

# BARISAN NASIONAL

Coalition Government  
in Malaysia

by  
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## PREFACE

The genesis of this book was my Ph.D. thesis on "Consociationalism and Coalition Politics in Malaysia" which was completed in 1978. This material has been revised, reduced, and up-dated to include political events through the 1982 General Elections.

In addition to books, articles, newspapers and party pamphlets, this book is based on about 200 interviews with Malaysian politicians, academics, and journalists in 1974-75, 1978, 1980, and 1982. Conducting research in Malaysia is a fascinating, challenging, and rewarding enterprise, not only because of the nature of politics in the nation, but especially because of the kind hospitality, openness, and forthrightness of the many people who have taken the time to see me and patiently answer my questions. To all these people I am deeply indebted; without their help this book would not have been possible.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### *POLITICAL PARTIES*

BARJASA	Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak
Berjasa	Barisan Jemmah Islam Se Malaysia
Berjaya	Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah
Bumiputera	Parti Bumiputera
BUNAP	Borneo Utara National Party
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DP	Democratic Party
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
IPPP	Independent People's Progressive Party
Kita	Kesatuan Insaf Tanah Air
LP	Labour Party of Malaya
M.A.P.	Malaysian Alliance Party
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
Pajar	Partai Rakyat Jati Sarawak
PANAS	Party Negara Sarawak
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam Se Malaysia
PBB	Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu
Pekemas	Parti Keadilan Masyarakat Malaysia
Pesaka	Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak
PM	United National Pasok Monogun Party
PMIP	see PAS
PN	Party Negara
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PR	Parti Rakyat; see PSRM
PSRM	Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia
SANAP	Sabah National Party
SAPO	Sarawak People's Organization
SCA	Sabah Chinese Association
SIC	Sabah Indian Congress
SF	Socialist Front

## *POLITICAL PARTIES*

SNAP	Sarawak National Party
SUPP	Sarawak United People's Party
UDP	United Democratic Party
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UNKO	United National Kadazan Organization
UP	United Party
UPKO	United Pasok-momogun Kadazan Organization
USNO	United Sabah National Organization

## *GOVERNMENT*

CLC	Communities Liaison Committee
ISA	Internal Security Act
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NCC	National Consultative Council
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGC	National Goodwill Council
NOC	National Operations Council
SEDCs	State Economic Development Corporations
SOCs	State Operations Committees
TAR	Tunku Abdul Rahman College
TMP	Third Malaysia Plan

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## INTRODUCTION:

### THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SETTING

**M**alaysia's political system has been significantly influenced by the nation's colonial experience, economic condition, and the socio-cultural situation. The combination of these factors has made ethnic relations the most important consideration in Malaysia's politics.

The British "forward movement" into Malaya (Peninsular Malaysia) in the 1870s was in response to threats to British interests caused by endemic fighting between rival Chinese secret societies, allied with various Malay chiefs, over the profits being realized from the large-scale tin mining industry. The Rulers in the Malay states, the victims of "over-mighty" subjects, could not restore law and order, and the disturbances were spilling over into the British Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements (Penang, Malacca, and Singapore) and threatening its stability. The troubles at the mining sites were jeopardizing the capital invested there by Straits merchants, who lobbied the British to step in.

Ruling at first indirectly and then gradually assuming more direct executive control, the British did reestablish order in the peninsula. Tin, and from around the turn of the century, rubber, became the export industries which provided most of the revenues for government administration and economic expansion.

The British found, as had the Malay chiefs, that the Muslim Malays on the whole would not work for wages in the tin mines or as rubber tappers, preferring instead to remain in their kampungs as subsistence farmers or fishermen. As a

result, the British imposed no immigration restrictions and, indeed, encouraged the recruitment of immigrant labour — basically Chinese for the tin industry and Indians for the rubber plantation industry.

British policy at this time was based on two major premises. First, it was believed that the Malays needed to be “protected” from the exploitative commercialism of the export sector and the often cruel and up-rooting socio-cultural transformation required by modernization. At the same time Malay village life became romanticized, idealized, and also isolated from the mainstream of development. The Malay aristocracy and the Rulers collaborated with the British in this policy of “protection” of the Malays, while the sons of the aristocracy attended English-language schools and filled the medium-level ranks of the civil service. The second major British premise was that the overseas immigrants were typical “birds of passage” or temporary residents who would one day return to their home countries. Indeed, most of the immigrant labourers did intend to make money and then return home, and many did just that. But many also stayed.

It was not until 1931, when the results of a preliminary census showed that there were substantially more non-Malays than Malays in the country, that restrictions were imposed on immigration.<sup>1</sup> The fact of ethnic division has fundamentally affected Malaysia’s modern political development. As of 1976 for Malaysia as a whole, the Malays and Other Indigenous comprised 54.7 per cent of the population, the Chinese 34.2 per cent, Indians and Pakistanis 9 per cent, and Others 2.1 per cent. For Peninsular Malaysia, the ethnic breakdown was as follows: Malays 53.1 per cent, Chinese 35.5 per cent, Indians and Pakistanis 10.6 per cent, and Others 0.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Ethnicity has to do with origins and race, culture, language, and religion, and is even associated with occupation. All the characteristics which make up major group identities are relevant, and also the divisions which make one group distinctive from others, which tend to combine in clusters of cleavages, as in a package, and to reinforce one another. Ethnic cleavages also tend to be intense and enduring because



they are linked with symbols and myths, tied to people's "roots", and because they are explicit and visible.

In Malaysia, the major ethnic groups are the Malays, Chinese, Indians, and, collectively, the indigenous Natives of Sabah and Sarawak. However the politically salient division is between the Malays and the non-Malays, with a clear "we" versus "them" connotation. The Malays and the non-Malays are nearly equally divided numerically, with the Malays holding a slight majority, and the lines of cleavage between the groups coincide closely for race, culture, language, religion, and to a lesser extent for occupation and residence in terms of an urban-rural distinction. Partly as a result of cultural proclivities and partly because of colonial policy, the non-Malays until recently, have controlled the modern sectors of the economy and more than a proportionate share of the economic wealth. On the other hand, the British policy of recognizing the Malays as the indigenous race and thereby as the legitimate claimants to political leadership, has led to a situation where, despite considerable political ethnic accommodation, the Malays claim and demand political hegemony. Especially since 1969, the Malays have run the government and have been the ones to set the political "rules of the game." But, precisely because of memories of the race riots of May 1969, the Malays have chosen not to ignore or run roughshod over the crucial interests of the non-Malays. All these factors have made socio-cultural assimilation nearly impossible without direct coercion, and have even made the political terms for national integration highly contentious. Governments in Malaysia have taken note of this.

One of the most important tasks of government is the management of conflict and the maintenance of legitimate public order and stability, which in turn creates a climate conducive to economic growth. Intense ethnic cleavages such as exist in Malaysia create difficult political problems which cannot easily be solved in the short-run, only regulated. There are limited political options, short of the costly and unreliable use of extensive sanctions and coercion.

Malaysia's elites have chosen to follow a political course designed to manage ethnic conflict without sacrificing Malay

political dominance or the vital interests of the non-Malays. This has been done by creating large, nearly "grand", government coalitions comprised of parties representing all of the important ethnic groups in the society, by Cabinet representativeness, and by elite bargaining and accommodation of divisive ethnic issues. Although Malaysia has many of the outward signs and some of the substance of democracy, to make the system of conflict regulation and elite accommodation viable there has also been substantial regulation of political competition and controls over popular participation, especially since 1969.

The first steps toward ethnic accommodation were taken in 1949 with the establishment of the Communities Liaison Committee (CLC). However, it was not until the formation of the Alliance Party, comprising the three major ethnic parties, and the compromise political agreements they worked out which led to Independence, that the idea of inter-ethnic cooperation at the elite level became institutionalized.

In May 1969, election reverses for the Alliance followed by terrible race riots in Kuala Lumpur signaled the end of the Alliance period and led to the search for a new political formula for ruling the country. After a period of rule by the National Operations Council, parliamentary rule was restored, accompanied by extensive coalition-building which saw government alliances formed with four former opposition parties. In 1974 a new political organization was formed, the Barisan Nasional, a permanent coalition comprised originally of nine political parties. This was recognised as the culmination of the Malaysian government's strategies for a political re-ordering.

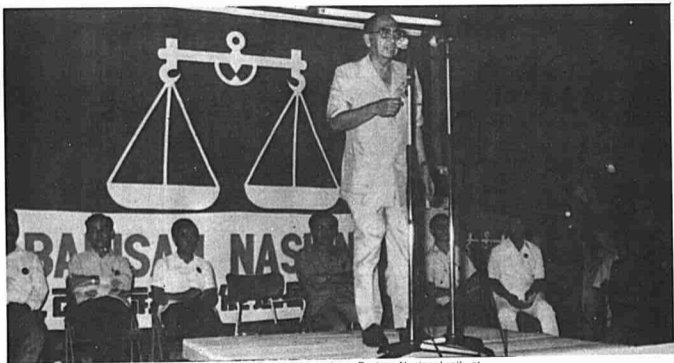
Some of the ambiguities of the Alliance period were removed, especially uncertainties about Malay political hegemony, and new regulations proscribed most of the more "sensitive" ethnic political issues from public debate. But the principle of Cabinet representativeness and of arriving at political decisions through inter-ethnic consultation, with some compromise and concessions on the part of the dominant Malay elite, was re-established.

Since its formation, the Barisan Nasional has tested its support and legitimacy in three general elections, in 1974, 1978, and 1982. Unlike the Alliance, which was noted for fluctuating from strong to weak electoral performances, the Barisan Nasional has been consistently strong in its elections.

This book seeks to chart the history of elite accommodation in Malaysia, coalition stresses and strains, election performances, and especially the origins and nature of the Barisan Nasional, Malaysia's dominant party.



Tunku Abdul Rahman addressing an Alliance rally.  
The Barisan Nasional replaced the Alliance



Tun Abdul Razak addressing a Barisan Nasional rally at the Merdeka Stadium, August 22, 1974

# 1

## THE ALLIANCE PARTY

### *THE FORMATION OF THE COMPONENT PARTIES OF THE ALLIANCE*

**B**efore the Second World War, the British governed in differing measure three distinct units in Malaya: The Straits Settlements, the four Federated Malay States, and the five Unfederated Malay States. Only the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements (Penang, Malacca, and Singapore) was under direct British rule and sovereignty. During the course of the war, however, colonial policy under the British coalition government began to change. As this affected Malaya, it led to the formation of a Malayan Planning Unit set up by the Colonial Office in 1943. <sup>1</sup> By the conclusion of the war, a scheme was finalized whereby the British Government would call for a constitutional Union of Malaya as a crown colony, which would include the nine Federated and Unfederated Malay States plus the Settlements of Penang and Malacca. Singapore was to be made a separate crown colony, for strategic reasons as well as considerations of the ethnic balance.

The Malayan Union envisioned three aims: the integration of the Chinese and Indians equally into the polity through liberal citizenship laws; the establishment of a single centralised government; and eventual self-government.

The Malayan Union scheme was first publicly disclosed in October 1945 and the Union was officially promulgated on April 1946. By July 25, 1946, it was announced that the

Malayan Union would be abandoned.<sup>2</sup> In the few months between the announcement, initiation, and abandonment of the Malayan Union, Malay nationalism had found a cause, a leader, and an organizational vehicle.

By December 1945, leaders of the Malay community were busy reviving old associations and organizing new ones to defend Malay interests and privileges. In January 1946, Dato Onn bin Jaafar organized the Peninsular Malay Movement to oppose the Malayan Union, and sent a letter to the Malay Press calling for a congress of Malays to meet as soon as possible to coordinate action against the Malayan Union.

On March 1, 1946, 41 Malay Associations from all parts of the Peninsula gathered as the Pan-Malayan Congress at the Sultan Sulaiman's Club in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the possibility of forming a central organization for warding off "the ignominy of racial extinction".<sup>3</sup> At the meeting a proposal was passed calling for the formation of a United Malays National Organization (UMNO), and a committee was charged with drafting a charter and constitution. On May 11, the third meeting of the Pan-Malayan Malay Congress was convened at Johore Bahru. Here the UMNO, organized as a political party though there was as yet no franchise, was inaugurated.<sup>4</sup> Dato Onn was elected as its first president. The UMNO executives decided that opposing the Union, through non-cooperation, non-participation, and mass demonstrations was only the first step. Accordingly, they also outlined an alternative scheme: a federation with safeguards for Malays. They agreed to hold negotiations with the British with the stipulation that the Malayan Union treaties signed with the Rulers (the MacMichael Treaties) first be abrogated, and that the negotiations be limited only to the UMNO, the Malay Rulers, and the British.

The British, faced with a deteriorating security situation and alarmed at the possibility of open Malay rebellion, invited UMNO to draft formal proposals.

On February 1, 1947, the British gave final approval to the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, and the Federation came into force one year later. The Federation Constitution

represented a substantial victory for UMNO and the Malays. The former status of the Rulers was restored, Malay special rights were instituted, and citizenship was restricted. The phenomenal rise of UMNO and its success in getting the Malayan Union replaced, left UMNO as the dominant Malay force and leading Malayan organization in government affairs. Under the federation, UMNO's leaders concentrated on consolidating their organization and on cooperating with the British in the administration of the federation. They were in no hurry to attain Independence, stressing gradualism as the best method of ensuring Malay interests. Though the leadership was exclusively from among the English-educated Malays and with strong representation of the aristocracy, the party had the overwhelming support of rural Malays and the sub-elite strata of Malay school teachers and religious teachers. The rural areas were penetrated by party teams and village committees were established as the base unit, though mobilization coincided with the traditional power structure and loyalties. These activities were coordinated at the state level by liaison committees and unified at the top by party headquarters. Meanwhile, a number of the top leadership participated on the Legislative Council, in the state assemblies, and in the civil service.

As UMNO became institutionalized, the branch became the basic unit, followed by district organizations and State Executive Committees (later replaced by State Liaison Committees) which were coordinated by the national organization. The national officeholders consisted of an elected president, deputy president, five vice-presidents, and several appointed positions. The officeholders were elected by the delegates to the Central Assembly, with the exception of the Presidents of UMNO Youth and Wanita UMNO (originally Kaum Ibu), who were automatically party vice-presidents, and who were elected by their own assemblies. The top policy-making body and UMNO's power centre was, as now, the Supreme Executive Council. The Council consisted of the elected national officeholders, those elected directly to the Council by the General Assembly, and



presidential appointees. The General Assembly, in turn, which comprised of delegates selected from the branches and divisions, met annually (in addition to special assemblies), and since 1971 has voted for office holders and Council members triennially. UMNO Youth and Wanita UMNO (women) are organizational wings of the party with their own officeholders and assemblies. In 1959 it was decided to form ulama (religious) sections at branch, division, and state levels, but this plan never materialized.

The Chinese community did not react to the debate on the Malayan Union until after the announcement that it would be rescinded. This apathy among the Chinese was partly the result of the diversity of the community itself. Chinese groups were organized along a network of economic, language and clan leadership lines, the guilds and associations, which were non-political in nature and which were often competitive. The abolition of the Kapitan China (headman) system in 1901 had "meant the disintegration of instituted and exclusive communal leadership" among the Chinese.<sup>5</sup>

After the July 1946 announcement, some leaders of the Chinese community, most notably Tun Tan Cheng Lock, an English-speaking Baba Chinese,<sup>6</sup> began to organize a protest movement, which included petitions and finally a nation-wide hartal. This reaction came too late to stop the implementation of the Federation of Malaya on February 1, 1948, but it did help promote political consciousness among the Chinese in Malaya.

Shortly after the Federation was promulgated, the security situation in the country deteriorated seriously as a result of the guerrilla warfare activity of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which was about 90 per cent Chinese. In June 1948, three European planters were killed by guerrillas, and the Government responded by declaring an Emergency, first in Perak, and then throughout the Federation. Under the Briggs Plan, the Government began to resettle what would amount to one-half million people, mostly Chinese, into New Villages. In these circumstances, it was becoming increasingly clear to the leaders of the Chinese community that a single

national organization to safeguard Chinese interests and offer an alternative to the MCP was needed. Tun Tan Cheng Lock's attempt to form a Malayan Chinese League in September 1948 failed to attract support. However, the leaders of the guilds and associations soon realized that they would have to support the English-speaking Chinese leaders sitting by appointment in the Federal Council and the state assemblies; it was these Chinese who could obtain British support and Malay consent.

The Malayan (later Malaysian) Chinese Association (MCA) was founded on February 27, 1949 in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>7</sup> Although Tun Tan Cheng Lock apparently had no direct connection in the move to form the MCA, he was the only Chinese leader acceptable to both the British and the Malays, and he was named the first President of the MCA.

In the beginning the MCA did not view itself as a political organization. It saw itself as a welfare, social and cultural organization whose primary task was to provide assistance to the New Villagers. The MCA adopted a constitution at a General Meeting in June 1949 which called for promoting inter-racial goodwill, promoting the welfare of the Chinese, and promoting peaceful and orderly progress in Malaya. Members were not prohibited from joining other organizations, even political ones, as long as the aims of these organizations were not contrary to those of the MCA. Membership in the MCA swelled considerably after the Government allowed an MCA lottery from October 1949, with profits used to assist the New Villagers. However, on October 28, 1951, Tun Tan Cheng Lock drafted a *Memorandum of the Reorganization of the MCA*, proposing to turn the MCA into a political organization, and submitted it to the party's Central Working Committee. In February 1952, after the MCA's participation in the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections, its lottery licence was withdrawn by the Government on the grounds that it was a political party. Finally, on June 20, 1952, the MCA Central Working Committee approved the *Memorandum*, thus acknowledging the political nature of the body.

Organizationally, ward branches and divisions, the base units of the MCA, were established only in 1959. Originally, the MCA was organized with only State Assemblies (later State Liaison Committees) and the national body. The state MCA organizations, with extensive control of state financial resources, were more powerful than their UMNO counterparts, and powerful enough at times to defy the national organization, until constitutional restrictions in 1971 centralized more power in the national executive. Nationally, the MCA had an elected president, deputy president, usually six vice-presidents, and several appointed officers. The most powerful executive body was the Central Working Committee (later called the Central Committee), made up of members elected by the General Assembly and those appointed by the President. An MCA Youth wing was formed in Malacca in 1954 and soon became a national organization. Like UMNO Youth, MCA Youth had its own set of officers and its own meetings; its first MCA Youth National Delegates Conference was held in 1955. A Wanita MCA section was formed in January 1972 in hope of encouraging more Chinese women to play an active role in politics.

The Malayan (later Malaysian) Indian Congress (MIC) was formed in August 1946 with the aim of protecting Indian interests and erasing the image of the Malayan Indian as a compliant laborer. The first President was John Thivy, who had been in the wartime Indian Independence League and also a member of Subhas Chandra Bose's Provisional Government of Azad Hind. From the beginning, the MIC had difficulties attracting a representative membership. The Indian community was divided, dispersed and overwhelmingly outnumbered by Malays and Chinese. The organization was led primarily by English-educated Indian professionals and businessmen who had virtually no links with the Indian laboring class or the trade unions, and it had to compete with the Indian Association, the Indian Chambers of Commerce, and various trade unions for influence.\*

Under the leadership of K.L. Devaser, who opposed having special rights for Malays in the Federal Constitution, the MIC

in 1951 became the staunchest supporter of the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), which will be discussed later. When the IMP ceased to function, the MIC was politically isolated. Though divided internally over a number of issues, there was virtual consensus in the party on the need of the MIC to be allied with other political forces. It was apparent rather early that the MIC was not going to be in a position to act as an arbiter between the Malays and Chinese, nor able to derive any extra influence from it. This was mainly because the Malays socially and politically divided the country into Malays and non-Malays, and did not distinguish between the Chinese and Indians.

Organizationally, the MIC was similar to UMNO and the MCA, though it was less tightly structured, with fewer branches, no Women's wing, and a not very active Youth section in the state of Selangor.

#### *TWO EARLY INTER-ETHNIC EXPERIMENTS: THE COMMUNITIES LIAISON COMMITTEE AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF MALAYA PARTY.*

In late December 1948 at an informal meeting of twenty-one community leaders at the home of Dato Onn bin Jaafar in Johore Bahru, it was decided to form a group which would examine the sources of ethnic conflict and recommend solutions to them. On January 10, 1949, as a result of this meeting, a Communities Liaison Committee (CLC) was formed for this purpose, with six Malay and six Chinese members and one Indian, Ceylonese, Eurasian, and European member each, and the attendance of the British Commissioner General, Malcolm MacDonald. The inauguration of the CLC was greeted with apprehension generally by the Malays despite the fact that some of the most active Malay opponents of the Malayan Union sat on the Committee. The *Utusan Melayu* called it "a meeting of high-class Malays with rich Chinese under the guidance of a British official."<sup>9</sup>

The CLC held a series of meetings stretching from February

1949 to May 1950, and issued two reports. The first report was a statement of general political aims for Malaya, including the attainment of self-government, and the rejection of communal electoral rolls and reserved communal seats. The CLC also accepted the legitimacy of endeavoring to take steps to improve the economic position of the Malays, even though the "specific remedial measures" were not very extensive.<sup>10</sup> The next report dealt largely with the difficult question of citizenship. The CLC agreed that the Federation citizenship provisions should be reviewed with the aim of liberalizing them somewhat. This, however was tied in with agreement that immigration restrictions should be strict.

These reports carried no official weight and indeed, some of the recommendations were rejected by Malay and Chinese organizations. Nevertheless, the CLC and its recommendations played an important part in the political development of the country. First, the CLC itself represented a new awareness on the part of some of the top ethnic leaders of the need for inter-ethnic compromises. Second, the CLC demonstrated to these leaders the possibility of arriving at inter-ethnic agreements and solutions despite the strong divergence of views and positions. Third, it appears to have encouraged the British authorities to believe that political advancement in Malaya was possible through inter-ethnic collaboration. Fourth, the CLC was the first inter-ethnic experiment to use the technique of conducting sensitive bargaining by semi-secret negotiations. Fifth, the idea of communal rolls and reserved seats to protect minorities was dismissed and never again very seriously considered. Sixth, the legitimacy of the principle of inter-ethnic cooperation to improve the economic position of the Malays was accepted. Finally, the CLC apparently significantly influenced the thinking of Dato Onn, and this in turn was to affect the history of UMNO and the country.

Partly at least because of the experience of the CLC, Dato Onn increasingly came to view progress towards Independence as dependent upon inter-ethnic cooperation. Believing that the multi-ethnic party was the wave of the future, Dato

Onn was determined that UMNO rather than the MCA would be the party to open its membership to all ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup>

In April 1950, Dato Onn tried to secure UMNO's approval of the CLC's citizenship proposals. After an Emergency UMNO meeting where counter-proposals were offered, and a regular UMNO General Assembly in June where a rank-and-file revolt materialized, Dato Onn resigned as President of UMNO, along with his Executive Committee.

However, he was persuaded to return for the next General Assembly, where his citizenship proposals were reluctantly approved and he was overwhelmingly re-elected President.

Although growing opposition to Dato Onn by the Malay schoolteachers, the Islamic functionaries, and the Rulers was undermining his prestige with the already alarmed Malays, he continued to pressure UMNO to conform to his views. In November 1950, Dato Onn wanted UMNO to open its membership to all ethnic groups and to change its name to the United Malayan National Organization. The Executive Committee approved under duress, but the general membership flatly opposed. In July 1951, Dato Onn announced his intention of leaving UMNO. Despite the ultimatum, this time there were no pleas for him to remain. He resigned from UMNO on August 25, 1951.

By this time, Dato Onn had already formulated plans for organizing a new multi-ethnic political party, the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP). At his farewell address to UMNO, he invited all Malays desiring Independence and ethnic cooperation to join him in his work. He evidently did not consider that he was severing all links with UMNO. However, the new President of UMNO, Tunku Abdul Rahman, called upon the Malays to avoid the IMP, saying that its policies were not in the best interests of the Malays. Later he announced that any UMNO member in sympathy with the IMP would be expelled.

In the meantime, Tun Tan Cheng Lock was also calling for the formation of a new political party which would supercede ethnic boundaries, and he quickly agreed to be the chairman

of the inaugural meeting of the IMP, and he urged the Chinese to give their full and active support to the new party.

The IMP was inaugurated on September 16, 1951 in Kuala Lumpur at an impressive meeting attended by most of the former members of the CLC and numerous other dignitaries. "The array of the distinguished political leaders who expressed their support for the IMP gave the impression that this new party would soon dominate the Malayan political scene."<sup>12</sup>

Despite appearances, the IMP was quickly floundering. Except for some supporters personally loyal to Dato Onn, Malay support was not forthcoming. Tun Tan Cheng Lock gave his support to the new party and MCA members were allowed to join the IMP, but Tun Tan did not put his MCA leadership on the line by insisting on a full MCA commitment to the new party. The MCA itself was badly divided on the issue. Support was withheld partly because there was no apparent Malay support for the IMP, partly because of the personality clashes, and partly out of fear that the success of the IMP would mean the ultimate demise of the MCA. Only the MIC was fully committed to the IMP.

In February 1952, the IMP competed in the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections, despite the fact that the party lacked an organizational base and financial strength.<sup>13</sup> The party did badly, winning only two seats out of twelve against the alliance of UMNO-MCA. After that the party languished until Dato Onn abandoned it to form a new Malay party, *Parti Negara*, in February 1954.

The IMP represented the first attempt to form a multi-ethnic party, and although it stood a better chance of success than has any multi-ethnic party since, it failed largely because of a basic political reality that ethnic divisions in Malaya were too deep for a single multi-ethnic party to function successfully. The experience of the IMP indicated three relevant political lessons: First, ethnic concerns as expressed in separate ethnic parties were more important than the expected common bond of a desire for Independence; second, the key to the viability of a multi-ethnic party was

primarily to secure substantial Malay support, and this was the community least likely to be forthcoming; and third, the top ethnic leaders need take sufficient care to secure the support of their respective followers.

### *THE AD HOC ALLIANCE AND THE FORMATION OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY*

Colonel H. S. Lee, the influential President of the Selangor State MCA organization, was not consulted by Dato Onn about the formation of the IMP, and at an Inaugural Meeting he was not only not asked to give an address, he was also not invited to sit on the platform. By these acts of omission the IMP created a powerful enemy it could ill afford.

As the date of the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections approached, the UMNO Kuala Lumpur Chairman of the election sub-committee, Encik Yahya bin Dato Abdul Rahman, met with his friend, Colonel Lee, at the Miners' Club in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the elections. Encik Yahya's job was to raise election funds, and because of the serious threat posed by the IMP, he was "vested with full authority to do anything reasonable he considered necessary to assist the UMNO to win seats."<sup>14</sup> As Encik Yahya knew, the MCA had strong financing. When they met, Colonel Lee apparently told Encik Yahya that the MCA would finance the elections if an UMNO-MCA election pact was created, and Encik Yahya agreed. The joint statement announcing the pact in January 1952 stated that UMNO and the MCA would each field six joint UMNO-MCA candidates. The name "Alliance" was not used and there was no attempt at any common platform nor suggestion of merger. Although this pact was a local decision, neither the national headquarters of UMNO or the MCA openly objected.<sup>15</sup> The result of this *ad hoc* alliance was that the UMNO-MCA won 9 of the 12 seats, and the pre-election favorite, the IMP, won only 2 seats with the remaining seat going to an Independent.

Though the national leadership of UMNO and the MCA had not originated the pact, they were quick to realize its



potential. In the municipal and local elections which followed, the same pattern of UMNO-MCA pacts were instituted, with a high degree of success. Despite the tensions resulting from the Immigration Control Bill in 1952 and the Education Ordinance and Licensing and Regulation of Businesses Ordinance in 1953, the UMNO-MCA election alliance was maintained. It "was based on the full understanding that disagreements on issues between them would not destroy the political advantage both secured through the common front presented during the elections."<sup>16</sup>

Soon after the Kuala Lumpur electoral successes the national leadership of UMNO and the MCA began holding Round Table Conferences to work out agreements which would link the two organizations at the national level and establish a more permanent basis. At their Conference in March 1953, the two parties reached definite agreement on setting up a National Alliance Organization, and this was formally instigated on August 23, 1953. Liaison committees consisting of two representatives each were to be set up at the local levels to provide institutional links, and in September 1954 a 30-member National Council was established as the supreme body. The Tunku was named "Leader of the Alliance".

In 1954 the MIC was on its own and seeking political allies, though its members were not in agreement as to which allies they wanted. The MIC approached both the Alliance Organization and Party Negara. However, Party Negara would only accept direct members, whereas the Alliance agreed to party affiliation and also to give the MIC two candidates for the first federal elections in 1955. On October 17, 1954, after a keenly contested vote, the MIC Executive Committee elected to join the Alliance.

On April 10, 1955, the Alliance National Council met for the first time to work out arrangements for the Federal Legislative Council Elections, elections which would make the Alliance the dominant political force in the country. The legal status of the Alliance as a political party during this period was obscure. The election authorities approved its

symbol and obviously considered it a political party. However, the ambiguity was resolved in 1957 when the Alliance Organization changed its name to the Alliance Party, submitted a constitution to the Registrar of Societies, and was officially registered as a political party.

Organizationally, the Alliance Party changed little from its original constitution. The National Council, consisting of 16 UMNO, 16 MCA, and 6 MIC representatives, was the supreme executive body. However, in fact it usually acquiesced to the decisions reached in the smaller Executive Council, made up of 5 UMNO, 5 MCA, and 2 MIC representatives from the National Council. All decisions required unanimity, a point insisted upon by UMNO, and most decisions were actually resolved informally by personal agreements among the top leaders before being presented to the Alliance Councils. Tunku remained head of the Alliance until his retirement in 1970.

#### *THE SABAH ALLIANCE PARTY AND THE SARAWAK ALLIANCE PARTY*

The Alliance Parties which developed in Sabah and Sarawak were patterned after the Alliance Party in Malaya, which provided both the inspiration and some assistance, but with modifications necessary because of the different ethnic composition in the Borneo states.<sup>17</sup> Sabah and Sarawak are both multi-ethnic, with a very heterogeneous indigenous population. The most relevant political divisions in the Borneo states can basically be stated as non-Muslim indigenous, Muslim indigenous, and non-indigenous.

The first political party in Sabah was not established until August 1961, several months after the Tunku's Malaysia proposal announcement. However by October 1962, the Sabah Alliance was formed. It was composed of a non-Muslim indigenous party, a Muslim indigenous party, and two non-indigenous parties, one Chinese and one Indian.<sup>18</sup> By early 1964, the only party outside Alliance was merged with the non-Muslim indigenous party inside the

Sabah Alliance. By late 1967, the non-Muslim indigenous party had been dissolved, leaving the Sabah Alliance with one Muslim indigenous party which now accepted some non-Muslim indigenous members, and two weak non-indigenous parties. There was no organized opposition.

In Sarawak, the pattern was more complex. For some time, there were two non-Muslim indigenous parties one of which had some Chinese members, two primarily Muslim indigenous parties, and two non-indigenous, Chinese parties, one of which was an ideologically-oriented party with a fairly substantial non-Muslim indigenous membership.<sup>2</sup> The Sarawak Alliance was formed in January 1963, comprising all the parties mentioned above except the ideological Chinese party. However, the composition of the Sarawak Alliance altered quite often. By 1970, the Sarawak Alliance consisted of one non-Muslim indigenous and one Muslim indigenous party, soon to merge, and one non-indigenous Chinese party, soon to be dissolved. In the opposition was the non-Muslim indigenous party with some Chinese members, and the ideological Chinese party with some non-Muslim indigenous members.

The Sabah Alliance followed more closely the set-up of the Peninsular Alliance Party than did the Sarawak Alliance. This was mainly because party development began earlier in Sarawak, with two parties both open to multi-ethnic membership, formed before the Malaysia proposal was announced, and with competition between groups, for geographic, dialect, and historical reasons, leading to the establishment of two parties for each major ethnic grouping in Sarawak. In Sabah, however, only one party was established for each major ethnic group. Nevertheless, in several respects the Alliance Parties in Sabah and Sarawak differed from the Peninsular Alliance in the same ways. First, the key division was more by religion than strictly by ethnic group, and very few of the Borneo parties were limited purely to one ethnic group. Second, whereas the Malays were *the* indigenous group in Peninsular Malaysia, in the Borneo states there were many such groups. This fact was further complicated in Sabah and

especially Sarawak by the presence of some Malays. Third, the Chinese parties in the Sabah and Sarawak Alliance parties were significantly weaker and less important than their counterpart, the MCA. Fourth, there was more cross-cutting of the major cleavages in Sabah and Sarawak than in Peninsular Malaysia (i.e. in Sabah, some Kadazans were Muslims). Fifth, the Borneo Alliance parties were formed while politics were very new and still in a flux, thus resulting in less stability, numerous mergers, some dissolutions, and considerable movement of parties in and out of the Alliances. There were differences also in the style of politics and party management. Politics tended to be more personal, the leadership to act more like patrons, and the rules of the political game to be less well understood.<sup>20</sup> Finally, whereas the politics of the Peninsular Alliance dominated the Federation as a whole, the Alliance parties in Sabah and Sarawak were strictly local.

### THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ALLIANCE

#### "The Bargain"

"The Bargain", the *quid pro quo* package deal arrived at by the elites of the component parties of the Alliance, can be explained on two levels. In general terms, the unwritten bargain was the establishment of the political rules of the game: Malay political hegemony in return for unhindered Chinese (and Indian) economic activity. Specifically, the terms of "the bargain" were set out in the Alliance memorandum to the Constitutional Commission of 1957, and these proposals were substantially incorporated into the Federation of Malaya Constitution. The basic concessions gained by the non-Malays were revisions in the citizenship regulations, and most importantly, the granting of *jus soli*<sup>21</sup> to non-Malays in the Federation after Independence. This was not retroactive. In return, the non-Malays accepted Malay "special rights", Islam as the state religion, Malay as the sole official language from 1967, and the functions<sup>22</sup> assigned to the Malay Rulers.

"The bargain" was not easily reached. It required more

than four months of intensive bargaining on issues that the Alliance elites had been unable to resolve for the 1955 Legislative Council Elections. UMNO elites were pressured by the Malay community to secure political power (Malay control of the government and administration of the country), special rights, Malay language and education, Islam, and the Rulers. UMNO itself had been strongly committed to the slogan 'Malaya for the Malays'. This was generally translated to mean government by the Malays alone rather than by a mixture of ethnic groups. In 1951 in an UMNO address, Tunku said, "... some people say independence should be handed to 'Malayans'. Who are these 'Malayans'? The Malays will decide who the 'Malayans' should be".<sup>23</sup> Seeing evidence of Chinese economic power all around them, there was an intense Malay fear of Chinese political power. Rigid citizenship provisions were viewed as the key protection.

The MCA elite were also under great pressure to secure favourable changes in the citizenship regulations. On April 27, 1956 in Kuala Lumpur, a conference of the Pan-Malaya Chinese Associations and Societies, with over 1000 delegates representing 711 Chinese organizations, issued a four-point declaration of demands: (1) *jus soli*; (2) five-year domicile for citizenship; (3) equality; (4) multi-lingualism. The conference delegates decided to submit this declaration to the Constitutional Commission. They also considered a proposal to create a Chinese political organization to rival the MCA, but this was dropped when the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, one of the conference sponsors, withdrew its support. The message to the MCA was clear, however. Tan Sri T. H. Tan warned the Alliance National Council that if the MCA were to remain the political representative of the Chinese, it must support the principle of *jus soli*.<sup>24</sup>

The Alliance elites, prodded by their respective ethnic communities, had been so strongly opposed on these critical issues that it seems remarkable that compromise was possible. However, there are some explanations. First, independence was greatly desired and the leaders of UMNO realized that this was unlikely to be achieved unless they had the support of

the non-Malays. Second, the Emergency, brought about when the Communists resorted to armed struggle, had reinforced the idea, with a sense of urgency, that all the ethnic groups must work together in the face of the guerilla menace. Third, the Alliance experiment of UMNO-MCA-MIC cooperating and thrashing out electoral compromises had provided bargaining experience as well as an established forum, and it had created close personal ties between the top leaders. Given the incentive to bargain, an established forum and procedure for negotiations, and good personal relations between the negotiators, compromise was possible. There was criticism from each of the communities, as anticipated but the Alliance elites defended "the bargain" with a united front, with liberal reference to the reward of Independence and the danger of the Emergency. Tun Tan Siew Sin said that the Constitution was "not perfect, but workable" and that it "has not satisfied any community completely. No single community had obtained all that it has asked for ..." <sup>25</sup>

The essence of "the bargain" was that the Chinese, as represented by the MCA, recognized that of the various ethnic groups, the Malays as the indigenous race should have political pre-eminence. This would be achieved by UMNO controlling the highest offices of government, by Malay special rights, by the official symbols of a Malay state — Islam and the Rulers, by conversion, although gradual, to Malay as the sole official language, and by the gradual extension of Malay in the education system. In return, the liberalized citizenship regulations, and especially the provision of *jus soli*, recognized the right of the immigrant races to make Malaya their home and primary source of national loyalty. It also recognized the right of the Chinese and Indians to participate in politics, government, and administration, and implied a commitment to the free enterprise system in so far as it would not be unduly subject to restrictions disadvantageous to Chinese and Indian economic activities.

### *The Nature and Style of the Alliance*

Neither the component parties nor the Alliance itself had

any orthodox ideology. Tunku explained, "We are ready and willing to accept anything that we earnestly believe is either politically or socially good and productive.... There are no water-tight compartments in our policies.... In my party we are right and centre and left according to what is needed and what we think best."<sup>26</sup> What the Alliance had was a strategy for governing. It was based on limiting and controlling ethnic hostility, depoliticizing tense ethnic issues, and compromising at the elite level. Such a strategy required considerable pragmatism and moderation, ambiguity, gradualism combined occasionally with the technique of *fait accompli*, and a carefully controlled feedback system so that the elite did not find themselves estranged from the masses.

The style of the Alliance required a mode of decision-making based on compromise, consensus, and reciprocity at the apex of the hierarchy.<sup>27</sup> Decisions could be made first in the Cabinet, given the high overlap between the top party officials and Cabinet membership, the Alliance Executive Council, where unanimity was required, or more often informally by the top elite. Once a decision was made, even though it might disadvantage one of the other community, a united front was presented publicly. In all cases, before a decision was made, secrecy was observed. Tun Tan Siew Sin noted about ethnic issues, "I am not ashamed to say that we deliberately play it down in order to transfer it from the public platform to a committee room. There we talk about it fully and frankly but in an atmosphere of calm and reason, insulated from political pressures applied publicly."<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Dato Harun bin Idris explained that the party wanted to "minimize possible differences and perhaps confine them to the national leaders. We do not want these differences to go down to the rank and file..."<sup>29</sup>

### *UMNO Supremacy in the Alliance*

It was not unnatural that UMNO should be the strongest partner in the Alliance, given the numerical superiority of the Malays, aided further by electoral rural weighting, and the

widespread support UMNO received, as well as the historical identification of the Malays as the indigenous race. The MCA and MIC combined did not have the electoral weight, the unity, the support, or the historical precedents to be exact political equals with UMNO. This fact was obscured, however, because for years the dominance of UMNO was masked, though at times not altogether convincingly, under the facade of an equal partnership. UMNO's supremacy was understood by its partners, but the MCA and the UMNO top elite did not want any obvious public demonstration of this fact. The lower echelon officials, however, were often not so sensitive to this point.

Despite UMNO supremacy, genuine bargaining did occur, and compromise solutions did emerge. The Tunku acknowledged that, while UMNO supremacy in the Alliance was understood, the non-Malays could drive hard bargains and there could be concessions.<sup>30</sup> The essence of Alliance bargaining was not equality but mutual dependency combined with a willingness to cooperate and accommodate.

### *THE ALLIANCE PARTY IN ACTION*

One of the best ways to evaluate the Alliance Party is by briefly examining the elections in which it participated, with special regard to intra-Alliance stresses, campaign issues, and electoral programmes.

#### *The 1955 Federal Legislative Council Elections*

The Legislative Council Elections in 1955 ended a period of strain between the Alliance and the British colonial administration over the timing of the elections and the number of elected members. Despite Alliance opposition and protests in the Legislative Council, and a national boycott of Alliance members of the government and civil service, the election timing was not advanced and the provision for 52 elective Council seats out of 98 was maintained. There was a compromise of sorts, however, when the High Commissioner



agreed to consult the majority leader about the nominations for five reserved seats. Tunku and the Alliance had two objectives: to win by a large enough majority to avoid the consequences of having to form a coalition government, probably with their chief rival, Dato Onn's new organization, Party Negara (PN), and to avoid any break up of the Alliance which could result in an alternative alliance of PN-MCA-MIC. It was believed very likely that the majority party in the Legislative Council would be the party to form the government at Independence.

The registered electorate in 1955 comprised approximately 84 per cent Malays, 11 per cent Chinese, and less than 5 per cent Indians. The Alliance faced an initial crisis over the allocation of seats. At the June 1955 UMNO General Assembly, the UMNO rank-and-file demanded 90 per cent Malay candidates. However, Tunku was concerned about MCA-MIC disaffection, and he opposed the membership, winning his way after threatening to resign. The Alliance divided the 52 constituencies among 35 UMNO, 15 MCA, and 2 MIC candidates. Many observers, while realizing that the seat allocations solidified the Alliance, thought it an inordinate gamble to put up 17 non-Malay candidates, all but 2 of whom would stand in Malay-dominated constituencies.

The Alliance election manifesto called for Independence in four years, Malayanization of the civil service, increased economic development and social services, and education policies to promote Malay as the national language. It had required lengthy negotiations to reach agreement on the issue of citizenship (the Alliance avoided it during the campaign). In reality, the issue of Independence completely overshadowed all other subjects, and, although the other parties also sought Independence, it was the Alliance which successfully captured the image and identity as the Independence Party.

The Alliance won an overwhelming 51 of 52 seats, including all its seats with non-Malay candidates, and 81.7 per cent of the popular vote. The victory was generally attributed to Alliance organization, its Independence image and stand, and its past

electoral successes. Too few non-Malays were eligible to vote for it to be regarded as a real test of non-Malay support. However, it did provide a test for UMNO discipline and support, and the Alliance concept: enough Malays voted for Alliance non-Malays, often competing against Malay candidates, for all 17 non-Malays to win; the Malay voted for the Alliance because UMNO told them to do so. "I had complete faith in victories for our Chinese and Indian candidates, who were in the strongest UMNO areas. Frankly, we dared not put them anywhere else..."<sup>14</sup>

The Alliance victory signaled the end of PN as a political force of consequence in Malaya. Except for a small though growing Malay party then called the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) and now called Partai Islam Se Malaysia, or its Malay-Arabic acronym, PAS, UMNO could claim almost total unified Malay support. As a consequence of the elections, the credibility of the MCA and MIC with their respective communities also increased.

#### *The General Election of 1959*

The political situation in the country had altered considerably by the 1959 elections. First, Independence had been granted in 1957, thus sweeping away an issue which had served to unite large portions of all the communities, and which had especially benefited the Alliance Party in 1955. Second, the percentage of non-Malay voters had been greatly increased as a result of the citizenship provisions of the 1957 Constitution. The Chinese now constituted approximately 36 per cent of the electorate and the Indians 7 per cent. Third, in March 1958, there was a leadership change in the MCA, when Dr. Lim Chong Eu defeated Tun Tan Cheng Lock, 87-67, for the presidency. Although Dr. Lim was a fairly moderate compromise candidate, he had been supported by a new group of MCA "new bloods" (also sometimes called "Chinese-firsters") who captured most of the important positions in the MCA. The new group wanted to alter the political balance of the Alliance by challenging UMNO's

supremacy. They were prepared to insist on a larger seat allocation and they wanted revisions in language and education policies.

The staggered 1959 state legislative elections preceded the federal election by a couple of months, and helped to contribute to the "July crisis" between the MCA and UMNO. Although the Alliance did well overall in the state elections, winning 207 of the 282 seats contested, it lost majority control of the state legislatures of Kelantan and Terengganu, in the northeast, to PAS.

There were some special intra-state circumstances which contributed to the Alliance's (UMNO's) loss in these tradition-bound, heavily Malay-populated states. UMNO nevertheless felt threatened by the popularity of an Islamic nationalist party which promised to restore to Malays the sovereignty which it said UMNO had sold away. Shocked by the loss of two states and facing a party intent on "outbidding", UMNO leaders were not in a conciliatory mood when challenged in early 1959 by the new MCA leaders for a better deal in the Alliance.

The MCA was also concerned about Alliance losses in Kelantan and Terengganu. The party leaders believed that UMNO might decide to counter PAS outbidding by more openly adopting a Malay communal stand, which would adversely affect MCA support. There were also rumors in the Chinese community that the MCA would be given only enough candidates so that whatever happened the Malays (UMNO and PAS) would have the two-thirds majority in Parliament required to alter the Constitution. <sup>2</sup> In this frame of mind, and pushed by MCA "new bloods" demanding a tough stand with UMNO, Dr. Lim Chong Eu in June 1959 wrote a "secret letter" to the Tunku. In the letter, Dr. Lim said that the Chinese community needed assurance that its position would not be jeopardized, and this could be attained by giving the MCA 40 seats. Soon after, Dr. Lim and Tun Razak were able to work out tentative compromises on nearly all the contentious issues between the two parties, including the allocation of seats and policy on the issues of language and

education. However, in early July, Dr. Lim's confidential letter was leaked to the Press, apparently without Dr. Lim's knowledge or approval.<sup>33</sup> Tun Razak broke off talks with Dr. Lim and the Tunku reacted swiftly and decisively to what he regarded as a public ultimatum. The Tunku told the MCA, through the Press, that it had stabbed him in the back, and said that it "is obvious that your intention is to break from the Alliance and it offers me and others no room for discussion particularly as you have made the terms of your demands public and unequivocal."<sup>34</sup> For the MCA to remain in the Alliance, the Tunku demanded a complete withdrawal of all MCA demands, a purge of certain radicals, and complete authority for himself to allocate personally all seats and select all candidates for the federal election. On July 12, 1959, a month before the elections, the MCA Central General Committee voted 89-60 to accept the Tunku's terms. However, the crisis split the party, and there was an exodus of "new bloods" from the party. Dr. Lim resigned as President in July, citing ill-health and saying that the publication of his letter had left him "politically stranded", and he quit the MCA in January 1961.

During the UMNO-MCA crisis, the MIC, though generally in sympathy with MCA demands, kept quiet and made no stand on either seat allocations or on the language and education issues.

The crisis was a demonstration of the natural stresses inside the Alliance which were exacerbated as a result of "outbidding" by an opposition party. It also showed that the political balance in the Alliance could not be altered to the disadvantage of UMNO without threatening to break up the coalition. UMNO leaders desired and believed in a multi-ethnic coalition, but UMNO's participation was based on two tenets of its existence: supremacy inside the Alliance, and thus control of the top offices of government, and the maintenance of solid Malay support. In 1959, PAS outbidding was bothersome, and UMNO moved to protect its flank by pronouncements and promises which catered more to Malay opinion. However, the PAS challenge was not nation-wide, and it was

not considered a serious enough attack on Malay unity for UMNO either to abandon or greatly undermine its partners. It was the challenge to the political balance in the Alliance that moved UMNO to a swift response. It was clear afterwards that, whatever the consequences to the coalition, UMNO would not surrender its dominant position inside it. It was "a sobering experience for Dr. Lim as well as for others who believed that the Chinese could get their way by taking a stronger and more daring political stance."<sup>18</sup> The MCA and MIC had few options. Undoubtedly the MCA could win more seats if it were out of the Alliance and unburdened with sometimes unpopular compromises, but it would lose its access to the highest policy-making levels of government. Nor could it win a majority of seats either by itself or via any other likely coalition. The MIC would likely lose its seats as well as its access. Importantly, the non-Malays might well lose the very genuine compromises attained for them by MCA and MIC participation in the Alliance.

The UMNO-MCA crisis was also revealing in terms of coalition behavior. First, the possibility of an eventual crisis was enhanced by the fact that Dr. Lim Chong Eu and the Tunku were not personally close. In a system that operated substantially through informal personal contact among the top elites, and given the high value the Tunku set on personal loyalties, the lack of communication between the two leaders removed a strong incentive for moderation and compromise. Further, the fact that Dr. Lim had challenged and beaten Tun Tan Cheng Lock, was viewed as both distasteful and as grounds for suspicion by the Tunku and some other UMNO leaders. Second, the MCA seriously violated the rules of the game on secrecy when Dr. Lim's letter to Tunku was turned over to the press. Once the MCA demands were made public, they assumed the proportions of an ultimatum, and compromise was no longer possible.

In the federal elections in August 1959, the patched-up Alliance fielded 69 UMNO, 31 MCA, and 4 MIC candidates. The Alliance campaigned on its record of communal accord and as the party which had won Independence. Its manifesto

was published just a week before polling, being delayed because of the UMNO-MCA crisis. The Alliance won 74 of the 104 seats with 51.5 per cent of the popular vote. UMNO won 52 seats, MCA 19, and MIC 3. Not surprisingly, the MCA fared the worst. It did best in constituencies with a large Malay vote and worst in heavily Chinese urban areas and "New Villages". Among the opposition parties, the elections gave 13 seats to PAS, 8 to the Socialist Front (SF), 4 to the People's Progressive Party (PPP), 1 each to Party Negara and the Malayan Party, and 3 to Independents. The most telling features of the elections were the lack of opposition unity or even minimal electoral pacts, the poor performance of the MCA, and the sharp decline of the Alliance percentage of the popular vote.

#### *The 1964 Elections in Peninsular Malaysia and the Aftermath*

In April 1964 the elections were conducted against the background of Confrontation with Indonesia over the formation of Malaysia. Although Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore had joined Malaya to form the new Federation, and Parliament had been expanded to 159 seats, these elections were held only for the 104 Peninsular seats.

Confrontation was the main theme of the campaign, and the Alliance benefited as the government party: appealing to the public for loyalty and patriotism in a time of crisis. The opposition was left with very little on which to campaign. The PAS was suspect for its known Indonesian sympathies and its initial opposition to Malaysia. The non-Malay communities were solidly against the Indonesian position and the other opposition parties by and large echoed the Alliance stand on Confrontation and accepted Malaysia as a *fait accompli*. Despite the economic dislocation caused by the conflict, economic grievances were not an important issue.

The Alliance won 89 of 104 Parliamentary seats with 58.3 per cent of the popular vote. UMNO candidates won 59 of 68 of their seats, the MCA 27 of 33, and the MIC 3 of 3.

Opposition victories were divided with PAS winning 9, SF 2, PPP 2, UDP 1, and the PAP 1.

One of the most interesting and ultimately significant aspects of the elections was the unexpected challenge by Singapore's ruling party, the People's Action Party (PAP). It initiated an intense Alliance-PAP conflict that culminated just over 15 months later with Singapore's expulsion from the Federation.

The PAP's participation in the Peninsular elections was minor. Only 11 candidates filed nomination papers for the Parliamentary contest, and 2 of these did not campaign, on PAP orders.<sup>36</sup> The PAP had no proper organization in the Peninsula despite the fact that party leader and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew drew the largest crowds ever in the Peninsula to his rallies.

The bitterness created by PAP participation exceeded the strength of the challenge; in the end only one PAP candidate was elected. However, it was the nature and the style of the PAP attack which precipitated the trouble. First, Lee Kuan Yew had stated in 1963 that the PAP would not enter the elections. When the PAP did enter, it was a surprise, and later the Tunku said that his "faith was shaken".<sup>37</sup> Further, the PAP concentrated its attack on the MCA, whom it called effete and corrupt, and centred its appeal almost entirely on the urban Chinese community, raising sensitive communal issues in the process. The PAP excuse was that the MCA had lost the support of the Chinese, and the PAP was needed to prevent seats being lost to the SF. In fact, the PAP had been courting UMNO and the Tunku, and hoped to replace the MCA in the Alliance.

The MCA fared well in the elections despite the presence of the PAP. However, the PAP intrusion caused internal dissension within the MCA, with the Youth wing pushing harder for Chinese demands. In turn, this caused pressure inside UMNO.

When the possibility of replacing the MCA seemed unlikely, Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP changed their strategy. Now they sought to persuade the Tunku to accept a PAP-

Alliance coalition. The Tunku firmly refused, though he reassured Mr. Lee that he would be consulted on all important matters.<sup>38</sup> After that PAP strategy changed again. It attacked the Alliance. The Singapore leaders began criticizing the Alliance Government, the concept of the Alliance, and the terms of "the bargain", offering instead an alternative nation-building formula. Lee Kuan Yew called for a "Malaysian Malaysia," with political equality for all rather than a "Malay Malaysia", which gave the Malays political predominance.<sup>39</sup> He said that the Malays were no more indigenous than the other ethnic groups, citing recent Indonesian arrivals, and he indulged in ethnic arithmetic, trying to show that the non-Malays really outnumbered the Malays. The aggressive PAP campaign produced results, some unintended: the Malays were alarmed by the ethnic arithmetic and the challenge to "the bargain", and UMNO "ultras" began clamoring for action against Lee Kuan Yew; sections of the non-Malay community, especially the young Chinese, were excited by the prospect of a political realignment, while other non-Malays worried that the conflict would threaten the position of UMNO's moderate leadership. In Singapore, race riots broke out in the summer and early fall of 1964.

In early 1965, the PAP began preparations for bringing together a united opposition front to oppose the Alliance. In May 1965, five opposition parties met in Singapore to form a Malaysian Solidarity Convention. This move changed the focus from verbal attacks to political action.<sup>40</sup> However, the Convention never had the opportunity to function. In June 1965, the Tunku, in a London clinic with shingles, became increasingly convinced that Singapore had to be cut away from Malaysia. "The more pain I got the more I directed my anger on him [Lee Kuan Yew] and pitied Singapore for all its self-imposed problems."<sup>41</sup> After final futile talks between Tun Razak and Lee Kuan Yew in July, the Tunku decided that Singapore should be separated. The separation of Singapore was announced on August 9, 1965. The main reason given for the expulsion was the fear and danger of widespread ethnic violence.



The PAP had not been willing to work quietly towards changes and compromises. Instead, the party took its case directly to the people, certain to enflame ethnic passions in Malaysia. The result of this contrast in styles was that trust and goodwill between the opposing leaders evaporated, and they found it virtually impossible to compromise even on the smallest inconsequential matters. Means writes that as "a political gambler, Lee seemed determined to force this new political realignment regardless of the effect on communal harmony, political stability, or the prospects for democracy's survival."<sup>42</sup>

The separation of Singapore in August 1965 abruptly terminated the Alliance-PAP conflict, and marked the end of the Malaysian Solidarity Convention. However, residues from the PAP attack lingered on, with important political consequences. First, the Tunku had alienated UMNO "ultras" by expelling Singapore instead of using force to subdue the PAP and perhaps even to arrest Lee Kuan Yew, and as a result his authority in the party was never again completely unchallenged. Second, many of the young non-Malays, too young to remember the wanton ethnic violence at the end of the war or the slow processes of ethnic accommodation which produced "the bargain" and led to Independence, remained committed to the notion of a "Malaysian Malaysia". Third, a new party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), which had its antecedents in the PAP and which was committed to pursuing a "Malaysian Malaysia", was allowed to register. Finally, the MCA was caught and divided by the vicious dilemma of wanting to stand more firmly for Chinese demands but not wanting to undermine the position of UMNO's moderate leadership by pressuring the Alliance. The cumulative effect of the PAP challenge was that politics had become intensified, many new controversial issues had been raised, and the "political system had become over-loaded with seemingly irreconcilable demands."<sup>43</sup>

## THE 1969 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE MAY 13TH RIOTS

The period from 1964 to 1969 was one of unprecedented ethnic political militancy, partly the result of the PAP's articulation of the "Malaysian Malaysia" theme, partly because Confrontation was winding down and ended in 1966, and partly because one of the pro-Malay parts of "the bargain" came due: the National Language Bill of 1967. Whereas the Chinese had immediately benefited from the 1957 citizenship provisions, the language agreement to make Malay the sole official language had called for a ten year interim period before implementation.

As early as 1964, there was anxiety on the part of many Malays about the government's resolve on the language issue. The Tunku was thought to be preparing the way for concessions when he made statements such as: "Although we may not be able to implement Malay 100 percent as the sole official language by 1967, we are confident that we can implement it at least 90 per cent."<sup>44</sup> By mid-1964, a group of Malays had founded the National Language Action Front (NLAF) to pressure the government to fully implement the terms of the language agreement. The group included members of UMNO, and it worked closely with PAS and Malay student activists. The concern was not just one of cultural nationalism, but was also related to Malay economic opportunities.

Meanwhile, a number of Chinese groups, including the Chinese teachers union, the guilds and associations, and MCA Youth, had already begun campaigning for a "more liberal stand" on language, including making Chinese one of the official languages. The controversy once again caught the MCA in the middle. Tun Tan Siew Sin warned that if "the MCA backs this demand there will be a head-on collision with UMNO...".<sup>45</sup> It was already apparent that the MCA would lose support in the Chinese community if it did *not* back the demands. In this atmosphere of heightened ethnic militancy, UMNO Youth joined the battle, calling for a review of the constitutional provisions of the granting of citizenship to the

non-Malays if the demand for Chinese to be made an official language continued.

The National Language Bill of 1967 was a compromise, allowing for the use of English for some official purposes, and the continued use of the Chinese and Indian vernacular languages for non-governmental and non-official purposes. The Malay community by and large felt betrayed, and there were immediate mass demonstrations protesting the Bill. Further, the Bill led to serious divisions inside UMNO, eroding the Tunku's position, and increasing the popularity of PAS.

The Bill should have been helpful to the MCA, but the Chinese community, less willing than ever to accept the terms of 1957 after listening to Lee Kuan Yew, was not pleased. Almost immediately the MCA was again in a dilemma when the militant Chinese language groups shifted their demands to the establishment of a Chinese-medium university.

There were no riots and no bloodshed following the passing of the language bill, and there was a sense of relief in the government that this difficult period was now behind. However, as the campaign for the 1969 elections began, the opposition, both Malay and Chinese, still made language an important issue, along with the related issue of education. The Chinese-based opposition parties, especially the DAP, latched on to the proposal for the establishment of the Chinese-medium Merdeka University, along with the appeal for a "Malaysian Malaysia". Still, this was not a singularly outstanding issue, nor were there any others, and the Alliance campaigned primarily on its past record. The Alliance apparently expected a rather routine election and subsequent victory, and was relying on money and machinery more than issues. Alliance pronouncements were slanted more to help UMNO ward off the PAS challenge (there was a special manifesto promising \$548 million for Kelantan if it voted in the Alliance) than to assist the MCA or MIC, but the top elite consistently warned the Chinese community that if it did not vote for the MCA, there would be no Chinese representation in the Alliance Government.

There were some differences with this election campaign, however (in addition to the fact that elections were also being held in Sabah and Sarawak). First, the campaign period was longer than ever before. Second, the campaign was conducted in an atmosphere of ethnic militancy and hostility which gave vent to unbridled appeals to ethnic emotions on all sides. Outbidding was rampant and there were few legal checks against calculated incitement of the ethnic groups. Dr. Mahathir writes that "...realizing that the Malay and Chinese opposition were gaining support through racialist appeal, the Alliance Party candidates also resorted to racial politics towards the end of the election campaign. The result was explosive. Responsibility disappeared to be replaced by unlimited license to appeal to grossest sentiment in the name of democracy."<sup>46</sup> Third, the opposition parties had for the first time arranged some simple electoral pacts so as to avoid splitting the opposition vote. Fourth, there was the unknown element of the boycott of the elections by the Labour Party (LP). Finally, there were two incidents involving deaths during the campaign.

When the election results for the Peninsula were returned (because of staggered voting, the results in Sabah and Sarawak were not yet complete), it was obvious that the Alliance had won easily but also that it had received a substantial setback. In the parliamentary elections, the Alliance won 66 of 103 seats, with 48.5 per cent of the popular vote.<sup>47</sup> UMNO had won 51 of 67 seats it contested, the MCA 13 of 33, and the MIC 2 of 3 seats. In the opposition DAP won 13 seats, PAS 12, Gerakan 8, and the PPP 4. In the state elections, the Alliance won a total of 162 of the 277 seats, but failed to recapture Kelantan from PAS, nearly lost Terengganu, lost Penang, and did not have a majority in either Perak (19 out of 40 seats) or Selangor (14 out of 28 seats). The Malays were not alarmed about losing Penang, since it had been a part of the Crown Colony and never a Malay state with a Malay Ruler, and Penang was generally viewed as a "Chinese" state. However, the prospect of UMNO and the Alliance not controlling either Perak or Selangor, and the

spectre of a non-Malay Menteri Besar in either, greatly heightened Malay anxieties.

In the midst of this suspense, the day after the Peninsular election results were complete, the DAP and Gerakan held a joint "victory" celebration procession through the streets of Kuala Lumpur. Along the way, Chinese and Malays exchanged angry insults. The next day, May 13, the MCA announced it would not participate in the Alliance government since "the Chinese in this country have rejected the MCA."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the city rumors were rampant. At the same time, an UMNO-led (primarily Selangor state UMNO) Malay counter-demonstration in Kuala Lumpur was being organized. It was apparent before the procession started that the situation was explosive, with police reporting the arrival in the city of truck loads of Malays armed with parangs. The result was a rampage of ethnic rioting, plundering, and murdering.<sup>5</sup>

The May 13 riots led to the proclamation of an Emergency, the suspension of Parliament, and rule by National Operations Council under the directorship of Tun Razak. The NOC ruled jointly with a Cabinet under the Prime Ministership of Tunku Abdul Rahman, however all real power belonged to and was exercised by the NOC. The May 13 riots led to changes in the political system designed to curb the excesses of uncontrolled political competition, and it led to a new formula for political rule.



First Meeting of Alliance — PAS Coordinating Committee  
February 27, 1973



UMNO General Assembly, 26th June 1981.  
UMNO is the "backbone" of the Barisan Nasional.

## 2

### THE POST-RIOTS POLITICAL STRATEGY: EXTENSIVE COALITION-BUILDING

#### *THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO MAY 13TH*

The Alliance Government elites reacted decisively to the May 13th breakdown of order. The Yang DiPertuan Agong (King), acting on the advice of the government, proclaimed a state of Emergency (clause 2, Article 150 of the Constitution, regarding public safety) and Parliament was suspended. The nation was governed jointly by a National Operations Council (NOC) and a caretaker Cabinet. Effective power, provided by the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinances of 1969 and 1970, resided in the NOC, under its Director, the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak.<sup>1</sup>

Order was quickly restored, and with the exception of a short but fierce outbreak of fighting in June, and a relatively high state of general tension, order was maintained. Nearly all types of political activity were banned, including demonstrations or processions, distributing pamphlets or posters, and using loudspeakers, and the uncompleted elections in Sabah and Sarawak were suspended.

Despite the stringent emergency regulations and the well-publicized statement by Tun (Dr.) Ismail that democracy in Malaysia was dead,<sup>2</sup> by June 1969, Tun Razak assured the people, over radio and television, that Emergency rule was only temporary and would not be prolonged any longer than necessary. He added, however, that this was the beginning of a "new realism" in the country.<sup>3</sup>

On August 31, 1970, the ban on political activity was



rescinded, though political utterances were now subject to the restrictions established by an amendment to the Sedition Act (Emergency Ordinance No. 45 of 1970) which made it illegal to question certain ethnically-sensitive provisions of the Constitution. In September 1970, the Tunku retired and Tun Razak succeeded him as Prime Minister, naming Tun (Dr.) Ismail as the Deputy Prime Minister. As promised by the Tunku in his "farewell broadcast", in February 1971 the Parliamentary process was restored. The first business of Parliament was to pass the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which was designed to remove permanently certain ethnically-sensitive provisions from political debate by "entrenching" them in the Constitution and by amending the Sedition Act.<sup>4</sup> It had been thought that the NOC might exist side by side with Parliament, but with the restoration of Parliament the NOC was renamed the National Security Council and its functions were substantially downgraded.

#### *PROBLEMS INSIDE THE ALLIANCE*

With the election results, the subsequent rioting, and the establishment of the NOC to run the country, members of the Alliance Party were left emotionally shattered. Malay discontent, mainly vocalized by Malay University students and UMNO "radicals", was vociferous and increasingly directed towards the twin objectives of ousting the Tunku and retaining the NOC. The Tunku was blamed for being indirectly responsible for causing the May 13th riots because he had agreed to too many Chinese demands, he had not initiated enough programs designed to reduce Malay poverty, and he had allowed, in effect, the non-Malays to believe that it would be possible for them to come to power through the electoral process. A number of Malay University groups circulated letters which called for the Tunku's removal from office, and warned Malays that they must not seek a return to parliamentary rule. An anti-Tunku demonstration was held at the University of Malaya, and the Tunku was hanged in effigy at a demonstration at the MARA Institute of Technology. How-

ever anti-Tunku activity among the students tapered off when the NOC made it an offense to call for the resignation of the Tunku, on the grounds that it caused fear and alarm and was prejudicial to the public safety.

Inside UMNO, the crisis over the Tunku's leadership was potentially more disruptive than the students' agitation. This was the party that for all intent and purposes was the government, and unity was its strength. The crisis broke open when an UMNO Supreme Council member, Dr. Mahathir, sent a highly critical letter to the Tunku accusing him of always giving in to the demands of the Chinese, and calling for him to retire as Prime Minister and President of UMNO.<sup>5</sup> When this letter was duplicated and its copies widely circulated, the Tunku responded by initiating an UMNO Supreme Council meeting to discuss to conduct of Dr. Mahathir. The Supreme Council then voted to expel Dr. Mahathir from the party. Another young UMNO member in sympathy with Dr. Mahathir's objectives, Musa Hitam, Assistant Minister to Tun Razak, was dismissed from his post and spent a year in Great Britain on "study leave".

With these moves, the Tunku was able to quell the most militant of his detractors. The Tunku had stated several times that it would be proper for him to step down if and when his nephew, the Sultan of Kedah, was elected the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong (King).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, when his nephew was elected, the Tunku announced that he would resign immediately after the installation on September 21, 1970. Tun Razak succeeded the Tunku as Prime Minister and acting head of UMNO and the Alliance, but the succession did not heal the rift which had developed inside UMNO between the so-called "new order" and "old order".

It was clear that Tun Razak needed firm control of UMNO before he could initiate any sweeping political changes. He had the difficult task of bringing UMNO and government policies more in line with Malay aspirations, but without abandoning the practice of elite ethnic cooperation. To do this, Tun Razak needed to bring some of the younger, better-educated and more dynamic members of UMNO into posi-

tions of responsibility, although some of these people were labelled as "radicals". At the same time he needed to protect himself from being *unduly* pressured by these and other UMNO "radicals".

However by the end of 1971 Tun Razak was firmly in charge of the party and had enough support and prestige to initiate new governmental and party directives and dampen the factional struggle inside the party. Dr. Mahathir, earlier expelled for his letter to the Tunku, was readmitted to the party in March 1972, and at the June 1972 UMNO General Assembly, the party was described as "united as never before".

The fortunes of the MCA dipped to their lowest point in the period following the 1969 elections. Influential members of UMNO criticized the MCA for failing to deliver the Chinese vote, and MCA President Tun Tan Siew Sin, stung by UMNO criticism and angry at the "betrayal" of the MCA by the Chinese community, announced shortly before the rioting broke out, that the MCA would not participate in the government. Soon after, however, in the changed circumstances of the Emergency, the MCA agreed to serve in the caretaker Cabinet, without portfolios, and in February 1970 the MCA agreed to rejoin the government.

Despite some renewed support for the party by various Chinese associations, and an effort to strengthen the party by amending its Constitution to give the President wider powers, the revitalization of the MCA faltered as soon as it started. Then in January 1971, Tun (Dr.) Ismail stunned the MCA by warning them in a speech that it would be better for UMNO to break with the MCA and MIC if the two Alliance partners continued to be "neither dead nor alive".<sup>7</sup>

Tun Tan Siew Sin predictably reacted quickly and with anger. He said that if there was a feeling in UMNO that it could do without the MCA, "it would be far easier for us to be out of the Alliance ...". The MCA, he said, was "a target for extremist Malays on the one hand and chauvinist Chinese on the other", and there was a limit to the MCA's endurance.<sup>8</sup> The leaders of UMNO denied they intended to break up the Alliance, and pointed out that Tun (Dr.) Ismail had merely

offered some advice.

If Tun (Dr.) Ismail's criticism was meant to prod the MCA, it achieved its desired result. There was an outpouring of sympathy and promised support for the MCA among the Chinese, especially after Tun Tan had appealed to the Chinese community to work together in its own interest, saying that the community was "hopelessly disunited", and offering to resign as President of the MCA if he was viewed as a barrier to unity.<sup>9</sup> This speech, before one thousand Chinese community leaders in Kuala Lumpur, marked the beginning of the Chinese Unity Movement. The Movement was organized and sponsored by a ten-man Malaysian Chinese Liaison Committee for National Unity, working independently of the MCA but with the backing of Tun Tan Siew Sin. Apparently the Unity Movement was not as "spontaneous" as it appeared to most observers, but it needed the support of Tun Tan Siew Sin and an aroused Chinese community ever to be launched, and these were forthcoming after Tun (Dr.) Ismail's speech. The idea behind the Unity Movement was to try to unite the Chinese through a series of high-powered public rallies, and then eventually to use this enthusiasm and support to reform the MCA into a party with a new image which could genuinely speak for the interests of the Chinese community. Undoubtedly, most of the organizers believed that it was going to be necessary to sweep away many of the MCA "old guard" before the reformation could take place.

The Chinese Unity Movement sponsored large and emotionally-charged rallies in Ipoh, Seremban and Penang between February and April. But it was obvious after the first week that the Unity Movement was in trouble, and that it was not going to be able to remain "above politics". The MCA "old guard" was quick to comprehend what it deemed a double-edged threat: either the Unity Movement, which was outside the control of the MCA, would eventually replace the MCA; or the Unity Movement "new bloods" would penetrate the MCA, using Tun Tan, and oust the "old guard". MCA Vice-President Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh called the Chinese Unity Movement an "overt act of chauvinism",<sup>10</sup> and

Tan Sri T.H. Tan resigned from the Central Working Committee, protesting that the Unity Movement has usurped the authority of the MCA. The MCA "old guard" used their positions to undermine the Unity Movement.

By April, Tun Tan Siew Sin had second thoughts about the tone and direction of the Unity Movement, and began to withdraw his support and protective shield. The Unity Movement was threatening to split the MCA, and UMNO leaders were growing increasingly alarmed about the strident style and emotional ethnic appeals of the Unity Movement. The Liaison Committee decided that the Unity Movement needed an organizational base and protection under law in order to survive. In mid-April, without informing Tun Tan, the Liaison Committee applied to the Registrar of Societies for registration of their Unity Movement as a political organization.<sup>11</sup> Tun Tan made his opposition clear, warning that such a move would cause confusion and disunity. Soon after, two founder members of the Liaison Committee were arrested under the Sedition Act, and a week later the Liaison Committee announced that it had decided not to register as political organization.

Some of the "new bloods" of the Chinese Unity Movement were admitted into the MCA, but the Unity Movement itself, and the organizing Liaison Committee, languished awhile and then faded away. Little of the energy expended on the Chinese Unity Movement carried over into revitalizing the MCA, nor for that matter, did Chinese unity outlive the Unity Movement.

In the meantime, a different type of movement was getting underway in Perak. Known as the Perak Task Force, it had been initiated prior to the Chinese Unity Movement, but had spent its early existence in discussion and planning sessions and was activated only in the final days of the Chinese Unity Movement. The Perak Task Force was organized by Dato Teh Siew Eng, who had been approached by Tun Tan Siew Sin to revitalize the Perak MCA. Dato Teh agreed, providing he had both financial support and complete authority for completing the task.<sup>12</sup> Dato Teh's group decided on

developing a task force which would attempt to build up grass-roots support by sending field workers to the New Villages and towns and offering basic civic courses, including songs and discussions, and classes in Chinese physical culture and politics, as well as organizing community projects and blood donation drives. The Task Force operated as a parallel or special MCA organization. It did not use the existing MCA party machinery, and at first it did not mention its ties with the MCA.

As the movement mushroomed, with membership soaring quickly to 8,000, the Perak Task Force initiated voluntary enrollment in the MCA, its members began moving into positions of authority in the State MCA organization, and some of its leaders started moving up in the national MCA hierarchy. Tun Tan Siew Sin announced he would initiate the task force approach in other states, and an editorial in the *Straits Times* (Malaysia) lauded the new spirit and drive of the MCA.<sup>13</sup>

Not unexpectedly, the MCA "old guard" disliked the Task Force, and by September 1971 a struggle developed in Perak between the Task Force "new bloods" and the "old guards". At the national level, the "old guard" thought they could see a conspiracy between the Task Force "new bloods" and the Selangor "new bloods", brought into the party when the Chinese Unity Movement faltered. At this juncture, however, the Task Force had the full backing of Tun Tan Siew Sin, and behind him the unreserved support of the Deputy President of the MCA, Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh. The Perak crisis was settled by a "compromise" which in effect aided the "new bloods". In December, the Task Force was given additional prestige when one of its leaders, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, was appointed as a Senator and then named by Tun Razak as a Minister with Special Functions (New Villages).

However, in 1972 events started to work against the Task Force. In April, Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh died in London.<sup>14</sup> Datuk Lee San Choon, who had been busy re-building the Perak MCA Youth to oppose the Task Force, was elected the MCA's Deputy President. The Task Force, on the defensive,

began taking on a more chauvinistic stance and by August it was noticeable that Tun Tan Siew Sin had cooled off considerably towards the Task Force,<sup>15</sup> and in September he relieved Dr. Lim Keng Yaik of the Chairmanship of the Perak MCA Liaison Committee and ousted Dato Teh Siew Eng as head of the Task Force. By November the "old guard" were firmly in control, and the Task Force was ordered to disband.

In the end, the Task Force group, along with the Selangor "new bloods", were all outmanoeuvred and expelled from the MCA.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds of their followers resigned to follow them. Once again an effort to reform and revitalize the MCA had failed. By 1973, with expulsions and mass resignations continuing, and the position of the MCA as spokesman for the Chinese community weakened by the coalitions with Gerakan and the PPP, the MCA looked much more dead than alive.

The MIC, the smallest and least consequential partner of the Alliance, seemed particularly stunned by the events of May 13th. Its leadership appeared determined not to confront anybody, and the membership remained largely inactive. When Tun (Dr.) Ismail delivered his "neither dead nor alive" warning, the President of the MIC, Tun V.T. Sambanthan, replied that having known Tun Ismail for many years, he was convinced that Tun Ismail did not mean to insult the party. Later, in the middle of the Chinese Unity Movement, the reaction of the MIC Deputy President, Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, was that there was no need for MIC unity rallies.

By mid-1971 the MIC did show some flickerings of life, but this was only in relation to an internal conflict developing between Tun Sambanthan and Tan Sri Manickavasagam for control of the party. This conflict was the sole preoccupation of the MIC over the next two years.

With the leadership crisis resolved finally in June 1973, with Tan Sri Manickavasagam being elected as President, it was possible again for the MIC to consider its position as a member of the ruling party. The MIC still had the task ahead of reunifying and revitalizing the party, regaining public credibility, and demonstrating to its partners that it could

speak for at least a substantial section of the Indian community.

### *THE SEARCH FOR A NEW POLITICAL FORMULA*

There was considerable speculation, after the May 13th riots and the establishment of the NOC, about what shape and form of governing machinery would be instituted in Malaysia. Some of the alternatives which were speculated about were: that democracy would be abandoned and the NOC continued indefinitely; that an all-Malay government would rule; that the military would take over; that all existing political parties would be abolished and the nation ruled by a single multi-ethnic party, with the Malays dominating; and that there would be a return to rule by the Alliance Party.

The first year after the riots, when Tun Razak had already assured the country that the emergency NOC rule would not continue indefinitely, it appeared that Tun Razak was preparing for a return to the political *status quo ante*, albeit with tighter political controls and an increased government involvement in improving the economic position of the Malays.

However, some of the top government officials already had been considering a substantial break with the past. Shortly after May 13th, Tun Razak indicated to his closest government associates that he wanted to look into the possibility of developing a new structure and form for governing.<sup>17</sup> Tun Razak, Tun (Dr.) Ismail, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, and Encik Khalil Akasah as secretary, met in the Cameron Highlands for this purpose. They decided that the Alliance policy had been good in its day, but it was no longer enough just to respond to communal pressures without having a firm policy. They felt it had been a mistake to have policies which fluctuated according to ethnic pressures. The group decided that it was necessary to develop one clear long-term political and socio-economic policy for the nation. Certain political parameters were agreed upon early: that it was necessary to reduce "politicking" in order to ensure ethnic harmony and to allow the government to get on with the major task of reducing



Malay economic grievances;<sup>18</sup> that the Westminster model of democracy needed to be adapted to fit better with Malaysia's political and social environment;<sup>19</sup> that Malay unity would be a major goal; and that any changes enacted must not undermine the dominance of UMNO.

Another parameter was also agreed upon: as expressed by Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie in August 1969; "... the politics of this country has been, and must remain for the foreseeable future, native based: that was the secret of our stability and our prosperity and that is a fact of political life which no one can simply wish away. It must be a native base which believes not in false compromises or in compulsion but in co-operation with all the other races in the country."<sup>20</sup>

Apparently Tun Razak had decided, tentatively at least, on a coalition-building scheme sometime during the talks held in 1969,<sup>21</sup> though by April 1970 he had not firmly committed the government to any particular strategy.<sup>22</sup>

The first step in translating the new ideas into concrete action was taken in setting up the National Consultative Council (NCC) in January 1970. Invitations by Tun Razak were sent to all major political parties to participate in "the new political order" by representation on the NCC. Originally, all of the parties except for the DAP agreed to participate, but then the PR (now PSRM) withdrew its representative. The NCC also included representatives from the federal and state governments, Sabah and Sarawak, religious groups, professional bodies, public services, trade union and employers' associations, the Press, teachers, and minority groups (a representative for women was added later).<sup>23</sup>

The stated aim of the NCC was "for the purpose of establishing positive and practical guidelines for inter-racial cooperation and social integration for growth of a national identity".

The NCC had three key features: representativeness, confidentiality, and consensus. Tun Razak wanted an open and uninhibited discussion of issues and views. To this end, members were sworn to secrecy, the Press was barred, and no

public record of the proceedings was kept (except for official summaries released to the Press). Furthermore, Tun Razak did not want a "divided Council", so all agreements made in the NCC required unanimity. The method was "to meet, and talk and talk until consensus was achieved".<sup>24</sup>

When the NOC lifted the ban on political activity, Tun Razak gave credit for the move to the progress being made in the NCC. He said that there was an indication that the opposition was willing to cooperate with the government, as was shown in discussions at the NCC meetings. Remarkably, the NCC found agreement on the New Economic Policy, the Rukunegara (National Ideology), and the amendments to the Constitution.

The success of the NCC and the "test case" coalition government in Sarawak, confirmed Tun Razak in his decision to pursue a policy of coalition-building in Malaysia.<sup>25</sup>

#### THE FIRST COALITION: THE SUPP AND THE SARAWAK ALLIANCE

The Press report on July 8, 1970, that a coalition had been negotiated between the Sarawak Alliance and the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) to form the state government in Sarawak, came as a surprise, indeed a shock to most Malaysians. It seemed puzzling that the federal government would have wanted and allowed the SUPP, a party which the authorities said had been infiltrated by Sarawak Communist Organization (SCO) members and sympathizers, and which had remained opposed to Malaysia long after the nation was established, to join the state government. It seemed equally surprising that the SUPP, an ideologically-oriented and strongly principled party, would have agreed to a coalition with the Sarawak Alliance. Yet in retrospect, many signs pointing to increased cooperation were present.

#### *THE BACKGROUND*

Two important general background features have some

bearing on the SUPP-Sarawak Alliance coalition. First, politics in Sarawak and Sabah are peripheral to Malaysian politics as a whole. There is virtually no spill-over of politics in Sarawak and Sabah into Peninsular Malaysia, and they have no effect on the basic ethnic problem there. The federal leaders want stable state governments which are not obstructionist to development plans, not too boisterous about states' rights issues and not too much of a nuisance in general. While the federal government has on several occasions used its muscle to remove troublesome Chief Ministers, its major task has been to mediate in disputes between the parties in the Sarawak and Sabah Alliances.

Secondly, party development in Sarawak (as in Sabah) is a recent phenomenon, spurred on by the Malaysia proposal in 1961. This fact has contributed to an unsettled party system, with constant activity of party formations, mergers, dissolutions, as well as some coalitions and a complexity of changing partners. Very few of the parties are composed exclusively of a single ethnic group, although in each case a single ethnic group dominates the party. None of the parties has branches elsewhere in Malaysia, and party policies and issues have tended to be regional.

The Sarawak Alliance is patterned after the Kuala Lumpur Alliance, but with some differences in practice.<sup>26</sup> It does not have "historical partners", each representing a major ethnic group. In fact at some points, the Sarawak Alliance has had two Malay-dominated parties and two Iban-dominated parties.

In 1963, one of the Malay-dominated parties, Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), left the Alliance when it felt it was not getting its share of rewards. In 1966, one of the Iban parties, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), left the Alliance after the dismissal of its leader as the Chief Minister. Just before this PANAS had returned to the Alliance, and in 1967 it merged with the other Malay-dominated party, Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) to form Parti Bumiputera. In 1970, the Sarawak Alliance consisted of three constantly bickering parties, Bumiputera (Malay-dominated), Parti

Pesaka Anak Sarawak (Pesaka) (Iban-dominated), and the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA) (Chinese). The only Sarawak party in this period which had never been part of the Sarawak Alliance was the SUPP.

The SUPP was the first party formed in Sarawak, in June 1959. It was organized by a group of moderate Chinese who wanted to create a mildly socialist and multi-ethnic party. The SUPP had been, from the beginning, under the top control of Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui as President, and Datuk Stephen Yong as Secretary-General. As other parties were established, the SUPP showed itself to be the best organized and most disciplined party in Sarawak, with stable grass-roots support.

However, several things happened which politically isolated the SUPP and led the federal government to characterize the party as dangerous and disloyal. First, the SUPP was infiltrated by Communists who sought to use the party as a "front". Left-wing extremists gained control of many of the SUPP branches, and became very active at the grass-roots level. By and large, the Communists were content not to try to overthrow the moderate leadership at the top, for it provided cover and protection, and instead they concentrated on establishing branch level control and applying pressure on policy. Second, the SUPP increasingly acquired the image of a Chinese party. Though there were a considerable number of Natives in the party, they tended to be inactive. This discouraged further Native membership, doubly since Communist activity was almost exclusively associated with the Chinese. Third, the SUPP maintained an anti-Malaysia stand and participated in the PAP-sponsored Malaysian Solidarity Convention in 1965. Fourth, because of Communist infiltration and the SUPP policies, the federal government kept the party under close surveillance. During Confrontation with Indonesia, several SUPP branches were closed and two party publications were banned. Further, the government periodically detained local-level SUPP leaders suspected of being left-wing extremists.

Despite government harassment, the SUPP entered the 1969 elections in a position of considerable strength. It was

thought that either the SUPP or SNAP might be in a position to gain control of the Council Negri.

### *THE COALITION*

However, by 1969, the SUPP top leadership, especially Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui but also Datuk Stephen Yong, had begun slowly to alter the role and direction of the party. Malaysia was now an accomplished fact; the nation had weathered the storms of Confrontation and Singapore's expulsion, and continued opposition to its existence was a futile exercise. Second, the top leadership was increasingly aware of the party's lack of influence on policy because it was regarded as a not-very-respectable opposition party. Third, the leadership, especially Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, was developing a close rapport with the Kuala Lumpur leaders. Fourth, it was becoming increasingly apparent that eventually there would be a showdown for control of the party between the moderates and the extremists, with the outcome uncertain.

According to Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, there were no official coalition talks between the SUPP and the Alliance in the 1967-1969 period, although there was an understanding between him and Tun Razak that if the 1969 elections yielded no clear majority in the state (as forecast), it would be best to have a Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition.<sup>27</sup>

Already the SUPP was becoming more "respectable" in the eyes of the federal government. Before the elections, the party issued a statement that it was no longer opposed to Malaysia, only to the way which the agreements had been negotiated. As part of the closer relationship, the federal government provided the SUPP leaders with the names of subversives in the party, and many of these were subtly weeded out.<sup>28</sup>

As a result of the May 13th riots, the 1969 elections in Sarawak and Sabah were suspended. In 1970, the NOC amended its ordinances to enable fresh elections in the two states, and these elections, albeit without campaigning, were scheduled for June (parliamentary only) in Sabah, and July

(state and parliamentary) in Sarawak. The Special Branch predicted a minority government outcome in Sarawak.

Tun Razak wanted a Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition, and for three months before the elections, several of his envoys held talks with Tan Sri Ong and Datuk Yong, as well as with the recognised leader of the Sarawak Alliance, Datuk Patinggi Haji Rahman Yakub.<sup>29</sup> Tun Razak stayed in the background. The Tunku was informed of the possible coalition and gave his consent. The Tunku was upset with the constant in-fighting and instability of the Sarawak Alliance and the weakness of its Chinese component, the SCA, and he respected the SUPP as a well-organized and well-supported party under sensible and moderate top leaders.<sup>30</sup> Further, he was convinced by the argument that Communism could not be successfully opposed in Sarawak unless the SUPP was in the government.

As the staggered polling began in Sarawak, an Alliance team from Kuala Lumpur, including Tun Razak, arrived in Kuching to try to negotiate a satisfactory coalition outcome. The final election results left the Sarawak Alliance just short of a stable majority, with Pesaka hedging about whether it was in or out of the Alliance.<sup>31</sup> In the July 4-7 period, mostly before all the results were in, there were parallel coalition negotiations going on between Bumiputera and the SUPP, with federal Alliance officials negotiating for Bumiputera, and SNAP-Pesaka-SUPP. However, on July 5 Datuk Yong, dismissing the minimal concessions offered the SUPP by SNAP and Pesaka, and aware that the federal leaders would seriously frown upon a coalition which excluded the Malay party, Bumiputera, contacted the Kuala Lumpur officials and told them he was ready to go ahead.<sup>32</sup> Shortly after, Tun Razak announced that there were coalition negotiations underway and the outcome would be known within 24 hours. He added that the "door was open" to any individual or party who wanted to join. Evidently, Pesaka was being difficult about the coalition, and Tun Razak wanted some Iban representation in the government.

On July 7, 1970, the coalition agreement was signed in the

house of the Federal Secretary, and was announced in the Press the following day. The SCA, obviously undermined by the coalition, nevertheless announced its support for it after a day's delay. Pesaka, however, declared that it had decided not to join the coalition government. Two days later, with two Pesaka members securely recruited into the government, Pesaka changed its mind. Pesaka leader Temenggong Jugah announced that Pesaka had never severed relations with the Sarawak Alliance, and that it supported the coalition. At this point, Tun Razak "closed the door" to further participants, saying that he did not think it was necessary to get SNAP into the coalition.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition government was formed, with Bumiputera and the SUPP as major partners, and Pesaka and the SCA as minor ones. Datuk Patinggi Haji Rahman Yakub of Bumiputera was named as the Chief Minister, and Bumiputera was given one other post in the six-member Cabinet. The SUPP was given a Deputy Chief Ministership (Datuk Stephen Yong) and one other Cabinet post, equal control in theory over policies and appointments, and the promise that the policies enumerated in its Election Manifesto would be implemented. Later, in December, the SUPP was also given a federal ministership which went to Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui. A compromise was reached concerning the SCA: it could remain as part of the Sarawak Alliance, but it would not be given any Cabinet posts. Pesaka was given two Cabinet posts, including the other Deputy Chief Ministership, but these were to be selected by the Chief Minister. Pesaka was also given a federal ministership. The coalition was limited to Sarawak and to the term of that government.

### *THE COALITION MOTIVES*

The Kuala Lumpur leadership had a number of reasons for favouring the Sarawak Coalition Government. First, it wanted a stable government in the state with a large and representative majority, which could get on with the task of

implementing development policies. Second, it wanted adequate Chinese representation to compensate for the weaknesses of the SCA, and it was obvious that this could only be supplied by the SUPP. Third, it was anxious to further reduce or eliminate the threat of the Sarawak Communist Organization, and it believed that including the SUPP in the government would be of help. Fourth, the Kuala Lumpur leadership was on good terms with the moderate top leadership of the SUPP and, now that the SUPP had come to terms with the existence of Malaysia, the party had regained a good deal of its respectability. Fifth, it was believed that the coalition, with the major role assigned to Bumiputera, would stabilize the Sarawak Alliance, whose intra-party rifts over seat allocations and appointments had been troublesome for Kuala Lumpur. Sixth, the federal government wanted the support of SUPP's five Members of Parliament to help get the two-thirds majority it needed to pass the Constitution (Amendment) Bill. Although the coalition was limited to the state, SUPP's leaders made it clear that the party would not oppose the Alliance in Parliament "in matters affecting national interests". Finally, the Sarawak coalition provided a "test-case" for Tun Razak's coalition scheme.

Bumiputera also had good reason to favor the coalition. It was now the major partner in the Sarawak Alliance and the most important component of the coalition, holding as it did the key post of Chief Minister. Pesaka and the SCA were obviously not enamoured of the coalition, but had no alternatives if they wished to receive the rewards of office. It was obvious that the SCA would not be missed if it dropped out (the party was subsequently dissolved in 1974). Pesaka finally and painfully realized that it had over-estimated its bargaining power, and that party discipline was so poor that members could be wooed away to join the government (for Iban representation) if Pesaka withdrew.

For the SUPP, the coalition represented new opportunities, and the coalition was desired for several reasons. First, the party had been in the opposition for a long time, and its leaders were frustrated with trying to influence policy from



the outside. They wanted a share of the leadership and a chance to implement some of the party's program. While the SUPP leaders did not know if they would have been allowed to form the government in 1969, if they had won a clear majority, they believed that, even if they had, because of pressure from the SUPP extremists and possible problems with the federal government, it would not have lasted long anyway.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the SUPP leaders favored a coalition with Bumiputera as a way of sharing power. Second, the top leaders saw the coalition as strengthening their position in the party against the extremists. With the coalition, the moderate SUPP leaders would have the prestige of office and the full support of the federal and state governments in fending off the extremists.

To make the coalition effective, the leaders of the SUPP had to win the support of the party membership to the coalition idea and avoid splitting the party. Shortly after the coalition was announced, the SUPP Sibuan branch aired strenuous objections, but when the national leaders asked that it be given a trial, the protest quietened down. However, according to Datuk Stephen Yong, it took a year to convince followers of the merits of the coalition.<sup>35</sup> During that time, the SUPP leadership was given some help. First, the application for a permit for the SUPP Delegates Conference scheduled for December 1970, when party elections would be held and the leaders expected to explain to coalition satisfactorily was rejected by the Sarawak Operation Council (SOC) on "security grounds". By the time the Conference was held in September 1971, the situation had eased and the top leaders were re-elected. Second, the restrictions imposed by the SOC and the federal government's determined drive against the Sarawak Communist Organization hindered the activities of the SUPP extremists, and they were unable or unwilling to initiate a breakaway movement.

#### THE FIRST PENINSULAR COALITION: THE ALLIANCE AND THE GERAKAN

Despite the success of the Sarawak Coalition Government,

Tun Razak gave no early indication that he had any coalition-building plans for Peninsular Malaysia. The coalition in Sarawak could not be construed as setting any precedent for coalition-building in Peninsular Malaysia; Sarawak was too far away, and its political situation was different. In December 1970 Tun Razak had shrugged away a question about coalitions, saying, "I do not know of any party knocking at our door at the moment".<sup>6</sup>

Certainly, the Alliance had little need for any additional parliamentary strength. By mid-1970, the opposition numbered 51 seats out of 144 in Parliament, and this number was slowly dwindling because of defections to the government. Only three administrative units, two states and a municipality, were under opposition control; and none of these posed a threat to the federal Alliance government. These opposition bases did, however, threaten Tun Razak's goal of reducing "politicking", and they could interfere with his plans for economic development.

Consequently, while there was some surprise registered when the Alliance-Gerakan Coalition was announced in February 1972, it was tempered with a realistic understanding that the coalition was not in fact incongruent with events which had transpired.

### *THE BACKGROUND*

Dr. Lim Chong Eu, former President of the MCA, returned from voluntary political exile in April 1962 when he and Too Joon Hing, supported by Dr. Lim's coterie of Penang followers and a number of ex-MCA members, formed the United Democratic Party (UDP). However, the party was soon split into antagonistic camps: Dr. Lim's moderate wing and Chin See Yin's radical Seremban wing. When the radicals failed to seize power at a Central Assembly meeting, they walked out of the party. After that the party languished until Dr. Lim dissolved it in 1968 in order to establish a new party.

When a group of English-educated moderates started leaving the Labour Party, especially after the Penang riots in

1967, Dr. Lim Chong Eu saw an opportunity to align himself with these individuals, and some interested university academics, in a new multi-ethnic political party. After a series of discussions and considerable planning, such a party, Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, was launched on March 25, and registered on May 25, 1968.

The Gerakan was comprised of three distinct groups: Dr. Lim Chong Eu and his former-UDP Penang followers; Dr. Tan Chee Khoo and the ex-LP group; and Professor Syed Hussein Alatas and an "anti-corruption" academic group. Professor Alatas was named as Party Chairman. The party program, the result of efforts to accommodate three distinct groups of political views, supported non-communism, moderate socialism (a mixed economy), and democracy. Gerakan did not reject the special position of the Malays, and it supported special measures to help the Malays economically. It compromised on the difficult areas of language and education.

For the 1969 elections, the party stressed economic policies and down-played ethnic issues. The platform was vague, idealistic and academic — and generally unexciting. Gerakan lacked organization and finances for the 1969 elections, except in Penang where the former UDP branches were simply re-registered. Consequently, in Gerakan's electoral pact with the DAP and the PPP, Gerakan sought and was given most of the Penang state seats to contest.

Despite all the efforts of Gerakan's leaders to project and practise non-communalism, including having five Malays on the party's sixteen member pro-tem committee, Gerakan was regarded as basically a Chinese party, and its support came overwhelmingly from the non-Malays.

The 1969 election results gave the Gerakan 16 of the 24 state seats in Penang, 8 parliamentary seats, and a scattering of other state seats. Dr. Lim Chong Eu had just formed a state government in Penang when the May 13th riots exploded, and Emergency rule replaced the elected governments.

## THE COALITION

Dr. Lim Chong Eu was quick to grasp the essential fact that in the changed circumstances brought about by the May 13th riots, some of the old issues and goals which had seemed feasible for the opposition before were now no longer possible. He also realized that it was not the time for the opposition to be militant or uncooperative, both because it would not be tolerated and also because it would be detrimental to the cause of national unity. Further, from a financial point of view, it was necessary for Penang to co-operate with the federal government. When Tun Razak telephoned Dr. Lim at the time of the riots, Dr. Lim assured him that Gerakan would be co-operative and would not support an anti-Alliance coalition in either Perak or Selangor.<sup>37</sup> Tun Razak soon after named Dr. Lim as Chairman of the Penang State Operations Committee. These contacts in the early days of the Emergency renewed an old friendship which had been cut off when Dr. Lim was involved in the 1959 MCA crisis, and they began "to sit together once more to discuss ways to settle the national crisis."<sup>38</sup> By September 1969, Kuala Lumpur was so friendly towards Penang and Dr. Lim so co-operative that some Gerakan voters were complaining about a sell-out to the Alliance. While the Dr. Tan Chee Khoon — Professor Syed Hussein Alatas groups favored co-operation with the federal government, they were adamant that Gerakan remain an uncompromised and responsible opposition party.<sup>39</sup> By 1970, some of the Gerakan leaders already believed that Dr. Lim was seeking formal ties of some nature with the Alliance.

Shortly after the return to parliamentary rule in April 1971, a Gerakan internal coup attempt to topple Dr. Lim Chong Eu was initiated. The attempt failed, but the party split, and by July Dr. Lim was left with only 12 supporters in the 24-man state assembly. At this point, Tun Razak reported that the Alliance would not ask for elections in Penang, and he added that the Alliance "will support the state government on measures that we consider would be in the interests of the people."<sup>40</sup> Apparently Alliance headquarters had already

sent a team to Penang to conduct a survey of voter opinion. The team's conclusion was that the Alliance would not win a majority, and an opposition party less to its liking than the Gerakan [the DAP] might gain power.

As expected, in September the DAP sponsored a motion of no confidence against the Penang State Government in the state assembly. By this time, Encik Ong Yi How had been pressured to return to the Gerakan fold, and the government survived without the assured Alliance support (they abstained) that it would have required otherwise.

At about this time, Tun Razak dispatched several envoys to Penang to talk to Dr. Lim Chong Eu about a coalition. In December, the Gerakan decided not to oppose the Alliance in a state by-election in Province Wellesley, to preserve "cordial relations". By the year's end, the Press was reporting coalition rumors, and on January 2, 1972, it reported in the local press that Tun Razak and Dr. Lim Chong Eu were engaged in "hush-hush talks" in Penang.

Finally, on February 13, 1972, Tun Razak and Dr. Lim Chong Eu announced an agreement in principle on a coalition government in Penang, for the life of the present assembly. The terms of the coalition agreement stipulated that: Dr. Lim Chong Eu would remain as Chief Minister and Gerakan would retain overall control of the state government; the Alliance would support Gerakan in the state assembly, and an Alliance member would be sworn into the Executive Council; Gerakan would support the Alliance in Parliament and the other state assemblies; Gerakan policies would not run counter to federal goals. To ensure the latter and to establish coalition forums, a Consultative Council would be set up under Dr. Lim Chong Eu and a Coordinating Council established with Tun Tan Siew Sin as its chairman. Each party would maintain its separate identity and there would be no Gerakan federal Minister. The federal government pledged assistance to Penang's economic development, especially industrialization, and support for Gerakan's two pet projects, the bridge linking the island with the mainland and an Urban Centre. In return, the state government pledged to make every effort to set up industries in the rural areas.

## *THE COALITION MOTIVES*

The motives of the Alliance in seeking a coalition with Gerakan in Penang seem easily understandable. First, the coalition gave the Alliance a share of political and administrative responsibility in the state. Second, it facilitated the coordination of federal economic policies and federal-state relations. Third, by co-opting an opposition party it further reduced "politicking" in the nation. Fourth, it stabilized a highly politicized state and minimized the chance of the DAP coming to power (either through fresh elections or else through a coalition with Gerakan). Fifth, it increased pro-government Chinese representation in a "Chinese state" (the MCA had not won any seats in Penang). Sixth, on a personal level, Tun Razak and Tun (Dr.) Ismail could work with Dr. Lim Chong Eu, and vice versa. Seventh, it marginally increased the government's strength in Parliament and in several state assemblies. Eighth, because the coalition was scheduled to last only until the next elections, it was thought that it would not permanently relegate the Penang Alliance to minority status. Ninth, from the point of view of UMNO's Malay support base, it was not controversial to solidify the position of a Chinese Chief Minister, because Penang was not a Malay state and was not, from the Malay perspective, too important.

The motives of Gerakan are less easy to disentangle. Basically they centre around the question of whether the Gerakan split led to the coalition or whether the coalition idea caused the split. The fact that Gerakan was weakened by the split, holding only a precarious majority in the state assembly, has led some people to conclude that the coalition idea grew out of the split. Certainly, the split contributed to a classic coalition situation, and it probably had a catalytic effect on the outcome.

However, Dr. Lim Chong Eu had good reason to seek a formal arrangement with the federal government even before the split. First, the Gerakan was never a united party. There were serious personality conflicts among the top leaders, and

equally serious differences of opinion over policy priorities. In any party crisis, Dr. Lim could count only on the solid support of his ex-UDP Penang group. Dr. Lim's worries over internal crises and defections increased once he had formed the Penang State Government, because now he had a government which could be toppled. Second Dr. Lim was a political moderate who had started his political career in the Alliance, and he still had friends in the UMNO (the MCA had not forgiven him, however). He was not a determined oppositionist, and he had been in the political wilderness a long time. Although he had championed Chinese language, education, and culture as an opposition politician in the UDP, he apparently had already changed his thinking about these causes by the 1969 elections.<sup>4</sup> After he formed the government in Penang, and after the riots, he demonstrated increasingly that he believed that cooperation with the federal government was the only viable strategy. Third, Dr. Lim Chong Eu and Professor Alatas disagreed directly over the short — and long-term goals of the party. Professor Alatas believed that forming the Penang government itself was not as important as the expansion of the party nationally and multi-ethnically. This conflict led to a crisis in May 1971 over the Yen-Merbok state by-election. Dr. Lim did not want the Gerakan to participate, since the party stood no chance and the action would only antagonize the Alliance. Professor Alatas, however, wanted to use the opportunity to introduce the party to the Kedah Malays, regardless of whether Gerakan could win or not. Fourth, Dr. Lim Chong Eu had become increasingly interested in the problems of economic development, and he was eager to put some of his plans and ideas to work in Penang. Most of this would be possible only if the federal government was prepared to offer substantial financial assistance to the state.

For these reasons, it seems very probable that it was *because* of Dr. Lim Chong Eu's efforts to reach a formal accord with the Alliance that the Gerakan split. Whichever caused which, by 1972 there were some easy explanations of Dr. Lim's desire for a coalition: to preserve Gerakan's control

of the Penang State Government; to further developmental goals he envisaged for Penang; because he had been in the opposition for a long time; and because he was on good personal terms with Tun Razak and Tun (Dr.) Ismail, and generally supported their views on the direction which politics in Malaysia should take.

#### *THE NEXT COALITION:*

#### *THE ALLIANCE AND THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY*

On April 15, 1972, Tun Razak announced that an agreement in principle had been reached between the Alliance and the PPP to form a coalition government in Perak, effective from May 1, 1972. The coalition was not much of a surprise, following as it did only two months behind the Penang coalition, and it had been rumored in the Press for the previous five weeks. However, this coalition was much more difficult to understand or explain; the Alliance had a secure majority in the state assembly; the PPP's only political base was the Ipoh Municipal Council, which was generally acknowledged to be the best-administered urban authority in the country; and, most of all, the Alliance and the PPP were recognized as bitter enemies.

#### *THE BACKGROUND*

The PPP was founded in January 1953 as the Perak Progressive Party. Among the founders were two Ipoh-based Tamil Ceylonese lawyer brothers, D.R. and S.P. Seenivasagam, who between them controlled the party. From the beginning, the PPP was an Ipoh-centered party whose influence never extended beyond Perak. Although the party was supported by some of Perak's wealthiest Chinese businessmen, its main support was among Chinese laborers, many of whom were from the New Villages, and some Indians and Ceylonese in the Ipoh area. The party was plagued, almost from the start, by endemic factionalism between the Indian/Ceylonese group and the more radical Chinese group.



In December 1953, the PPP joined the Alliance to contest the local town council elections in Perak (against the National Association of Perak). However, this relationship broke down in early 1955 when the Alliance by-passed D.R. Seenivasagam as a candidate for the 1955 elections. After unsuccessfully contesting these on its own and with a moderate platform, the party underwent a complete metamorphosis. In 1956 it emerged with a new name, the People's Progressive Party, and a new program which appealed directly to the non-Malay vote. It championed Chinese and Tamil education and languages, and it rejected special rights for Malays. The PPP prospered with its new approach, with D.R. Seenivasagam defeating an Alliance candidate in a 1957 federal by-election, and winning the four seats up for election in the Ipoh Town Council (later Ipoh Municipal Council) in December 1958, thus taking control of the Council.

In the 1960s, the PPP seemed to grow lethargic. D.R. Seenivasagam was an outspoken critic of the government in Parliament, but the party had few activities or functions and remained organizationally weak. In fact, most party energies were concentrated on running the Ipoh Council, under the presidency of Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, and the Council developed a reputation for efficiency and sound administration. Party notices and news releases were increasingly related to municipal matters: drainage systems, housing, and electricity.

Just before the 1969 elections, D.R. Seenivasagam died suddenly, thus depriving the PPP of its chief political force. The party did well in Perak in the 1969 elections nonetheless, mainly as a result of electoral pacts with the DAP and Gerakan. However, when Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam was unable to put together an opposition coalition to form the state government of Perak, he seems to have despaired of the PPP ever coming to power at the state level. Further, the Constitution (Amendment) Act in 1971 prohibited the articulation of some of the PPP's most successful ethnic issues. Increasingly, the PPP retreated to its political lifeline, the Ipoh Municipal Council.

## *THE COALITION*

As with all the previous coalitions, the negotiations for the Alliance-PPP coalition were secret until agreement in principle had been reached. Although the possibility of a coalition had been rumored in the Press, there were no dramatic events, such as the elections in Sarawak or the Gerakan split in Penang, which pointed toward a coalition situation in Perak. What could be observed, however, was a slowly developing federal program to reform and/or abolish local authorities, a program which would inevitably affect the Ipoh Municipal Council. In July 1971, the federal government announced that the system of local government would be abolished because it was "unnecessary" and "redundant". In December 1971, the federal government said that it would be the responsibility of the state governments to restructure local government authorities before there could be any local elections again. Then, in February 1972, it was announced that the federal government had decided to continue the suspension of local authority elections. Finally, in April 1972, just prior to the announcement of the coalition agreement, the Press reported that the Malacca State Government had taken over the Malacca Municipal Council.<sup>42</sup>

The coalition announcement on April 15, 1972 stated that it was for the current term of the Perak State Government only. Unlike the Sarawak and Penang coalitions, it would not extend to the federal level. There would be no PPP Cabinet appointment and the party's MPs would remain in the opposition. The terms of the coalition stated that the PPP would get one position on the State Executive Council (Exco), and the Alliance would get three places on the Ipoh Municipal Council. The understanding accompanying the terms was that the PPP would retain control of the reformed Ipoh Municipal Council and that the federal and state governments would give more consideration to approving and financially assisting municipal projects. Evidence of this understanding materialized quickly in the shape of approval and finance which became available for long-stymied projects. For example, in

July, Tun Razak reported that both the federal and state governments would contribute financing for the construction of a new library in Ipoh and in November 1972, Dato Sri Seenivasagam announced that the Kinta Heights low-cost housing scheme was now out of "cold storage". The PPP was also interested in extending the boundaries of the Ipoh Municipal Council and in gaining City status for Ipoh. In late July 1972, the federal government announced plans for doubling the area of the Ipoh Municipal Council to 60 square miles, including five New Villages. It was thought that City status would be awarded shortly after, but this did not materialize.

### *COALITION MOTIVES*

The reasons why the Alliance wanted this coalition seem diffuse, except in terms of Tun Razak's over-all coalition-building scheme. But there are some possible contributing motives. First, Perak UMNO suffered from chronic factionalism at the divisional level, which the state organization seemed unable to control. Further, there was not even a majority in the state assembly until July 1970 when three opposition members defected to the Alliance.<sup>43</sup> Given the possibility that, after the assembly met again in 1971, factional strife could lead to threats of, or actual desertions which could topple the government, it was considered a precautionary move to bring the PPP into the state government. Second, the federal Alliance wanted to increase non-Malay support in the state to compensate for the weaknesses of the MCA and the MIC. Third, it wanted more non-Malay electoral support as a hedge against growing PAS strength in the rural areas of northern Perak.<sup>44</sup> Fourth, it wanted greater participation in the running of the Ipoh Municipal Council, especially to promote New Economic Policy goals, such as trying to get more Malays in business in Ipoh. Finally, it is possible that the federal government thought that a more congenial political atmosphere in Perak might be of some value in combating the Communist insurgents.

The security situation and the PAS threat seem to be the least important factors, while Perak UMNO factionalism and the active participation on the Ipoh Municipal Council appear to be the most likely reasons for the Alliance seeking the coalition. Probably the most crucial reason is that Tun Razak wanted coalitions with all opposition parties that were compatible, especially those controlling administrative units.

The PPP motive for joining the coalition is straightforward: it wanted to maintain control of the Ipoh Municipal Council. It also wanted to secure more federal and state cooperation for Municipal projects, but this was more in the nature of a bargaining concession by the Alliance than an actual reason for the PPP wanting the coalition. Another factor contributing to the PPP top leaders' willingness to agree to a coalition was that all of the ethnic issues championed by the party were now proscribed by the Constitution (Amendment) Act, which the PPP had voted against. Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam had come around to the view that it was no longer much use being in the opposition, because it would not be allowed to come to power, and so it was better to try to work within the government.<sup>44</sup>

Nonetheless, it appears that this coalition was thrust upon an at least somewhat reluctant PPP, unlike the coalitions with the SUPP or Gerakan, because of the threat of the PPP losing its control of the Ipoh Municipal Council.<sup>45</sup>

#### THE COUP DE GRACE: THE ALLIANCE COALITION WITH PAS

This is the coalition which took the longest time to conclude, and it is the only one whose basic progress, especially in 1972, could be charted in the Press. Except for the fact that the public was prepared for the coalition to materialize, both because of manoeuvres reported in the Press and because of the coalition pattern already established, this coalition would have been the most surprising of all, and especially alarming to the non-Malays.<sup>46</sup> Between UMNO and PAS was a longstanding rivalry of deep intensity and with

considerable rancour and antagonism. Yet Tun Razak, unlike the Tunku, was not irrevocably anti-PAS, and he had made a coalition with PAS the cornerstone of his post-riots political strategy.

### THE BACKGROUND

Historically, PAS developed out of three groups, all linked by Malay nationalism and Islam. In 1950, UMNO decided to form a religious wing, called the Persatuan Ulama Sa-Malaya, under the leadership of Encik Ahmad Fuad, a dedicated follower of Dato Onn. Following the split in UMNO, the religious wing held a meeting at Kepala Batas, Penang in 1951 which was attended in force by former members of the Hizbul Muslimin (Islamic Brotherhood), an affiliate of the disbanded radical Malay nationalist Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya.<sup>17</sup> It was decided at the meeting to form a purely religious Islamic welfare movement called PAS. Soon after, a third group joined forces when Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, elected President in 1956, brought into the PAS organization some old supporters of the Malayan Nationalist Party.

As Independence negotiations between the British and UMNO progressed, PAS became increasingly distressed over UMNO's concessions to the non-Malays, especially its willingness to grant citizenship on the basis of *jus soli*. The day before nominations closed for the 1955 Federal Legislative Council Elections, PAS officially registered as a party, with the goal of restoring and protecting Malay rights.

Ideologically, PAS was a Malay nationalist and Islamic party. It was in fact more concerned with Malay nationalist issues than with Islam, but religion gave the party cohesion and an identity. The party's slogan: "Bangsa, Uagama, Tanah ayer" (race, religion, native land) had a simple and powerful symbolic appeal. The foundation of PAS's belief system was that "Malaya belongs to the Malays". It tried to persuade Parliament to write this "fact" into the Constitution, but the motion was adjourned *sine die*.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, this belief guided PAS policy. The party wanted Malay rights extended

and entrenched in the Constitution, tighter and retroactive citizenship regulations, more restrictive immigration laws, Malay immediately as the national and only official language, the posts of Menteri Besar, Ministers, Governors, and Heads of the Armed Forces reserved for Malays, and the establishment of an Islamic theocratic state.<sup>49</sup> PAS accused UMNO of selling away the birthrights of the Malays, and said that the Alliance was dominated by the MCA. While the application of the party's theocratic and mildly socialistic ideas was never really explained, in its nationalism, PAS "had a clear, unambiguous appeal as far as the Malay electorate was concerned".<sup>50</sup>

To almost everyone's surprise, PAS won the state elections in Kelantan and Terengganu in 1959. Although the party lost Terengganu in 1961, there was a shift in the party's centre of power to the East Coast, and Kelantan became the focal point. After Kelantan-born Datuk Asri bin Haji Muda became the Menteri Besar of Kelantan in 1964, and succeeded Dr. Burhanuddin as PAS President, the party's major efforts were devoted to governing in Kelantan and to maintaining power in that State. There were some other changes in the party's direction at this time also. PAS gradually drifted away from the Pan-Indonesian orientation, the more overt forms of socialism, and the purely theoretical aspects of Islam, derived from Dr. Burhanuddin's leadership, towards a more straightforward Malay nationalist approach. Datuk Asri also was less opposed to cooperating with UMNO than Dr. Burhanuddin had been.

### *THE COALITION*

The first normal coalition approach by the Alliance was made in December 1970 by Deputy Minister Dato Samad bin Idris, who "speaking in his personal capacity", suggested an Alliance-PAS coalition in Kelantan and Terengganu. Datuk Asri replied that he had not had time to study the proposal, but that it was just "politics" to suggest that a coalition would be of special help to Malays in Kelantan. Talk of a coalition

was in the air at the January 1971 UMNO General Assembly, but when it was not taken up by the UMNO leadership, and PAS seemed unresponsive, the talk died away.

However, UMNO leaders had been trying to reach some accommodation with PAS even before the Dato Samad Idris statement. Apparently, during the riots when Datuk Asri was flown to Kuala Lumpur, at Tun Razak's request as a demonstration of solidarity,<sup>11</sup> talks were held between Datuk Asri and Tun Razak and also Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie. While it is unlikely that Tun Razak had a coalition strategy in mind at this early date, he certainly wanted PAS cooperation during the crisis. Apparently some areas of agreement were worked out concerning national security and Malay unity. However, PAS was not interested in any formal bonds.

Certainly, from the time of the riots to the announcement of the coalition, PAS was cooperative with the federal government. The party was favorable to NOC rule, participated on the NCC, supported the Constitution (Amendment) Bill in 1971 (although the party was internally at odds over this), and generally avoided political confrontations. However, PAS seemed determinedly not interested in a coalition until 1972, when the idea was revived again.

In April 1972, a full Minister, Ghafar Baba, told the Press that, although there had been no serious discussion yet, the Alliance government was prepared to consider a coalition government in Kelantan. At this point, several top PAS leaders, including Haji Wan Ismail (Datuk Asri's brother-in-law), Abu Bakar Hamzah, Daud Samad, and Muhammad Fakhruddin met to discuss the coalition idea.<sup>12</sup> The group was favorable to the idea and decided to test it, with Abu Bakar Hamzah as the spokesman for the pro-coalition PAS group. It is unclear just what Datuk Asri's attitude was at this juncture. Datuk Asri remained uncommitted and was possibly undecided. At the same time it was still too early for Datuk Asri to comment publicly since the leader cannot be put on the front line.

However, in early May, Datuk Asri replied that he was prepared to go into negotiations any time the Alliance leaders

make the approach. He added that it was no longer a question of a Kelantan coalition, but of a national coalition. To emphasize the point, a few weeks later Datuk Asri stated that his Kelantan Government was not keen on a state coalition as it already had an absolute majority in the state.<sup>53</sup>

The breakthrough came in June at the UMNO General Assembly. In his Presidential speech, Tun Razak said, "We in the UMNO particularly and the Alliance in general will gladly cooperate with any opposition party who wants to cooperate with us. Recently there was talk of a coalition between us and PAS in Kelantan. I have emphasized that we do not reject any effort towards this end ..."<sup>54</sup>

Datuk Asri in turn replied in July at the PAS General Assembly, saying that Tun Razak's speech merited earnest and exhaustive study. The next day the PAS Central Executive Committee was given a mandate (by a vote of 114 for, 50 against, 50 abstentions) to start working out details for a PAS-Alliance coalition government "at all levels".<sup>55</sup> On September 5, 1972, after four rounds of talks, it was announced that an agreement in principle had been reached between the Alliance and PAS for a coalition at the state and federal levels. In November, it was reported that UMNO and PAS had agreed in principle on the coalition details. Then PAS held an Extraordinary Congress in December to discuss the coalition and to seek a mandate. By a vote of 190-for, 94-against, 19-abstentions, and 30-absent, the party leaders were given a formal go-ahead to conclude the coalition agreement.<sup>56</sup> Finally, on December 28, 1972, the coalition agreement containing a 13-point communique was signed by Tun Razak and Datuk Asri in the Prime Minister's Department. The coalition would come into effect on January 1, 1973.

Among the terms of the coalition agreement, PAS was given the Ministry of Land Development and Special Functions (Datuk Asri), and the same Minister was to be named the Deputy Chairman of the National Council of Malaysian Islamic Affairs, with the consent of the Rulers. PAS was also given one Deputy Ministership, a Parliamentary



Secretary, a Political Secretary, and the appointment of a Senator when a vacancy arose. Further, PAS was to be considered for foreign service posts, to be included on overseas delegations, and was to participate on committees, boards and corporations. At the State level, two PAS members each were named to the Terengganu and Kedah Executive Councils. In return, the Alliance was given two seats on the Kelantan Executive Council.

The conditions of the coalition further stated that a Coordinating Committee would be established, and that the Alliance and PAS would not contest against each other in by-elections in any constituency formerly won by either the Alliance or PAS.

### *THE COALITION MOTIVES*

For Tun Razak and the Alliance, this coalition was vital to the strategy of reducing "politicking", achieving Malay unity, and devoting all energies to the implementation of the Second Malaysia Plan and the New Economic Policy. Without this coalition, Tun Razak would likely not have created the Barisan Nasional. Additionally, the Alliance sought the coalition with PAS in order to eliminate the threat of "outbidding" by PAS and also to stop the danger posed by PAS's spreading influence in other northern states (Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis, and Perak). Finally, the coalition gave the Alliance participation in the Kelantan State Government and reduced federal-state tensions there. Nonetheless, when one looks at the coalition the overwhelming motive for it seems to be Tun Razak's goal of achieving a broad national political consensus in order to get fully down to the business of implementing the Second Malaysian Plan and the NEP.

The motives of PAS are more complex. In 1970 the party did not want a coalition. By 1972, for a variety of reasons, there had been a change of heart. First, PAS was badly hurt by the post-May 1969 restrictions on political activity, especially the Sedition Act, 1971, the Constitution (Amendment) Act,

1971, and the 1972 Elections (Amendment) Act, which prohibited the use by political parties of any symbol connected with any religion or sect. With these restrictions, PAS could not campaign on some of the issues which in the past the party had found had great appeal with the rural Malay electorate. The party was especially crippled by not being able to champion tighter and retroactive citizenship regulations.

The warning was made clear by Tan Sri Abdul Kadir bin Yusof during the Parliamentary debates on the Constitution (Amendment) Bill: "... I, therefore, remind that if there is any suggestion, let us say that all citizens should be called "Melayu" on the ground that the country originally belonged to the Malays as expounded by the PMIP all this while, then that is an infringement of the Sedition Act. This is the reason why I said ... that some political parties ... including the PMIP, if they wish to play safe, they should review and see to it that their party policies and party constitution do not run contrary to the Bill and the Sedition Act." He continued, "... with the passage of the Bill, the two main party policies which have been the pulse of the PMIP, cannot be pursued, namely, the fight for "Melayu" for the name of the nation and the use of the Islamic religion in the party struggle. If they keep on pursuing such policies ... legal actions ... will be taken."\*

Second, given the political restrictions the party was now operating under, and the fact that the Kelantan government had no money, the party was worried about a decline in its power in Kelantan. The results of the Tumpat Barat state by election in Kelantan in February 1972 had significantly alarmed PAS. It won by only 230 votes. Further, PAS was troubled about defections, some including whole branches, to UMNO in the other northern states.

Third, the Kelantan State Government was tightly squeezed for money and badly needed an inflow of federal funds. While this was not new, it was perhaps worse than usual in 1971-72 because of some land leasing decisions made by the Kelantan State Economic Development Corporation (SEDC).

Fourth, PAS had been politically isolated in Kelantan for a

long while, and many in the party favored getting into the mainstream and securing a share of power nationally. Party members were interested in the rewards of federal office: posts, committees, government bodies, and overseas delegations. Further, Datuk Asri seemed particularly attracted to the idea of becoming a federal Minister,<sup>50</sup> even though it would mean he would hold less actual power than as Menteri Besar.

Fifth, PAS Kelantan was undergoing a leadership crisis, and Datuk Asri's position as Menteri Besar was unstable. The party in Kelantan was divided into two main factions plus another smaller one, and there was considerable intrigue between them. Apparently there were at least two coup attempts against Datuk Asri in the post-riots period, one of which nearly toppled him. It was alleged that both the Palace and UMNO Kelantan actively supported one of the coup attempts.<sup>51</sup> It was believed that Datuk Asri was in serious danger of losing his power position in Kelantan at some point, and the coalition was viewed as a way for him to preserve his leadership.

Sixth, there were allegations of corruption in Kelantan, and in 1971 the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) initiated enquiries into the activities of the Kelantan SEDC. It was thought that these enquiries might have had some effect in influencing the attitude of the Kelantan PAS leadership in favor of the coalition.

Finally, there can be no doubt of the strong emotional appeal which the prospect of Malay unity held for both PAS and UMNO, and it was probably the most convincing pro-coalition argument employed to convince the PAS rank-and-file.

### *THE COALITION-BUILDING STRATEGY*

The Alliance coalition-building scheme was devised by Tun Razak as a political strategy for achieving a widely representative and broadly consensual government. Although the Alliance enjoyed a solid parliamentary majority, Tun Razak

believed that this was no longer adequate for the tasks of reducing political strife, for forging ethnic harmony, for ensuring governmental legitimacy, or for meeting the goals of economic development as specified in the NEP.

Originally the Alliance, itself a tripartite permanent coalition, enjoyed such extensive public support that little thought was given to enlarging the coalition. The general election and riots of May 1969 changed these perceptions. In deciding on a post-riots political strategy, the Alliance elites settled on the procedure or tactic in which they had all been well-schooled. The Alliance leaders had acquired considerable bargaining skills in their years of working out compromises together, they were very skilled at the carrot and stick technique, and they appreciated the value of offering, at times, genuine concessions and compromises.

All of the coalitions originally were limited in duration to the current term of the particular state government or until the next general election. The coalitions were maintained from the top with Tun Razak over-seeing their operations, and with various Coordinating Councils at the state level. As had been practised in the Alliance, decisions taken concerning the coalitions were most often the result of personal negotiations and agreement among the top leaders.

As will be seen in the following chapter, these coalitions were not terminated. Rather, they were maintained and consolidated into the Barisan Nasional organization for the exercise of political power in Malaysia.



Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah talking to journalists during the Barisan Nasional's 1978 election campaign in Kelantan.



Tun Hussein Onn chaired by colleagues (July 22, 1978).

### 3

## THE FORMATION OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL AND THE 1974 GENERAL ELECTIONS

### *THE BARISAN NASIONAL: FROM CONCEPT TO LEGAL ENTITY*

**T**un Razak first publicly used the term "barisan nasional" (national front) in his Hari Kebangsaan (Independence Day) radio and television broadcast in August 1972, when he said, "Except for a small group, there is the possibility of a national front among political parties to work together in facing national problems."<sup>1</sup> It was generally believed then that Tun Razak was referring to the possibility of an Alliance coalition with PAS, which would mean that there would be almost complete Malay party support for the government, accompanying the considerably bolstered non-Malay representation in the government provided by the other coalitions. With the PAS coalition due to come into effect on January 1, 1973, the Press and many politicians were already speaking in November and December 1972 of the formation of the new "barisan nasional" government. While it appeared that the term "barisan nasional" was being used to describe the various Alliance coalitions, Tun Razak dropped a hint of further development when he noted that "we are now closer to the concept of a national front which will in due course become a durable foundation for a strong, united, multi-racial Malaysia."<sup>2</sup>

For the next year and a half, the term "barisan nasional" remained undefined and unfathomable. The "barisan nasional" was sometimes talked about as if it already existed,

and at other times as if it were yet to be created. It was quite often referred to as a "concept", in the sense of an idea, but without clarification as to whether it was an idea realized or an idea still to be translated into action. In March 1973, Tun Razak said that with the "formation" of the barisan nasional, the days of "old style" politicking were over, and that he hoped that "the concept" of the barisan nasional would be further strengthened in the coming general election. Yet, in July, the Prime Minister told the delegates at the UMNO General Assembly that the Alliance was no less relevant than before. Datuk Asri cleared up some of the confusion in September when he explained that at present no barisan nasional had been formed. "There is only a coalition government, but it is moving towards a national front. However, as there is no clear picture of a front yet, it is premature to say" what the result will be.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, in November, Tun Razak noted that he could "see no reason why the coalition government could not progress towards the creation of a lasting and strong national front."<sup>4</sup> By the year's end it was at least clear that what had been hailed as a "barisan nasional" at the start of the year was not what Tun Razak envisaged by the term, and that what he meant was not yet in effect. The question then focused on exactly what Tun Razak did have in mind. Harvey Stockwin accurately predicted a formal change, writing that "Malaysia is moving towards political developments which may further push politics towards the national front concept of Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, and away from the almost traditional Alliance formula that has prevailed ...".<sup>5</sup>

During the first three months of 1974, Tun Razak held a number of high-level talks with the leaders of the coalition parties for the purpose of working out a common strategy and platform for the general elections expected sometime in 1974. The first concrete action was announced in April: there would be a common symbol for all the barisan nasional political parties in the next general election, the scales of justice (*dacing*). There would be no individual party symbols, and no more Alliance sailing boat.<sup>6</sup> After that, the development of the barisan nasional progressed rapidly. In early May, a



massive "barisan nasional" rally was held in Alor Star, Kedah. Then it was announced that a Selection Committee had been formed to decide on the final lists of barisan nasional candidates, although all parties agreed that Tun Razak would have the final say in the selection of all the barisan nasional candidates in the next general elections. It was also stated that a barisan nasional election manifesto was being formulated. In late May it was reported that the barisan nasional slogan for the elections would be "Support Tun Razak and the Barisan Nasional" and that Tun Razak's portrait would appear on all posters, along with the *dacing*.

It went virtually unnoticed that, on June 1, 1974, the Barisan Nasional of Malaysia was given a certificate of registration by the Registrar of Societies, and thus became a legal functioning party.<sup>1</sup> The nine political parties in the Barisan Nasional were UMNO, MCA, MIC, PAS, PPP, Gerakan, SUPP, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), and the Sabah Alliance Party. Tun Razak was listed as the Chairman, with Encik (later Datuk) Michael Chen as Secretary and Datuk Asri as Treasurer. The administration of the Barisan Nasional was to be handled by a Dewan Tertinggi (Supreme Council) with members of each component party represented on it.

At the PAS 20th Congress, June 13-15, 1974, Datuk Asri explained the structure and goals of the Barisan Nasional to his party and received a comfortable mandate (275-19) for PAS to participate in it. At the end of June, Tun Razak likewise explained the Barisan to UMNO delegates at its 25th General Assembly, although he neither needed nor sought any official mandate. He said that a "new era in the political development of our country has begun with the establishment of the National Front", and that the results of the next general elections would determine "our relationship with the other parties of the National Front". He explained that elections would no longer be in "the name of the Alliance", and concluded that the "setting up of the National Front is the climax of our political strategies in the 1970s."<sup>2</sup>

An obvious question underlies the formation of the Barisan

Nasional: was it *ad hoc* or planned? In an interview, Tun Razak said that the "idea of bringing together the different parties came to my mind after the May 13 incident ... when the moment of opportunity came .. I welcomed it." He continued, "After May 13 this question of unity was very much on my mind ... And when we formed all the coalitions and we found that it was a success all round, I decided that we should form this Barisan Nasional or National Front."<sup>9</sup> Several UMNO insiders close to Tun Razak, interviewed for this research, confirmed that Tun Razak was the principal architect of the Barisan Nasional and that it was indeed planned. One recalled that Tun Razak had a grand scheme for the Barisan Nasional right from the beginning (after May 13th, 1969), but that it was necessary for implementation to proceed gradually.<sup>10</sup> Another noted that while the Barisan Nasional was Tun Razak's idea, the Prime Minister was cautious and so there was never any one moment when the idea was born or announced; rather it came to life slowly.<sup>11</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the Barisan Nasional was more thought out than it seemed during the process of formation, but less planned than was afterwards claimed.<sup>12</sup> It was consistent with Tun Razak's political style to move slowly and to test opinion. It was also consistent with his style to plan moves rather than to act impulsively or intuitively. Given the post-riots strategy of extensive coalition-building was planned, it seems quite likely that Tun Razak may have an idea for a new organization with which to institutionalize and consolidate the various coalitions into a permanent governing body once the venture proved successful. It is not nearly so clear, however, that the structure and form of the Barisan Nasional was planned greatly in advance, or in much detail.

#### *POLITICAL ADJUSTMENTS WITHIN THE BARISAN. 1973-74*

While the Barisan Nasional was slowly taking shape the coalition partners were undergoing various strains and stresses in trying to adjust to the changing political circum-

stances. This period saw the departure of three of Malaysia's top political figures: Deputy Prime Minister Tun (Dr.) Ismail, who died in office, and MCA President Tun Tan Siew Sin and MIC President Tun V.T. Sambanthan, both of whom retired from politics.

(1) **UMNO.** The most significant event in 1973 for UMNO and the nation was the sudden death of the respected Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy President of UMNO, Tun (Dr.) Ismail, in August 1973. Less than a week later, the UMNO Supreme Council unanimously selected Tun Razak's choice, the Minister of Education and an UMNO vice-president, Datuk (later Tun) Hussein Onn, to succeed Tun (Dr.) Ismail as UMNO deputy president. Four days later Tun Razak appointed Datuk Hussein Onn as the Deputy Prime Minister in a major Cabinet reshuffle. This fast and smooth process of succession in the government and the party boosted confidence in the system and reconfirmed Tun Razak's leadership and control.<sup>13</sup> He was able to placate the two senior UMNO vice-Presidents while quietly insisting on his choice of Datuk Hussein Onn, with barely a murmur from the party rank-and-file.

(2) **The MCA.** The coalition agreements between the Alliance and Gerakan and then the PPP undermined the position of the MCA as the sole spokesman for the Chinese in the government, and created internal dissension between the MCA top leadership and those members opposing the coalitions. In late 1972 and early 1973, the MCA, trying to salvage the party's position in the government, held merger talks with Gerakan, but Dr. Lim Chong Eu was not interested in the terms. Meanwhile, the internal conflict between the MCA "new bloods" and the "old guards" escalated to crisis proportions. The "new bloods" were unhappy that they had not been fully consulted about the coalitions beforehand, and were critical of the terms agreed to by the top leadership. The "new bloods" then started to break party discipline, and by March 1973 they were in open revolt. The "old guard" were probably not much happier about the coalitions, but they understood the "rules" (about not openly opposing the decisions of the Alliance top leaders). Besides, the coalitions

gave the "old guard" the opportunity to convince Tun Tan Siew Sin that the "new bloods" wanted to topple him. In May, Tun Tan imposed a two-month political moratorium on MCA activities, including meetings of the Central Working Committee, accompanied later by a Press blackout. In June, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik was expelled from the party, and by early August most of the other "new bloods" were also expelled. As well, some branches and divisions under the control of "new blood" supporters were dissolved.

Although the exodus of the "new bloods" ended the immediate internal crisis, the MCA was left by the end of 1973 in a weakened bargaining position, with the majority of the "new bloods" swelling the ranks of Gerakan and strengthening Gerakan's bargaining position vis-a-vis the MCA. Further, some of the "old guards" who had hitherto supported the top leadership against the "new bloods" now began to clamor for a stronger stand against UMNO, and to insist that the MCA should demand that it be allocated all of its traditional seats in next general elections.<sup>14</sup> One foreign journalist commented, although the MCA had defied obituaries before, it now appeared that, while it would survive, it would be relegated to the status of a "rump party".<sup>15</sup>

In January and February 1974, with Tun Tan Siew Sin in London recovering from a lung operation, the Perak and Penang MCA organizations announced they were determined to contest all the seats they had stood for in 1969. Then a national leader, Senator Wong Seng Chow, also told the Press that the MCA wanted to contest all its traditional state and federal seats, and that it was up to the members whether to contest under the banner of the MCA or of the Barisan Nasional. A special meeting of the Central Working Committee was held, and Acting President Datuk Lee San Choon reported that the Committee felt that Senator Wong's statement reflected their mood.<sup>16</sup> In March, the Penang MCA declared its opposition to the barisan nasional concept, and the Perak MCA issued a statement supporting that stand. The Malacca MCA Youth joined in with a call to terminate the

coalitions before the elections, and another MCA national leader stated that the MCA "does not believe in entering into any electoral pact with any other political party" except under the Alliance.<sup>16</sup> In the midst of this turmoil and rebellion, in early April 1974 the MCA sustained what many thought was a mortal blow: Tun Tan Siew Sin announced he was retiring as Minister of Finance and MCA President.

The UMNO leaders had been quiet and restrained in the face of the MCA outbursts; even as the intensity of the rebellion seemed to grow, the only public comment from Tun Razak was that the MCA had to respond to the "winds of change". However, after the retirement of Tun Tan, the Press in its editorials started to bear down on the MCA. A *Straits Times* (Malaysia) editorial suggested that "An MCA outside the National Front must be an MCA outside the government".<sup>17</sup> Shortly after, the MCA Central Committee announced that it was "prepared to enter into serious discussion ... with other political parties which have accepted the National Front concept so long as by being in the National Front, the MCA will not lose its identity as the vehicle for the channelling of the political aspirations of the Chinese ...". Datuk Lee San Choon added that "we still have to see how the concept is to be implemented and what form it is to take".<sup>18</sup>

From that point on, it was clear that the MCA was going to remain in the Barisan Nasional despite the fact that Tun Razak reminded them in July that the party was no longer the sole representative of the Chinese, and even though many members remained reluctant to cooperate with their Barisan partners.

In May, Datuk Lee explained the MCA's hard line to the Press, saying that they "had to get the backing of the whole party. If I commit the party and I cannot carry the decision, then this would not be of any use to the party and to the National Front".<sup>19</sup> Datuk Lee confirmed in an interview that the MCA leaders did not intend to take the MCA out of the Barisan, but they felt it was necessary to make a strong stand in order to secure the best conditions possible, and more importantly to convince the rank-and-file that they were

fighting hard. As a result, he noted, the rank-and-file supported the MCA's late decision to stay in the BN.<sup>22</sup>

As the general elections neared, the MCA was given fewer seats to contest than in 1969, but nearly all were relatively good ones, and the party membership was united, if not behind all of the Barisan at least behind its own leaders. It was apparent that the party had defied another obituary, and that given its traditional relationship with UMNO and its substantial financial resources and organizational machinery, it could still be the major, if not the sole, spokesman for the Chinese, if it preserved a high degree of unity and also performed well in the elections.

(3) **The MIC.** Although the long and bitter leadership dispute was technically settled when Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam was unanimously elected President of the MIC on June 30, 1973, it was obvious that there was "neither harmony nor brotherhood" in the party. Such had been the state of conflict in the party for the last three years, that even a Penang Judge, in refusing a legal application, felt compelled to scold the MIC, saying that "until and unless the principle of majority rule is accepted, this party will remain torn with dissensions, disputes, and litigations".<sup>23</sup>

The MIC, preoccupied with sorting out its own internal problems, raised no objections to the various Alliance coalitions or to the formation of Barisan Nasional. Remarkably, however, in a year, given the incentive provided by the prospect of a general election, Tan Sri Manickavasagam managed to subdue the MIC's factional conflicts. An editorial in July 1974 reported that every MIC state congress had been held in an orderly manner (no fisticuffs or flying chairs), a number of branches had been revitalized, the party had worked out a sophisticated and detailed "Blueprint for Economic Advancement" (with the help of some recently recruited well-educated young members), and MIC discipline and confidence had been largely restored. On election eve the MIC could expect that its traditional role in the government would continue.

(4) **Gerakan.** In early 1973, Gerakan held tentative merger talks with both the MCA and the SUPP, but neither set of talks progressed to any serious level of discussion. Dr. Lim Chong Eu appeared content with his state legislative majority and with federal cooperation for a variety of economic projects for Penang, in which he was vitally interested. In October 1973, when Gerakan postponed its National Delegates Conference, it was rumored in the Press that the expelled MCA "new bloods" would join Gerakan. Two months later, Dr. Lim Chong Eu told the Press that in the next few weeks there would be great changes which would show that Gerakan was not a political party confined only to Penang. On December 19, 1973, it was announced that Dr. Lim Keng Yaik and many of the former MCA "new bloods" had joined Gerakan. By the end of the year and on into January 1974, there were reports of "thousands" of applications for Gerakan membership. Almost overnight, Gerakan inherited a considerable membership in Perak and Selangor as well as a smattering of new members throughout the other West Coast states, and the party began setting up branches and divisions to incorporate its new members. One Chinese newspaper commented that the two doctors (Dr. Lim Chong Eu and Dr. Lim Keng Yaik) wanted "to carry out political surgery on the MCA".<sup>2</sup> In June, new party officers were elected, and Dr. Lim Keng Yaik became the deputy chairman under Dr. Lim Chong Eu, and a number of former "new bloods" were elected to the Central Committee.

Gerakan's expansion and surge of new enthusiasm coincided with the low ebb in the MCA's fortunes, and there was speculation that Gerakan might replace the MCA as the leading representative of the Chinese. However, Gerakan was still only very marginally a "national" party, and it lacked the organizational base and finances of the MCA. As the general elections approached, Dr. Lim Chong Eu appeared content to focus most of his bargaining power on securing a large allocation of seats for Gerakan in Penang.

(5) **The PPP.** It was surprising in 1973-74 how well the PPP seemed to be adjusting to its new posture as part of the

government team. By the same token, the PPP appeared to have lost the political fire and enthusiasm it once had as an opposition party. Its leaders concentrated almost entirely on the running of the Ipoh Municipal Council and with implementing municipal projects which now received state and federal cooperation. Formal party organization, never exactly a model, ceased to exist on paper. Inside the party, Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam was unable to control the conflict between his two principal lieutenants, Secretary-General Khong Kok Yat and Vice-President R.C.M. Rayan, which had divided the party into antagonistic factions. The PPP was unable to mount even a mildly energetic campaign as the general elections neared, hoping instead to be carried along by the Barisan tide.

(6) PAS. Not unexpectedly, given its abrupt change of political roles, PAS was plagued with internal dissension and rank-and-file rebellion. At the first post-coalition by-election (for the Tunku's seat in Kedah), nearly half of the electors who would normally follow PAS directives voted for Independent candidate Cik Siti Nor instead of UMNO's Datuk Senu, although the latter won anyway. It was clear that the PAS leaders needed to do a lot of explaining and convincing if the coalition was going to work. Inside the party, several crises developed. In mid-1973, PAS Secretary-General Encik Abu Bakar Hamzah, architect of the coalition, was relieved of his party post. He then contested against Datuk Asri for the presidency of PAS at its crisis-delayed September Congress; however Datuk Asri won easily. After this there was a crisis in the PAS organization, in Perlis (Encik Abu Bakar Hamzah's home state), when a "no confidence" motion against the PAS Liaison Committee carried. The PAS national executive (discipline committee) moved swiftly, and in April, Encik Abu Bakar was expelled from the party.

Just as the crisis was being resolved, a worse crisis broke out in Kelantan, now known as the "March 14th Revolt". A group of prominent Kelantan PAS members opposed the state leadership of Menteri Besar Haji Ishak Lofti, and sought to deliver an ultimatum calling on him to step down. How-



ever, the Menteri Besar and Datuk Asri, forewarned, acted swiftly by expelling the March 14th group from the party before it could take any legal party action. Although expelled, the March 14th group continued to circulate pamphlets and to attack the Menteri Besar. Eventually, this group became the nucleus of the Barisan Bebas (Independent Front), which contested against PAS in Kelantan in the 1974 general elections.

Although serious party factionalism continued to exist just under the surface in Kelantan, the national PAS Congress in June 1974 revealed no open signs of discord, with the membership providing a strong mandate for PAS to participate in the Barisan Nasional.

(7) **Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (formerly the Sarawak Alliance).** Two events affected the Sarawak Alliance in 1973-1974. In May 1973, the Registrar of Societies approved the application of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), a merger of Parti Bumiputera and Parti Pesaka of the Sarawak Alliance. Then in June 1974, it was announced that the members of the other component of the Sarawak Alliance, the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), had dissolved their party. This left the PBB as the only component of the Sarawak Alliance, and the latter organization lapsed.

Meanwhile the PBB (Sarawak Alliance) and the SUPP, aware that their coalition had set the precedent for coalition-building in Peninsular Malaysia, were determined to make Sarawak the "model" for the Barisan Nasional. In December 1973, they agreed to contest future elections as a united front, and in January 1974, they adopted a common political symbol. By July they announced that they had agreed on the allocation of seats for Sarawak for the general elections.

(8) **SUPP.** In early 1973, the party held merger talks with Gerakan, but eventually the two parties settled for an undefined "close relationship". In Sarawak, the SUPP strengthened its ties with the Sarawak Alliance and then the PBB, as described earlier. Perhaps the most significant event for the SUPP was its role (especially through the part played by its Secretary-General and Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Stephen

Yong), in the March 1974 Sri Aman campaign, wherein nearly 500 Sarawak Communist guerrillas surrendered under specified terms of amnesty.<sup>25</sup> The success of the Sri Aman campaign raised the prestige of all of the Sarawak coalition partners.

By election time in August 1974, the SUPP moderates had successfully subdued and weeded out the extremists, and the party entered the elections reasonably united. However, the SUPP, as a government coalition partner rather than an opposition party, still had not tested its support among the electorate in a general election.

(9) **The Sabah Alliance.** Of all the Barisan Nasional leaders, Tun Mustapha was perhaps the least enamored of the new political arrangement. The United Sabah National Organization (USNO) and the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA) entered the Barisan jointly under the old banner of the Sabah Alliance, and Tun Mustapha insisted on using their old symbol instead of the new *dacing*. But whatever friction existed would have little adverse effect on the election results in Sabah, where organized opposition to the powerful Mustapha political machine was virtually non-existent.

### *THE 1974 GENERAL ELECTIONS*

Although the allocation of seats among its various partners may have been the Barisan Nasional's most difficult task, the 1974 General Elections were viewed as a crucial test of its support among the people. On July 28, 1974, Tun Razak announced that the allocation of seats among the Barisan component parties had been finalized and they were ready for the polls. The proclamation dissolving Parliament was signed two days later, thus necessitating elections within sixty days. The elections were to be for 154 parliamentary seats, an increase of ten, and for 360 state assembly seats in 12 of the 13 states (Sabah chose not to hold its state assembly election in 1974). Nomination day was set for August 8th and polling day for August 24th (with staggered polling in Sabah and Sarawak).

The government picked an opportune time to call the long-anticipated elections. Tun Razak's visit to China and his meeting with Mao Tse-tung had been very popular with the Malaysian Chinese; the nation's growing role in world Islamic affairs, as symbolized in the hosting of the fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, pleased the Malays; the worst effects of inflation (related to the Arab oil price increases) had been curbed; and the election commission had completed its work on the redrawing of constituency boundaries, thus increasing by ten the number of parliamentary seats. Further, the timing of the election was good: it was ahead of the monsoon season and before the Islamic fasting month. Finally, the Barisan Nasional and the leadership of Tun Razak seemed to be riding on a high crest of popularity.

It was clear even before nomination day that the elections were going to be more in the nature of a referendum than a contest to see who would govern. Tun Razak confidently told the Press that he expected the support of 80 per cent of the electorate, and that Malay support was solid. In a theme he reiterated throughout the campaign, he said that he wanted a national government drawn from all the communities, and not a Malay government; but in order to have a truly representative government it was up to the voters to elect Chinese and Indian candidates from Barisan. He made it clear that he would not bring into the government any non-Malays from outside the Barisan Nasional, and if the non-Malays did not vote for the Chinese and Indian candidates of the Barisan, then there would be a Malay government.

The landslide began on nomination day when 47 Barisan parliamentary candidates and 43 state candidates were returned unopposed, including over half of the Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers, and Menteri Besar. In Sabah, the BN's candidates in 15 of the 16 parliamentary seats were unopposed. Remaining to be contested were 107 parliamentary seats and 317 state seats. The tempo of the campaign was restrained, owing to the restrictions imposed by the Sedition Act, and electioneering focused primarily on personalities and on the state of the economy. It was expected

that, in this first post-riots general election the mood of the electorate would be cautious. *The Barisan Nasional Manifesto, 1974* ("The People's Front for a Happier Malaysia") was a hastily-written general platform representing a non-contentious minimal level of agreement between the component parties. It identified the members of the Barisan, explained its aims and rationale, and outlined the government's progress in the fields of the economy, foreign policy and social services. However, undoubtedly the main thrust of the Barisan campaign was the theme of a vote of confidence in Tun Razak. Within the Barisan's general policy outlines, and with considerable coordination and direction provided by Barisan Nasional Headquarters (recently converted from Alliance headquarters, and also the headquarters of UMNO), the component parties campaigned individually and stressed the issues most appealing to each of their constituencies. The MCA, with its own elaborate headquarters, ran a sophisticated and well-financed nation-wide campaign. The PPP ran a loosely organized campaign, playing up Tun Razak's visit to China, and made extensive use of the posters showing a photo of Tun Razak shaking hands with Chairman Mao. Gerakan concentrated its campaign mostly in Penang, where it stressed the state's economic revival, federal pledges for future assistance, and the terrible economic situation which would result in the state if the opposition came to power. PAS, on the other hand, emphasized the merits and value of Malay unity.

The Barisan Nasional was confident of its parliamentary performance, but it was concerned about several states. Penang looked to be the most serious area, with the DAP mounting a strong challenge, and with Dr. Lim Chong Eu involved in four-way fights for both his own state and parliamentary seats. Perak was also an area of uncertainty, with the heaviest concentration of opposition candidates. Although the Malay vote was considered fairly stable, Perak UMNO was never a totally united organization, and there was the unanswered question of how PAS anti-coalition dissidents in the state would vote. The non-Malay side was even less

settled. The MCA was still in the process of trying to restore a strong state organization after the "new blood" split, and there was considerable anti-Barisan feeling within their ranks, and the PPP was running "in areas of heavy Chinese concentration where victory cannot be taken for granted".<sup>26</sup> Party officials in UMNO and PAS were also worried about Terengganu, where they were surprised and somewhat alarmed to find Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia (PSRM), a Malay socialist party, concentrating its forces. Finally, Sarawak was something of a question mark with the Barisan Nasional being challenged in every seat by the Iban party, SNAP. Of the party leaders and Cabinet Ministers, Dr. Lim Chong Eu was conceded to be in a tough fight for his seats, Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam was said to be involved in a "photo finish", and it was predicted that MIC President and Cabinet Minister V. Manickavasagam would lose to his Pekemas opponent in Port Klang.

Among the opposition, the DAP put up the most candidates in Peninsular Malaysia and stood the best chance of winning some seats. It was thought that the DAP might even form the majority in Penang. Apparently one of the election goals of the DAP was to destroy the other Peninsular Malaysia opposition parties, particularly Pekemas, and to establish itself as *the* opposition party for the future. Consequently, it declined to enter into any electoral pacts with the other opposition parties. The DAP, despite its attempts at creating a multi-ethnic membership and following, was still essentially a Chinese-based and supported party, and in the campaign it did promote itself as the champion of Chinese language, education and culture. On substantive issues, the DAP promised to look into the problems of corruption in the government, landless squatters, low-cost housing, and recognition for university degrees from Nanyang (in Singapore), Taiwan, India, and the Middle-East. In its attacks on the Barisan Nasional, it accused the government of seeking political surrender rather than accommodation, and said the government wanted to move towards a one-party state. The DAP concentrated a great deal of its wrath on the

PPP and Gerakan, whom it accused of having sacrificed political principles for position, office and profit.<sup>27</sup>

Pekemas, frustrated in all its attempts to create an opposition front, conducted a low-keyed campaign that emphasized the party's stand on the "principles of democratic socialism", and called on the electorate to deny the Barisan a two-thirds majority in Parliament. The party criticized the government for taking inadequate steps to combat inflation, unemployment, and poverty. Further, Pekemas called for free primary to university education for all, a national social security scheme, some nationalization, especially of the tin mines, a limit to the amount of land anyone could own, and an end to absentee landlordism.

The PSRM caused some alarm for Barisan Nasional, as mentioned earlier, when on nomination day it became apparent that the party was training its election guns on Terengganu. It fielded 28 state candidates and 8 parliamentary candidates, including three national leaders in Terengganu. The PSRM chose the state because it was economically backward although possibly oil rich, had numerous anti-coalition dissidents, and because the party recently had built up some support and machinery in the state. Further, Terengganu was a heavily Malay-populated state, and the UMNO Menteri Besar had not been seen as an effective leader. The PSRM adopted several separate manifestos for different states. In Terengganu it campaigned on an 11-point program promising a better deal for rural peasants through extensive socialist measures, including nationalizing the timber industry and giving land to all landless peasants.

A couple of newly-formed minor parties also participated in the elections, and there was a high number of other Independents contesting (47 as opposed to 7 in 1969 for parliamentary seats). This was in large measure the result of the formation of the Barisan and the severe competition between the component parties for Barisan nominations. Many, if not most, of the Independents were disgruntled members of the component parties not selected to stand for a seat.

In Sarawak, the multi-ethnic but essentially Iban-supported party, SNAP, provided the major challenge to the

Barisan Nasional. SNAP campaigned on the issues of nepotism and corruption in the state and promised better government. The party, however, was known for its "Sarawak for the Sarawakians" position, its desire to protect states' rights and avoid too much (non-economic) federal government involvement in Sarawak, and its championing of native (mainly Iban) interests; its voter support would be related to these postures. SNAP had successfully attracted several young and well-educated Ibans into its ranks, and it was widely recognized that the party was going to provide a strong challenge to the Pesaka portion of the PBB. One of the imponderables of the election was the effect on the coalition government on the SUPP's electoral support, and SNAP put up some Chinese candidates in SUPP strongholds to test and challenge this.

In Sabah it was really no contest. Only one opposition candidate managed to file and have his nomination papers accepted, having escaped the hazards of bribery and intimidation, and a strange but consistent propensity in Sabah at that time for opposition candidates' nomination papers to be rejected as improperly filed. For his efforts, the Pekemas candidate then faced the full force of Tun Mustapha's considerable party and government machinery. It was not the election results but the federal government's apparent embarrassment over the alleged heavy-handed tactics employed in Sabah which generated the most interest. The Barisan was clearly earmarked for a decisive election victory, which the government did not want to be tainted by any "irregularities".

On the eve of polling, it was estimated that the Barisan Nasional would win between 110 and 120 of the 154 parliamentary seats and all of the state assemblies. It was anticipated that the non-Malay voters would "prefer to play it safe this time around".<sup>28</sup>

The actual results gave the Barisan Nasional an even more massive victory than had been predicted. It won 135 of 154 parliamentary seats (104 in Peninsular Malaysia, 16 in Sabah, 15 in Sarawak), amounting to approximately 87 per cent of

the seats, and 59 per cent of the popular vote (the popular vote figure is deceptively low since no votes were tallied for the 47 strongest Barisan Nasional candidates who were returned unopposed). Of the remaining parliamentary seats, the DAP won nine and Pekemas one in Peninsular Malaysia, and SNAP was victorious in nine federal seats in Sarawak.

In the state assembly elections, the Barisan emerged with clear majorities in every state. In the difficult states of Penang and Perak, the Barisan won 23 of 27 seats and 31 of 42 seats, respectively. In Sarawak the Barisan Nasional won 30 of the 48 Council Negri seats, in Kelantan it captured every seat, and in Terengganu it completely shut out the PSRM. All of the federal Ministers, Chief Ministers and Menteri Besar who stood for the election won their seats, including surprisingly easy victories for Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam and Dr. Lim Chong Eu. The only leadership casualties were PPP President S.P. Seenivasagam who lost both his parliamentary and state seats to the DAP, and the SUPP Secretary-General and Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak Datuk Stephen Yong, who lost his state seat to SNAP.

The Malay community gave solid support to the Barisan. Both UMNO and PAS won all their parliamentary contests (61 and 14 seats, respectively), and only four Barisan Nasional Malay state candidates lost (all to Independents). There were now no Malays in the opposition benches of Parliament.<sup>29</sup> The MCA remained the second largest party in the coalition with remarkable electoral come-back which netted the party 19 of 23 parliamentary seats and 43 of 56 state seats. The MIC likewise did amazingly well, winning all four of its parliamentary seats and seven of eight state seats. Gerakan captured five of eight parliamentary seats contested and won eleven of thirteen state seats in Penang. In Peninsular Malaysia, the only Barisan Nasional party which fared badly was the PPP. The party won only one out of four parliamentary seats and two out of nine state seats. The PPP's performance was worst in the Kinta District, for twenty years the party's stronghold. Further, in addition to the election losses of Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, most of the other PPP top



leaders also lost. PPP supporters apparently felt a sense of betrayal over the coalition combined with a view that the PPP was not a "significant factor in ensuring community representation in the government".<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the PPP did not mount an effective campaign, and it was generally believed that some of the leaders had been neglecting their constituencies.

In the Borneo states, the Sabah Alliance won its only contest, although the Pekemas candidate won nearly 30 per cent of the vote. In Sarawak, the PBB won 9 of 16 parliamentary contests and 18 of 33 state seats, all its losses going to SNAP. The SUPP won 6 of 8 parliamentary seats and 12 of 15 state seats, its losses likewise going to SNAP. This was a remarkably good showing for the SUPP, marred only by the shock of the defeat of Datuk Stephen Yong in his state seat.

In the opposition, the PSRM, and the "mosquito parties" won no seats at all. Pekemas, which entered the elections with five Members of Parliament, emerged with only one, that of its President, Dr. Tan Chee Khoo. The DAP, however, roughly retained its strength, winning nine parliamentary seats, mostly in urban areas with a heavy concentration of Chinese voters, including three of the Federal Territory constituencies. However, the party was disappointed with its performance in Penang, where it was picked to win a majority until the last week of the campaign, and ended up with only two state seats there. In Sarawak, SNAP continued to demonstrate its extensive voter appeal among the Ibans and some Chinese by winning 9 parliamentary and 18 state seats, increases of 2 and 8 seats, respectively. However, SNAP President and former Chief Minister, Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan, lost both his parliamentary and state seats, and SNAP Deputy President, Datuk James Wong, lost his parliamentary seat.

The 1974 General Elections provided a clear mandate for the Barisan Nasional, although the elections also showed that pockets of urban Chinese in Peninsular Malaysia and of Ibans and Chinese in Sarawak remained opposed. There are several possible explanations for the magnitude of the Barisan victory. First, the voters generally agreed with Tun Razak's

**Table A: Government and Opposition in Parliament**

At the Reconvening of Parliament in February 1971	
The Alliance	98 <sup>a</sup>
Opposition	45
Total	143 <sup>b</sup>
At the Dissolution of Parliament in July 1974	
The Barisan Nasional	119
Opposition	25
Total	144
At the Opening of Parliament following the August 1974 General Elections	
The Barisan Nasional	135
Opposition	19
Total	154

a The Peninsular Alliance won 66 seats in 1969, with the election in one seat (Melaka Selatan) postponed. By February 1971, the Alliance had won the Melaka Selatan by-election and gained another member who crossed the floor, but lost one member (through death) from Kapar, whose vacancy had not been filled. This gave the Peninsular Alliance a total of 67 seats in February 1971. Added to this were 16 seats from the Sabah Alliance, 10 seats from the Sarawak Alliance, and the 5 SUPP MP's who, in conjunction with the coalition government in Sarawak, had agreed to vote with the federal Alliance on all matters affecting the national interest.

b There was a vacancy in one Peninsular seat (Kapar).

*Table B: The Parliamentary Election of 1974: Seats Won and Contested by Parties*

	Won	Contested
The Barisan Nasional	104	114
UMNO	61	61
MCA	19	23
MIC	4	4
PAS	14	14
PPP	1	4
Gerakan	5	8
DAP	9	46
Pekemas	1	33
PSRM	0	21
Kita	0	4
Ind. PPP	0	1
Independents	0	44
<b>Total Seats Peninsular Malaysia</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>263</b>

*Sarawak*

The Barisan Nasional	15	24
PBB	9	16
SUPP	6	8
SNAP	9	24
Independents	0	3
<b>Sarawak Total Seats</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>51</b>

### Sabah

The Barisan Nasional (Sabah Alliance)	16	16
USNO	13	16
SCA	3	3
Pekemas	0	1
Sabah Total Seats	16	17
Total Seats Malaysia	154	331

political policies of accommodation and stability. Second, the Malay vote was nearly solidly for the Barisan. Third, the non-Malay voters, influenced by memories of 1969 and the nation's current prosperity, were cautious and pragmatic; the normal protest vote was minimalized. The best example of voter caution was in traditionally opposition-minded Penang, where, until the final week of the campaign, it appeared that the DAP might form the state government. In the final week, fears of adverse economic repercussions started to mount and were reinforced by the increasingly shrill tone adopted by the DAP. The result was a large Barisan victory. Fourth, the opposition could not match the election organization, machinery, and finances of the Barisan Nasional. Fifth, unlike 1969, there were no opposition electoral pacts to avoid splitting the protest vote. Finally, the Barisan Nasional election triumph was very much a product of the stature of Tun Razak himself, and demonstrated convincingly an acceptance of his political ideas and his leadership.

The new post-election 21 member Cabinet was made public by Tun Razak on September 6, 1974. Every Barisan Nasional party except the PPP and Gerakan was represented on it (Gerakan was given a deputy ministership), and every state except Perak (compensated for by three deputy ministers and one parliamentary secretary). The ministerial break-down by party was: UMNO 12, MCA 3, MIC 1, PAS 1, PBB 1, SUPP 2, USNO (Sabah Alliance) 2. Tun Razak was now the only

remaining member of the 1957 Independence Cabinet. The big shock of the Cabinet line-up was the naming of Sabah Chief Minister Tun Mustapha to the third-ranking portfolio, the Ministry of Defence, a post he eventually refused when it became apparent he would have to give up his state position. A smaller surprise was the appointment of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, formerly considered a "radical", to the sensitive post of Minister of Education.

The MCA, while joyous over its election performance, was not pleased with the new Cabinet. Its total number of Ministers did not increase, although it gained two additional Deputy Ministers and a new Parliamentary Secretary. However, it was the quality of the portfolios allotted to the party which caused the most displeasure: none were of top importance. The Ministries most valued by the MCA, Finance, Trade and Industry, and Education, were in UMNO hands. The MIC was also not very happy with the new Cabinet, believing that based on its election performance it should have been awarded more than just the Ministry of Transport and Communications. However, both the MCA and MIC were basically acquiescent, and the other Barisan parties expressed satisfaction with the line-up. This was the most widely representative Cabinet in Malaysia's history. It was also the first time that virtually every important portfolio was held by UMNO.

### *THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL*

The Barisan Nasional organization was not fully functional until well after the August elections. The hurriedly-written first Barisan Nasional Constitution of July 1974 allowed only for organization at the national level, and included only the basic structure upon which all of the parties could readily agree.<sup>41</sup>

Encik Ghafar Baba was appointed Secretary-General of the Barisan in September 1974 to oversee the groundwork for the reorganization and strengthening of the Party. The Barisan Nasional Supreme Council (Dewan Tertinggi) met

for the first time on November 6, 1974 to discuss ways of bringing the component parties closer together, to hear an election post-mortem report, and to decide on the implementation of a code of conduct for all Barisan MPs and State Assemblymen (SAs). The Supreme Council decided that the Barisan Constitution needed to be amended to allow for the establishment of state and division secretariats and branch committees to coordinate the work of Barisan MPs and SAs (who would set up offices in divisional headquarters), and to serve as a forum for inter-party dialogue. A constitution amendment committee was formed for the purpose of working out proposals.

Even before the constitutional amendments were approved, work started on setting up state and divisional level organizations. However, there was confusion as to whether the Alliance committees and coalition coordination committees should still function (side-by-side with the new committees), should simply undergo a name change, or should be dissolved. Encik Ghafar Baba explained that the Alliance National Headquarters would become the headquarters of the Barisan Nasional, and the Supreme Council decided that all other Alliance and coalition coordinating committees should be abolished, and new committees established. This organizational work was slowed down by the necessity of matching divisional offices with the newly altered parliamentary constituency boundaries. Nonetheless, in December 1974, Penang became the first state to set up a State Barisan Nasional Committee; a process which was finally completed in all of the states by June 1975.

Meanwhile, on November 30, 1974, the Secretaries-General of the nine component parties held their first meeting, chaired by Encik Ghafar Baba, to draw up the agenda for the next Supreme Council meeting and to implement the decisions already reached by that body. This became a standard procedure, with the Secretaries-General meeting usually preceding the Supreme Council meeting by one to two months.

In January 1975, the Supreme Council approved the new

Constitution. The Barisan Nasional was now termed an "association" of political parties;<sup>32</sup> it called for state and divisional coordinating committees (and empowered these to establish branch committees); it included new officers in the Supreme Council (Vice-Chairmen, one from each party) and defined "representatives from each member party" as meaning three representatives each, including the member appointed as Vice-Chairman; it called for the election of the Barisan Nasional Chairman by the Supreme Council to serve for an undefined term at the "pleasure" of the Council; and it provided that decisions taken in the Supreme Council would require unanimity. The new Constitution, like the original one, also provided, under its membership clause, for the admittance of "such other political parties as all the member parties shall unanimously decide to admit" into the Barisan Nasional.

Additional constitutional amendments were approved at various times after the January 1975 Constitution (the first ones as early as July 1975), but they have been relatively minor in nature. The trend has been for more institutionalization, a streamlining of administrative procedures, and a greater concentration of power and control in the Barisan Nasional Chairman. No further formal consolidation of the Barisan Nasional is possible so long as the component parties, especially UMNO, want to retain fully their own party identities.

### *THE 1975 UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY*

The June 1975 26th UMNO General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur was a major political event, not only for UMNO, but also for the Barisan Nasional and the nation. To some observers, this was Malaysia's "real" election. It was clearly recognized that UMNO was the essential core of the Barisan, and that as in the past, it would continue to provide the top government leaders. As always, those UMNO members voted into the top party offices were in a position of considerable importance. At the June 1975 General

Assembly, where the triennial elections were scheduled to be held, it was believed that the results could influence the future course of political events in Malaysia: there was a vacancy for one of the three vice-presidential posts; the Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy President of UMNO, Datuk Hussein Onn, was recovering from a heart attack and believed to be interested in retiring; and rumors were circulating that the thin and tired looking Tun Razak might retire before the next UMNO elections. Consequently, a struggle over the heir-apparency was building up, and the UMNO elections for the vice-presidential posts were regarded as crucial. After some withdrawals and late nominations, there were finally eight candidates for the three vice-presidential posts. Incumbent Encik Ghafar Baba was viewed as the favorite, and standing vice-president Tengku Razaleigh also was regarded as a very strong candidate. The real contest was for the third post. For a while it appeared that it would be a battle between "old order" UMNO "ultra" Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar and the Minister of Education (once also considered a Malay "radical"), Dr. Mahathir. Then, at the end of May, Dato Harun, the powerful Menteri Besar of Selangor and President of UMNO Youth, announced that he had decided to contest the vice-presidential election. Dato Harun's candidacy greatly reduced Tan Sri Albar's chances. It also created a problem for Tun Razak and his political associates. It was not thought that Dato Harun was the type of leader who would fit in with the style of moderate and accommodationist politics practised in the country, and one high UMNO official believed that if Dato Harun won a vice-presidential position this time, he would contest for the deputy presidency next time.<sup>33</sup>

The dilemma for Tun Razak was whether or not to name a government team in his Presidential Address. Apparently he changed his mind several times, even after the printed text had been handed to the Press, and was undecided until nearly the last minute.<sup>34</sup> If he named a team and any one of the team lost, the prestige of his leadership would suffer. Further, there was always a danger of a protest or "backlash" from delegates



who might resent having a slate dictated to them. In the end, Tun Razak decided to name a government team in his address. Although the references were camouflaged and apparently vague, the message was clear to the delegates. In his speech, Tun Razak repeated several times that the most important prerequisite for leadership was honesty, a reference not lost on the delegates, and he told the delegates that their choices would have far-reaching effects on the political system. Then he congratulated, in turn, Encik Ghafar Baba, Tengku Razaleigh, and Dr. Mahathir for their work in the government and the party; thus naming the government team.<sup>15</sup>

When the votes from the 1,030 delegates were tallied, the government team had won: Encik Ghafar Baba 838, Tengku Razaleigh 642, Dr. Mahathir 474 (followed by Dato Harun 427, and Tan Sri Albar 374). In the Supreme Council elections, sixteen of the twenty incumbents were re-elected, and only one of seven UMNO Youth candidates was elected. The Press called the election results "a vote for continuity" and a "triumph for Tun Razak". The UMNO elections were certainly a strong endorsement of Tun Razak's leadership and political ideas. The results, regarded as of crucial importance, would turn out to be even more momentous than expected, because the effect was to be almost immediate. Tun Razak would be dead by mid-January 1976, at the age of fifty-three.

### *WHY A BARISAN NASIONAL?*

By 1969, the Alliance was on the defensive against opposition outbidding in an environment of open political competition. After the riots of May 13, 1969, the elites were especially sensitive to the dangers of ethnic violence and to the realization that unregulated "politicking" could serve as a catalyst for such violence, thus also undermining political stability and retarding economic advancements. The various coalition arrangements and later the Barisan Nasional was an attempt to repair the deficiencies experienced by the Alliance in the late 1960s.

Tun Razak stated the problem: "It is clear to us now ... that although there was unity among the leaders ... unity did not penetrate to the ground. As a result of May 13, we had to review our policies, our priorities, and indeed, our whole field of activities .... Politically we felt there must be a greater base of support for the various parties forming the government ... That is why I am convinced that this concept of coalition and a National Front is good for the country." \* The government leaders were also aware that support would be more important in terms of the influence, legitimacy, effectiveness, and representativeness of the Barisan Nasional than in the actual number of seats it controlled in Parliament.

To build up a stronger and wider base of popular support, it was necessary to co-opt some or most of the opposition into the government, avoid a rebellion by the sub-elites of those parties already in the government, eliminate outbidding effectively, and hope that the followers of all the parties now in the government would continue to give their support under the new arrangement.

To accompany the evolving Barisan Nasional concept, Tun Razak tried to impress upon the Malaysian people the new realities of the situation. Open political competition had led to riots and bloodshed and emergency NOC rule; now there would be limited political competition. The Malays had been frustrated by their lack of economic advancement; now there would be direct government involvement in helping to uplift the Malays economically, hopefully in an expanding economy which would penalize no one. Many of the young Chinese had not understood or accepted the Independence "bargain"; now the Malays would openly dominate politically, although with the participation of the non-Malays at all levels and in a spirit of compromise and accommodation. For Tun Razak's government, there would be no more ambiguity and no more sweeping problems "under the carpet".

Since the government viewed economic disparities between the ethnic groups as a major cause of ethnic hostility, the NEP, which is designed to reduce these disparities, was given top priority. To complement the implementation of the NEP,

and to reduce to a minimum the possible negative consequences of increased economic competition, the government was determined to foster an expanding economy on the one hand, and on the other, it established more limited guidelines for legal political competition and created the Barisan Nasional. Tun Razak noted, "The socio-economic revolution will fail and come to nought, if our socio-political situation is not stable ... the National Front concept is a positive effort towards reducing political tension so as to allow the government to concentrate on intensifying development".<sup>37</sup>

The 1974 General Elections were viewed as a test of public support. The Barisan Government was gratified with its electoral mandate, and the leaders believed that they had remedied, for the present at least, the problem of a dwindling support base. Further, within the Barisan, the followers of the component parties, with the exception of those of the PPP, had largely maintained their support. The Malays, on the whole, had backed Tun Razak's leadership, the minor exceptions being those who wanted a more pro-Malay or more Islamic-based government, and the PSRM supporters who wanted a socialist government. The non-Malays voted generally as if Tun Razak's "new realities" had made an impression. The spectre of rioting and bloodshed, and the possibility that there might have been an all-Malay government had been sobering. The heady days of the 1969 campaign were long behind, and the non-Malays voted pragmatically.



Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yakub addressing a Barisan Nasional election rally in Sarawak.



Barisan Nasional Press Conference, July 15, 1981.

## 4

### COALITION TENSIONS AND STRESSES AND THE BARISAN NASIONAL'S ELECTORAL PERFORMANCES IN 1978 AND 1982

The political scene had changed considerably in the time between the 1974 and 1978 general elections, and these changes placed significant strains and stresses on the Barisan's grand coalition. Malaysia's foremost coalition-maker, Prime Minister Tun Razak, had died suddenly in January 1976, and the country had a new leader in Datuk (later Tun) Hussein Onn and a controversial Deputy Prime Minister in Dr. Mahathir. There were also several changes in the composition of the Barisan; two parties exited and three joined the coalition. Political coalitions tend to be fragile and difficult to maintain. The "grand" coalition is probably even more difficult to maintain, given the size and diversity of the partnership and the limited rewards or payoffs available for the partners. In a relatively new coalition, before adjustments to partnership and predictable patterns of working together are developed, there are often areas of tension between the partners, ranging from conflict over policy decisions to competition over "political territory" and simple intra-coalition jealousies. Further, a new coalition often lacks a firm commitment on the part of the partners to its survival. In Malaysia in the inter-election period, the Barisan partners were still in the process of adjusting to one another and to the change of leadership from Tun Razak to Datuk Hussein Onn.

## BROADENING THE BARISAN: SNAP, BERJAYA, AND USNO

### *SNAP JOINS THE BARISAN NASIONAL*

By mid-1975 talks were already underway and tentative agreement had been reached on SNAP, an Iban-based Sarawak party, joining the Barisan Nasional. The results of the July 1975 SNAP party elections were a further boost to negotiations when long-time SNAP President and former Chief Minister Datuk Ningkan was defeated for the party's leadership, and many new faces replaced the old guard.

The first public indication that SNAP might join the Barisan came with a statement from PBB President and federal Minister Datuk Amar Haji Taib Mahmud in February 1976, indicating there was such a possibility. This, in turn, came on the heels of the announcement that SNAP Deputy President Datuk James Wong Kim Min had been released from detention. Speculation continued to grow when Encik Ghafar Baba, as Secretary-General of the Barisan Nasional, made a four-day visit to Sarawak in late February. In March, when the Sarawak Council Negri introduced the Sarawak Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which would allow for the appointment of up to nine state Deputy Ministers, this was considered a key step in paving the way for SNAP's entry into the state government. The SNAP National Council met to consider the Amendment and its implications, and on March 22, 1976, party Secretary-general Encik Leo Moggie announced that there was "agreement in principle" on SNAP joining the Barisan Nasional at state and federal levels.<sup>1</sup> Two days later the Council Negri unanimously passed the Amendment Bill.

On June 20, 1976, the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council formally accepted SNAP into the BN, noting that there was also agreement in principle on SNAP's participation in the Sarawak State Government. In a federal Cabinet reshuffle that followed, SNAP's senior Vice-President, Encik Edmund Langgu, was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and

two SNAP members were appointed Parliamentary Secretaries. With SNAP's nine Members of Parliament, the Barisan Nasional now held a total of 144 of 154 seats.<sup>2</sup>

Encik Ghafar Baba expressed confidence that Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yakub would be able to work out a plan to let SNAP participate in the state government. However, several months elapsed after SNAP was included at the federal level before it joined the Sarawak State Government. On November 1, 1976, a state Cabinet reshuffle was announced, and SNAP was given two Ministerial portfolios and its President was named as one of the three Deputy Chief Ministers.

SNAP's coalition motives are not entirely clear. SNAP was not a particularly opposition-minded party; it had been in the Sarawak Alliance until 1966 when its President, Datuk Ningkan, was dismissed as Chief Minister through some complicated federal manoeuvres, including Emergency rule. However, the party's strength had grown as a result of its opposition stance, especially at the expense of the Iban component (Pesaka) of the PBB and some of the SUPP's Chinese support. Certainly, it is believed generally that the coalition could not have been negotiated satisfactorily when Datuk Ningkan was still party President.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that some of the party's new leaders saw SNAP's joining the state government as a revival of the "Native Alliance" idea of 1965.

The official reasons SNAP cited for joining the Barisan Nasional were that the party would be able to participate fully in the implementation of the Third Malaysia Plan, and also because SNAP leaders believed the security situation in the region required political cooperation. Unofficially, according to one Sarawak source, the party was in serious financial trouble because its primary contributor, Datuk James Wong, was in detention. Consequently, a key coalition motive and SNAP condition apparently was the release of Datuk James Wong. Other possible motives were: fear by some SNAP officials that growing Iban alienation would turn them towards joining the terrorists; harassment of SNAP



members; and coalition as a way of "getting back" at the SUPP for not joining up with SNAP in 1970. Further, as has been mentioned, some of the new, young, and well-educated SNAP leaders were not opposed to the idea of the Barisan itself and were actively favorable to the revival of a "Native Alliance."

The federal government was interested in getting SNAP into the Barisan Nasional soon after the 1974 General Elections, when the Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition seemed viable. The motives of the federal government were rather easier to understand. SNAP remained a formidable opposition party, although not yet so strong that it would be clearly uninterested in a coalition. There was a danger in Sarawak of Iban alienation, with Iban representation in the state government weak and most Ibans feeling that they were excluded from the councils of power. Further, "politicking" in Sarawak could not be reduced, full attention could not be given to development, and broad consensus in Sarawak could not be achieved, with SNAP in the opposition.

The Sarawak State Government apparently was less enthusiastic about SNAP joining the state coalition than the federal government. It was reported that the Chief Minister preferred to have SNAP in the opposition and was concerned about SNAP and Pesaka joining forces inside the state government. Also, the PBB-SUPP coalition was working remarkably well, and there was concern that a new component could upset the delicate balance of interests that had been achieved. Additionally, SNAP's inclusion would mean more claims to Cabinet posts and government appointments, and it could mean severe conflict over seat allocations in the next state elections.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Sarawak State Government at length conformed to federal wishes, and SNAP was admitted into the Sarawak State Government.

With SNAP in the Barisan Nasional, for the first time in Sarawak's political party history there was no major party in the opposition.

## *THE RISE OF BERJAYA IN SABAH*

In 1973-74, relations between Tun Mustapha and the federal government began to turn sour. Until then the political assets of Sabah's tough Chief Minister seemed to outweigh his liabilities. Despite eccentricities and a dictatorial style of political rule, Tun Mustapha seemed suited to the "frontier" setting of Sabah, especially given that the federal leaders wanted to devote most energies towards the political consolidation of Peninsular Malaysia. Gradually, however, the liabilities began to overtake the assets: despite apparent political stability in the state, undercurrents of political discontent were reaching Kuala Lumpur, and the heavy-handed tactics employed by Tun Mustapha against political opponents, especially during elections, were becoming an embarrassment to the federal government. Further, Tun Mustapha's open support for the Moro Rebellion in the Southern Philippines conflicted with federal prerogatives in foreign policy. Also, growing evidence of economic mismanagement in the state, more noticeable because of the world-wide recession, was coming to the attention of Kuala Lumpur. In 1974, Tun Mustapha turned his ire on the federal government when they refused to allow him to negotiate a huge foreign loan (reputedly with Libya) and declined early federal compensation for some development projects (e.g. a new airport) which Tun Mustapha had initiated without waiting for federal approval. Likewise, the federal government was angry at Tun Mustapha's obstinacy in delaying the conclusion of an oil agreement with Petronas. Amazingly, given the vast timber resources of Sabah and a program of ruthless exploitation, it was rumoured in Peninsular Malaysia that Tun Mustapha and his state were in deep financial difficulties.

Relations deteriorated markedly after Tun Mustapha refused to accept the federal Cabinet post of Minister of Defence offered to him in September 1974, having decided that it was a federal plot to separate him from his fiefdom.<sup>3</sup> By

the end of April 1975 it was widely rumoured that Tun Mustapha was talking of secession.<sup>6</sup> Later, in July, Tun Mohd. Fuad Stephens told the Press that Tun Mustapha had been plotting to take Sabah out of Malaysia and form a new state, consisting of Sabah, Mindanao, Palawan, and the Sulu Islands, with himself as Sultan.<sup>7</sup> Tun Fuad said that he had heard this said many times, had seen written proof, and had attended a meeting in April 1975 where Tun Mustapha had discussed secession and the idea of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence.<sup>8</sup>

For a brief while it appeared that the federal government was going to persevere patiently rather than challenge Tun Mustapha. Moreover, it was growing clear that Kuala Lumpur was not willing to intercede with constitutional measures against Tun Mustapha. However, soon after, the extraordinary police and internal security powers in Sabah which had been given to Tun Mustapha in the aftermath of the May 13, 1969 riots, were removed. Then, on July 12, 1975, a new Sabah multi-ethnic political party, *Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah* (Berjaya) was registered.

Several previous parties had been formed to oppose the Sabah Alliance, but they had short and ineffectual existences. It was obvious that Berjaya was a party with a difference: it was formed mainly by ex-USNO members, including some former state Ministers and several State Assemblymen, it appeared to have a genuine multi-ethnic representation: and it had been formed after consultation with Kuala Lumpur and clearly with the blessings of the federal government. Berjaya leaders said they had formed the party in order to oppose any secessionist movement and to expose mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism in the state. Two weeks later, Tun Mustapha's old adversary, Tun Mohd. Fuad Stephens, resigned as the Yang Dipertua Negara and was quickly named President of Berjaya.

Tun Mustapha hurried back from London to try to stem the flow of defections from USNO to Berjaya only to be confronted with a masterful strategic coup by the federal government. Berjaya had already stated that it desired a close

relationship with the federal government and had applied for membership in the Barisan Nasional. The latter seemed exceedingly difficult since each component party, including presumably the Sabah Alliance, had a veto over the admission of a new member party. However, the Secretary-General of the Barisan Nasional, Encik Ghafar Baba, then announced that the Sabah Alliance was no longer in the Barisan Nasional as from January 8, 1975, when it was deemed to have withdrawn as a result of disagreements over the proposed amendments to the Front Constitution.<sup>9</sup> USNO leaders denied that the Sabah Alliance had withdrawn from the Barisan Nasional and said it was "splitting hairs" to contend that it had.<sup>10</sup>

In August, Tun Razak announced that the Barisan Nasional had decided to admit Berjaya, provided the party agreed to certain conditions to be discussed with its leaders. Likewise, the Prime Minister noted that the Barisan Nasional was prepared to admit the Sabah Alliance when it agreed to accept the provisions and policies of the Barisan Nasional. The next month came the surprising announcement that Tun Mustapha would resign as Chief Minister on October 31, 1975. It was rumored that his resignation was one of the conditions for the re-entry of the Sabah Alliance into the Barisan Nasional. However, with Tun Mustapha still the leader of USNO and the Sabah Alliance, Berjaya President Tun Fuad Stephens complained that "Tun Mustapha will still be running the state even after he resigns", and a September 4, 1975 editorial in the *New Straits Times* admitted that the resignation was more cosmetic than anything else. On October 31, 1975, Tun Mustapha stepped down as Chief Minister, but was allowed all existing facilities and privileges, including using a flag on his car and other ceremonial honours. By October, Tun Mustapha had successfully stopped party defections and had managed to win some members back to the fold. He then took the initiative by invoking the "resignations" of two former USNO members, now with Berjaya.<sup>11</sup> The by-elections for the vacant seats were held on Decemebr 8-10, and the results gave USNO victories in both

constituencies, including a surprising win over Berjaya Deputy President Datuk Harris Salleh.

Less than two weeks after the death of Prime Minister Tun Razak in January 1976, the Sabah Assembly obtained a dissolution, and a state election for the 48 seats was called for April 5-14, 1976 (staggered polling). Tun Fuad Stephens complained that Tun Mustapha was "capitalizing on the change of government in Kuala Lumpur" to come back to power. Certainly it appeared that with his powerful adversary removed from the scene, Tun Mustapha had chosen to act decisively.

The Sabah Alliance put up 40 USNO and 8 SCA candidates, and decided that each one would use its own party symbol. Berjaya contested all 48 seats, meeting the Sabah Alliance in 23 straight fights. The Sabah Alliance campaigned simply for continued rule. Berjaya campaigned on a 14-point manifesto promising clean government, closer state-federal relations, and a "sweeping away" of corruption and nepotism. In reality, the campaign centred on personalities, and was full of personal accusations and verbal attacks.

Although it was noted that "observers do not rule out the possibility of an upset",<sup>12</sup> this seemed wishful thinking. Berjaya was reeling from a series of setbacks and seemed on the verge of falling apart.

Unofficially, it was apparent that the top federal leaders were hoping for a Berjaya victory. The UMNO rank-and-file, however, were divided in their support, and PAS clearly favoured USNO. The federal government restricted its role in the elections to ensuring that they would at least be fair and correct. In addition to the recently federally appointed and rigorously impartial new Sabah Police Commissioner, Kuala Lumpur also dispatched to Sabah to oversee the elections a number of NBI and Special Branch officials, 19 election commissioners, and, six Federal Reserve units. Also, Datuk Hussein Onn personally intervened to recall from Sabah a handful of UMNO members who had gone there to campaign for USNO, and expressed his displeasure at the PAS members in Sabah working for Tun Mustapha.

The election results came as a shock. Berjaya won 28 seats and USNO 20 seats, while the SCA lost all of its seats (Pekemas, Bersatu and the Independents were also completely unsuccessful). In explaining the Berjaya victory, it was thought that the new constituency boundaries had undermined the SCA (by separating some of the Muslim kampungs from the urban Chinese constituencies), that USNO had relied on money instead of organization, and that there was a groundswell of frustration with the Tun Mustapha government, exacerbated by the recession and unemployment in the state, which a fair election had allowed to surface. It would appear, if compared with the 1967 election results, that the difference in 1976 was the swing of the vast majority of Chinese voters to Berjaya, and, in this sense, the fact that the voters in Sabah realized that the federal government was supporting Berjaya was crucially important.

On June 21, 1976, the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council announced that it had formally accepted Berjaya and USNO (as well as SNAP in Sarawak) into the Barisan.<sup>11</sup> The federal Cabinet reshuffle of July 2, 1976 to include SNAP in the federal government, did not, however, provide any positions for Berjaya, although USNO retained its one post. The unique feature of the Sabah arrangement was that although both Berjaya and USNO became coalition partners at the federal level, USNO remained in the opposition at the state level. Berjaya steadfastly maintained that it sought political cooperation with USNO, but not a coalition in the state.

#### *PAS LEAVES THE BARISAN NASIONAL*

On December 16, 1977, after several months of crises, and in the face of a Barisan Nasional expulsion threat and ultimatum, PAS formally moved into the ranks of the opposition. The crises leading to the break involved a PAS factional struggle, ensuing strained relations with UMNO, the Barisan Nasional, and top federal leaders, and PAS defiance of the Barisan whip in Parliament.

The origins of the trouble can be traced back to Kelantan,

with the appointment of Datuk Mohamad Nasir as the Menteri Besar in September 1974, more or less at the insistence of Tun Razak, and against the wishes of Datuk Asri and most of the top officials of Kelantan PAS. In 1975, the controversy over the Menteri Besar, part and parcel of the 1977 conflict, mushroomed into a crisis of serious proportions. True to his word, Datuk Mohd. Nasir set out to clean up the state government. He began cancelling forest concessions and repossessing alienated land which was suitable for agro-based development, and pressed for investigations into land deals made by previous PAS state governments. This, of course, was just what Datuk Asri and most of the Kelantan PAS hierarchy had wanted to avoid, and it was one of the reasons why PAS had joined the Barisan.

In May 1965, the Kelantan PAS Liaison Committee voted that it had "no confidence" in the Menteri Besar. Apparently Datuk Asri then showed the documentation of this vote to Tun Razak and asked to have the Menteri Besar replaced; the Prime Minister, however, declined to take any action.<sup>14</sup> For weeks there were rumours in Kelantan that PAS would try to topple the Menteri Besar through a "no confidence" vote in the state assembly. However, this did not occur.

From about July 1975, when Datuk Mohd. Nasir withdrew his challenge for Datuk Asri's post of national PAS President, the efforts to remove him as Menteri Besar temporarily abated, and the friction between PAS and the Barisan Nasional over his conflict seemed to die down. At the 21st PAS Congress, at which Datuk Asri was returned unopposed as President, he called on his party to defend and support the Barisan Nasional. The PAS Congress delegates, however, passed a resolution giving its leaders one year to settle all problems relating to the role of the party in the Barisan Nasional with the understanding that the 1976 PAS Congress would decide whether or not the party should remain in the Barisan.

In the next year, relations between PAS and its Barisan partners seemed to improve, and the Kelantan problem simmered on without a serious flare up. At the 22nd PAS

Congress in August 1976, Datuk Asri reported that the PAS delegates had expressed satisfaction with the cooperation among the Barisan's component members at the national level, although there was some dissatisfaction expressed concerning the lower levels. Datuk Asri in turn told the PAS Congress that any grievances with the Barisan Nasional could be settled through discussion.<sup>15</sup>

Although intrigue continued in Kelantan, in April 1977, Datuk Asri stated that there was no question of PAS withdrawing from the Barisan Nasional and that "state-level relations" were generally improving. He reiterated that the important thing was national solidarity, especially among the bumiputeras and Islamic parties.<sup>16</sup>

It was with shocking suddenness then that the apparently semi-dormant conflict in Kelantan developed into a full crisis in September 1977. It began when the Kelantan PAS Liaison Committee gave Datuk Mohd. Nasir until September 20th to resign. He refused, and the Liaison Committee passed a "no confidence" vote against him (as it had done in May 1975). This was followed by a rally of 60,000 supporters of Datuk Mohd. Nasir in Kota Baru, and a PAS ultimatum to the Menteri Besar to step down. This having been ignored, on September 29, 1977, PAS expelled Datuk Mohd. Nasir from the party.<sup>17</sup> On October 15, 1977, the Menteri Besar was defeated in a vote of no-confidence in the Kelantan State Assembly, with PAS members voting solidly against him. Four days later, mass demonstrations in Kota Baru in support of Datuk Mohd. Nasir degenerated into rioting. Special police reserves were flown to the city, and a 24-hour curfew was imposed, but spasmodic violence continued and the state government appeared unable to function properly.

On November 8, 1977, the Yang DiPertuan Agong proclaimed a State of Emergency in Kelantan, and the federal Parliament tabled and then passed on November 9, 1977, the Emergency Powers (Kelantan) Bill 1977, which suspended the state Assembly and placed all authority in the state under a federally-appointed Director of Government, who would be responsible only to the Prime Minister. In spite of the



invoking of the whip by the Barisan Nasional, PAS joined the DAP in voting against the Bill, which passed 118-18. Datuk Asri resigned as a federal Minister, along with two PAS Deputy Ministers and two Parliament Secretaries. The Deputy President of PAS and Local Government and Federal Territory Minister, Haji Hassan Haji Arshad, of Perak, however, refused to resign from the government and voted with the Barisan on the Bill. He was then expelled from PAS.

For a while it appeared certain that PAS either would withdraw from the Barisan or would be expelled from it. However, although positions had hardened considerably by this time, neither side seemed prepared to take the final step, and the coalition remained precariously intact. Datuk Asri stated that PAS would remain in the Barisan Nasional and that PAS members of the State Executive Committees would not be affected. Likewise, Encik Ghafar Baba, the Barisan Nasional Secretary-General, said that it was up to PAS to decide whether it would remain in the Barisan Nasional or withdraw; and that the Barisan Supreme Council had no plans to meet on the issue.

However, conflict and provocation continued. Datuk Asri appeared to believe that the Barisan Nasional Constitution required the unanimous support of all the other component parties, under Article 12, in order to expel PAS, and he indicated that this fate could be avoided.<sup>18</sup> However, Article 12 requires unanimity *except* for decisions taken under Articles 14 (discipline) and 21 (interpretation of the rules), which require only a majority. Article 14 gives the Supreme Council, by majority vote, the power to discipline, suspend, or expel any member party.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of November, it was announced that the Barisan Supreme Council would hold a special meeting on December 5, 1977 to consider matters of discipline. The decision taken at this meeting was that component parties would be required to expel any of their own members who defied the BN whip in Parliament or the state assemblies. The decision was to apply to the PAS MPs who voted against the Kelantan Emergency Bill, and this included the top PAS hierarchy. Nine parties

approved of the decision, PAS opposed, and the PPP abstained.<sup>20</sup> Datuk Hussein Onn said that the PAS MPs who defied the whip had set a dangerous precedent which could not go unanswered. He continued to say that UMNO would like PAS to stay in the Barisan, but not with its present leaders.

The PAS leaders, most of whom were on the PAS Central Committee, met and decided that PAS could not accept the Barisan ruling, stating that the party was prepared for any eventuality. Although there was an anti-Asri movement in the party, there was no rank-and-file initiative to expel all of the top officials, and the party did not split.

The Barisan Supreme Council met on December 13, 1977 and voted to expel PAS from the Barisan Nasional if the party did not expel its MPs before December 17th. If the deadline were not met, PAS would be "automatically expelled". Nine parties supported the decision, PAS abstained, and the PPP opposed it as being "too harsh".<sup>21</sup> On December 16, 1977, all 13 PAS MPs crossed the floor, and PAS announced that it considered itself expelled from the Barisan and now in the opposition.

It appears that PAS was willing to precipitate a breakdown of relations in order to better its position in the Barisan and increase its influence among the electorate, and also to gamble on removing the irritations caused by the Kelantan Menteri Besar. The continuation in Kelantan, under the direction of the Menteri Besar, of inquiries into land deals in the state and plans for the repossession of land, was embarrassing and threatening to Datuk Asri and to his party. The PAS leaders were convinced that UMNO, especially Kelantan UMNO, was using the Menteri Besar for "its own purposes".<sup>22</sup> Datuk Asri reportedly said that UMNO had ambitions of becoming the top party in Kelantan and that there had been a constant undermining of PAS's position, which they could not allow. The PAS leaders may have believed that the party could vote the Menteri Besar out of power without UMNO retribution, but it was brinkmanship at best, indicating a communications gap and a misreading of

Datuk Hussein Onn.

It is not evident that UMNO sought a showdown with PAS or desired PAS's expulsion from the Barisan. However, the UMNO leaders, as in the past, would not fail to respond to any challenge to UMNO's dominance or to any obvious transgressions of the coalition "rules". Relations were already strained, and trust and confidence partly eroded, between the two parties as a result of PAS activity in opening new branches around the country, in contradiction to the understanding among the partners that no party would attempt to extend its influence into the political territory of another partner. It was obvious the UMNO was supporting the Kelantan Menteri Besar and would interpret surreptitious efforts to remove him as contravening the spirit of the coalition.<sup>25</sup> Once the crisis was defined in confrontation terms, in the full glare of the public, there was probably no way to avoid the ultimate expulsion of PAS (unless a PAS rank-and-file revolt against their own leaders had materialized).

The crisis followed a not untypical pattern for the breakdown of a coalition: disagreement over the coalition rules; imperfect communications; misjudgement of possible reactions to a crisis situation; public defiance and confrontation; and a disinclination on the part of either side to sit down again and try quietly to work out a compromise. Apparently PAS and UMNO had both reached the point where they were willing to allow the disenchantment between them to develop into a confrontation. On each side it appears that the commitment to maintaining the coalition declined accordingly.

#### *THE KELANTAN STATE ELECTIONS OF MARCH 1978*

On February 12, 1978, Emergency rule in Kelantan was lifted. The next day the state assembly was dissolved, and on February 14th state elections were called for March 11, 1978. The contest for the 36 state assembly seats would be between PAS, the Barisan Nasional, and the newly-registered Islamic party, Parti Berjasa, formed by Datuk Mohd. Nasir.<sup>26</sup> It was

widely believed that the Barisan and Berjasa would cooperate to oppose PAS. Then nomination papers were filed, the Barisan Nasional and Berjasa opposed each other, as well as PAS and some Independents, in 13 of the 26 constituencies. However, it quickly became apparent that the Barisan-Berjasa strategy was to split the vote in areas which otherwise might have voted strongly for PAS as *the* Islamic party. The Barisan Nasional and Berjasa also announced an agreement to form a coalition government in the state, with the party having the larger number of seats providing the Menteri Besar.

The day before polling, the Press reported that the "outcome remained anybody's guess".<sup>23</sup> The lopsidedness of the election results was therefore a complete surprise. The Barisan Nasional won 23 and Berjasa 11 (including a convincing win by Datuk Mohd. Nasir) of the seats, with PAS reduced to 2 seats. The magnitude of the reversal of 19 years of complete PAS predominance in the state was stunning. Only one PAS incumbent retained his seat (the other PAS win went to a new candidate). Although PAS won 33.5 per cent of the total vote (with 79,514 votes) for 36 seats, this was a decline from its 1969 total of 52 per cent (with 123,231 votes) for 30 seats. The total vote of the Barisan Nasional-Berjasa coalition was 153,351, or 64.5 per cent.

TABLE C: THE MARCH 1978 KELANTAN STATE  
ELECTIONS:  
SEATS CONTESTED AND WON BY PARTIES

Party	Contested	Won	Total Vote
Barisan Nasional	24	23	88,671
Berjasa	25	11	64,680
PAS	36	2	79,514
Independents	10	0	4,709
Totals	95	36	237,574

Source: Compiled from *New Straits Times*, March 13, 1978.

## *PAS IN THE OPPOSITION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COALITION*

The departure of PAS from the Barisan Nasional and its return to the opposition meant that UMNO again faced the challenge of a Malay nationalist and Islamic party in competition for the Malay vote. The damage to Tun Razak's goal of reducing "politicking" through a "grand" coalition and elite compromises, a strategy which acknowledged the PAS coalition as the cornerstone, would clearly depend on the electoral strength of PAS as an oppositional force.

### *THE 1978 GENERAL ELECTIONS*

After the success of the Barisan Nasional-Berjasa coalition in routing PAS in the March 1978 Kelantan state elections, it was expected that a general election would follow quickly before PAS could effectively regroup, and elections were indeed called for July 1978.<sup>26</sup>

It was thought that Berjasa would join the Barisan in time for the elections. However, an internal leadership struggle flared up and just before nomination day the party's Central Executive Committee voted not to join the Barisan. Apparently the leadership struggle directly concerned the question of Berjasa's relationship with the Barisan. Datuk Mohd. Nasir and his group favored joining the Barisan, but the committee majority objected for at least two reasons. First, the party would have little chance to expand as a Barisan component party, given the competition for seats, and, second, some Berjasa members viewed the party as an Islamic alternative to PAS with beliefs and goals not quite served by the multi-ethnic "secular" coalition. It appeared that, despite the Kelantan state coalition arrangement, Berjasa would contest the elections as an opposition party. However, party President Datuk Mohd. Nasir refused to sign the nomination papers for any Berjasa candidates, and the party did not participate in the elections.

UMNO entered the elections with a sense of wary confi-

dence. It campaigned on the record of the government in providing ethnic peace and stability and economic development. It criticized PAS for "misinterpretations" of the Quran and warned the Malays not to be misled by false teachings. It also criticized a so-called "unholy alliance" between PAS and the DAP.<sup>27</sup> PAS was still in a state of shock over losing Kelantan after 19 years of ruling the state, but there was good reason to believe that the Kelantan state election returns were largely the result of the prolonged PAS fratricidal struggle there, and might not indicate a generalized or permanent PAS decline. Nomination day revealed that PAS was seeking a new state base and had selected Kedah as its target.<sup>28</sup> It also became evident during the campaign that PAS had altered the emphases of its opposition challenge. Instead of concentrating on traditional Malay nationalist issues, the party now more determinedly promoted Islam and attempted to link up with the growing Islamic resurgence movement beginning to sweep the country. For example, PAS called for promoting Islamic law in Kedah. Three former ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement) officials contested in Kedah as PAS candidates, and ABIM members were reported to be openly campaigning for PAS.<sup>29</sup>

Among the Barisan's non-Malay component parties, there was serious coalition tension between the MCA and Gerakan. The MCA viewed Gerakan as a chief rival trying to usurp or undermine the MCA's historical role as spokesman for the Chinese community. The rift between the Barisan partners was especially bad in Penang, where six former MCA "Independents" stood against Gerakan candidates, and cooperation between the MCA and Gerakan was non-existent in Perak and minimal elsewhere. The rift between the Barisan partners resulted directly in the loss of one Gerakan seat, and it may have been a factor in some other losses.<sup>30</sup>

The issues central to the non-Malay campaigns focused on the grievances of the non-Malay community over urban unemployment, university admissions, employment quotas, some aspects of the NEP, and the implementation of the Industrial Coordination Act (ICA). The DAP called for

revisions in the NEP, repeal of the ICA, and the establishment of a private Chinese-medium Merdeka University. As well, the DAP continued to promote its "Malaysian Malaysia" theme of political equality for the ethnic groups. The DAP had had hopes of being able to win a majority of state seats in Penang, however in early 1978 the Penang State DAP organization split as a result of internal feuding, and the DAP had to downgrade its aspirations for the state. The party still had high hopes of capturing a majority of seats in Perak, and promised that it would name a Malay as Menteri Besar if it did form the state government.

The MCA, Gerakan, MIC, and the PPP all campaigned on the broad Barisan platform stressing the government's solid achievements in terms of ethnic harmony and political stability, and the government's performance and plans for economic development. The Barisan partners reiterated the message that only by being strongly supported could they adequately defend the interests of the non-Malay community inside the government. The MCA did go a step further, however. It supported the idea that the government should allow the formation of privately-funded institutions of higher learning, and it promised to use its influence to seek changes in the ICA if the Chinese business community believed it was being adversely affected. With these stands, the MCA slightly transgressed the official Barisan position, and some UMNO leaders were reportedly not pleased.

In Sabah, Barisan partners and intense state rivals, Berjaya and USNO, engaged in some "friendly contests" sanctioned by Barisan Nasional headquarters, and also in some clandestine competition. Also, the DAP contested in the state, with candidates in two urban centres.<sup>11</sup>

In Sarawak, the Chief Minister found himself at the centre of controversy for alleged mismanagement and corruption in the state. A new party called *Pajar* was registered specifically to compete against the Muslim sector of the Chief Minister's party, the PBB. There were rumours that Pajar had the backing of some influential UMNO officials unhappy with the attitude and policies of the Chief Minister. This naturally

conjured up comparisons with the rapid rise and coming to power of Berjaya in Sabah, and a considerable amount of media interest was directed towards Pajar. In fact, Pajar was unable to attract important defections from the PBB, and its backing from Kuala Lumpur was not united and did not reach up to the Prime Minister.<sup>32</sup>

The election results gave the Barisan Nasional 131 of 154 parliamentary seats with 57.6 per cent of the total valid vote, and 239 of 275 state seats and control of all state governments. In Peninsular Malaysia, the Barisan won 94 of 114 parliamentary seats.<sup>33</sup>

Among the Barisan partners in Peninsular Malaysia, UMNO lost only 5 seats to PAS, while the MCA, MIC, Gerakan, and the PPP lost a total of 15 seats, all to the DAP. Only the PPP performed badly, losing its one parliamentary contest and three of the four state seats it was given to contest.

In opposition, PAS fared poorly in terms of seats won. Out of 87 parliamentary candidates only 5 won (down from 14 in 1974) and 27 lost their deposits. At the state level PAS won only 9 out of 203 contests, and in Kedah managed to win only 7 of the 26 seats, thus falling considerably short of capturing the state government. However, in term of votes, PAS clearly remained a formidable contender for the Malay vote. In the four heavily Malay-populated northern states, where PAS is strongest (and where it won 4 of its 5 seats), the party received 40.29 per cent of the total valid vote in parliamentary seats contested.<sup>34</sup> This meant that for the future a swing of only a few percent of the vote had the potential of radically improving the party's seats won totals.

The DAP, which had held 9 parliamentary seats, won 15 Peninsular seats and also one in Sabah, and increased its percentage of votes in seats contested to over 39 per cent. However, the DAP's performance in the state seats, especially in Perak, fell short of party expectations. The DAP won only 25 state seats of the 126 it had contested, and won only 9 out of 42 seats in Perak. The elections did reaffirm, however, the "axiom" that the DAP was nearly unbeatable in the large urban constituencies with a high percentage of non-Malay



*TABLE D: PENINSULAR MALAYSIA —  
RESULTS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, 1978*

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Total Party Vote
Barisan Nasional	113	94 <sup>a</sup>	1,732,749
UMNO	74	69	1,090,008
MCA	27	17	451,307
MIC	4	3	67,119
Gerakan	6	4	98,217
PPP	1	0	9,204
Direct BN	1	1	16,894
The Opposition			
PAS	87	5	529,329
DAP	51	15	652,730
PSRM	4	0	22,031
Pekemas	6	0	22,871
Kita	1	0	350
SDP	3	0	13,788
Workers Party	1	0	1,731
Ind.	18	0	52,024
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>3,027,603</b>

<sup>a</sup> Five Barisan candidates were returned unopposed (4 UMNO, 1 MCA)

voters.

In Sabah, the Barisan won 14 of the 16 parliamentary seats (Berjaya won 9 of 10 and USNO 5 of 6). An Independent, widely-believed to have been sponsored by Berjaya, defeated USNO's Datuk Ghani Gilong, making him the only federal Minister to lose his seat in the election. The other opposition win went to the DAP, whose candidate in heavily Chinese-populated Sandakan beat the Berjaya candidate. This made the DAP the only Peninsular party to ever contest and win a seat in Borneo Malaysia, and party officials quickly announced that they intended to set up more branches in Sabah and Sarawak.

In Sarawak, the Barisan won 23 of the 24 parliamentary seats, and the Pajar challenge collapsed. The only opposition win went to the sole candidate of a new Chinese-based party, the Sarawak People's Organization (Sapo), at the expense of the Barisan's SUPP.

The Barisan Nasional election victory in 1978, representing only a marginal decline from 1974 when electoral conditions for the government were exceptionally favorable, showed that the Barisan concept retained multi-ethnic support, that coalition strains and rivalries, however counter-productive, were manageable and within acceptable limits, and that the departure of PAS had not fatally undermined the whole coalition concept and strategy. What had changed was that the goal of minimizing "politicking" was threatened although tough legal prohibitions on campaigning remained intact, and the associated goal of maintaining Malay unity had collapsed. The opposition was now effectively polarized between PAS on the Malay side and the DAP on the non-Malay side, each seeking totally incompatible ethnic demands.

### *THE BARISAN NASIONAL AND THE 1982 GENERAL ELECTIONS*

Several politically-significant events transpired in the years between the 1978 and 1982 general elections. One of the more important events was the January 1980 demonstration in Alor

Setar, Kedah by Malay Muda rice farmers. The farmers protested the conversion of government cash bonuses for rice into a coupon subsidy scheme designed to force savings, and the demonstration degenerated into rioting and attacks on state government buildings (even while the Sultan was inside in his office). The Barisan government was alarmed for several reasons. First, it was a violent protest by normally deferential Malays who form part of the core support group for the Barisan's dominant partner, UMNO. Underlining the disturbances, it was believed, Malay farmers were frustrated over unfulfilled rising economic expectations.<sup>35</sup> Any signs of weakening Malay support had important political ramifications for the coalition, since concessions on the part of UMNO were possible only to extent that they did not undermine UMNO's Malay support. Second, while there was not the potentially volatile coalescing of Malay students and farmers as had occurred at Baling in 1974, there were reports of the direct involvement of underground Islamic group called *Pertubuhan Angkatan Sabilullah (P.A.S.)* which reputedly had links with some member of PAS.<sup>36</sup> Third, it was clear that a large number of the demonstrators came from PAS-held constituencies, and it appeared that PAS was rebounding quickly from the 1978 elections, and was in some ways "raising the stakes" by increasingly utilizing religious issues. For example, PAS was now telling the Malays that voting for UMNO could get them development, but voting for PAS could get them to heaven. Further, it was increasingly apparent that PAS had penetrated some government organizations, such as FELDA and Tabung Haji, while it was in the Barisan, and was now using these links to spread its message. Beyond this, it was believed that while Datuk Asri had been a federal Minister and had travelled extensively in the Arab states, he had established personal contacts with influential Arabs, and as a result PAS was thought now to be receiving some external funding.<sup>37</sup>

However, the April 1980 state by-election win by the Barisan (UMNO) in Bukit Raya, a former PAS stronghold and the area from which came many of the farmers who

demonstrated, helped defuse UMNO concern about a rejuvenated PAS. Also, the by-election was a particularly good example of the merits of the Barisan coalition since the Chinese minority in Bukit Raya were the marginal voters. The fact that the MCA, and particularly Datuk Michael Chen (now with Gerakan), participated in the campaign and delivered a substantial portion of the non-Malay vote to UMNO was important to the credibility of the Barisan's non-Malay partners. Also Bukit Raya gave the first clear electoral indication that the predominant idiom for Malay political competition now was Islam.

Another event in 1980, of more importance to the history of the Barisan than to the country, was the acceptance of Berjasa into the Barisan Nasional in May.<sup>39</sup> This brought the coalition's membership up to ten parties. Berjasa membership in the Barisan would have made more sense in 1978, following on the heels of the successful Kelantan state election link-up, than it did in 1980. The main reason for adding Berjasa to the Barisan's rolls (in addition to not betraying the loyalty of Datuk Mohd. Nasir), was that it could compete against PAS in Malay areas where Islamic sentiment was particularly strong and where UMNO was vulnerable to accusations of being too secular. However, almost from the time Berjasa entered the Barisan, UMNO began actively to promote a more Islamic image for itself.

The most important event in the inter-election years was brought about by the retirement of Prime Minister Datuk (now Tun) Hussein Onn in July 1981. Dr. Mahathir was named Prime Minister and elected President of UMNO, and was therefore head of the Barisan Nasional. Datuk Musa Hitam, after defeating Tengku Razaleigh in an intensely contested party election for UMNO Deputy President, was named Deputy Prime Minister. This brought to power a successor generation of leaders — not aristocratic, not from wealthy families, not British-educated, not irrevocably wedded to western concepts of development. Further, both had been labeled Malay "radicals" in the days after May 1969 when they criticized policies which seemed not to do enough

for the Malays.

It was expected that the Mahathir (or 2M) administration would seek an election mandate as soon as the new team was deemed to be functioning smoothly. In fact, the Mahathir administration was action-oriented from the start, virtually foregoing the normally cautious transition period and the expected stress on continuity. Almost immediately it released a number of detainees who had been held under the Internal Security Act, and this was followed by the granting of a remission of sentence on corruption charges to and freeing from jail of UMNO Vice-President Datuk Harun Idris (who has since received a full pardon). The administration also instituted several changes designed to discourage lethargy and inefficiency in the civil service, and initiated reforms aimed at preventing official corruption. As well, Dr. Mahathir introduced a "Look East Policy" (preceded by a "buy British last" policy) designed to re-orient Malaysia's socio-cultural and economic perspective towards the Japanese and Korean models, and thereby balance the intrusion of western influences.

Further, the Mahathir administration gradually moved UMNO and the government to a much closer association with formal Islamic principles and goals. For example, it was announced that an International Islamic University, exempt from the Universities Act and national education policy, would be established, and it was hinted that the administration might also set up an Islamic bank (the creation of this bank was formally announced after the elections). Malay government officials no longer denied the feasibility of instituting aspects of Islamic law or an "Islamic state". However, Islamic extremists were condemned and the non-Malays were reassured that they had nothing to fear from this Islamic trend.<sup>40</sup>

As anticipated, general elections were called over a year early, in April 1982.<sup>41</sup> Once again a ban was imposed on rallies for "security reasons", meaning the danger of racially-inspired mob violence as a result of large campaign rallies. Instead, the campaign was conducted through "ceramahs"

**TABLE E: PENINSULAR MALAYSIA —  
RESULTS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, 1982**

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Total Party Vote
Barisan Nasional	114	103 <sup>a</sup>	2,262,316
UMNO	73	70	1,328,937
MCA	28	24	678,206
MIC	4	4	79,825
Gerakan	7	5	146,654
PPP	0	0	—
Berjasa	2	0	28,690
The Opposition			
PAS	82	5	598,948
DAP	56	6	766,677
PSRM	4	0	38,600
SDP	1	0	464
Pekemas	1	0	619
Ind	15	0	40,158
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>3,707,778</b>

a Four Barisan (UMNO) candidates were returned unopposed.

(indoor campaign meetings where size and space delimitations reduced the dangers of sparking mob violence), door-to-door appeals, massive poster and banner displays, newspaper advertisements, and through limited radio and television appeals. For the first time, polling was scheduled for a Thursday instead of the traditional Saturday. The DAP complained that this would cut down on the urban non-Malay voter turnout, but the government stated that the Thursday polling was much more convenient for the five states which use Friday, the Muslim holy day, as their holiday.

That the Barisan Nasional would win the election comfortably was not in doubt. The Barisan had at its disposal all of the resources of government, superior organization and finances, an enviable record of political and economic achievement, and a dynamic new administration. By contrast, the opposition parties were paralyzed by infighting, defections, lack of finances, organization, and manpower, and plagued by poor media exposure. During this campaign the opposition seemed disorganized, negative and unable to offer alternative policy proposals, nor even, to generate issues with much voter appeal.

The results gave the Barisan Nasional 132 of 154 parliamentary seats with 60.4 per cent of the popular vote, and 280 of 311 state seats and control of all state assemblies. While this represented only one additional parliamentary seat from 1978, and three less than the Barisan won in 1974, the win was more impressive than total seat numbers indicated. In Peninsular Malaysia, the dominant political sector, the Barisan won an additional nine seats, up to 103 of 114 seats.

The key issues for the Malay contests, pitting UMNO and Berjasa against PAS mostly, were Islamic advancement and the nature of the Barisan's development strategies. In 1978 PAS had shifted perceptibly to a much stronger emphasis on Islamic matters, and it continued and intensified this direction. PAS called for alterations in the federal constitution to bring it more in line with Islamic law and administration and an "Islamic state", and it criticized the government's economic development policies as being devoid of

Islamic concerns. PAS also called for "Malay and Islamic sovereignty" and warned against gains being made by the non-Malays.<sup>42</sup> Beyond this, PAS offered no alternative policies or programmes and only issued its manifesto in the last days of the campaign. Apparently, in the rural areas of the four northern states, PAS revived the "kafir-mengafir" (infidel) issue and warned Muslims that there would be retribution in the hereafter for those supporting infidels meaning UMNO candidates.<sup>43</sup>

UMNO's credentials as a Malay party committed to advancing Islamic goals were in good order by the 1982 elections. UMNO was no longer so vulnerable to accusations that it was too secular. Not only was UMNO Malaysia's oldest and largest Muslim party, it was also, several party leaders declared, the world's "third largest" Islamic party. Further, party officials declared that Malaysia's standing as an Islamic nation had been accepted by the Arabic world and even Iran.<sup>44</sup> UMNO also took care to defend its development strategies against PAS accusations, pointing that development did not mean westernization; that economic progress needed to be matched by spiritual advancement and moral strength.<sup>45</sup> The coup de grace in polishing up UMNO's Islamic image came on the eve of Nomination Day when Encik Anwar Ibrahim quit as President of ABIM, joined UMNO, and contested a parliamentary seat.<sup>46</sup>

However, UMNO's new Islamic image stripped its Barisan partner, Berjasa, of most of the *raison etre* for its existence. It was no longer the Barisan's "Islamic answer" to the appeal of PAS in the more conservative and religious rural northern Malay areas. It had little to promote or advocate that could not be done more convincingly by UMNO, and being a Barisan partner it could not promise as much as PAS. Berjasa's problems in 1982 were compounded by internal dissention and a leadership struggle, and by the fact that the UMNO Kelantan organization, itself plagued by internal rivalries, failed to support the party fully.

A leadership struggle inside PAS also hurt its electoral performance. PAS was split nationally between the "Old



Guard" leadership struggling to retain power against the competition of the party's largely Arabic-educated and Islamic fundamentalist "Young Turks". In Terengganu, the Young Turks captured control of the party's state organization and completely disassociated themselves from the national leadership. The split was so complete and so bitter that the Young Turks did not want Datuk Asri, a gifted orator, even to campaign on behalf of PAS candidates in Terengganu. In Kelantan, the Old Guard or "Group of Twenty" prevailed after a Young Turk's attempt to dominate the candidate slate was stopped by Datuk Asri. However, divisions prevented completely unified and enthusiastic campaign efforts there. In Kedah and Perlis the situation was worse since neither faction dominated and the struggle was carried over into the elections.

UMNO lost only three parliamentary seats (2-Kelantan, 1-Kedah) and eight state seats (5-Terengganu, 2-Kedah, 1-Kelantan) to PAS, as well as one state seat to an incumbent Independent in Selangor. Berjasa however fared poorly. It lost both of its parliamentary contests to PAS and won only 5 of the eleven state seats it contested.

PAS won 5 parliamentary seats (4-Kelantan, 1-Kedah) out of 82 contested, thus maintaining its 1978 totals for parliamentary representation. In the state seats PAS contested 226 and won 18 (10-Kelantan, 5-Terengganu, 2-Kedah, 1-Perlis). Every PAS win occurred in the four northern states, and in those states the party gained over 38% of the valid vote for the parliamentary contests (down only 2 per cent from 1978). The results seem to indicate that PAS strength is reverting to its traditional strongholds of Kelantan and Terengganu, and is declining in Kedah (down 8 per cent) and Perlis. However, the factional split in Kedah and Perlis, accompanied by a strong pro-government Chinese vote in Kedah in 1982, accounted for the decline at least in part and may not mean a permanent shift away from PAS.

Among the non-Malays, the issues were quite different. Islam was not an issue, partly because it sparked little interest among the non-Malay voters, and partly because it was a

"Malay affair" and thus sensitive and difficult for the non-Malays politicians to discuss publicly. The issues among the non-Malays had to do with protection and defence of non-Malay interests in such areas as primary education, employment, and university enrollment quotas. At a more diffuse level, voter concern centred around the question of the economic and political position of the non-Malays vis-a-vis the Malays.

The electoral struggle was basically a set of contests between the Barisan's non-Malay parties (MCA, MIC, Gerakan, PPP) and the DAP. In fact, the MIC was given four relatively safe seats to contest and its campaign was localized and low-keyed, and the PPP, already considered a spent force whose demise was eminent, stood in only three Perak state seats. The real contests were between the MCA and Gerakan versus the DAP for the Chinese vote.

The MCA and Gerakan concentrated on a single theme: the Chinese needed to unite politically to protect their interests, and those interests, were better safeguarded inside the government coalition than from the opposition benches. However, the effectiveness of the MCA and Gerakan inside the government depended on solid electoral support. The dilemma of the Barisan's non-Malay parties, in part, was their electoral dependence on the Malay vote which subsequently acted to deprive them of coalition clout.

The appeal for Chinese unity was not new, but there were some new factors in this election. First, Gerakan managed to win the endorsement of the powerful and traditionally oppositional United Chinese School Teachers Association (UCSTA), whose leaders now decided that the defence of Chinese education was best served by having educationalists inside the government. Although aligned strictly with Gerakan, which had selected two UCSTA members to stand as candidates, the UCSTA helped the Barisan's other non-Malay parties by using its vast influence to oppose the DAP throughout the Peninsula.<sup>48</sup>

The MCA came into the elections on the heels of what was viewed to be a successful defence of Chinese primary educa-

tion against the potentially insidious intrusion of the new "3R Programme".<sup>49</sup> Sensing that the timing for a "breakthrough" might be right, for the first time the MCA put important party members as candidates in several of the tough urban seats where victory against the DAP was not assured. For years the DAP had chided the MCA leaders to come out of hiding and contest Chinese-majority seats. Similarly, UMNO had pressured the MCA to justify its claim to leadership of the Chinese community. In 1982 DAP leader Encik Lim Kit Siang challenged MCA President Datuk Lee San Choon to stand against him in one of the twelve Chinese-majority urban constituencies. Datuk Lee responded by leaving his safe Johore seat to stand in Seremban.<sup>50</sup> The choice of Seremban put the DAP in a dilemma. With the Chinese educationalist turning against the party, it was not an ideal location for Encik Lim Kit Siang to risk his prestige. Further, to stand in Seremban, Encik Lim Kit Siang would have to displace Dr. Chen Man Hin, who was local, the long-time incumbent, and the party Chairman. In the end, Encik Lim Kit Siang chose not to stand in Seremban against Datuk Lee. One result was that many Chinese applauded Datuk's Lee courage and felt disappointed that the DAP had turned away from its own challenge.

Although the MCA and Gerakan once again viewed themselves as rivals, the electoral damage they managed to inflict upon one another in 1982 was minimal. The residue from the wrangling over the allocation of seats was less severe as a result of a compromise imposed from the top. Gerakan was given some additional seats nationally and in return the MCA was given an equal number of state seats as Gerakan in Penang, the only state with a Chinese Chief Minister. While the parties did not cooperate much, they did not actively sabotage the efforts of the other. Tension naturally was highest in Penang, where the MCA proclaimed that it would provide the Chief Minister if it won more seats than Gerakan. This strategy boomeranged on the MCA: it frightened sections of the Penang electorate who viewed Gerakan Chief Minister Dr. Lim Chong Eu as a stable force good for

economic development, and it resulted in the defeat of the MCA's "candidate" for the Chief Minister's post.

The DAP was ill-prepared for the 1982 elections. The party's "Project '83" for winning control of Penang state was cancelled after a decisive Penang by-election loss to MCA in November 1980, and the DAP's hopes for gains in Perak were being torn apart by internal dissension in the state's organization. Nationally the DAP was crippled by internal feuding and defections in 1980-81, and at election time the party lacked unity, organization, finances, and manpower. These problems were compounded by the shifting of several incumbents to new constituencies and by running too many candidates. There were grievances available to the DAP to exploit, basically the same grievances as in 1978, but the DAP's campaign effort was under-manned and under-financed, lacked media exposure, and seemed devoid of determination and confidence. The cumulative effect of all these factors was that the DAP did not succeed in convincing even all of its regular backers that a strong opposition was good for the non-Malays.

While some of the signs were present, most observers were surprised by the election results. The MCA and Gerakan won some of the urban "DAP stronghold" seats, including a narrow win in Seremban by Datuk Lee, and the DAP's peninsular parliamentary seat holdings were reduced from 15 to 6 (although its percentage of the valid vote in seats contested declined by only 4.23 per cent from 1978). In the parliamentary contests, the MCA lost only 4 out of 28 seats and Gerakan 2 out of 7, all to the DAP. The MIC won all four of its contests. The voter swing away from the DAP in some of the tough urban constituencies was significant: over 30 per cent in Ipoh, Menglembu, and Damansara. None of the Barisan's non-Malay parties lost in parliamentary constituencies where the non-Malay electorate was less than 75 per cent. Where the percentage was higher, the MCA and Gerakan managed to win half their contests against the DAP, thus destroying a previously accepted "axiom" that this could not be done.

In the parliamentary elections in Sabah and Sarawak, intra-

Barisan feuding and internal party frictions were more important than the challenge by a multitude of weak opposition parties, the exception being the limited presence of the DAP.

In Sabah the bitter fighting between Barisan partners Berjaya and USNO continued unabated. Berjaya put up five Independent candidates, who had just resigned from the party for that purpose, to contest against USNO. The result was that USNO lost all five contests to these Independents and the party was left nearly moribund. Berjaya won 10 of its 11 contests, losing only one seat to the DAP incumbent in the Chinese-majority constituency of Sandakan.

In Sarawak, the dominant partner in the Sarawak Barisan, the PBB, once again won all (8) of its contests. However, a factional struggle inside SNAP prior to the elections resulted in three former members standing as Independents against SNAP candidates and winning, and SUPP lost two urban Chinese seats (Bandar Kuching and Bandar Sibul) to the DAP. The overall effect of the eleven seats lost in Sabah and Sarawak (8 to Independents and 3 to the DAP) was that the Barisan's election victory appeared slightly less conclusive on paper than it was in fact.



MCA President accepts the DAP challenge at Seremban during the 1982 general election.



The Mahathir-Musa team led the Barisan Nasional to a massive victory in the 1982 general election.

## 5

### CONCLUSIONS

"The politics of this country tend to be racial, whether you like it or not, so whenever you talk about anything that has some identification with race, the chances are that politics will be dragged in. So you cannot tell people that this is culture and that is politics, so let's keep the two separate."

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad<sup>1</sup>

**I**n Malaysia, in the presence of politically salient ethnic cleavages, the political elites of both the Alliance and the successor Barisan Nasional have demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and compromise on the difficult issues dividing the ethnic communities. This system of elite accommodation, centring around the "grand" coalition, runs counter to the principle of strict majority rule, the pattern of government-versus-opposition, and the idea of winners and losers. The character of the political system is described well by the President of the MCA, Datuk Sri Lee San Choon: "We have in the Barisan Nasional today a mass political organization capable of mobilising the resources of our multi-racial society to achieve our national objectives .... The Barisan Nasional now stands out as both a forum and a vehicle for the resolution of conflict between the communities and for the accommodation of their respective sensitivities ... It is no mere coincidence that political parties of such varying complexions have found common ground in a philosophy based on the belief that the problems of our society can never be solved if



sections of the polity are in the perpetual conflict with one another. To the extent that the formation of the Barisan Nasional is a denial of the politics of confrontation, it is also a commitment to the politics of consultation and consensus, the politics of good-will and co-operation.”<sup>2</sup>

Both the Alliance and the Barisan Nasional have represented a form of “grand coalition” government (a larger-than-necessary coalition which includes all of the major segments or “pillars” of the society). The Cabinets of the Alliance and the Barisan have always had representatives of the major ethnic groups. Informally, the principle of compromise and “package deals” has helped protect some of the major interests of each community, as has the practice of striving for consensus rather than taking votes in the higher councils of government and party. Proportionality operates in varying degrees. It operates roughly in the allocation of Cabinet appointments and access to government decision-making bodies in general, in patronage posts, and in the allocation of electoral seats among the component parties. However, influence over policy-making decisions has not been as proportional. In effect, UMNO decides on government policy, although in consultation with the other parties. Quite often there are policy compromises or concessions on implementation, and rarely have the wishes of the other parties been completely ignored.

The important change in proportionality, if the political and economic spheres are considered together, has taken place with UMNO’s determination to uplift the economic position of the Malays by replacing “the bargain” with the New Economic Policy. However, even here, the non-Malays have had some voice: They succeeded in convincing the Malay elites to increase the projected non-Malay share of ownership and management of all commercial and industrial activities from thirty to forty per cent, with the Malay target set at thirty per cent and the foreign share at thirty per cent.<sup>3</sup> The non-Malays have viewed it as an important accomplishment that their share of the economic cake is both adequate *and* specified. In some respects, this is the new “bargain”.

Despite the dominance of the Malays and their insistence on political hegemony, the Malay political elites have been willing to share governmental power with the non-Malays, and to bargain and compromise on divisive issues. The elites believe there is a need for consensus and wide representation in order to maintain legitimacy and political stability and avoid ethnic violence. Tun Tan Siew Sin once noted, "the leaders can disagree on ideological, economic, and social issues, and even on political issues, but they must take care not to turn it into a contest of ethnic community against ethnic community."<sup>4</sup> In Malaysia, the political elites have been able to institutionalize the "rules of the game" and the procedures for elite cooperation.

To have a successfully functioning coalition like the Barisan Nasional, there must be stable support from the masses. The political elites must have security, which the stable support of their followers ensures, in order to make compromises. At a minimum, the non-elites must not work against the agreement reached by the elites.<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Mahathir once noted about UMNO-PAS cooperation; "This is the sort of thing that has to percolate from the top. It will be a case of the top leadership convincing the lower rungs of the leadership, and then slowly perhaps it might get down to the bottom."<sup>6</sup> However, in arriving at compromises, meaning something less than might optimally be desired by each respective community, the elites can be very vulnerable to "outbidding" by ethnic counter-elites who can demand maximal ethnic claims. In the beginning, in the 1950s, the Alliance commanded widespread mass support. However, this support slowly dwindled. By 1969 the Alliance was being successfully outbid on both its ethnic flanks, a fact revealed partially in the electoral results. Following the trauma of May 13th, the Barisan Nasional was instituted in its place, with additional partners, to gain once more broad-based mass support.

Several observations can be made about the nature of the Alliance and Barisan Nasional grand coalition. First, they have been permanent and semi-institutionalized — but still dependent on individual skills, notably those of Tun Razak.

Second, there has been a core party, UMNO, which provides stability and also dominates. Third, there has been considerable movement of individuals, and within the Barisan of several peripheral parties, in and out of the coalition without upsetting the basic structure. Fourth, personality has played an important role in coalition formation and maintenance. Fifth, the standard payoffs accruing to the coalition parties have been roughly proportional to their resource contributions (given that the MIC's resource contribution consisted mainly in its being representative of an ethnic group); increased legitimacy is a "bonus" for the core party, and political stability is a payoff for all.

The Alliance and the Barisan Nasional are conceptually similar: the practice of elite accommodation and compromise has been the central operating principle in both organizations. Datuk Musa Hitam said that the Barisan Nasional method of rule was "time-tested",<sup>7</sup> and Tun Razak noted that the Barisan was "not different, only larger".<sup>8</sup> Further, in style and in organizational structure and rules, the Alliance and Barisan are also quite similar. In many respects, the Barisan Nasional is simply an extension of the Alliance principle.

Nevertheless, there *are* some important differences between the two organizations, which justify the claim that a "new formula" for managing the political system had been devised after May 13, 1969. First, the Barisan Nasional is much larger than the Alliance, with many more coalition partners. It has a stronger and wider base of support than the Alliance had in 1969, although similar in comprehensiveness to the Alliance support base as it was in the mid-1950s. Partly as a result of greater size, and possibly because some ethnic groups are represented by more than one coalition partner, and also that some of the constituent parties are not ethnically exclusive, the leaders of the various parties in the Barisan Nasional do not share the close relationships that existed in the Alliance, and there is a larger range of social and education backgrounds among the various leaders. One consequence has been that the Prime Minister, as head of the Barisan, has had to devote more time and effort to his role as the

intra-coalition arbiter. Another consequence has been that the conduct of politics has been less informal in the Barisan.

Second, although UMNO was the dominant party in the Alliance, it is even more hegemonic in the Barisan. The difference is in degree and openness. After May 1969, it was clear to everyone in the country that the Malays led by UMNO were in charge. As a corollary to the New Economic Policy, it was necessary for UMNO to state more clearly and assert more actively its dominance.

There is no permanent protection for the non-Malays, such as a formal veto, which is institutionalized into the system. Under the Alliance, "the bargain" established political and economic guidelines which were closely observed, and this is partially absent under the Barisan Nasional. Still, however, the Malays have not sought to monopolize all political power, have not abandoned the tradition of sharing governmental power, and have not stopped the practice of consultation, bargaining, and reaching for compromise solutions. The scope or extent of these practices may be more limited, but they are still practised.

Finally, and most importantly, the Barisan Nasional differs from the Alliance in that the political elites who devised the coalition-building scheme and the Barisan, namely Tun Razak and his close associates, also provided an overall strategy to guide the Barisan by instituting long-term socio-economic policies designed to eliminate what they regarded as the *causes* of ethnic hostility. In conjunction with this they initiated political steps to encourage ethnic harmony and prevent any flare up of ethnic violence. The Alliance, on the other hand, had no firm policy and tended just to respond to various ethnic pressures as they came up. Milton J. Esman observed that the Alliance practiced an "avoidance model" of sweeping issues under the carpet when possible and responding to events as they occurred. As a result, the Alliance was "whipsawed between conflicting demands".<sup>9</sup> Esman, writing before the period of extensive coalition-building and the formation of the Barisan Nasional, believed that Malaysia needed a "guidance model" which would do more to antici-

pate ethnic issues, design strategies of action, improvise possible trade-offs, and develop accommodative habits of thinking and behaviour.<sup>10</sup> He also believed that there should be a strong governmental presence with the ability and willingness to suppress threats of ethnic violence, both by accommodation and by using official coercion and force. In some ways, this is a blueprint of what the political elites have attempted to do under the Barisan Nasional government. Under the Alliance the political elites took no steps to remedy the problems of a declining base of mass support and increasingly prevalent outbidding by counter-elites. With the formation of the Barisan Nasional, most major outbidders were co-opted into the ruling coalition. This not only removed them as outbidders; they were also made more moderate by the responsibilities of sharing power, and were exposed to the tradition of accommodative attitudes and practices in the councils of government. Further, as part of the new formula for political rule developed after May 1969, the political elites instituted some additional measures designed to protect the system from ethnic violence resulting from abuse of open political competition. Tun Razak and his political associates decided that the accommodative methods practiced by the Alliance elites had proved inadequate *on their own* for the task of controlling ethnic conflict and building national unity. Further, they decided that the "bargain" needed to be revised. Consequently, they devised a two-prong strategy to remedy the situation: measures to promote ethnic harmony; and measures to control ethnic violence.

To promote ethnic harmony, the political elites established the National Consultative Council (NCC), the Department of National Unity (DNU), and the National Goodwill Council (NGC). The latter was organized by the Tunku and was primarily a vehicle for his personal efforts to restore ethnic harmony by touring the country and talking to the people. The NCC, prelude to the coalition-building strategy, has been discussed in Chapter 2. The DNU (later the National Unity Board) was created as a research-type unit to ponder the causes of ethnic conflict and to recommend possible solutions. The

unit has since been functionally downgraded and now appears to be engaged more in minor goodwill projects than in devising long-range strategies to deal with the problem of ethnic conflict. However, in its early existence, the DNU was charged with the responsibility of producing a national ideology (the Rukunegara), which after being approved by the NCC and the NOC, was subsequently proclaimed by the Yang Dipertuan Agong on August 31, 1970. The Rukunegara is a simple statement of general principles designed as a guide to conduct for the people. It calls for: Belief in God; Loyalty to the King and Country; Upholding the Constitution; Rule of Law; and Good Behavior and Morality. It has been criticized as being too general and vague to have much impact, which is probably true.<sup>11</sup>

It has been the action taken to control ethnic conflict which has had the most significant impact upon the political system. The Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1971 has had the effect of limiting political competition in Malaysia. With the passing of the constitutional amendments, the Sedition Act was amended to make it illegal to question certain ethnically sensitive provisions of the Constitution;<sup>12</sup> and additionally to place the same restrictions on speech in Parliament and the state assemblies. Further, Article 159 of the Constitution, which "entrenched" certain other Articles by making their amendment subject to the approval of the Conference of Rulers,<sup>13</sup> was broadened to include additional Articles.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Article 159 (clause (5)) was itself entrenched. Thus Parliament on its own no longer had the power to alter or amend Article 159 of the Constitution nor any of the Articles protected by it. Tan Sri Abdul Kadir bin Yusof explained, in the Senate debates on the amendments, that "to allow complete freedom to criticize the four sensitive issues in the Constitution, as has been done in the past, is not only to incite to commit and offense, but to incite the Malays and non-Malays of this country to cut each other's throats and to destroy our country."<sup>15</sup>

The effect of the tougher Sedition laws and the constitutional amendments has been to exclude partially from

the political arena some of the issues used most effectively by the opposition party outbidders to raise ethnic passions and mobilize ethnic support against the ruling coalition. Restricting political competition has helped provide some autonomy for the accommodating elites by "shedding the democratic excesses of the old system".<sup>16</sup>

The "rules of the game" for the Malaysian political system have also been altered in the post-riots period. First, although Malay political dominance was accepted by the various Alliance political elites and was part of the informal "bargain", Tun Razak believed that the new generation was unmindful of the careful compromises agreed upon at the time of Independence. One of the new rules was to remove ambiguity and make it clear to the public that the Malays would be politically dominant. This, it was believed, would reduce Malay anxieties and avoid heightened non-Malay political expectations. The prominent former opposition MP, Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, appreciated the reality: "Malay leadership ... is a fact of life that has to be accepted. As I see it, for the next thirty or forty years, the Malays will not accept a government where the non-Malays play a dominant role."<sup>17</sup>

Second, the "bargain", which allowed for unhindered Chinese economic activity and consequently Chinese economic dominance, was revised. Tun Razak believed that one of the causes of the May 13th riots was Malay economic grievances. The New Economic Policy (NEP) was announced with the intention both of reducing the economic imbalances between the ethnic communities and of eradicating poverty among all groups. Under the NEP, the government would play an active role in promoting the participation of Malays in the modern economic sectors, in employment, management by establishing large government corporations, setting aside capital for loans, encouraging joint ventures, and by seeing that a proportion of Malays was hired at all levels of business activity.

In effect, the government would be backing Malay economic activity and even competing on behalf of the Malays in economic areas previously dominated by the non-Malays

(including foreigners). However, it was believed, and this was to be the key to the success of the NEP, that the targets for restructuring the economy would be met in the framework of a rapidly expanding economy which would allow for reasonably large non-Malay economic growth and even for increased activity by foreign-owned enterprises.

Finally, changes in the rules of the game could be seen in some alterations to the electoral constituency boundaries: in February 1974 approximately 94 square miles of the greater Kuala Lumpur area were separated from the jurisdiction of the State of Selangor and designated as the Federal Territory; and in July 1974, the Election Commission submitted its new delimitations of election constituencies. The creation of the Federal Territory worked in favor of the Barisan Nasional in several ways. First, the change eliminated some heavily urban and decidedly anti-government constituencies from Selangor state, thus effectively reducing the threat of the opposition coming to power in the state. Also, since the Federal Territory was not considered as a state, politically there was no danger of its governance falling into opposition hands. Finally, the five parliamentary constituencies in the Federal Territory were so delimited that, despite the urban, Chinese, and pro-opposition character of the Territory as a whole, the Barisan Nasional had a fair to good chance in several of the seats.

The new delimitation of election constituencies for Peninsular Malaysia in July 1974 also worked to the advantage of the Barisan Nasional. First, the total number of parliamentary seats was increased from 144 to 154, thus easing slightly the difficult task of allocating seats among the larger number of competing partners in the new coalition. Second, the previous rule of maximum fifteen per cent differential between urban and rural weightage was removed; consequently the disparity between some urban and rural constituencies increased, the extreme example in 1974 being the disparity in Perak between Menglembu with 51,300 voters and Grik with 16,400. The delimitations work to the disadvantage of the large urban centres, which happen to be populated by a high proportion of working-class Chinese who



traditionally tend to vote anti-government.

The post-riots political "rules of the game" in Malaysia show that while the top UMNO leaders believe in and practice elite accommodation and compromise, they are also willing to change the Constitution and alter the political boundaries in order to protect themselves from the competition of the opposition.

When considering the prospects of a successfully-operating "grand" coalition political system in Malaysia, one must look to UMNO and the top UMNO elites. UMNO is the most powerful and influential political party in the country: it holds the largest number of seats in Parliament and in most of the state assemblies; its leaders always occupy the top Cabinet posts, including, so far, every Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister; its leaders set the rule for accommodation in the ruling coalition and formulate government policy. Clearly, UMNO and its top elites are the key to the durability of the Barisan Nasional and to the practice of elite accommodation in general. Given the participation of UMNO, the composition of the Barisan could be altered in other ways without destroying the basic structure. Similarly, only UMNO is capable of forming a large central-position coalition. Further, it is inconceivable that UMNO could be excluded from any ruling coalition.

There has appeared in the past to be a cyclical process operating in Malaysia. The UMNO-dominated Alliance commanded nearly total electoral support in the mid-1950s, and then its support base slowly dwindled until it was replaced by the UMNO-dominated Barisan Nasional, which has commanded extensive electoral support since 1974. If this old pattern were to persist, it might be expected that after another one or two elections there would once again be a need for an UMNO-led realignment of political forces to bolster support. However, after three general elections, the Barisan Nasional shows no signs of decline.

There are some potential trouble-spots for the Barisan Nasional, however. There are three weak parties in the Barisan (the PPP, Berjasa, and USNO) which may simply

decline into non-existence before or after the next general elections. There are several destructive intra-coalition rivalries, such as the MCA vs Gerakan, Berjaya vs USNO, and Kelantan UMNO vs Berjaya which threaten to detract from the Barisan's electoral performance. And there is generally intense intra-coalition rivalry for seats to contest and the rewards of office. The Prime Minister as head of the Barisan, must be able to balance conflicting demands and claims in order to manage the grand coalition, and at the same time he must see that governmental effectiveness does not suffer as a consequence. An important element of coalition behavior in Malaysia is personalities: the personal friendships and conflicts between the political elites as conditioned by such factors as similarities and differences in social and educational back-ground, life style, work habits, and temperament. Tun Tan Siew Sin made the point that "quite often close personal relationships could achieve more in five minutes than could be done in five years of shouting through the newspaper."<sup>18</sup> Personality is probably the least predictable and least rational aspect of coalition behavior, since personal proclivities often override cost-benefit considerations. What the element of personalities leads one to predict is that the DAP can never be accepted into the Barisan while Encik Lim Kit Siang remains its leader: UMNO Malays simply find him too abrasive and uncompromising. There are also personality conflicts between PAS and UMNO officials which dampen the overall desire for "Malay unity". There were overtures to PAS to rejoin the Barisan before the 1982 elections, but PAS rejected these as not genuine and tantamount to surrender.

Another factor which could adversely affect the Barisan Nasional would be a serious breakdown of deference among the Malays, especially among the UMNO rank-and-file. The system of deference has helped provide security for the Malay political elites, an important ingredient for the conduct of accommodative politics. Deference has its roots in the old feudal establishments headed by the Malay Rulers, which were not disturbed by British indirect rule and which were

incorporated into the modern polity at Independence. The key to Malay deference is rank. The basic division is *Rajah* and *rakyat* (Ruler and subject), although there are grades of rank descending from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom, all of which serve to condition contact between Malays. Today rank can be attained by blood, position, education, age and honorific titles.

In the political arena, deference operates to insulate the top Malay leadership from personal criticism and challenge. This protection also extends to policy areas, and to some degree is helpful in policy decisions requiring ethnic compromise. Culturally, the Malay traditionally supports the leader and accords him the right to make the decisions, based of course on the premise that these decisions will be good for the Malays and Islam.

Deference can start to break down in two ways: As a result of the efforts of outbidders who can convince the Malays that the government leaders are not doing what is good for the Malays or Islam; and, by the process of "modernization", for instance through the spread of education, mass communication, and urbanization, which tend to weaken old cultural values. Deference is still deeply ingrained in Malay cultural habits and etiquette. However, as carried over to politics, it appears to be more fragile. Historically the top UMNO leader has tried not to become identified with controversial measures before the party rank-and-file, in order to safeguard his power, but also in order to protect the deference accorded to him — the idea being that the second stone is easier to throw than the first. Recent UMNO General Assemblies have shown some weakening of deference. Nevertheless, the top UMNO leaders have been active in urging party members to retain and preserve old values, and Malay deference has not yet broken down to a serious extent.

Another factor which would undermine the Barisan would be a major split in UMNO. If this unlikely event were to happen, large-scale realignments in the political system could be expected, with the outcome uncertain. However, "there is a strong awareness inside UMNO that the party's strength is

dependent upon internal unity", and despite the existence of factions, "it is unlikely that any rebelling sector could draw significant support away from the main body and the attraction of the rewards of power"<sup>19</sup> In addition to the rewards, there is a general view about the party — that it saved the Malays from the Malayan Union and it gained Independence for the country — which contributes to its unity. There is a firm belief by its members that only UMNO can both protect the Malays and ensure political stability and ethnic harmony, and that, whatever the quarrel, the first priority is that the party stays united. Further, deference towards the top party leaders contributes to the unity of UMNO.<sup>20</sup>

Another factor which could disrupt the Barisan and thwart the practice of accommodative politics in Malaysia would be "too much" Malay dominance. Musolf and Springer see "perhaps the greatest danger" in the possibility that the Malays will carry their dominance beyond limits tolerable to other ethnic groups.<sup>21</sup> The Chinese commercial class is believed to have a great deal of tolerance as long as it can function with some opportunity for success. On the other hand, it is believed that some of the working class and young Chinese in the cities and the poor Chinese in general are frustrated. As one DAP leader sees it, if things get worse economically, the Chinese might increasingly support, either passively or actively, the Malayan Communist Party (a guerrilla movement in the jungle). He does not believe the Chinese would adjust to more and more disadvantages "until they have their backs to the sea". They will "give up on the constitutional process before that, and by then it will be too late even for the DAP to help".<sup>22</sup>

However, the government has seemed aware that it cannot totally neglect the economic interests of the Chinese. While the guidelines spelt out after May 1969 are less favorable for the Chinese than the original "bargain", and are essentially non-negotiable, issue-by-issue bargaining and compromise still exists on the "implementation" of stated goals. Further, Malaysia's economy is expanding at an acceptable rate, despite the effects of the recent worldwide recession, and

economic opportunities still exist.

None of the factors which could interfere with the practice of accommodative politics in Malaysia is as crucial, although speculative, as the success of the effort to restructure society (so that economic function will not be identified with ethnic community) through the New Economic Policy (NEP). If it falls very short of its targets (mostly projected for 1990), the stability of the political system and its accommodative practices could be threatened. There would possibly be pressure by the Malays to have an all-Malay government which would try to achieve by authoritarian means what could not be accomplished by accommodative practices. Malay expectations are high, and, although the expectations of the non-Malays have been adjusted downward correspondingly, there is a persistent zero-sum perception, and ethnic economic competition is increasing. The legitimacy of UMNO's, and the Barisan Nasional's, political approach is based on governmental effectiveness which will provide an opportunity for economic growth for the non-Malays as well as introducing more Malays into modern economic sectors. The government does not need to meet all of the economic targets, but it needs to be seen to be moving towards them with sufficient speed and sense of direction in order that it can maintain its credibility and legitimacy.

To sum up, the success and stability of Malaysia's current political system are closely linked with governmental effectiveness in the economic development sphere. The problem of overcoming outbidding and convincing the respective ethnic communities that the Barisan government can best represent their interests, so that government energies can be devoted to economic development, is vitally important. The government has attempted to deal with outbidding and to maintain stable mass support in three ways. First, it has co-opted many of the opposition parties into the ruling grand coalition. This was a more effective measure, of course, while PAS was still in the Barisan. Now UMNO must contend with a major opposition party on its flank, just as the non-Malay component parties must face the challenge of the DAP and

other parties. Outbidding from the Malay side is UMNO's more important concern, because, although the party wants ethnic accommodation, it will not willingly sacrifice its dominance, which depends on a firmly solid Malay base, for the sake of compromises with the non-Malays.

Second, in addition to the co-optation, the government has enacted legislation designed to limit political competition by removing certain ethnically sensitive issues from the arena of legal political debate. Enforcement of these provisions has been effective except in the area of Islamic religious issues, where the Barisan government appears very reluctant to apply sanctions. It is in the arena of intra-Malay Islamic politics, where accommodation with the non-Malays plays little part and yet resolution of Islamic issues directly affects multi-ethnic relations, that uncertainties about future political stability arise.

Finally, the Barisan government has made a determined effort to get its message across to Malaysians: that first, if ethnic violence is to be avoided, there must be mutual tolerance and compromise among the ethnic communities; second, the only way to reduce the hostility between the ethnic communities is to concentrate on economic development, unhindered by an excess of "politicking", until such a time as the Malays are on a secure economic footing equal to that of the other ethnic communities; and finally, while no single ethnic community can have everything it desires, there will only be violence and instability if the system of accommodative politics is abandoned or weakened by electoral rejection. How well the message has penetrated, and to what extent it has become internalized, is difficult to judge. The new generation of political elites appears to remain committed to multi-ethnic accommodative politics, and the three general elections held under the Barisan Nasional's banner, in 1974, 1978, and 1982, seem to indicate that mass support is holding steady.

## ENDNOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> See N. J. Ryan, *The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 192. The 1931 figures were Malays — 1,930,000, Non-Malays — 2,330,000.

<sup>2</sup> *Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, pp. 138-139, 144.

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> See Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (second edition). London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> On the rise and demise of the Malayan Union, see James de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series, No. 10, 1967, *passim*; M. R. Stenson, "The Malayan Union and the Historians," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. X, No. 2 (September 1969), pp. 344-354.

<sup>3</sup> Ishak bin Tadin, "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 1960), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> UMNO was not registered as a political party until April 27, 1950. The party's Malay name is Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (PKMB), but this is virtually never used. In 1970 a party spokesman reported that because of the fame and popularity of its English abbreviation, UMNO, this would be retained.

<sup>5</sup> See Wan Mong-Sing, "The History of the Organisations of the Chinese Community in Selangor with Particular Reference to Problems of Leadership, 1857-1967," M. A. Thesis, University of Malaya 1967.

<sup>6</sup> The Baba Chinese are the descendants of the early Chinese merchants (from the 16th century) who settled permanently in the Peninsula, mostly in Malacca and Penang, and often intermarried with local women. The Babas eventually spoke a Chinese version of Malay. They are sometimes considered as a distinct group of Chinese. See Soh Eng Lim, "Tan Cheng Lock, His Leadership of the Malayan Chinese," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 1960), pp. 29-55.

<sup>7</sup> It is generally believed that the initiative to form the organization came from 16 Chinese Federal Councillors and that Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner, was also involved. See Chan Heng Chee, "The Malayan Chinese Association," M. A. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1965, pp. 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Approximately 78 per cent of the Indian community are Tamils, with the remainder divided between Malayalis, Telegus, Sikhs, and Sinhalese. There is a social and occupational separation of the groups and a variant of the caste system

operates in determining rank and status.

<sup>9</sup> *Utusan Melayu*, January 6, 1949, quoted in Margaret F. Clark, "The Alliance and its Accommodation of Communal Pressures, 1952-1962," M. A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1964, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> See Karl von Vorvys, *Democracy Without Consensus*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 96-104 for a detailed account of the CLC.

<sup>11</sup> It is also believed by some that Dato Onn was concerned about the growing power of the MCA and hoped to undermine it by allowing Chinese to join UMNO. See Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, pp. 126-127.

<sup>13</sup> For complete details of the IMP platform and campaign, see R. K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 56-64.

<sup>14</sup> Harry Millet, *Prince and Premier*. London: George C. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1959, p. 113.

<sup>15</sup> Tun Tan Siew Sin notes that the UMNO-MCA pact caused a "dangerous rift" in the MCA. See *The Role of the M.C.A. in Malaysia*. Speech to the Historical Society of the University of Malaya on 10 September 1965, Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters.

<sup>16</sup> Means, *op. cit.*, p. 136

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of the political history of Sabah and Sarawak, see R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia—New States in a New Nation*. London: Frank Cass, 1974, *passim*; Margaret Roff, *The Politics of Belonging*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, *passim*; Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, *passim*. For a very good account of the Chinese parties in Sabah, see Edwin Lee, *The Towkays of Sabah*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976, *passim*. A shorter general account may be found in K. J. Ratnam & R. S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964*. Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, pp. 266-311.

<sup>18</sup> The parties were: the *United National Kadazan Organization* (UNKO), formed in August 1961, with which the *United National Pasok Momogun Party* (PM) was merged in 1964 to become the *United Pasok-momogun Kadazan Organization* (UPKO), the non-Muslim indigenous party (dissolved in December 1967); the *United Sabah National Organization* (USNO), established in December 1961, the Muslim indigenous party; the *Borneo Utara National Party* (BUNAP), subsequently renamed the *Sabah National Party* (SANAP), which was a merger of the *United Party* (UP) and the *Democratic Party* (DP); and which in mid-1965 merged with the *Sabah Chinese Association* (SCA), taking the name of the latter, the Chinese party; and the politically insignificant and often overlooked *Sabah*



*Indian Congress (SIC), the Indian party.*

<sup>19</sup> The parties were: the *Sarawak National Party (SNAP)*, formed in March 1961, primarily a non-Muslim indigenous party but with some Chinese membership; *Party Pesaka*, established in June 1962, a non-Muslim indigenous party; *Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS)*, formed in April 1960, and *Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA)*, founded in January 1962, primarily Muslim indigenous parties which merged in 1967 as *Parti Bumiputera: Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA)* established July 1962, a non-indigenous Chinese party, and the *Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP)* formed in June 1959, a Chinese and non-Muslim indigenous ideological party under Chinese leadership. The rivalry between SNAP and Pesaka was based on regions, that between PANAS and BARJASA was based partly on regions and partly on the divisions which arose as a result of the cession of Sarawak from the Brooke Rajahs to the British Crown in 1946, that between the SCA and SUPP was largely ideological and occupational, but also related to Chinese dialect groups (see Leigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205).

<sup>20</sup> See Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-313.

<sup>21</sup> *Jus soli* (law of the soil) refers to the right of citizenship derived from having been born in the country.

<sup>22</sup> For example, each is the head of the Muslim religion and has jurisdiction over any action relating to Islam or Malay custom in his state; each may appoint heirs, a consort, Regent or Council of Regency; control his own royal courts and palaces, grant titles and honors, and call for a meeting of the Conference of Rulers when it concerns the position of the Rulers or religion. The Rulers must take the advice of their Executive Councils except for certain discretionary spheres, such as the appointment of a Menteri Besar and the withholding of consent for the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly. See R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, 2nd Edn., Singapore and Vancouver: Times Books International and University of British Columbia Press, 1980, pp. 257-261.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> Chan Heng Chee, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> From *Collections of Articles About and Speeches of Tan Tan Siew Sin (1955-1970)*, Universiti Sains Malaysia Library collection (cyclostyled), from an extract of the Federation of Malaya Legislative Council Debates Official Report, Thirteenth Meeting of the Second Session of the Second Legislative Council, Wednesday, 10 July 1957.

<sup>26</sup> *The Alliance*, Vol. 1, No. 14, (April 1967), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew explained that in the Alliance Cabinet all the policies which are approved must obtain unanimous agreement. If a Cabinet member holds a divergent view, the matter will be shelved for further consideration (*Sin Chew Jit Poh*, March 8, 1973, as quoted in *Intisari Akhbar Harian*).

<sup>28</sup> *The Role of the MCA in Malaysia*, Speech by Tan Siew Sin, September 10,

1965, Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters, p. 22. He explained that in the Alliance "when we have a difficult problem to resolve, we do not thump the table. We meet together in a spirit of understanding and compromise" (*Sunday Times (Malaysia)*, August 12, 1973).

<sup>29</sup> *Straits Times (Malaysia)*, June 20, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman (May 7, 1975).

<sup>31</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 177, quoting Tunku Abdul Rahman.

<sup>32</sup> Tun Tan Siew Sin understood the MCA dilemma astutely when he told an MCA meeting in July 1959 that the government could cause considerable trouble if it wanted to without changing the Constitution, through Emergency regulations, and if the MCA was not in the ruling party in the government, having 40 seats would be of little protection.

<sup>33</sup> See Means, *op. cit.*, p. 223. Apparently the letter first appeared in the *Chinese Press* on July 8, 1959 and subsequently in the *Straits Times* on July 10, 1959. It is widely believed that the letter was released by MCA Publicity Chairman Yong Pung How.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Chan Heng Chee, *op. cit.*, p. 104 from the *Straits Times*, July 11, 1959.

<sup>35</sup> Means, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>36</sup> The PAP instructed two of its candidates not to campaign once it was realized that they would be competing against UMNO candidates. See Ratnam and Milne, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>37</sup> Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back", *The Star*, March 31, 1975.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.*, April 7, 1975;

Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, p. 76. The personal style of political decision-making and the fact that Mr. Lee was distrusted by Alliance elites and had no access to the top Alliance Councils or to the Cabinet, fairly well excluded him from actively participating in federal decisions, though he was probably consulted on most matters concerning Singapore.

<sup>39</sup> See Lee Kuan Yew: *Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia?* Singapore: Ministry of Culture, 1965; *The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia*. Singapore: Ministry of Culture, 1965; *Malaysia — Age of Revolution*. Singapore: Ministry of Culture, n.d.; *Some Problems in Malaysia*. Singapore: Ministry of Culture, n.d.

<sup>40</sup> Means, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

<sup>41</sup> Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back", *The Star*, April 7, 1975. Also see

R.S. Milne, "Singapore's Exit from Malaysia: The Consequences of Ambiguity," *Asian Survey*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (March 1966), pp. 175-184.

<sup>42</sup> Means, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>44</sup> *Straits Times*, December 4, 1964.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, August 2, 1965.

<sup>46</sup> Mahathir Mohammad, "Problems of Democratic Nation-Building in Malaysia," *Solidarity*, Vol. VI, No. 10 (October 1971), p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> The election in one constituency, Melaka Selatan, was postponed.

<sup>48</sup> *Straits Times*, May 13-14, 1969.

<sup>49</sup> For details on May 13th, see Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5, and von Vorys, *op. cit.*, Chapter 13.

<sup>50</sup> The elections in Sabah and Sarawak were suspended before they were completed. See *Straits Times*, May 16, 1969. The Emergency was proclaimed by the Agung under Clause 2 of Article 150 of the Constitution to secure public safety.

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup> See *Straits Times* (Singapore), May 15-18, 21, 1969. The NOC was composed of several top Alliance elites and top representatives of the armed forces, police, and civil service. The stated aim of the NOC was to coordinate government, army, and police activities in an effort to establish and maintain security and order. See R.S. Milne & Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, 2nd. edn., Singapore and Vancouver: Times Books International and University of British Columbia Press, 1980, Chapter 5, and Karl von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 345-346. Although the Tunku was not a member of the NOC, he and Tun Razak were in close contact, and major decisions of the NOC were submitted by law to the Tunku for his approval.

<sup>2</sup> *Straits Times* (Singapore) May 20, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, June 14, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> See Milne and Mauzy *op. cit.*, pp. 94-99, for an account of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill. Also see *Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill 1971*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972. The Bill amended the Sedition Act, though most of the provisions were already in force through the Emergency Ordinance No. 45 of 1970. Additionally, however, it placed the same restrictions on speech in Parliament and the state assemblies. The Bill also amended Article 159 of the Constitution, which entrenched certain Articles (by making their amendment subject to the approval of the Conference of Rulers), by broadening it to

include some additional Articles. Then Article 159 was itself entrenched.

<sup>5</sup> From a mimeograph copy of Dr. Mahathir's letter to the Tunku, June 17, 1960, at the library of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

<sup>6</sup> The Tunku believed it would not be proper for the uncle to bow to the nephew, as ceremony would have required if the Tunku had remained as Prime Minister.

<sup>7</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), January 18, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, January 19, 1971.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, February 8-9, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> *Singapore Herald*, February 26, 1971.

<sup>11</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia) April 15, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Interviews with Dato Teh Siew Eng in March 1975.

<sup>13</sup> August 23, 1971.

<sup>14</sup> According to Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, this was the turning point for the Perak Task Force (interview, March 18, 1975).

<sup>15</sup> It is thought that Tun Tan Siew Sin became increasingly convinced that the Task Force and "new bloods" in the party had plans to topple him, and that several "old guards" had helped convince him of this. There was a Press blackout on the MCA struggle during this time.

<sup>16</sup> Dr. Lim Keng Yaik attributed the Task Force's defeat to lack of political in-fighting experience (interview, March 18, 1975). In a newspaper interview, he pointed out five areas where the "old guard" had outmanoeuvred the Task Force: freezing of thousand of membership applications; illegal set-up of invisible ward branches; unconstitutional election of office-bearers; lack of official investigations into certain malpractices; and the "closed door" policy of the Perak MCA Youth (*Straits Times*) (Malaysia), October 6, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> The information here and in the following paragraphs is from interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah, then Executive Secretary of UMNO, the Alliance, and the National Front, March 21, June 12, 16, 25, 1975, and Tan Sri Haji Muhammad Ghazali Shafie, Minister of Home Affairs, July 3, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> Tun Razak apparently had decided that the main cause of the May 13th riots was Malay economic frustration and discontent, and that the best way to promote national unity was to reduce "politicking" and concentrate on economic issues, specifically projects designed to reduce the ethnic economic imbalance. This was not a new thought to Tun Razak. Before 1969 he said, "... which comes first,

political stability or economic stability? I myself would answer the question by saying that both come first and they come together ... Therefore, the first basis for economic development is the type of political leadership which will not waste national emotion on non-essential rabble-raising ...." ("Development Implementation in Malaysia," *Malaysian Management Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (July 1968), p. 2).

<sup>19</sup> Tun Razak believed that the country "must be protected from the kind of debate that questions the very principle on which the nation was founded" (*Towards National Harmony*, Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Cetak Kerajaan, 1971, p. 2). There is a new generation, he said, "which is unmindful of the delicate and careful compromises agreed upon by the various races before we attained our independence in 1957" (*United for Peace and Prosperity*, speech on February 23, 1971, in the Dewan Rakyat, Kuala Lumpur: Department of Information, 1971, p. 3). For these reasons, Tun Razak believed that Malaysia did not have suitable environmental conditions for a Westminster-type of democracy. "The Malaysian-type of democracy is best suited to the needs of the country's unique multi-racial society. The Malaysian concept of democracy subscribes also to the need to balance individual interests against the general security of the State. The view we take is that democratic government is the best and most acceptable form of government .... We recognize that each nation must develop ... its own chosen political and economic systems and that the developing world has a special need of an articulated political system suitable to its own problems" (*Straits Times* (Malaysia), September 14, 1971). Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie subscribed to the same views, saying that Malaysia could not mimic Westminster democracy: "We need time, not harrassment, cooperation, not obstacles ..." (*ibid.*, March 6, 1971). "It was felt that the people would expect its leaders to order the nation's priorities in a businesslike manner and get on with the enormous tasks ahead with as few distractions as possible" ("The Dynamic of Shaping National Policy Priorities: The Case of Malaysia," A Williamsburg Paper, Vancouver, B.C., September 10-13, 1975, published in *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, Vol. 7, No. 3, n.d.).

<sup>20</sup> "Leadership and a Motivated Society," *Development Forum*, Vol. II, No. 2 (December 1969), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> This was confirmed in interviews with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975), Encik Khalil Akasah (March 21, 1975), and Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, former Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (June 18, 1975). Apparently in 1969 there were some tentative approaches to PAS and some other parties.

<sup>22</sup> Research papers and proposals listing the pros and cons of alternative political schemes, solicited by Tun Razak from some government associates and "backroom" advisers, were still being submitted to Tun Razak at that date.

<sup>23</sup> See Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-93 for more details. The ethnic breakdown of the membership of the NCC was never officially cited. From a list of 64 members given in the *Malaysian Digest*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 14, 1970), pp. 1 and 8, it is possible to work out an approximate ethnic breakdown, which is as follows: Malays 27, Chinese 17, Indians 8, Others 8, Unknown (but not Malay) 4. The NCC was widely representative body ethnically, politically, occupationally, and

territorially. It included in its ranks spokesman for all of the ethnic communities (except for that sector of the Chinese community which regarded the DAP as its legitimate spokesman). It included the leaders of the two states held by the opposition, and top representatives from five (originally six) of the major opposition parties.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Professor Syed Hussein Alatas on September 17, 1974.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Encik Khalil Akasah in March and June 1975.

<sup>26</sup> For details of the development of the parties in Sarawak see R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, *Malaysia — New States in a New Nation*. London: Frank Cass, 1974; and Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon*. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Interview (March 24, 1975).

<sup>28</sup> Interview with a federal Minister in 1975.

<sup>29</sup> From interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad, and Tan Sri Mohd. Ghazali Shafie in June and July 1975.

<sup>30</sup> Interviews with Tunku Abdul Rahman in May 1975.

<sup>31</sup> The Council Negri results for 47 seats were: Bumiputera — 12; SCA — 3; Pesaka — 9 (including one former Independent), SUPP — 11, and SNAP — 12. The election in one seat, a SUPP stronghold, was postponed. See the *Sarawak Tribune*, July 4-8, 1970.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Datuk Stephen Yong on July 19, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, July 12, 1970.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui on March 24, 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Interview on July 19, 1974.

<sup>36</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, December 7, 1970.

<sup>37</sup> William Shaw, *Tun Razak, His Life and Times*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., 1976, p. 206.

<sup>38</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), August 10, 1974 (Dr. Lim Chong Eu).

<sup>39</sup> Information in this section is based on interviews with Dr. Tan Chee Khoon (July 2, 1975); Professor Syed Hussein Alatas (September 17, 1974), Encik Tan Tim Hwa (May 21, 1975); Encik Mustapha Hussein, (April 30, 1975); Encik Ong Yi How, (April 27, 1975).

<sup>40</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 18, November 23, 1971; *Straits Echo*, September 11, 1971. Dr. Tan Chee Khoon and Professor Alatas, among others, quit

the party. In June 1971, Professor Alatas tried to suspend Dr. Lim, but he had made the mistake of resigning his Chairmanship first. Dr. Lim took over the Chairmanship and disallowed any attempts to suspend him. Dr. Lim's position was upheld legally.

<sup>41</sup> According to a Gerakan official interviewed in May 1975, Dr. Lim Chong Eu believed, even before the 1969 elections, that championing the cause of Chinese language and education, and culture, was no longer in tune with the times. This led to a watered-down Gerakan platform on these issues.

<sup>42</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 8, December 11, 1971, February 12, April 12, 1972.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, July 9, 1970. Two PPP members and one from the DAP defected, giving the Alliance 22 of 40 seats.

<sup>44</sup> Interview on March 17, 1975. Dato Sri Seenivasagam also stated (*Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 15, 1972) that Tun Razak's moderation and sense of justice impressed on us and we felt we could take a change... we have no regrets. There is also a point of view that Dato Sri Seenivasagam was trying to protect his position in the party against the Chinese faction.

<sup>45</sup> Dato Sri Seenivasagam admitted there had been some pressure (interview, March 17, 1975). Encik R. C. M. Ryan, former vice-president of the PPP, said it was an "open secret" that the PPP might have lost the Ipoh Municipal Council (interview, March 17, 1975). Dato Liew Why Hone, former President of the Ipoh Municipal Council, thought that the PPP was forced to accept the coalition because of the threat (interview, March 15, 1975). However, Encik Khong Kok Yat, former President of the PPP, denied that the coalition was to save the Ipoh Municipal Council (interview, March 17, 1975).

<sup>46</sup> It was known that Datuk Asri favored an all-Malay government at the centre, and would certainly have brought PAS into such an arrangement. See, for example, *Utusan Melayu*, September 8, 1967; and *Alliance* Vol. II, No. 6 (December, 1967), p. 1, as reported in Joseph Akinyemi Ibikunle, "Some Aspect of the Political System in Malaysia with Special Reference to Federalism," M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1969, pp. 248-249. Also see *Suaran PAS Kelantan*, 2, B. 19/10 (September/October 1967).

<sup>47</sup> The PKMM and Hizbul Muslimin were not banned, but they dissolved their organizations in 1948 to escape proscription. On the history of PAS, see K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, *The Malaysian Parliamentary Elections of 1964*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, *passim*, and Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties: The DMK (India) and the PAS (Malaya)", Ph. D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976, chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>48</sup> See *Straits Times*, October 2, 1962; *Sunday Mail*, October 7, 1962.

<sup>49</sup> Ratnam and Milne, *op. cit.*, p. 124. *The Constitution and Rules of Persatuan Islam Sa-Tanah Melayu*, n.c. (mimeo).

<sup>50</sup> Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community: A Study of UMNO's Position and Opposition Attitudes," M.S.S. Thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, 1974, p. 200.

<sup>51</sup> Reported in interviews with Haji Wan Ismail b. Haji Ibrahim, former Deputy Menteri Besar of Kelantan (June 2, 1975), and Haji Hassan Adli b. Haji Arshad, former Deputy President of PAS and a former Deputy Minister (July 4, 1975). Also see, Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accomodation of Primordial Parties ...", *op. cit.*, ch. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Che gu Muhammad Fakhruddin bin Haji Abdullah on June 2, 1975.

<sup>53</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), May 4 and 29, 1972.

<sup>54</sup> *Sunday Times* (Malaysia), June 25, 1972.

<sup>55</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 30, 1972.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, December 22, 1972; *Berita PAS*, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 1-7. *Kerjauan Campuran Perikatan — PAS*, Kuala Lumpur: UMNO Headquarters, n.d.

<sup>57</sup> The coalition also helped to reduce the social disruption at the Malay Kampung level which was caused by the UMNO-PAS political rivalry.

<sup>58</sup> *Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill 1971*, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 235.

<sup>59</sup> Interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah (March 21, 1975) and Datuk Encik Wan Hashim bin Haji Wan Ahmad (June 1, 1975).

<sup>60</sup> From interviews with PAS and UMNO party members in 1975.

### CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), August 31, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1, 1973; *Straits Echo*, January 1, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> *Sunday Times* (Malaysia), September 16, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), November 5, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> "Trauma for the MCA", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 31, 1973, p. 14. Also see Stephen Chee, "Malaysia and Singapore: The Political Economy of Multiracial Development," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XIV, No.2 (February 1974), pp. 183-191. He thought that talk of an all-embracing barisan nasional might be just another case of "Wayang Kulit" (p. 186)



<sup>6</sup> Removing the Alliance sailing boat was a daring change since it was undoubtedly the most widely recognized political symbol in Peninsular Malaysia. To avoid confusion during the election campaign and at polling stations, many of the smaller "dacing" posters were folded in the shape of a sailing boat and suspended from ceilings.

<sup>7</sup> *The Star*, June 2, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), June 27, 1974; *Sunday Times* (Malaysia), June 30, 1974. Tun Razak said that with the formation of the Barisan Nasional the old structure of the Alliance had "automatically lapsed" (*Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 22, 1974).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, August 8, 1974. Also see *The Star*, March 10, 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (June 18, 1975).

<sup>12</sup> One former politician, however, believed that the Barisan Nasional was more *ad hoc* than planned. He said that there had been no thinking done on it, and that the leaders could not explain the Barisan Nasional because they did not know what it was (interview on September 17, 1974).

<sup>13</sup> Tun Tan Siew Sin, then President of the MCA, believed that as the senior Cabinet Minister after Tun Razak he should be named Deputy Prime Minister, or at least one of two Deputies, and he was angry about being by passed. Tun Razak explained that the Malays would not stand for a Chinese being named Deputy Prime Minister, even though there were no constitutional barriers to it. This incident was hushed up and it did not appear in any Malaysian newspapers. However, numerous interviews confirmed that Tun Tan did make a bid for the post as described.

<sup>14</sup> See *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, December 30, 1973, and *Utusan Melayu*, December 31, 1973 (edit), as quoted in *Intisari Akhbar Harian*.

<sup>15</sup> Stockwin, "Trauma for the MCA", *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *The Star*, February 27-28, 1974.

<sup>17</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), March 10, 1974.

<sup>18</sup> *The Star*, March 28, 1974 (Encik Ang Eng Hock).

<sup>19</sup> April 10, 1974.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, April 18, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> *Sunday Times* (Malaysia), May 5, 1974.

<sup>22</sup> Interview on June 19, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), July 28, 1973.

<sup>24</sup> *Shin Min Daily News*, December 24, 1973, as quoted in *Intisari Akhbar Harian*.

<sup>25</sup> See *Straits Times* (Malaysia), March 5-7, 1974.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, August 21, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> See *The Rocket*, Vol. 8, No 3 (September/October 1973), p. 6, and Vol. 9, No. 2 (August 1974), p. 5; "Expose the National Fraud of the National Front," 1974 *General Elections Manifesto of the DAP*. Kuala Lumpur, n.d.; *Coalition Politics in Malaysia. The DAP View*. Kuala Lumpur, DAP, n.d.

<sup>28</sup> *Straits Times*, (Singapore), August 24, 1974.

<sup>29</sup> See Noordin Sophiee, "The Action Parliament," *New Straits Times*, November 5, 1974; and Chandrasekaran Pillay, *The 1974 General Elections in Malaysia. A Post Mortem*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 25, 1974. All ten opposition MP's from Peninsular Malaysia were Chinese. Of SNAP's nine MP's, eight were Ibans and one was Chinese.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Ibu Pejabat Barisan Nasional Malaysia, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> See *Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu) 1975*. The term "association" was later changed back to "confederation", as a concession to Tun Mustapha, according to an UMNO source.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with a high-ranking UMNO official in 1975.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> In his actual speech, off the cuff, and near the end, Tun Razak also praised Dato Harun for the successful campaign he organized for the Selayang by-election on June 14, 1975. This reference did not appear in the full text of his speech which was printed in the *New Sunday Times*, June 22, 1975. An earlier feature story with biographical sketches of the UMNO vice-presidential candidates listed them with the government team at the beginning and with the longest biographies (Cheong Men Sui, "Men in the UMNO V.P. Contest", *New Straits Times*, June 18, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), December 28, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, June 27, 1974.

## CHAPTER 4

<sup>1</sup> See *New Straits Times*, March 20, 22-23, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> This total includes Berjaya and USNO members admitted into the Barisan on the same day. The SCA members of Parliament from the now defunct Sabah Alliance were not technically part of the Barisan, but they were allowed to sit as Barisan backbenchers in Parliament.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with a PBB state Minister and a former Pesaka official in July 1974.

<sup>4</sup> In 1974, SNAP won some of the SUPP's and Pesaka's "traditional" seats. The SUPP and the PBB (Bumiputera and Pesaka) basically were not electorally competitive for the same seats, whereas SNAP was competitive with Pesaka and with the SUPP in some seats. One SUPP statement welcomed SNAP in the state government so long as the allocation of seats in future elections would not be based on present membership in the Council Negri (*New Straits Times*, May 24, 1976). However, according to a Sarawak source (June 16, 1976), one of SNAP's conditions was that it be allowed to contest in future elections all the Council Negri seats it presently held.

<sup>5</sup> According to one highly-placed UMNO source, Tun Mustapha requested in writing a federal Cabinet post (interview in 1975). Also see *Straits Times* (Singapore), September 18, 1974. Apparently Tun Mustapha either did not understand that he would be unable to continue simultaneously as Sabah Chief Minister, or that the federal government was not going to allow him to continue to rule Sabah by proxy. Once before, in 1963, Tun Mustapha had miscalculated by accepting the position of Yang Dipertua Negara (Governor) without fully realizing that effective political power resided in the Chief Minister. Later he rectified that error by becoming Chief Minister.

<sup>6</sup> Several people interviewed mentioned the rumour that Tun Mustapha wanted Sabah to secede. Dr. Tan Chee Khoo noted that some of his subordinates had mentioned hearing the rumour, and he reassured them that if they knew about it, then surely Tun Razak also knew (interview July 2, 1975).

<sup>7</sup> Later, Datuk Harris Salleh reported that the proposed new nation, "Borneasia", was to include Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) (*New Straits Times*, August 12, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, 1975.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, July 22, 1975; *New Sunday Times*, July 27, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, July 20, 1975; *New Straits Times*, July 21-22, 1975. The Barisan Nasional headquarters explained that it had received a letter from the Sabah Alliance dated January 8, 1975 stating that "USNO, in particular, and the Sabah Alliance in general, cannot participate in the National Front as a member." On

January 22, 1975, Tun Mustapha sent a memo to the Barisan Nasional explaining why the Sabah Alliance could not accept the amendments to the Barisan's Constitution. New amendments, meeting most of Tun Mustapha's demands, were proposed and these were forwarded to the Sabah Alliance on May 29, 1975 for its approval. A reminder was sent to the Sabah Alliance on June 27, 1975 requesting a reply on its position by the first week of July before the Barisan Supreme Council meeting. There was no reply. After the registration of Berjaya and its application to join the Barisan, the Sabah Alliance sent a letter dated July 17, 1975, stating that it had accepted the amended Front Constitution. By that time, however, Encik Ghafar Baba explained that the Sabah Alliance had already lost its membership in the Barisan and its mere acceptance of the new Constitution did not automatically reinstate it to membership. Although Tun Mustapha did not like the symbol of the Barisan, was opposed to its structure, and disagreed with some of its policies, especially the recognition of China, it is most likely that his intransigence on the amendments and "apparent withdrawal" of the Sabah Alliance from the Barisan was more in the nature of a bluff than actually intended.

<sup>11</sup> It was a common practice at state level to have assemblymen sign undated letters of resignation which could be put into effect if and when necessary.

<sup>12</sup> *New Straits Times*, March 31, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, June 22, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with a former PAS State Assemblyman and Member of the State Executive Council on June 1, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> *New Straits Times*, August 5-6, 1976.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, April 27, 30, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> This decision was confirmed by the PAS Executive Committee on October 10, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> *New Straits Times*, November 16, 1977.

<sup>19</sup> *Pelaksanaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu)*, 1975 (mimeo), pp. 7-10.

<sup>20</sup> *New Straits Times*, December 6, 1977.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, December 14, 1977.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with the former Kelantan Timbalan Menteri Besar, Haji Wan Ismail on June 2, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> Kelantan UMNO, out of power for 19 years was eager to contest against PAS for control of the state. However, it cooperated with and supported Menteri Besar Datuk Mohd. Nasir.

<sup>24</sup> Berjasa, like PAS, bases its political pursuits on Islamic principles. Its original membership was comprised largely of former PAS members.

<sup>25</sup> *Sunday Times* (Singapore), March 12, 1978.

<sup>26</sup> The elections were for Parliament and ten of the thirteen state assemblies. There were no state elections held in Sabah, Sarawak, or Kelantan. Nomination day was June 21, and polling for Peninsular Malaysia on July 8. In Sabah polling was staggered between July 8-15, and in Sarawak between July 8-22.

<sup>27</sup> The large number of PAS and DAP candidates contesting the same seats lends credibility to the Barisan Nasional accusation of the existence of an election pact. The strategy is based on the idea that PAS could attract a number of Malay votes in a non-Malay dominated constituency contested by the DAP versus a Barisan non-Malay party, thereby depriving the Barisan of Malay votes it would otherwise receive if there were no Malay candidates; a vice-versa with the DAP helping PAS by siphoning off some of the non-Malay votes in PAS-UMNO contests. In fact, this strategy, which was not new, has never worked very successfully.

<sup>28</sup> PAS President Datuk Asri moved from his native Kelantan to stand for a Kedah parliamentary seat. Out of fears of splitting the Kedah PAS organization and also of stimulating a parochial backlash, he did not contest for a Kedah state seat.

<sup>29</sup> See *New Straits Times*, July 4, 1978.

<sup>30</sup> It was rumoured that the MCA unofficially urged its supporters to vote for the opposition in constituencies being contested by Gerakan, and also that Gerakan was doing the same thing as regards the MCA. After the elections, Penang Chief Minister Dr. Lim Chong Eu retaliated by not naming any MCA members to the state exco.

<sup>31</sup> The national DAP leader, Encik Lim Kit Siang, was refused entry into Sabah to support the campaign of his candidates. The federal government appeared embarrassed but took no action since under the 1963 Malaysia Agreement, Sabah and Sarawak retain control over their own immigration activities.

<sup>32</sup> According to a Kuala Lumpur political source in July 1978, Pagar was contesting as a "trial run" and if the party could win 20-30 per cent support in the seats it contested, it would prepare for an all-out effort in the upcoming state elections.

<sup>33</sup> See Diane K. Mauzy, "A Vote for Continuity: The 1978 General Elections in Malaysia," *Asian Survey*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (March 1979), pp. 281-296.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>35</sup> However, Dr. Mahathir believed that, unlike in Baling, there were no genuine grievances among the farmers and that they were organized for the protest (interview, April 29, 1980).

<sup>36</sup> In May 1980 PAS suspended two members thought to be involved with P.A.S. (*New Straits Times*, May 22, 26, 1980). Apparently P.A.S. began as an Islamic welfare society specializing in providing death insurance. Then it linked up with and succeeded an invulnerability cult group called the Red Sash. It went underground, devised secret oaths, and became radicalized. According to a federal Minister, P.A.S. has proclaimed that political violence is a legitimate means for attaining its goal of an Islamic state (interview, April 25, 1980).

<sup>37</sup> Interviews with a Menteri Besar on May 6 and 7, 1980.

<sup>38</sup> This was a significant feat in Bukit Raya because the Chinese there had felt ignored by UMNO whereas they had worked out a number of mutually agreeable accommodations with the PAS state assemblyman.

<sup>39</sup> See *New Straits Times*, April 30 and May 7, 1980; the *Star*, May 28, 1980.

<sup>40</sup> On the changes instituted in the first year of the Mahathir administration, see *New Straits Times*, July 16, 1982; the *Star*, July 16, 1982.

<sup>41</sup> The elections were for Parliament and for eleven of the thirteen state assemblies. No state elections were held in Sarawak or Sabah, where the life of their state assemblies can extend constitutionally until 1984 and 1986 respectively. Nomination day was April 7 and polling for Peninsular Malaysia was on April 22. In Sarawak and Sabah polling was staggered from April 22-26.

<sup>42</sup> See Datuk Asri's campaign comments in *New Straits Times*, April 20, 1982.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, April 17, 1982. According to the Prime Minister PAS used the infidel issue with some success during the campaign (interview, July 5, 1982). The animosity between PAS and UMNO followers in some northern areas is so pronounced that there are a number of separate mosques and graveyards (see *New Straits Times*, March 24, 1982).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1982. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam said, "Even Iran which PAS considers an ideal Islamic state, acknowledges Malaysia's Islamism".

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, April 17, 1982.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, March 27, 29-31, 1982. It was later revealed that Encik Anwar had been an unpaid up member of UMNO for many years, and thus he was immediately eligible to hold a party position. Encik Anwar joined UMNO because he believes in Dr. Mahathir, and he thinks that UMNO is now committed to Islamic progress. Also he believes he can be more effective in the government party (interview, July 3, 1982). It had been widely anticipated that one day Encik Anwar would join PAS and probably be the successor to Datuk Asri as PAS President. However, several politicians and journalists expressed the opinion during interviews that the rise of many young Arabic-educated leaders in PAS, whose Islamic credentials are better

than those of Encik Anwar, meant that Encik Anwar would have grave difficulties both in uniting PAS and also in maintaining his position against internal challenges. Encik Anwar is rising quickly in both the government and in UMNO, and many consider it likely that he will one day become Prime Minister. He is a Deputy Minister and is expected to be elevated to full Minister in 1983, and he was elected President of UMNO Youth in September 1982, thus making him one of UMNO's five vice-presidents. See also Tan Sri Dr. Tan Chee Khoo's interview with Encik Anwar in the *Star* April 9-10, 1982.

<sup>47</sup> On October 23, 1982, Datuk Asri resigned as President of PAS during the party's annual assembly. The membership voted to set up a "majlis ulama" or council of theologians to act as the party's highest policy-making body. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1982, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> The DAP's Encik Lee Lam Thye (interview, July 12, 1982) and Gerakan's Datuk Michael Chen (interview, July 7, 1982) both attributed significance to the role played by the UCSTA in the elections.

<sup>49</sup> When first announced, the "3R Program" of upgrading standards in the basic subjects seemed to threaten the character of Chinese primary schools since the language and cultural content of the syllabi was Malay. The MCA objected strenuously and publicly. When the government almost immediately announced that changes would be made, including printing Chinese syllabi, to remove those parts of the program objectionable to the non-Malays, the stature of the MCA was enhanced as was its claim that the MCA could get UMNO leaders to listen. See *New Straits Times*, February 28, March 10, 23, April 2, 15, 1982; the *Star*, March 13, 1982.

<sup>50</sup> Of the twelve urban constituencies, Seremban was the best choice in terms of ethnic breakdown for Datuk Lee to contest. Further, the DAP incumbent had not been very active politically in the last few years and was considered vulnerable. See Diane K. Mauzy, "The 1982 General Elections in Malaysia: A Mandate for Change?", forthcoming in *Asian Survey*, Spring 1983.

## CHAPTER 5

<sup>1</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia) interview, February 23, 1973. Tun Razak also noted that it "is very well for some people to say that a strong opposition is essential to our democratic way of life. But in our Malaysian society of today, where racial manifestations are very much in existence, any form of politicking is bound to follow along racial lines and will only enhance the divisive tendencies among our people." (*Malaysian Digest*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1973), p. 5)

<sup>2</sup> *The Guardian*, Vol. 7 (August 1975), p. 3 (Presidential Address delivered at the 1975 MCA General Assembly).

<sup>3</sup> See the *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1973, pp. 81-88. In the revised projections, the extra ten per cent targeted for the non-Malays was deducted from the foreign share.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Morais (ed.) *Blueprint for Unity* (Selected Speeches and Statements of Tun Tan Siew Sin), Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters, 1972, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> See Eric A. Nordlinger, *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), February 22, 1973.

<sup>7</sup> Interview (June 30, 1975). Also see *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, January 23, 1973, as quoted in *Intisari Akhbar Harian* (Dr. Lim Keng Yaik).

<sup>8</sup> *Pelapor*, No. 3 (1975), pp. 15-16 (UMNO Publication).

<sup>9</sup> Milton J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 258-259.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-27.

<sup>11</sup> See R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, Singapore and Vancouver: Times Books International and University of British Columbia Press, 1980, pp. 92-94. The Rukunegara has been compared with the Five Pillars of Islam. Encik Lim Kit Siang, Secretary-General of the DAP, remarked that very few people will disagree with these principles, just as very few people will disagree with the "Ten Commandments" (*The Rocket*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (November 1970), p. 4).

<sup>12</sup> This provision was already in force through the Sedition Act (Emergency Ordinance No. 45 of 1970). The sensitive issues were citizenship, the National Language, the special position of the Malays and natives of the Borneo states, and the position of the Rulers.

<sup>13</sup> Already entrenched in Article 159 were Articles 38, 70, 71 (1), and 153. The first three deal with protecting the rank, rights and powers of the Yang DiPertuan Agong, the Rulers and Governors, and the Conference of Rulers. Article 153 concerns the reservation of certain quotas for the Malays. It is this last Article which had been the subject of some controversy.

<sup>14</sup> The additional Articles entrenched in Article 159, as amended by the Sedition Act, were Articles 10, 63, 72 (freedom of speech, privilege in Parliament and the state legislative assemblies). Also entrenched was Article 152: the National Language.

<sup>15</sup> *Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill, 1971*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972, p. 188. Also see his speech summing up the deliberations, *ibid.*, pp. 230-236.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Kershaw, "National and Local Perspectives of a Non-Ideological Election: West Malaysia August 1974 (With Special Reference to Kelantan)", in Bernhard Dahm and Werner Draguhn (eds), *Politics, Society and Economy in the*



ASEAN States, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975, p. 198.

In fact, while the new regulations appeared very tough, there have been relatively few legal cases brought against violators. The "escape clause" allowed by the Amendments and the security acts was that it remained legal to question the "implementation" of policy action concerning a sensitive issue, as opposed to the "principle".

<sup>17</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), April 2, 1973. Likewise, former Home Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie said that "... the politics of this country has been, and must remain for the foreseeable future, native-based ..." ("Leadership and a Motivated Society", *Development Forum*, Vol. II No. 2 (December 1969), p. 5).

<sup>18</sup> *Straits Times* (Malaysia), April 26, 1971.

<sup>19</sup> See Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, p. 218. The departure from UMNO in 1951 of its founder and first President, Dato Onn bin Jaafar, did not attract any but his closest associates away from the party. Neither did the resignation of Encik Abdul Aziz bin Ishak in 1963 draw support away from UMNO. Both of these leaders started their own political parties.

<sup>20</sup> Also, in a crisis, Malays traditionally turn toward their established leaders.

<sup>21</sup> Lloyd D. Musolf and J. Fred Springer, "Legislatures and Divided Societies: The Malaysian Parliament and Multi-Ethnicity," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 2 (May 1977), p. 116.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Encik Lee Lam Thye (July 1, 1975). The same opinion was expressed by Encik Yeap Ghim Guan. He explained that the poor Chinese are caught by two kinds of pressure: (1) the class pressure — being poor in a time of economic pinch and inflation; and (2) the ethnic pressure — political and economic discrimination. As a result, they feel a sense of frustration and futility (interview, May 23, 1975). Also see *New Sunday Times*, July 11, 1976 (Datuk Lee San Choon).

<sup>23</sup> UMNO leaders, however, are aware of the effect that Islamization could have on the non-Malays and they have given the Barisan non-Malay leaders assurances that there will be justice and fairness in policy decisions concerning Islam and the non-Malays.

## GLOSSARY

- Alliance Party      A registered party, it was the ruling coalition of UMNO, the MCA, and the MIC from 1955-1974.
- BARJASA            A Sarawak Malay-based party formed in January 1962, which merged with PANAS in 1967 to form Bumiputera.
- Berjasa              Founded in November 1977 by Datuk Mohd. Nasir and registered in early 1978. A Kelantan-centred Islamic party, it joined the Barisan Nasional in May 1980.
- Berjaya              A Sabah multi-ethnic party formed in July 1975 to oppose the Sabah Alliance. It won control of Sabah in the 1976 state elections.
- Bumiputera         A Sarawak Malay-based party formed in 1967 by a merger of BERJASA and PANAS. In 1973 it merged with Pesaka to form the PBB.
- “bumiputera”      The Malay word for indigenous, or “son of the soil”.
- BUNAP/  
SANAP                A Sabah Chinese-based party formed in 1962 by a merger of UP and DP. In 1965 it merged with the DCA and took the name of the latter.
- DAP                  A multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese Peninsular Malaysia party formed in 1966 by former members of the PAP, following Singapore’s separation from Malaysia.

- "Datuk/Dato"  
(also "Datuk  
Sri"/ "Dato Sri"  
and other  
variations)
- The highest of the honorific titles given by the Rulers and Governors of the state in Malaysia, in consultation with the respective Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers. In the states which have the title of "Datuk Sri", etc. it would rank higher than "Datuk".
- DP
- A West Coast Sabah Chinese-based party formed in early 1962. It merged with UP in October 1962 to become BUNAP/SANAP.
- Gerakan
- A multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese party in Peninsular Malaysia, which has held power in Penang since 1969. It was formed in March 1968 by former leaders of the UDP and LP, along with an academic group.
- IMP
- A multi-ethnic Peninsular Malaysia party formed in September 1951 by Dato Onn bin Jaafar. It was the first attempt at a multi-ethnic party, and it was virtually defunct by 1953.
- "kampung"
- The Malay word for village.
- LP
- A predominantly Chinese ideological party in Peninsular Malaysia. It was formed in June 1954 by an amalgamation of regional labour and socialist organizations. It boycotted the 1969 General Elections and has since been disbanded.
- MCA
- A Peninsular Malaysia Chinese party formed in February 1949. It became the Chinese "pillar" of the Alliance.

MCP	Formed in Malaya and Singapore in 1930 after an open breach between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. It was proscribed by the British in July 1948 after the beginning of the Communist insurrection. Its membership is overwhelmingly Chinese.
"Menteri Besar"	The title of the equivalent of a Chief Minister in the nine states which have Malay Rulers. In the remaining states, the term Chief Minister is used.
MIC	An Indian party in Peninsular Malaysia formed in August 1946. It became the Indian "pillar" of the Alliance.
Pajar	Founded and registered just prior to the 1978 General Elections by Encik Alli Kawi as an opposition party designed to attract the Muslim vote away from the PBB.
PANAS	A Malay-based Sarawak party formed in April 1960. It merged with BARJASA in 1967 to form Bumiputera.
PAP	A Chinese-based Singapore moderate socialist party formed in 1954 by Lee Kuan Yew.
PAS/PMIP	An Islamic party in Peninsular Malaysia which was registered in 1955. It has held power in Kelantan from 1959-1978, and it briefly controlled the State of Terengganu.
PBB	A Sarawak party formed in May 1973

	from a merger of Malay-based Bumiputera and Iban-based Pesaka.
Pekemas	A multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese Peninsular Malaysia party (with some branches in Sabah) formed in 1971 by several ex-Gerakan leaders.
Pesaka	A predominantly Iban Sarawak party formed in June 1962. It merged with Bumiputera in 1973 as the PBB.
PM	A Sabah multi-ethnic but predominantly Murut and Dusan party formed in January 1962. It merged with UNKO in 1964 to become UPKO.
PN	A multi-ethnic but predominantly Malay party in Peninsular Malaysia formed in 1954 by Dato Onn bin Jaafar. Defunct after the 1964 General Elections.
PPP	A Chinese and Indian Perak-based party formed in January 1953.
PSRM/PR	A predominantly Malay Peninsular Malaysia ideological party formed in November 1955. It was part of the Socialist Front from 1958 to 1965.
Rulers, the	The hereditary heads of the executive in the nine Malay states in Peninsular Malaysia. The remaining four states have Governors (Sabah calls its Governor the Yang DiPertuan Negara).
SCA (Sabah)	A Sabah Chinese party formed in June 1965 by a merger of BUNAP/SANAP

and a Chinese welfare organization, taking the name of the latter. It disassociated itself from the Sabah Alliance in 1976 and is virtually defunct.

- SCA (Sarawak) A Sarawak Chinese party founded in July 1962. It dissolved in 1974.
- SF A multi-ethnic coalition of the LP and PR which was registered in Malaya in July 1958. In 1965 the PR quit the coalition, and soon after the LP also disengaged itself from the SF.
- SNAP A Sarawak Iban-based party formed in March 1961.
- SUPP A Sarawak multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese party formed in June 1959.
- “Syed” An Arabic-Malay male title denoting a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)
- “Tan Sri” The second highest federal honorific title.
- “Tun” The highest federal honorific title, roughly equivalent to a British Knighthood.
- “Tunku”/  
“Tengku” A Malay hereditary title denoting royalty.
- UDP A multi-ethnic but predominantly Chinese party in Peninsular Malaysia formed in April 1962. It was disbanded in 1968.
- UMNO A Malay Peninsular Malaysia party

formed in 1946. It became the Malay "pillar" of the Alliance and has supplied all four of Malaysia's Prime Ministers.

**UNKO** A Sabah Kadazan party formed in August 1961. It merged with PM in 1964 to become UPKO.

**UP** A Sandakan-based Sabah Chinese-dominated party formed in 1962. It merged with the DP in October 1962 to form BUNAP/SANAP.

**UPKO** A Sabah non-Muslim native party formed in 1964 by a merger of UNKO and PM. It was dissolved in December 1967.

**USNO** A Sabah Muslim party formed in December 1961.

**"Yang DiPertuan Agong"** The Malay equivalent of "King".

\* For simplification, the term "Peninsular Malaysia" is used throughout for the geographic locations of the political parties on the Peninsula, as opposed to Sabah, or Sarawak, rather than switching to the term "Malaya" for those formed before Malaysia was created in 1963.

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