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.8 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N28 Seduan	Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP)	7,445	5,558
	Wong Sie Lee (Independent)	1,887	
	Mohd Syaifuddin Suyong b Abdullah @ Vero Wells Suyong (Independent)	176	
N29 Igan	Tiong Chiong Chu (BN-SUPP)	2,813	1,886
	Linus ak Lembang (Independent)	927	
	Neo ak Senen (Independent)	399	
	Boniface Jubilee b Genam (Independent)	365	
N30 Dudong	Wilfred Kiroh ak Jeram (SUPP- Independent)	2,870	175
	Joseph Tan Chok Tiong @ Joseph Chock Chung Tang (SNAP)	2,695	
	Sabang ak Lambong @ Raymond (PBDS)	2,387	
N44 Miri	George Chan Hong Nam (BN-SUPP)	Unopposed	

Note: SUPP constituencies only; SNAP and PBDS stood under their own party symbols.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.9
Sarawak: Results of the 1986 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P155 Bandar Kuching	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	26,468	7,974
	Chan Seng Khai (BN-SUPP)	18,494	
P158 Padawan	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (BN-SUPP)	14,750	7,908
	Barnabas Kulor ak Kaos (Independent)	6,842	
P159 Serian	Lainus ak Andrew Luak (PBDS?-Independent)	9,871	1,420
	Richard Dampeng (BN-SUPP)	8,451	
P166 Sarikei	Law Hieng Ding (BN-SUPP)	10,589	519
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	10,070	
P167 Sibiu	Tieu Sung Seng @ Tiu Siing Seng (BN-SUPP)	18,841	546
	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	18,295	
	Tang Lung Chiew (PLUS)	308	
P168 Rajang	Nicholas Munong ak Ibau (PBDS-Independent)	6,113	153

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.9 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
	Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP)	5,960	
	Siew Chee Kiong @ Shaw		
	Chee Kiong (Independent)	634	
P175 Lambir	Peter Chin Fah Kui (BN-SUPP)	15,933	5,553
	Wong Ho Leng (DAP)	10,380	
	Abang Ismail b Abang Peel (Independent)	2,651	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.10
Sarawak: Results of the 1987 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N1 Lundu	Ramsay Noel Jitam (BN-SUPP)	4,890	1,329
	Hj Noor b Hj Tahir (PERMAS)	3,561	
N3 Padungan	Song Swee Guan (BN-SUPP)	14,499	5,961
	Tay Cheo Hong @ Cheng Hui Hong (DAP)	8,538	
N4 Stampin	Sim Kheng Hong (BN-SUPP)	16,790	7,066
	Sim Keng Soon @ Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	9,724	
N9 Batu Kawah	Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP)	8,228	5,821
	Japat ak Simol (PERMAS)	2,407	
	Lim Guan Sin (DAP)	2,041	
N10 Bengoh	Sura ak Sah @ Sora ak Rusah (PBDS)	5,648	219
	Louis Nigel Gines (BN-SUPP)	5,429	
	Chong Kuet Bui @ Robert Abui (Independent)	230	
N16 Sri Aman	Michael Pilo ak Gangga (BN-SUPP)	5,578	816
	Hollis ak Tini (PBDS)	4,762	
N17 Engkilili	Sing Cho Nang @ Sim Choo Nam (PBDS)	3,839	1,778
	Intal ak Rentap (BN-SUPP)	2,061	
N25 Repok	David Teng Lung Chi (BN-SUPP)	6,479	915
	Wong Sing Nang (DAP)	5,564	
N26 Meradong	Thomas Hii King Hiong (BN-SUPP)	5,371	1,237
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	4,134	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.10 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N27 Maling	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	19,239	9,381
	Ling Siew Ming (DAP)	9,858	
N28 Seduan	Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP)	7,023	4,692
	Ling Sii Kiong (DAP)	2,331	
	Lee Hie Kin @ Eric Lee (PERMAS)	684	
	Loh Ngie Hock (Independent)	155	
N29 Igan	David Tiong Chiong Chu (PERMAS)	2,425	23
	Wong Sook Koh (BN-SUPP)	2,402	
	Nait ak Mani (Independent)	81	
N30 Dudong	Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP)	4,717	311
	Wilfred Kiroh ak Jeram (PBDS)	4,406	
	Suffian b Abdullah @ Siew Chee Kiong (Independent)	232	
N44 Miri	George Chan Hong Nam (BN-SUPP)	14,352	8,273
	Wong Ho Leng (DAP)	6,079	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.11
Sarawak: Results of the 1990 Parliamentary Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P157 Bandar Kuching	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	25,573	6,164
	Stephen Yong Kuet Tze (BN-SUPP)	19,409	
P158 Padawan	Yong Khoon Seng (BN-SUPP)	16,362	6,611
	Cheng Hai Hong (DAP)	9,751	
P160 Serian	Richard Riot ak Jaem (PBDS-Independent)	10,349	2,685
	William Aham (BN-SUPP)	7,664	
P168 Sarikei	Law Hieng Ding (BN-SUPP)	12,584	4,612
	Chian Pao Koh (DAP)	7,972	
P171 Lanang	Wong Sing Nang (DAP)	15,405	3,973
	Tieu Sung Seng (BN-SUPP)	11,432	

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.11 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
P172 Sibü	Robert Lau Hoi Chew (BN-SUPP)	11,914	2,008
	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	9,906	
	Tang Lung Chiew (PLUS)	162	
P174 Selangau	Joseph Mauh (PBDS- Independent)	54,413	1,025
	Jerome Runggol (BN-SUPP)	4,418	
	Linton Albert (Independent)	1,099	
P178 Miri	Peter Chin Fah Kui (BN-SUPP)	18,904	8,181
	Sarbini b Morni (PERMAS)	3,242	
	Lo Yung Tee (DAP)	10,723	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.12
Sarawak: Results of the 1991 State Election

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
N1 Tanjung Batu (formerly Lundu)	Ramsay Noel Jitam (BN-SUPP)	5,088	794
	Sidi Munan (PBDS)	4,294	
	Aton ak Kajit (Parti Negara)	133	
	Ahmed Abang Ali (Independent)	268	
N7 Padungan	Song Swee Guan (BN-SUPP)	8,836	4,190
	Ng Kim Ho (DAP)	4,646	
N8 Pending (formerly Stampin)	Sim Kheng Hui (BN-SUPP)	11,170	5,537
	Chen Hui Hong (DAP)	5,633	
N9 Batu Lintang (new constituency)	Chan Seng Khai (BN-SUPP)	8,206	2,434
	Sim Kwang Yang (DAP)	5,772	
N10 Batu Kawa	Chong Kiun Kong (BN-SUPP)	10,201	6,616
	Yong Seng Chan (DAP)	3,585	
	Chong Ju Siaw (Independent)	100	
N11 Bengoh	William Tanyuh ak Nub (BN-SUPP)	6,477	212
	Wilfred Rata Nissom (PBDS)	6,265	
	Johnnie Chai @ Sasim (Independent)	275	
	George Si Ricord (Parti Negara)	236	
N21 Simanggang (formerly Sri Aman)	Michael Pilo ak Gangga (BN-SUPP)	4,818	197

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 2.12 (continued)

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Candidates/Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Majority^a</i>
	Ngu Piew Seng (PBDS)	4,621	
	Hj Azmi Hj Lamat (Independent)	165	
	Simong ak Naga (Independent)	62	
	Banic ak Laba (Parti Negara)	39	
N22 Engkilili	Toh Heng San (BN-SUPP)	3,227	405
	Sim Choo Nam (PBDS)	2,822	
	Engkamat ak Nanang (Parti Negara)	143	
N31 Meradong	Thomas Hii King Hiong (BN-SUPP)	5,368	1,905
	Sim Lai Ann (PBDS)	3,463	
	Wailem Mohamad Sidek Kumung (Parti Negara)	211	
N32 Repok	David Teng Lung Chi (BN-SUPP)	6,491	1,403
	Chong Siew Chiang (DAP)	5,088	
	Mawan ak Wass (Parti Negara)	87	
N37 Dudung	Soon Choon Teck (BN-SUPP)	8,580	6,031
	Joseph Tang Chok Tiong (DAP)	2,549	
	Paul Kong Pak Nam (PBDS)	1,874	
N38 Bukit Assek (formerly Maling)	Wong Soon Kai (BN-SUPP)	10,567	6,353
	Jason Wong Sing Nang (DAP)	4,216	
N39 Bawang Assan (new constituency)	Wong Soon Koh (BN-SUPP)	6,112	2,892
	Ling Sie Ming (DAP)	3,220	
N40 Seduan	Ting Ing Mieng (BN-SUPP)	8,677	5,912
	Ma Teck Kiong (DAP)	2,765	
	Junit Yunus (Parti Negara)	410	
N43 Tamin (new constituency)	Joseph Entulu Belaun (PBDS)	3,455	512
	Jawan Empaling (BN-SUPP)	2,943	
	Emat ak Lidy (Independent)	124	
N50 Kidurong (new constituency)	Michael Sim (BN-SUPP)	5,710	1,350
	Ting Ling Kiew (PBDS)	4,360	
	Chiew Chiu Sing (DAP)	2,676	
	Menjang ak Mawar (Parti Negara)	94	
N52 Piasau (formerly Miri)	George Chan Hong Nam (BN-SUPP)	13,634	9,063
	Chong Kon Fatt (DAP)	4,571	
	Edward Guatee ak Sundai (PBDS)	2,819	

Note: SUPP constituencies only.

^aMargin of victory.

APPENDIX 3

SUPP's Memorandum to UN Together with United National Pasok Momogun Party and Parti Rakyat Brunei

PETITION FROM MR G. S. SUNDANG, CHAIRMAN, UNITED NATIONAL PASOK MOMOGUN PARTY, MR A. M. AZAHARI MAHMUD, CHAIRMAN, THE PARTY RAKYAT AND MR ONG KEE HUI, CHAIRMAN, SARAWAK UNITED PEOPLE'S PARTY, CONCERNING SARAWAK, BRITISH NORTH BORNEO AND BRUNEI.

9th September 1962

The Secretary-General
United Nations Organization
New York

Sir,

We the undersigned representing our respective parties in the territories of Sarawak, British North Borneo and Brunei have the honour to submit herewith a joint memorandum with a view to having it placed before the Committee on Colonies of the United Nations Organization or any other competent body for consideration and with a view to seeking the intervention of the United Nations in the proposed transfer of Sovereignty in British North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak by the United Kingdom Government to the proposed Federation of Malaysia without the exercise of the right of self determination by the peoples in these territories, in contravention to the spirit and letter of the Declaration of the United Nations and the Resolution 1514(XV) of the United Nations General Assembly of the 14th December, 1960.

We further request that in view of the urgency of the matter earliest opportunity be given to us for making oral representation before the Committee.

Yours faithfully,

The United National Pasok Momogun Party of Sabah
G. S. Sundang, Chairman

The Party Rakyat
(Peoples' Party)
A. M. Azahari Mahmud, Chairman

The Sarawak United People's Party
Ong Kee Hui, Chairman

Memorandum

This memorandum is submitted by the following political organizations in the British Borneo territories of British North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak viz:

- (1) The United National Pasok Momogun Party of British North Borneo, a political party with a membership to date of over 30,000 comprising largely of the native inhabitants of North Borneo together with a few hundred Chinese who are either born in North Borneo or have made North Borneo their home and the object of their loyalty.
 - (2) The Party Raykat of Brunei, a party established in Brunei since 1956 with a membership of 26,000 comprising all races in Brunei and receiving the overwhelming support of Brunei's population of 84,000.
 - (3) The Sarawak United People's Party, the first political party to be formed and is the largest party in Sarawak with a membership to date of 47,000 people, comprising of all races who live in Sarawak and is therefore a most representative party. Every one in eight of the adult population in Sarawak is a member of the Party.
2. These three political parties represent[ing] the nationalist movement in the territories' started independently of each other, are striving for the natural aspirations of the people in the British Borneo territories to achieving self government and independence.
 3. Sarawak and British North Borneo (also known as Sabah) are British colonies without any representative government. The Government of the United Kingdom has however repeatedly given the pledge that the peoples in these territories shall be granted self-government and independence.
 4. Until the middle of [the] 19th century, the Sultan of Brunei had exercised sovereignty over Sarawak and over [a] large part of Sabah. The State of Brunei is a protectorate of the United Kingdom and through her High Commissioner she can assert and has in fact exercised great influence in the conduct of political affairs in this State. It has no representative government.
 5. In 1958 the Colonial Governors of Sarawak and Sabah, in pursuance of the policy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain at that time called for closer association of the territories of Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei with a view to forming a federation of these territories. The people in these territories were urged to accept the same as pre-requisite to [the] gran[ting] of independence.
 6. On 27th May 1961, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman made a statement on the concept of Malaysia. At the prompting of the representatives of [the] Governments of Malaya and Singapore, the delegates from North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak, attending the Regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting, proposed the formation of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC). The pace of and the line taken by this Committee was set or influenced by the representatives of the governments of Singapore and Malaya.
 7. On 23rd November 1961, a joint statement was issued by the British and Malayan Governments to the effect that formation of a 'Federation of Malaysia' was a desirable aim and that a commission was to be set up to ascertain the views of the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak and to make recommendations.
 8. The composition of the Commission was Lord Cobbold (Chairman), Sir Anthony Abell (a former Governor of Sarawak), Sir David Watherston, Dato Wong Pow Nee and Enche Mohammed Ghazali bin Shafie. The

Chairman was a joint choice by the British and Malayan Governments, and of the four members two were nominated by the British Government and two by the Malayan Government.

9. In view of the decision of the British Government, the Colonial Governments of Sarawak and Sabah were bound to support the formation of Malaysia and had utilized every propaganda machine at their disposal to put the proposal in the most favourable light. In Sarawak and elsewhere, charges were indiscriminately made of people who were against Malaysia as Communists, a description equivalent to bandits or foreign agents.
10. The Commission sat in 20 centres in Sarawak and 15 in Sabah and saw over 4,000 people in 690 groups in both Sarawak and Sabah. No referendum was taken.
11. The Government of Brunei set up its own committee to ascertain the views of the people there and to forward the finding to his Highness the Sultan.
12. As no public demonstrations were allowed when the Commission was in the Colony of Sarawak, a national signature campaign was launched. Some over 112,000 signatures of adult persons opposing the Malaysia Plan were collected and forwarded to the Commission. These signatures were obtained in very short time and in face of adverse government propaganda. In terms of the total population (750,000) 55 per cent of whom are not adults, the persons against Malaysia are substantially large.
13. The assessment of the Commission was that about one-third of the population strongly favoured realization of Malaysia without conditions, one-third favoured it with conditions and safeguards, and the rest against. This assessment was totally wrong and could not be supported by facts and cannot be accepted by independent impartial observers.
14. In August 1962 in a joint Communiqué, issued by the British and Malayan Governments, it was stated that the proposed Federation of Malaysia should be brought into being by 31st August, 1963 and within 6 months a formal agreement would be concluded to provide for the transfer of sovereignty in Sabah and Sarawak by the State.
15. This decision was against the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and particularly its Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14th December 1960 and of the Nine Cardinal Principles of the Rules of the The White Rajah which form part of the present Constitution for Sarawak. The said principles are annexed hereto and marked "A".
16. The finding of the Committee set up by H. M. the Sultan of Brunei was that the overwhelming majority of the people in the State is against the federation of Malaysia.
17. At the recent general elections, candidates of Party Rayaat of Brunei, the only Party in Brunei against the federation of Malaysia and fighting the elections on that platform were all returned, by winning all the 55 seats.
18. The signatories to this memorandum appeal to the United Nations and urge that:
 - a. The United Nations Organization should, in pursuance to its declaration and resolutions, intervene in the proposed transfer of sovereignty in Sarawak and Sabah on the ground that such a transfer is a denial to the peoples in these territories of their right to self determination and of their right to complete independence;
 - b. Alternatively that a plebiscite organized and conducted by the United Nations Organization be held before such transfer of sovereignty;
 - c. In accordance with the peoples' freely expressed will and desire and our

belief, a federation or union of the three Borneo territories viz. Sarawak, Sabah, and Brunei be brought about with His Highness the Sultan of Brunei as the Constitutional Head of such a Federation or Union.

Dated this 9th September, 1962

The United National Pasok Momogun Party
The Party Rakyat of Brunei
The Sarawak United People's Party

“A”

CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF THE RULE OF THE ENGLISH RAJAHS

1. That Sarawak is the heritage of Our Subjects and is held in trust by Ourselves for them.
2. That social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised.
3. That never shall any person or persons be granted rights inconsistent with those of the people of this country or be in any way permitted to exploit Our Subjects or those who have sought Our protection and care.
4. That justice shall be easily obtainable and that the Rajah and every public servant shall be freely accessible to the public.
5. That freedom of expression both in speech and writing shall be permitted and encouraged and that everyone shall be entitled to worship as he pleases.
6. That public servants shall ever remember that they are but the servants of the people on whose goodwill and co-operation they are entirely dependent.
7. That so far as may be Our Subjects of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our Service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge.
8. That the goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind, that the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves, and that continuous efforts shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in the obligations, the responsibilities, and the privileges of citizenship.
9. That the general policy of Our predecessors and Ourselves whereby the various races of the State have been enabled to live in happiness and harmony together shall be adhered to by Our successors and Our servants and all who may follow them hereafter.

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This is a partial list. Interviews were conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Sibul, and Singapore.

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