

CONSOCIATIONALISM AND COALITION POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

by

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## Abstract

In this thesis I have examined the "consociational" arrangements used by the political elites in Malaysia, namely the elite transactions and bargaining which occurred in the original Alliance Party system, and especially the refashioning of the formula towards a grand coalition strategy after the May 13, 1969 riots. Primary emphasis has been given to the 1969-1975 period and the leadership of Tun Abdul Razak.

Theoretically, the basic approach used is a version of the consociational democracy model of Arend Lijphart. However, I have also made use of the literature on political modernization and coalition theory, especially on larger-than-minimal political coalitions. Empirically, the research is based on interviews in Malaysia in 1974-1975, Malaysian and Singapore newspapers, translations of the vernacular Press, government and party literature, election manifestos, and articles and books related to the subject.

The general question posed is: how does a country like Malaysia, with salient reinforcing ethnic cleavages dividing the two nearly-numerically balanced groups, the Malays and the non-Malays, maintain political stability and avoid ethnic violence? In answer, it is maintained that, conceptually, consociationalism can be separated from the condition of "democracy", and that a version of it can operate where there is not a balance of power among the segments. The Alliance practiced one form of consociationalism which followed quite closely the requirements of Lijphart's model, while the National Front practices another form of consociationalism, which deviates from Lijphart's model in being less democratic and more unbalanced, but is still consociational. It is argued

that, in a country like Malaysia, the chances of successfully maintaining political stability and avoiding ethnic confrontation are improved when elite consociational practices are used in conjunction with political controls restricting political competition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1 Consociationalism and Coalition Politics .. ..	1
Chapter 2 The Alliance Party .. .. .	81
Chapter 3 The Post-Riots Political Strategy: Extensive Coalition-Building .. .. .	161
Chapter 4 The Formation of the National Front and the 1974 General Elections .. .. .	243
Chapter 5 After Tun Razak: Malaysia Under Datuk Hussein Onn .. .. .	308
Chapter 6 Consociationalism in Malaysia .. .. .	374
Glossary .. .. .	423
Selected Bibliography .. .. .	427
List of Interviews .. .. .	449

List of Tables

	Page
Table A: Government and Opposition in Parliament .. .. .	280
Table B: The Parliamentary Election of 1969 (Sabah and Sarawak 1970): Seats Won and Contested by Parties .. .. .	281
Table C: The Breakdown of Seats Held in Parliament by Parties at the Dissolution of Parliament in July 1974 .. .. .	282
Table D: The Parliamentary Election of 1974: Seats Won and Contested by Parties .. .. .	283
Table E: Breakdown of Seats Held in State Assemblies by Parties in the Original Coalition States After the August 1974 General Elections .. .. .	284-285
Table F: The March 1978 Kelantan State Elections: Seats Contested and Won by Parties .. .. .	370
Table G: The March 1978 Kelantan State Elections: Types of Contests and Seats Won by Parties .. .. .	371

## ABBREVIATIONS

### Political Parties

ADMO	Alliance Direct Membership Organization
BARJASA	Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak
Berjaya	Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah
Bumiputera	Parti Bumiputera
BUNAP	Borneo Utara National Party
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DP	Democratic Party
G.A.O.	Grand Alliance Organization
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
PANAS	Party Negara Sarawak
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam Se Malaysia
PBB	Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu
Pekemas	Parti Keadilan Masyarakat Malaysia

## Political Parties

Pesaka	Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak
PM	United National Pasok Monogum 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
SCA	Sabah Chinese Association
SCA	Sarawak Chinese Association
SIC	Sabah Indian Congress
SF	Socialist Front
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-momogum 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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## CHAPTER I: CONSOCIATIONALISM AND COALITION POLITICS

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the theoretical guidelines to be utilized in the thesis, and to put the Malaysian empirical setting into a general theoretical perspective.<sup>1</sup> The primary model to be used, an amended version of consociationalism, is really an approach to looking at a particular type of political arrangement in some types of cleavage-ridden societies. It does not seem to belong completely to any single theoretical school, however it is related to coalition theory, elite theory, and political party theory, and such fields as the study of cleavages and conflict-management.

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1 The history and social background of Malaysia are well documented and need not be repeated here. See C.D. Cowen, Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control, London: Oxford University Press, 1961; Rupert Emerson, Malaysia, A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937; J.M. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems of West Malaya, London: The Athlone Press, 1958, and Malaya, London: Ernest Benn, 1963; Wang Gungwu, ed., Malaysia, A Survey, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964; Victor Purcell, The Chinese in Modern Malaya, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1960; William R. Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967; Kernial Singh Sandhu, Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969; Sir Frank Swettenham, British Malaya, rev. ed., London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948; Sir Richard O. Winstedt, Malaya and Its History, fifth ed., London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1958, and A History of Malaya, Singapore: Marican and Sons, 1962. For Sabah and Sarawak see Edwin Lee, The Towkays of Sabah, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976; Steven Runciman, The White Rajahs, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960; K.G. Tregonning, Under Chartered Company Rule, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1958.

The Setting: Malaysia's Socio-Political Problems

In Malaysia one finds a society which is divided by race, language, religion and culture, as well as, to a lesser extent, occupational and urban-rural differences. These divisions largely coincide in the form of several ethnic blocs. In this thesis, the term "ethnic" will be used to define and describe the salient socio-cultural and political features which make up Malaysia's major group identities.<sup>2</sup>

In anthropological terms, an ethnic group is generally understood to mean a group which: (1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating, (2) shares fundamental cultural values, (3) makes up a field of communication and interaction, and (4) has an identity which to it and others distinguishes it from other categories.<sup>3</sup> Judith Nagata describes

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- 2 Although Judith A. Nagata writes that ethnicity is a frequently misused term ("Introduction", in Judith A. Nagata (ed.), Pluralism in Malaysia: Myth and Reality, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975, p. 2), it is perhaps less confusing and controversial than its counterparts of "pluralism" (two or more communal groups living side by side, but separately within the same political unit) as set forth by J.S. Furnivall (Colonial Policy and Practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948, p. 304), and "primordialism" (the primordial attachment to assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion, and custom) as developed by Clifford Geertz ("The Integrative Revolution", in Clifford Geertz (ed.), Old Societies and New States, New York: The Free Press, 1963, p. 112).
- 3 Frederick Barth, "Introduction" in Frederick Barth (ed.), Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969, p. 10. Wendell Bell and Walter E. Freeman ("Introduction" in Wendell Bell and Walter E. Freeman (eds.), Ethnicity and Nation-Building, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1974, p. 10) define ethnicity as "characteristic distinctive cultural or subcultural traits that set one group off from another." Basically, they say, ethnicity is a question of group boundaries.

ethnicity as a series of groups within a larger political unit which are differentiated by various degrees and combinations of linguistic, religious, origin and political factors, each of which independently, can be a potential normative reference group.<sup>4</sup> Cynthia Enloe uses the term broadly to mean a "cluster" of beliefs and values which sustain a community (which is largely biologically self-perpetuating) and separates it from others.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult, as Bell and Freeman point out, to separate a definition of ethnicity from a recital of correlated cleavages and characteristics.<sup>6</sup> Ethnicity in general implies the identities and boundaries of at least two groups within one political system which provide group solidarities, and thus a heterogeneous socio-political setting. However, it is the nature of ethnic cleavages which distinguishes ethnically diverse societies in general. The cleavages which are considered

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4 Nagata, op. cit., p. 3. Also see David Lowenthal, West Indian Societies, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 92.

5 Cynthia H. Enloe, Ethnic Conflict and Political Development, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973, p. 17. Thus she calls the Catholics of Northern Ireland an ethnic group because a cluster of coinciding beliefs and values sets this group apart, whereas the Catholics in the United States, with cross-cutting beliefs and values, are simply a religious group, and will not predictably act as a solidarity group on non-religious matters.

6 Bell and Freeman, op. cit., p. 10.

"ethnic" are those pertaining to origin and race, culture, language, and religion, which combine in "clusters" to a much greater extent than they cross-cut. Dr. Mahathir, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, provides an example: "The Malay word Adat has been taken to mean custom in English. However, as one goes more deeply into the part played by Adat in the life of the Malays, it soon becomes obvious that Adat is more than just custom. It is in fact almost a religion...The Malays therefore subscribe to these rules with as much faith and fanaticism as they do to their contemporary religion--Islam."<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Malays have combined Adat, Islam, and knowledge of the Malay language into a definition of a Malay.<sup>8</sup> In Malaysia, none of the more refined subtleties of ethnicity need be explored to find the relevant cleavages. The major racial groups, the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, constitute ethnic communities divided by largely coinciding or reinforcing cleavages of culture, language, and religion. Because of the nature of the

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- 7 Mahathir B. Mohamad, "Interaction--Integration," Intisari, Vol. I, No. 3, n.d., p. 38. There is a Malay proverb which indicates the intensity of adat: "Biar mati anak, jangan mati adat" (Let the child die, but not the custom). Also see Walter Baghot, Physics and Politics, fourth ed., London: Henry S. King & Co., 1876, pp. 25-29 on the "cake of custom". On religion, especially Islam, and politics, see Gaetano Mosca, The Ruling Class, New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1939 (translated by Hannah D. Kahn), pp. 75-87.
- 8 Tan Sri Mohamed Suffian bin Hashim, An Introduction to the Constitution of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1972, pp. 247-249.

political system, ethnicity is most accurately translated politically in terms of Malays and non-Malays.<sup>9</sup>

There seems to be considerable agreement that the cleavages arising from ethnicity are extremely difficult to manage, and potentially pose a danger to the stability of a state. Ethnic-type cleavages tend to be explicit and visible, to be linked with symbols and myths, to have a high intensity of identification, to be persistent and enduring, and to offer a low availability of alternatives to individuals.<sup>10</sup> Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, who in a study nearly two decades ago (Beyond the Melting Pot) had expected ethnic groups in New York to disappear, admit to surprise at the "persistence and salience of ethnic-based forms of social identification and conflict."<sup>11</sup> To describe these

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9 Nagata makes the good point that ethnicity is as much "who you are not" as "who you are" (op. cit., p. 3).

10 Enloe, op. cit., p. 15; Charles W. Anderson, et al., Issues of Political Development, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967, pp. 25-26; Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 4 (December 1970), p. 1130; Val R. Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism," Comparative Politics, Vol. 3, No. 2 (January 1970), p. 143; Harold R. Isaacs, "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe," in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.), Ethnicity, Theory and Experience, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 30; Milton J. Esman, "The Management of Communal Conflict," Public Policy, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (Winter 1973), p. 49; Martin O. Heisler (Special Editor) "Ethnic Conflict in the World Today: An Introduction," The Annals, Vol. 433 (September 1977), pp. 1-5; Christopher Hewitt, "Majorities and Minorities: A Comparative Survey of Ethnic Violence," The Annals, Vol. 433 (September 1977), pp. 150-160, esp. p. 151.

11 Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, "Introduction" in Glazer and Moynihan, op. cit., p. 7.



ethnic traits as "givens",<sup>12</sup> while it helps to pinpoint the problem, probably overstates the case. People can change their religion, language, and culture, and they can even try to change their racial identification.<sup>13</sup> However, these tend to be very difficult changes, even assuming that the converts would then be recognized and accepted by the new identity group, which are beyond the ability and will of most members of an ethnic community. These traits are basic, concerned with "roots" and sense of self-identity; thus there is less likelihood of people wanting to switch groups, and it is traumatic for those who try.<sup>14</sup>

Some writers believe that ethnic-type cleavages threaten the integrity of political boundaries because they compete at the same level

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12 Geertz, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

13 See Paul R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North India, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 24.

14 Harold R. Isaacs writes, "The baby acquires a name, an individual name, a family name, a group name. He acquires the history and origins of the group into which he is born, nationality or other conditions of national, regional or tribal affiliation, his language, religion and value system--the inherent clusters of mores, ethics, aesthetics, and the attributes that come out of geography or topography of his birthplace itself--all shape his outlook and way of life from the first day." (op. cit., p. 32). He continues with two key ingredients in every individual's personality and life experience: his sense of belongingness and the quality of his self-esteem" (ibid., p. 34).

as national loyalties.<sup>15</sup> In Malaysia, loyalties to non-Malay ethnic groups perhaps rival loyalty to the state. However, because the Malays hold a preponderance of political power, and most of the symbols of nationhood are Malay, the loyalty of the Malays to their ethnic group sometimes becomes equated with loyalty to the state.<sup>16</sup>

Within any given ethnically-divided society the numbers and strengths, and locations, of the ethnic groups may differ. The types of cleavages that develop, the degree of reinforcement, and the intensity of these cleavages may also differ. Different situational contexts produce different problems, expectations, and responses. In Malaysia, the situation resembles the one which John Stuart Mill identified as creating "the greatest practical obstacles...to the blending of nationality", that is, "when the nationalities which have

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15 Geertz, op. cit., p. 111; Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., pp. 1129-1130; Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, Political in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 8 and 80; Rupert Emerson, "Parties and National Integration in Africa," in Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, pp. 288-289; Daniel Bell, "Ethnicity and Social Change," in Glazer and Moynihan, op. cit., p. 162.

16 However, see Marvin L. Rogers, "The Politicization of Malay Villagers", Comparative Politics, Vol. 7, No. 2 (January 1975), p. 223. He writes that the political loyalty and commitment of the Malay villagers he studied were restricted to the Malays as a distinct ethnic group rather than to the national political system. While there was considerable legitimacy accorded the government, it was based on Malay political dominance and Malay privileges.

been bound together are nearly equal in number and in the other elements of strength."<sup>17</sup> Today this phenomenon is called bi-polarism or bifurcation.<sup>18</sup> Peninsular Malaysia is politically bi-polarized into Malays and non-Malays, who are dispersed throughout the country and who are nearly equal in numbers, with the Malays holding more of the political power and the non-Malays holding more of the economic power.<sup>19</sup> The Malays are generally considered the indigenous race and the non-Malays the immigrant races. This bipolarized situation appears to have some important political implications for Malaysia. First, a confrontation between two "near equals" is likely to be most intense because (1) the "enemy" is clearly identified, (2) there is uncertainty over ultimate strength or power, and (3) there is no balancing or arbitrating group to mitigate the conflict. Second, assimilation is probably more difficult because neither group believes it should be doing the

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17 John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government, London, J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1910, p. 365.

18 Arend Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 56-60, 153-154; W.P. Grant "Electoral Reform and Local Government," in S.E. Finer (ed.), Adversary Politics and Electoral Reform, London: Anthony Wigram, 1975, p. 356.

19 Borneo Malaysia is polyethnic. The most simplified breakdown of ethnic divisions would be; Muslim Natives, Non-Muslim Natives, Non-Natives. Borneo Malaysia, however, is on the periphery of national politics, and the polyethnic character of Sabah and Sarawak does not alter the basic bi-polar situation in Malaysia as a whole.

assimilating.<sup>20</sup> This is doubly the case in Malaysia where the Malays see themselves as the indigenous people who "own" the country, so to speak, but where the immigrant races regard themselves as the heirs to the legacies of the great civilizations of China and India and are subject to the cultural pull of these neighbouring countries. Third, the "numbers game" may become intense. The Malays believe they have a right to rule, regardless of their numbers (now a majority in Peninsular Malaysia)<sup>21</sup>, by virtue of their being indigenous. Nonetheless, they can be roused to near panic about the possibility of one day

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20 See Musa Hitam, "Political Forum," Opinion, Vol. 1, No. 11 (July-August 1968), pp. 155-157. He writes that each community feels it is superior in one way or another.

21 The 1976 figures on population show that the Malays and Other Indigenous comprise 54.7 per cent of Malaysia's 12,249,000 population. The non-Malays consist of 34.2 per cent Chinese, 9 per cent Indians and Pakistanis, and 2.1 per cent Others. In Peninsular Malaysia, as opposed to Sabah and Sarawak, the population breaks down into 53.1 per cent Malays, 35.5 per cent Chinese, 10.6 per cent Indians and Pakistanis, and 0.8 per cent Others. See Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1976, pp. 138-139, 144; 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972, pp. 24 and 27; Unjuran Penduduk Malaysia 1970-1990, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1974. These groups are dispersed over the entire country (except for the natives of Sabah and Sarawak, who have largely remained in their own states), and while the northeastern Peninsular states are heavily Malay-populated and the Federal Territory is substantially non-Malay, there are not ethnic enclaves *per se*. The pattern is beginning to break down, but there is still a preponderance of Malays living in the rural areas, while more of the non-Malays, especially the Chinese, dwell in urban settings. See Third Malaysia Plan, *op. cit.*, p. 149; Ooi Jin-Bee, Peninsular Malaysia, London: Longman, 1976, Part II; Population and Housing Census of Malaysia: Community Groups, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972, Table XVI, p. 33.

being outnumbered and/or out-voted by the non-Malays.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the Malay claim to the "right to rule" is not unreservedly accepted by the non-Malays, some of whom hope to see one day a non-Malay Prime Minister.

Along with the numbers and strengths of ethnic groups, it is important to distinguish what kinds of cleavages divide the groups in what ways. "Cleavages are the criteria which divide the members of a community or subcommunity into groups, and the relevant cleavages are those which divide the members into groups with important political differences at specific times and places."<sup>23</sup> Harry Eckstein points out that the types of divisions which exist are only one of the variables, the others being how many types of divisions, how fundamental, and how extensive and enduring they are.<sup>24</sup> The other consideration is the relationship between the cleavages, whether they cross-cut or reinforce one another. It is widely believed that a society can tolerate cleavages so long as the same people are not lined up on the same side on all issues ("pluralism" in the Western sense). Ethnic-type cleavages,

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22 For example, the alarm and tension caused by Lee Kuan Yew's "ethnic arithmetic" figures. See Lee Kuan Yew, Are There Enough Malaysians to Save Malaysia?, Singapore: Ministry of Culture, 1965 pp. 7-24. Another example is when Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar criticized family planning as a plot to reduce the population of Muslims in Malaysia (New Straits Times, December 23, 1976).

23 Douglas W. Rae and Michael Taylor, The Analysis of Political Cleavages, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 1.

24 Harry Eckstein, Division and Cohesion in Democracy, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960, p. 35.

however, rarely cross-cut, because they tend to be "cradle to grave" package identifications which are both fundamental and intense, and members of the same ethnic group will tend to be on the same side on all relevant issues. This is often so much the case that "different ethnic groups can afford to divide internally because the over-riding opposition between groups will bring members back into solidarity in any conflict touching their collective interests."<sup>25</sup> This seems to be the case in Malaysia. The cleavages all largely reinforce each other; there is the same line of division generally between Malays and the non-Malays, for culture, language, religion, and race. The same is largely true about occupation and area of residence (often perceived in ethnic terms), and although these associations have been breaking down somewhat lately, in fact, with the persistence of stereotypes they are still often viewed as a division along the same ethnic lines. Guy Hunter describes the situation: "Harder still is the case of Malaysia, where the myth of nation has to cover a political and administrative balance between two grossly unlike peoples...Nationhood here has been stripped of common culture, common language, common history, geographical continuity, assured boundaries."<sup>26</sup>

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25 Michael Banton, Race Relations, London: Tavistock Publications, 1967, p. 288. This is certainly the feeling one gets about the two major Malay parties in Peninsular Malaysia, UMNO and PAS; that any over-riding issue affecting the Malays would bring them together.

26 Guy Hunter, South-East Asia, Race, Culture and Nation, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 77. He continues to say that it "may be that such a test should never have been set, and that the facts of human social nature are too heavily weighed against it; but it has been set and cannot now be evaded" (p. 168).

Another important consideration in trying to understand the situational context of an ethnically-divided society is the salience of cleavages. In any society some types of cleavages will be more intense, fundamental and more politically important than others. Even where cleavages cross-cut, conflict will not be minimized if one type of cleavage is overwhelmingly more important than the others.<sup>27</sup> In ethnically-divided societies, the ethnic-type cleavages are likely to be highly politically salient, and other types of cleavages will either be "politically irrelevant" or else will be viewed in ethnic terms.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, high salience encourages mobilization and counter-mobilization, and this in turn tends to increase the insecurity of an ethnic group (or groups) if a political threat is perceived, or the impatience of a group (or groups) if an opportunity is visualized.<sup>29</sup> In Malaysia, ethnic cleavages dominate the political scene. Ideology is basically

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27 Eric A. Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972, pp. 96-97; Rabushka and Shepsle, op. cit., p. 17.

28 See Rabushka and Shepsle, op. cit., pp. 15-17, 57-58; Nordlinger, op. cit., pp. 7, 94-96. As this applies to the cleavages of language and education, Dankwart A. Rustow illustrates the point in the Low Countries. He writes that on "matters of economic policy or social expenditures you can always split the difference. In an expanding economy, you can even have it both ways...But there is no middle position between Flemish and French as official languages, or between Calvinism, Catholicism, and secularism as principles of education" ("Transitions to Democracy," Comparative Politics, Vol. 2 (April 1970), p. 359).

29 Scott C. Flanagan, "Models and Methods of Analysis," in Gabriel A. Almond, et. al. (eds.), Crisis, Choice, and Change, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973, p. 64.

politically irrelevant, and class does not have its presumed cross-cutting effect, primarily because it is not politically salient.<sup>30</sup>

Even minor decisions must take into consideration the ethnic ramifications, and government policies and political pronouncements are dissected carefully in terms of what this means for the respective ethnic groups.<sup>31</sup> It is the ethnic "package", the fact that just about every political issue is perceived in ethnic group terms, that makes ethnicity so salient. For instance, race, in and by itself, in terms of color and anthropological traits, is largely unimportant. Yet packaged together with other ethnic cleavages, it becomes important because it makes the respective ethnic groups generally distinguishable by sight and contributes to the visibility of ethnic activity. Thus, in Malaysia, one finds a bi-polar setting, with reinforcing ethnic-type cleavages of high political salience.

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30 Differences in income and wealth have corresponded basically to ethnic differences, the Malays on the average being poorer. The New Economic Policy, started after May 1969, has made an effort to change this, which is having some effect. However, economic differences in themselves are generally not perceived as class differences. See Judith A. Nagata, "Perceptions of Social Inequality in Malaysia, in Nagata (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 117-134.

31 James Morgan noted that when "one listens to Tun Razak, for example, one is looking for what he does not say: is the adjective "racial" left out before 'economic imbalance'?" ("Partialities", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 27, 1971, pp. 14-15). Another example, when the tax on Chinese oranges was temporarily reduced for Chinese New Year celebrations, some Malay groups immediately countered with an appeal to the government to lift the duty on imported dates, which have religious significance to Muslims (Straits Times (Malaysia), January 16, 1973).



The Dilemma of Conflict Management and Stability

One of the most crucial tasks for a government is the management of conflict and "minimization of political violence",<sup>32</sup> and the creation of a "legitimate public order" which provides stability and effectiveness.<sup>33</sup> In Malaysia and other ethnically-divided societies, there is a high potential for conflict and violence which necessitates setting a high governmental priority on political order.<sup>34</sup> There is a danger, as G. Bingham Powell, Jr. notes about all fragmented societies, "not merely that intense conflict may occur, but that it may become the norm."<sup>35</sup>

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- 32 Nordlinger, op. cit., pp. 1-3; Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1953 (last reprint), p. 92; Myron Weiner and Joseph LaPalombara, "The Impact of Parties on Political Development," in LaPalombara and Weiner (eds.), op. cit., p. 418; Edward Dew, "Testing Elite Perceptions of Deprivation and Satisfaction in a Culturally Plural Society," Comparative Politics, Vol. 6, No. 2 (January 1974), p. 271. Also see Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., pp. 1129-1130; Marc V. Levine, "Institution Design and the Separatist Impulse: Quebec and the Antebellum South," The Annals, Vol. 443 (September 1977), p. 61.
- 33 Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 7, 28; Esman, op. cit., p. 55; Michael Leifer, Dilemmas of Statehood in Southeast Asia, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972, p. 6; Perry Mars, "The Conditions of Political Stability," GISRA (Georgetown, Guyana), Vol. 6, No. I (March, 1975) pp. 1-5.
- 34 Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., p. 1130; Donald Rothchild, "Ethnicity and Conflict Resolution," World Politics, Vol. 22 (1969-70), p. 598; Ralph R. Premdas, "Fiji: Communal Conflict and Political Balance in the South Pacific," paper presented at the 29th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, New York City, March 25-27, 1977 (mimeo), p. 29.
- 35 G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Social Fragmentation and Political Hostility, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970, p. 82.

Further, the problems arising from ethnic cleavages cannot usually be solved in the short-run, only regulated. Robert C. North et al. write that the resolution of conflict, other than by avoidance (separation) or conquest, depends generally on two central factors: the reduction of the intensity of the conflict (short-term) and "integration" which subordinates the original incompatibilities (long-term).<sup>36</sup> Reducing the potential for conflict requires that the government take steps to regulate political competition to some extent and exert some control over mobilization and participation.<sup>37</sup> This in turn, however, can undermine the basis of legitimacy of the political system. Legitimacy refers to the acknowledgement of the right of a government to govern or of a political system to exist.<sup>38</sup> There are, of course, degrees of legitimacy reaching from high to low levels of political support, and there are different types of legitimacy stretching from "specific" action-evaluated support to "diffuse" emotional and psychological support with a "reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will".<sup>39</sup> Basically,

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36 Robert C. North, et al., "The Integrative Functions of Conflict," Conflict Resolution, Vol. IV, No. 3 (September 1960), p. 360; Paul Tennant, "Pluralism in West Malaysian Politics," in Nagata (ed.), op. cit., p. 80.

37 Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., pp. 1114-1117, and especially p. 1130.

38 See Ronald Rogowski, Rational Legitimacy, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 183.

39 David Easton, "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, Part 4 (October 1975), pp. 435-457; Carl Stone, Class, Race and Political Behavior, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Mona, Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1973, pp. 21-22, 54-56.

what is important for a government or political system is to obtain allegiance and acquiescence (even through apathy or inertia), and to avoid political disaffection,<sup>40</sup> especially where it leads to a danger of violence.

Countering the possible legitimacy crisis, which may be generated as a result of regulating political competition, depends generally on the government's ability to maintain "specific political support" by promoting economic development and an expanding resource base, and upon governmental "effectiveness".<sup>41</sup> Prolonged effectiveness itself may serve to provide legitimacy.<sup>42</sup>

In Malaysia, economic modernization is an important goal to which

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40 F.E. Dessauer, (Stability, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1949, pp. 137, 139) sees an important correlation between stability and inertia, or the "sleep of the world". Jack Citrin, et al. ("Personal and Political Sources of Political Alienation," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, Part 1 (January 1975), pp. 3-4) point out that symbolic expressions of political dissatisfaction (i.e. powerlessness, cynicism, negativism, value rejection) may be poor indicators of alienated behavior, partly because a person's ability to influence political events may not be especially important to him.

41 Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963, p. 64. By "effectiveness", he means "the actual performance, the extent to which the system satisfied the basic functions of government as most of the population and such powerful groups within it as big business or the armed forces see them."

42 Ibid., p. 70; W. Howard Wriggins, The Ruler's Imperative, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 40; Dessauer, op. cit., p. 131; Easton, op. cit., p. 445.

the government is committed.<sup>43</sup> It is seen as a way of creating legitimacy for the political system and the government by demonstrating effectiveness and as a way of "buying time" until the salience of ethnicity has declined.<sup>44</sup> Further, it is designed to reduce the ethnic problem through economic measures intended to narrow the economic gap between the communities. Finally, economic modernization is seen as the proper goal of good government. The problem is that economic modernization, if it is too rapid, can be destabilizing.<sup>45</sup> As Huntington notes, it can disrupt traditional social groupings, produce nouveaux riches, increase geographical mobility, widen the rich-poor gap, increase incomes absolutely but not relatively, aggravate group conflict and competition, increase aspirations, and increase demands.<sup>46</sup> In short, economic modernization encourages, and requires to some extent, social mobilization, and this in turn increases the demand for political participation, which is what the government hopes to limit if it is

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43. Malaysia has the highest national income per head in Southeast Asia except for Singapore and Brunei, and it is only behind Japan for South and East Asia. Its wealth is derived mainly from the export of sawlogs and timber, rubber, tin, petroleum products, and palm oil. It is now also diversifying into cocoa growing for export. See R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, Singapore and Vancouver: Federal Publications, Ltd., and University of British Columbia Press, 1978, ch. 3; "Malaysia '77", Far Eastern Economic Review, September 2, 1977, pp. 47-48, 53-55.
44. See Stephen A. Douglas and Paul Pedersen, Blood, Believer, and Brother: The Development of Voluntary Associations in Malaysia, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No. 29, 1973, p. 69.
45. Huntington, op. cit., pp. 58-59; Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., p. 1117.
46. Huntington; op. cit., pp. 49-50.

going to reduce the intensity of political conflict. If there is too rapid economic modernization and unrestricted mobilization and participation, the end result is what Huntington calls "political decay", or instability and possible political violence.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, in an ethnically-divided society like Malaysia, the government probably must try to balance and control these ultimately conflicting goals (limiting social mobilization and political participation but promoting economic development). In Malaysia the government appears to have allowed greater political participation than it desired, and with it a problem with "outbidding".

Giovanni Sartori describes surenchère, or outbidding, as a type of "unfair" or irresponsible political competition which "in the absence of effective control" is based on "what is appealing even though it is not credible."<sup>48</sup> Although this type of political competition is practiced in almost all countries, it is particularly effective where ethnic cleavages are salient. Ethnic groups are easy for counter-elites or sub-elites in opposition to the top leadership to mobilize just by appealing to ethnic grievances. Because the top leadership is "compelled to compromise the maximal claims of its constituents in order to maintain peaceful and effective intercommunal relations" it is "continually vulnerable" to the charge that it has "sacrificed vital group interests".<sup>49</sup>

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47. Ibid., ch. 1.

48. Giovanni Sartori, Democratic Theory, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967, pp. 67-68.

49. Esman, op. cit., p. 73. Also see Melson and Wolpe, op. cit., p. 1122; Rabushka and Shepsle, op. cit., p. 83.

Outbidding can have several effects. First, it can undermine support for inter-ethnic compromisers. Additionally, it can force the top leadership of the respective ethnic groups to move politically toward the ethnic position posed by the outbidders in order to undermine the appeal of the latter, thus reducing the range and scope for top-level inter-ethnic compromises. Finally, it can inflame ethnic emotions, create fear or raise aspirations, and it can lead to violence between the ethnic communities. The campaign for the Malaysian 1969 General Elections appears to provide a good example of all these effects.<sup>50</sup>

Related to the problems of outbidding, legitimacy, and the effects of socio-economic modernization, is the so-called "elite-mass gap". This is a gap in perceptions of what is best for the individual, the group, or the nation and what policies are thought to be desirable for achieving these goals. In an ethnically-divided society it tends to be a gap between the elites and masses of each respective ethnic group rather than one gap between all the elites and all of the masses. A gap can begin with social mobilization and a lessening of deference arising from economic modernization and increased inter-group competition, and it can be exacerbated by outbidding political

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50 The 1969 General Election and the subsequent May 13th riots are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

entrepreneurs.<sup>51</sup> It becomes serious when the gap lessens political loyalties to the extent that decisions and policies of the top political leaders are not followed by their respective groups. This destroys the rationale of elite bargaining and arriving at compromises about sensitive ethnic claims.

An elite-mass gap can increase or decrease over time, and it can affect the various ethnic groups to different degrees at any one time. An unpopular decision favoring one group can widen the elite-mass gap within another group. Subsequent efforts to balance the favoritism can increase the elite-mass gap within the formerly favored group. However, a disaster, crisis, or perceived negative effects of pushing ethnic claims too far, can lessen the gap. Likewise, declining deference, while probably never reversible,<sup>52</sup> can be replaced by compliance to laws and policies, either voluntarily by according legitimacy to the regime, through general apathy, or induced through co-opting counter-elites or via sanctions.

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51 Warren F. Ilchman and Norman Thomas Uphoff describe a political entrepreneur as one, in or out of office, who through imagination and initiative frequently can increase his power by acquiring greater political resources, or stated more technically, as "one who by improving the state of the political arts raises the marginal efficiency of the capital" (The Political Economy of Change, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, p. 204).

52 As is suggested by Shakespeare in the famous speech of Ulysses: "...The general's disdained  
By him one step below; he by the next;  
That next by him beneath: so every step,  
Exempl'd by the first pace that is sick  
Of his superior, grown to an envious fever  
Of pale and bloodless emulation;" (Troilus and Cressida, Act I, Scene III).

In Malaysia, the elite-mass gap appears to be an important factor for the stability of the political system. Elite accommodation will not work if the followers do not support, however begrudgingly or apathetically, the compromises reached by the elites. The Malays are still largely deferential, although less so than previously, and the non-Malays are generally politically compliant and apathetic. However, in the absence of controls and in the presence of outbidders, all of the groups are capable of being aroused to great and explosive ethnic passions.

#### The Key Features of Lijphart's Consociational Model

Arend Lijphart developed his consociational democracy model after he noticed that there was a gap in the logic of empirical democratic theory which overlooked the deviant cases of fragmented but stable democracies which should have exhibited "great immobility and instability", but did not.<sup>53</sup> He decided that a new theoretical category was needed for such deviant cases: Consociational Democracy.<sup>54</sup>

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53 Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," World Politics, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1969), p. 211. Also see ibid., The Politics of Accommodation, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

54 David Apter is credited with first using the term "consociational" in a modern context in his The Political Kingdom of Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961. However, according to Lijphart, the term "consociational" is derived from Johannes Althusius's concept of consociatio in his Politica Methodice Digesta (Democracy in Plural Societies, op. cit., p. 1, fn. 2).



Lijphart has refined his model several times in the past few years since its original formulation, but it retains its key assumptions. He writes that "the essential characteristic of consociational democracy is not so much any particular institutional arrangement as the deliberate joint effort by the elites to stabilize the system".<sup>55</sup> He distinguishes between the elite political culture and the mass political culture (although adding that they are not mutually exclusive), and asserts that political stability can be maintained "if the leaders of the subcultures engage in cooperative efforts to counteract the centrifugal tendencies of cultural fragmentation."<sup>56</sup>

Lijphart suggests four devices or methods for practicing consociational democracy: government by grand coalition, mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy.<sup>57</sup> The first and most important element is the grand coalition, meaning the cooperation of the political leaders of all the significant segments of the society. The grand coalition is complemented by the other three secondary devices, all of which represent deviations from the principle of majority rule. The mutual veto (or minority veto) provides protection to each segment; Lijphart likens it to John C. Calhoun's "concurrent majority" idea.<sup>58</sup>

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55 Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy", *op. cit.*, p. 213.

56 Arend Lijphart, "Cultural Diversity and Theories of Political Integration", Paper prepared for the Colloquium of Integration and Disintegration in the Canadian Political System, Laval University, Quebec City, October 17-18, 1970, p. 10, later published in the Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 4, No. 1 (March 1971), pp. 1-18.

57 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-44.

58 Ibid., p. 37.

It can be a formal rule or informal and unwritten principle, and it can be accomplished by requiring that decisions be taken by unanimity. Proportionality operates both as proportional representation on decision-making bodies and also like the Austrian Proporz in the allocation among the segments of various governmental resources. The final device, segmental autonomy, is less easily applied. Basically, Lijphart means the "rule by a minority over itself in the area of the minority's exclusive concern".<sup>59</sup> Where the segments are territorially based, segmental autonomy can function through a form of federalism. Where the segments are interspersed, segmental autonomy takes the form of control by a segment over its cultural, educational and/or linguistic concerns. However, as Lijphart writes, although consociational democracy is characterized by these devices, it is not so much any particular institutional arrangement that is required, but rather overarching elite cooperation. Clearly not all of the devices are required for an operating consociational system, and presumably none of them are absolutely essential for compromise and accommodation.

In his earlier works, Lijphart listed four elite behavioral prerequisites and six tentative societal conditions favorable to

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59 Ibid., p. 41.

consociationalism.<sup>60</sup> The prerequisites were: (1) the ability to recognize the dangers inherent in a fragmented system; (2) a commitment to system maintenance; (3) the ability to transcend subcultural cleavages at the elite level; and (4) the ability to forge appropriate solutions for the demands of the subcultures. Lijphart wrote that the last prerequisite was probably the most important and also the most difficult to fulfill. There was some confusion here, as it appeared on a first impression to mean that the "solution" had to be sufficiently effective so that followers, making the demands, would continue to support their leaders. However, in explaining the idea, Lijphart added that the "leaders must be able to develop both institutional arrangements and rules of the game for the accommodation of their differences," which seemed to stress elite cooperation but downplay the elite-follower relationship.<sup>61</sup> In subsequent works, Lijphart made it increasingly clear that he did want to emphasize the importance of the followers supporting the elites and accepting the agreements reached by the elites. For instance, he pointed out in "Consociational Democracy" that the "elites have to cooperate and compromise with each other without losing the allegiance and support of their own rank and file."<sup>62</sup> However,

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60 Arend Lijphart, "Typologies of Democratic Systems," in Arend Lijphart, (ed.), Politics in Europe, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969, pp. 59-72.

61 Ibid., pp. 64-66.

62 Op. cit., p. 221. In personal correspondence, Arend Lijphart noted that this was a later article than his "Typologies of Democratic Systems", although both were subsequently published in 1969 (letter, November 11, 1974).

this idea was included along with one of the facilitating conditions ("distinct lines of cleavage among the subcultures"), and although implicitly important, it was not explicitly stressed on the same level as the prerequisites or major conditions.<sup>63</sup>

In his most recent work, Lijphart has overhauled the model and removed this discrepancy.<sup>64</sup> The model now has two primary features: (1) overarching elite cooperation; and (2) stable non-elite support.<sup>65</sup> The first feature encompasses the essential characteristic of consociational democracy, and subsumes in it implicitly the previously stated elite behavioral attributes. The elites must be willing to cooperate, recognize the need to cooperate, rise above the cleavages in the system, and work out the arrangements and rules for such cooperation. The second primary feature, stable non-elite support, recognizes the importance of the elites being able to retain the support and loyalty of their followers, and explicitly places this condition on an equal footing with elite cooperation. The difference between the two primary features is that there must be overarching elite cooperation in order for a consociational arrangement even to be initiated, whereas there must be stable non-elite support if the arrangement is to have a

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63 Perhaps the problem here was in the structure of the model, since the major conditions (earlier, prerequisites) were all elite behavioral attributes, and the elite-follower relationship could not be worked in easily. The importance of the elite-follower relationship is implied elsewhere in Lijphart's works when he emphasizes the value of deference and elite political autonomy. See The Politics of Accommodation, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 144-145.

64 Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration, *op. cit.*

65 Ibid., pp. 1, 25, 49-50, 53-54.

chance to succeed.

Lijphart identifies some additional factors which are conducive to overarching elite cooperation and stable non-elite support, and these correspond partially to the tentative facilitating conditions listed in his earlier works.<sup>66</sup> First, it is favorable to have a "multiple balance of power" among the segments. Here he means primarily the numerical strength of the segments although the influence of economic power or cultural predominance may also be important. It is ideal to have a balance between three or four segments. While it is disadvantageous to have the society fragmented into too many segments, it is also bad to have a dual balance, because it may tend to produce hegemony or the dominance of one segment instead of cooperation.<sup>67</sup> Second, it is favorable if the country involved is of a small size (to a certain limit). This can have a positive effect as an internal factor because of the ease of political management and also a smaller circle of elites, which facilitates cooperation. Third, it is favorable to have some cohesive force in the country, such as nationalism, which serves to unite the entire society or a section of it ("overarching loyalties"),

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66 Those favorable conditions from his earlier works which have been omitted are: popular attitudes favorable to government by grand coalition; relatively low total load on the system; external threat; and moderate nationalism. These can be found in "Typologies of Democratic Systems," *op. cit.*, pp. 67-72, along with some favorable conditions which have been retained in his latest work.

67 See Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., *op. cit.*, pp. 55-61. Lijphart has changed his mind on this point. Previously he believed that a dual balance was the worst case for consociationalism.

and moderates the intensity of the cleavages dividing the society.<sup>68</sup> Fourth, it is conducive to consociational democracy to have "segmental isolation". This is similar to the facilitating condition in previous works called "distinct lines of cleavage between the subcultures". Segmental isolation has a dual purpose: inter-segmental conflict through competition is minimized by clear boundaries; and, internal group cohesion is aided by clear boundaries. Fifth, it is favorable to the success of consociational democracy if there are "prior traditions of elite accommodation" among the segments in the system. This is a new condition, prompted by Lijphart's debate with Hans Daalder (discussed later). Lijphart writes that this may be more important than the other factors, but it is not a prerequisite. Finally, the "presence of cross-cutting cleavages" may be a factor of subsidiary importance to consociationalism. This is also a new condition, and Lijphart admits that it is rather weak and ambiguous.<sup>69</sup> He writes crosscutting cleavages "of equal or unequal intensities are a factor of subsidiary importance, and they may or may not be favorable to consociationalism." If the cleavages are of equal intensity, the only likely effect will be to produce "separate internally homogenous segments that are not strongly subject to cross-pressures".<sup>70</sup> If this means an all-minority situation rather than a bipolar situation, it can be favorable to consociationalism. Unequal cleavage intensities, he writes, entail fewer segments that are less homogenous internally. But the cross-pressures within the segments

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68 Ibid., pp. 81-83. He admits, however, that nationalism could in some cases act as an additional cleavage.

69 Ibid., pp. 54, 97. He writes that the only unambiguously favorable types of crosscutting are the crosscutting of class cleavages with various kinds of segmental cleavages.

70 Ibid., pp. 75-81, esp. p. 81.

will encourage moderate attitudes. This is somewhat confusing, however. Equal cleavage intensity means that there is little in the way of cross-pressures. Unequal cleavage intensity can moderate attitudes, but, if it means less internal homogeneity, it can undermine one of his other conditions, segmental isolation. This apparent contradiction is not adequately explained.<sup>71</sup>

Interpretations of "Democracy", "Balance of Power", and "Proportionality"

It is necessary to consider the relationship between consociationalism and democracy in Lijphart's model, and also the application of the ideas of a balance of power and proportionality (or proporz). Lijphart calls his model "consociational democracy". Probably, because he began by looking at the Netherlands and other Western European nations, he linked consociationalism with democracy. To Lijphart, the ultimate end of consociational democracy is stable democracy. Consequently, when he looked at Malaysia in Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration, he found a reasonably successful case of consociational democracy up to 1969, but after 1971 "because of the limitation of freedom of expression and the increasing political discrimination in favor of the Malays", he thought it doubtful that Malaysia could be regarded as either fully democratic or fully consociational.<sup>72</sup> Even in the 1955-1969 period, Lijphart notes that the politically dominant role of the Malays in the Alliance and in the Malaysian Government "throws some doubt on the consociational character of the Malaysian regime...".<sup>73</sup> Lijphart questions two aspects of the Malaysian system with regard to consociational democracy. One concerns consociation and the other concerns democracy.

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71 Fortunately, this final condition is not very important to the model, since many of the nations which have need of a consociational arrangement are those which lack cleavages which crosscut or moderate to any significant extent the major divisions in the society. See this Chapter, pp. 11-12.

72 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 153.

73 Ibid., p. 154.

In Lijphart's model, an important condition for the success of consociationalism is a multiple balance of power among the segments and proportionality in the sharing of that power. In Malaysia this condition is not met since there are only two groups and, further, one of the groups, the Malays, is politically dominant. However, the Malays are not so dominant that they can wisely ignore the demands of the non-Malays; the numbers are roughly equal, and the non-Malays have been economically dominant, factors which are not overlooked in Lijphart's model when he discusses balance.<sup>74</sup> Further, a multiple balance of power is only one of the features of consociationalism conducive to its success, and proportionality is only one of the devices useful to the institutionalization of a consociational approach. While unfavorable in the Malaysian case, these deficiencies would appear not to preclude the establishment or existence of a consociational arrangement, according to Lijphart's model.<sup>75</sup> However, in a country like Malaysia, what really appears to concern Lijphart is that, in spite of the near-numerical equality between the segments and the partially compensating factor of non-Malay economic strength, Malay political dominance might result in unconsociational elite attitudes and behavior. The fact that many government policies favor the Malays, leads Lijphart to the conclusion that the country is not fully consociational, without leading him to consider that not all government policies favor the Malays.

Consociationalism as defined in this thesis, need not be restricted to

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74 Ibid., p. 56. By "power" he means primarily numerical strength, "although the influence of unequal economic power or cultural predominance may also be an important factor". Another factor which should be included is electoral strength. Numerical strength may not be completely accurately translated into electoral strength (for instance if there is rural weightage or restrictions on voting eligibility which disadvantage one segment).

75 See ibid., p. 54. Lijphart writes that the favorable conditions are factors that are "helpful but neither indispensable nor sufficient in and of themselves to account for the success of consociational democracy."



political systems where there is a balance of power between the segments and perfect proportionality (indeed, despite Lijphart's concern, it is not so restricted in his model). It is unrealistic to expect that the dominant political segment in a bi-polar setting will voluntarily surrender its dominance; it is also unlikely that it will agree to perfect proportionality. However, if the dominant segment is to maintain a consociational-type system, it must not assume all political power and impose majority rule solutions which presumably it could always do, and exclude the other segment(s) from access to the government. It must be willing to share power and bring representatives of the other segment(s) into the government. It must also be willing, within limits, to engage in genuine bargaining and accommodation and offer legitimate compromises and concessions. If the dominant political sector is willing to act in this way, it is practising consociationalism to some extent. If it shares power completely and equally in all respects, the system could constitute a full and ideal type of consociationalism. Clearly, some countries are more consociational than others to the extent that they approximate to Lijphart's pure model.<sup>76</sup> To the degree that the dominant sector imposes straight majority rule upon the other sector(s), excludes them from access and consultation, and offers only token or meaningless concessions, then the less it practices consociationalism. Consequently, a principal contention in this thesis is that divided societies (like

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76 Ibid.

Malaysia) should not be classified only as "consociational" or "not consociational" but according to the extent to which they practice consociationalism.<sup>77</sup>

Lijphart's other objection seems to be that Malaysia is not democratic enough to be called a "consociational democracy". To be sure, he has the right to link consociation and democracy. However, it appears that these are two analytically separate concepts, and consociational attitudes and practices can be viewed independently of democracy. There may be countries which would not "qualify" as democracies, and yet consociationalism could work as a method of conflict management.<sup>78</sup>

Hans Daalder has written that there should be an attempt "to disentangle more clearly the properties of consociationalism on the one hand and democracy on the other."<sup>78a</sup> Consociationalism is primarily a strategy for managing conflict in a divided society. Democracy,

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77 The difficulty, as with democracy, is where to draw the line. Lijphart writes (*ibid.*, p. 105) that three of his four European consociational examples deviate "in some significant respects from the pure model, although they come sufficiently close to be classified as consociational democracies." Conversely, he writes that "some of the nonconsociational democracies have a number of significant consociational elements." The actual cut-off point remains subjective, but there are some basic minimal criteria: (1) the condition of a society which is divided into contending segments, (2) elite accommodation to resolve the serious political differences dividing the segments, and (3) enough stable non-elite support so that at least the compromises worked out by the elites will not be sabotaged. Beyond these minimal criteria there are several devices and facilitating conditions which may be helpful to the practice of consociational politics, but these are neither necessary nor sufficient.

78 There may be some practical, as opposed to strictly analytical, link between consociation and democracy. For example, democratic practices may be useful for providing legitimacy for the political elites and the consociational approach.

78a Hans Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme," World Politics, Vol. XXVI No. 4 (July 1974), p. 167.

however, is not at all a precise concept.<sup>79</sup> It is sometimes taken as implying equality, rights of the common man, or freedom of expression; at other times it is taken to mean government by the consent of the governed. Daalder warns that the term "democracy" is too often taken for granted rather than actually defined.<sup>80</sup>

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79 Sartori (op. cit., p. 66) makes the point that "democracy" is variously defined. He defines it as a "political system in which the people exercise power to the extent that they are able to change their governors, but not to the extent of governing themselves." A good definition is offered by G.C. Field: "A state is democratic, not 'if' but in so far as the great mass of the population can exercise an effective influence on the decisions that make up the work of government" (Political Theory, London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1960, p. 93). Democracy is quite often viewed as government by consent and accountable to the people, with majority rule but minority rights. The Westminster model is often held up as the closest approximation to the ideal. Some of the practices associated with democracy include universal suffrage, free elections, and genuine political competition, as well as the protection of civil liberties. One of the problems in an ethnically-divided society, is that a key feature of western democracy, where winners and losers can expect to alternate, does not operate. The losers are likely to be permanent losers, and this can lead to the adoption of extreme or fatalistic opposition positions and irresponsibility (see Giovanni Sartori, "Opposition and Control: Problems and Prospects" in Rodney Barker (ed.), Studies in Opposition, London: MacMillan, St. Martin's Press, 1971, pp. 34-35). Further, the defense against the criticism of a tyranny of the majority, that it can not exist because of the lack of one majority on all issues, does not hold up in an ethnically-divided society where the majority will almost certainly be the same majority on all relevant political issues. See John C. Calhoun, A Disquisition on Government, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1953, pp. 19-40, on "permanent minorities" and "concurrent majority"; and Levine, op. cit., pp. 62-72. Interestingly, a three-day international conference in Athens in October 1977 on the future of democracy, ended with the delegates divided over definitions (Vancouver Sun, October 8, 1977).

80 Daalder, op. cit., p. 617.

Lijphart does not adequately define democracy in his consociational work, and neither do such writers as Rabushka and Shepsle, although it is claimed to be their central theme. Lijphart writes that democracy, "a concept that virtually defies definition", is used in his latest book "as a synonym of what Dahl calls 'polyarchy'. It is not a system of government that fully embodies all democratic ideals, but one that approximates them to a reasonable degree."<sup>81</sup> Although this general definition seems flexible, Lijphart has stated that it is doubtful that Malaysia could be regarded as "fully democratic", and it would appear that he also doubts that Malaysia embodies democratic ideals to a reasonable enough degree to be considered even substantially democratic.<sup>82</sup>

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81 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 4. He also notes that consociational democracy itself is "far from the abstract ideal" (p. 48). See Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971.

82 Yet there is certainly some degree of democracy in Malaysia. There is universal suffrage and also free and regular elections, even during periods of emergency, that feature honest polling and the absence of direct coercion of perspective voters. Further, there is a parliamentary structure of government, and an independent judiciary. However, there has been, in effect, a drawing of electoral boundaries with a rural (therefore Malay) bias, as in many other countries, which opponents would regard as "gerrymandering". Political competition is limited, more so since the riots of May 1969 than before, by laws delimiting the conduct of political campaigning. No political party has been proscribed except the Malayan Communist Party (it was proscribed under the British in July 1948 after the communist insurrection had begun). There is undoubtedly some harrassment of the opposition parties through court action on sedition cases and detentions, and some civil liberties have been curtailed, mostly relating to internal security and partially as a result of the long struggle against communist guerrillas. However, the total picture is of a political system which is less restricted and repressive and more responsive and open than any authoritarian regime.

However, in any case, the purpose of this thesis is to examine what features of consociationalism, if any, exist in Malaysia. This is a question which can usefully be considered independently of "democracy".

#### Other Writers on Consociationalism and Related Themes

The consociational model is a relatively recent addition to the literature of political science. In the last few years a growing number of researchers have been analyzing or using the model, and some have suggested theoretical variations; others, though not mentioning consociationalism, have developed ideas closely related to the consociational scheme.<sup>83</sup>

The most significant argument for alterations to the consociational model has come from Hans Daalder, who makes two points.<sup>84</sup> First, and

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83 Among those who have analyzed or used the consociational model and who will not be mentioned elsewhere in this thesis are: Brian Barry, "The Consociational Model and its Dangers," European Journal of Political Research, Vol. 3, No. 4 (November 1975), pp. 393-412; Alan Zuckerman, "Political Cleavage: A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, Part 2 (April 1975), pp. 231-248; Rodney P. Stiefbold, "Segmented Pluralism and Consociational Democracy in Austria; Problems of Political Stability and Change," in Martin O. Heisler (ed.), Politics in Europe, New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1974; Gerhard Lehmbuch, "Consociational Democracy in the International System," European Journal of Political Research, Vol. 3, No. 4 (December 1975), pp. 377-391; S.J.R. Noel, "Political Parties and Elite Accommodation: Interpretations of Canadian Federalism", in J. Peter Meekison (ed.), Canadian Federalism: Myth or Reality, 2nd ed., Toronto: Methuen, 1971; James A. Dunn, Jr., "'Consociational Democracy' and Language Conflict," Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1 (April 1972), pp. 3-33.

84 Hans Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations: The Cases of the Netherlands and Switzerland," International Social Science Journal, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (1971), pp. 368-370.

most importantly, Daalder believes that in order to have a present day consociational system there must exist in the system "prior traditions" of elite accommodation.<sup>85</sup> If this were the case, then the applicability of consociationalism would be somewhat limited, although, with investigation, it is probably possible to find some examples of elite cooperation in most old societies. Lijphart disagrees that this is a prerequisite,<sup>86</sup> although in his latest work he has elevated the importance of prior traditions to perhaps the most important of the favorable conditions. Lijphart cites Austria as a case of a consociational system (perhaps the most successful one of all) in which there can be found very little evidence of a prior tradition of elite accommodation. There was so little elite agreement in the 1930s that there was endemic political violence followed by a civil war. It was not until after World War II that the elites of the same two major groups decided to cooperate and compromise.<sup>87</sup>

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85 By this he means traditions of elite accommodation established before the transition to a modern political system.

86 See also Lijphart, "Cultural Diversity...", op. cit., Canadian Journal of Political Science, pp. 13-14.

87 This view is supported by William T. Bluhm (Building an Austrian Nation, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973, and "Political Integration, Cultural Integration, and Economic Development: Their Relationship in the Nation-Building Experience of Republican Austria," paper prepared for the VIIIth World Congress of I.P.S.A., Munich, West Germany, September 1, 1970), who calls the arrangement a "contractarian compromise". Kenneth McRae discusses the Lijphart-Daalder debate and concludes that older traditions of elite accommodation are not decisive. He calls the Austrian case perhaps the clearest example of consociationalism as an innovative pattern of elite cooperation in response to a major challenge (Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1974, p. 18). There is something of a "chicken and egg" flavor to this argument. Even those societies with a prior tradition of elite accommodation had to start sometime, although perhaps the task was easier in pre-modern political settings.

Daalder's second point is that he finds debatable the reasoning that smaller states can practice a certain pattern of political life that larger states could not endure, merely because they escape international responsibilities, and thus there are fewer political loads on the system.<sup>88</sup> Lijphart believes that there are advantages to being small (to a certain limit), although he does not now regard smallness just as reducing the political load because of fewer international responsibilities, or just as creating solidarity because of the threatening presence of larger neighboring countries, but rather notes that small size facilitates internal political management and elite cohesion.<sup>89</sup>

Another argument for alteration has come from Eric A. Nordlinger, who disagrees with Lijphart's facilitating condition of segmental isolation. He believes that it should be restricted to a "spatial sense" (i.e. where people live and work), and not apply to isolation in a socio-cultural sense (i.e. with reference to schools, socializing patterns, mass communications). However, even then, Nordlinger doubts that spatial

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88 Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations...", *op. cit.*, pp. 368-370. Also see Brian Barry, "Review Article: Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, Part 4 (October 1975), p. 484.

89 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., *op. cit.*, pp. 65-70. He points out that Malaysia's population (approximately 12 million) is of the same order of magnitude as those of the European consociational democracies (p. 154). Also see Arend Lijphart, "Review Article: the Northern Ireland Problem: Cases, Theories, and Solutions," British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, Part I (January 1975), pp. 100-101.

segmental isolation would help with conflict regulation.<sup>90</sup> Stephen A. Douglas and Paul Pedersen believe that there can be either favorable or unfavorable conditions for ethnic contact. When it is unfavorable (e.g. when it produces competition between the groups, when contact is unpleasant and involuntary, when it lowers the status of either group, when there are conflicting moral standards), such as is often the case in Malaysia, ethnic contact is likely to intensify hostilities.<sup>91</sup>

This is basically a "good fences" versus "integration" debate. However, whatever the dangers of contact, especially through ethnic competition, there is also a danger in isolation which may encourage distorted ethnic stereotypes which can then be exploited by outbidding politicians.<sup>92</sup> Milton J. Esman believes that structured and guided inter-segmental communication and dialogue at all levels are needed lest the lines of conflict become too rigid.<sup>93</sup> Segmental isolation is a means of containing inter-ethnic tensions, as long as the elites can cooperate. In the short-run, too much interaction is dangerous; it has not been shown to lead to goodwill. On the other hand, complete segmental isolation also has its dangers. It would appear that what is needed is a corollary

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90 Nordlinger, op. cit., pp. 105-110.

91 Douglas and Pedersen, op. cit., pp. 68, 86.

92 See R. S. Milne, " 'The Pacific Way'--Consociational Politics in Fiji," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Fall 1975), p. 423.

93 Milton J. Esman, Administration and Development in Malaysia, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 271-275.



to Lijphart's segmental isolation condition, to the effect that the political elites, while not tearing down the fences, must nevertheless attempt the long-term task of structuring some types of inter-group communication with the intent of discouraging destabilizing ethnic stereotypes.<sup>94</sup>

Among the writers who have looked at the problem of conflict-management in divided societies independently of the consociational model, the one who has developed the most complete scheme is Eric A. Nordlinger. His hypothesis is that "nonmanipulable cultural, social and economic conditions may go a long way in accounting for the emergence of an intense conflict but, once it becomes severe, its successful or unsuccessful regulation will be largely dependent upon the purposeful behavior of political elites".<sup>95</sup> According to the scheme, if the political elites have managed to control a severe conflict, they invariably will have employed one or more of six "conflict-regulating practices": government coalitions, proportionality, mutual veto, purposive depoliticization, compromise, and concessions.<sup>96</sup>

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94 Lijphart has attempted to determine the acceptable ratio of isolation to contact, saying that "the volume and intensity of contacts must not exceed the commensurate degree of homogeneity. In the words of Karl W. Deutsch, a transaction - integration balance is necessary..." (Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 89).

95 Nordlinger, op. cit., p. 4.

96 Ibid., pp. 21-33.

Further, the political elites need to avoid several ineffective and dangerous practices: orthodox majoritarianism and unregulated electoral competition, or attempts to create a set of common values and symbols.<sup>97</sup> Nordlinger believes that if the elites are to engage in conflict-regulating practices, they must be moved to action by one or more of four conflict-regulating motives: through the belief that an external threat or danger will submerge internal conflicts; because the consequences of conflict will be detrimental to the economic well-being of the elite's own group; desire for the acquisition or retention of political power; and/or because of a high value placed by the elites on the avoidance of bloodshed.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, Nordlinger states that the elites must have political security vis-à-vis their own political followers, and the non-elites must accept, or at least not sabotage, the agreements reached by the elites.<sup>99</sup> There are significant similarities between this scheme and Lijphart's "consociational democracy" model, despite some differences in emphasis and detail. Nordlinger gave more emphasis to the importance of the non-elites following the directives of the elites than Lijphart, until Lijphart's latest book (Democracy in Plural Societies...), and Nordlinger's work still has more detail than Lijphart's on the non-elites. However, on most of the fundamentals, they are in agreement. They both emphasize the crucial role played by the political elites in stabilizing a

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97 Ibid., pp. 33-38.

98 Ibid., pp. 45-52.

99 Ibid., pp. 65, 74.

political system and managing conflict.

Another writer with views which Lijphart has identified as essentially consociational is W. Arthur Lewis.<sup>100</sup> Looking at West Africa, where he thought politics was a "curse", Lewis recommended a coalition of all the big parties, a reduction of the tempo of political activity, representation of all the various groups in the decision-making process, and abandonment of the idea that "somebody is to prevail over somebody else."<sup>101</sup> Lewis called for consensual politics through the mechanism of a broadly representative coalition, which is a consociational type of political arrangement.

Finally,<sup>102</sup> Milton J. Esman, an authority on Malaysia, sees

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100 W. Arthur Lewis, Politics in West Africa, London: Allen and Unwin, 1965; Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., pp. 143-147.

101 Lewis, op. cit., pp. 66-73.

102 Some of the other writers on conflict-management not mentioned elsewhere in this thesis include, Claude Ake, A Theory of Political Integration, Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1967; Robert Presthus, Elite Accommodation in Canadian Politics, Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973; Gerhard Lehmbuch, "A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Switzerland, Austria and Lebanon," in McRae (ed.), op. cit., pp. 90-97; Jürg Steiner, "The Principles of Majority and Proportionality," in ibid., pp. 98-106, and "Nonviolent Conflict Resolution in Democratic Systems: Switzerland," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (1969), pp. 295-304; J. David Singer, "Consensus and International Political Integration," Political Research: Organization and Design, Vol. 1, No. 3 (January 1958), pp. 30-33; R.S. Milne, "Review Article: Ethnicity, Democracy and Political Development," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Fall 1973), pp. 435-444; J. Bensman and R.J.C. Preece, "Review Article: The Concept of Negative Consensus," Political Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (March 1970), pp. 142-147.

conflict management as resting upon the governing principles of: apportioned access to scarce resources; bargaining and compromise; depoliticizing non-negotiable issues; and protecting sensitive rights by making them amendable only by extraordinary procedures.<sup>103</sup> While Esman's approach is broader, tied in with competition over scarce resources, his political conditions fit with the consociational approach, and he sees structured elite predominance as one of the most important ingredients for conflict management.<sup>104</sup>

#### Reasons for Using the Consociational Model

"Models are a way in which progress can be made beyond (1) the mere enumeration of facts or (2) the spinning of logical webs, unrelated to fact, towards a fruitful union of fact and theory."<sup>105</sup> If the model utilized is to provide a "fruitful union", it naturally must fit the empirical context. Likewise, the focus of the research should also correspond to what is relevant. James Bryce wrote that the "inquisition of the forces which move society is a high matter; and even where certainty is unattainable it is some service to science to have determined the facts, and correctly stated the problems, as Aristotle remarked long ago that the first step in investigation is to ask the right

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103 Esman, "The Management of Communal Conflict," op. cit., p. 62.

104 Ibid., p. 72.

105 R.S. Milne, Concepts and Models in Public Administration, New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1966, p. 1.

questions."<sup>106</sup> Both the choice of a research focus and a model tend to put blinders on other perspectives. Donald Searing reports a good example of such a problem.<sup>107</sup> He notes that Robert Redfield studied a large Mexican village, Topozlán, and found it well integrated and harmonious. A number of years later Oscar Lewis studied the same village and found violence, corruption and disease. Redfield, Searing reports, tried to explain the different conclusions, and decided that Lewis had been interested in the problems of economic and personal disharmony and unhappiness, topics which Redfield did not investigate. In short, writes Searing, "Redfield investigated harmonious relationships and Lewis problems of conflict and disharmony."<sup>108</sup>

Searing simply uses this example to show that different researchers can come to different conclusions about what is happening in the same place, and he makes no judgment on which researcher is "correct". An example like this is frightening and eye-opening, because, even allowing for a difference in viewpoints, a certain minimum common area of agreement might have been expected.<sup>109</sup>

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- 106 James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, Vol. I, London: Macmillan Co., 1891, p. 11. Stanley Hoffman has written that "efforts at theory have produced a glut of typologies and models of political systems, often at a level of abstraction that squeezes out the role and impact of the political leaders" ("Heroic Leadership: The Case of Modern France," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the A.P. S.A., 1966, p. 1, quoted in Lijphart, "Typologies of Political Systems...", op. cit., p.66).
- 107 Donald Searing, "Models and Images of Man and Society in Leadership Theory," The Journal of Politics, Vol. 31, No. 10 (May 1969), pp. 30-31.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 This is especially so in the example just cited, where the two focuses of research were not entirely unrelated, being opposite sides of the same coin (conflict and consensus).

However, while aware that a different approach might lead to a somewhat different conclusion, I hope to show in the case of Malaysia that the approach which is most relevant to the actual working of the political system and to the limited political alternatives, and which best fits the behavior of the actors themselves, is one which is focused on the political elites and the governing parties and which, in many respects appears to follow a consociational model. Temperamentally, consociationalism is appropriate for an essentially conservative and elitist society which is on the whole non-violent, and one which has generally chosen conservative political responses. Whatever the merits of radical socialism, revolution, forced integration, military rule, dictatorship, the majority principle and free political competition, or even a return to colonial rule, Malaysia's ruling elites have rejected these hypothetical alternatives.<sup>110</sup> Instead, they have chosen a strategy based on conflict-management, bargaining and accommodation.

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110 After the riots of May 1969, several top political elites, including Tun Razak, Tan Sri Mohd. Ghazali Shafie and Tun (Dr.) Ismail, said that democracy must fit its environment, and that the Westminster model must be amended to make it more suitable for Malaysian conditions. These amendments have been mainly directed at restricting political competition, a limitation which the elites see as vital for peace and stability. As one writer on Malaysia notes, at "the broadest level, then, political policy-makers have no real choice but to continue to seek to prevent violence..." (Tennant, *op. cit.*, p. 83). Concerning the hypothetical alternatives of revolution or military coup, there is no indication at all of any rising of the masses, and the armed forces are not only trained in the British tradition of political non-involvement, but they also have the same ethnic origin and orientation as the top elites. In Malaysia, it appears that the only possibility of a take-over by force would be if the Communists, currently conducting a limited guerrilla war, managed somehow to seize control. This is not likely in the short-run.

Consociationalism is modeled on these practices.

Normatively, consociationalism has been criticized for its conservatism and, by some, for its elitist bias which is seen as not ideally democratic. There is some validity to these criticisms, but given that a consociationalist interpretation is explicitly tied to a political setting of societal division and fragmentation, it must be weighed against alternative schemes in terms of advantages and drawbacks. Lijphart's defense against criticisms that consociationalism is not democratic enough, is that under unfavorable conditions, "consociational democracy, though far from the abstract ideal, is the best kind of democracy that can realistically be expected."<sup>111</sup> Milton J. Esman, who points out that a "coalition of politically secure elites, whatever services they may perform for their society in the management of conflict, and however compelling their noblesse oblige, will certainly protect their own interests", goes on to write that in the Malaysian case, "the maintenance of the intercommunal elite coalition is more likely than any alternative to insure peaceful coexistence..."<sup>112</sup>

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111 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 48

112 Esman, "The Management of Communal Conflict," op. cit., pp. 74-75.

It is my belief that ethnic violence in Malaysia serves no constructive purpose.<sup>113</sup> Directly, it leads to actual suffering, economic dislocation, and political instability inviting repression. Additionally, in the end, ethnic differences and hostilities will not only persist after the violence; they are likely to have been exacerbated by it. For Malaysia, the question should not be "Is the political system democratic enough?", but "How much democratic practice can the present political system tolerate?"

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113 There have been frequent incidents of ethnic violence in Malaysia since the end of World War II. In late 1945 after the Japanese surrender and before the British re-imposed order, there was widespread ethnic "score-settling". There are no accurate figures on deaths during this period, which was characterized by Chinese reprisals against Malay police and Malay villages which had been "sympathetic" towards the Japanese, and Malay retaliatory massacres of Chinese. Karl von Vorys lists details of several of the clashes, one of which in November 1945 Malays attacked a Chinese settlement in Negri Sembilan, killing 35 women and 5 children (Democracy Without Consensus, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 62-64. Also see Felix V. Gagliano, Communal Violence in Malaysia 1969: The Political Aftermath, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, No. 13, 1970, pp. 6-9; N.J. Ryan, The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 227-228). Among the other more serious incidents of ethnic violence were the 1964 riots in Singapore (22 killed and 200 injured in July and 8 killed and 60 injured in September) (see Gordon P. Means, Malaysian Politics, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976 (2nd ed.), pp. 342-343; Arnold C. Brackman, Southeast Asia's Second Front, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966, pp. 235-236), and the November 1967 riots over currency devaluation in Penang and Port Butterworth (11 dead and 200 injured) (see Gagliano, op. cit., p. 8). Finally, there were the May 1969 riots in which approximately 200 people were killed (Von Vorys, op. cit., pp. 362-365). John Slimming estimated, however, that a conservative figure for deaths in the first week of rioting would be over 800 (Malaysia--Death of a Democracy, London: John Murray, 1969, p. 47).



### The Class Approach

It is undoubtedly true that consociationalism tends to ignore the role of the masses.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, it does not offer any explicitly class explanation, which may antagonize those with set views on the primacy of the class approach. In Malaysia the ethnic-type cleavages are so salient that considerations of class across ethnic boundaries are completely subordinated.<sup>115</sup> This is the reason there has been so little class analysis applied to research on Malaysia, although one writer, Boon-Ngee Cham, has tried to focus strictly on class relations in order to explain the "whole context" of social, political and economic

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114 Except for the very important condition that the masses of each group must follow their respective leaders.

115 Nancy L. Snider writes that "there seems to be little hope that economic and class cleavages will in the foreseeable future provide sufficient cross-cutting pressures to mitigate to any great extent the polarizing tendencies of Malayan communalism" ("Communalism and the Breakdown of Malayan Parliamentary Democracy," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, p. 44). This is also not unique to Malaysia. Seymour Martin Lipset, quoting the work of Joji Watanuki, found that in the Third World in general, cleavages of "value systems" have more political effect than cleavages based on economic or status factors ("Political Cleavages in 'Developed' and 'Emerging' Polities," in Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (eds), Mass Politics, New York: The Free Press, 1970, p. 39). In Trinidad, Calvin Farier concluded in the 1950s that even if a workers' coalition had been formed "...common ideology based on a sense of common status deprivation could not sustain a united front once such basic ethnic, colour, religious, occupational differences had not first been more significantly eroded [sic]" ("Black Intellectuals Come to Power," New World Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1972), p. 76).

development.<sup>116</sup> He believes that the May 1969 riots were "the logical and cumulative result of a long period of communal mobilization and agitation practised by the ruling class", and that "communalism arises as a result of class distortion through elite manipulation".<sup>117</sup> He concludes that "common objective needs among the lower classes have not given rise to their class solidarity", not because of ethnic divisions themselves, but because of an elite conspiracy that uses ethnicity to thwart class feelings.<sup>118</sup> However, even disregarding an elite conspiracy, it is not even altogether certain that the elite act as a class. An eminent Malaysian scholar, Wang Gungwu, has found that elite interests were never united in class terms, though they had much in common, and that there was always a communal element underlying apparent unity.<sup>119</sup> The class approach implies that class is the "natural" order of division; some who seek to use it, being unable to find class unity, can find only reasons why it should exist. As

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116 Boon-Ngee Cham, "Race, Class and Power in Social Change in Malaysia," in Victor M. Fic (ed.), Strategies for a Social Change, Focus on Malaysia and Singapore, papers and proceedings of a conference held on November 22-23, 1974 at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario: Canadian Council on Southeast Asian Studies of The Canadian Society for Asian Studies, 1975, p. 66.

117. Ibid., pp. 75 and 77.

118 Ibid., pp. 77-78.

119 Wang Gungwu, "Political Change in Malaysia," Pacific Community, Vol. 4 (July 1970), p. 685.

Glazer and Moynihan note, those who wish to emphasize the primacy of class will find many societies puzzling; "Why on earth would one wish to be a Pole when one could be a worker?".<sup>120</sup>

Judith Nagata also looked at class in Malaysia, by focusing on social inequality. She found that great disparities of wealth and power exist in all of the ethnic communities and that there is evidence of a form of class stratification across ethnic boundaries. She also found, however, that "most Malaysians show little awareness of class distinctions in the western sense of the term"<sup>121</sup> and that the greatest intra-ethnic disparities in income, power and prestige occur among the Malays, who are "probably the least 'class-conscious' section of the entire community";<sup>122</sup> while resentment among the Chinese was "more an expression of Chinese chauvinism, an ethnically defined discontent...".<sup>123</sup> Further, she found that "even among the workers,

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120 Glazer and Moynihan, op. cit., pp. 15 and 18. Also see Milton J. Esman, "Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia," in Glazer and Moynihan, op. cit., p. 414; Dahl, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

121 Judith A. Nagata, "Perceptions of Social Inequality in Malaysia," in Nagata, op. cit., p. 119. She adds that perceptions of social differences in an ethnic idiom is more common. Also see Donald Horowitz, "Multiracial Politics in the New States: Towards a Theory of Conflict," paper prepared for delivery at the 65th Annual Meeting of the A.P.S.A., New York City, September 2-6, 1969 (mimeo), p. 9.

122 Nagata, "Introduction", op. cit., p. 8.

123 Nagata, "Perceptions of Social Inequality...", op. cit., p. 129.

the strategic group which has pre-empted so much of the attention of western stratification theorists, there exists in Malaysia little sense of commonality across ethnic lines."<sup>124</sup> Nagata found several reasons for the weakness of class consciousness in Malaysia, including the salience of ethnicity, patronage, and a downplaying by the government and mass media of possible "class-type" reference groups.<sup>125</sup> In the organization and appeal of political parties especially, but also in voluntary associations and generally in trade unions, one sees the importance of ethnicity. Nancy L. Snider writes that "efforts to base parties and voter appeals on fundamentally economic class orientation have been successful in Malaysia only to the degree that such orientation coincides with, or at least did not run counter to, ethnic divisions."<sup>126</sup>

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124. Ibid., p. 133. Also see Esman, "Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia," op. cit., pp. 405-406.

125. E.g., trade unions. See Nagata, "Introduction", op. cit., pp. 2-14, and "Perceptions of Social Inequality...", op. cit., pp. 117-134.

126. Nancy L. Snider, "Is National Integration Necessary? The Malaysian Case," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1973), p. 87. Also see Pierre Fistie, "L'evolution de la vie politique malaysienne," Politique Etrangère, No. 4 (1976), pp. 337-367. Dr. Mahathir noted that any "political party which appealed to ethnic sentiments could never expect to form the federal government. Neither could any party which forgot completely the ethnic origins of its members hope to prosper" (Straits Times (Malaysia), February 29, 1972).

There is, however, a type of potential class conflict which a number of researchers on Malaysia are aware of because it could assume political importance in the future: Intra-ethnic and especially intra-Malay class differences. Owing to the political dominance of the Malays, which is dependent upon a high degree of Malay unity, intra-Malay class differences are probably more important politically than class cleavages within the non-Malay sector. Until now, intra-Malay class differences, calmed by patronage and tradition, as well as ethnic solidarity, appear not to have divided the Malays politically. However, with the effects of modernization, there have been stirrings among university students, and to a lesser extent among poor urban Malays, and isolated incidents reflecting discontent among rural Malay peasants. This is strictly a Malay affair, with few signs that it is bridging the ethnic gap. The interesting question is at what point intra-Malay class divisions would be important enough in a political crisis to destroy Malay unity and force a political realignment? This is something researchers on Malaysia seem to be looking at, in relation to the communist guerrilla movement and internal security, the viability of the New Economic Policy, and possible effects of continuing modernization. But the time is not yet ripe for abandoning an ethnic focus, and it is certainly premature to adopt an "orthodox" class approach.

### Federalism in Malaysia

Federalism is sometimes cited as a method of controlling or minimizing conflict in ethnically-divided or otherwise fragmented societies when one or more of the groups is territorially based.<sup>127</sup>

Malaysia is officially a federation. However, federalism in Peninsular Malaysia plays a relative insignificant role in the management of ethnic conflict for several reasons.<sup>128</sup> First, Malaysia is a highly

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127 For definitions and descriptions of federalism, see A.H. Birch, "Approaches to the Study of Federalism", Political Studies, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (February 1966), pp. 15-32; William H. Riker, Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1964; Thomas M. Franck (ed.), Why Federations Fail, New York: New York University Press, 1968. Nordlinger, (op. cit., p. 31) does not include federalism as one of his conflict-regulating practices, partly because he views it as a group objective rather than a conflict-regulating process, and partly because he believes that it may actually contribute to increased conflict because the dominant segment in any one state may "ignore or negate the demands of the minority segment." Lijphart, however, writes that federal theory can "be regarded as a limited and special type of consociational theory." Similarly federalism can be used as a consociational device when the segments are territorially based (Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., pp. 87-89).

128 Relations between the central government and the Borneo states are more genuinely federal (see Milne and Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, op. cit., ch.6). The Borneo states have several powers, including control of state immigration, which the Peninsular states do not have. However, given the extensive influence of the federal government in Borneo state matters and the fact that friendly state governments have voluntarily withdrawn or not enforced several Borneo rights, it can still be said that federalism in Malaysia as a whole is quite centralized. The Borneo states are excluded in this discussion of federalism as a device for conflict management because they have a different ethnic composition, the population is small, and because they are on the political periphery with little influence over what happens among the major ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia.

centralized federation, with nearly all financial control held at the centre. Authority over the development of natural resources, namely land and mining, agriculture, and forestry belong constitutionally to the states, but the central government, with control of the purse-strings can exercise considerable influence in these activities.<sup>129</sup>

A federal system was established in Malaya primarily to preserve the traditional role of the Malay Rulers, as part of a compromise which grew out of the movement against the Malayan Union.<sup>130</sup> Wang Gungwu has doubts that Malaya was really a federation at all, despite the fact that it had a nominal federal structure, and he concludes that the federal structure certainly was not meant to be genuine.<sup>131</sup> Second, the major ethnic groups are not territorially based. Except for a concentration of Malays in the northeast coastal states of Kelantan and Trengganu, each of the groups lives all over the Peninsula, and

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129 See ibid., ch. 6.

130 Ibid., ch. 6. Cynthia H. Enloe, "The Neglected Strata: States in the City-Federal Politics of Malaysia," Publius, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 1975), p. 152; Wang Gungwu, "Malayan Nationalism," Royal Central Asian Journal (July/October 1962), p. 328 (Report of Discussion).

131 Ibid., p. 328.

there are no exclusive domains.<sup>132</sup> Even where there are ethnic concentrations, it is more often seen in a urban-rural dimension than as federalism.<sup>133</sup> Consequently, the possibility of reducing tensions by granting limited autonomy to a region, or of eliminating ethnic conflict through partition, is not viable.<sup>134</sup>

### Coalition Politics and Coalition Theory

Although no particular institutional arrangement is actually required by the consociational model, the prototype is the "grand coalition", especially the grand coalition Cabinet.<sup>135</sup> Coalition-building, in the nature of the "grand coalition", appears to be a prominent

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132 Esman writes that "seldom have two peoples so divided...been fated to coexist in the same territory, yet so intermingled that regional autonomy is not available as a device for conflict-management" ("Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia," op. cit., p. 406). Also see B. Simandjuntak, Malayan Federalism, 1945-1963, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 297.

133 See the Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1976, p. 149. Regional ties have some political importance in Peninsular Malaysia insofar as there may be personal loyalties based on having come from the same state. This operates most noticeably inside UMNO. It does not appear to operate inter-ethnically, however.

134 Singapore was separated from Malaysia in 1965, of course. This was possible in that case because of the very high concentration of Chinese in Singapore and because Singapore historically had operated as a distinct entity (part of the Straits Settlements and then a Crown Colony with autonomy over internal affairs).

135 Lijphart, "Typologies...", op. cit., p. 63; and Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 31.



feature of the pattern of politics in Malaysia. The word "coalition" stems from coalescere, meaning to grow together,<sup>136</sup> and it is generally defined as the joint use of resources to attain a common goal by two or more groups or actors.<sup>137</sup> There are four major aspects of coalition behavior: (1) coalition formation (in the theory, usually viewed as the end product); (2) bargaining in the process of coalition formation; (3) the distribution of payoffs; and (4) coalition maintenance.<sup>138</sup> The coalition is the "who", the payoffs are the "what", and the process of coalition formation is the "how".<sup>139</sup> This behavior hypothetically can be tested and evaluated through experiments and simulated data, and/or "real world" empirical data. The latter, according to E.W. Kelly, can be related to the predictions of the theoretic models.<sup>140</sup> There are

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- 136 Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, Gencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956, p. 147.
- 137 See Sven Groennings, et al., "Introduction" in Sven Groennings, E.W. Kelly, and Michael Leiserson (eds.), The Study of Coalition Behavior, New York: Rinehard and Winston, Inc., 1970; William A. Gamson, "A Theory of Coalition Formation," in Walter A. Hill and Douglas M. Egan (eds.), Readings in Organization Theory: A Behavioral Approach, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1966.
- 138 E. W. Kelly, "Techniques of Studying Coalition Formation," Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. XII, No. 1 (February 1968), p. 62.
- 139 Michael Leiserson, "Coalitions in Politics: A Theoretical and Empirical Study," Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 1966, p. 29.
- 140 Kelly, op. cit., p. 84.

several types of coalitions; electoral, parliamentary, and governmental.<sup>141</sup> Coalition theory generally focuses on post-electoral negotiations for forming temporary governing coalitions. In situations where a permanent coalition exists, as in Malaysia, operating as a "super party", the coalition might cover electoral agreements as well.<sup>142</sup> In orthodox coalition models, it is assumed that there is a zero-sum condition, that the actors are rational and will always seek to maximize their gains, and that communication between them is perfect.

In practice, most work on coalition theory has been addressed to predicting coalition formations as end products, and the method has been through quantitative models and schemes derived from game theory. The attention that has been directed to bargaining has centred on outcomes rather than process, and the work on payoffs has focused on their relationship to estimates of perceived or real resources contributed to the coalition. Much less attention has been directed to actual bargaining processes and actual types of payoffs, except for the work of Browne and Franklin on the nature of party resources and payoffs,<sup>143</sup> and even less attention has been given to coalition maintenance. Further, virtually no work has been done by orthodox

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141 Maurice Duverger, Political Parties, 3rd ed., London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1967 (translated by Barbara and Robert North), p. 331.

142 In the era of the Austrian "Grand Coalition", the coalition lapsed during each general election and was renegotiated following the election. The election, however, was conducted in the expectation of renewing the coalition immediately afterwards.

143 See Eric C. Browne and Mark N. Franklin, "Aspects of Coalition Payoffs in Parliamentary Democracies," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXVII, No. 2 (June 1973), pp. 453-469.

coalition theorists on the "grand coalition"; it is sometimes dismissed by them because it does not represent a true coalition situation, and at other times dismissed because of the improbability or impossibility of its occurrence within the confines of the game rules.<sup>144</sup>

### Coalition Formation

Most of the leading coalition theorists have hypothesized that coalitions will be "minimal winning" ones in some respect. Von Neumann and Morgenstern and also William Riker contend that coalitions will be of "minimal size" (Riker's "size principle"); similarly William Gamson

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144 . See William H. Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, p. 39; Gamson, op. cit., p. 90; Eldon Kenworthy, "Coalitions in the Political Development of Latin America," in Groennings, Kelly, and Leiserson (eds.), op. cit., p. 110; W. Edgar Vinacke and Abe Arkoff, "An Experimental Study of Coalitions in the Triad," American Sociological Review, Vol. XXII (August 1957), p. 407; Theodore Caplow, "Further Development of a Theory of Coalition in the Triad," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 64 (1959), p. 489. Many coalition theorists predict that if  $A > (B + C)$ , no coalition will occur.

theorizes that the "cheapest winning coalition" will be formed;<sup>145</sup> Michael Leiserson, in his "bargaining proposition", postulates that the winning coalition will contain the fewest parties/actors; and Leiserson contends that the winning coalition will tend to be formed by parties or actors separated by a minimal ideological range or distance.<sup>146</sup>

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145 Gamson and Riker are very often discussed together when coalition theories are reviewed because normally Riker's "minimal size" and Gamson's "cheapest winning" theories will yield identical predictions. However, Gamson uses resources and payoffs to predict coalition formations rather than size per se.<sup>\*</sup> Gamson's theory is that the fixed payoffs in any winning coalition are distributed proportionally to the resource contributions of each partner, and thus, to maximize his share of payoffs, each potential coalition partner will seek the "cheapest winning coalition", meaning each will seek the weakest partner or partners, that will still allow a winning coalition. Thus, if  $A > B > C$ , and  $A < (B + C)$ , Gamson would predict BC and not AC or AB would form the winning coalition. This is because C will prefer B to A, since B is weaker, and therefore a coalition with B will give C a greater share of the payoff. Likewise, B will prefer a coalition with C rather than A because this will give B a greater share of the payoff. Using Riker's "minimal size" theory and supplying any numbers to  $A > B > C$ , and  $A < (B + C)$ , the minimal winning coalition will also be BC.

[<sup>\*</sup> Just what Gamson's resources or weights represent is not clear, however writers explaining or using assigned resources or weights generally mention that they are "roughly equivalent to" or "reflected in" voting strength or numbers.]

146 John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944; Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions, op. cit., pp. 32, 211; Gamson, op. cit., pp. 92-94; Leiserson, op. cit., p. 309; Michael Leiserson, "Factions and Coalitions in One-Party Japan: An Interpretation Based on the Theory of Games," American Political Science Review, Vol. 62 (September 1968), p. 775. A good review of the various "minimal theories" can be found in Abram De Swann, Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formations, Amsterdam: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 49-80.

### Bargaining

Most coalition theorists assume a priori that there is a willingness to bargain among all the rational actors, in a coalition situation, and an incentive to be part of the winning coalition, whatever it is. Bargaining is viewed as quantifiable, and directly related to maximizing payoffs; each actor has a set sum of resources with which he will rationally bargain in order to gain the optimum payoff. Little has been written about such aspects of bargaining as personality likes and dislikes, past experience, background similarities or differences, and availability of actors at critical times.<sup>147</sup> This is because the mathematical approach necessitates a tightly controlled environment.<sup>148</sup>

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147 Scott C. Flanagan ("Models and Methods of Analysis", in Gabriel A. Almond, Scott C. Flanagan, and Robert J. Mundt (eds.), Crisis, Choice, and Change, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973, pp. 98-99) lists variables such as rigidity, adaptability, skill, risk-taking propensities, political style, ideological commitments, and inertia. Flanagan, however, is more a critic than a follower of game-related coalition theory.

148 In Riker's The Theory of Political Coalitions (op. cit.), as E.W. Kelly points out ("Utility Theory and Political Coalitions: Problems of Operationalization," in Groennings, Kelly & Leiserson (eds.), op. cit., p. 478), "learned social norms and past experience in coalition situations are irrelevant to Riker's hypothesis." Yet Riker obviously is aware of the importance of such variables. In his book on federalism (Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance, op. cit., p. 12), for example, he notes that in the act of bargaining, the crucial condition is the predisposition to make the bargain.

### Payoffs

These are the particular resources, values, weights, or prizes accruing to and distributed among the partners of the winning coalition. In most theories, the total payoff is assumed to be constant. Often the distribution is related directly to the resources which the actor/party brings into the coalition, although some theories postulate that a small partner, especially if pivotal, will receive a disproportionately large share of the payoffs.<sup>149</sup> Browne and Franklin have identified several types of payoffs: membership in the government; policy prerogatives, including access and policy promises; and public offices, especially government ministries.<sup>150</sup>

### Coalition Maintenance

Virtually nothing has been written by the coalition theorists on this aspect of coalition behavior, probably because they tend to

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- 149 See Vinacke and Arkoff, op. cit., p. 413; Theodore Caplow, "A Theory of Coalitions in the Triad," American Sociological Review, Vol. 21 (August 1956), p. 490; Sven Groennings, "Patterns, Strategies, and Payoffs in Norwegian Coalition Formation," in Groennings, Kelly, and Leiserson (eds.) op. cit., p. 74.
- 150 Browne and Franklin, op. cit., pp. 453-454. Also see Eric C. Browne, Coalition Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973, pp. 15-16, 49-52. Browne adds, however, that payoffs may not be capable of valuation in market terms, and even if they are, the value may not be perceived as the same by all participants (ibid., p. 67). Mancur Olson, Jr., writes that economic motives are not the only incentives or payoffs. There are other social and psychological aspects such as prestige, respect, and friendship (The Logic of Collective Action, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 60).

consider coalitions to be temporary arrangements.<sup>151</sup> Browne notes that some theorists appear to view coalition formation as an "end of the world game", and warns that the "value of the payoff to governing coalitions resides in the exercise of political power, not simply receiving it."<sup>152</sup>

Orthodox coalition theory can be useful to the researcher looking at a potential or actual "real world" coalition in helping to indicate important areas of investigation. However, it is generally too far removed from reality for its hypotheses to be useful.

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- 151 One exception is John E. Schwarz, "Maintaining Coalitions: An Analysis of the EEC With Supporting Evidence from the Austrian Grand Coalition and the CDU/CSU", in Groennings, Kelly, and Leiserson (eds.) op. cit., pp. 235-248. He believes that the most important factor in coalition maintenance is a perception by the actors of high negative costs for coalition failure which promotes maintenance to a major coalition goal. He lists three conditions beneficial to coalition maintenance: partial exclusion of certain issues; some or all of the members having a veto over important coalition decisions; and the existence of a central "broker" role within the coalition (pp. 237-238). Another exception is Michael Leiserson, "Coalition Government in Japan," in Groennings, Kelly, and Leiserson (eds.) op. cit., pp. 87-90. He writes of the coalition maintenance process in Japan, and offers a maintenance proposition. Also see R. A. Dahl, "Patterns of Opposition", in Robert A. Dahl (ed.), Political Oppositions in Western Democracies, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966, pp. 345-346. He discusses "coalescent strategies" and lists another coalition maintenance incentive: confining conflicts within the Cabinet.
- 152 Eric C. Browne, "Testing Theories of Coalition Formation in the European Context," Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 3 (January 1971), p. 407.

Browne calculates, for instance, that the Riker/Gamson theories predicted only eight per cent of all actual coalition formations in thirteen Western European democracies covering the entire post-World War II period.<sup>153</sup> Scott Flanagan writes that coalition theory has become locked into a paradox: "No matter how sophisticated or complex a mathematical expression of a model assumes, as long as it remains essentially univariate, it is capable of explaining behavior only in tightly controlled situations".<sup>154</sup> Likewise, E.W. Kelly, with regard to Riker's hypothesis, notes that "there are few if any situations in the political world in which the antecedent are met and no other variables are operating." But, he adds, the "hypothesis can

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153 Ibid., p. 400. Leiserson's "bargaining proposition" was a somewhat better predictor of actual coalition formations. In a 90-set study reported by De Swann, the Leiserson minimal ideological range theory did the best (op. cit., p. 71).

154 Scott Flanagan, "Theory and Method in the Study of Coalition Formation," Journal of Comparative Administration, Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 1973), p. 271. Robert Dahl (quoted in ibid., p. 268) writes that the "more elegant and convincing the mathematical formulations... the more they apply to extremely simple human situations and therefore, the less they seem relevant to the complex problems of human life." Byran H. Massam notes that these theories may help us "link actions, values and goals..." but do "not allow us to explain real world conflict situations completely..." (The Spatial Structure of Administrative Systems, Research Paper No. 12, Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1972, p. 35). Allan Mazur's criticism is that "we can say that rational theories seem to work when the players are rational, and they don't when the players aren't" ("A Nonrational Approach to Theories of Conflict and Coalitions," Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 12 (1968), pp. 197-198). Finally, Eric C. Browne writes that the "reason for imposing the zero-sum condition on existing theories of coalition formation appears to be that the mathematical properties of such game models are considerably more tractable than is the case in non-zero-sum games" (Coalition Theories..., op. cit., p. 78 fn).



clearly be correct if no other theoretically significant properties obtain to a coalition situation."<sup>155</sup> Flanagan sees the problems with coalition theory as being: inflexible rules of the game; specification of division of winnings and not choice of partners; the zero-sum conditions; the determination of "winning" as fifty per cent plus one; the minimal winning hypothesis in which every coalition outside the set has a zero possibility of occurring; and lack of forward linkages to relate a coalition outcome to the development of a polity.<sup>156</sup> In fact, some of the material which is of the most assistance in coalition investigation comes from the criticisms of coalition theory and the enumeration of the important factors missing from it.

#### The Larger-than-Minimal and Grand Coalitions

Non-minimal coalitions, as noted coalition theorist Abram De Swann writes, are "a very familiar feature of coalition politics."<sup>157</sup> There is little that can be recognized strictly as theory relating to these coalitions, but there are a number of reasons as to why they

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155 Kelly, "Utility Theory and Political Coalitions...", op. cit., p. 478.

156 Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 271-273. On the importance of assessing the human behavior of the coalition actors, see the selections in Naresh Chander Sahni, (ed.), Coalition Politics in India, Jullundur City: New Academic Publishing Co., 1971.

157 De Swann, op. cit., p. 80.

might be formed. De Swann offers several possible explanations, among which are: a political culture which places a high value on consensus; belief that decisions adopted by a simple majority or without the concurrence of certain groups or actors will be ineffective; political requirements which alter the definition of "winning"; and minimizing policy distance.<sup>158</sup> Flanagan makes the same point as one of De Swann's: what is meant by "winning" in terms of size, will depend on what the coalition is expected to accomplish.<sup>159</sup> In a crisis situation, where effectiveness (i.e. the ability to effect a solution) is the major goal, there is a tendency for the size and strength of a coalition to be increased beyond the minimal technically necessary. In such a case, as Adrian and Press note, the amount of payoff may actually increase as the size of the group increases because of reduced decision costs.<sup>160</sup>

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158 Ibid., p. 81. De Swann also mentioned as explanations the concern to cushion the majority against possible defections, and a veto power by an indispensable actor or group (the latter was not explained, but presumably it could refer to an indispensable actor or group which is outside the minimal winning set, but which must be included and can block any minimal winning coalition which excludes it). Other explanations sometimes offered by game theorists are irrationality and imperfect communications.

159 Flanagan, "Models and Methods of Analysis," op. cit., pp. 70-71, 75.

160 Charles R. Adrian and Charles Press, "Decision Costs in Coalition Formation", American Political Science Review, Vol. LXII, No. 2 (June 1968), pp. 556-560. Flanagan discusses the ideas of Adrian and Press in "Theory and Method...", op. cit., pp. 274-275, 289.

In Malaysia, it appears that the goal of the ruling coalition is to be broadly representative and consensual in order to ensure the ethnic harmony, legitimacy, and political stability necessary to promote a climate conducive to economic growth.

A point frequently made about larger-than-minimal coalitions, and one which is of particular importance in explaining the grand coalition, is the idea of "common advantages". This would generally indicate hostility of some nature in the political environment, either short- or long-term; the "common advantage" would be one of affording some protection against the threat, and avoiding political violence or instability. There is a positive gain for all <sup>161</sup> (as with a collective good), and reduced political costs for the government <sup>162</sup> if, through cooperation, some environmental menace to the political system is avoided. In other words, this is not a zero-sum situation. <sup>163</sup> Similarly, Buchanan and Tullock write about a "net-cost approach", which looks at minimization of costs rather than maximization of some difference between benefits and costs when "collective action is aimed

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161 Except for those against the political system who may welcome political violence and instability as a way of changing the system.

162 For example, a high cost in maintaining order, in monetary terms and/or in the time required by the leadership to attend to the problem.

163 Lijphart writes that when "common advantages do play a role, the zero-sum condition does not apply and neither does the size principle" ("Typologies of Democratic Systems," *op. cit.*, p. 61).

at removing negative externalities...".<sup>164</sup> In the same way, Bensman and Preece write that there are situations where "negative consensus" prevails because the presence of tensions makes the avoidance of violence assume overriding importance.<sup>165</sup> The effect of a crisis and the possibility of a "common advantage" is often political compromise or what Groennings calls "coalescent strategies", based on the belief that no party can attain its own ends without the cooperation of others,<sup>166</sup> and what De Swann calls "payoff maximization in terms of 'concord'".<sup>167</sup> Even if one party has the power to coerce another, it may well engage in genuine negotiations,<sup>168</sup> either instead of

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- 164 James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, The Calculus of Consent, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962, pp. 85-87. They add that net benefits are not overlooked; they are viewed in terms of a reduction of external costs.
- 165 J. Bensman and R.J.C. Preece, "The Concept of Negative Consensus", Political Studies, Vol. XVIII (March 1970), pp. 142-147. They write that the success of such a regime will depend upon its effectiveness in bargaining, in suggesting vividly the horrors of the abyss, and in abstracting concessions. M.B. Nicholson notes similarly that there are situations where the possible costs of provoking further conflict outweigh any benefits that might accrue, even in the future ("The Resolution of Conflict," in Oran R. Young (ed.), Bargaining, Formal Theories of Negotiation, Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1975, p. 231).
- 166 Groennings, "Patterns, Strategies, and Payoffs...", op. cit., p. 60.
- 167 De Swann, op. cit., p. 81.
- 168 See John W. Chapman, "Coercion in Politics and Strategy", in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (eds.), Coercion, Nomos XIV, Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, Inc., 1972, p. 317. He defines coercion as "accommodation inspired by fear". Also see Bernard Cert, "Coercion and Freedom", in ibid., p. 46.

or in addition to employing some coercion, because of the accepted rules of the game, the high costs and unreliability of coercion, and the fear of failure or non-solution.<sup>169</sup> Where the "common advantage" is viewed as an important factor, it could be expected that cooperation would be employed rather than repression, though a stick might be carried along with the carrot.

De Swann has noted that "consensual" ideas can explain the inclusion of certain individuals or groups in the coalition, but, he writes, it leaves the exclusion of others unexplained.<sup>170</sup> Browne and Franklin provide a partial answer, explaining that it is "important for the government to neutralise the opposition of some parties, while it can function perfectly well with the opposition of others."<sup>171</sup> Sometimes there are personality imponderables involved in the exclusion of certain individuals or groups, but one way to try to evaluate such an action is to look at the costs to the governing coalition. If it appears that the costs are high with regard to legitimacy, outbidding, and the possible need to use coercion, it would work against the "common advantage" to exclude such individuals or groups.

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169 See Peter Bachrach, The Theory of Democratic Elitism, A Critique, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967, p. 79. He discusses the reluctance of most governments to use coercion (meaning sanctions or force) because of the high political costs and ultimate unreliability. Also see Heisler, op. cit., p. 2.

170 De Swann, op. cit., p. 83.

171 Browne and Franklin, op. cit., p. 457.

One of the problems of dealing with the larger-than-minimal coalition is that few of the theoretical rules apply, and although freed from the unrealistic constraints of the mathematical games, one is thrown back on observing actual and multi-variate phenomena from which only case study generalizations, at best, are possible. However, larger-than-minimal coalitions actually do exist, and it is important, however imperfectly it accords with rigorous scientific method, to try to explain the who, what, why, and how of their existence. In Malaysia, the government has decided on a broad-based, much larger-than-minimal coalition-building strategy. The "common advantage" derived by the absence of ethnic violence appears to be a factor of significant relevance to this policy.

#### Other Theoretical Inputs: Political Parties and Political Elites

Political parties and political elites are viewed in this study as organizations and individuals that can and often do influence the course of political and socio-economic events. Political parties are the hallmark of modern political systems, and constitute the most likely organizational form for the conduct of politics; in this case, for accommodative politics. Political elites, by their behavior are crucial to politics and the consociational model.

Political Parties and Political Systems

Definitions of a political party vary from those who define it narrowly and rigidly to those who think it best to classify as a political party any organization which so regards itself. Sigmund Neumann defines a political party as "the articulate organization of society's active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power..."<sup>172</sup> Similarly, La Palombara and Weiner define a political party as having continuity in organization and local roots, and functionally as seeking electoral support, playing a part in political recruitment, as being "committed to the capture or maintenance of power, either alone or in coalition with others."<sup>173</sup> Both of these definitions are acceptable for looking at political parties in Malaysia. Political parties, as viewed here, are conditioned by their historical circumstances and by background societal conditions, yet, they are able to influence their political and social environment.<sup>174</sup>

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172 Sigmund Neumann, Modern Political Parties, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 395. Also see Robert Michels, Political Parties, New York: The Free Press, 1962 (translation by Eden and Cedar Paul), p. 109; Duverger, op. cit., passim.

173 Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties," in La Palombara and Weiner (eds.), op. cit., pp. 3-6, 29.

174 Richard Rose and Derek W. Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems Since 1945," Political Studies, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (September 1970), pp. 309-311; Brass, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

Political parties have been generally associated with representative government, elections, and the extension of the suffrage. They function as instruments for political recruitment and socialization, for articulating and managing demands, influencing public opinion, circulating information, serving as a link between the government and the people, formulating policy goals and attempting to influence governmental decision-making. As Paul Tennant notes, "Political Parties are the crucial political variable in any plural society with even a modicum of popular participation".<sup>175</sup> Malaysia's political parties appear to perform all these functions in varying degrees, although the parliamentary role of the Alliance/National Front and its constituent parties seems weak, probably because major political decisions are taken in the Cabinet and at high party levels, and the government party in Parliament tends to act as a rubber stamp.

Reference to some party typologies can help provide a broad view of Malaysia's political party system. There are some initial difficulties. First, the Alliance was, and the National Front is, registered as a political party,<sup>176</sup> yet the components of the Alliance/

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175 Tennant, op. cit., p. 80.

176 The National Front in its constitution, calls itself a confederation of political parties, but it is nevertheless registered as a political party.



National Front are also registered as political parties. Further, there is a dominant party (UMNO) within the dominant party (Alliance/National Front).<sup>177</sup> For classification purposes, because of the permanent nature of the partnership, the Alliance/National Front can be considered a single super-party.<sup>178</sup>

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- 177 If one considered the various parties independently, UMNO could nearly be considered a dominant party on its own, although it is not even a majority party in Parliament. However, all the top government posts are held by UMNO, and its legacy and right to hold these positions is established; the army is loyal to this leadership; it could likely win more parliamentary seats than it now holds (because of the policy sharing seats with its partners); and it is, for the present, unthinkable that UMNO would be isolated completely or have to surrender its top position in any partnership; it is the indispensable group.
- 178 See J.A. MacDougall, "Shared Burdens: A Study of Communal Discrimination by the Political Parties of Malaysia and Singapore," Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1968, pp. 164-165. After applying various criteria of a political party, he concludes that both the components and the Alliance are "real parties". Duverger notes that some alliances are lasting and strongly organized, so that sometimes they are like super parties (*op. cit.*, p. 324). Also see Gordon P. Means, "Malaysia", in Robert N. Kearney (ed.), Politics and Modernization in South and Southeast Asia, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975, p. 181.

The Alliance/National Front fits the category of a dominant or hegemonic party in a multi-party system.<sup>179</sup> The old Alliance would be considered closer to India's Congress Party (before mid-1975) on the spectrum than to Mexico's Revolutionary Party (PRI), while the National Front as a type would be moved a bit closer on the spectrum to the PRI.<sup>180</sup> There is a fine line of distinction between the dominant party and either the authoritarian party or the one-party system, the distinction consisting in the extent of the monopoly of power and the legitimacy of opposition. In a dominant party system there is a tendency to monopolize political power, but this is not complete, and an opposition is legal. The dominant party cannot be seriously challenged in the short run for political control by the opposition, but it likewise cannot altogether ignore the opposition in its

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179 Duverger, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-312, 410-411; La Palombara and Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties," *op. cit.*, p. 35. La Palombara and Weiner believe it is possible to talk of hegemonic systems where, in some cases, the power is held by a ruling coalition, if there is a major party in the coalition which is nearly a majority on its own, and it controls the coalition over a long period (*ibid.*). There are a number of similar cases cited by David Nachimias, "A Note on Coalition Payoffs in a Dominant Party System: Israel," *Political Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (September 1973), p. 302.

180 See Chan Heng Chee, "The Dynamics of One-Party Dominance: A Study of Five Singapore Constituencies," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1973, pp. 1-11; Samuel P. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems," in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore (eds.), Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society, The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1970, pp. 5-6; L. Vincent Padgett, The Mexican Political System, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966, p. 47; W.H. Morris-Jones, "Dominance and Dissent," in Rodney Barker (ed.), Studies in Opposition, London: MacMillan, St. Martin's Press, 1971, p. 287.

political calculations.<sup>181</sup> Duverger generally sees dominance as more a question of influence than of sheer strength, though he describes a dominant party as one which is larger than any other and "clearly outdistances its rivals over a certain period of time."<sup>182</sup> Duverger's definition is quite similar to LaPalombara and Weiner's "hegemonic system", one in which over an extended period of time the same party, or coalitions dominated by the same party, hold governmental power.<sup>183</sup> Jerzy Wiatr offers a somewhat different party typology.<sup>184</sup> By his scheme, Malaysia would be nearly a hegemonic party system, one in which all (in Malaysia's case, most) of the existing parties form a lasting coalition within which one of them is accepted as the leading force of the coalition.<sup>185</sup> Malaysia under the Alliance was closer to Wiatr's consensus party system, where multi-partyism exists but one political party commands in a lasting way the loyalties of a predominant

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181 See Graham White, "One-Party Dominance and Third Parties: The Pinard Theory Reconsidered", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 1973), p. 399; Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics", op. cit., p. 5; Lester G. Seligman, "Political Risk and Legislative Behavior in Non-Western Countries," in G.R. Boynton and Chong Lim Kim (eds.), Legislative Systems in Developing Countries, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1975, p. 102.

182 Duverger, op. cit., p. 308.

183 LaPalombara and Weiner, op. cit., p. 35.

184 Jerzy Wiatr, "Political Parties, Interest Representation, and Economic Development in Poland," American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 4 (December 1970), pp. 1239-1245.

185 Ibid., p. 1239. His typology does not exclude mixed types.

majority and permanently runs the government.<sup>186</sup>

When a dominant or hegemonic party system exists, divisions and factions within the ruling party take on great importance. Dennis Beller and Frank Belloni note that within a single-party or dominant party "the functional aspects of factionalism for the party necessarily carry over into the total political system".<sup>187</sup> In Malaysia, because of the separate organizations and identities of the parties comprising the Alliance/National Front, one finds little in terms of factional divisions among or between them. Rather, it is inside the individual parties that factionalism is found. There appears, for instance, always to be some kind of "old guard" versus "new blood" factional conflict occurring within the MCA. However, factionalism is most important in the leading party, UMNO, which supplies the leaders for the top governmental posts, and here it does appear to have consequences for the entire political system.

The causes of factionalism cited by Beller and Belloni, namely vague party ideology, loose party organization, and the party's origins

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186 Ibid., p. 1239. Both of Wiatr's categories could fit into a general dominant party classification.

187 Dennis C. Beller and Frank P. Belloni, "Party Factionalism: A Comparative Analysis," paper prepared for delivery at the Edinburgh I.P.S.A. Congress, August 16-21, 1976 (mimeo), p. 22. Edward Shils points out that in many developing states, the most persuasive and effective political opinion may come from activists within the ruling party. Although they are often critical of the party, or especially its leadership, they are bound to the party by belief and also by the "prospect of a continuing flow of material benefits" (Opposition in the New States of Asia and Africa," in Barker (ed.), op. cit., p. 63).

as a union or merger, all fit UMNO.<sup>188</sup> Additionally, as noted by Michels, there are personal reasons for intra-party struggles, revolving around jealousies, attempts to grasp the top positions, and conflict that arises simply between the party's young and old.<sup>189</sup> In many cases, it can be a struggle between the party's "in" group and the "outs", or between several "ins" competing to be "most in". All of these personal motives for factions have relevance to the situation inside UMNO, as well as inside the other National Front parties.

The factions inside UMNO and the other National Front parties are not formally organized, ideological, or permanent.<sup>190</sup> They appear to be the types of factions which Beller and Belloni call "factional cliques" and "personal or clientist factions".<sup>191</sup> The "factional cliques" are groups of individuals who may have some common interest, but who are not formally organized in pursuit of that interest.

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188 Beller and Belloni, op. cit., p. 15.

189 Michels, op. cit., pp. 173-182. Also see F. G. Bailey, Strategms and Spoils, Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1969, pp. 51-55; Wriggins, op. cit., p. 74.

190 Interview with Dr. Mahathir (March 28, 1975).

191 Beller and Belloni, op. cit., pp. 3-5. Also see Andre Beteille, "Review Article: On Politics and Social Change in India," Government and Opposition, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October 1966-January 1967), p. 142. James Jupp, "Political Parties in Non-Communist Asia," Political Studies, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (1971), pp. 290-291; Ralph W. Nicholas, "Factions: A Comparative Analysis," in Michael Banton (ed.) Political Systems and the Distribution of Power, London: Tavistock Publications. A.S.A. Monograph, No, 2, 1965, pp. 27-29.

Membership is often by self-identification or externally ascribed identification. The "clientist factions" have some informal organization through the bond of leader and follower. One pattern typical of cliques or clientist factions is restricted intra-elite competition. Beller and Belloni write that in this pattern there is often an attempt to keep competition within the inner circles, and that competition, whether mild or intense, is generally played by "the rules of the game".<sup>192</sup> This has generally been the case in UMNO, although it was more true under the Tunku than under Tun Razak, with expulsion from the party the ultimate, though not necessarily permanent, sanction against breaking the rules of the game. The factions within UMNO seem to be as complex and fluid as they are important. Many leaders even deny their existence, and there has been a continual attempt to keep factional struggles out of the public view. The factions have some link with region, with age, with Malay nationalism, and a big link with "ins" and "outs", but all of these crosscut to the extent that one can not necessarily assume that a particular politician's friend's enemy is also his enemy or vice-versa.<sup>193</sup>

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192 Ibid., p. 17. But also see Shils, op. cit., p. 74. He writes that factions in a dominant party "intensify conflicts" over succession and "increase the acerbity" of the response which the ruling group makes to its internal opponents.

193 On the complexity of factions in India, see W.H. Morris-Jones, "The Indian Congress Party: A Dilemma of Dominance," Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1967), p. 111.

### Political Elites

Elite theory postulates generally that all political systems are divided into those who rule (a small group of elites) and those who are ruled (the masses), with an underlying assumption that this state of affairs is natural.<sup>194</sup> Rather than indulge in the debate over the morality of elite theory,<sup>195</sup> it is probably enough to say that Malaysia appears to be a good illustration of the elitist approach, since it is a highly elitist society where a considerable proportion of the political activity is conducted on a personal and informal basis among the elites.<sup>196</sup> The most relevant part of the elite approach for this thesis naturally concerns the nature of the political elite. The political elite can be defined as that group which possesses most political power and which makes most of the important political decisions in a society.<sup>197</sup>

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194 See Mosca, op. cit., p. 50; Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society, Vol. III, London: Jonathan Cape, 1935, pp. 1422-1424; James A. Bill and Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., Comparative Politics, The Quest for Theory, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1973, p. 143; Peter Bachrach, The Theory of Democratic Elitism, A Critique, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967, pp. 47-48; Geraint Parry, Political Elites, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969, passim; T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966, passim; Avery Leiserson, Parties and Politics, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958, pp. 4, 180.

195 Bottomore, op. cit., Ch's VI and VII; Bill and Hardgrave, Jr., op. cit., pp. 171-173; Peter Bachrach, "Elite Consensus and Democracy," Journal of Politics, Vol. 24, No. 3 (August 1962), p. 443.

196 Bill and Hardgrave, Jr., op. cit., p. 171; Bottomore, op. cit., p. 96. Esman notes that the "danger in Malaysia was not elitism but the prospect that the political elites were losing influence over their constituencies" (Administration and Development in Malaysia, op. cit., pp. 293-294).

197 Bill and Hardgrave, Jr., op. cit., p. 143.

In the case of Malaysia, the political elite would correspond substantially to top government and party leaders (in most cases federal Ministers or Deputy Ministers, state Mentris Besar<sup>198</sup> and Chief Ministers, and top party office-holders), with the strata below them generally representing the sub-elite.<sup>199</sup> While power, wealth and status often go together, the aristocracy, military, bureaucracy, and the economic elite are not, as groups, part of the political elite, though on any particular issue any of these groups, or some of their members, might exercise important influence on that political decision.

The elite approach addresses itself to three overlapping considerations in evaluating the nature of the political elite: (1) the social background; (2) elite recruitment (or "circulation of elites"); and (3) the degree of elite cohesiveness. A common or similar social, educational, and linguistic background is considered an important element in elite cohesiveness since it is believed to foster similar values and modes of thinking. In Malaysia, the political elite have come primarily from English-educated, Western-oriented families with relatively high social standing. All three of Malaysia's Prime Ministers have had this background, and all three have

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198 Mentri Besar is the title given to the equivalent of a Chief Minister in the nine states in Peninsular Malaysia which have Rulers. In the states of Penang, Malacca, Sabah, and Sarawak, which do not have Rulers, the term Chief Minister is used.

199 Members of the opposition seeking to replace the current political elites would be "counter-elites". See *ibid.*, pp. 172-173.



also possessed legal qualifications. Among the political elite in general, this bond of similar social and educational background is starting to break down, but the recruitment of individuals with dissimilar backgrounds has been limited and gradual, and most often accompanied by a socialization process which minimized differences.<sup>200</sup>

The "circulation of elites" concerns the recruitment of new elites, either through absorption by sponsorship or competition into the ruling circle, or by displacement of it. It is thought that if recruitment is closed and static, this will lead to instability, yet often one of the indices of stability is taken to be minimal turnover of top elite personnel, i.e. in the Cabinet. The point is that there must be some circulation, but not so much that continuity, especially at the highest levels, is destroyed. This circulation leads to competition among elites and/or sub-elites for the top posts.<sup>201</sup> Circulation is a prime reason why factional cliques are formed, especially in a non-ideological dominant party. There are, of course, different levels of recruitment. When the top leader recruits, his action is seldom challenged.<sup>202</sup> But when the top leader dies, or to a lesser extent when he resigns, there tends to be a realignment of factional

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200 In the selection of a Deputy Prime Minister in 1976, an important factor against one of the leading candidates was his Malay educational background.

201 Bill and Hardgrave, Jr., op. cit., p. 160. Michels, however, writes that it is usually not so much the case of circulation as of amalgamation (op. cit., p. 182).

202 See Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs?, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961, p. 187, on the resources of the leader in the elite circle.

forces, a scramble for power, and even a belated challenge to some of the former leader's choices. This seems to have been the case inside UMNO.

The third consideration is "the degree to which any given elite is cohesive, conscious, and 'conspiratorial', the latter meaning a "common will to action" rather than "secret machinations".<sup>203</sup> This is directly related to the consociational model, which requires of elites that they take deliberate collective action to minimize conflict. If the group does not act as a unified body it is less an elite than a collection of "top persons".<sup>204</sup> It is generally understood that if the top governmental elite cannot work together, this could have dire consequences for stability and effectiveness. In Malaysia, the political elite seem to show a determination to maintain cohesiveness and a common will, despite the pressures from factions and less successful ethnic outbidders.

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203 Parry, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32, quoting John Meisel.

204 *Ibid.* S. Ahmad Hussein makes the point that the group as a whole may not be as exclusive and cohesive as an elitist theory viewpoint might lead one to imagine, but the leader, as the focal point, can play an important role in reducing conflict and encouraging a form of elite unity ("Kampung Elites and Rural Development: Case Studies of Selected Villages in Penang and Kedah," M.S.S. Thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1974, p. 26).

### Major Questions for the Thesis

Along with the general theoretic perspective set out in the preceding pages, the major questions posed in this thesis are:

- 1) Can either or both the Alliance and the National Front be considered to be consociational political systems, as defined in this thesis? In what respects do they fit or not fit Lijphart's model?
- 2) From the case of Malaysia, what can be learned about coalition behavior? What can be learned about the nature of the grand coalition, as found in Malaysia?
- 3) What are the main differences between the Alliance and its successor, the National Front, in managing the political system generally, and particularly, in following consociationalist-type practices and forming coalitions?
- 4) What other practices, apart from consociational-type practices and coalition-building, have been employed by the ruling elites? What rules of the game have been established for the Malaysian political system?
- 5) What are the chances of success, as measured in stability, for the consociational-type practices used in Malaysia? a) How can the ruling elites avoid being outbid? b) How can they convince their respective ethnic communities that they are best suited to represent their interests?
- 6) Given that consociational theory was developed from a study of European democratic systems, what tentative suggestions can be made, from the Malaysia experience, for modifying the theory so that, while retaining some essential features, it may be usefully applied to a Third World country such as Malaysia?

## CHAPTER 2: THE ALLIANCE PARTY

### The Formation of the Component Parties of the Alliance

Before the Second World War, the British governed in differing measures 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

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- 1 Victor Purcell, Chinese in Southeast Asia (second edition), London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 317; N.J. Ryan, The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 228-229.
  - 2 The Malayan Union included the nine Federated and Unfederated Malay States plus the Settlements of Penang and Malacca. Singapore was made a separate crown colony, for strategic reasons as well as considerations of the ethnic balance (Ryan, op. cit., p. 228).

The Malayan Union scheme was first publicly disclosed in October 1945 and the Union was officially promulgated on April 1, 1946. By July 25, 1946, it was announced that the Malayan Union would be abandoned. 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.<sup>3</sup>

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 Malay 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>4</sup>

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3 In fact, the Malayan Union provided the catalyst to Malay nationalism that British patrimonial tutelage, Pan-Islamic reform, Pan-Indonesianism, and a World War had failed to stimulate. 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; Purcell, op. cit., pp. 315-349; Ishak bin Tadin, "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951," Journal of Southeast Asian History, Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 1960), pp. 56-88; J.M. Gullick, Malaya, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, p. 90.

4 Ishak bin Tadin, op. cit., p. 61. It is estimated that 70 to 80 percent of "pengulus and Malays who were either in government service or interested in political affairs" were represented at the Congress. See 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. 5.

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>5</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

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5 UMNO's Malay name is Pertubohan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (PKMB). However, it was decided in 1970 that because of the fame and popularity of its English abbreviation, UMNO, there was no necessity "at this time" to use the Malay name or abbreviation (Sarawak Tribune, December 6, 1970). UMNO was not registered as a political party until April 27, 1950 (New Straits Times, April 22, 1976). See A.J. Stockwell, "The Formation and First Years of the United Malays National Organization (U.M.N.O.), 1946-1948," Modern Asian Studies, Vol. II, Part 4 (October 1977), pp. 481-513.

restored, Malay special rights were instituted, and citizenship was restricted.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the Federation represented "with the exception of measures for administrative centralisation, an almost complete rejection of the principles involved in the Malayan Union Scheme."<sup>7</sup>

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. In fact, UMNO "was able to mobilize Malay opinion to a degree thought impossible."<sup>8</sup> 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

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6 For details of the Federation Agreement, 1948, see R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, Singapore and Vancouver: Federal Publications Ltd., and University of British Columbia Press, 1978, pp. 29-31.

7 Stenson, op. cit., p. 346. It was not so much a debate between a unitary and a federal structure per se. A federal structure was sought to preserve the seats of power of the Malay Rulers, but the crucial issues were Malay special rights and citizenship.

8 Gordon P. Means, Malaysian Politics, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976 (second edition), p. 100.

loyalties.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 General 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

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9 See Daniel Eldredge Moore, "The United Malays National Organization and the Malayan Elections: A Study of a Political Party in Action in a Newly Independent Plural Society," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1960, p. 63; Hans. H. Indorf, "Party System Adaptation to Political Development in Malaysia During the First Decade of Independence, 1957-1967," Ph.D. Thesis, New York University, 1969, p.147.

10 There has been a persistent struggle in the party between proponents of decentralized mass participation and those favoring a centralization of power in the Supreme Executive Council and the President. In a constitutional change in 1955, considerable powers were given to the State Executive Committees. The result was the creation of semi-autonomous state organizations and increased factional fighting in the states. An attempt to reverse this trend was blocked in 1959, but passed in 1960. The State Executive Committees were replaced by less powerful State Liaison Committees, with each chairman appointed by the Supreme Executive Council. For further details on the organization and constitutional history of UMNO, see Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137; Means, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197; Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-56; Salleh Daud, *UMNO Image and Reality*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pelopor, n.d., pp. 1-3; *UMNO, The Kaum Ibu Movement*, Kuala Lumpur: UMNO Headquarters, n.d.



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 officeholders and Council members triennially.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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,

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11 Until the practice was stopped by a constitutional amendment in 1974, delegates to the General Assembly were allowed on the basis of branch and divisional membership. This led to inflated memberships and the phenomena of "vote-buying" to enlarge certain state delegations. See Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 200.

12 See Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

which were non-political in nature, except perhaps in orientation towards China, and which were often competitive and non-compatible. The abolition of the Kapitan China (headman) system in 1901 had "meant the disintegration of instituted and exclusive communal leadership" among the Chinese.<sup>13</sup>

After the July 1946 announcement, some leaders of the Chinese community, most notably Tun Tan Cheng Lock, an English-speaking Baba Chinese,<sup>14</sup> began to organize a protest movement, which included petitions and finally a nationwide 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.<sup>15</sup>

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13 On the diversity of the Chinese community, its cause and the results, 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; G. William Skinner, "Overseas Chinese Leadership: Paradigm for a Paradox," in Leadership and Authority, edited by Gehan Wijeyewardene, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1968; Maurice Freedman, "The Growth of a Plural Society in Malaya," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2 (June 1960), pp. 158-168; Wang Gungwu, "Chinese Politics in Malaya," The China Quarterly, No. 43 (July/September 1970), pp. 1-30; Diana Ooi, "A Study of the English-Speaking Chinese in Penang, 1900-1941," M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1967; Purcell, op. cit., passim.

14 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 Ryan, op. cit., p. 121.

15 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.

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 over 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.<sup>16</sup> Under the Briggs Plan, the Government began to resettle what would soon 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, possibly due to suspicions because of his Baba background.<sup>17</sup> However, the leaders of the guilds and associations now 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.

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16 See Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Political Violence in Malaysia: The Malayan Emergency and its Impact," paper presented to the Seventh Conference of the International Association of the Historians of Asia, 22-26 August 1977, Bangkok, Thailand (mimeo).

17 Lim San Kok, "Some Aspects of the Malayan Chinese Association, 1949-1969," Journal of the South Seas Society, Vol. 26, No. 2 (December 1971), p. 32. Possibly also there could have been suspicions because of Tun Tan's earlier link with the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) and the nationwide hartal against the Federation Agreement.

The Malayan (later Malaysian) Chinese Association (MCA) was founded on February 27, 1949 in Kuala Lumpur. It is generally believed that the initiative to form the organization came from 16 Federal Councillors.<sup>18</sup> It also seems likely that Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner, was directly involved.<sup>19</sup> Although Tun Tan Cheng Lock evidently 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.<sup>20</sup>

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.<sup>21</sup> The MCA adopted a constitution at a General Meeting in

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18 Chan Heng Chee, "The Malayan Chinese Association," M.A. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1965, p. 2. Chan Heng Chee concludes that the real promoters, from behind the scenes, were Yong Shook Lin, H.S. Lee, Tan Siew Sin, Khoo Teik Ee, and Leong Yew Koh.

19 Ibid., pp. 2-3. Chan Heng Chee reports that Sir Henry Gurney was at the dinner party where the idea of the MCA was first mentioned. Anthony Short writes that Lucien Pye in his unpublished study of the Emergency says that the initiative was taken by Sir Henry Gurney who approached Tan Cheng Lock. Short adds that this view appears to be borne out by MacDonald's telegram to the Secretary of State (April 19, 1949), in which he said that "the High Commissioner has played, behind the scenes, a decisive part" (Anthony Short, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, London: Frederick Miller Ltd., 1975, p. 265). Lucien Pye's unpublished study is titled: "Lessons from the Malayan Struggle against Communism," (mimeo.), n.d., p. 40. Sir Henry Gurney was killed in a guerrilla ambush on October 6, 1957 on his way to Fraser's Hill.

20 Lim San Kok, op. cit., p. 35.

21 MCA 25 Tahun 1949-1975, MCA 25th Anniversary Souvenir Publication, Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters, 1974, p. 1; Chan Heng Chee, op. cit., p. 21. At this time, Tun Tan Cheng Lock saw the MCA as a politically-oriented pressure group.

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 Reorganisation 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. In May 1952, Tun Tan Cheng Lock threatened to leave the MCA if it pretended to be an exclusively social and cultural body. He said that in his view, the MCA was a political organization.<sup>22</sup> 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

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22 Ibid., p. 30, from the Straits Times, May 15, 1952. After the action of the Central Working Committee in June, Yong Shook Lin, the Secretary-General, resigned because he conceived of the role of the MCA as a welfare organization.

national executive. Nationally, the MCA had an elected president, deputy president, usually six vice-presidents, and several appointed officers. In 1961 a special "President's Committee" was established to act as a kitchen cabinet. However, 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 the 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 as an "avowedly activist political organization" determined to protect Indian interests and to erase the image of the Malayan Indian as a compliant laborer.<sup>23</sup> 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

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23 Hugh Tinker, Separate and Unequal, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976, pp. 292, 206-208. Also see Moore, op. cit. p. 236.

outnumbered by Malays and Chinese.<sup>24</sup> 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. The MIC joined the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) coalition which was formed in December 1946 to fight the proposals of the Working Committee for the Federation Agreements. When the AMCJA collapsed after failing to stop the Act of Federation in 1948, the MIC was left in the

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24 The Indian population (approximately 9 per cent) does not comprise as much as one-fourth of the electorate in any single constituency in Malaysia. On the fragmentation of the Indian community see Indorf, op. cit., pp. 69-71. He reports that 78 per cent of the Indian community are Tamils, with the remainder divided between Malayalis, Telegus, Sikhs and Sinhalese, and that there is social and occupational separation between them. According to one Malaysian Indian, the caste system still has some subtle political relevance as regards rank and status, and sub-cultural identities (conversation in January 1978). Also see R. Hatley, "The Overseas Indian in Southeast Asia: Burma, Malaysia, and Singapore," in Robert O. Tilman, ed., Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969, pp. 460-462. Tunku Abdul Rahman discusses the political problem of Indians quarrelling among themselves in his "Looking Back" column, The Star, June 16, 1975. During the MIC leadership struggle, 1971-1973, the most newsworthy feature of party activity was the brawls which quite often erupted during or after party meetings. The President of the MIC said during this period that his party was conducting itself more like the Mafia than a political party.

political wilderness. Indian politics in Malaya at this time "were characterized by division, and indecision."<sup>25</sup>

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 shortly. When the IMP ceased to function, the MIC was once again 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.<sup>26</sup>

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

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25 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Also see T.H. Silcock and Ungku Abdul Asiz, "Nationalism in Malaya," Asian Nationalism and the West, William L. Holland (ed.), New York: The MacMillan Company, 1953, pp. 269-345.

26 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. See Nancy L. Snider, "Communalism and the Breakdown of Malayan Parliamentary Democracy," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1972, p. 82.



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.<sup>27</sup> 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>28</sup>

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27 See Karl von Vorys, Democracy Without Consensus, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 96-104, for a very detailed account of the CLC. Also see Means, op. cit., pp. 123-124; MCA 25 Tahun 1949-1975, op. cit., pp. 16-17; Margaret F. Clark, "The Alliance and its Accommodation of Communal Pressures, 1952-1962," M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1964, pp. 18-19; Tan Cheng Lock, "One Country, One People, One Government," Presidential Address at a Meeting of the General Committee of the MCA, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Collection of Tan Cheng Lock Speeches, n.d., p. 5; Dr. Thio Chan Bee, "The Foundation of Racial Harmony", MCA 20 Tahun 1949-1969, Kuala Lumpur; MCA Headquarters, 1969, pp. 128-130.

28 Utusan Melayu, January 6, 1949, quoted in Clark, op. cit., p. 19. Also see Margaret Roff, "UMNO--The First Twenty Years," Australian Outlook, Vol. 20, No. 2(1966), p. 170.

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>29</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. In education, the Committee's only point of agreement was in recommending that the teaching of Malay and English should be compulsory in all government and government-aided schools.

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

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29 Von Vorys, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

that political advancement in Malaya was possible through inter-ethnic collaboration.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> Sixth, the legitimacy of the principle of inter-ethnic cooperation to improve the economic position of the Malays was accepted.<sup>32</sup> 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, which he believed would best be obtained through a multi-ethnic political party. Also, as the leading political figure in the country, Dato Onn "was noticeably developing pretensions

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30 The British apparently favored the creation of the multi-ethnic Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), and changed sympathies only when it became apparent that a coalition of individual ethnic parties was more viable.

31 The issue of communal rolls was taken up again in 1953 when a Federal Council committee was set up to investigate the idea. However, it was rejected on the grounds that it was not in keeping with the agreed objective of promoting national unity (K.J. Ratnam, Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965, pp. 175-176). Also the idea of communal rolls was one of the alternatives presented for discussion at the top level policy meetings after May 13th, but it was again rejected (interview with Encik Khalil Akasah, then Executive Secretary of the Alliance and the National Front (June 12, 1975)).

32 Means, op. cit., p. 130fn. Means points out that the establishment of the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) in July 1950 to help the Malays was "a direct result of the CLC recommendations".

of supra-communal statesmanship."<sup>33</sup> 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>34</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. The pressure of his resignation was substantial.<sup>35</sup> He was persuaded to return for the next General Assembly, where his citizenship proposals were reluctantly approved and he was overwhelmingly re-elected President.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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

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33 Von Vorvys, op. cit., p. 107.

34 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.

35 The UMNO Malays were uncertain what would become of the party and Malay interests without the leadership of Dato Onn. He had led the Malays against the Malayan Union, he was the founder and first President of the party, and he was a father figure to the Malays.

36 See Means, op. cit., pp. 124-125 for further details.

37 Von Vorvys, op. cit., p. 106. These groups believed Dato Onn was not sufficiently concerned about their interests.

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, and later he announced that any UMNO member in sympathy with the IMP would be expelled.<sup>38</sup>

In the meantime, Tun Tan Cheng Lock was also calling for the formation of a new political party which would supersede ethnic boundaries, and he quickly agreed to be the chairman of the inaugural meeting of the IMP, and urged the Chinese to give their full and active support to the new party.<sup>39</sup> He had been encouraged by Sir George Maxwell, former Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States, to seek out Dato Onn for a joint venture, though Maxwell had cautioned that he doubted Dato Onn was "wise enough to realize that he must consolidate his own position by

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38 Means, op. cit., p. 126.

39 Tan Cheng Lock, Address to the Inaugural Meeting of the Independence of Malaya Party, 16 September 1951, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Collection..., op. cit., p. 15.

securing first the confidence of the people and then their backing..."<sup>40</sup>

The IMP was inaugurated on September 16, 1951<sup>41</sup> in Kuala Lumpur at an impressive meeting attended by most of the former members of the CLC and numerous other dignitaries. "The array of 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>42</sup>

Despite appearances, the IMP was very 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 personality clashes, and partly out of fear that the success of the IMP would mean the ultimate demise of the MCA. It was also possible that some MCA members believed that Dato Onn was tougher to negotiate with than the Tunku, and that UMNO could be bought off.<sup>43</sup> Only the MIC was fully committed to the IMP.

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40 Quoted in von Vorys, op. cit., p. 106, from correspondence from Sir George Maxwell to Tan Cheng Lock, March 28, 1951.

41 Von Vorys writes that the IMP Inaugural Meeting was held on September 19, 1951, ibid., p. 107.

42 Means, op. cit., p. 127.

43 R.K. Vasil, talk delivered to the faculty and students of the Political Science Department, University of British Columbia, October 1971.

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>44</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, Party 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: "Communal divisions in Malaya were so deep that it was impossible to form successfully a single non-communal party; but they were not too deep to destroy an alliance of communal parties."<sup>45</sup> The experience of the IMP indicated four relevant political lessons: First, ethnicity as expressed in separate ethnic parties was more salient than the expected common bond of a desire for Independence;<sup>46</sup> second,

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44. 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.

45. R.S. Milne, Government and Politics in Malaysia, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p. 35.

46. On this point, see Clark, op. cit., p. 32; John Lowe, The Malayan Experiment, Research Series 213, London: Fabian International and Commonwealth Bureau, 1960, p. 8.

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; third, the top ethnic leaders did not take sufficient care to secure the support of their respective followers; and fourth, the importance of personalities (e.g. Colonel H.S. Lee, as will become apparent below) was neglected.

#### 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 the 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.<sup>47</sup>

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 poised by the IMP, he was "vested with full authority to do anything reasonable he considered necessary to assist the UMNO to win seats."<sup>48</sup> As Encik Yahya knew, the MCA had strong financing. Further, he was interested in

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47 See Vasil, op. cit., pp. 10-11fn; Clark, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

48 Harry Miller, Prince and Premier, London: George C. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1959, p. 113.



the MCA manifesto which stated that the MCA would include non-Chinese candidates under its banner. He interpreted this not as a threat but as a "not too veiled invitation to UMNO."<sup>49</sup> 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 a suggestion of merger.<sup>50</sup> Although this pact was a local decision, neither the national headquarters of UMNO or the MCA openly objected. Tun Tan Cheng Lock however made no comment and was conspicuously absent from Kuala Lumpur.<sup>51</sup> The result of this ad hoc alliance was that the UMNO-MCA won 9 of the 12 seats (6-MCA, 3-UMNO), 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

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49 Von Vorys, op. cit., p. 107.

50 Ibid., pp. 107-108; Vasil, op. cit., pp. 10-11 fn, 63-64; Means, op. cit., p. 133.

51 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.

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. As Means points out, it "was based on the full understanding that disagreements on issues between them should not destroy the political advantage both secured through the common front presented during the elections."<sup>52</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.<sup>53</sup> 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".

By 1954, the MIC was again 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

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52 Ibid., p. 136.

53 See Moore, op. cit., pp. 211-215, and Clark, op. cit., pp. 45-49 for more details. Also see T.H. Tan, "How Independence was Won," MCA 20 Tahun, op. cit., pp. 84-89.

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.<sup>54</sup>

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. Moore points out that the legal status of the Alliance as a political party during the 1954-57 period was obscure. The election authorities approved its symbol and obviously considered it a political party. However, ambiguity subsided 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.<sup>55</sup>

Organizationally, the Alliance Party changed little from its

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54. Miller, op. cit., p. 165; Moore, op. cit., p. 236; Vasil, op. cit., p. 12; Means, op. cit., pp. 153-154; Indorf, op. cit., pp. 160-161.

55. Moore, op. cit., pp. 214-215.

original constitution.<sup>56</sup> The National Council, consisting of 16 UMNO, 16 MCA, and 6 MIC representatives, was the supreme executive body. However, in fact it often acquiesced in 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.<sup>57</sup> Tunku remained head of the Alliance until his retirement in 1970.

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56 In May 1965, after earlier attempts had been rejected by the Registrar of Societies, the Alliance Party instituted the Alliance Direct Membership Organization (ADMO) as a means of allowing membership for persons agreeing with Alliance objectives but not eligible for or not desiring membership in the component parties. (The Alliance Vol. 1, No. 6 (June 29, 1966) pp. 7-8 ). ADMO started to gain some momentum in 1971-72 when, with approximately 2300 members, it was allowed a Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, its own set of officers, and was given two seats in the Alliance National Council and one in the Executive Council (Straits Times (Malaysia), April 27, 1971, May 13, 1972). Tan Sri T.H. Tan called ADMO the fourth pillar of the Alliance (ibid., April 24, 1971); Encik Ghafar Baba predicted that ADMO would supercede the three parties in years to come (ibid., May 27, 1971); and Encik Khir Johari said that "ADMO could become the nucleus of a genuinely non-communal Alliance" (ibid., October 23, 1973). However, by 1973 ADMO's position was being challenged. It was criticized by the Alliance component parties for stealing members and being a refuge for dissident elements (Malay Mail, February 27, 1973). In 1974 ADMO was told that it would not be allowed to field any of its own candidates for the up-coming general elections (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 29, 1974). In early 1975, the National Front headquarters sent letters to the ADMO branches instructing them to dissolve, and advising its members to join any National Front component party (New Straits Times, January 21, 1975; The Star, February 17, 1975).

57 See F.V. Gagliano, "Political Input Functions in the Federation of Malaysia" Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1967, p. 214.

### 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>58</sup> Sabah and Sarawak are both multi-ethnic, with a very heterogeneous indigenous population, and without a bifurcated political ethnic division. The most relevant 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

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58 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. Shorter general accounts may be found in Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 7; and K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, pp. 266-311.

party, and two non-indigenous parties, one Chinese and one Indian.<sup>59</sup>

By early 1964, the only party outside the 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>60</sup> The Sarawak

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59 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.

60 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; Party 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).

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 one 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.<sup>61</sup> 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

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<sup>61</sup> See Milne and Ratnam, op. cit., pp. 142-155.

and Sarawak Alliance parties were significantly weaker and less important than their counterpart, the MCA.<sup>62</sup> 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>63</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 Malaysian Alliance Party (the Grand Alliance Organization)

In October 1962, with the formation of Malaysia near at hand, the Tunku had the idea of forming a Grand Alliance of the various

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62 The Indian component was even weaker. The Sabah Indian Congress existed virtually in name only, and there has never been an Indian party in Sarawak.

63 Milne and Ratnam, op. cit., pp. 306-313.



Alliance organizations.<sup>64</sup> Such a Grand Alliance would provide institutional links between the various parties. Further, it would lend support to the establishment of Malaysia, currently being challenged as a neo-colonial plot by the Indonesians, and it would tend to isolate the People's Action Party (PAP), the ruling party in Singapore. It was not intended, however, that the Grand Alliance would supercede the original Alliance, nor disturb its coherence in any way.

A Grand Alliance Convention was held in Kuala Lumpur by closed invitation on March 30-31, 1963, where it was resolved to form a Grand Alliance Organization (G.A.O.). A committee under the chairmanship of Tun (Dr.) Ismail was formed to draft a constitution.<sup>65</sup>

The constitution was not approved until April 17, 1965 in Kuala Lumpur, at the third convention of what was now called the Malaysian Alliance Party (M.A.P.). The constitution called for a set of officers led by a Chairman, a National Council, and an Executive Council. It was

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64 See Edwin Lee, op. cit., p. 187. Tunku sent Dr. Lim Swee Aun to convey this idea to the parties in Sabah and Sarawak. This was before Brunei decided not to become part of Malaysia.

65 For more details, see United for Malaysia, Grand Alliance Convention on Problems and Promise of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, n.d.; Edwin Lee, op. cit., pp. 193-194; Sunday Mail, March 31, 1963. In his opening address to the Convention the Tunku called for a Grand Alliance of all political parties. However, he clarified in an interview (May 30, 1975) that he meant only as many as possible of the parties in Sabah and Sarawak.

stipulated that there would be no voting,<sup>66</sup> and there were also no state or district structures. Almost immediately the constitutional arrangements of the M.A.P. were disrupted by the expulsion of Singapore from the Federation, in August 1965. Though an uneventful fourth convention was held in Kuching in October 1967, the M.A.P. never functioned with much effect. As Edwin Lee writes, "The Grand Alliance, in so far as it existed, did so in name only."<sup>67</sup>

In December 1972 another meeting of the once-again-named Grand Alliance was held. This meeting, however, bore no relationship to the earlier meetings. Political parties outside of the Alliance were invited, and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the coalitions in Peninsular Malaysia and to raise the possibility of forming a national front in the future.<sup>68</sup>

The M.A.P./G.A.O. was intentionally never given the power to become an effective political force. The Peninsular Alliance Party did not want to create a rival which, although they could control it, might be less effective than their present organization, and they gradually lost interest in expanding their organization to the Borneo states. Further, the Alliance parties in Sabah and Sarawak did not want to see the M.A.P./G.A.O. have too much direct control over their

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<sup>66</sup> Indorf, op. cit., p. 234; Straits Times, March 24-25, April 16, 1965.

<sup>67</sup> Edwin Lee, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>68</sup> See Straits Echo, November 30, 1972; Malay Mail, December 9, 1972; The Star, December 10, 1972.

local activities. The M.A.P./G.A.O. could have been utilized as an institutional link between the Alliance segments, but even here the personalized style of politics practised by the top leaders meant that this channel was usually conveniently by-passed.

### 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 supremacy 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.<sup>69</sup> The basic concessions gained by the non-Malays were revisions in the citizenship regulations, and most importantly, the granting of jus soli<sup>70</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,

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69 Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 11; R.S. Milne, "Political Modernisation in Malaysia," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. VII, No. 1 (March 1969), p. 16.

70 Jus soli (law of the soil) refers to the right of citizenship derived from having been born in the country (on the soil).

and the functions<sup>71</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 felt the pressure of Malay core demands concerning political power (the Malays should control 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>72</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 favorable changes in the citizenship regulations. On April 27, 1956 in Kuala Lumpur,

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71 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 Milne, op. cit., p. 142.

72 Quoted in Miller, op. cit., p. 106.

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.<sup>73</sup> The conference 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>74</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.<sup>75</sup> 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

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73 Wan Mong-Sing, op. cit., pp. 116-118; Lim San Kok, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

74 Chan Heng Chee, op. cit., p. 52.

75 Datuk Senu Abdul Rahman, "UMNO: Before, Now and in the Future," Pelopor, No. 3 (1975), p. 33 (translation author's own).

together in the face of the guerrilla 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>76</sup>

The essence of "the bargain" was that the Chinese, as represented by the MCA, recognized that "of the various ethnic groups in Malaya, the Malays should--by virtue of their indigenoussness--be primus inter pares in the political system."<sup>77</sup> This would be achieved by UMNO controlling the highest offices of government, by Malay special rights,<sup>78</sup> by the

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76 From Collections of Articles About and Speeches of Tun Tan Siew Sin (1955-1970), Universiti Sains Malaysia Library collection (cyclo-styled), 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.

77 Donald L. Horowitz, "Multiracial Politics in the New States: Toward a Theory of Conflict," paper prepared for delivery at the 65th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, September 2-6, 1969 (mimeo), p. 5. Also see Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 33.

78 See Gordon P. Means, "'Special Rights' as a Strategy for Development," Comparative Politics, Vol. V, No. 1 (October 1972), pp.29-61.

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 intrusion of Malay, as a compulsory language at least, into education.<sup>79</sup> 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>80</sup> In Parliament in 1965, Tun Razak replied to criticism that the Alliance could not have a development program without having a philosophy to guide it, by saying, "The Alliance has a philosophy...it is progress."<sup>81</sup> But more than an ideology or

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79 "The bargain" did not determine the role of Malay as a medium of instruction in education. It has now replaced English as a medium of instruction, but it is still a matter of contention in Chinese and Tamil primary schools. See Means, op. cit., p. 202.

80 The Alliance, Vol. 1, No. 14 (April 1967), p. 2.

81 Quoted in Indorf, op. cit., p. 501.

philosophy, the Alliance had a strategy for governing. It was based on limiting and controlling ethnic hostility, depoliticizing tense ethnic issues, and compromising at the elite level.<sup>82</sup> Milton Esman writes that the Alliance was based on the idea of avoidance of unmanageable ethnic demands and tensions; a "mutual deterrence model of conflict management".<sup>83</sup> 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 get "too far ahead of the rank and file".<sup>84</sup>

The style of the Alliance required a mode of decision-making based on compromise, consensus, and reciprocity at the apex of the hierarchy.<sup>85</sup>

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82 See Snider, op. cit., p. 176.

83 Milton J. Esman, Administration and Development in Malaysia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 258-266.

84 Tan Siew Sin, "The Alliance and the Minorities in Malaya," Eastern World, IX, No. 3 (March 1955), p. 22.

85 See Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation, Political Unification in the Malaysia Region, 1945-65, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974, p. 184; Leo Ah-Bang, "Elite Cohesion in Malaysia: A Study of Alliance Leadership," M.S.S. thesis, University of Singapore, 1972, p. 134. 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).



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 or 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>86</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>87</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 rural weighting, and the widespread support UMNO received, as well as the historical identification of the Malays as the indigenous race. This dominance was further supported by "the willingness of the

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86 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).

87 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 20, 1973.

other two partners to recognize the political pre-eminence of the Malay community",<sup>88</sup> and this was part of the unwritten bargain. However, there was sometimes a feeling, especially after Singapore's Mr. Lee Kuan Yew politicized the issue, that the partnership should mean equality, given the near equality of population between the Malays and non-Malays. The MCA and MIC combined, however, 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. For instance, at the June 1958 UMNO General Assembly it was proposed to change the representation on the Alliance Executive Committee to 6 UMNO, 5 MCA, and 3 MIC (from 6-6-3, respectively). The MCA Central Working Committee objected that it would "be invidious to make such a change in view of the long established principle of equal partnership which had applied to all levels of the Alliance thus far...".<sup>89</sup> The change did not take place, but in fact it was symbolic only, since decisions taken in the Alliance Executive Council required unanimity. 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.

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88 Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 33.

89 Quoted in Vasil, op. cit., pp. 26-27, from Minutes of the Central Working Committee, July 6, 1958.

Despite UMNO supremacy, genuine bargaining did occur, and compromise solutions did emerge. An UMNO publication stated that "behind the apparent power of UMNO in the Alliance, there is the very real influence which the MCA and MIC exercise."<sup>90</sup> The Tunku admitted that, while UMNO supremacy in the Alliance was understood, the non-Malays could drive hard bargains and there could be concessions.<sup>91</sup> The essence of Alliance bargaining was not equality but dependency combined with access. As Esman writes, they were involved in a political game where either side (Malays or non-Malays) could inflict unacceptable damage, and this provided the incentives to cooperate and accommodate.<sup>92</sup>

#### 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 (the Alliance wanted them in 1954) and the number of elected members (the Alliance wanted 60). Despite Alliance opposition and protests in the Legislative Council, and a national boycott

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90 Salleh Daud, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

91 Interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman (May 7, 1975).

92 Esman, *op. cit.*, p. 261. Cynthia H. Enloe writes that "UMNO has had to be scrupulous in its dealing with its Chinese and Indian colleagues ..." (Multi-Ethnic Politics: The Case of Malaysia, Research Monograph Series, No. 2, Center for Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1970, p. 117).

of Alliance members of the government and civil service, the election timing was not advanced to 1954 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.<sup>93</sup> 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 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.<sup>94</sup> The Alliance divided the 52 constituencies into 35 UMNO, 15 MCA, and 2 MIC candidates. Many observers, while realizing that the seat allocations solidified the Alliance, thought

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93 See Ratnam, op. cit., pp. 175-186; von Vorys, op. cit., pp. 113-120; Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

94 See Miller, op. cit., pp. 166-167.

it an inordinate gamble to put up 17 non-Malay candidates, all but 2 of whom would stand in Malay dominated constituencies.<sup>95</sup>

The Alliance election manifesto, The Road to Independence (Menuju Kearah Kemerdekaan) 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.<sup>96</sup> 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,<sup>97</sup> and, although the other parties also sought Independence, it was the Alliance which successfully captured image and identity as the Independence Party.

The Alliance won an overwhelming 51 of 52 seats,<sup>98</sup> 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. Francis Carnell wrote that it "was a Malay rather than a Malayan victory."<sup>99</sup>

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95 Ibid.; Ratnam, op. cit., p. 185. The two constituencies with Chinese majorities were George Town and Ipoh-Menglembu (ibid., pp. 191, 197-198).

96 Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., p. 164.

97 However, Tunku's amnesty proposal concerning the communist guerrillas was a strong secondary issue.

98 The lone seat the Alliance lost was to a Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP, now called PAS) candidate in Perak.

99 Francis G. Carnell, "The Malayan Elections," Pacific Affairs, XXVIII, No. 4 (December 1955), p. 316.

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 Malays voted for the Alliance because UMNO told them to do so. Tunku commented, "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>100</sup>

The Alliance victory signalled the end of PN as a political force of consequence in Malaya, and, except for a small though growing Malay party then called the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), and now most commonly known by and hereafter referred to by its Malay-Arabic acronym, PAS.<sup>101</sup> 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 increased; they needed every bit of credibility in 1956-57 to negotiate "the bargain". For, despite strong opposition within the Malay community to the possible granting of jus soli, after the 1955 elections, "UMNO could, in a sense, ignore protests to a point, and impose its will upon the Malay community as a whole."<sup>102</sup>

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100 Miller, op. cit., p. 177.

101 In the past, the party was often called the PMIP. However, it is now increasingly referred to as PAS, its Malay-Arabic acronym. On June 22, 1971, the party changed its name from Persatuan Islam Se-Tanah Melayu to Partai Islam Se Malaysia. The Secretary-General, Encik Baharuddin said, however, that the party "will continue with our well-known abbreviation PAS" (Straits Times (Malaysia), June 16, 1971). Also see Utusan Melayu, March 7, 1963.

102 Pillay, op. cit., p. 37.

### The General Elections 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.<sup>103</sup> 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.<sup>104</sup> They were prepared to insist on more seat allocations than they felt UMNO was likely to want to offer them, and they wanted revisions in language and education policies. Almost immediately, the Secretary-General of UMNO, Encik Ismail bin Yusoff, warned that "Alliance unity depends on the type of leaders [of the MCA] who take office. Right leaders are vital to unity."<sup>105</sup> Inside the MCA, the membership was

103 Ratnam, op. cit., p. 207. The Malays constituted 57 per cent of the electorate (49 per cent of the population).

104 Roy H. Haas, "The MCA, 1958-1959: An Analysis of Differing Conceptions of the Malayan Chinese Role in Independent Malaya," M.A. Thesis, Northwestern Illinois University, 1967, pp ii-iv.

105 Vasil, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

badly split. The "old guard" managed to win a legal battle in November 1958 which nullified a constitutional amendment allowing affiliation for Chinese organizations; an amendment which would have strengthened the "Chinese-firsters" wing of the party.<sup>106</sup> However, the new MCA leaders continued to press for changes which would, in effect, alter "the bargain".<sup>107</sup>

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 Trengganu, in the northeast, to PAS.<sup>108</sup>

There were some special intra-state circumstances which contributed to the Alliance's (UMNO's) loss in these tradition-bound, heavily Malay populated states.<sup>109</sup> UMNO nevertheless felt threatened by the popularity of an Islamic nationalist party which promised to restore to Malays the

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106 See Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., p. 205; Haas, op. cit., p. 113; Chan Heng Chee, op. cit., pp. 94-102.

107 A propos of this period, Tun Tan Siew Sin later warned against upsetting the political power of the Malays. "If this balance is upset, they will resort to drastic action to restore their position. This delicate relationship can only be maintained if the leaders of the parties in the Alliance trust one another. This trust has been built up over a period of years" (Straits Times, March 6, 1964).

108 T.E. Smith, "The Malayan Elections of 1959," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1 (March 1960), pp. 38-47.

109 These circumstances will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 in the section on the coalition with PAS. See Roger Kershaw, "The 'East Coast' in Malayan Politics: Episodes of Resistance and Integration in Kelantan and Trengganu," Modern Asian Studies, Vol. II, Part 4 (October 1977), pp. 515-541.



sovereignty which it said UMNO had sold away.<sup>110</sup> 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 Trengganu. The party leaders believed that UMNO might decide to counter PAS outbidding 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>111</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.<sup>112</sup> 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

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110 See Moore, op. cit., p. 72.

111 Ibid., p. 291-292. Tun Tan Siew Sin understood the MCA dilemma acutely 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.

112 See Haas, op. cit., pp. 147-151.

on the issues of language and education.<sup>113</sup> However, in early July, Dr. Lim's confidential letter was leaked to the Press, apparently without Dr. Lim's knowledge or approval.<sup>114</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>115</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.<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup>

During the UMNO-MCA crisis, the MIC, though generally in sympathy with MCA demands, kept very quiet, and it made no stand on either seat allocations or on the language and education issues.<sup>118</sup>

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113 *Ibid.*, pp. 147-151.

114 Means reports that the letter first appeared in the *China Press*, July 8, 1959 and subsequently in the *Straits Times*, July 10, 1959 (*Malaysian Politics, op. cit.*, p. 223). Haas writes that the letter was released by MCA Publicity Chairman, Yong Pung How (*op. cit.*, pp. 156-157).

115 Quoted in Chan Heng Chee, *op. cit.*, p. 104, from the *Straits Times*, July 11, 1959.

116 Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

117 Haas, *op. cit.*, p. 170; Vasil, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253.

118 Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 246, 250.

The crisis was a demonstration of the natural stresses inside the Alliance which were exacerbated as a result of "outbidding" by an external 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 to either 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. Gordon Means writes that 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>120</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

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119 During this period, Tunku said that the greatest danger to the Alliance was from the Alliance itself. (from the Straits Times, February 12, 1959, cited in Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., p. 211).

120 Ibid., p. 223.

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.<sup>121</sup>

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.

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121 Of course, it constantly galled the MCA and MIC leadership that their respective communities seemed so little to appreciate the important role played by their parties in gaining concessions and compromises for their communities, and in helping to preserve communal peace. In 1969, just before the rioting broke out, the MCA announced that it would not participate in the government. This was partly an angry reaction by Tun Tan Siew Sin to teach the Chinese a lesson since they had not voted MCA substantially in the elections.

Its manifesto, See What the Alliance Offers You, 1959 Parliamentary Election Manifesto, was published just a week before polling, publication being delayed because of the UMNO-MCA crisis.<sup>122</sup> 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".<sup>123</sup> 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 latter was an indication, but not necessarily an accurate poll, of public support, since the Alliance won some uncontested seats in stronghold areas where no votes were polled.

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122 Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., p. 223.

123 Ibid., p. 252; Ratnam, op. cit., pp. 203-205; Indorf, op. cit., p. 185.

### 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 144 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.<sup>124</sup>

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.<sup>125</sup> Opposition victories were divided with PAS winning 9, SF 2, PPP 2, UDP 1, and the PAP 1.

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124 Detailed analysis of the campaign and results can be found in Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., passim.

125 According to Indorf, of the 46 per cent non-Malay vote, the MCA/MIC received 22.2 per cent and the opposition 23.8 per cent (op. cit., p. 328).

One of the most interesting and ultimately significant aspects of the elections was the unexpected challenge by Singapore's ruling party, the PAP. It initiated an intense Alliance-PAP conflict that culminated just over 15 months later with Singapore's expulsion from the Federation. In fact, many believe, along with Noordin Sopiee, "that the seeds sown in 1964 and 1965 were reaped in the communal whirlwind of 13 May 1969."<sup>126</sup>

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>127</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 challenge; in the end only one PAP candidate was elected.<sup>128</sup> 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.<sup>129</sup> When the PAP did enter, it was a surprise, and later the

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126 Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, op. cit., p. 188 fn.

127 The PAP instructed two of its candidates not to campaign once it was realized that they would be competing against UMNO candidates. There were 15 PAP candidates in the state elections. See Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 139.

128 Bitterness had also been created earlier by the creation of a Singapore Alliance and its participation in the 1963 Singapore elections.

129 See: Milne, Government and Politics in Malaysia, op. cit., p. 98, from the Straits Times, September 10, 1963.

Tunku said that his "faith was shaken".<sup>130</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.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the PAP had been courting UMNO and the Tunku, and hoped to replace the MCA in the Alliance.<sup>132</sup>

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 put pressure on UMNO. The Tunku "time and again advised the Malays to concede to the Chinese demands in order to help shore up" the MCA.<sup>133</sup> According to Dr. Mahathir, this was a directive the rank and file did not want to follow, and it served to increase the popularity of PAS.<sup>134</sup>

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130 Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back", The Star, March 31, 1975.

131 Milne, Government and Politics in Malaysia, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

132 See Lee Kuan Yew, The Winds of Change, Singapore: PAP Political Bureau, n.d., speech to the Cantonese Clan and Other Civil Organizations, 14 March 1964. In this speech, Lee Kuan Yew said that while the present Malay leadership was vital, the Chinese leadership in the Alliance as represented by the MCA was not irreplaceable.

133 Mahathir bin Mohamad, "Problems of Democratic Nation-Building in Malaysia," Solidarity, Vol. VI, No. 10 (October 1971), p. 12. Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir is now the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.

134 Ibid.



Nonetheless, UMNO's leaders did make it very clear to the PAP that it was "an unwelcome suitor and that they had no intention of abandoning the MCA in its favour."<sup>135</sup>

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>136</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>137</sup> He said that the Malays were no more indigenous than the other ethnic groups, citing recent Indonesian arrivals, and he indulged in ethnic mathematics,

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135 Ratnam and Milne, *op. cit.*, p. 146. The Tunku said: "They said they want to join the UMNO, but we don't want them" (*ibid.*, p. 147).

136 See Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back," *The Star*, April 7, 1975; Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Means, *Malaysian Politics, op. cit.*, pp. 345-346. 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. Mohamed Noordin Sopiee reports that Sir Alec Douglas Home attempted to persuade the Tunku to form a coalition government with the PAP (*op. cit.*, p. 195).

137 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.

trying to show that the non-Malays outnumbered the Malays.<sup>138</sup> As Derek Davies later noted, the "advocates of a 'Malaysian Malaysia' sound very reasonable and liberal in theory, until the realities of the cultural and racial divisions within Malaysia are remembered."<sup>139</sup> But 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, as Means points out, changed the focus from

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138 Tun Tan Siew Sin complained that "Mr. Lee Kuan Yew by harping on the 60-40 business, that the Malays were outnumbered by the non-Malays... obviously made the Malays very fearful of their future. The moment he came to Malaysia he stirred up old fears and suspicions so that both Chinese and Malays were worked up." Tun Tan Siew Sin Collection of Speeches..., op. cit., speech to MCA Youth, August 15, 1965. In fact, Lee's ethnic arithmetic was politically incorrect, but the "numbers game" was so intense that just raising the issue was enough to set off panic and doubt.

139 Derek Davies, "Some of Our Best Friends...", Far Eastern Economic Review, June 26, 1969, p. 702.

verbal attacks to political action.<sup>140</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>141</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.<sup>142</sup> The main reason given for the expulsion was the fear and danger of widespread ethnic violence.<sup>143</sup>

The PAP had not been willing to work quietly towards changes and compromises. Instead, they took their case directly to the people, certain to enflame ethnic passions in Malaysia. The Tunku wrote, "Instead of doing what they want in a quiet and practical way, they tread on everybody's toes, knock everybody's head and bring about chaos, suspicion, misunderstanding, hatred, and trouble."<sup>144</sup> 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

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140 Means, Malaysia Politics, op. cit., p. 346.

141 Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back", The Star, April 7, 1975.

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

143 Ibid., p. 181; Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., pp. 353-354.

144 Separation, Singapore: Ministry of Culture, n.d., p. 12.

realignment regardless of the effect on communal harmony, political stability, or the prospects for democracy's survival."<sup>145</sup>

The separation of Singapore 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,<sup>146</sup> 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 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>147</sup>

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145 Means, Malaysian Politics, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

146 The Tunku was convinced that using force against Singapore would result in communal violence and bloodshed.

147 Means, Malaysian Politics, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

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 per cent as the sole official language by 1967, we are confident that we can implement it at least 90 per cent."<sup>148</sup> By mid-1964, a group of Malays had founded the National Language Action Front (NLAF) (Barisan Bertindak Bahasa Kebangsaan) to pressure the government to fully implement the terms of the language agreement.<sup>149</sup> 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.

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148 Straits Times, December 4, 1964.

149 Ibid., July 27, 1964, March 24, April 6, September 13, 1965; Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

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.<sup>150</sup> 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>151</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.<sup>152</sup>

The National Language Bill of 1967 was a compromise, allowing for the use of English for some official purposes, and the "liberal" 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

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150 Straits Times, August 6, 18, 30, September 4, 8, 16, 1965; Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

151 Straits Times, August 2, 1965. The Perak MCA Chairman, in condemning the demands, said that it was not clear why the language issue had re-erupted when it appeared to have been well-settled (ibid., August 6, 1965 (Dato Liew Why Hone)). The President of MCA Youth, Datuk Lee San Choon, threatened to resign over the issue and only decided to stay on when the MCA Youth agreed not to agitate for Chinese as an official language (ibid., September 4 and 8, 1965). It would have required a constitutional amendment to make Chinese an official language, and this was clearly out of the question.

152 Ibid., September 16, 1965. The UMNO Youth statement said that the "national language question was an important factor which made UMNO agree to a compromise over the granting of citizenship to non-indigenous people...".

position, and increased the popularity of PAS.<sup>153</sup>

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.<sup>154</sup> 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.<sup>154a</sup> 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.<sup>155</sup> The Alliance apparently expected a rather routine election and subsequent victory, and was relying on money and machinery more than issues. Alliance

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153 See R.K.Vasil, The Malaysian General Election of 1969, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 15; Snider, op. cit., p. 258; Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., pp. 391-392.

154 Ibid., Also see, MCA 25 Tahun 1949-1974, op. cit., pp. 2-4(Tun Tan Siew Sin).

154a The language bill was passed in August 1967. In November there were ethnic riots in Penang, but the causes of this violence do not appear to have any direct relationship to the language issue. In October 1967, at a stormy convention, the extremists gained control of the Labour Party. Shortly after, the federal government announced a currency devaluation, and the Labour Party called for a hartal to protest the move. The resultant tensions led to an outbreak of violence which soon degenerated into ethnic rioting.

155 The Alliance Manifesto was called "An Even Better Deal for All" (Kuala Lumpur, April 5, 1969). It stressed three points: (1) the opposition were playing on ethnic emotions; (2) the opposition, separately or in concert, do not constitute a credible alternative; (3) national language shall be the cementing force for establishing national solidarity.

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.<sup>156</sup>

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 the grossest sentiment in the name of democracy."<sup>157</sup> Third, the opposition parties had for the first time arranged some electoral pacts.<sup>158</sup> Fourth, there was the unknown element

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<sup>156</sup> See, for example, Straits Times, March 7, April 11, 17, 23, 1969 (statements by Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak, Tun Tan Siew Sin).

<sup>157</sup> Mahathir B. Mohamad, op cit., p. 14. Also see Mahathir B. Mohamad, The Malay Dilemma, Singapore: Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1970, p. 14.

<sup>158</sup> See Snider, op. cit., pp. 251, 254, 267. Basically the DAP and Gerakan divided up areas, with most of Penang going to Gerakan. PAS and Party Rakyat (PR) agreed not to contest against Gerakan in Penang. In Perak there was a PPP-DAP pact. The Electoral pacts were limited simply to not dividing the opposition vote and/or to divide the Alliance vote (for instance in an MCA-DAP fight, PAS might enter a candidate to draw the Malay vote that might otherwise go to the MCA).



of the boycott of the elections by the Labour Party (LP). Finally, there were two incidents involving deaths during the campaign.<sup>159</sup>

Despite these differences, the Alliance faced the polls apparently unworried. The Tunku was still saying, near the end of the campaign, that the election fever, "the shouts, screams and outcries" of the parties was proof that democracy was working in Malaysia.<sup>160</sup>

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 both that the Alliance had won easily and also that it had received a substantial setback. In the parliamentary elections, the Alliance won 66 of 103 seats,<sup>161</sup> with 48.5 per cent of the popular vote. 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 Trengganu, had faced a stiff battle in Kedah and Perlis, 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 Crown Colony and never a Malay state with a Malay Ruler, and Penang was generally viewed as a "Chinese" state.

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159 See *ibid.*, p. 228. On April 24th in Penang an UMNO member was killed, and in Kuala Lumpur on May 4th, police killed a Labour Party member. A large funeral was held for the latter in Kuala Lumpur on May 9th, the day before polling. Although there was no violence during the procession, it raised tensions in the city considerably.

160 *Straits Times*, May 9, 1969.

161 The election in one constituency, Melaka Selantan, was postponed.

However, the prospect of UMNO and the Alliance not controlling either 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>162</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 parongs. The result was a rampage of ethnic rioting, plundering, and murdering.<sup>163</sup>

The May 13 riots led to the proclamation of an Emergency, the suspension of Parliament, and rule by a National Operations Council under

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162 Straits Times, May 13, 14, 1969. UMNO spokesmen accused the MCA of a "shocking defeat."

163 For full details of May 13, see Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., chapter 5; Von Vorys, op. cit., chapter 13; The May 13 Tragedy, Kuala Lumpur: Report of the National Operations Council, 1969; Tunku Abdul Rahman, May 13, Before and After, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu Press, Ltd., 1969; John Slimming, Malaysia, Death of a Democracy, London: John Murray, 1969, passim. It is ironic that the Chinese secret societies gained considerable prestige among the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur as a result of their role in protecting Chinese during the riots.

the directorship of Tun Razak.<sup>164</sup> 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.

#### Consociationalism and the Alliance Party

Having discussed how the Alliance Party (and its components) was formed, and how it operated within the constraints of an ethnically-divided society, it is appropriate to consider the extent to which the Alliance Party government followed consociational practices. Consociationalism as defined in this thesis is a variant of Lijphart's consociational democracy model. As defined here, consociation is primarily a conflict-management strategy, and democracy is neither part of the definition nor considered a necessary element to be looked for when consociational practices are being examined. Further, as defined here, the strategy may still be consociational when political power is not shared equally among the segments, even when it is a bi-polar situation and one segment is politically dominant.<sup>165</sup> Clearly, however,

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164 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 (ibid., May 15, 1960).

165 See Chapter 1, pp. 28-34.

it is not consociational if the segment which is politically dominant assumes all political power.

The consociational model has two primary features which are essential: overarching elite cooperation and stable non-elite support. The first is necessary in order to establish a consociational-type system; the second is necessary in order to successfully maintain that system. Additionally, there are several consociational devices or practices which are useful in institutionalizing attempts at consociation, but which are neither necessary nor sufficient. Further, there are a number of favorable societal conditions for consociationalism which may influence the viability of consociational practices.<sup>166</sup>

#### Overarching Elite Cooperation

The Alliance Party is an exemplary illustration of one of the primary features of consociationalism, overarching elite cooperation. First, the elites seemed to recognize the dangers inherent in their ethnically-divided society. The ethnic violence at the end of the Second World War had been an ample demonstration of the latent hostility existing between the ethnic groups which could explode into violence upon the least provocation.<sup>167</sup> Further, the Emergency generated by Communist

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166 See Chapter 1, pp. 21-28.

167 See Chapter 1, p. 45, fn. 113.

guerrilla activity always threatened to evolve into more an ethnic than a strictly ideological battle, and it was recognized as necessary to offer the Chinese community an alternative leadership organization to the MCP and a stake in the system.<sup>168</sup> The political elite seemed to appreciate the fact that, given the differences in religion, language, cultural, and occupational patterns between the ethnic groups, ethnic-based issues would dominate the political arena, and political mobilization along ethnic lines would not only be the most effective organizational base, but was also probably unavoidable.<sup>169</sup> Consequently, in recognition of the dangers of unbridled political confrontation between the ethnic groups, elite accommodation appeared as the only sensible course of action. Overarching elite cooperation began with the CLC experiment,<sup>170</sup> and developed into an institutionalized style of politics with the Alliance Party.

Second, the Alliance elites gave every appearance of being committed to maintaining the basic framework of the political system which they inherited from the British. In consociational theory it is believed that if the elites have little or no commitment to maintaining the system, they will lack the incentive to accommodate. None of the elites was

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168 See pp. 88.

169 As was demonstrated in the experience of the IMP. See pp.98-101.

170 On the CLC, see pp. 94-98.

radically nationalistic, intent on tearing apart and rebuilding the political system. To attain Independence it had not been necessary to include in their ranks any anti-system elements, and Independence had been attained without bloodshed or bitterness. The Alliance elites, in fact, had participated in the formulation of the Independence Constitution, which was accepted in the Legislative Council by unanimous acclamation.<sup>171</sup>

Third, the Alliance elites were able to "transcend" ethnic cleavages in the sense that they were willing to compromise and accommodate ethnic claims.<sup>171a</sup> They were in many cases personal friends, they believed in pragmatism and moderation, they considered consensus a political necessity, and they came to value the formula for accommodation itself. The sharing of government power among the ethnic components of the Alliance, and "the bargain" provide examples of the fruits of such accommodative attitudes.

Fourth, the elites were able to establish the "rules of the game", namely "the bargain", as just mentioned, and the institutional arrangements for conducting the game. The Alliance elites had a strategy for governing which emphasized representation of the major ethnic groups in the government, and depoliticizing sensitive issues through elite compromise and accommodation. Their strategy included negotiations which were secret, and policy which was often purposely ambiguous

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171 See Means, *Malaysian Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-175.

171a One of the early elites who did not "transcend" ethnic interests was UMNO Vice-President and Minister of Agriculture, Enche Abdul Aziz bin Ishak. He became a champion of the rural Malays in the late 1950s when he announced plans to set up rural rice cooperatives which would eliminate Chinese middlemen. The MCA objected to UMNO about these moves, and the Tunku asked Encik Aziz to backpedal. When he did not desist from his plans, he alienated the Tunku, and by 1962 he had been removed from the Cabinet and was not re-elected as an UMNO Vice-President.

and took the form of gradualism, but which at other times gave the impression of a fait accompli. The Alliance strategy was largely to "buy time" and to win legitimacy if necessary through effectiveness. The elites appeared to realise that alternative approaches, such as strict majority rule, could only lead to rule by one ethnic group and to either forced assimilation or repression. They also seemed to appreciate the fact that the ethnic numbers were too closely matched for the majority to exert its will uncompromisingly upon the minority without creating instability and chaos. Although the Alliance could never claim to represent the vast majority of non-Malays, as it did the Malays, the formula did largely satisfy the demands of the various ethnic groups initially. "[W]hen the whole scene was surveyed, in its social, economic and political aspects, it becomes clear that a kind of short-term rough justice between the claims of the communities was attained."<sup>172</sup>

The most serious threat to "overarching elite cooperation" occurred in the 1959 conflict between UMNO and the MCA. The MCA was at that time temporarily controlled by a new group of elites who were less willing to bargain, who did not fully understand the consociational rules of the game or the institutional procedures for conducting the game, and who were not on close personal terms with the other Alliance elites. A consociational arrangement will not work if the elites of one ethnic

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172 Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., p. 42.

group will not accept compromise, and if the elites take their case into the public arena. Once ethnic demands are made public, compromise becomes exceedingly difficult. The resultant confrontation in 1959 between UMNO and the MCA came close to breaking up the Alliance. The Alliance was saved when, following an UMNO ultimatum, the MCA membership voted the new leaders out and returned the leadership of the party to those MCA elites who have taken part in the Independence agreements.

#### Stable Non-Elite Support

In the beginning, the Alliance Party could claim "stable non-elite support"<sup>173</sup> from followers in their respective parties, ranging from potentially aspiring sub-elites to the public at large. The Alliance was aided by a relatively low level of mass political participation and mobilization, and by widespread deference among the Malays towards the political elite, who tended to be high-ranking hereditarily and English-educated. While there was less deference to the political elites of the non-Malay communities in their own right, admiration and high status was often accorded to those attaining business and/or professional achievements, which would include most of the Alliance non-Malay elites.<sup>174</sup> Further, the top elites, especially

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173 See Chapter 1, pp. 25-26.

174 Judith A. Nagata, "Perceptions of Social Inequality in Malaysia," in Judith A. Nagata (ed.), Pluralism in Malaysia: Myth and Reality, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975, p. 124.



in the beginning, could exercise some control over access to the second echelon (sub-elite) positions, especially in recruiting mainly from the ranks of the English-educated, and they could discipline deviant followers even in the lowest party positions.<sup>175</sup> As a result, the Alliance elites had the autonomy and security necessary to act as genuine representatives of their respective communities.

However, a number of things combined to erode gradually the Alliance's "stable non-elite support". First, the gradual political mobilization of the masses, not encouraged by the elite itself, but rather a by-product of efforts at economic modernization, tended to reduce overall political compliance in the society, and brought a new but comparatively unsophisticated political awareness to the rural villages, where the people tended to be "far more communalistic".<sup>176</sup> Further, it also resulted in increased urbanization and growing spheres of ethnic competition, which tended to heighten ethnic awareness, demands and hostilities. As one observer noted, the "government of any multi-racial country must adopt the policies of compromise, but the tragedy of Malaysia is that the Alliance government's compromises were satisfying less and less people."<sup>177</sup>

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175 Gagliano, op. cit., p. 137.

176 See Marvin L. Rogers, "Political Involvement in a Rural Malay Community," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1968, p. 481. Also see ibid., Sungei Raya: A Sociological Study of a Rural Malay Community Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, No. 15, University of California, Berkeley, 1977; S. Husin Ali, Malay Peasant Society and Leadership, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975; Cynthia H. Enloe, "Taking the Politics Out of Malaysian Ethnic Politics," review article in Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1973), pp. 138-141.

177 Bob Reece, "Dare the Tunku Go?" Far Eastern Economic Review, December 11, 1969, p. 533.

Second, the "outbidding" style of politics practised by the opposition parties, especially PAS and the PAP and the DAP, had the result of chipping away Alliance support on all fronts. The opposition successfully changed the political atmosphere of ethnic accommodation to one of ethnic competition. Any policy pronouncement not completely meeting the demands of one or another community could be, and was, outbid by a section of the opposition. Any new compromise could cost one or another, or even all, of the Alliance component parties some more of its support. Even old compromises were not safe, indeed, "the bargain" itself was attacked as selling out the Malays by PAS and as selling short the non-Malays by the PAP and the DAP.

Third, the growing popularity of the opposition outbidders put a strain on the allegiance of the rank-and-file of the component parties of the Alliance. This strain coincided with the gradual development of friction between the elites of Independence and emerging new leaders. The sub-elites tended to be closer to the grass-roots and more sympathetic to ethnic demands, though they were still very often English-educated. They had played little or no role in formulating the original agreements, and they tended to have grievances about the implementation of some of the terms. The top Alliance elites could still secure party compliance, but not, as time went by, without turning back growing challenges to their authority. The top Alliance elite functioned with considerably less autonomy and security in 1969 than they had in the

1950s.

As a result of increased political mobilization, intensified ethnic demands, declining political deference and compliance, "outbidding" by the opposition, and a less firm allegiance by the rank and file, the Alliance entered the 1969 elections on the defensive. Although the Alliance occupied the vast centre of the political spectrum and its parliamentary majority was secure, it received the votes of only about one-half of the electorate. The shock of the elections and what was perceived as a loss of Alliance mass support (and Alliance legitimacy in terms of being representative of all the major ethnic groups), was enough of a catalyst, given bad judgment by procession organizers, and the government decisions to permit processions, to set off the riots.

When the Alliance was finally disbanded, it was not because of any failing of "overarching elite cooperation", but because, in an open competition system, not enough of the followers chose to follow. It was clear that a new strategy for rule was needed. Still the Alliance had had sufficient "stable non-elite support" for more than a decade and a half, and in that time the elites established the guidelines for ethnic cooperation which still govern the nation.

#### Consociational Devices or Practices

There are some devices or practices associated with a consociational-type government, all of which deviate from the principle of pure majority rule, namely government by grand coalition, the mutual veto,

proportionality, and segmental autonomy.<sup>178</sup>

In Malaysia, the ruling Alliance Party practised the most important of the consociational devices--a grand coalition government. This means a coalition which is broadly-based and includes the representatives of all the major segments or "pillars", but not necessarily all existing political parties. The Alliance government was a permanent coalition representing, through component parties, the Malays, Chinese, and Indians. In the beginning (the 1950s) the Alliance component parties could justifiably claim to be the legitimate spokesmen for their respective communities. However, stable non-elite support gradually eroded, especially on the non-Malay side, and by the 1969 elections, the legitimacy of the MCA and the MIC as plausible ethnic representatives was thrown in serious doubt.

The other consociational devices are considered complementary to the grand coalition. The mutual veto (or minority veto) operated in spirit but was only weakly instituted in Malaysia under the Alliance. The rule of unanimity was practised in the Alliance Executive and National Councils. In the Cabinet, the veto operated informally to a limited extent by way of policy compromises and "package deals" such as "the bargain". In Parliament, a two-thirds majority was required to alter the Constitution. Although UMNO was quite scrupulous in its dealing with its partners,<sup>179</sup> there was no formally instituted permanent

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178. See Chapter 1, pp. 22-23.

179. This view was expressed by top leaders of the MCA and the MIC in interviews in 1975.

protection afforded by the device of a minority veto as such.

Proportionality, by which is meant the allocation among the partners of Cabinet appointments and places on government decision-making bodies, governmental patronage-type posts, electoral seats, and influence over policy decisions, operated in varying degrees. The allocation of Cabinet appointments and places on government bodies and delegations, and the distribution of electoral seats, were roughly proportional to the electoral strength of the partners, although slightly less proportional to the strength of the ethnic groups in the population. Influence over policy decisions was less proportional. Although guided by the agreements in "the bargain", UMNO was the dominant partner, and its leaders held the posts of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. While Tun Sambanthan and especially Tun Tan Siew Sin could in fact exert genuine influence over many policy decisions, they had to depend upon the accommodative spirit and good sense of the top UMNO leaders instead of wielding influence from a basis of equal strength.

Segmental autonomy, or the "rule by the minority over itself in the area of the minority's exclusive concern",<sup>180</sup> did not have extensive application in Malaysia, mostly because the segments were geographically intermingled with no exclusive territorial domains. It did operate to some extent, however, through implementation of the terms of "the bargain", wherein the government tended to leave the jurisdiction over urban business

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180. Arend Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, A Comparative Exploration, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977, p. 41. Also see Chapter 1, p. 23.

and commercial interests to the non-Malays. It also operated to some extent by virtue of limited government intrusion in the cultural and educational activities of the non-Malays. By 1969, however, it was becoming clear that the Malays were less and less inclined to consider these activities as the "exclusive concern" of the non-Malays.

#### Favorable Societal Conditions Conducive to Consociationalism

In Lijphart's consociational model, there are six societal conditions which are conducive, although not mandatory to spawning and/or maintaining overarching elite cooperation and stable non-elite support.<sup>181</sup>

(1) Multiple balance of power. Malaysia has more of a bipolar than a multiple balance of power. This is considered disadvantageous to consociationalism because it may lead to dominance or hegemony instead of cooperation. In fact, in Malaysia under the Alliance it did mean political dominance by the Malays, but this was partially balanced by the economic power of the non-Malays, and it did not preclude cooperation, bargaining or compromises. If the situation had been less balanced, with the Malays more clearly numerically superior, and economically more powerful, it is probable that there would have been more forced assimilation and/or repression and less accommodation. Malaysia's nearly balanced bipolarism (numerically) appears to represent a difficult case for consociationalism, as it is believed that this situation invites a winner-take-all type of ethnic competition between the groups. It did

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181 See Chapter 1, pp. 26-28.

not happen that way in Malaysia because the cooperating elites recognized both the historical claims of the Malays as the indigenous race, and the permanent settlement and legitimate claims of the immigrant races, and they had the will to negotiate compromises on the basic ethnic ground rules for the nation.

(2) Small size of the country involved. It is believed that small size (to a certain limit) is conducive to political management and governmental effectiveness. Malaysia is a small country in terms of population (approximately 12 million, which is comparable to the European consociational nations), with a sound economic base,<sup>182</sup> relatively good communications (less good in the Borneo states and between them and Peninsular Malaysia), and there is sufficient educated manpower for elite recruitment. Political control from the centre is facilitated not only because of a highly centralized form of federalism, but also in general by the comparatively small size of Peninsular Malaysia (less so with the noncontiguous Borneo states). Also, small size tends to mean smaller government numerically, and a smaller circle of elites. This facilitates elite interaction and cohesion.

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182 Malaysia has the highest national income per head in Southeast Asia except for Singapore and oil-rich Brunei, and it is only behind Japan for South and East Asia. Its wealth is derived mainly from the export of timber, rubber, tin, petroleum and petroleum products, palm oil, and some cocoa. See Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 1; "Malaysia '77", Far Eastern Economic Review, September 2, 1977, pp. 47-48, 53-55.

(3) Overarching loyalties. There have been two periods where overarching loyalties temporarily moderated the conflict potential of the ethnic cleavage. The two periods were just prior to Independence and during Confrontation with Indonesia. However, neither period produced any lasting national cohesiveness. Nationalism has not resulted in the creation of an overarching loyalty in Malaysia except among the Malays. The non-Malays may recognize Malaysia as their homeland and feel loyal towards it. However, it is difficult for them to feel any emotional sense of nationalism, given that all of the symbols and trappings of nationalism are Malay.<sup>183</sup>

(4) Segmental isolation. Although they were starting to break down in the last years of the Alliance, there had been clear socio-economic boundaries between the ethnic groups. The groups tended to dwell in separate areas, though sometimes side-by-side, with little social contact, and occupational differentiation resulted in little economic interaction. These boundaries helped to maintain internal group cohesion, considered necessary for elite autonomy, and to minimize the potential for inter-ethnic conflict as a result of social contact and economic competition.

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183 See Milton J. Esman, "Malaysia: Communal Coexistence and Mutual Deterrence," in Ernest Q. Campbell (ed.), Racial Tensions and National Identity, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1972, p. 229; Michael Leifer, Dilemmas of Statehood in Southeast Asia, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972, p. 109.



(5) Prior traditions of elite accommodation. This is considered an important factor for consociationalism, and in Malaysia there is a mixed tradition. The Malays, through Islamic teachings and practice, have a tradition of reaching decisions through the often slow deliberations necessary to achieve consensus, rather than settle for a majority. Consensus is and was highly valued culturally.<sup>184</sup> In a status and deference system, this has meant that a tradition of accommodation by and among elites, as representatives, patrons, or arbiters, has developed. On the other hand, the non-Malays, as immigrants, were torn away from their traditional patterns of elite authority. The general historical pattern among the non-Malays in Peninsular Malaysia has been one of persistent minimal involvement with ethnically external authorities and a reliance on guilds and associations as patrons and protectors.<sup>185</sup> There is little that can be cited as a prior tradition of elite accommodation among the non-Malays, except in terms of deferring to what was and is formally required by the government (British or Malay). The non-Malay tradition of deferring to authority coupled with the Malay tradition of seeking consensus has probably been useful for the practice of elite accommodation in Malaysia.

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184 See Robert Winzeler, "Malay Religion Society and Politics in Kelantan," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1970, p. 30; Raul Manlapus, "Democracy's Not a Western Idea," International Herald Tribune, August 5, 1977; Michael Haas, "The 'Asian Way' to Peace," Pacific Community, Vol. 4, No. 4 (July 1973), pp. 503-505.

185 See Means, Malaysian Politics, op. cit., pp. 27-28, 32-33.

(6) Presence of cross-cutting cleavages. As has been stated in Chapter One, class is a potentially cross-cutting cleavage in Malaysia, but to date it has not materialized as a force which can either compete with or cross-cut the ethnic cleavage.<sup>186</sup> There are no other cleavages which act to effectively cut across ethnicity.

### Consociationalism and the Alliance Party

Consociationalism requires overarching elite cooperation in order to be instituted and stable non-elite support in order to be maintained. There are some devices or practices associated with consociationalism which are believed to be useful to practicing consociation, and there are some favorable societal conditions which may influence the success or failure of an attempt at consociational practices. It is not possible to quantify the extent to which Malaysia under the Alliance was a consociational system. It is possible to submit that, until its stable non-elite support eroded, the extent to which consociation was practiced was considerable.<sup>187</sup> Overarching elite cooperation characterized the operation of the political system. Inter-ethnic bargaining, compromises, and "package deals" by the elites was the modus operandi, rather than a strict majority rule, government versus opposition, and winners and losers political approach. The most important compromise was "the bargain". Institutionally, consociation was practised through the

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186 See pp. 27-28, 46-50.

187 Lijphart called Malaysia during the 1955-1969 period a "reasonably successful consociational democracy" (Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., p. 150).

sharing of governmental power in a grand coalition of parties representing the major ethnic divisions, and in rough proportionality between the partners. The Alliance elites managed, mainly by force of will and example, a consociational political arrangement in a country which had only some of the favorable societal conditions.

CHAPTER 3: 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.<sup>1</sup> The Yang Dipertuan Agung (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>2</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

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- 1 The riots were largely confined to the nation's capital. For details of the post-May 13th government, see R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, Singapore and Vancouver: Federal Publications Ltd., and University of British Columbia Press, 1978, ch. 5.
  - 2 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 (Karl von Vorys, Democracy Without Consensus, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 345-346). One former high-ranking Minister said that, in effect Tun Razak, Tun (Dr.) Ismail, and Tun Tan Siew Sin ran the country (interview, June 17, 1975). However, 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. See Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 5.

activity were banned, including demonstrations or processions, distributing pamphlets or posters, and using loudspeakers, and the uncompleted elections in Sabah and Sarawak were suspended.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the stringent emergency regulations and the well-publicized statement by Tun (Dr.) Ismail that democracy in Malaysia was dead,<sup>4</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>5</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.<sup>6</sup> The first business of Parliament was to pass the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which was designed to remove

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3 See Straits Times (Singapore) May 16, 23, June 12, 1969.

4 Ibid., May 20, 1969.

5 Ibid., June 14, 1969. The Tunku expressed his opinion that Malaysia could only be said to have returned to normalcy if the public could witness a fight between a Malay and a Chinese without panicking (Straits Times (Malaysia), August 1, 1969).

6 Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 5. It is Professor Syed Hussein Alatas' thesis that the real cause for the delay in returning to Parliamentary rule was the problem of the change of leadership in the UMNO ("The Politics of Coalition in Malaysia," Current History, Vol. 63, No. 376 (December 1972), pp. 271-273, 277).

permanently certain ethnically sensitive provisions from political debate by "entrenching" them in the Constitution and by amending the Sedition Act.<sup>7</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",<sup>8</sup> 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

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7 Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 5, 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.

8 The term "radical" or "ultra" is often used to refer to the more extreme Malay nationalists, whereas the more extreme Chinese are often called chauvinists. None of these labels necessarily reflects any particular ideological leaning.

to believe that it would be possible for them to come to power through the electoral process.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> "We are fighting for the survival of our race," one student leader said, "If we do not fight now we will be submerged by the Chinese."<sup>11</sup> 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. However, 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.<sup>12</sup>

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

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- 9 See Why Tunku Abdul Rahman Should Resign, Barisan Bertindak Pelajar-pelajar Malaysia (Malaysian Students Action Front), August 1969 (mimeo); Tunku Abdul Rahman, "Looking Back," The Star, June 23, 1975; Derek Davies, "Some of Our Best Friends...", Far Eastern Review, June 26, 1969, pp. 700-705; ibid., September 18, 1969, pp. 698-700.
- 10 See Why Tunku Abdul Rahman Should Resign, op. cit., Raja Mukharuddin Dain, Message to Malays, distributed to Muslims at the National Mosque, Kuala Lumpur, on 4 July 1969 (mimeo); Bob Reece, "The Tunku Rides Again," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 7, 1969, pp. 320-322; Bob Reece, "Crimes for Democracy?" ibid., September 18, 1969, p. 688.
- 11 Bob Reece, "The Tunku Rides Again," op. cit., p. 321.
- 12 Straits Times (Malaysia), September 3, 1969; Gordon P. Means, Malaysian Politics, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976 (2nd ed.) p. 399.

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>13</sup> When this letter was duplicated and its copies widely circulated, the Tunku responded by initiating an UMNO Supreme Council meeting to discuss the conduct of Dr. Mahathir. The Supreme Council then voted to expel Dr. Mahathir from the party.<sup>14</sup> Another young UMNO member in sympathy with Dr. Mahathir's objectives, Encik 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.<sup>15</sup> The Tunku had stated several times that it would be proper for him to step down if and when his nephew, the Sultan of

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13 From a mimeographed copy of Dr. Mahathir's letter to the Tunku, June 17, 1969, at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies library (Singapore) (classified).

14 Dr. Mahathir was expelled from UMNO on July 19, 1969. See Bob Reece, "The Tunku Rides Again," *op. cit.*, pp. 320-322. In an interview in September, Dr. Mahathir explained that the problem with the Tunku was that he "has not stuck to the original agreements made with the Chinese at the time of Independence. Rather, he had gone on to placate the Chinese by giving in...", Far Eastern Economic Review, September 18, 1969, p. 698.

15 Tun Razak's position in the crisis is somewhat ambiguous. He was apparently cross-pressured but on the whole remained loyal and supportive to the Tunku and tried to stay outside the actual conflict.



Kedah, was elected the Yang Dipertuan Agung (King).<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, when his nephew was elected, the Tunku announced that he would resign immediately after the installation of his nephew as Yang Dipertuan Agung on September 21, 1970.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> To do this, Tun Razak needed to bring some of the younger, better-educated and more dynamic members of UMNO into positions 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".

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16 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 Prime Minister while his nephew was the Yang Dipertuan Agung. For details on the election of the Sultan of Kedah and the Tunku's position, see Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, chs. 5 and 8.

17 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 31, 1970. In December 1970, the Tunku stepped down from the Alliance Party leadership.

18 For an informed article on the difficulties Tun Razak faced, see Pakir Singh, "How Far To Go...?", New Nation, February 22, 1971.

The leadership transition had disrupted UMNO's stability, and, in spite of dire warnings from the top party leaders, it had resulted in a factional struggle between the so-called "new order" and the "old order" groups.<sup>19</sup> As always inside UMNO, membership in factions was fluid and not easily identifiable. Basically, the "new order" group was made up of followers of Tun Razak as well as some "radicals" who were anti-Tunku and anti-"old order", and some long-time members who actively associated with Tun Razak when he took over. The "old order" was generally identified as those closely associated with the Tunku and those older members who had held a variety of party and/or government offices over a number of years. The "radicals" tended to cross-cut the groups; the religious and cultural "radicals" belonging more to the "old order" and the economic "radicals" more to the "new order". As always, there were some members who seemed to defy classification.

The first test of strength came with the January 1971 UMNO General Assembly, where elections were held for all the national party offices. Tun Razak and Tun (Dr.) Ismail were returned unopposed as UMNO President and Deputy President, respectively. However, a sharply contested battle ensued for the three Vice-President posts, the Supreme Council seats, and for the Presidency of UMNO Youth (the latter automatically an UMNO Vice-President, along with the President of Wanita UMNO). Two of the three members elected as Vice-Presidents were

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19 See Straits Times (Malaysia), January 3-4, 16, 1971; Sunday Times (Malaysia), January 24, 1971.

from the "old order", but were viewed as allies of the "new order".<sup>20</sup>

The third member elected was an "old order"-type "radical" who was not identified as being with either group (one of those who defy classification).<sup>21</sup> An incumbent, Encik Khir Johari, a federal Minister definitely linked with the Tunku and the "old order" was surprisingly defeated.<sup>22</sup>

The UMNO Youth elected as its head, Dato Harun, who was viewed as a radical "populist-type" Malay nationalist, and not closely aligned with either Tun Razak or, even less, Tun (Dr.) Ismail, nor particularly with the "old order".

The election results left the "new order" group in a position of strength in the party, especially on the Supreme Council, and raised Tun Razak's stature, but the results did not solve the problem of keeping the "radicals" in the party under tightly disciplined control.<sup>23</sup>

The UMNO Silver Jubilee Assembly in May 1971<sup>24</sup> was vital for Tun Razak's leadership. At this Assembly, although there were no elections there were several important amendments to the UMNO Constitution.

20 They were Encik Ghafar Baba and Tan Sri (later Tun) Sardon (Straits Times (Malaysia), January 24, 1971.

21 Ibid. This was Dato Syed Nasir bin Ismail.

22 Owing to the deference Malays generally accord their leaders, it is highly unusual for an incumbent to lose his position.

23 See Patrick Low (ed.), Trends in Southeast Asia, No. 2, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, July 1971, pp. 93-98; James Morgan, "Changing the Guard," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 6, 1971, pp. 16-17; Straits Times (Malaysia), January 22, 1971.

24 It is unusual for UMNO to hold more than one Assembly per year. However, 1971 was exceptional both because of the previous ban on political activity and also because of the change of leadership in the party.

designed to strengthen the control of the national leadership over the rank-and-file and state leaders. Two of the amendments were viewed as particularly crucial: triennial instead of annual elections to the top national party offices,<sup>25</sup> and Supreme Council control over the choice of state and parliamentary election candidates, after consultation with the divisional committees.

The amendments were highly controversial, and Tun Razak staked his leadership on their approval.<sup>26</sup> When the vote on the amendment for triennial elections was counted, the amendment passed by the slim margin of 180 to 175 votes. However, after this test case, the Assembly mood changed and the delegates quickly adopted the rest of the amendments.

The two 1971 UMNO Assemblies left Tun Razak firmly in charge of the party, and with enough support and prestige to initiate new governmental and party directives. The UMNO factional struggle subsided, Dr. Mahathir, earlier expelled for his letter to the Tunku, was readmitted to the party,<sup>27</sup> and at the June 1972 UMNO General Assembly,

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25 This included the offices of President, Deputy President, the Vice-Presidents, and positions on the Supreme Council, but did not include the heads of UMNO Youth or Wanita UMNO.

26 It seemed somewhat out of character for Tun Razak, a cautious and pragmatic politician, to put his prestige on the line by becoming directly associated with amendments which stood a good chance of being rejected. Undoubtedly, this association meant the difference between approval and rejection. The Tunku, for instance, though thought of as impulsive and as a gambler, had always stayed clear of sponsoring any dangerously controversial party issues, leaving them for his subordinates to fight for. Tun Razak must have believed that he could not control the party sufficiently for his purposes, (i.e. to make some important changes) unless the amendments passed, and this made his gamble necessary. On the opposition of some delegates, see Straits Times (Malaysia), May 9-19, 1971.

27 Dr. Mahathir was expelled from UMNO in July 1969 and readmitted in March 1972 (ibid., March 8, 1972).

the party was described as "united as never before".<sup>28</sup>

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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

Despite some renewed support for the party by various Chinese associations,<sup>31</sup> and an effort to strengthen the party by amending its

- 28 Ibid., June 23, 1972. Also see Stephen Chee, "Malaysia and Singapore: Separate Identities, Different Priorities," Asian Survey, Vol. XIII, No. 2 (February 1973), pp. 151-161.
- 29 See Straits Times (Malaysia), May 14, 1969; Derek Davies, op. cit., p. 702. Tun Tan Siew Sin did not have any election statistics available at that time. However, in an interview in July 1969 he denied that the MCA had declined badly in the election, and attributed the loss of seats to the opposition pacts (J. Victor Morais., (ed.), Blueprint for Unity (Selected Speeches and Statements of Tun Tan Siew Sin), Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters, 1972, pp. 644-645). Later, in January 1971, Tun Tan Siew Sin said that in terms of percentages, UMNO lost more Malay support in 1969 than the MCA lost of Chinese (Straits Times (Malaysia), January 19, 1971). Also see: Bob Reece, "The Parting of the Ways?", Far Eastern Economic Review, June 19, 1969, pp. 662-664.
- 30 Straits Times (Singapore), May 17, 1969; Tun Tan Siew Sin Collection of Speeches, Universiti Sains Malaysia library, Penang (cyclostyled by year), 1970 MCA Press Release.
- 31 Dato Chong Shik Guan, vice-president of the Chinese Assembly Hall, said, "I believe the Chinese have really had a change of mind after what has happened." The MCA may have its defects, he continued, but it was still a great stabilizing force in the country (Straits Times (Malaysia), June 10, 1969). Also see Straits Times (Singapore), May 16, 1969.

Constitution to give the President wider powers,<sup>32</sup> the revitalization of the MCA faltered as soon as it started. Tun Tan Siew Sin told MCA members that the position of the party was very critical as there was a general feeling that the MCA was no longer useful.<sup>33</sup>

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>34</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". There was a limit to the MCA's endurance, Tun Tan warned.<sup>35</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.

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32 Sarawak Tribune, September 13, 1970.

33 Confidential Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the MCA Central General Assembly, Kuala Lumpur, September 11, 1970 (mimeo).

34 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 18, 1971.

35 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 19, 1971. Tun Tan continued to point out the problems of an accommodating party in an outbidding situation. The MCA and MIC were always at a disadvantage because they had to defend the special position of the Malays and the Alliance stand on education and language. This was bound to cost them substantial support, he noted. "We must face the fact that unless the MCA is prepared to play up issues on race and language, it is virtually impossible to obtain, in our view, more than 40 per cent of Chinese support even in the best of circumstances."

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>36</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, led by Alex Lee, working independently of the MCA but with the backing of Tun Tan Siew Sin.<sup>37</sup>

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- 36 Ibid., February 8-9, 1971. In a later speech, Tun Tan elaborated on the sources of Chinese lack of unity. "It is bad enough that we have to be divided into Hakkas, Hokkiens, Cantonese, Hainanese and so on. Recently, I learnt to my horror that the Hakkas themselves were further split into various subcommunities and each sub-community was represented by its own huay kuan [association]. In politics, this could be disastrous" (Straits Times (Singapore), February 18, 1971).
- 37 The Committee, representing a wide spectrum of political views, included: Alex Lee, lawyer son of Tun H.S. Lee; Sim Mow Yu, President of the Federation of Chinese School Teachers who was expelled from the MCA in 1966; a medical doctor; two ex-PAP members; a Chinese-educated lawyer regarded as a socialist; a Chinese school teacher; a rubber dealer and ex-MCA member; a hotelier and ex-Labour Party member; and a businessman and leader of the Hokkien Association. See "Round Table Discussion," (Alex Lee) in Patrick Low, op. cit., pp. 78-79; New Nation, February 17, 1971; James Morgan, "Malaysia: Confessional Victory," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 20, 1971, p. 11. It is possible that the Unity Movement might have had some links with a "Save the MCA" plan formulated by Douglas Lee (Alex Lee's older brother) and some others after May 13th. See Malayan Thung Pau, May 28, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

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.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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".<sup>40</sup> 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

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38 Apparently some members of the Committee were already meeting with Tun Tan in late 1970. Tun Razak was briefed on the Unity Movement as soon as it was launched. See New Nation, February 19, 1971; V.K. Chin, "Last Chance for the MCA," Singapore Herald, February 15, 1971.

39 See Straits Times (Malaysia), February 8-9, 1971; New Nation, February 15, 17, 1971; Singapore Herald, February 15, 1971; The Guardian (MCA), May 1971; The MCA Intra-Party Struggle, 1973 (4/7/73 (mimeo)), pp. 2-4, from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies library (classified); Alex Lee, "Trends in Politics: A Malaysian-Chinese View," in Patrick Low, op. cit., pp. 49-53; "Round Table Discussion" (Alex Lee), ibid., pp. 78-80.

40 Singapore Herald, February 15, 1971.



bloods" would penetrate the MCA, using Tun Tan, and oust the "old guard"<sup>41</sup>. MCA Vice-President Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh called the Chinese Unity Movement an "overt act of chauvinism",<sup>42</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.<sup>43</sup> The MCA "old guard" used their positions to undermine Alex Lee and 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.<sup>44</sup> 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>45</sup> Tun Tan made his opposition clear, warning that such

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41 In March, for example, Alex Lee was appointed a member of the MCA Central Working Committee (Straits Times (Malaysia), March 23, 1971).

42 Singapore Herald, February 26, 1971.

43 James Morgan, op. cit., p. 11.

44 Undoubtedly Tun Tan's backing lent the Unity Movement respectability, especially in the eyes of UMNO and the Government.

45 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 15, 1971.

a move would cause confusion and disunity.<sup>46</sup> Soon after, two founder members of the Liaison Committee were arrested under the Sedition Act,<sup>47</sup> and a week later the Liaison Committee announced that it had decided not to register as a political organization.<sup>48</sup>

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.<sup>49</sup> The Perak Task Force was organized

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46 Ibid., April 16-17, 1971.

47 They were Sim Mow Yu and Koo Eng Kwang, arrested for violations of the Sedition Act committed in speeches delivered in Ipoh on February 18, 1971 during a Chinese Unity Movement rally (ibid., April 18, 1971).

48 Ibid., April 26, 1971.

49 The Task Force group disagreed with the approach of the Chinese Unity Movement because it offered no way of turning emotions and ideas into concrete action. At first the Task Force group had thought it would approach one hundred or more top leaders of the guilds and associations, explain the problems of the MCA, and solicit their support. This approach was dropped after the experience of the Chinese Unity Movement (interview with T.C. Choong, former state deputy secretary of the MCA and a leader of the Perak Task Force, March 14, 1975).

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>50</sup> Dato Teh's group, which numbered sixteen at the beginning, 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.<sup>51</sup> The Task Force also set up the Shin Han Seah Association as a political discussion organization designed to attract young intellectuals and professionals who would otherwise be reluctant to be associated with the MCA. 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.<sup>52</sup>

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50 Interviews with Dato Teh Siew Eng, organizer of the Perak Task Force, former Senator, and former Perak State Executive Committee member, March 13 and 16, 1975.

51 The Perak Task Force organization was tightly controlled. Field workers were given four weeks instruction before going out, and there was extensive supervision in the field (interview with T. C. Choong, March 14, 1975).

52 On the purpose and activities of the Perak Task Force, see The Guardian (MCA), April 1972, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 5; "Political Scene" by Huen Peng Hong, The Star, July 11, 1972; ibid., August 8, 1972; "Political Scene" by M.G.G. Pillai, ibid., August 16, 1972; The MCA Intra-Party Struggle, 1973, op. cit., pp. 4-10.

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>53</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".<sup>54</sup> 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".<sup>55</sup> In December, the Task Force was given additional prestige when one of its leaders, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik,

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53 August 23, 1971.

54 See Straits Times (Malaysia), September 30, October 9, 12, 16, 19, 1971.

55 During the September-October Perak crisis, Tun Tan Siew Sin was out of the country, and Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh chaired the ad hoc committee of the Central Working Committee which resolved the crisis.

was appointed as a Senator and then named by Tun Razak as a Minister with Special Functions (New Villages).<sup>56</sup>

However, in 1972 events started to work against the Task Force. In April, Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh died in London.<sup>57</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. At the end of April, the MCA expelled two Perak Task Force leaders for their public opposition to the Alliance-PPP Coalition Government in Perak.<sup>58</sup> The Task Force, on the defensive, began taking on a more chauvinistic stance, and complained freely to the Press. By August it was noticeable that Tun Tan Siew Sin had cooled off considerably towards the Task Force,<sup>59</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

56 Sunday Times (Malaysia), December 22, 1971; Straits Times (Malaysia), December 23, 1971.

57 According to Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, this was the turning point for the Perak Task Force (interview, March 18, 1975).

58 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 27, 1972. T. C. Choong, one of the expelled leaders, said that while the coalition was a big blow to the Task Force, the group was really objecting in principle to the fact that they were not consulted beforehand. He noted, however, that the first clash with Tun Tan Siew Sin came earlier when Dr. Lim Keng Yaik was appointed as Minister. The Task Force was worried that the appointment was just to quiet the Task Force down and that the Ministry would be powerless and in the end they would be blamed (interview, March 14, 1975).

59 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.

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. 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>

By mid-1971 the MIC did show some flickerings of life, but this was only in relation to an internal conflict developing between Tun

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60 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 thousands 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).

61 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 19, 1971.

62 Sunday Times (Malaysia), April 18, 1971.

Sambanthan and Tan Sri Manickavasagam for control of the party. This conflict was the sole preoccupation of the MIC over the next two years.<sup>63</sup>

In October 1971, the MIC Central Working Committee postponed the Presidential elections until March 1972, as a compromise solution to ease the tension and violence between the contending groups within the party, in spite of warnings by the Registrar of Societies that the party could be de-registered for failing to hold its annual meetings for the last three years.<sup>64</sup> The Tunku offered to mediate, but in 1972 the MIC turned to Tun Razak when the crisis appeared to be getting out of control. Tun Razak worked out a compromise solution wherein Tun Sambanthan would remain as President one more year and then would retire in June 1973. In return, Tan Sri Manickavasagam would withdraw from the Presidential election.<sup>65</sup> Although this compromise was accepted by both of the leaders, their followers persisted with the struggle. An Indian newspaper editorial remarked that "nowadays there is no difference between an MIC meeting and a clash between gangsters."<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, on June 30, 1973 Tun Sambanthan resigned as agreed and Tan Sri Manickavasagam was unanimously elected as the MIC President.<sup>67</sup>

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63 See Straits Times (Malaysia), August 5, 8-9, October 8-9, 1971, March 16, 1972, June 28-30, August 25, 1973; Sunday Times (Malaysia) July 1, 1973.

64 Straits Times (Malaysia), October 8-9, 1971.

65 Ibid., March 16, 1972.

66 Tamil Malar, March 4, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian. Tun Sambanthan remarked that sometimes he wondered "whether there is a mini-mafia at work within the MIC" (Press Statement, June 27, 1973 (mimeo), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies library).

67 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 28-30, 1973; Sunday Times (Malaysia), July 1, 1973.

With the leadership crisis resolved, 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.<sup>68</sup>

The first year after the riots, when Tun Razak had already assured the country that the emergency NOC rule would not continue

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68 See Bob Reece, "Crimes for Democracy?", op. cit., p. 688; Straits Times (Malaysia), March 3, 1971; Bob Reece, "Dare the Tunku Go?", Far Eastern Economic Review, December 11, 1969, pp. 550-553; Louis Kraar, "Closing the Racial Gap in Malaysia," New Leader, Vol. LIV, No. 2 (January 25, 1971), pp. 11-12; Felix V. Gagliano, Communal Violence in Malaysia 1969: The Political Aftermath, Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No. 13, 1970, pp. 33-39; John Slimming, Malaysia, Death of a Democracy, London: John Murray, 1969, p. 71; Nancy L. Snider, "Communalism and the Breakdown of Malayan Parliamentary Democracy," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1972, p. 303.



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. To observers, it appeared as if "nobody has thought of creating a new political structure."<sup>69</sup>

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>70</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

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69 James Morgan, "Parliamentary Questions," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 20, 1971, pp. 21-23.

70 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.

ensure ethnic harmony and to allow the government to get on with the major task of reducing Malay economic grievances;<sup>71</sup> that the Westminster model of democracy needed to be adapted to fit better with Malaysia's political and social environment;<sup>72</sup> that Malay unity would be a major goal;

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71. 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-rousing...." (Development Implementation in Malaysia, " Malaysian Management Review, Vol. 3, No. 1 (July 1968), p. 2). Also see Derek Davies, "The Racial Balance Sheet," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 10, 1969, pp. 119-122; James Morgan, "The Challenge Ahead," ibid., September 26, 1970, pp. 28-30.
72. 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 Kerjaan, 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.). Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), September 22, 1971; F.E. Dessauer, Stability, New York; The MacMillan Co., 1949, p. 130.

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>73</sup>

Apparently Tun Razak had decided, tentatively at least, on a coalition-building scheme sometime during the talks held in 1969,<sup>74</sup> though by April 1970 he had not firmly committed the government to any particular strategy.<sup>75</sup>

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73 "Leadership and a Motivated Society" (translation of talk at the 8th General Meeting of the National Association of Muslim Students, August 2, 1969), Development Forum, Vol. II, No. 2 (December 1969), p. 5.

74 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.

75 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.

The first step in translating the new ideas into concrete action was taken in setting up the National Consultative Council (NCC) in January 1970.<sup>76</sup> Invitations by Tun Razak were sent to all major political parties to participate in "the new political order" by representation on the NCC.<sup>77</sup> Originally, all of the parties except for the DAP agreed to participate, but then the PR (now PSRM) withdrew its representative.<sup>78</sup> 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>79</sup>

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- 76 For details, see Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 5. Encik Khalil Akasah attributed the idea of the NCC to Tun Razak (interview, March 21, 1975). A National Goodwill Council was also established, mainly through the interest and efforts of the Tunku. The NGC had the task of fostering ethnic goodwill on a day-to-day and village-to-village basis (*Sarawak Tribune*, September 25, 1970). However, the NGC was never a high-powered body like the NCC. Another body, the Department of National Unity, was also set up, to study ethnic problems in depth, and to propose long-term solutions on the basis of its research.
- 77 Interview with Encik Khalil Akasah (June 25, 1975).
- 78 *Straits Times* (Singapore), January 24, 1970; Bob Reece, "The Obstacle Race," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 5, 1970, p. 5. The virtually defunct Labour Party was not invited.
- 79 Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 5. 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 a widely representative body ethnically, politically, occupationally, and territorially. It included in its ranks spokesmen for all of the ethnic communities (except for that sector of the Chinese community which regarded the DAP (or the MCP) as its 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.

The stated aim of the NCC was "for the purpose of establishing positive and practical guidelines for inter-racial cooperation and social integration for the growth of a national identity".<sup>80</sup>

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>81</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.<sup>82</sup> 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>83</sup>

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80 Tan Sri Abdul Kadir bin Yusof, "The Road Back to Parliament" Malaysian Digest, Vol. 2, No. 21 (November 14, 1970), p. 2; Straits Times (Malaysia), January 1, 12-14, 1970. Also see R.S. Milne, "'National Ideology' and Nation-Building in Malaysia," Asian Survey, Vol. X, No. 7, (July 1970), pp. 563-573.

81 Tun Razak was intent, above all, on consensus (interview with Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, member of the NCC and former Chairman of Gerakan, September 17, 1974).

82 Sarawak Tribune, August 6, 1970.

83 Interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah (March 21, June 12, 1975).

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 Peoples' 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<sup>84</sup>

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.<sup>85</sup> 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

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84 For details of the historical development of the parties and the party system in Sarawak, see R.S. Milne and K.J. Ratnam, Malaysia--New States in a New Nation, London: Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 69-244; Michael B. Leigh, The Rising Moon, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974, pp. 52-115.

85 See Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 7.

has on several occasions used its muscle to remove troublesome Chief Ministers,<sup>86</sup> 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 and "Sarawak-ethnic".

The Sarawak Alliance is patterned after the Kuala Lumpur Alliance, but with some differences in practice.<sup>87</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. The present Sarawak Alliance consists of one ethnically mixed (though Malay dominated) party, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

In 1963, one of the Malay-dominated parties, Party Negara

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86 The Chief Ministers removed were Dato Donald (later Tun Mohd. Fuad) Stephens by resignation in 1965, Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan by a complicated dismissal in 1966, and Tun Datu Haji Mustapha bin Datu Harun by resignation in 1975.

87 See Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-155 for a detailed account of differences in the Alliance formula as practised in Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak and Sabah. Also see Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 7.

Sarawak (PANAS), left the Alliance when it felt it was not getting its share of rewards.<sup>88</sup> 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. Soon after, PANAS 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.<sup>89</sup> It was organized by a group of moderate Chinese who wanted to create a mildly socialist and multi-ethnic party. The SUPP has been, from the beginning, under the top control of Datuk Ong Kee Hui (now Tan Sri) 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

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88. There was also a long-standing conflict between PANAS and BARJASA that had its roots in the 1946 divisions among the Malays into pro-cession and anti-cession groups.

89. See Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-82, for an historical account of the SUPP.



and disloyal. First, the SUPP was infiltrated by Communists who sought to use the party as a "front".<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> 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.<sup>93</sup>

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90 Infiltration was easy since membership was open to virtually all who applied. See *ibid.*, pp. 72-82; The Communist Threat to Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Cetak Kerhaan, 1966, pp. 4-5.

91 Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75. The Natives are the indigenous people in Sarawak and Sabah.

92 The SUPP was badly spilt on the issue of participating in the Malaysian Solidarity Convention. The extremists thought it would acknowledge the legitimacy of the Federation of Malaysia.

93 Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Despite government harrassment, 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),  
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it would be best to have a Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition.

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94 Interview (March 24, 1975).

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. Tan Sri Ong told the Press that he had no desire to "put the clock back" on Malaysia.<sup>95</sup> 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>96</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.<sup>97</sup> Once again, the Special Branch predicted a minority government outcome in Sarawak.<sup>98</sup>

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 recognized leader of the Sarawak Alliance, Datuk Pattingi Haji Rahman Yakub.<sup>99</sup> Tun Razak stayed in

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95 Straits Times, April 23, 1969.

96 Interview with a federal Minister in 1975.

97 See Tun (Dr.) Ismail, "What Lies Ahead for Malaysia," Malaysian Digest, May 14, 1970, pp. 1 and 3; Sarawak Tribune, May 26, June 6, 1970.

98 Interview with Datuk Stephen Yong (July 19, 1974). Datuk Yong was informed of the predictions, which turned out to be quite accurate.

99 From interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah (June 12, 1975), Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (June 18, 1975), Tan Sri Mohd. Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975).

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>100</sup> Further, he was convinced by the argument that Communism could not be successfully opposed in Sarawak unless the SUPP was in the government.<sup>101</sup>

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.<sup>102</sup> The final election results left the Sarawak Alliance just short of a stable majority,<sup>103</sup> with Pesaka hedging about whether it was in or out of the Alliance. 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.<sup>104</sup> However, on July 5th Datuk Yong, dismissing the minimal concessions offered the SUPP by SNAP and Pesaka, and aware that the

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100 Interviews with Tunku Abdul Rahman (May 7 and 30, 1975). Also see Leigh, *op. cit.*, p. 130. The Tunku announced his support for the coalition publicly in August 1970. See the Sarawak Tribune, August 25, October 14-15, 1970.

101 Interview with Tan Sri Mohd. Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975).

102 See the Sarawak Tribune, July 4-5, 7-8, 1970; Sunday Tribune, July 6, 1970.

103 The Council Negri results for 47 seats were: Bumiputera 12, SCA 3, Pesaka 9 (including 1 former Independent), SUPP 11, and SNAP 12. The election in one seat, a SUPP stronghold, was postponed.

104 For fascinating accounts of the intrigue and drama in Kuching during this period, see Leigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-147; Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-240.

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>105</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.<sup>106</sup> Evidently, Pesaka was being difficult about the coalition, and Tun Razak wanted some Iban representation in the government.<sup>107</sup>

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.<sup>108</sup> The SCA, obviously undermined by the coalition, nevertheless announced its support for it after a day's delay.<sup>109</sup> Pesaka, however, declared that it had decided not to join the coalition government.<sup>110</sup> 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,

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105 Interview with Datuk Stephen Yong (July 19, 1974).

106 Sunday Tribune, July 6, 1970. Also see Bob Reece, "Unlikely Alliance," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 16, 1970, pp. 6-7.

107 Interview with Encik Sidi Munan, former leader of Pesaka Youth (July 18, 1974). Encik Sidi Munan was directly involved with the recruitment of the two Pesaka Ibans.

108 Sarawak Tribune, July 8, 1970.

109 Ibid., July 9, 1970.

110 Ibid., July 8, 1970.

and that it supported the coalition.<sup>111</sup> 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>112</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 Pattingi Haji Rahman Yakub of Bumiputera was named as the Chief Minister, and Bumiputera was given one other post in the six member Cabinet.<sup>113</sup> The SUPP was given a Deputy Chief Ministership (Datuk Stephen Yong) and one other Cabinet post, equal control over policies and appointments, and the promise that the policies enumerated in its Election Manifesto would be implemented.<sup>114</sup> Later, in December, the SUPP was also given a federal ministership (Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui), which raised some interesting coalition questions (discussed later).<sup>115</sup>

111 Ibid., July 10, 1970. Technically, Pesaka had not left the Sarawak Alliance, even though it had contested the elections on its own and with its own symbol and with some candidates competing against the Sarawak Alliance. Michael Leigh reports that Temenggong Jugah was summoned to Kuala Lumpur, where Tun Razak had already returned, and given the choice of joining the coalition or resigning his federal Cabinet post (op. cit., p. 146). Also see Goh Cheng-Teik, "Sarawak: Yakub's Election Coup," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 30, 1970, pp. 31-33.

112 Sarawak Tribune, July 12, 1970.

113 The SUPP would have preferred an Iban Chief Minister, but this point was not open to negotiation by Kuala Lumpur and Bumiputera (interview with Datuk Stephen Yong, July 19, 1974).

114 See Leigh, op. cit., pp. 143-147; Milne and Ratnam, op. cit., pp. 238-239. Later, Datuk Stephen Yong said that the SUPP had underestimated the power of the Office of Chief Minister, and as a result, the SUPP did more giving than taking, though it had a veto over issues which might seriously affect its support (interview, July 19, 1970).

115 Sarawak Tribune, December 10-11, 14, 1970.

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.<sup>116</sup> Pesaka was given two Cabinet posts, including the other Deputy Chief Ministership, but these were to be selected by the Chief Minister.<sup>117</sup> 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 favoring 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.<sup>118</sup> Fourth, the Kuala Lumpur leadership

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- 116 The SUPP wanted the SCA completely out (interview with Datuk Stephen Yong, July 19, 1970).
- 117 Milne and Ratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 240. The Chief Minister by-passed the top party officials when he named the Pesaka Cabinet members. Apparently the SUPP insisted to Bumiputera that Pesaka should be represented, although part of the problem was Temenggong Jugah's bad feelings towards the SUPP as a result of the SNAP-Pesaka-SUPP coalition talks (interview with Datuk Stephen Yong, July 19, 1970). Allegedly, SNAP and Pesaka believed Datuk Yong had committed himself to that coalition more than was later apparent.
- 118 The Sarawak Communist Organization was in a dilemma over the coalition government. In an August 1970 directive, it finally decided its members should remain within the SUPP and pressure the party to fulfill its coalition pledges. Failing this, its members would resign, leaving the SUPP "an empty shell" (The Threat of Armed Communism in Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1971.).

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".<sup>119</sup> Finally, the Sarawak coalition provided a "test-case" for Tun Razak's coalition scheme.

When Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui was named to the federal Cabinet in December 1970, the question was asked by newsmen and other parties whether the coalition now extended to the federal level.<sup>120</sup> The answer was that Tan Sri Ong's decision to join the Cabinet was his own, and not the party's, and this had no effect on the previous agreement that SUPP's MP's would vote with the government on national issues.<sup>121</sup>

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119 Sarawak Tribune, July 18, 1970.

120 Ibid., December 10, 11 (editorial), 14, 1970.

121 Ibid., December 10-11, 1970. In fact there was a long delay before Tan Sri Ong could accept a federal ministership because some party members objected (interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, March 24, 1975).



Bumiputera also had good reason to favor the coalition.<sup>122</sup> 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 programs. 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>123</sup> They understood in 1970 that an opposition coalition government would have meant "no early return to control by an elected

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122 There was no agreement among the people interviewed as to whether Datuk Pattingi Haji Rahman Yakub favored and encouraged the coalition from the start, or whether he had to be convinced of its merits by Kuala Lumpur. He signed the coalition agreement on behalf of Bumiputera.

123 Interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui (March 24, 1975). Tan Sri Ong estimated that a SUPP government would have only lasted perhaps six months.

government",<sup>124</sup> as the state was still being run by a State Operations Committee (SOC). Further, the SUPP leaders considered SNAP under Datuk Ningkan an unreliable coalition partner, and they believed that Temenggong Jugah could be pressured to take Pesaka over to the other side.<sup>125</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.<sup>126</sup> 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 Sibu branch aired strenuous objections, but when the national leaders asked that it be given a trial, the protest quieted down.<sup>127</sup> However, according to Datuk Stephen Yong, it took a year to convince followers of the merits of the coalition.<sup>128</sup> During that time, the SUPP leadership was given some help. First, the application for a permit for the SUPP

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124 Leigh, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

125 Interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui (March 24, 1975).

126 Leo Ah Bang, "Elite Cohesion in Malaysia: A Study of Alliance Leadership," M.S.S. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1972, p. 178 (interview with Ong Kee Hui on October 19, 1971); Leigh, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Bob Reece, "Unlikely Alliance," *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

127 Interview with Encik Dennis Law, editor of the Sarawak Tribune (July 18, 1974).

128 Interview (July 19, 1974).

Delegates Conference scheduled for December 1970, when party elections would be held and the leaders expected to explain the coalition satisfactorily, was rejected by the SOC on "security grounds".<sup>129</sup>

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.<sup>130</sup>

#### 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

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129 Sarawak Tribune, December 15, 18, 1970. Leigh, op. cit., p. 157.

130 Interview with Datuk Amar Haji Abdul Taib bin Mahmud, Minister of Information (March 24, 1975). Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui noted that the extremists had a choice of SUPP or the jungle (interview, March 24, 1975).

December 1970, Tun Razak told reporters that former Minister Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh's observation that "a coalition government would be the best thing for Malaysia..." was a "personal view", and it was not, he stressed, the Alliance view".<sup>131</sup> Earlier, 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>132</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

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131 Sarawak Tribune. December 8, 1970. Tan Sri Khaw Kai Boh's speech in Ipoh on December 6, 1970, is discussed in The Guardian (MCA) Vol. 4, No. 2. (June/July 1972), p. 8.

132 Sarawak Tribune, December 7, 1970.

with events which had transpired.

### The Background

Dr. Lim Chong Eu, former President of the MCA, returned from 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, 1968.<sup>133</sup>

The Gerakan was comprised of three distinct groups: Dr. Lim Chong Eu and his former-UDP Penang followers; Dr. Tan Chee Khoon and the ex-LP group; and Professor Syed Hussein Alatas and an "anti-corruption" academic group. Professor Alatas was named as Party Chairman. The

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133 The Gerakan was approved by the Registrar of Societies on May 25, 1968. During the period of discussions, the Gerakan founders asked the DAP and the PPP if they would be interested in amalgamation. They were not; in particular the DAP wanted nothing to do with the ex-LP members. See Ho Sooi Beng, "The Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia--An Investigation Into the Breakup of a Malaysian Non-Communal Political Party," Graduation Exercise, University of Malaya, August 1972, pp. 12-15. The Gerakan's English translation is Malaysian People's Movement.

party program, the result of efforts to accommodate three distinct groups of political views, supported non-communalism, 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.

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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.

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134 The party sought compromises on the government's language and education policies without clearly rejecting these policies, but it was firm on preserving Chinese and Tamil secondary education. Gerakan issued a party program in April 1968, and an election manifesto in 1969. See Md. Aris Ariffin, "Coalition Government in Penang," Graduation Exercise, University of Malaya, August 1973, p. 13. On the Gerakan 30-point manifesto, see von Vorys, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-272.

### 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>135</sup> Tun Razak soon after named Dr. Lim as Chairman of the Penang State Operations Committee.<sup>136</sup> 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>137</sup> By September 1969, Bob Reece was reporting that Kuala Lumpur was friendly towards Penang and Dr. Lim co-operative to the point that some Gerakan voters were complaining that he was becoming "a mouth-piece of the Alliance."<sup>138</sup>

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135 William Shaw, Tun Razak, His Life and Times, Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malaysia Sdn., Bhd., 1976, p. 206.

136 It was not necessarily automatic that the Chief Minister of each state would become the Chairman of that state's SOC. In Sarawak, the Federal Secretary was named instead of the Chief Minister, who was a member of the Sarawak Alliance.

136 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 10, 1974, (Dr. Lim Chong Eu). Evidently, before the friendship was interrupted, Dr. Lim used to stay at Tun Razak's house when he was in Kuala Lumpur (interview with Dr. Chandrasekaran Pillay, former Lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang (February 4, 1975)).

138 "Out on a Limb," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 11, 1969, p. 644.

Dr. Lim Chong Eu gave the appearance of building an increasingly closer relationship with the federal government.<sup>139</sup> While the Dr. Tan Chee Khoo--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>140</sup> By 1970, some of the Gerakan leaders already believed that Dr. Lim was seeking formal ties of some nature with the Alliance.<sup>141</sup>

Shortly after the return to parliamentary rule in April 1971, a Gerakan internal coup attempt to topple Dr. Lim Chong Eu was initiated. The

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139 Some speeches showing Dr. Lim's warming relationship with the federal government can be found in Collection of Speeches of Lim Chong Eu, Universiti Sains Malaysia library collection, 3 vols (xerox) July 30, 1969, May 19, 1970, March 25, 1971; Straits Times (Malaysia), September 2, 1970, February 15, March 26, April 4, 20, May 24, July 17, November 6, December 10, 1971. In March 1971, a DAP member noted that it "looks like the Gerakan has one leg in the government" (ibid., March 17, 1971).

140 Information in this section is based on interviews with Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, President of Pekemas (July 2, 1975); Professor Syed Hussein Alatas (September 17, 1974), Encik Tan Tim Hwa, Gerakan Penang State Secretary (May 21, 1975); Encik Mustapha Hussein, former Penang Deputy Chief Minister (April 30, 1975); Encik Ong Yi How, former Gerakan and Pekemas state assemblyman, now back with the MCA (April 27, 1975).

141 Contact between the state government and the Gerakan party organization was virtually nil during the period of SOC rule, and party officials found it difficult to get Dr. Lim to explain his intentions. However, Dr. Lim apparently persuaded most of the party leaders that Gerakan would assume more of an oppositional stance after the return to parliamentary rule in February 1971 (interview with Encik Ong Yi How, April 27, 1975).



attempt failed, but the party split, and by July Dr. Lim was left with only 12 supporters in the 24-man state assembly.<sup>142</sup> 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>143</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.<sup>144</sup>

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,<sup>145</sup> and the government survived without the assured Alliance support that it would have been required otherwise.<sup>146</sup>

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142 Straits Times (Malaysia) June and July 1971, especially June 14-15, July 12, 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.

143 Ibid., July 18, November 23, 1971; Straits Echo, September 11, 1971.

144 Interview with Datuk Sam Ah Chow, Penang State Chairman of the MCA (May 7, 1975).

145 Encik Ong Yi How felt he was caught in a dilemma. If he did not support Gerakan and the government fell, a Malay Chief Minister might have been installed. Then the Chinese would have never forgiven him, and if there had been racial trouble he would have felt responsible. He said that Alliance votes were not certain at this point. He added that Dr. Lim Chong Eu was a very "persuasive" speaker in such circumstances (interview, April 27, 1975). Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), September 21, 1971, June 9, 1972.

146 They abstained. See ibid., September 28, 1971; Straits Echo, September 30, 1971.

At about this time, Tun Razak dispatched several envoys to Penang to talk to Dr. Lim Chong Eu about a coalition.<sup>147</sup> In December, the Gerakan decided not to oppose the Alliance in the Muda State by-election in Province Wellesley, to preserve "cordial relations".<sup>148</sup> By the year's end, the Press was reporting coalition rumors, and on January 2, 1972, it reported that Tun Razak and Dr. Lim Chong Eu were engaged in "hush-hush talks" in Penang.<sup>149</sup>

Finally, on February 13, 1973, 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.<sup>150</sup> 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

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147 Interview with Encik Khalil Akasah (June 12, 1975). Encik Khalil was one of the coalition negotiators.

148 Straits Times (Malaysia), November 6, December 10, 1971.

149 Ibid., December 31, 1971, January 1, 1972; Straits Echo, December 31, 1971; Sunday Mail, January 2, 1972.

150 Straits Times (Malaysia), February 14-15, 1972. Encik Lim Kean Siew's comment (referring to Dr. Lim Chong Eu) on the coalition was: "return of the prodigal son" (ibid., April 21, 1972).

up under Dr. Lim Chong Eu and a Coordinating Council established with  
 Tun Tan Siew Sin as its chairman.<sup>151</sup> 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.<sup>152</sup>

#### 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.<sup>153</sup> 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

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151 Ibid., February 17, 19, March 2, 4, 1972; Sunday Times (Malaysia),  
 July 16, 1972.

152 Trends in Southeast Asia, No. 2, op. cit., p. 101; The Star,  
 January 2, 1974.

153 Dr. Mahathir said that the "Alliance believes that its participation  
 in the Penang State Government can ensure the smooth implementation  
 of development projects (Straits Times (Malaysia), February 29, 1972).

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.<sup>154</sup> 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.<sup>155</sup>

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.<sup>156</sup> Certainly, the split contributed to a classic coalition situation, and it probably had a catalytic effect on the outcome.

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154 This was confirmed by Dr. Tan Chee Khoo (interview, July 2, 1975) and Encik Mustapha Hussein (interview, April 30, 1975). It was also noted by the latter that Tun Razak "could not stand" the DAP.

155 In general, the Penang Malays also supported the coalition because they viewed it as amounting to a national UMNO take-over. Later, they would express some dissatisfaction over Dr. Lim Chong Eu's policies and some dismay that the federal government was not forcing Dr. Lim to do more for the Penang Malays.

156 Mohd. Aris Ariffin, for example, after field research in Penang, concluded that the Gerakan split led directly to the coalition, and that there was no coalition in mind before the breakup (*op. cit.*, pp. 24-26). Dr. Lim Chong Eu had no comments on the subject (interview, April 25, 1975).

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.<sup>157</sup> 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 dedicated or career oppositionist (in the sense of "Mr. Opposition", the name given to Dr. Tan Chee Khoo). He had been in the opposition wilderness a long time. Although he had championed Chinese language, education, and culture as a opposition politician in the UDP, he apparently had already changed his thinking about these causes by the 1969 elections.<sup>158</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

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157 According to Ho Sooi Beng, Dr. Lim "ruled in constant fear of defections". Also, Penang was renowned for political defections (op. cit., p. 34).

158 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 not in tune with the times. This led to a watered-down Gerakan platform on these issues.

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.<sup>160</sup> On the other hand, it was alleged that Dr. Lim was content to hold his Penang base and was no longer a "fighter". 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 antagonise 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.<sup>161</sup> 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.<sup>162</sup> Most of this would be possible only if the federal government was prepared to offer substantial financial assistance to the state.

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159 Examples of this have been cited earlier.

160 Interview with Professor Syed Hussein Alatas (September 17, 1974).

161 Ibid.,

162 See, for example, "The Malaysian Business Interview: Dr. Lim Chong Eu, Chief Minister of Penang," Malaysian Business, February 1973, pp. 22-25. Also see: Stephen Chee, op. cit., p. 153.

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.<sup>163</sup> 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.<sup>164</sup> 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.<sup>165</sup> However,

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163 This view was confirmed in interviews with Dr. Tan Chee Khoo (July 2, 1975); Professor Syed Hussein Alatas (September 17, 1974); and Encik Mustapha Hussein (April 30, 1975); and supported in writings by Ho Sooi Beng, op. cit., passim; 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, pp. 294-295; Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Coalition Politics--The Why and Whither," Commentary (January-March 1973), pp. 4-5, 16-17.

164 Sunday Times (Malaysia), April 16, 1972.

165 See China Press, April 9, 1972, and Malayan Thung Pau, April 14, 1972, both as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; Straits Echo, April 14, 1972.

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.<sup>166</sup> 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.<sup>167</sup> 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.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> For a detailed résumé of the history of the PPP, see R.K. Vasil, Politics in a Plural Society, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 222-248.

<sup>167</sup> The PPP did have some branches in other states, but they were not important.

<sup>168</sup> The Seenivasagam brothers seemed unable to stop the factional strife which developed in the party. By the early 1960s, the factional conflict had settled into a steady battle between Encik Khong Kok Yat and Encik R.C.M. Rayan and their respective groups. This probably developed in 1964 when R.C.M. Rayan replaced Khong Kok Yat as a party vice-president (Straits Times, September 14, 1964). After Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam died in 1975, however, Khong Kok Yat outmaneuvered R.C.M. Rayan for the presidency of the PPP, and the latter and his group quit the party.



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.<sup>169</sup>

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169 See Snider, op. cit., p. 167.

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.<sup>170</sup> 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

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170 Unlike all of the other coalitions, there seems to be an absence of identifiable Tun Razak-appointed envoys to "feel out" this coalition. Encik Selvendra Rajendram, Special Assistant to the Director, USIS, thought that perhaps the man behind the PPP-side of the coalition was wealthy Perak businessman Chan Swee Ho (interview, June 10, 1975). I was unable to find out any information on this. Dato Sri Haji Kamaruddin b. Mohd. Isa, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and Mentri Besar of Perak at the time of the coalition, stated that the coalition was worked out by Tun Razak and Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam (interview, July 3, 1975).

program to reform and/or abolish local authorities,<sup>171</sup> 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".<sup>172</sup> 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.<sup>173</sup> Then, in February 1972, it was announced that the federal government had decided to continue the suspension of local authority elections.<sup>174</sup> 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>175</sup>

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171 See Paul Tennant, "The Decline of Elective Local Government in Malaysia," Asian Survey, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (April 1973), pp. 347-365. Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 8.

172 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 8, 1971.

173 Ibid., December 11, 1971.

174 Ibid., February 12, 1972. On the Local Authorities (Temporary Provisions) Act, see ibid., July 10, 24-25, 1973.

175 Ibid., April 12, 1972. The Malacca Municipal Council was generally conceded to be badly run. It is most probable that Perak coalition talks were well underway at this time, and the takeover would not have had much influence on the PPP decision to accept a coalition. It may have had some effect on otherwise reluctant PPP followers, however.

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.<sup>176</sup> The terms of the coalition stated that the PPP would get one position on the State Executive Council (Exco)<sup>177</sup>, 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<sup>178</sup> 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.<sup>179</sup> In July, Tun Razak reported that both the federal and state governments would contribute financing for the construction of a new library in Ipoh.<sup>180</sup> In November 1972, Dato Sri Seenivasagam announced that

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176 Ibid., April 19, 1972.

177 In July 1973, the PPP was given a second place on the Perak Exco (ibid., July 6, 1973). Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, President of the PPP and the Ipoh Municipal Council until his death in July 1975, said that the PPP had bargained for and was given two Exco seats. He did not explain the long delay before the second PPP member was sworn in, and it is possible that it was "bargained for" after the coalition had taken effect (interview, March 17, 1975).

178 Interview with Dato Sri Haji Kamaruddin b. Mohd. Isa (July 3, 1975).

179 See Straits Times (Malaysia), November 1, 1972 for a listing of approved Ipoh projects.

180 The Star, July 15, 1972. The federal government pledged \$100,000 and the state government at least \$50,000. The state government approved the project at the same time (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 16, 1972).

the Kinta Heights low-cost housing scheme was now out of "cold storage".<sup>181</sup>  
 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.<sup>182</sup>  
 It was thought that City status would be awarded shortly after, but this did not materialize.<sup>183</sup>

#### Coalition Motives

The reasons why the Alliance wanted this coalition seem diffuse, except in terms of Tun Razak's over-all coalition-building scheme. There seems to be little agreement on other compelling reasons. The following are possible contributing motives. First, Perak UMNO suffered from chronic factionalism at the divisional level, which the state organization seemed unable to control.<sup>184</sup> Further, there was not even a majority

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181 The Star, November 10, 1972.

182 Ibid., July 25, 1972. The PPP had been assured it would be given more money in return for taking on the new areas, some of which were poor (interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, March 24, 1975).

183 Dato Sri Seenivasagam was very keen on City status for Ipoh (interview, March 17, 1975). Until he died, approval always seemed to be very near. Another PPP project which had not materialized as of mid-1975 was the construction of a crematorium in Ipoh.

184 See Daniel Eldredge Moore, "The United Malays National Organization and the 1959 Malayan Elections: A Study of a Political Party in Action in a Newly Independent Plural Society," Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, 1960, pp. 132-136, for a historical background on factionalism in Perak UMNO.

in the state assembly until July 1970 when three opposition members defected to the Alliance.<sup>185</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.<sup>186</sup> Second, the federal Alliance wanted to increase non-Malay support in the state to compensate for the weaknesses of the MCA and the MIC.<sup>187</sup> Third, it wanted more non-Malay electoral support as a hedge against growing PAS strength in the rural areas of northern Perak.<sup>188</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.<sup>189</sup> Finally, the federal government thought that a more congenial political atmosphere in Perak might be of some value in combating the Communist insurgents.<sup>190</sup>

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185 Straits Times (Malaysia) July 9, 1970. Two PPP members and one from the DAP defected, to give the Alliance 22 of 40 seats.

186 This is the view of Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Coalition Politics...", op. cit., pp. 6-7. Dato Sri Seenivasagam believed that UMNO divisions were an important factor (interview, March 17, 1975).

187 M.G.G. Pillai, "Redrawing the Battle Lines," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 26, 1972, p. 9; M.G.G. Pillai, "Political Scene," The Star, August 18, 1972; Stephen Chee, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

188 M.G.G. Pillai, "Political Scene," op. cit., writes that PAS gains were not serious enough to warrant a threat. Dato Sri Seenivasagam said that PAS gains in Perak were not important (interview, March 17, 1975).

189 Interview with Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui (March 24, 1975); Sunday Times (Malaysia), July 16, 1972.

190 However, Professor R.S. Milne relates that a member of the Psychological Warfare Section, Kuala Lumpur, believes that the security situation in Perak had no bearing on the coalition agreement.

The security situation and the PAS threat seem to be the least important factors, while Perak UMNO factionalism and 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.<sup>191</sup> 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.  
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Nonetheless, it appears that this coalition was thrust upon an at least somewhat reluctant PPP, unlike the coalitions with the SUPP or

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191 This view is expressed in the Straits Echo, April 19, 1972; Malayan Thung Pau, April 17, 1972, and Sing Pin Jih Pao, April 19, 1972, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

192 Interview (March 17, 1975). Dato Sri Seenivasagam also stated (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 15, 1972) that Tun Razak's "moderation and sense of justice impressed us and we felt we could take a chance...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.

Gerakan, because of the threat of the PPP losing its control of the  
 Ipoh Municipal Council.<sup>193</sup>

The Coup de Grâce: 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,<sup>194</sup> and especially alarming to the non-Malays. Between UMNO and PAS was a longstanding rivalry of deep intensity and with considerable rancour and antagonism. Even in 1971, Dr. Mahathir told a group at a

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193 Dato Sri Seenivasagam admitted there had been some pressure (interview, March 17, 1975); Encik R.C.M. Rayan, 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, present 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, present President of the PPP, denied that the coalition was to save the Ipoh Municipal Council (interview, March 17, 1975).

194 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 Aspects of the Political System in Malaysia with Special Reference to Federalism, M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1969, pp 248-249. Also see Siaran PAS Kelantan, ibid., 2, B.1 9/10 (September/October 1967).



"Round Table Discussion" that there "is no Malay Unity Movement because the cleavage between the UMNO and the PMIP [PAS] is something that can never be overcome."<sup>195</sup> Yet Tun Razak, unlike the Tunku, was not irrevocably anti-PAS, and he had made a coalition with PAS the cornerstone of his entire post-riots political strategy.

### The Background<sup>196</sup>

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.<sup>197</sup> 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>198</sup> It was

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195 Patrick Low, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

196 On the history of PAS, see K.J. Ratnam and R.S. Milne, The Malayan Parliamentary Elections of 1964, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, *passim.*; Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 8; Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", *op. cit.*, pp. 186-254; Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties; The DMK (India) and the PAS (Malaya)," Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976, ch's 2 and 3; Y. Mansoor Marican "Malay Nationalism and the Islamic Party of Malaysia," Islamic Studies, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (Spring 1976), pp. 291-301; Clive S. Kessler, "Muslim Identity and Political Behaviour in Kelantan," in William R. Roff, (ed.) Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974.

197 Y. Mansoor Marican writes that possibly UMNO established its religious wing in order to counter the influence of the Hizbul Muslimin ("Malay Nationalism...", *op. cit.*, p. 295).

198 The PKMM and Hizbul Muslimin were not banned, but they dissolved their organizations in 1948 to escape proscription.

decided at the meeting to form a purely religious Islamic welfare  
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 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.<sup>200</sup>

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.<sup>201</sup>

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.<sup>202</sup> The

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- 199 Its original English name was the Pan-Malayan Islamic Association (PMIA).
- 200 The future President of PAS, Datuk Asri bin Haji Muda, was also from the MNP group.
- 201 Both Chandrasekaran Pillay ("Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., p. 186), and Y. Mansoor Marican ("The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties...", op. cit., ch.3) agree that it was UMNO concessions to the non-Malays which led PAS to abandon its Islamic welfare function in favor of political activity.
- 202 Robert Winzler, "Malay Religion Society and Politics in Kelantan," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1970, p. 190; Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 51.

party's slogan: "Bangsa, U gama, tanah ay er" (race, religion, native land) had a simple and powerful symbolic appeal.<sup>203</sup> The foundation of PAS's belief system was that "Malaya Belongs to the Malays".<sup>204</sup> It tried to persuade Parliament to write this "fact" into the Constitution,<sup>205</sup> but the motion was adjourned sine die. 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 Mentri Besar, Ministers, Governors, and Heads of the Armed Forces reserved for Malays, and the establishment of an Islamic theocratic state.<sup>206</sup> PAS accused UMNO of selling away the birthrights of the Malays, and said that the Alliance was dominated by the MCA.<sup>207</sup> While the application of the party's theocratic and mildly socialistic ideas was never really explained, in its nationalism, PAS

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- 203 See Manning Nash, "Ethnicity, Centrality and Education in Pasir Mas, Kelantan," Comparative Education Review (February, 1974), p. 5.
- 204 Our Stand, PAS Central Headquarters, n.d. (mimeo), p. 1; Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., p. 186; Dato Asri, "Malay as a Nation," Opinion, Vol. 1, No. 4 (November 1967), p. 40; Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 124; Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties...", op. cit., ch. 3. In ibid., see details of the PAS memorandum to the Reid Commission and Dr. Burhanuddin's, The Philosophy of Malay Nationalism, published by PAS in 1955.
- 205 See Straits Times, October 2, 1962; Sunday Mail, October 7, 1962.
206. Ratnam and Milne, op. cit., p. 124; The Constitution and Rules of Persatuan Islam Sa-Tanah Melayu, n.d. (mimeo).
- 207 Evidently, some of the "evidence" PAS had and showed to rural Malays was that a Chinese had signed the newly issued bank notes (Tun H.S. Lee, Minister of Finance), from Moore, op. cit., p. 72. Nevertheless, PAS officials often said that it was the Alliance they hated, not UMNO. An example of this kind of mixed approach can be seen in the statement of a PAS MP in Parliament in 1964: "Sir, only now we see that the UMNO and PMIP don't fight in this House because friends and enemies are now clearly identified--blood is always thicker than water" (quoted in Stephanie Glicksberg Neuman, "The Malay Political Elite: An Analysis of 134 Malay Legislators, Their Social Backgrounds and Attitudes," Ph.D. Thesis, New York University, 1971, p. 434).

"had a clear, unambiguous appeal as far as the Malay electorate was concerned".<sup>208</sup>

To almost everyone's surprise, PAS won the state elections in Kelantan and Trengganu in 1959. Although the party lost Trengganu in 1961,<sup>209</sup> 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 Mentri Besar of Kelantan in 1964, and succeeded Dr. Burhanuddin as PAS President,<sup>210</sup> 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 straight-forward Malay nationalist approach. Datuk Asri also was less opposed to cooperating with UMNO than Dr. Burhanuddin had been.

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208 Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., p. 200.

209 PAS lost Trengganu after a rift developed in PAS over the position of the Mentri Besar. UMNO was able to lure several PAS members to cross the floor, and the Sultan, instead of calling for an election, instructed UMNO to form the government. The Alliance won Trengganu in the 1964 elections, and ever since.

210 Datuk Asri became de facto President of PAS in 1965 after Dr. Burhanuddin's arrest. Although Dr. Burhanuddin was name honorary President of the party after he was released in March 1966, one of the conditions of his release was that he not actively engage in politics, and he never returned to the party's leadership circles.

### The Coalition

The first formal 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 Trengganu.<sup>211</sup> 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.<sup>212</sup> Talk of a coalition was in the air at the January 1971 UMNO General Assembly,<sup>213</sup> 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>214</sup> talks were held between

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211 Straits Times (Malaysia), December 17, 1970. One well-informed UMNO source said that this was an officially sanctioned "feeler", while another equally well-informed UMNO source said that, while it coincided with government thinking, it was not official (interviews in March and June 1975). It seems quite likely that it was official.

212 Straits Times (Malaysia), December 17-18, 1970.

213 Ibid., January 22, 1971.

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

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.<sup>215</sup>

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, Encik 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.<sup>216</sup> At this point, several top PAS leaders, including Haji Wan Ismail (Datuk Asri's brother-in-law), Encik Abu Bakar Hamzah, Encik Daud Samad, and Encik Muhammad Fakhruddin met to discuss the coalition idea.<sup>217</sup> The

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215 Interviews with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975), Haji Hassan Adli (July 4, 1975), and Haji Wan Ismail (June 2, 1975).

216 Sunday Times (Malaysia), April 30, 1972.

217 Interview with Encik Muhammad Fakhruddin b. Haji Abdullah, former PAS MP and head of Barisan Bebas Kelantan in 1974 (June 2, 1975)

group was favorable to the idea and decided to test it. Encik Abu  
 Baker Hamzah became the spokesman for the pro-coalition PAS group. It  
 is unclear just what Datuk Asri's attitude was at this juncture. Encik  
 Fakhruddin said that Datuk Asri remained uncommitted and was possibly  
 undecided.<sup>219</sup> Haji Wan Ismail said that it was still too early for Datuk  
 Asri to comment, that "you cannot put your general on the front line."<sup>220</sup>

Nonetheless, in early May, Datuk Asri replied that he was "prepared  
 to go into negotiations any time the Alliance leaders make the approach."<sup>221</sup>  
 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 coalition as  
 it already had an absolute majority in the state.<sup>222</sup>

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217a Ibid. Encik Fakhruddin said that he was the only one of the group  
 opposed to the coalition idea.

218 Although it was apparently Haji Wan Ismail who first took up the idea  
 (interviews with Encik Wan Hashim b. Wan Ahmad (June 1, 1975), and  
 Haji Wan Ismail (June 2, 1975). Haji Wan Ismail said that he was the  
 first to reply favorably to Encik Ghafar Baba's coalition proposal, at  
 a rally, but it was not reported in the Press.

219 Interview (June 2, 1975).

220 Interview (June 2, 1975).

221 Straits Times (Malaysia), May 4, 1972. At the same time, Encik Ghafar  
 Baba was explaining that the Alliance had not made any offer, except  
 a willingness to consider a coalition (The Star, May 4, 1972). Neither  
 side wanted to appear to be the initiator, in case the talks failed  
 or else it might be interpreted as a sign of weakness. On the shadow-  
 boxing between the parties, see M.G.G. Pillai, "Political Scene"  
ibid., June 8, 1972.

222 Straits Times (Malaysia), May 29, 1972.

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>223</sup>

Datuk Asri in turn replied in July at the PAS General Assembly, saying that Tun Razak's speech merited earnest and exhaustive study.<sup>224</sup> 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 a PAS-Alliance coalition government "at all levels".<sup>225</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.<sup>226</sup> In November, it was

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223 Sunday Times (Malaysia), June 25, 1972. Tun Razak added, however, that the DAP was not acceptable to UMNO. He did not exclude agreements with the other opposition parties holding parliamentary seats, namely SNAP and Pekemas.

224 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 29, 1972. Tun Razak welcomed PAS's readiness to discuss the question of a coalition (The Star, July 29, 1972).

225 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 30, 1972.

226 Ibid., September 6, 1972. For further details on the talks, see ibid., August 3-5, 1972; The Star, August 3-5, 1972; Straits Echo, August 3, 1972; Utusan Melayu, August 15, 1972, as quoted in the Mirror of Opinion (Singapore).



reported that UMNO and PAS had agreed in principle on the coalition details.<sup>227</sup> 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>228</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.<sup>229</sup> 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

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227 Straits Times (Malaysia), November 11, 1972. Also see ibid., November 15, 1972.

228 Ibid., December 22, 1972. Also see ibid., November 27-28, 1972; Sunday Times (Malaysia) November 26, 1972; Berita PAS, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 1-7; ibid., Nos. 4 and 5 (April/May 1973), p. 5; M.G.G. Pillai, "National Front" Far Eastern Economic Review, December 30, 1972, pp. 22-23.

229 Kerjaan Campuran Perikatan-PAS, Kuala Lumpur: UMNO Headquarters, n.d.

corporations. At the State level, two PAS members each were named to the Trengganu and Kedah Executive Councils. In return, the Alliance was given two seats on the Kelantan Executive Council.<sup>230</sup>

The conditions of the coalition further stated that a Coordinating Committee would be established,<sup>231</sup> 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 never have created the National Front.<sup>232</sup> Additionally, the Alliance sought the coalition with PAS in order to eliminate the threat of "out-

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230 Another important coalition payoff for PAS, though not stated in the original terms, was federal government recognition of the Islamic Institute of Nilam Puri, set up by the Kelantan State Government, and already recognized by Al Azahar University of Cairo. In September 1972, Tun Razak announced that the Institute would become part of the Islamic Faculty of Universiti Kebangsaan in 1974, and be known as Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Nilam Puri (Straits Times (Malaysia)), September 22, 1972, as noted by Mohd. Taib Ahmad Said, "Coalition Politics in Kedah," Graduation Exercise, University of Malaya, August 1974, p. 49).

231 The first serious meeting of the Alliance-PAS Coordinating Committee, dealing with the "brass-tacks on the working of the coalition" took place on March 29, 1973 Straits Echo, March 30, 1973, Malay Mail, March 31, 1973.

232 Interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah (June 12, 1975) and Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (June 18, 1975).

bidding" by PAS and also to stop the danger posed by PAS's spreading influence in other northern states (Trengganu, Kedah, Perlis, and Perak). Finally, the coalition gave the Alliance participation in the Kelantan State Government and reduced federal-state tensions there.<sup>233</sup> 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 Malaysia 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 most of the issues which in the past the party had found had great appeal with the rural Malay electorate.<sup>234</sup> The party was especially crippled by not being able to champion tighter and retroactive citizenship regulations.

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233 The coalition also helped to reduce the social disruption at the Malay kampung level which was caused by the UMNO-PAS political rivalry. See Conner Bailey, Broker, Mediator, Patron and Kinsman: An Historical Analysis of Key Leadership Roles in a Rural Malaysian District, Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Papers in International Studies Southeast Asia Series No. 38, 1976, p. 48.

234 See Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Coalition Politics...", op. cit., p. 4; Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., p. 243; Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties...", op. cit., ch. 6.

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, can not 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."<sup>235</sup>

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.<sup>236</sup>

According to Alias Muhammad, the results of the Tumpat Barat state by-election in Kelantan in February 1972 significantly alarmed PAS. It won by only 230 votes.<sup>237</sup> Further, PAS was troubled about defections, some

235 Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill 1971, op. cit., pp. 232, 235.

236 However, nearly all UMNO, PAS, and MCA officials interviewed, believed that PAS could have won in Kelantan again in 1974 without the coalition. See also, Konggeres PAS Yang Ke-XVII, Kuala Lumpur: PAS Malaysia, 1971.

237 Kelantan: Politik Dan Dilemma Pembangunan, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Utusan Melayu (M) Bhd., 1975, pp. 79-82. The PAS margin of victory was steadily declining: 1959 by 3191, 1964 by 2043, 1969 by 827. Also see Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., p. 245.

including whole branches, to UMNO in the other northern states.<sup>238</sup>

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).<sup>239</sup>

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>240</sup> even though it would mean he would hold less actual power than as Mentri Besar.

Fifth, PAS Kelantan was undergoing a leadership crisis, and Datuk Asri's position as Mentri Besar was unstable.<sup>241</sup> The party in Kelantan

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- 238 For references to PAS defections, see Straits Times (Malaysia), June 14, 29, 1971, August 19, 1971, April 7, 1972.
- 239 See Alias Muhammad, op. cit., pp. 3-35. Also see Shaw, op. cit., p. 240, on Tun Razak's application of pressure through control of the distribution of federal development funds for Kelantan.
- 240 Interviews with Encik Khalil Akasah (March 21, 1975) and Encik Wan Hashim b. Haji Wan Ahmad (June 1, 1975). There might be some connection between Datuk Asri's desire to become a federal Minister and his humble origins. On the whole, rural and Malay-educated Malays tend to be very status conscious, in terms of Malay titles and positions.
- 241 Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of the Malay Community...", op. cit., pp. 249-251; Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties...", op. cit., ch. 6.

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>242</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.<sup>243</sup> 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.

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242 From interviews with PAS and UMNO party members in 1975.

243 From interviews with UMNO and PAS members in 1975. Also see Y. Mansoor Marican, "The Political Accommodation of Primordial Parties...", op. cit., ch. 6; "Menapa Asri Bermati-mati Kerjaan Campuran", Siri Sastera Revolusi Bil. 26, May 29, 1974 (mimeo). On the activities of the Kelantan SEDC, see Alias Muhammad, op. cit., Pengenalan, pp. 31-40.

### Coalition-Building in Malaysia and Coalition Theory

Coalition theory focuses on the study of four aspects of coalition behavior: (1) coalition formation (as an end product), (2) bargaining in the process of coalition formation, (3) the distribution of payoffs, and (4) coalition maintenance.<sup>244</sup> In this section, coalition-building in Malaysia will be analysed with respect to these aspects of coalition behavior and the theories related to them.

#### Coalition Formation (as an end product)

The orthodox theories of coalition formation attempt primarily to predict what coalitions will occur, and then to explain why. It can be seen that the coalitions established in Malaysia better fit the "non-minimal" explanations for coalition formation than the minimal size theories.

Probably none of the minimal size theories would have predicted that the federal Alliance Party would have engaged in any coalition-building after the 1969 elections. The Alliance enjoyed a comfortable and secure majority in Parliament, it controlled eleven state governments, and it could exercise considerable financial influence over the only two states and one municipal council in opposition hands. One of the state governments and the municipal council had been held by the opposition since the 1950s, and there had been no attempts at coalitions. The other state government was just won by the opposition in 1969, but this was not a Malay state and therefore not important, in prestige terms, for the federal Alliance to control.

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244 See Chapter 1, pp. 54-55.

Likewise, applying these theories to the opposition parties brought into coalitions, PAS had a solid majority in Kelantan and the PPP had a firm grip, in terms of numbers, on the Ipoh Municipal Council. Only Gerakan had a shaky majority in the Penang Legislative Assembly, a one vote majority just before the coalition. It is only in considering Gerakan's part in the Alliance-Gerakan coalition that the minimal size rule seems to apply. For Penang, Gerakan picked a coalition partner with the minimal size (four UMNO members), and minimal ideological distance. In Gerakan's case, it is unlikely that it could have wooed any opposition state assemblymen (UMNO and DAP, later Pekemas) to cross the floor, and the pivotal man, who had returned to Gerakan to give it its one man majority, was an extremely reluctant follower.

In Sarawak, the coalition arrangement was somewhat different, as it did not directly involve the federal Alliance. The Sarawak Alliance controlled half of the Council Negri seats, but one of its components, Pesaka, was non-committal about whether or not it was with the Sarawak Alliance. To secure a working but minimal majority government, the Sarawak Alliance needed a coalition with one of the two opposition parties. There was no size difference in the two opposition parties, SNAP and SUPP.<sup>245</sup> However, theoretically there was less ideological distance between the Alliance and SNAP than the Alliance and the SUPP.<sup>246</sup> Nonetheless, the

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245 SNAP won 12 seats and the SUPP won 11, but the election in one SUPP stronghold was postponed.

246 Using the criteria of policy statements and Council Negri and Parliamentary voting records.



Sarawak Alliance chose the SUPP, for personality, organizational, and external (federal Alliance) reasons, all basically unaccounted for in the minimal coalition theories. If minimal size were strictly observed in predicting the coalition outcome, it would have been Bumiputera-SCA-SUPP. However, this would have left the two Iban parties both in the opposition, clearly an intolerable situation. What might have been predicted in this "real world" situation was the co-optation of enough individual opposition members for the Sarawak Alliance to form the government.<sup>246</sup> This is not an unusual political course in Malaysia, especially in the Borneo states, but in this case that solution was not followed.<sup>247</sup>

It is non-minimal size coalition explanations which have the most relevance to Malaysia. Basically, a larger than necessary coalition may be sought if there is a desire for a broad consensus and/or if it is

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246 According to coalition theory, this would no longer be a coalition situation, and therefore no coalition need be predicted, even though immediately before the co-optation of some individual opposition members, a certain coalition outcome might well have been predicted. Coalition theory does not allow for changes in the resources, weights, or strengths of its actors/players (units) during coalition formation. Therefore, there is no way within coalition theory to consider the possibility of defections or co-optation of individuals in the formation stage as a method of arriving at a majority government, although once formed, the perfect minimal winning coalition would be one which could be defeated by the defection of a single unit. Coalition theory does not overlook this solution--it dismisses it, because a coalition is no longer necessary.

247 In fact, after the coalition with the SUPP, before Pesaka made up its mind whether or not it was in the Sarawak Alliance, two Ibans were lured into the government from Pesaka. In this case, it was the defections, given the already established Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition, which created the coalition situation for Pesaka--once two Ibans were in the government, the party lost its leverage for forcing any realignment and was much better off joining the existing coalition.

believed that a simple majority will be ineffective for achieving political or socio-economic goals.<sup>248</sup> The Alliance coalition-building scheme devised by Tun Razak called for a broad national consensus. Although the Alliance enjoyed a solid parliamentary majority, Tun Razak apparently 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. The Alliance gained little in immediate concrete terms from its coalitions. They did not give the Alliance control of the two states and the municipal council, only minority representation in them. In return, the Alliance gained more parliamentary support than it needed, in minimal size terms, and was required to share more of the rewards of office. But the gain, through the coalitions and later the National Front, was the establishment of a widely-representative and broadly consensual government.

#### Coalition Bargaining

Orthodox coalition theory assumes a priori a willingness to bargain among actors, based on a desire to be part of the winning coalition. Further, bargaining in orthodox coalition theory is bound to the idea of the rational actor who, in a zero-sum game, bargains to secure maximum payoffs. However, a willingness to bargain cannot just be assumed; it is conditioned by such factors as personality likes and dislikes, social background similarities, and simple availability of actors. Also, in the real world, actors are sometimes not rational, and the situation is often not zero-sum.

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248 See Chapter 1, pp. 62-64.

In Malaysia, the force of personality has been a particularly significant factor in bargaining situations. For example, the Tunku was not willing to bargain or negotiate further with Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew in 1965, because of feelings of distrust and deep personal antagonism, even though the stakes involved breaking up the federation.<sup>249</sup> Likewise, the Tunku could not forget the years of animosity between UMNO and PAS, which he took personally, and he was completely against striking any agreements with PAS.<sup>250</sup> Tun Razak, on the other hand, was apparently more willing to bargain and negotiate with the opposition parties. The leaders of the SUPP, Gerakan, the PPP, and PAS all expressed the view at various times that one of the important coalition considerations was the fact that they trusted Tun Razak and believed they could work with him.

Coalition theory does not address itself to the actual mechanics and style of bargaining, nor does it concern itself with bargaining skills. These would be nearly impossible to quantify, and they are difficult even to observe. In Malaysia, coalition bargaining and negotiating followed a general pattern. First, except for the shadowboxing with PAS, the coalition probes and discussions were carried out in secret. Second, the style of the Alliance was to use intermediaries for the initial stages. Tun Razak would only formally associate himself with the coalition in

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249 See Chapter 2, pp. 136-137.

250 Interviews (May 7 and 30, 1975).

the final stages of bargaining. Third, 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. In the coalition with PAS, for instance, the Alliance held back its "bait" of a coalition "at all levels" with a ministerial post for Datuk Asri until nearly the end, by which time it had assumed great importance. Finally, there was a strong desire on the part of all the parties involved not to appear to be the initiator of the coalition, as this might be construed as a weakness.

#### Coalition Payoffs

The payoffs in coalition theory are the rewards accruing to the members of the winning coalition.<sup>251</sup> Often these are measured by the number of government or Cabinet positions awarded to each partner, and sometimes this measurement also considers the qualitative rank of these positions. The payoffs going to the various parties in the coalitions in Malaysia already have been itemized.

However, there is also the important cost-benefit factor of "common advantages" which should be considered. What this means is that the payoff may increase with a larger coalition if it thereby reduces the costs of avoiding some negative force (i.e. ethnic violence). For the Alliance, the "common advantages" of the coalitions, which far outweighed

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251 See Chapter 1, pp. 59, 63.

the standard payoffs it acquired, were increased governmental representativeness and reduced political tensions and coercion costs.<sup>252</sup> Likewise, it could be said that "common advantages" played a part for Gerakan, PAS, the PPP, and even the SUPP. Each party had its problems and pressures, and for each of them the costs of staying out of a coalition with the Alliance might have been too high.

#### Coalition Maintenance

Orthodox coalition theory generally assumes that coalitions are temporary. Perhaps because of this, and the fact that coalition maintenance is better suited to observation than quantitative analysis, coalition theory offers little about this aspect of coalition behavior.<sup>253</sup>

In Malaysia, 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 overseeing 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 negotiation 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 a National Front for the exercise of political power in Malaysia.

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252 This view was expressed by numerous political elites interviewed in 1975. Also see Chapter 1, pp. 63-67.

253 There are some exceptions. See Chapter 1, pp. 59-60, fn. 151.

CHAPTER 4: THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL FRONT  
AND THE 1974 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The National Front: From Concept to Legal Entity

Tun Razak first publicly used the term "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 "national front" government.<sup>2</sup> While it appeared that the term "national front" 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

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1 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 31, 1972.

2 See ibid., November 29-30, December 23, 29, 1972; Sunday Times (Malaysia), December 31, 1972; Malay Mail, December 9, 1972; M. G. G. Pillai, "A 'national front'", Far Eastern Economic Review, December 30, 1972, pp. 22-23.

become a durable foundation for a strong, united, multi-racial Malaysia."<sup>3</sup>

For the next year and a half, the term "national front" remained undefined and unfathomable. The "national front" 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 national front, the days of "old style" politicking were over, and that he hoped that "the concept" of the national front would be further strengthened in the coming general election.<sup>4</sup> Yet, in July, the Prime Minister told the delegates at the UMNO General Assembly that the Alliance was no less relevant than before.<sup>5</sup> Datuk Asri cleared up some of the confusion in September when he explained that at present no national front had been formed. "There is only a coalition government, but it is moving towards a national front. However, as there

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- 3 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 1, 1973. Also see The Star, January 1, 1973; Straits Echo, January 1, 1973; Malaysian Digest, Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 15, 1973), pp. 1, 5, 7; M. G. G. Pillai, "Consensus Time", Far Eastern Economic Review, January 15, 1973, pp. 17-18.
- 4 Straits Times (Malaysia), March 15 and 30, 1973. Also see Kwong Wah Jit Poh, July 2, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.
- 5 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 2, 1973 (edit.). Also see M. G. G. Pillai, "Poll Pointers", Far Eastern Economic Review, July 23, 1973, pp. 23-24; Sin Chew Jit Poh, July 9, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

is no clear picture of a front yet, it is premature to say" what the result will be.<sup>6</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>7</sup> By the year's end it was at least clear that what had been hailed as a "national front" 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 Stockin 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>8</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

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6 Sunday Times (Malaysia), September 16, 1973.

7 Straits Times (Malaysia) November 5, 1973.

8 "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 national front might be just another case of "wayang kulit" (puppet shadow plays) (p. 186).



general elections expected sometime in 1974.<sup>9</sup> The first concrete action was announced in April: there would be a common symbol for all the national front political parties in the next general election,<sup>10</sup> the scales of justice (dacing).<sup>11</sup> There would be no individual party symbols, and no more sailing boat for the Alliance.<sup>12</sup> After that, the development of the national front progressed rapidly. In early May, a massive "national front" rally was held in Alor Star, Kedah.

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9 See Straits Times (Malaysia), January 18, February 13, 16-17, March 15, 23, 1974; Sunday Times (Malaysia), March 10, 1974; The Star, March 15, 1974.

10 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 29, 1974. This was confirmed by Tun Razak, ibid., May 3, 1974.

11 At first the symbol was called "neraca", but by July the government realized that this word had a bad connotation for some groups in Sarawak; and it was changed to "dacing". The latter was the more common word for that particular type of scale anyway, and was thus easier for the electorate to remember. Ironically, however, the adoption of the word "dacing" coincided with government efforts to ban the "dacing" as a market weighing device, since it was deemed to be subject to cheating. The "dacing" is similar to the libra scales and in the market it is suspended in one hand while the balancing is done. See New Sunday Times, January 18, 1976.

12 Removing the Alliance sailing boat was a significant change since this was undoubtedly the most widely recognized political symbol in Peninsular Malaysia, associated with Independence and the government for two decades. To avoid confusion during the election campaign and at polling stations, many of the smaller "dacing" posters were folded in the shape of the sailing boat and suspended from ceilings.

Then it was announced that a Selection Committee had been formed to decide on the final lists of national front candidates, although all parties agreed that Tun Razak would have the final say in the selection of all the national front candidates in the next general elections. It was also stated that a national front election manifesto was being formulated. In late May it was reported that the national front slogan for the elections would be "Support Tun Razak and the National Front", and that Tun Razak's portrait would appear on all posters, along with the dacing.<sup>13</sup>

It went virtually unnoticed that, on June 1, 1974 the National Front (the Barisan Nasional of Malaysia) was given a certificate of registration by the Registrar of Societies, and thus became a legal functioning party.<sup>14</sup> The nine political parties in the National Front were MIC, UMNO, MCA, 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) Michel Chen as Secretary and Datuk Asri as Treasurer. The administration of the National Front 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 National Front to his party and received

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13 The Star, May 4, 20, 1974; Sunday Times (Malaysia), May 12, 1974; Straits Times (Malaysia), May 20, 22, 1974.

14 The Star, June 2, 1974. The major parties not in the National Front were SNAP in Sarawak, and the DAP, PSRM, and Pekemas in Peninsular Malaysia.

a comfortable mandate (275-19) for PAS to participate in it.<sup>15</sup> At the end of June, Tun Razak likewise explained the National Front 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".<sup>16</sup> 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>17</sup>

An obvious question underlies the formation of the National Front: was it ad hoc or planned? In a Straits Times (Malaysia) 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

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15 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 14, 1974; Sunday Times (Malaysia), June 16, 1974; Berita PAS, No.'s 6 & 7 (June/July 1974), pp. 1-4. None of the other parties sought any kind of membership mandate in order to participate in the National Front except, less directly, the MCA, which will be discussed shortly.

16 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 27, 1974.

17 Sunday Times (Malaysia), June 30, 1974. See also Cabaran Untuk Keamanan, Kuala Lumpur: UMNO Headquarters, n.d., p. 4; Kegarah Perpaduan Kebangsaan, no ref., but available at UMNO Headquarters, pp. 2-3; Straits Times (Malaysia), August 8, 1974. Tun Razak said that with the formation of the National Front, the old structure of the Alliance had "automatically lapsed" (ibid., July 22, 1974).

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>18</sup> Several UMNO insiders close to Tun Razak, interviewed for this research confirmed that Tun Razak was the principal architect of the National Front and that it was indeed planned. One recalled that Tun Razak had a grand scheme for the National Front right from the beginning (after May 13th, 1969), but that it was necessary for implementation to proceed gradually.<sup>19</sup> Another noted that while the National Front 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>20</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the National Front was more thought out than it seemed during the process of formation, but less planned than was afterwards claimed.<sup>21</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

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18 August 8, 1974. Also see The Star, March 10, 1974.

19 Interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie (July 3, 1975).

20 Interview with Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (June 18, 1975).

21 One former politician interviewed, however, believed that the National Front 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 National Front because they did not know what it was (September 17, 1974). Datuk Senu Abdul Rahman, however, said that the "Sarawak government's success inspired Tun Razak to bring about the National Front (Straits Times (Malaysia), June 9, 1974).

to act impulsively or intuitively.<sup>22</sup> Given the post-riots strategy of extensive coalition-building was planned, it seems quite likely that Tun Razak may have had 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 National Front was planned greatly in advance, or in much detail.

Major Political Developments Affecting the  
Coalition Partners, 1973-74

While the National Front was slowly taking shape the coalition partners were undergoing various strains and stresses in trying to adjust to the changing political circumstances. 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 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

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22 See Tun Razak's personal comments on his political style in Straits Times (Malaysia), September 19, 1971. His reputation was as a skilled administrator, planner, and organizational innovator. Much less recognized by the general public was his astuteness and adroitness at weighing and balancing political forces, cautiously and pragmatically, and at wielding political power. Also see an interesting article by former Labour Party official, now with the MCA, Encik Lim Kean Siew, "The National Front--and its Component Parties" The Guardian, Vol. 6, No. 6 (1st Half of July, 1974), pp. 3-5. He analyses Tun Razak's political style, writing that the Prime Minister prefers discussion with committees and commissions to headline-catching public political debate, and that he favors minimizing politics and concentrating on development.

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 Hussein Onn, to succeed Tun (Dr.) Ismail as UMNO deputy president.<sup>23</sup> Four days later Tun Razak appointed Datuk Hussein Onn as the Deputy Prime Minister in a major Cabinet reshuffle.<sup>24</sup> This fast and smooth process of succession in the government<sup>25</sup> and the party boosted confidence in the system and reconfirmed Tun Razak's leadership and control.<sup>26</sup> He was able to placate the two senior vice-presidents<sup>27</sup> while quietly insisting on his choice of Datuk Hussein Onn, with hardly a murmur from the party rank-and-file.

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23 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 10, 1973. Datuk Hussein Onn was elected an UMNO vice-president in June 1972, placing third out of the three elected by the General Assembly.

24 Ibid., August 14, 1973.

25. Except for the understandable anger of Tun Tan Siew Sin, the President of the MCA, in the Cabinet at not being named Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Tan, the Minister of Finance, was the senior Cabinet Minister after Tun Razak. However, as Tun Razak apparently explained to him, the Malays would not stand for a Chinese being named Deputy Prime Minister, even though there were no constitutional barriers to it. See M. G. G. Pillai, "The Road to the Top", Far Eastern Economic Review, September 3, 1974, pp. 23-24. This incident was kept very well 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.

26 Malaysia at this time had had very little experience with successions at the top; the only previous one was the Tunku's resignation as Prime Minister in 1970. This was the first time that there was no logical and clearly-recognized choice for the Deputy Prime Ministership and the Deputy Presidentship of UMNO.

27 They were Tan Sri (later Tun) Sardon and Encik Ghafar Baba.

The June 1974 UMNO General Assembly was held just after the registration of the National Front, and with the general elections expected to be called shortly. There were no party elections in the General Assembly, although there was an important election in the UMNO Youth wing for its presidency. In the General Assembly the most important business concerned two constitutional amendments, both designed to increase the control of the Supreme Council. One amendment was to not allow division members to expel their leaders by a simple "no confidence" vote. Under the amendment any expulsion would require the approval of the Supreme Council. The other and more important amendment was designed to curb some of the power the state leaders and Mentris Besar gained through "vote buying", or inflating divisional memberships in order to increase the strength of state delegations at the General Assemblies. Under the amendment, a maximum of ten delegates would be allowed for each division regardless of membership strength; whether the division had, say, 5,000 or say 20,000 members.<sup>28</sup> An active campaign against "vote-buying" was started in April by the top UMNO leaders and continued unabated up to the General Assembly vote.<sup>29</sup> Once again, the amendments were viewed as a test of strength for the leadership of Tun Razak, and they were approved easily by the UMNO delegates.

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28. There was substantial evidence that some divisions were buying memberships (very nominal fees, usually \$1 per year) for as many Malays as they could find who were willing to join (possibly with some extra incentive) just in order to boost their "paper strength".

29. See The Star, April 22, 24-25, 27, 29, May 11, June 30, 1974; Straits Times (Malaysia), May 11, June 27, 1974; Utusan Melayu June 25, 1974 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

However, in the UMNO Youth wing election, the incumbent president, Dato Harun, the powerful Menteri Besar of Selangor, was opposed by Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Abdul Samad Idris. The word spread that Tun Razak was backing the challenger,<sup>30</sup> and although Tun Razak quickly disclaimed any involvement in the election and instructed party headquarters to remain neutral, the election became controversial and bitter.<sup>31</sup> When Dato Harun was easily re-elected UMNO Youth President (and automatically an UMNO vice-president),<sup>32</sup> it was considered a slap at Tun Razak's leadership, despite his disclaimers of involvement. Further, it revealed that serious factionalism continued to exist just under the surface in UMNO, reminiscent of Tun Razak's earlier warning to members, "As the Malay saying goes, do not think that there are no crocodiles under calm water."<sup>33</sup>

(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

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30 This was probably true, but it was not common for the top leader to stake his reputation on an underdog, unless it was crucially important for some reason and/or unless it was calculated that an endorsement could change defeat into victory.

31 See Straits Times (Malaysia), June 26-27, 1974.

32 The Star, June 29, 1974. Dato Harun won by 245 to 107 votes for the two-year term.

33 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 11, 1972. This is typical of the kind of innuendo and code used by UMNO leaders in communicating party matters.



position in the government, held merger talks with Gerakan,<sup>34</sup> but Dr. Lim Chong Eu was not interested in the terms.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> The "old guards" 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 coalition 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

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34 See M. G. G. Pillai, "National Front," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 16, 1972, p. 16; M. G. G. Pillai, "Opposition Bloc", ibid., February 5, 1973, p. 20; Straits Times (Malaysia), January 9, 11-12, 16-17, 1973; The Star, January 10-12, 17-18, 20, 1973; Straits Echo, January 20, 1973; Overseas Chinese Daily News, January 17 and 22, 1973 (edits), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

35 Straits Echo, January 15, 1973. The SUPP was also included in some of these talks. In March 1973 the DAP publicly revealed that the MCA had held secret talks with the DAP on the subject of merger in 1971. See China Press, March 6, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian. On earlier MCA denials of initiating the talks, see Straits Times (Malaysia), July 10, 1971.

36 See Chapter 3, pp.177-179.

blackout.<sup>37</sup> In June, Dr. Lim Keng Yaik was expelled from the party, and by early August most of the other "new bloods", including Alex Lee and Dr. Tan Tiong Hong, were also expelled. As well, some branches and divisions under the control of "new blood" supporters were dissolved.<sup>38</sup>

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-à-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>39</sup> Harvey Stockwin commented, although the MCA had defied obituaries before, it now appeared that, while it would survive, it would be regulated to the status of a "rump party".<sup>40</sup>

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37 Straits Times (Malaysia), May 20, 1973; Sin Chew Jit Poh, May 20, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian. In July, the DAP in Parliament questioned the MCA Press blackout, asking who gave the directive and under what legal authority (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 13, 1973. Apparently the directive was issued by Tun (Dr.) Ismail.

38 Ibid., May 31, June 2-4, 1973; Nanyang Siang Pau, May 31, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

39 See Sin Chew Jit Poh, December 30, 1973; and Utusan Melayu, December 31, 1973 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; Straits Times (Malaysia), January 2, 1974.

40 Stockwin, op. cit., p. 14.

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.<sup>41</sup> Then 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 National Front.<sup>42</sup> 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>43</sup> In March, the Penang MCA declared its opposition to the national front concept, and the Perak MCA issued a statement supporting that stand.<sup>44</sup> 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>45</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.<sup>46</sup>

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41 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 18, 1974; The Star, February 21, 1974.

42 The Star, February 20, 1974; Sin Chew Jit Poh, February 20, 1974, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; The Guardian Vol. 6. No.1 (February/March 1974), p. 2.

43 Sin Chew Jit Poh, February 23, 1974, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; The Star, February 27-28, 1974; Straits Times (Malaysia), February 28, 1974.

44 Ibid., March 10, 1974.

45 The Star, March 28, 1974 (Encik Ang Eng Hock).

46 M. G. G. Pillai, "Search for a Man of Many Talents", Far Eastern Economic Review, April 15, 1974, pp. 16-17.

The UMNO leaders had been extremely 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".<sup>47</sup> However, after the retirement of Tun Tan, the Press in its editorials started to bear down on the MCA. A Straits Times (Malaysia) editorial, the unofficial English-language voice of the UMNO government leadership, suggested that there "can be little doubt that withdrawal from the National Front must mean withdrawal from the Alliance...An MCA outside the National Front must be an MCA outside the government".<sup>48</sup> Shortly after, the MCA Central Committee (formerly the Central Working 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>49</sup> To the MCA, the Acting President said that the party had to "face facts and accept challenges".<sup>50</sup>

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47 Sunday Times (Malaysia), August 12, 1973. Likewise, the leaders of the other National Front parties were largely successful in controlling their memberships against making any challenging or provocative statements directed at the MCA during this period.

48 April 10, 1974. Also see Straits Echo, April 16, 1974 (edit.); Straits Times (Malaysia), April 19, 1974 (edit.); Sunday Mail, April 21, 1974 (edit).

49 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 18, 1974. Also see The Guardian, Vol. 6, No. 2 (April/May 1974), pp. 2 and 9.

50 The Star, April 22, 1974.

From that point on, it was clear that the MCA was in the National Front, even though Tun Razak reminded them in July that the party was no longer the sole representative of the Chinese, and even though many members<sup>51</sup> remained reluctant to cooperate with their National Front partners.<sup>52</sup>

In May, Datuk Lee explained the MCA's hard line to the Press, saying that he "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>53</sup> Datuk Lee confirmed in an interview that the MCA leaders did not intend to take the MCA out of the National Front, 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 Front.<sup>54</sup> It is quite probable that Tun Razak was informed about the strategy of the MCA leaders, and this may account for the mild response on the part of UMNO and the other National Front parties.

As the general elections neared, the MCA was given fewer seats to contest than in 1969,<sup>55</sup> but nearly all were relatively good ones, and

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51 Ibid., July 22, 1974.

52 Kwong Wah Jit Poh, April 15, 1974 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

53 Sunday Times (Malaysia), May 5, 1974.

54 Interview (June 19, 1975).

55 The MCA leaders were given a mandate by the MCA chairmen and secretaries for states, divisions and branches, at a joint meeting, to accept any number of seats allocated to the party and to select all of the MCA candidates (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 22, 1974).

the party membership was united, if not behind all of the National Front, 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 selected President of the MIC on June 30, 1973, it was obvious that there was "neither harmony nor brotherhood" in the party.<sup>56</sup> 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>57</sup>

The MIC, preoccupied with sorting out its own internal problems, raised no objections to the various Alliance coalitions or to the formation of the National Front. 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

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56 Ibid., June 28-29, 1973; Sunday Times (Malaysia), July 1, 1973.

57 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 28, 1973 (Judge Datuk Chang Min Tat). It was a legal application for an injunction to stop the calling of a Penang MIC delegates conference.

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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> On December 19, 1973, it was announced that Dr. Lim Keng Yaik and many of the former MCA "new bloods" had joined Gerakan.<sup>61</sup> By the end of the year and on into

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58 Ibid., July 9, 1974 (edit.).

59 The Sun, October 12, 1973, and Sin Chew Jit Poh, October 14, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; Straits Times (Malaysia), October 13, 1973; The Star, November 3, 1973.

60 Sin Chew Jit Poh, December 13, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

61 Ibid., December 27, 1973; Malayan Thung Pau, December 21, 1973, and China Press, December 22, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

January 1974, there were reports of thousands of applications for Gerakan membership, including those from Encik Alex Lee and Dr. Tan Tiong

<sup>62</sup> Hong. Almost overnight, Gerakan inherited 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>63</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.<sup>64</sup>

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.

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62 Straits Echo, December 25, 1973 (edit.); The Star, January 4, 8, 11, 14, 1974; Malayan Thung Pau, December 27, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

63 Shin Min Daily News, December 24, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

64 The Star, June 29, 1974.



(5) The PPP. It was surprising 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.<sup>65</sup> Formal party organization, never exactly a model, virtually ceased to exist except 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.<sup>66</sup> The PPP was unable to mount even a mildly energetic campaign as the general elections neared, hoping instead to be carried along by the National Front 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

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65 See Chapter 3, p.

66 See Nanyang Siang Pau, February 25, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

of UMNO's Datuk Senu, although the latter won anyway.<sup>67</sup> It was clear that the PAS leaders needed to do a lot of explaining and convincing if the coalition were 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.<sup>68</sup> He then contested against Datuk Asri for the presidency of PAS at its crisis-delayed September Congress; however Datuk Asri won easily.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> The PAS national executive (discipline committee) moved swiftly, and in April, Encik Abu Bakar was expelled from the party.<sup>71</sup>

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67 Straits Times (Malaysia), January 22, 1973; Straits Echo, January 23, 1973; Berita Harian, January 24, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; M.G.G. Pillai, "Inadequate Victory," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 26, 1973, p. 23.

68 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 27, 1973. It was rumored that he was removed because of a conflict with Datuk Asri of a personal nature.

69 Utusan Malaysia, July 11, 30, September 10, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; Straits Times (Malaysia), September 24, 1973.

70 Ibid., January 26, 1974.

71 Berita Harian, January 26, 1974, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; Berita PAS 4 & 5 (April/May 1974), p. 16; Straits Times (Malaysia), April 27, May 15, 1974; The Star, April 28, 1974.

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 Mentri Besar Haji Ishak Lofti, and sought to deliver an ultimatum calling on him to step down. However, the Mentri Besar and Datuk Asri, forewarned, acted swiftly by expelling the March 14th group from the party before it could take any legal party action.<sup>72</sup> Although expelled, the March 14th group continued to circulate pamphlets and to attack the Mentri Besar.<sup>73</sup> Eventually, this group became the nucleus of the Barisan Bebas (United Independents), 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 National Front.<sup>74</sup>

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72 An UMNO observer in Kelantan at the time explained that the March 14th group failed partly because it moved slowly and indirectly; because a "coup" is "not the Malay way". The revolted thus lost the element of surprise and Datuk Asri was able to gather his forces and oust the revolted before the latter could take their case to the whole Kelantan PAS organization (interview, June 1, 1975). Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), June 15, 1974.

73 For example, see Siri Sastera Revolusi Bil 1 (April 10, 1974) and Bil 26 (May 29, 1974)(mimeos). Bil 1 was titled "Why Haji Ishak Lofti bin Omar is Not Qualified to Be Commissioner of PAS and Mentri Besar of Kelantan". Bil 26 was titled, "Why Asri Crucially Wants a Coalition Government" (translated).

74 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 14-16, 1974; The Star, June 14, 1974; Utusan Melayu, June 17, 1974 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

(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 Party Pesaka of the Sarawak Alliance.<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> 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 National Front.<sup>77</sup> In December 1973, they agreed to contest future elections as a united front, and in January 1974, they adopted a common political symbol.<sup>78</sup> By July

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75 Straits Times (Malaysia), May 2, 1973; Albert Rony Assem, "Rural Love Affair," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 5, 1973, pp. 20-21. A merger proposal was apparently first discussed in October 1971 (Report for Presentation to Sarawak Alliance National Council, October 1971 (Confidential) (mimeo)). Pesaka leaders were said to be in general agreement by 1972, but were concerned about the effects of merger on grass-roots support. It was thought that the merger would reduce possible conflicts in the future over seat allocations, and also that Pesaka would be aided by Bumiputera's greater organizational strength (interview with a PBB (Pesaka) official, July 17, 1974).

76 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 28, 1974. Some SCA members believed the dissolution was illegal because a vote was taken when the subject was not on the agenda (interview with a former SCA official, July 19, 1974). The party was not revived.

77 Straits Times (Malaysia), July 18, 1974.

78 Ibid., December 5, 1973, January 19, 1974. The symbol was a wheel enclosing a bunch of padi (rice stocks). It was soon replaced by the National Front dacing.

they announced that they had agreed on the allocation of seats for Sarawak for the general elections.<sup>79</sup>

(8) The SUPP. In early 1973, the party held merger talks with Gerakan, but eventually the two parties settled for an undefined "close relationship".<sup>80</sup> 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>81</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 National Front leaders, Tun Mustapha was perhaps the least enamored of the new political arrangement.

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79 Ibid., July 18, 1974.

80 Overseas Chinese Daily News, January 22, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian. Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), January 16, 1973; The Chinese Daily News, January 12, 1973, and Malay Mail, January 17, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian. Part of the incentive for merger was the fact that Dr. Lim Chong Eu and Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui were close personal friends who shared the same political viewpoint (Kwong Wah Yit Poh, April 17, 1973 as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian).

81 See Straits Times (Malaysia), March 5-7, 1974.

The United Sabah National Organization (USNO) and the Sabah Chinese Association (SCA) entered the Front 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 National Front's most difficult task, the 1974 General Elections were viewed as a crucial test of its support among the people.<sup>82</sup> On July 28, 1974, Tun Razak announced that the allocation of seats among the National Front parties had been finalized and that they were "ready for the polls".<sup>83</sup> The proclamation dissolving Parliament was signed two days later, thus necessitating elections within sixty days.<sup>84</sup> 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 decided not to hold its state assembly election in 1974).<sup>85</sup> Nomination day was set for August 8th and polling day for August 24th (with staggered polling

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82 See Straits Times (Malaysia), December 28, 1973 on Tun Razak's concern for getting a mandate from the people for the National Front.

83 Ibid., July 29, 1974. However, more last minute bargaining evidently occurred at the July 31st meeting of 300 National Front leaders, prompting Tun Razak to comment that "not all can be satisfied because there are now nine parties" (ibid., August 1, 1974).

84 Ibid., July 31, 1974.

85 Sabah held its state assembly election in 1971 and the state government decided to allow its current term to run its full course.

in Sabah and Sarawak).<sup>86</sup>

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;<sup>87</sup> 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 National Front 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.<sup>88</sup> Tun Razak confidently told the Press that he expected the support of 80 per cent of the electorate, and that Malay

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86 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 1, 1974.

87 According to a high-ranking UMNO official, it was also believed that the economic situation in Malaysia would worsen in the next year (interview in 1975).

88 See Harvey Stockwin, "Variations of the Status Quo," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 16, 1974, pp. 28-29; M.G.G. Pillai, "Malaysia: Razak's Overkill," ibid., August 23, 1974, p. 26; M.G.G. Pillai, "The Viability of a Cornucopia," ibid., August 30, 1974, pp. 5-6.

support was solid.<sup>89</sup> 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 the National Front.<sup>90</sup> He made it clear that he would not bring into the government any non-Malays from outside the National Front, and if the non-Malays did not vote for the Chinese and Indian candidates of the National Front, then there would be a Malay government.

The landslide began on nomination day when 47 National Front parliamentary candidates and 43 state candidates were returned unopposed, including over half of the Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers, and Mentris Besar.<sup>91</sup> In Sabah, the Front'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.

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89 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 8, 1974.

90 Ibid., August 5, 8, 11, 12, 17, 1974.

91 Ibid., August 9, 1974. In 1969, 19 parliamentary and 11 state Alliance candidates were unopposed.



The National Front campaigned on six basic issues: national unity, national security, the economy, foreign policy, religion, and social services.<sup>92</sup> Its election slogan was "Masyarakat Adil, Bersatu Padu dan Kemahmuran Rakyat" ("A Just Society, Unity, and Prosperity of the People").<sup>93</sup> The Barisan Nasional Manifesto, 1974 ("The People's Front for 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 Front, explained its aims and rationale, and outlined the government's progress in the fields of the economy, foreign policy and social services.<sup>94</sup> However, undoubtedly the main thrust of the National Front campaign was the theme of a vote of confidence in Tun Razak. Within the Front's general policy outlines, and with considerable coordination and direction provided by National Front 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

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92 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 5 and 8, 1974.

93 Ibid., July 30, 1974.

94 "The People's Front for Happier Malaysia", Barisan Nasional Manifesto, 1974, Kuala Lumpur: Ibu Pejabat Barisan Nasional, n.d.

hands with Chairman Mao.<sup>95</sup> 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 National Front 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 Dr. Lim Chong Eu involved in four-way fights for both his own state and parliamentary seats.<sup>96</sup> Perak was also an area of uncertainty, with the heaviest concentration of opposition candidates (approximately 125 for 42 state seats and 57 for 21 parliamentary seats).<sup>97</sup> 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-National Front feeling within their ranks, and the PPP was running "in areas of heavy Chinese concentration where victory cannot be taken for granted".<sup>98</sup> Party officials in UMNO and

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95 Sunday Times (Malaysia), August 18, 1974.

96 See Khor Cheang Kee, "Penang Battle Grows Louder," Straits Times (Malaysia), August 19, 1974; Straits Echo, August 9, 1974 (edit.).

97 The figures vary slightly. See Straits Times (Malaysia), August 8-9, 12-13, 21, 1974.

98 Ibid.; August 21, 1974.

PAS were also worried about Trengganu, where they were surprised and somewhat alarmed to find Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia (PSRM), a Malay socialist party, concentrating its forces.<sup>99</sup> Finally, Sarawak was something of a question mark with the National Front 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.<sup>100</sup>

Among the opposition,<sup>101</sup> 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.<sup>102</sup> Consequently,

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99 Interview with Encik Khalil Akasah (March 21, 1975).

100 New Nation, August 24, 1974. Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), August 21, 1974; China Press, August 10, 1974, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

101 For an analysis of the major opposition parties, see Noordin Sopiee, "The Challenge to the National Front", Straits Times (Malaysia) August 6, 1974; Ernest Corea, "Nothing Has Been Left to Chance...", Straits Times (Singapore), August 24, 1974.

102 Interview with a Penang DAP leader (May 23, 1975). Also see Straits Times (Malaysia), August 14, 16, 21, 1974.

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.<sup>103</sup> 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.<sup>104</sup> In its attacks on the National Front, it accused the government of seeking political surrender rather than accommodation, and said the government wanted to move towards a one-party state.<sup>105</sup> 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>106</sup>

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103 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 17, 1974.

104 Ibid., August 16, 1974.

105 The Rocket, Vol. 9, No. 2 (August 1974), p. 5; Coalition Politics in Malaysia, The DAP View, Kuala Lumpur, DAP, n.d., reprint of a speech by Encik Lim Kit Siang on August 25, 1972. Also see The Rocket, Vol. 8, No. 3 (September/October 1973), p. 6.

106 "Expose the National Fraud of the National Front," 1974 General Elections Manifesto of the DAP, Kuala Lumpur: DAP, n.d.; "Can You Trust this Chap Any More?", election pamphlet published by the DAP, n.d.

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 National Front 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 the tin mines, a limit to the amount of land anyone could own, and an end to absentee landlordism.<sup>107</sup>

The PSRM caused some alarm for the National Front, as mentioned earlier, when on nomination day it became apparent that the party was training its election guns on Trengganu. It fielded 28 state candidates and 8 parliamentary candidates, including three national leaders, in Trengganu.<sup>108</sup> The PSRM chose the state because it was economically backward, had numerous anti-coalition dissidents, and because the party recently had built up some support and machinery in the state.<sup>109</sup> Further, Trengganu was a heavily Malay-populated state, and the UMNO Mentri Besar had not been seen as an effective leader.<sup>110</sup> The PSRM adopted several separate

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107 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 12, and 14, 1974 (edits.).

108 The PSRM ran a total of 21 parliamentary and 114 state candidates.

109 Interview with Encik Kassim Ahmad, President of PSRM (May 4, 1975). Also see Noordin Sopiee, "This Time David Has no Stones to Sling at Goliath", Straits Times (Singapore), August 8, 1974; Samad Ismail, "The Most Neglected State-by Sosialis Rakyat," ibid., August 11, 1974. Some UMNO leaders believed PSRM would win one or two parliamentary seats and four or five state seats (interview, September 15, 1974).

110 Samad Ismail, "Socialists Keep on Soldiering," Straits Times (Malaysia), August 22, 1974; The Star, August 3, 1974 (edit.).

manifestos for different states. In Trengganu 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.<sup>111</sup>

A couple of newly-formed minor parties, Kesatuan Insaf Tanah Air (Kita), and the Independent People's Progressive Party (IPPP), participated in the elections, but it was a new group in Kelantan, calling itself the Barisan Bebas, or United Independents, which created the most interest.<sup>112</sup> This was a group of 33 state assembly and 8 parliamentary candidates, headed by Encik Mohd. Fakhruddin and composed of a nucleus of former PAS participants of the "March 14th Revolt",<sup>113</sup> as well as some ex-UMNO supporters and several newcomers to politics.<sup>114</sup> Although not officially registered as a political party, the group campaigned with a common symbol and ran on a common platform of opposition to government corruption and nepotism in Kelantan, promising "plain, honest, and efficient government".<sup>115</sup>

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111 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 12 and 14, 1974. For the PSRM position on the government coalitions and the National Front, see Mimbar Sosialis, Vol. 12, No. 9 (October 1972), p. 2; ibid., Vol. 1, No. 1 (November 1972), pp. 2 and 6; ibid., Vol. 2, No. 2 (February/March 1973), p. 8.

112 See Samad Ismail, "Rebels Without a Cause," Straits Times (Malaysia), August 20, 1974.

113 See p. 264 above.

114 Straits Times (Malaysia), August 10, 1974.

115 Ibid., August 13, 1974. The group intended to form an Islamic party in Kelantan after the elections.

In addition to the Barisan Bebas (technically Independents) there was a high number of other Independents contesting the elections, 47 as opposed to 7 in 1969 for parliamentary seats. This was in large measure the result of the formation of the National Front and the severe competition between the component parties for National Front nominations. Many, if not most, of the Independents were disgruntled members of the component parties not selected to stand for a seat.<sup>116</sup>

In Sarawak, the multi-ethnic but essentially Iban-supported party, SNAP, provided the major challenge to the National Front.<sup>117</sup> SNAP campaigned on the issues of nepotism and corruption in the state and promised better government.<sup>118</sup> 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

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116 See 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.

117 A newly-formed minor party, Party Bisamah, representing some of the Bidayuh natives also contested the state election with four candidates. There were some Independents as well.

118 See P. C. Shivadas, "Battle for Votes in the Longhouses", Straits Times (Malaysia), August 14, 1974.

of the election was the effect of 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 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, and Pekemas President Dr. Tan Chee Khoon's appeal to the Prime Minister to investigate "election irregularities" in the state,<sup>119</sup> which generated the most interest. The National Front 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 National Front would win between 110 and 120 of the 154 parliamentary seats and all of the state assemblies.<sup>120</sup> It was anticipated that the non-Malay voters would "prefer to play it safe this time around".<sup>121</sup>

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119 Straits Times (Singapore), August 17, 1974.

120 New Nation, August 24, 1974; Straits Times (Singapore), August 24, 1974.

121 Ibid., August 24, 1974.



The actual results gave the National Front 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),<sup>122</sup> 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 National Front candidates who were returned unopposed).<sup>123</sup> 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 National Front emerged with clear majorities in every state. In the difficult states of Penang and Perak, the National Front won 23 of 27 seats and 31 of 42 seats, respectively.<sup>124</sup> In Sarawak the National Front won 30 of the 48 Council Negri seats, in Kelantan it captured every seat, and in Trengganu it completely shut out the PSRM. All of the federal Ministers, Chief Ministers and Mentris 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

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122 See Table D below. Also see Kershaw, op. cit., p. 213 (Appendix 1a).

123 See Harvey Stockwin, "Electing to be Moderate," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 6, 1974, pp. 10-12; Straits Times (Malaysia), August 26, 1974 (edit.).

124 See Table E below.

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 Deputy Stephen Yong, who lost his state seat to SNAP.

The Malay community gave very solid support to the National Front. Both UMNO and PAS won all their parliamentary contests (61 and 14 seats, respectively), and only four National Front Malay state candidates lost (all to Independents).<sup>125</sup> There were now no Malays in the opposition benches of Parliament.<sup>126</sup> The MCA remained the second largest party in the Front with a 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, including two which were considered extremely difficult (Port Klang and Damansara), and seven of eight state seats. Gerakan captured five of eight parliamentary seats contested (three for three in Penang), and won eleven of thirteen state seats in Penang. In Peninsular Malaysia, the only National Front 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.<sup>127</sup> Further,

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125 Chandrasekaran Pillay, The 1974 General Elections in Malaysia, A Post-Mortem, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper No. 25, 1974, p. 4.

126 See Noordin Sopiee, "The Action Parliament", New Straits Times, November 5, 1974. All ten opposition MP's from Peninsular Malaysia were Chinese. Of SNAP's nine MP's, eight were Ibans and one was Chinese.

127 See Straits Times (Malaysia), August 26, 1974; Noordin Sopiee and Ety Ibrahim, "Triumph--And Blighted Hopes," ibid., August 29, 1974; New Nation, August 26, 1974; New Straits Times, September 21, 1974. Joseph Sossai, "The PPP 'Down but not Out'", ibid., September 21, 1974.

Table A: Government and Opposition in Parliament

<u>At the Reconvening of Parliament in February 1971</u>	<u>Seats</u>
The Alliance	98 <sup>a</sup>
Opposition	45
Total	143 <sup>b</sup>

<u>At the Dissolution of Parliament in July 1974</u>	
The National Front	119
Opposition	25
Total	144

<u>At the Opening of Parliament following the August 1974 General Elections</u>	
The National Front	135
Opposition	19
Total	154

a The Peninsular Alliance won 66 seats in 1969, with the election in one seat (Malaka Selatan) postponed. By February 1971, the Alliance had won the Malaka 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 1969 (Sabah and Sarawak 1970):  
Seats Won and Contested by Parties

<u>Peninsular Malaysia</u>	<u>Won</u>	<u>Contested</u>
The Alliance	66	103 <sup>a</sup>
UMNO	51	67
MCA	13	33
MIC	2	3
PAS	12	59
PPP	4	6
Gerakan	8	14
DAP	13	24
PR (later PSRM)	0	5
Independents	0	2
Total Seats Peninsular Malaysia	103a	(213)
<u>Sarawak</u>		
The Sarawak Alliance	10	29
Bumiputera	5	11
Pesaka	3	15
SCA	2	3
SUPP <sup>b</sup>	5	18
SNAP	9	23
Total Seats Sarawak	24	(70)
<u>Sabah</u>		
The Sabah Alliance	16	16
USNO	13	13
SCA	3	3
Independents	0	5
Total Seats Sabah	16	(21)
Total Seats Malaysia	143 <sup>a</sup>	(304)

a The election in one Peninsula constituency was postponed; later won by the Alliance.

b. The SUPP formed a coalition government with the Sarawak Alliance just after the election.

Table C: The Breakdown of Seats Held in Parliament by  
Parties at the Dissolution of Parliament in July 1974

<u>Parties</u>	<u>Seats Held</u>
The National Front	119
UMNO	52
MCA	15
MIC	3
PAS	10
PPP	4
Gerakan	2
Sabah Alliance	16
PBB	12
SUPP	5
The Opposition	25
DAP	9
Pekemas	5
Kita	3
SNAP	7
Independents	1
PSRM	0
Total Parliamentary Seats	144

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

	Won	Contested
The National Front	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>114</b>	<b>(263)</b>
<u>Sarawak</u>		
The National Front	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>
<u>Sabah</u>		
The National Front (Sabah Alliance)	16	16
USNO	13	16
SCA	3	3
Pekemas	0	1
<b>Sabah Total Seats</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(17)</b>
<b>Total Seats Malaysia</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>(331)</b>

Table E: Breakdown of Seats Held in State Assemblies  
by Parties in the Original Coalition States After the  
August 1974 General Elections

<u>Sarawak</u>	<u>Seats</u>
The National Front	30
PBB	18
SUPP	12
SNAP	18
<b>Total Sarawak Council Negri Seats</b>	<b>48</b>
<u>Penang</u>	
The National Front	23
Gerakan	11
UMNO	9
MCA	1
MIC	1
PAS	1
DAP	2
Pekemas	1
Independent	1
<b>Total Penang State Assembly Seats</b>	<b>27</b>

Cont....

Table E continued.

Perak	Seats
The National Front	31
UMNO	21
MCA	3
MIC	1
PAS	3
PPP	2
Gerakan	1
DAP	11
Total Perak State Assembly Seats	42

Kelantan

The National Front	36
PAS	22
UMNO	13
MCA	1
Total Kelantan State Assembly Seats	36

Sources for tables: Compiled from Straits Times (Malaysia) and New Straits Times. At the time of writing, official Reports were not available for the 1974 elections. Newspaper accounts were sometimes conflicting, and, in any case, did not indicate to which component of the Front the various National Front candidates belonged. Therefore these accounts were supplemented and corrected from various sources, including National Front officials and the Canadian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.



in addition to the election losses of Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam most of the other PPP top leaders, including Encik Khong Kok Yat and Encik R.C.M. Ryan, also lost. Pillay writes that PPP supporters 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>128</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.<sup>129</sup>

In the opposition, the PSRM, Kita, the IPPP, the Barisan Bebas, and small Party Bisamah of Sarawak won no seats at all.<sup>130</sup> Pekemas, which

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128 Pillay, op. cit., p. 8.

129 See P.C. Shivadas, "Setbacks But Still a Good Majority," New Straits Times, September 17, 1974; M.G.G. Pillai, "Razak's Frail Eastern Front," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 27, 1974, p. 13.

130 However, in Trengganu the PSRM did win 30 per cent of the vote in its parliamentary and state seats, and the Barisan Bebas won over 23 per cent of the vote in the state seats in Kelantan which it contested. See Samad Ismail, "The Terrible Swath of Victory," Straits Times (Malaysia), August 28, 1974.

entered the elections with five Members of Parliament, emerged with only one, that of its President, Dr. Tan Chee Khoon. 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 (Kuala Lumpur) constituencies.<sup>131</sup> 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 Kalong Ningkan, lost both his parliamentary and state seats, and SNAP Deputy President, Datuk James Wong, lost his parliamentary seat.<sup>132</sup>

The 1974 General Elections provided a clear mandate for the National Front, 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 National Front victory. First, the voters generally agreed with Tun Razak's political policies of accommodation and stability. Second, the Malay vote was nearly solidly for the National Front. Third, the

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131 See Sin Chew Jit Poh, August 29, 1974 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian.

132 See New Sunday Times, September 15, 1974 (edit.).

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 National Front victory. Fourth, the opposition could not match the election organization, machinery, and finances of the National Front. Fifth, unlike 1969, there were no opposition electoral pacts to avoid splitting the protest vote. Finally, the National Front 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<sup>133</sup> was made public by Tun Razak on September 6, 1974. Every National Front 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).<sup>134</sup> 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

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133 Tengku Razaleigh was appointed head of Petronas, the National Petroleum Corporation, a position which Tun Razak stressed was the equivalent to a full Cabinet post.

134 New Straits Times, September 6, 1974; Straits Echo, September 7, 1974.

of the 1957 Independence Cabinet.<sup>135</sup> 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.<sup>136</sup> A smaller surprise was the appointment of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, 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.<sup>137</sup> 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 Communication. However, both the MCA and MIC were basically acquiescent, and the other National Front parties expressed

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135 In 1971, six of the thirteen Cabinet Ministers had been members of the 1957 Cabinet.

136 See Chapter 5, pp. 320-334, 354.

137 See The Guardian, Vol. 6, No. 9 (October 1974), pp. 1-2. The three portfolios were Labour and Manpower, Health, and Housing and New Villages.

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.<sup>138</sup>

### The Consolidation of the National Front

The National Front organization was not fully functional until well after the August elections. The hurriedly-written<sup>139</sup> first National Front 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>140</sup>

Encik Ghafar Baba was appointed Secretary-General of the National Front in September 1974 to oversee the groundwork for the re-organization and strengthening of the Front.<sup>141</sup> The National Front

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138 The exception was the Ministry of Defence to Tun Mustapha, had he taken it. According to government sources, it was expected that Tun Mustapha could be controlled and contained in this position. The announcement, however, sparked considerable controversy and some alarm among the public. There were wild rumors, for instance that Tun Mustapha might buy over the generals and either stage a coup or else start a full scale "jihad" (holy war) somewhere in the area.

139 According to Encik Khalil Akasah (interview, March 21, 1975).

140 Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Ibu Pejabat Barisan Nasional Malaysia, 1974.

141 New Straits Times, September 5, October 8, 1974.

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 National Front MPs and State Assemblymen (SAs).<sup>142</sup> The Supreme Council decided that the National Front Constitution needed to be amended to allow for the establishment of state and division secretariats and branch committees to coordinate the work of National Front MPs and SAs (who would set up offices in divisional headquarters), and to serve as a forum for inter-party dialogue.<sup>143</sup> A constitution amendment committee was formed under the chairmanship of Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam to work out the proposals, which held its first meeting on November 25, 1974.<sup>144</sup>

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.<sup>145</sup> Encik Ghafar Baba explained that the Alliance

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142 Ibid., September 3, October 30, November 8, 1974; Straits Times (Malaysia), August 28, 1974; ibid., August 29, 1974 (edit.). Also see Michael M.C. Ong, "The Member of Parliament and His Constituency: The Malaysian Case", Legislative Studies Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1976), pp. 405-422.

143 New Straits Times, September 5, October 9, 30, 1974.

144 Ibid., November 8, 19, 1974.

145 Ibid., September 25, 1974.

National Headquarters would become the headquarters of the National Front, and the Supreme Council decided that all other Alliance and coalition coordinating committees should be abolished, and new committees established.<sup>146</sup> 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 National Front Committee; a process which was finally completed in all of the states by June 1975.<sup>147</sup>

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.<sup>148</sup> 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.<sup>149</sup> The National Front was now termed an "association" of political parties;<sup>150</sup> it called for state and divisional coordinating

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146. Ibid., December 25, 1974.

147. Ibid., June 2, 1975.

148. Ibid., November 19, 1974.

149. Ibid., January 11, 1975.

150. See Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu), 1975 (mimeo draft). The term "association" was later changed back to "confederation" as a concession to Tun Mustapha, according to an UMNO source.

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 National Front 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.<sup>151</sup> 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 National Front.<sup>152</sup>

Additional constitutional amendments were approved at various times after the January Constitution (the first ones as early as July 1975), but they were relatively minor in nature compared with the structural and procedural measures enacted in the January 1975 National Front Constitution.<sup>153</sup> The trend has been for more institutionalization,

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151 Except for decisions taken under Articles 14 (discipline) and 21 (interpretation of rules) which would be decided by a majority vote, with each member party having one vote (see Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu), *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 10.

152 Ibid., p. 2.

153 One of the new procedural rules, for instance, was that no component with National Front party could admit former members of another component party except with the approval of the Supreme Council (see The Star, March 22, 1975).



a streamling of administrative procedures, and a greater concentration of power and control in the National Front Chairman. However, it is believed that for the present at least, a formal consolidation of the National Front cannot be pushed much further, since the component parties, especially UMNO and PAS, want to retain fully their own party identities.<sup>154</sup>

#### 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 National Front and the nation. To some observers, this was Malaysia's "real" election.<sup>155</sup> It was clearly recognized that UMNO was the essential core of the National Front, and that as in the past, it would continue to provide the top government leaders.<sup>156</sup> 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

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154 Interview with an UMNO official (May 23, 1975).

155 By a Correspondent, "Preparing for the Slugging Match," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 30, 1975, pp. 24-25; New Straits Times, June 19, 1975; New Sunday Times, June 22, 1975 (edit.)

156 In interviews, many National Front and opposition politicians alike expressed the view that the future of the National Front and Malaysian politics depended mostly upon what happened in UMNO.

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 gaunt-looking Tun Razak<sup>157</sup> might retire before the next UMNO elections.<sup>158</sup> It was a near certainty that if Tun Razak or Datuk Hussein Onn stepped down, one of the top vacancies would be filled from the ranks of the vice-presidents; consequently a struggle over the heir-apparency had been building up.<sup>159</sup> This, coupled with the fact that several of the aspirants for the vice-presidential posts were considered to be Malay "radicals", meant that the UMNO elections were regarded as crucial.

There was a new procedural rule for the UMNO elections at this Assembly. In an attempt to reduce or eliminate "bloc voting" and "horse-trading", the individual secret ballot was introduced.<sup>160</sup> Additionally, it was required that each ballot be marked for the full allotment of

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157 This impression of his health was gained from talking with and observing the Prime Minister at a Selayang by-election polling station on June 14, 1975.

158 Tun Razak and Datuk Hussein Onn were returned unopposed in 1975 for the offices of UMNO President and Deputy President, respectively.

159 Also Tun Razak declined to name any successor (Straits Echo, March 12, 1975).

160 See New Straits Times, May 3, 9, 1975; The Star, June 19, 1975.

candidates (three for the vice-presidential posts and twenty for the Supreme Council).<sup>161</sup> Although these new procedures introduced an element of uncertainty into the voting and reduced some of the control of the Mentris Besar over their state delegations, there was still apparently a significant amount of bloc-voting.<sup>162</sup>

The Assembly was opened by Tun Razak with his President's Report,<sup>163</sup> which was a policy speech dealing mostly with the NEP, the state of the economy, and preparations for the Third Malaysia Plan (TMP). It was expected that the debate on the President's Report and on the six resolutions tabled before the Assembly would occupy most of the next two days, before the business of voting began.<sup>164</sup> However, the Assembly

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161: In turn, however, this introduced the phenomenon of the "throw away" vote for a weak candidate. There was some concern that a "weak" candidate might even win if enough votes were thrown in the same direction, but this did not happen.

162 According to two UMNO Ministers (interviews, June 30, 1975 and July 4, 1975). It was estimated at UMNO headquarters that 70 to 80 per cent of the delegates were the same as at the last General Assembly, and that these delegates would vote the "state ticket" as instructed by the state UMNO leader.

163 Kajian Presiden 1975, Kuala Lumpur: Ibu Pejabat UMNO Malaysia, 1975. This policy speech should not be confused with Tun Razak's second, and more political, speech, the Presidential Address.

164 Six resolutions, mostly concerning the implementation of the NEP, education, and religion, were referred to the Assembly, out of over 600 submitted. Of the other resolutions, approximately 136 were rejected and 479 approved outright by the UMNO committee on resolutions (See New Straits Times, May 29, June 17-19, 1975).

very quickly passed five of the six resolutions, rejected the sixth and accepted the President's Report, all without debate.<sup>165</sup> Tun Razak asked that the Assembly reconsider the resolutions because they were important and needed to be fully discussed, but the Assembly stood by its decision.<sup>166</sup> This left on the agenda only Tun Razak's Presidential Address and the actual voting, the culmination of months of campaigning, lobbying, and intriguing.<sup>167</sup> The primary focus of attention was on the vice-presidential election. After some withdrawals and late nominations, there were finally eight candidates for the three posts. Incumbent Encik Ghafar Baba was viewed as the favorite, and nominated vice-president Tengku Razaleigh also was regarded as a very strong candidate. The real contest was for the third post.<sup>168</sup> 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,

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165 New Sunday Times, June 22, 1975.

166 Ibid. An UMNO Minister explained later that the Assembly's action on the resolutions and the booring which occurred during the meeting when some leaders' names were mentioned was not a shocking, or even a new, occurrence, and it did not indicate a break-down of Malay deference. Rather, he explained, deference simply did not apply to a large group setting where anonymity was guaranteed. Also, he added, Tun Razak was very tolerant about criticisms, more so than the Tunku (interview July 4, 1975).

167 See Utusan Melayu, February 8, 1975 (edit.), as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian; New Straits Times, February 24, April 21, 30, May 2-3, 9, 13, 22, 31, June 17-21, 1975; New Sunday Times, April 27, May 18, 1975; "Preparing for a Slugging Match", op. cit., pp. 24-25.

168 See R.S. Milne, "Malaysia and Singapore, 1975", Asian Survey, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (February 1976), pp.186-192, especially for background information on the UMNO candidates.

Dato Harun, the powerful Mentri Besar of Selangor, President of UMNO Youth, and one of the main organizers of the Muhammad Ali-Joe Bugner championship fight in Kuala Lumpur immediately after the General Assembly, announced that he had decided to contest the vice-presidential election.<sup>169</sup> 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>170</sup>

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- 169 New Straits Times, May 31, 1975. Dato Harun revealed that he purposely declared his candidacy at a late date so that there would be no time for his enemies to mount a large-scale attack against him (interview, June 14, 1975). The Ali-Bugner fight was considered a political coup for Dato Harun, although he denied there was any political motive behind it.
- 170 From an interview with a high-ranking UMNO official in 1975. Dato Harun is a complex political figure. He is educated and articulate. He was an effective administrator as Mentri Besar, and was, and is capable of arousing deep political loyalties. He is thought of as a Malay nationalist and perhaps a radical (although neither "new order" or "old order"), yet the Chinese in Selangor were able to work with him when he was Mentri Besar. The concern about Dato Harun is more that he is too politically ambitious, to the point that he is a political gambler willing to stretch the established "rules of the game". Some accusing fingers were pointed to his role in the May 13th riots (he organized the Malay counter-rally which ran amok). Additionally, as he explained in an interview (June 14, 1975), he had later organized an UMNO Youth protest march against the Philippine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur at the height of the southern Philippine Muslim revolt. The protest was orderly, but Tun Razak was upset and Tun (Dr.) Ismail gave him a "tongue-lashing". Dato Harun believed that the militancy of UMNO Youth served as a safety-valve for young Malay ultras who would otherwise support some more extreme organization. His leadership of UMNO Youth gave him a powerful political lever, but the very militancy that he had become identified with tended to exclude him from the top party inner circles.

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>171</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, in the least dictatorial fashion possible, a government team in his address. Although the references were camouflaged and apparently vague, the message was clear to the delegates.<sup>172</sup> In his speech, Tun Razak repeated several times that the most important prerequisite for leadership was honesty, a reference not lost on the delegates,<sup>173</sup> 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

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171 According to a high-ranking UMNO official interviewed in 1975.

172 Ibid.

173 Dato Harun was being investigated by the National Bureau of Investigation on allegations of corruption at that time. For the text of Tun Razak's speech, see New Sunday Times, June 22, 1975. Datuk Hussein Onn, in his earlier speech to the UMNO Youth Assembly also referred to honesty and the need to stamp out corruption regardless of who was involved (The Star, June 21, 1975).

naming the government team.<sup>174</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).<sup>175</sup> In the Supreme Council elections, sixteen of the twenty incumbents were re-elected, and only one of seven UMNO Youth candidates was elected.<sup>176</sup> The Press called the election results "a vote for continuity"<sup>177</sup> and a "triumph for Tun Razak".<sup>178</sup> 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 their effect was to be almost immediate. Tun Razak would be dead by mid-January 1976, at the age of fifty-three.

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174 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).

175 The Star, June 22, 1975; Malay Mail, June 23, 1975 (edit.)

176 Ibid., There were 72 candidates for the 20 elected Supreme Council seats.

177 Ibid.

178 New Straits Times, June 23, 1975 (edit.).

Consociationalism and the National Front

Consociationalism as defined in this thesis is a variant of Lijphart's consociational democracy model. As defined here, democracy is not considered a necessary element for the investigation or practice of consociationalism. Further, as defined here, consociationalism can operate when political power is not shared equally, even in a bi-polar situation where one segment is politically dominant.<sup>179</sup> For consociationalism to operate successfully in Malaysia, via the National Front, it was necessary to have both "overarching elite cooperation" and "stable non-elite support".<sup>180</sup> As pointed out in Chapter 2, by 1969 the Alliance, in an environment of open political competition, was on the defensive against opposition outbidding and was suffering from a partial decline of its non-elite support.<sup>181</sup> The various coalition arrangements, and later the National Front, were an attempt to repair the deficiencies experienced by the Alliance in the late 1960s.

Overarching Elite Cooperation

Like the Alliance government, the National Front was an attempt to continue the tradition of elite political accommodation. The elites appeared to possess the "behavioral attributes" necessary for a consociational approach, by being: (1) aware of the dangers inherent in the political system; (2) committed to system maintenance; (3) able to transcend ethnic cleavages; and (4) favorably predisposed to bargaining and compromise.<sup>182</sup> Especially after the riots of May 13, 1969, the elites were sensitive to the dangers of ethnic violence and to the realization that uncontrolled political competition could serve as a catalyst for such violence. Perhaps more

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179 See Chapter 1, pp. 28-34.

180 Ibid., pp. 25-26.

181 See Chapter 2, pp. 138-144.

182 See Chapter 1, pp. 23-24.



than any other factor, this heightened realization contributed to the willingness of the former Alliance elites and some opposition elites to try to work together in a spirit of accommodation and compromise.<sup>183</sup>

The essential ingredient of the National Front, of course, was the behavior of Tun Razak and the other top UMNO leaders; their willingness and ability to cooperate and share power with former opponents without losing old allies.

The style and "rules" for elite accommodation in the National Front were basically the same as the Alliance: semi-secret negotiations, public unanimity, and a striving for consensus through the process of compromise and bargaining within the inner circles. There were some differences, however. First, the elites were not all personal friends on a social level, and, as a result, intra-National Front politics were less informal. Second, the role of Tun Razak as intra-Front arbiter was, because of the greater size of the Front, more extensive than the Tunku's had been with the Alliance. Third, the "bargain" was changed by UMNO; it now incorporated the NEP and the 1971 legislation.<sup>184</sup> Finally, the predominance of UMNO was more clearly

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183 A Sunday Times (Malaysia) editorial (August 25, 1974) characterized the consociational approach: "Give and take. Compromise. These are words most Malaysians understand. They mean SURVIVAL for the nation."

184 See Lee San Choon, "Message", in MCA 25 Tahun, 1949-1974, Kuala Lumpur: MCA Headquarters, 1974, introductory section, no p. no.; New Sunday Times, September 15, 1974; Mohd. Mahyuddin Wan Nawang, "Sistem Politik Akan Datang," in Kursus Politik Peringkat Negri 1975, Kuala Lumpur: Pergerakan Pemuda UMNO Malaysia, 1975, p. 3.

stated and recognized, and there was less need for ambiguity.

#### Stable Non-Elite Support

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."<sup>185</sup>

The government leaders were also aware that support would be more important in terms of the influence, legitimacy, effectiveness, and representativeness of the National Front than in the actual number of seats it controlled in Parliament.<sup>186</sup>

To build up a stronger and wider base of non-elite 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.

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185 Straits Times (Malaysia), December 28, 1973.

186 See ibid., July 22 and August 8, 1974; New Straits Times, February 2, 1975.

To accompany the evolving National Front 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";<sup>187</sup> 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.<sup>188</sup> For Tun Razak's government, there would be no more ambiguity and no more sweeping problems "under the carpet".

The 1974 General Elections were viewed as a test of non-elite support. The National Front Government received 59 per cent of the popular vote. While this figure does not seem to indicate the kind of massive support that had been sought, it must be remembered that just over 30 per cent of the National Front parliamentary candidates were returned unopposed and do not figure in the popular vote totals. For the most part, the National Front candidates who were returned unopposed, were unopposed because opposition parties regarded them as

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187 See Towards National Harmony, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1971, p. 2.

188 The Economist observed that the National Front, although it was "dominated by Malays, it has enlisted the support of some of the country's most intelligent and flexible Chinese politicians in an attempt to overcome the constant danger that Malaysian politics will become racially polarised" (reported in New Straits Times, June 20, 1975).

certain to win. If the seats had been contested, the National Front would certainly have won much more than an average of 59 per cent of the vote.<sup>189</sup>

The National Front Government was gratified with its electoral mandate, and the leaders believed that they had remedied, for the present at least, the problem of too many non-elites supporting opposition elites.<sup>190</sup> Further, within the Front, 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. Further, Malaysia was one of the most prosperous countries in Southeast Asia, and still one of the most lenient towards its immigrant minorities. The heady days of the 1969 campaign were long behind, and the non-Malays voted pragmatically.

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189 There does not seem to be any way to accurately judge what the National Front popular vote totals might have been had those 47 parliamentary seats been contested and their votes added to the totals.

190 Also, they could see the prospect of broadening and enlarging further their support base in Sarawak by bringing another opposition party, SNAP, into the National Front.

With the mandate for non-elite support which it sought, and with apparently a substantial degree of political stability and legitimacy, the National Front Government now had to begin to produce the developmental results which it had promised.

Conditions Favorable to Overarching Elite Cooperation  
and Stable Non-Elite Support

Most of the conditions found in a society which are either conducive or detrimental to the success of a consociational system are long-term, and, if they change, do so only slowly. Consequently, in Malaysia most of the same societal conditions which existed while the Alliance ruled still obtained for the National Front.<sup>191</sup> There was still: the disadvantage of a bipolar numerical balance instead of the more favorable multiple balance; the advantage of comparatively small size in population and area; the disadvantage of not having any permanent overarching loyalties; the partial advantage of some prior traditions of elite accommodation, most notably among the Malays; and, the disadvantage of not having any politically salient cross-cutting cleavages.

The one condition that has been changing more rapidly is "segmental isolation". With reference to consociationalism this applies to the existence of clear socio-economic boundaries between the groups,

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191 See Chapter 1, pp. 26-28 and Chapter 2, pp. 155-159.

both to maintain internal (ethnic) group cohesion and also to minimize inter-group conflict generated by contact and competition.<sup>192</sup> In Malaysia, "segmental isolation" is starting to break down, partially at least as a result of the government's NEP, which has increased and broadened the spheres of ethnic economic competition. This is considered unfavorable to consociationalism. However, since the government views economic disparities between the ethnic groups as a cause of ethnic hostility, the NEP, which is designed to reduce these disparities, has top priority, even if simultaneously it increases inter-group competition and contact. Also, the NEP has not been initiated in isolation. To complement the implementation of the NEP, and to reduce to a minimum the possible negative consequences of increased economic competition, the government has been 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 National Front. 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>193</sup> If the economic disparities between the groups was reduced, the economy growing, and politics stable, the effects of a reduction of "segmental isolation" would probably be negligible.

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192 See Chapter 1, p..27.

193 Straits Times (Malaysia), June 27, 1974.

CHAPTER 5: AFTER TUN RAZAK: MALAYSIA UNDER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN

On December 18, 1975, uncharacteristically cancelling scheduled engagements, Tun Razak was flown suddenly to Great Britain. The government reported that the Prime Minister was taking a short holiday, admitting only that he needed a rest. While this fiction was maintained, rumours about his health spread in Malaysia and stock market prices declined sharply.<sup>1</sup> The Tunku finally asked, through his column in The Star, if Tun Razak was seriously ill, adding that the people had a right to know.<sup>2</sup> The gravity of the situation was revealed in a government announcement that the Prime Minister's scheduled return to Malaysia had been "postponed until further notice" because of "unforeseen circumstances".<sup>3</sup> The next day the Press broke the news to a startled nation that Tun Razak had died in London on January 14, 1976 of acute leukaemia, after a secret six-year battle against the disease.<sup>4</sup>

The death of a nation's leader is always politically unsettling--all the more so in a nation like Malaysia where the leader is responsible

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1 There was a Malay astrological rumour circulating in 1975 that Tun Razak would be out of office before his next birthday, March 11, 1976, either by being overthrown or by dying (interview with Encik Mustapha Hussein, April 30, 1975). Also see K. Das, "Speculation Over Razak's Illness," Far Eastern Economic Review, January 2, 1976, pp. 19-20.

2 Reported by K. Das, "Waiting for the News on Razak", ibid., January 16, 1976, p. 16.

3 New Straits Times, January 14, 1976.

4 Ibid., January 15, 1976.

for holding together and balancing the contending forces in a large multi-ethnic coalition. An editorial tribute to Tun Razak noted that the Prime Minister had "built up a developmental strategy which, if it did not satisfy the aspirations of all, was accepted as the only workable compromise between the mutually contradictory expectations of the various sectors of Malaysian society. It was accepted because of the confidence the Tun was able to inspire as a fair and just leader."<sup>5</sup> The problem with Tun Razak's strategy was that he seemed so indispensable to its continuance. As one reporter put it, the question was not only "After Razak, Who?" but "After Razak, What?"<sup>6</sup>

#### The Change of Leadership

The actual succession was smooth and orderly. On January 15, 1976, the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Hussein Onn, was sworn in as Malaysia's third Prime Minister.<sup>7</sup> He announced that during the forty days of mourning there would be no Cabinet changes, no appointment of a Deputy Prime Minister, and no special UMNO assembly. He also promised continuity with the policies of the late Tun Razak. In his first week in office, he received the full support of his Cabinet, was confirmed by

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5 Far Eastern Economic Review, January 23, 1976, p. 5.

6 Denzil Peiris, "Unkown Factors in the Communal Equation," ibid., January 23, 1976, p. 8.

7 New Straits Times, January 16, 1976; New Sunday Times, January 18, 1976; K. Das, "Hussein Takes the Strain," Far Eastern Economic Review, January 30, 1976, pp. 12-13.



the UMNO Supreme Council as the Acting President of the party, and was named Chairman of the National Front by the leaders of the component parties.

Still, there were many unanswered questions. Tun Razak had died before he was able to deal with some important unfinished business, including the political confrontation with Tun Mustapha in Sabah, the growing UMNO crisis over Dato Harun, and the completion of the Third Malaysia Plan. Additionally, the communist insurgency had once again become a nagging problem. There was uncertainty about how Datuk Hussein Onn would respond to these situations. Although the son of the first President of UMNO, and himself UMNO's first youth leader, Datuk Hussein Onn had left politics soon after his father's break with UMNO in 1951, and had not resumed a political career until 1964 when he rejoined UMNO. He was elected an MP in 1969, appointed Minister of Education in 1970, elected an UMNO Vice-President in 1972, and was named Deputy Prime Minister and UMNO Deputy President in August 1973. Known as an honest man with moderate political views similar to Tun Razak's, he was nevertheless something of an unknown political quantity. Regarded as politically unambitious, it was thought that he disliked party intrigues and maneuverings, and lacked a solid political base. Further, Datuk Hussein Onn generally had not been considered the likely successor to Tun Razak. He was still recovering from a serious heart attack and was believed to have been thinking of retirement. Before the forty days of mourning

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8 K. Das, "Malaysia's Leadership", *ibid.*, January 23, 1976, pp. 6-7;  
K. Das, "Hussein Onn: Doing It His Way," *ibid.*, February 6, 1976,  
pp. 10-11.

were over, the question already being posed was: who will succeed Datuk Hussein Onn?<sup>9</sup>

At the end of January, Datuk Hussein Onn announced that he would name a Deputy Prime Minister and a new Cabinet early in March.<sup>10</sup> It was clear that the choice of a Deputy Prime Minister would come from the ranks of UMNO, and it was nearly as certain<sup>11</sup> that it would be one of the three UMNO Vice-Presidents: Encik Ghafar Baba, Tengku Razaleigh or Dr. Mahathir. The Press picked Encik Ghafar Baba, the senior UMNO Vice-President and the man named by Tun Razak to serve as Acting Prime Minister on one occasion, as the strongest candidate. Tengku Razaleigh, although believed to be too young, was rated a close second. It was even speculated that two Deputy Prime Ministers might be named.<sup>12</sup>

On March 5, 1976, Datuk Hussein Onn named his Deputy: the controversial 50-year old Minister of Education, Dr. Mahathir.<sup>13</sup> The choice was surprising for several reasons. First, Dr. Mahathir ranked

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9 K. Das, "Hussein Takes the Strain," *op. cit.*, p. 12. Also see Harun Hassan and Subky Latif, Siapa Selapas Tun Razak?, Kuala Lumpur: Amir Enterprises, 1975, pp. 1-3, 16-17.

10 New Straits Times, January 29, 1976.

11 The only conceivable candidate with an outside chance was Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, but his lack of solid party support and the fact that he had not been elected an UMNO Vice-President made his appointment nearly impossible.

12 See New Straits Times, March 2-5, 1976.

13 Ibid., March 6, 1976.

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behind Encik Ghafar Baba in party seniority, a traditionally important consideration in UMNO politics. Second, Dr. Mahathir had been stereotyped as a Malay radical by many non-Malays, who could be expected to be apprehensive about his appointment.<sup>15</sup> Finally, "Dr. Mahathir had been expelled from UMNO in 1969 for criticizing the Tunku, and his return and mercurial rise through party and government ranks was bruising to the sensitivities of some of the 'old guard' in UMNO."<sup>16</sup>

Datuk Hussein Onn, in commenting on the appointment, said he did "not expect 100 per cent approval", but he had made his decision and could "only pray and hope that the choice is a correct one and that he [Dr. Mahathir] will be accepted and supported by the country generally."<sup>17</sup>

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- 14 Tengku Razaleigh also ranked ahead of Dr. Mahathir as the second senior Vice-President. He was first appointed to the post, and then placed second in the voting in 1974. However, Tengku Razaleigh lacked the long years of party service of Dr. Mahathir, despite his several years in exile, which helped compensate for this fact.
- 15 An editorial in The Guardian (MCA) commented that as for "the non-Malays, many of them have come to associate Dr. Mahathir's political stance with extremism. Whether legitimate or not, this is a real and widespread fear which the years have done little to allay. The less charitable would even have it that Dr. Mahathir has profited from this situation...But 1976 is not 1969, and the man is now in a position of responsibility. A proper evaluation of Dr. Mahathir as a national leader and not merely as a leader of the Malays alone will have to depend on the balance he chooses to strike..."(Vol. 8, No. 2 (March/April 1976), p. 2).
- 16 R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, Singapore and Vancouver: Federal Publications Ltd., and University of British Columbia Press, 1978, ch. 7.
- 17 New Straits Times, March 6, 1976.

It was clear that the choice had not been easy, and the Prime Minister admitted that he had finalized the decision only the night before the scheduled announcement.<sup>18</sup> It appeared that a major consideration in his choice was to name a man whom the Prime Minister believed could effectively lead the nation if called upon at short notice. Educated, forthright, and with demonstrated ability in an important Ministry, Dr. Mahathir, although controversial for some of his supposed political and ethnic views, best fitted the requirements sought by Datuk Hussein Onn. Encik Ghafar Baba, a consummate politician with extensive and deep grass-roots support, nonetheless was not in the mould, particularly educationally, of Malaysia's other top leaders, past or present.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, it was reported that the Sabah Alliance did not favor his appointment, and also that he and the Prime Minister could not work well together.<sup>20</sup> Tengku Razaleigh generally was considered too young, an important consideration in a deference system which honors its elders, and he may also have been considered too untested.

Reaction to the appointment of Dr. Mahathir was varied. MCA Headquarters declined comment, as did the Tunku. Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar said "he had plenty to say but would rather keep it to himself".

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18 Ibid.

19 See Mavis C. Puthuchery, "Administration, Politics and Development: A Case Study of West Malaysia", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1973, p. 89 fn.

20 K. Das, "Hussein Put His Faith in Mahathir", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 19, 1976, pp. 19-20.

Dr. Lim Chong Eu merely commented that the Prime Minister had made his choice and the country must support him. The MIC, however, welcomed the appointment of a man of "integrity, firmness, and patience", the parties in Sabah and Sarawak supported the appointment, and most comment by UMNO rank-and-file seemed favorable.<sup>21</sup>

When the new Cabinet was announced, and it was apparent that Encik Ghafar Baba had not been named to it (his former Ministry of Agriculture post remaining vacant), it appeared certain that a crisis was brewing in UMNO. However, in Malaysian politics it is usually foolhardy for a disgruntled politician to challenge the Prime Minister, and Encik Ghafar Baba had always demonstrated sound political instincts. The next day the tension was eased when Encik Ghafar Baba announced that he would remain as Secretary-General of the National Front and as an UMNO Vice-President, and urged support for the new Cabinet.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise, the new Cabinet contained no surprises, and it retained its essential representativeness, with the MCA, MIC, and PAS each gaining a new full Minister.<sup>23</sup> With the appointment of a Deputy Prime Minister and the naming of a new Cabinet, the leadership transition resulting from the death of Tun Razak was complete. It was now Datuk Hussein Onn's Malaysia.

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21 New Straits Times, March 6, 1976; New Sunday Times, March 7, 1976; K. Das, "Hussein Puts His Faith in Mahathir", op. cit., pp. 19-20.

22 New Sunday Times, March 7, 1976.

23 See New Straits Times, March 6, 1976. The breakdown by party of the 23 Cabinet Ministers was: UMNO 12, MCA 4, MIC 2, SUPP 1, PBB 1, PAS 2, Sabah Alliance (USNO) 1. Gerakan and the PPP were not given any Ministers, although Gerakan received two Deputy Ministerships.

Broadening the Front: SNAP, Berjaya, and USNO

SNAP Joins the National Front

By mid-1975 talks were already underway and tentative agreement had been reached on SNAP joining the National Front.<sup>24</sup> The results of the July 1975 SNAP General Assembly elections were a further boost to negotiations when Datuk Endawie Dunstan defeated long-time SNAP President and former Chief Minister Datuk Ningkan, 96-23, for the party's leadership, Encik Leo Moggie was returned unopposed as Secretary-General, and many new faces replaced the old guard.<sup>25</sup>

The first public indication that SNAP might join the National Front came with a statement from PBB President and federal Minister Datuk Amar Haji Taib Mahmud in February 1976, indicating there was such a possibility.<sup>26</sup> This, in turn, came on the heels of the announcement that SNAP Deputy President Datuk James Wong Kim Min had been released from detention.<sup>27</sup> Speculation continued to grow when Encik Ghafar Baba, as Secretary-General of the National Front, made a four-day visit to Sarawak in late February. In March, when the Sarawak Council Negri

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- 24 Reported in interviews with two federal Ministers in June and July 1975.
- 25 New Straits Times, July 28, 1975. Two Sarawak politicians confirmed that Datuk Ningkan would have to be replaced before SNAP could join the Front (interviews in July 1974).
- 26 New Straits Times, February 9, 1976.
- 27 Ibid., February 3, 1976. Datuk James Wong was first arrested on October 30, 1974. He was rearrested under the ISA on March 10, 1975. On the conditions of Datuk James Wong's release, see ibid., November 2, 1976. Also see K. Das "Wong: Key to a Reshuffle," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 13, 1976, p. 10; K. Das, "Front-Line Party Politics," ibid., September 10, 1976, pp. 24-25.

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.<sup>28</sup> The SNAP National Council met to consider the Amendment and its implications, and on March 22, 1976, Encik Leo Moggie announced that there was "agreement in principle" on SNAP joining the National Front at state and federal levels.<sup>29</sup> Two days later the Council Negri unanimously passed the Amendment Bill.<sup>30</sup>

On June 20, 1976, the National Front Supreme Council formally accepted SNAP into the Front, noting that there was also agreement in principle on SNAP's participation in the Sarawak State Government.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> With SNAP's

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28 New Straits Times, March 17, 1976.

29 Ibid., March 20, 22, 23, 1976; K. Das, "Harun: Selangor Says No", Far Eastern Economic Review, April 21, 1976, pp. 8-9.

30 New Straits Times, March 25, 1976.

31 Ibid., June 22, 1976. Also see ibid., March 24, April 22, 20, May 3, 24, 1976.

32 Ibid., July 3, 1976.

nine Members of Parliament, the National Front now held a total of 144  
<sup>33</sup>  
of 154 seats.

Encik Ghafar Baba expressed confidence that Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yakub would be able to work out a plan to let SNAP  
<sup>34</sup>  
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. SNAP President Datuk Dunstan Endawie was named a Deputy Chief Minister (one of three) and Local Government Minister, and Encik Leo Moggie was appointed Welfare Minister to give SNAP participation in the nine-member state Cabinet.<sup>35</sup>

SNAP's coalition motives are not entirely clear cut. 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  
<sup>36</sup>  
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. Several people interviewed in Sarawak in 1974 believed that SNAP would not be interested in joining the state coalition or the National Front.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> This total included Berjaya and USNO members admitted to the National Front on the same day. The SCA MPs from the now defunct Sabah Alliance were not technically part of the National Front, but they did not choose to sit with the Opposition in Parliament, and they are allowed to sit as National Front backbenchers in Parliament.

<sup>34</sup> New Straits Times, May 20, 1976.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., November 2, 12, 1976.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter 2, pp. 106-109.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews with a Sarawak newspaper editor, a former SCA official, and a former Pesaka official in July 1974.



Certainly, it is believed generally that the coalition could not have been negotiated satisfactorily in 1976 if Datuk Ningkan had not been defeated as party President.<sup>38</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.<sup>39</sup>

The official reasons SNAP cited for joining the National Front were that the party would be able to participate fully in the implementation of the Third Malaysia Plan, and because SNAP leaders believed the security situation in the region required political cooperation.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup> Other possible motives were: fear by some SNAP officials that growing Iban alienation would turn them towards joining the terrorists; harrassment of SNAP members; and coalition as a way of "getting back" at the SUPP for not joining up with SNAP in 1970.<sup>42</sup> Further, as has been mentioned, some of the new, young, and well-

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38 Interviews with a PBB state Minister and a former Pesaka official (July, 1974).

39 According to a Sarawakian political observer (June 16, 1976). On the "Native Alliance", see R.S. Milne and K.J. Ratnam, Malaysia--New States in a New Nation, London: Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 220-224.

40 New Straits Times, March 23, 1976; The Vanguard, April 1, 1976.

41 According to a Sarawakian political observer (June 16, 1976). This source reports that there were 17 SNAP conditions in addition to the release of Datuk James Wong, dealing mainly with retaining the party's identity and keeping the same number of seats in the next state elections which it now held. Also see K. Das, "Wong: Key to a Reshuffle," op.cit., p. 10; K. Das, "Front-Line Party Politics," op. cit., pp. 24-25. K. Das reports that the release of Datuk James Wong was the essential condition.

42 According to a Sarawakian political observer (June 16, 1976).

educated SNAP leaders were not opposed to the idea of the National Front itself and were actively favorable to the revival of a "Native Alliance."

The federal government was interested in getting SNAP into the National Front soon after the 1974 General Elections, when the Sarawak Alliance-SUPP coalition seemed viable.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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

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43 Negotiations were apparently conducted between a senior federal Minister and SNAP officials in the initial stages (interviews with two federal Ministers, June and July 1975). Later it appeared that Encik Ghafar Baba was involved in some of the discussions involving PBB and SUPP leaders.

44 K. Das, "Wong: Key to a Reshuffle", op. cit., p. 10; interview with a former SCA official (July 19, 1974).

appointments, and it could mean severe conflict over seat allocations in the next state elections.<sup>45</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 National Front, for the first time in Sarawak's political party history, there was no major party in the opposition.

The Crisis with Tun Mustapha; the 1976 Sabah Elections;  
Berjaya and USNO Join the National Front

In 1973-74, relations between Tun Mustapha and the federal government began to turn sour.<sup>46</sup> Until then, the political assets of Sabah's tough Chief Minister seemed to outweigh his liabilities.<sup>47</sup> 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

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45 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.

46 See Bruce Ross-Larson, The Politics of Federalism: Syed Kechik in East Malaysia, Singapore: Bruce Ross-Larson, passim, but especially pp. 146-147.

47 On the assets and liabilities of Tun Mustapha, see Robert O. Tilman, "Mustapha's Sabah, 1968-1975: The Tun Steps Down," Asian Survey, Vol. XVI, No. 6 (June 1976), pp. 495-509.

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. Finally, the federal leaders were displeased with stories of Tun Mustapha's extravagant life-style. 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.<sup>48</sup>

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48 Conversation with an informed source (May 8, 1975). Also see Far Eastern Economic Review, December 2, 1977, pp. 46-60.

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>49</sup> By the end of April 1975 it was widely rumoured that Tun Mustapha was talking of secession.<sup>50</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>51</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>52</sup>

For a brief while it appeared that the federal government was going to persevere patiently rather than challenge Tun Mustapha. Moreover,

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- 49 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.
- 50 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): Also see Andrew Davenport, "Mustapha: Total Power in the Name of Allah," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 18, 1975. pp. 20-21.
- 51 Later, Datuk Harris Salleh reported that the proposed new nation, "Bornesia", was to include Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, and Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) (New Straits Times, August 12, 1975).
- 52 Ibid., July 28, 1975.

it was growing clear that Kuala Lumpur was not willing to intercede with constitutional measures against Tun Mustapha.<sup>53</sup> 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.<sup>54</sup> Then, on July 12, 1975, a new Sabah multi-ethnic political party, Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah (Berjaya) was registered.<sup>55</sup>

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,<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> Berjaya leaders said

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- 53 See R. S. Milne, "Malaysia and Singapore, 1975", Asian Survey, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (February 1976), p. 189. Utilizing constitutional measures, such as proclaiming a state of Emergency in Sabah, could have had political repercussions in Peninsular Malaysia where Tun Mustapha had good relations with several of the Rulers, the Tunku, PAS leader Datuk Asri, and some pro-Islamic political forces.
- 54 Harvey Stockwin, "Mustapha: Confidently Facing the Music", Far Eastern Economic Review, August 1, 1975, pp. 10-13.
- 55 New Straits Times, July 16, 1975.
- 56 A prominent former state Minister revealed in 1974 that there were serious divisions in USNO between Mustapha's Suluk Muslims and the Brunei and Bajau Muslims (interview, July 15, 1974).
- 57 New Straits Times, July 16-17, 1975; K. Das, "Sabah: Mustapha Under Fire," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 25, 1975, pp. 1--12; Andrew Davenport, "Kuala Lumpur Waits to Pick Up the Pieces," ibid., March 12, 1976, p. 16; Milne, op. cit., p. 189; Stockwin, op. cit., pp. 10-13.

they had formed the party in order to oppose any secessionist movement and to expose mismanagement, corruption, and nepotism in the state. They stated that while they were not against USNO itself, they were inalterably opposed to the rule of Tun Mustapha.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup>

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 National Front. 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.<sup>60</sup> However, the Secretary-General of the National Front, Encik Ghafar Baba, then announced that the Sabah Alliance was no longer in the National Front 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>61</sup> USNO leaders denied that the Sabah Alliance had withdrawn

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58 New Straits Times, July 16, 1975.

59 Ibid., July 28-29, 1975. Datuk Harris Salleh voluntarily relinquished the Presidency of Berjaya to Tun Fuad Stephens and became the Deputy President.

60 See Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu), 1975 (mimeo draft).

61 New Straits Times, July 22, 1975; New Sunday Times, July 27, 1975. Tun Razak later confirmed that the Sabah Alliance had withdrawn from the Front (New Straits Times, August 8, 1975). The disputed amendments concerned calling the Front a "confederation", the use of its symbol, and the method of selection of state chairmen (New Sunday Times, July 20, 1975).

from the National Front and said it was "splitting hairs" to contend that it had.<sup>62</sup>

In August, Tun Razak announced that the National Front 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 National Front was prepared to admit the Sabah Alliance when it agreed to accept fully the provisions and policies of the National Front.<sup>63</sup> The next month came the surprising announcement that Tun Mustapha would resign as Chief Minister on October 31, 1975.<sup>64</sup> It was rumoured that his

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., July 20, 1975; New Straits Times, July 21-22, 1975. The National Front 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 National Front explaining why the Sabah Alliance could not accept the amendments to the Front'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 Front Supreme Council meeting. There was no reply. After the registration of Berjaya and its application to join the Front, 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 Front 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 Front, he was opposed to its structure, and disagreed with some of its policy, especially the recognition of China, it is most likely that his intransigence on the amendments and "apparent" withdrawal of the Sabah Alliance from the Front was more in the nature of a bluff than actually intended.

<sup>63</sup> New Straits Times, August 8, 16, 1975.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., September 4, 1975.



resignation was one of the conditions for the re-entry of the Sabah Alliance into the National Front. 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 an 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." He was replaced as Chief Minister by Tan Sri Mohamed Said Keruak.

From the beginning, Berjaya had announced that it was prepared to force a series of by-elections, through the staggered resignations of its state assemblymen, in order to demonstrate the popularity of its challenge to Tun Mustapha. However, in early October, Berjaya reported that it had dropped plans for forcing a series of by-elections. Almost on cue, Tun Mustapha, who had successfully stopped party defections and had managed to win some members back to the fold, took the initiative by invoking the "resignations" of two former USNO members, now with Berjaya.

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65 Ibid.

66 See ibid., September 5, 1975. The Sabah Assembly also voted Tun Mustapha a pension for life of \$M3,500 per month, but the outcry against this was so extensive that the Tun later declined the pension.

67 Ibid., October 11, 1975.

68 Ibid., November 13, 1975. 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. This was the case in the "resignations" of Datuk Harris Salleh and Datuk Salleh Sulong, both former USNO State Ministers.

for the vacant seats were held on December 8-10 (staggered polling), and the results gave USNO victories in both constituencies, including a surprising win over Berjaya Deputy President Datuk Harris Salleh.<sup>69</sup> The by-election results showed that the political fighter, Tun Mustapha, was not yet capitulating.

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<sup>70</sup> was called for April 5-14, 1976 (staggered polling).<sup>71</sup> Tun Fuad Stephens complained that Tun Mustapha was "capitalizing on the change of government in Kuala Lumpur" to come back to power.<sup>72</sup> Certainly it appeared that with his powerful adversary removed from the scene, Tun Mustapha had chosen to act decisively.

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69 Ibid., December 11, 1975. The by-election results were, in Labuan: Encik Mohamed Omar Bledran (USNO) 3,299, Datuk Harris Salleh (Berjaya) 2,211, Encik M.A. Rhaman (Pekemas) 27; and in Kuala Kinabatangan: Datuk Pengiran Galpambur Pengiran Indar (USNO) 3,148, Encik Abdullah Hussein (Berjaya) 1,853, Encik Pinjaman Hasin (Pekemas) 28. Datuk Salleh Sulong, who "resigned" from his Kuala Kinabatangan seat, declined to stand in the by-election.

70 The delineation of new constituency boundaries, ready for this election, had raised the number of seats to 48, from the previous total of 32 seats.

71 New Straits Times, January 24, 1976; K. Das, "Speculation Over Razak's Illness," op. cit., p. 20; K. Das, "Waiting for the News on Razak", op. cit., p. 16.

72 New Straits Times, January 25, 1976.

The Sabah Alliance put up 40 USNO and 8 SCA candidates, and decided that each would use its own party symbol. Berjaya contested all 48 seats, meeting the Sabah Alliance in 23 straight fights. Pekemas put up 11 candidates, a small Sabah west coast party, Bersatu, put up 3 candidates, and there were 16 Independents.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> In reality, the campaign centred on personalities, and was full of personal accusations and verbal attacks.<sup>75</sup> With a total of 126 candidates vying for seats, "it was a far cry from the days when an opposition candidate who filed nomination papers was considered more foolish than brave".<sup>76</sup>

Although it was noted that "observers do not rule out the possibility of an upset",<sup>77</sup> this seemed wishful thinking. Berjaya was reeling from a series of setbacks and seemed on the verge of falling apart.

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73 Ibid., March 18-20, 1976. There were a total of 239,012 registered voters in Sabah (ibid., March 3, 1976).

74 Ibid., February 9, 1976.

75 K. Das, "Bitter Start to Election Campaign," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 27, 1976, p. 14; Davenport, "Kuala Lumpur Waits to Pick Up the Pieces", op. cit., pp. 16-17.

76 Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 7.

77 New Straits Times, March 31, 1976.

First, the Berjaya Secretary-General was arrested under the ISA, and then founder-member and federal Minister Datuk Haji Abdul Ghani Gilong quit the party to rejoin USNO. There were reports that Berjaya members were flocking back to USNO and entire Berjaya branches closing down.<sup>78</sup>

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. Two serious questions came to the fore: if USNO won, would Tun Mustapha defy the federal government by naming himself as Chief Minister; and, if so, what would Datuk Hussein Onn do about it?

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: four NBI officers; 19 election commission officials, including the chairman; 18 senior police officers, including 11 Special Branch members; six Federal Reserve units; and the Inspector General of Police himself. Further, various of these federal officials assured the people that they could vote with complete secrecy and safety.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Datuk Hussein Onn personally intervened to recall from Sabah a handful of UMNO members who had gone there to campaign for USNO, and expressed

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78 Ibid., March 16-17, 1976. For a detailed account of the campaign and election, see Ross-Larson, op. cit., ch. 10.

79 Ibid., March 3, 10, 12, 17-18, 20, 30-31, April 2, 1976: K. Das, "Sabah's Voters Prepare to Spell It Out", Far Eastern Economic Review, April 16, 1976, p. 14.

his displeasure at the PAS members in Sabah working for Tun Mustapha.<sup>80</sup>

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).<sup>81</sup> The USNO Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Herman Luping, lost his seat, as did state Minister Datuk Payar Juman.<sup>82</sup> In explaining the Berjaya victory, it was said that the new constituency boundaries had undermined the SCA (by separating some of the Muslim kampungs from the urban Chinese constituencies),<sup>83</sup> 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.<sup>84</sup> 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.

The new multi-ethnic Berjaya Cabinet was sworn in on April 20, 1976, with Tun Fuad Stephens back as Chief Minister and Datuk Harris Salleh as the Deputy Chief Minister.<sup>85</sup> Encik Ghafar Baba said that he saw no

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80 K. Das, "Mustapha's Fight for Survival", *ibid.*, May 7, 1976, p. 5.

81 New Straits Times, April 15, 1976; Harvey Stockwin, "Bulldozing the Tun Mustapha Legend," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 30, 1976, pp. 8-9.

82 Datuk Payar Juman's defection to USNO in 1967 had spelt the end for UPKO.

83 The SCA had relied in the past on a considerable portion of its vote coming from USNO Muslim supporters.

84 See New Straits Times, April 16, 1976; Stockwin, "Bulldozing the Tun Mustapha Legend", *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

85 New Straits Times, April 16, 21, 27, 1976.

obstacles to both Berjaya and USNO joining the National Front, and the drama appeared completed.<sup>86</sup> However, high emotions and considerable rancour continued in Sabah, despite federal pleas for good-will and cooperation between Berjaya and USNO. Berjaya initiated a probe into corruption, indicated it would sell the planes ordered by the former Chief Minister, as well as Sabah House in Kuala Lumpur, accepted defecting USNO members, and insisted that Tun Mustapha must retire before it could work with USNO.<sup>87</sup> Finally, there were bomb blasts in several Sabah towns, and it was rumoured that disconsolate USNO members might be responsible.<sup>88</sup>

Then, tragically, on June 6, 1976, a plane carrying Tun Fuad Stephens and ten others, including three of his Ministers and one Assistant Minister, crashed into the sea near Kota Kinabalu with no survivors.<sup>89</sup>

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86 Ibid., April 22, May 3, 18, 1976.

87 Ibid., April 29, May 3, 7, 15, 1976.

88 Ibid., May 10, 1976; K. Das, "Blasts Sow Seeds of Suspicion," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 21, 1976, pp. 13-14.

89 See New Straits Times, June 7, 1976; Harvey Stockwin, "Berjaya Without Tun Fuad", Far Eastern Economic Review, June 18, 1976, p. 11. The dead included some of the best-educated and ablest politicians in the state. Killed, in addition to Chief Minister Tun Fuad Stephens, were Minister of Finance, Datuk Salleh Sulong, aged 37; Minister of Local Government and Housing, Datuk Peter Mojuntin, aged 36; and Minister of Communications and Works, Encik (posthumously Datuk) Chong Thain Vun, aged 40. With the deaths of Tun Fuad Stephens and Datuk Mojuntin, the top leadership of the Kadazans was destroyed. Datuk Mojuntin was "probably the most able state politician outside the ranks of chief ministers in Malaysia's 13-state federation" (Stockwin, "Berjaya Without Tun Fuad", op. cit., p. 11). Datuk Hussein Onn, ordered a full-scale investigation into the plane crash. In October, 1976, the government investigating team reported that the crash was caused by "human error" (an overloaded baggage hold), thus dispelling earlier rumours of sabotage (New Straits Times, October 29, 1976).

Datuk Harris Salleh was sworn in as the new Chief Minister and named Acting President of Berjaya. In a Cabinet reshuffle in July, Datuk James Ongkili, apparently heir to the Kadazan leadership, was appointed Deputy Chief Minister.

On June 21, 1976, the National Front Supreme Council announced that it had formally accepted Berjaya and USNO (as well as SNAP in Sarawak) into the Front.<sup>90</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.<sup>91</sup> 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.<sup>92</sup> Despite an USNO agreement not to contest the five Berjaya state by-election seats (this was probably a National Front condition), Berjaya steadfastly maintained that it sought political cooperation with USNO, but not a coalition in the state.<sup>93</sup>

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90 Ibid., June 22, 1976. The National Front officials had talked earlier of readmitting the Sabah Alliance. However, USNO applied for membership in its own name, and eventually it was USNO rather than the Sabah Alliance which was admitted. The SCA, the nearly defunct component of the Sabah Alliance, announced in early June 1976 that it was leaving the Sabah Alliance and would like to join the National Front if given the chance (ibid., June 14, 1976). The SCA's two MPs continued to sit with the government in Parliament (see ibid., July 3, 1976). In July two SCA candidates were prepared to contest against Berjaya in the state by-elections, but they were disqualified on technical grounds (ibid., July 16, 1976).

91 Ibid., July 3, 1976.

92 Ibid., July 13, August 18, 1976.

93 Ibid., June 9, 24, July 13, 1976. Datuk Harris ruled out any coalition with USNO so long as Tun Mustapha, Datuk Syed Kechik, and Datuk Dzulkifli remained as USNO leaders (Far Eastern Economic Review, June 25, 1976, p. 5).

Berjaya won its five by-election seats in July, three uncontested and two by victories over a Pekemas and Independent candidate, respectively.<sup>94</sup> This gave Berjaya 34 seats, including the six nominated members, in the 54-member State Assembly, with a stream of defections slowly adding to its numbers. USNO appeared to be suffering the same fate as its old rival, UPKO, whose demise had been accompanied by defections to USNO. In July, USNO held a special General Assembly and resolved in principle to dissolve the party if its members could join UMNO.<sup>95</sup> However the UMNO Supreme Council declined to take positive action upon the USNO initiative.

By August, Berjaya held 38 State Assembly seats and 4 Parliamentary seats.<sup>96</sup> Finally, a letter from Tun Mustapha, dated August 20, 1976 from London, announced to USNO that he was resigning as USNO President and retiring from politics.<sup>97</sup> Tan Sri Said Keruak was named Acting President of USNO. A New Straits Times editorial called it the end of an era, and commented that this represented the removal of a major obstacle to better

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94 New Straits Times, July 16, 1976; New Sunday Times, August 1, 1976.

95 New Straits Times, July 13, August 9, November 13, December 8, 1976; Far Eastern Economic Review, July 23, 1976, p. 18.

96 By the end of September 1976, Berjaya totals had climbed to 41 State Assemblymen and 7 MPs (New Straits Times, September 30, 1976).

97 Utusan Malaysia, August 27, 1976. In October 1976, Tun Mustapha was granted a one year leave from Parliament as from November 6, 1976, by the Speaker (New Straits Times, October 26, 1976).



Berjaya-USNO relations.<sup>98</sup> With Tun Mustapha retired (or so it seemed then) Berjaya and USNO sat down together for the first time to try to improve their political relationship.<sup>99</sup> However, when Berjaya unofficially supported the successful candidacy of an Independent (ex-Berjaya) against the National Front (USNO) candidate in the Kimanis parliamentary by-election of January 1977, relations deteriorated again.<sup>100</sup> Datuk Hussein Onn was called in to mediate the crisis. No disciplinary action was taken against Berjaya, but the Prime Minister reported that his personal representative would attend all National Front Co-ordinating Committee meetings in Sabah from now on.<sup>101</sup> Datuk Hussein Onn also made it clear that he supported the idea that although USNO was in the National Front, it should continue as the opposition in the Sabah State Assembly.<sup>102</sup>

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98 Ibid., August 31, 1976 (edit.).

99 Ibid., August 30, 1976.

100 On the Kimanis by-election, see ibid., January 18-19, 28-29, 1977. Also see New Sunday Times, December 12, 1976, January 23, 1977. The Independent candidate, Encik A.K. Aliuddin won by 7,077 to 4,315 over the National Front's (USNO's) Haji Karim Ghani. This was the first by-election loss for the National Front, but, as Datuk Musa Hitam reported, "the results...do not tell the whole story" (New Straits Times, January 29, 1977).

101 Ibid., April 3, 1977.

102 Ibid., May 29, 1977.

The National Front Partners, 1976-1977

Political coalitions, the most important of the consociational devices or practices, 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. 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. In Malaysia, the National Front partners in 1976-1977 were still in the process of adjusting to one another and to the change of leadership from Tun Razak to Datuk Hussein Onn.

UMNO: The Confrontation with Dato Harun, and a "Crisis Hysteria"

Developments inside UMNO, the dominant party and core partner of the coalition, are of consequence not only to the party and the coalition, but to the political system itself. The change of leadership to Datuk Hussein Onn rekindled a factional struggle and jockeying for position inside UMNO which embroiled the party in a serious and prolonged conflict. The new Prime Minister had to contend almost immediately with the party crisis generated by legal action against Dato Harun, the powerful

Mentri Besar of Selangor and UMNO Youth President.<sup>103</sup> Dato Harun

was arrested on corruption charges on November 24, 1975, and released on bail.<sup>104</sup> In March 1976, a new set of charges involving bank fraud

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103 The trouble had started in early 1974, when students at Universiti Kebangsaan criticized Dato Harun, who had approved on behalf of the Selangor State Government a contract with a private company, Syarikat Kerjasama Dengkil Berhad, to extract timber from 1,000 acres of the Bangi forest reserve. Anonymous letters proclaimed that Dato Harun had profited considerably from the contract (New Straits Times, November 2, 1976). After questions were raised in Parliament, Tun Razak ordered an investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). In answer to queries, Tun Razak told Parliament in July 1974 and again in October 1975 that the NBI had not yet completed its investigation of Dato Harun (Straits Times (Malaysia), July 25, 1974; New Straits Times, October 28, 1975). At the end of October 1975, Dato Harun revealed that he had been offered the post of Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, but he was undecided as to whether to accept (ibid., November 1, 1975). After he was arrested on November 24, 1975, Tun Razak reported that the matter of the U.N. post "does not arise now" (ibid., December 1, 1975). At his trial, Dato Harun testified that Tun Razak had informed him that accepting the U.N. post was the only way to avoid a court case (ibid., October 26, 1976). Under the Tunku, and to a lesser extent under Tun Razak, it was not an uncommon practice to deal with scandals involving politicians by reassigning them to overseas posts, although it often meant the end of their political careers. There is a Malay proverb which applies: let a person down easily instead of dropping him. In Dato Harun's case, he declined all invitations to be let down easily, apparently convinced that he could avoid being dropped.

104 Ibid., November 24-25, 1975.

was levelled against the Mentri Besar.<sup>105</sup>

However, it was the political aspects of the case against Dato Harun which acquired crisis proportions. On March 18, 1976, the UMNO Supreme Council expelled Dato Harun from the party.<sup>106</sup> The Supreme Council said that Dato Harun's political activities and actions had contravened the spirit of the Supreme Council decisions of November 30, 1975, namely that Dato Harun should take leave and refrain from all political activity.<sup>107</sup> His actions, the Supreme Council reported, were

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105 The trial of Dato Harun on the corruption charges began in April, and on May 18, 1976, he was found guilty and sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine. Charged along with Dato Harun and also found guilty were Datuk Abu Mansoor Mohd. Basir and Encik Ismail Din (*ibid.*, April 22, May 19, 1976; K. Das, "Jail, and Tears for Datuk Harun," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 28, 1976, pp. 12-13). His second trial on charges of forgery and criminal breach of trust involving M\$8 million in shares and stocks belonging to Bank Kerjasama Rakyat, connected with sponsoring the Ali-Bugner championship fight in Kuala Lumpur in 1975, began in September 1976. In January 1977, Dato Harun was found guilty and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine. Datuk Abu Mansoor and Encik Ismail Din were also charged and found guilty (New Straits Times, March 13, 1976, January 25, 1977; K. Das, "Harun Loses Another Round," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 4, 1977, pp. 13-14). On June 10, 1977, the Federal Court of Appeal dismissed his petition on the first conviction (New Straits Times, June 11, 1977). On December 6, 1977 the Federal Court of Appeal upheld his second conviction and increased his sentence to four years' imprisonment (*ibid.*, December 7, 1977). His appeals to the Privy Council in London were rejected in February 1978 (Far Eastern Economic Review, March 3, 1978, p. 5). His final legal recourse, a pardon by the Yang Dipertuan Agung, was rejected on March 8, 1978.

106 New Straits Times, March 20, 1976; K. Das, "Harun: Hussein Strikes," Far Eastern Economic Review, March 26, 1976, pp. 11-12.

107 New Straits Times, March 20, 1976.

creating a disunity in UMNO and anxiety among the people.<sup>108</sup> The next week, the Selangor State Assembly passed a motion of no-confidence against Dato Harun, and the following day he resigned as Mentri Besar.<sup>109</sup>

Actually Dato Harun had acted with caution and propriety until Tun Razak died.<sup>110</sup> After that he apparently decided to gamble.<sup>111</sup> He started touring the country to build up his political power base, and he began to characterize his ordeal as a political trial.<sup>112</sup> After he was expelled, a steady pressure was exerted on Dato Harun's behalf by his UMNO supporters. In July, the UMNO Youth Assembly passed a resolution asking the Supreme Council to reinstate Dato Harun.<sup>113</sup>

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108 Ibid., March 20, 1976; Asian Student (San Francisco) April 10, 1976, p. 3.

109 New Straits Times, March 26-27, 1976; K. Das, "Harun: Selangor Says No," Far Eastern Economic Review, April 2, 1976, pp. 8-9. The vote against the Mentri Besar was 25-1 with 4 abstentions.

110 He had taken leave, as recommended, and he had calmed his militant supporters by saying that "the issue was no longer between him and the party leadership. It was between him and the courts" (Ibid., November 30, 1975; K. Das, "Breathing Easy After Harun Takes Leave," Far Eastern Economic Review, December 12, 1975, pp. 17-18). Tun Razak had praised Dato Harun for acting with the correctness expected of him.

111 K. Das writes that Dato Harun must have decided that, without the "sober, deliberate council" of Tun Razak, he must act on his own ("Malaysia's Leadership Crisis", op. cit., p. 7).

112 K. Das, "Harun: Hussein Strikes", op. cit., pp. 11-12.

113 New Straits Times, July 1-2, 1976.

In August, the Supreme Council announced that Dato Harun's appeal against expulsion had been referred to an UMNO Disciplinary Committee.<sup>114</sup> On October 23, 1976, Dato Harun was readmitted to UMNO as an ordinary member with no conditions attached.<sup>115</sup> While this was a popular move which lowered the intensity of conflict within the party, it was viewed by some as a surrender by Datuk Hussein Onn to pressure which could only undermine his leadership position.<sup>116</sup> And, as events were to show, it did not completely relieve the pressure or heal the rift. Once Dato Harun was readmitted to the party, the UMNO Youth campaign on his behalf turned its attention to demanding a "political solution" to his legal problems.<sup>117</sup>

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114 Ibid., August 9, 1976. The committee was chaired by Dr. Mahathir, himself once expelled from UMNO.

115 Ibid., September 13-14, October 25, 1976.

116 See Denzil Peiris, "Will Datuk Hussein Survive?", Far Eastern Economic Review, November 26, 1976, pp. 22-23.

117 New Straits Times, February 15-16, 20, March 16, 1977. UMNO Youth said that it was the "grand design" of the communists to destroy Dato Harun, and it called for the removal of "all obstacles" to his full participation in politics. Increasingly, Dato Harun's supporters called for his "rehabilitation", which, coming from the Malay word "pulihan", was actually a demand for a pardon. However, the UMNO Supreme Council replied that it could not do anything about Dato Harun's "rehabilitation" without affecting the process and sovereignty of the law of the country, except to advise him to appeal to the Pardons Board (ibid., March 12, 1977; New Sunday Times, March 13, 1977; K. Das, "Hussein, Harun and the Law," Far Eastern Economic Review, March 25, 1977, p. 27).

The UMNO Supreme Council responded that it could only advise Dato Harun to appeal to the Pardons Board. The UMNO Youth supporters of Dato Harun also attempted another course of action, prompted by the sudden death of UMNO Youth President Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar in January 1977. They called for a special UMNO Youth Delegates Conference in order to re-elect Dato Harun as President. The attempt failed, under considerable pressure from the top UMNO leadership. On March 1, 1978, after several tense days of protective "seige" by supporters outside his Kuala Lumpur house, Dato Harun surrendered to authorities to begin serving his prison term. The Yang Dipertuan Agung rejected his appeal for a pardon on March 7, 1978, thus effectively removing Dato Harun from the political scene.<sup>118</sup>

The UMNO crisis generated by the confrontation with Dato Harun has an important bearing on the unity of UMNO and the control by the top leadership of the party's rank-and-file. These, in turn, have important implications for the successful practice of consociational-type political in Malaysia. Aside from the question of corruption, the top UMNO leadership has apparently felt threatened by the populist Malay nationalist appeal of Dato Harun, his use of UMNO Youth as a pressure group for more pro-Malay policies, and what is perhaps perceived as his dangerous proclivities as a political gambler.<sup>119</sup> None of these behavioral

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118 See K. Das, "Last Stand for a Lost Cause", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 10, 1978, pp. 12-14; K. Das, "Back to Law and Order", ibid., March 17, 1978, pp. 12-13.

119 Interview with a top UMNO official in 1975. One example as a political gambler is the part played by Dato Harun in organizing the emotionally-charged Malay counter-rally which ran amok on May 13, 1969. A more recent example was his efforts to resist arrest in late February 1978. K. Das reports that the "effect of his move was to send the country into panic and so move the entire police and military into action". When he surrendered on March 1, 1978, the "sigh of relief was almost audible as the news reached the streets" ("Last Stand for a Lost Cause", op. cit., p. 12).

attributes in a top leader would seem to be desirable for the success of consociational practices.

There was another serious factional crisis in UMNO in 1976-77, which threatened the unity of the party and consequently the viability of the National Front. The dispute centred around allegations by the "old order" and UMNO Youth faction that there were communist agents in high places in the government, and that these agents were manipulating the "old order" from positions of responsibility in the government and party.<sup>120</sup> In April 1976, Datuk Hussein Onn replied to an allegation raised by an UMNO member in Parliament of communists in the government, by saying that this "allegation, if taken in the context of a Malay proverb, is like: 'If you cannot get the horns, you twist the ears'." The government, he went on to say, "has no evidence of any government servants being used by the communists as their agents".<sup>121</sup> The Prime Minister warned against a "smear campaign to discredit UMNO leaders" and "innuendos and character assassinations".<sup>122</sup>

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120 For instance, "old order" leader Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar warned UMNO headquarters of a threatened split in the party because many old members "were being pushed aside" while new members were occupying high positions in both the party and the government (New Straits Times, March 16, 1976). Also See K. Das, "The Big Test For UMNO Solidarity," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 2, 1976, pp. 8-9.

121 New Straits Times, April 9, 1976

122 Ibid., June 7, July 5, 1976. Up to this time, most old order-UMNO Youth allegations of communist agents in the government seemed to be based on a statement by PSRM Chairman, Encik Kassim Ahmad, that there were socialists and progressives in UMNO who might eventually team with PSRM (ibid., March 16, April 12, 1976). In an interview in 1975, Encik Kassim Ahmad said basically the same thing (May 4, 1975).



On June 22, 1976, however, the influential managing editor of the New Straits Times, Encik Abdul Samad Ismail, known to have close personal friendships with several UMNO government and party officials, was arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) as a communist agent.<sup>123</sup> A few days later, at the UMNO Youth Assembly, Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar, the old order "ultra" and champion of the anti-communist forces, was elected President<sup>124</sup> over a candidate identified as the Prime Minister's choice.<sup>125</sup> Then, in the General Assembly which followed, a delegate rose to say that he possessed a secret document naming top government officials who were involved in clandestine communist activities. Datuk Hussein Onn had to tell the speaker not to reveal the contents of the document as

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123 New Straits Times, June 23 and 26, 1976; K. Das, "Malaysia: The Enemies Within," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 2, 1976, pp. 8-9. The ISA charge was for "direct involvement in activities in support of the communist struggle for political power in this country". He was first implicated in confessions by Singapore journalists who were arrested there for communist activities. Also arrested was Encik Mohamed Samani, assistant editor of Berita Harian (Malaysia), on similar ISA charges.

124 New Straits Times, July 2, 1976. Tan Sri Albar was elected 222-136 over Deputy Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat. In the Deputy President race, Haji Suhaimi Dato Haji Kamaruddin, an MP, defeated Deputy Defence Minister Encik Mokhtar Hashim, 190-170. Tan Sri Albar liked to refer to UMNO Youth, not as a pressure group, but as a "ginger group": pungent, but with a medicinal value (ibid., July 5, 1976).

125 K. Das, "Hussein Calls the Shots," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 16, 1976, pp. 10-11; K. Das, "The Gentle Giant-Killer," op. cit., p. 12.

they were secret and under investigation.<sup>126</sup>

Despite these events, which gave credence to some of the old order-UMNO Youth charges of communists in the government, Datuk Hussein Onn seemed well in control of the Assembly. In his Presidential speech, he told the gathering that "we all know that since Tun Razak's death there have been incidents which to some extent involved the solidarity and integrity of the party. As I said two months ago, there is in fact no crisis in UMNO."<sup>127</sup> Further, at the end of the Assembly, he told the delegates that he would not allow a "witch-hunt" in the country.<sup>128</sup>

After a brief lull the publication of the confession of Encik Samad Ismail in September renewed the UMNO factional feud and hysteria. Encik Samad Ismail admitted that he had been a member of the Malayan Communist Party since 1949, and said that through the "younger generation of UMNO leaders" he had managed to get "closer to the core of UMNO leadership" and that he "made the UMNO leaders that mattered see things and resolve problems" his way.<sup>129</sup> Immediately the old order group called

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126 K. Das, "Hussein Calls the Shots", op. cit., p. 10.

127 New Straits Times, July 3, 1976. Later, however, several delegates took the floor to contend that there was a crisis in UMNO and it would be better for the leadership to admit it (ibid., July 5, 1976).

128 Ibid., July 5, 1976.

129 Ibid., September 2, 1976.

for a party purge, while the top leadership counselled patience and said that the government must carry out an investigation.<sup>130</sup> The Tunku warned that there was "dissatisfaction" among the "old guards", and Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar threatened that if the party leadership did not undertake an immediate purge, UMNO Youth would expose the "communist collaborators".<sup>131</sup> Datuk Hussein Onn, trying to calm confused and alarmed UMNO members, said that UMNO was "solid, strong, firm and united" and that there was "no power struggle among factions or groups in UMNO".<sup>132</sup>

Surprisingly,<sup>133</sup> on November 1, 1976, Datuk Hussein Onn issued a statement which said that while UMNO as a whole was free from communist infiltration or policy influence, there was evidence that communist elements had got close to and "more or less influenced a small portion of UMNO members", and that they would be expelled from the party, while any other action taken would be in accordance with the law.<sup>134</sup> The next

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130 Ibid., September 3, 8, 11, October 5, 11, 14, 18, November 8 15, 1976.

131 Ibid., October 14, 18, 1976.

132 Ibid., October 23, 1976. He admitted there were differences of opinion, interpretation, and outlook in the party, however.

133 I think it is safe to say that many people believed that the communist bogey was being used by the UMNO old guard in order to try to settle some scores against certain members of the new order, and that it was more fiction than fact.

134 New Straits Times, November 2, 1976.

day two UMNO Deputy Ministers, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad and Encik Abdullah Majid, resigned their government posts. The following day, the two former UMNO Deputy Ministers and four others were arrested under the ISA for "involvement in the Communist United Front struggle."<sup>135</sup>

The so-called anti-communist lobby, now armed with credibility, increased its demands for further purges, and a widening circle of UMNO politicians linked with those arrested came under a cloud of suspicion. Even the policies of Tun Razak, especially with regard to establishing ties with the People's Republic of China, were called into question, and allegations were made that the accused, and possibly others, had isolated and misled the late Prime Minister.<sup>136</sup>

Datuk Hussein Onn again tried to calm the situation and minimize the crisis.<sup>137</sup> However, his forthright Deputy, Dr. Mahathir, speaking at a symposium on Malay leadership at the University of Malaya, revealed the depth of the current uneasiness. The Malays were facing a "very

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135 Ibid., November 3-4, 1976. The six were arrested under section 73(1) of the ISA, 1960. The other four arrested were: Encik Kassim Ahmad, head of PSRM; Encik Chian Heng Kai, MP for the DAP; Encik Chan Kok Kit, DAP Assistant National Treasurer; and Encik Tan Kien Siew, MCA Chief Executive Secretary. Coincidentally or not, half of those arrested were Malays, half Chinese, and half were National Front, half from the opposition. Also see K. Das, "The Purge from Within", Far Eastern Economic Review, November 12, 1976, pp. 20-21.

136 See ibid., and K. Das, "Succession Struggle-Round Two, ibid., November 26, 1976, pp. 21-24. K. Das writes that the old veterans, having disposed of one clique, called for a "jihad" (holy war) against subversives. Also see Christian Science Monitor, December 20, 1976.

137 New Sunday Times, December 12, 1976,

serious" problem of leadership, he said. Possibly never in the history of the Malays had their leadership been in such a chaotic state or the credibility of the leaders so questioned as at the present time. Allegations were being thrown about, he continued, until it appeared that no Malay leader could be trusted. Little by little the accusations, however unreasonable they were, began to be accepted, and the people started to doubt a leader whom they had once highly respected.<sup>138</sup>

However, the inspiration behind the UMNO anti-communist group's witch-hunt, Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar, died suddenly on January 14, 1977.<sup>139</sup> Despite the confessions of the former UMNO Deputy Ministers in February 1977,<sup>140</sup> the agitation by the anti-communist lobby largely subsided. By the 28th UMNO General Assembly in July 1977, Datuk Hussein Onn seemed to have attained a fair measure of control over the party,<sup>141</sup> and the

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138 Ibid., December 9, 1976; The Asian Student (San Francisco), January 1, 1977, p. 2.

139 New Straits Times, January 15, 1977; K. Das, "Controversial to the End," Far Eastern Economic Review, January 28, 1977, p. 14.

140 See New Straits Times, February 5, 8, 1977; New Sunday Times, February 6, 1977; K. Das, "Switching On the Confessions," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 18, 1977, pp. 10-12.

141 An editorial noted that there was a "level of undisciplined dissensus" in UMNO now that was not healthy (New Straits Times, July 2, 1977). Datuk Hussein Onn has not yet attained the control which the Tunku or Tun Razak exercised over the party. This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

"crisis hysteria" appeared over. The Prime Minister had taken the step of inviting the Tunku to UMNO's 31st Anniversary celebrations in May and again to the General Assembly in July (the first time the Tunku had attended since retiring), and in the process cemented an important friendship.<sup>142</sup> In his Presidential speeches, the Prime Minister was able to devote most of his attention to the Third Malaysia Plan, political stability, and the need for Malay self-reliance, although he did note that in the last year UMNO had been affected by "unhealthy developments", and he reminded the delegates that UMNO's strength was dependent upon its unity and solidarity.<sup>143</sup>

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142 Ibid., May 11, July 2, 1977; K. Das, "The Prime Minister's Promise," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 15, 1977, pp. 31-32. Also see K. Das, "Seizing the Enemy Within," ibid., July 8, 1977, pp. 8-9. In June the Tunku expressed his faith in the leadership of Datuk Hussein Onn (New Straits Times, June 23, 1977). Datuk Hussein Onn also paid tribute to the services rendered by the Tunku to the party and the nation (ibid., July 2, 1977). The Tunku had been distressed at the way he had been forced to resign and upset because Tun Razak had not consulted him enough after he retired (interviews, May 7 and 30, 1975. Interestingly, during the May 7th interview, the Tunku was given a message to telephone Tun Razak, who had just called). Datuk Hussein Onn appears to have taken the steps necessary to placate the sensitivities of the Tunku, who remains an influential political figure.

143 Ibid., July 2 and 4, 1977.

At the end of 1977, the UMNO leadership was facing more traditional types of party problems, mainly bickerings and feuds in some of the state organizations.<sup>144</sup> While annoying to the top leadership, disputes in the state organizations were not as potentially disruptive and dangerous to the party, and thus the coalition, as the "crisis hysteria" of the previous year and a half.<sup>145</sup>

#### The Other Partners: Adjustment to the Politics of the National Front

In the 1976-1977 period, with their traditional positions as the major non-Malay partners recognized and accepted, the MCA and MIC appeared fully reconciled to the National Front. The parties concentrated primarily on economic issues, especially on plans to ensure that the non-bumiputera sector (the non-Malays) achieved the forty per cent share of economic wealth promised in the Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan.<sup>146</sup>

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144 This traditional type of factional feuding is often indicative that a general election is on the horizon. In fact, there have been rumours and some indications that a general election will be called in 1978, possibly as early as April. Apparently party offices have been told to gear up, and government MPs have been told to spend without delay the money already allotted for small projects. In 1975 a high UMNO official said that the next general elections, due in 1979, would likely be held in a different year. The reason for this is that the Alliance had fared worse than anticipated in the two elections held in years ending with a "nine": 1959 and 1969 (interview, June 25, 1975).

145 See K. Das, "Malacca Crisis for the Front," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 23, 1977, pp. 15-16; K. Das, "State Dissent Worries UMNO," ibid., September 30, 1977, pp. 17-18; K. Das, "Partners Look for an Answer," ibid., November 4, 1977, pp. 30-31. The more serious trouble in Kelantan will be discussed in the section concerning PAS.

146 See The Guardian, Vol. 7, No. 7 (August 1975), p. 4; New Straits Times, July 7, 1975, June 28, August 24, 1976; Dasar Ekonomi Baru dan Malaysian Indian: Rantindak MIC, Kuala Lumpur: Ibu Pejabat MIC, 1974.

Both parties generally approved of the Third Malaysia Plan (TMP)<sup>147</sup> and saw it as an improvement over the former plan. Datuk Lee San Choon urged the government to create and maintain a "favorable investment climate" which, he said, could be achieved "not merely by providing fiscal incentives but also by removing psychological and political disincentives".<sup>148</sup> Increasingly, the MCA leadership took the position that the TMP would not adversely affect the Chinese community if it could be fully implemented. This they believed depended upon an expanding economy, political stability, and a stable internal security situation.<sup>149</sup> The MIC leadership likewise showed most concern about the possibility that targets in the TMP would not be met.<sup>150</sup> Both parties seemed to be apprehensive that if the implementation of the TMP fell significantly short of the targets, not only would the non-Malay share of the cake be smaller absolutely (and possibly relatively), but also Malay discontent might become a serious problem.

MCA and MIC relations with other National Front partners at the national level have been good. The MCA has been pressuring UMNO for

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147 See the Third Malaysia Plan 1976-1980, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1976: Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 10. For a detailed account of the New Economic Policy, also see R.S. Milne, "The Politics of the New Economic Policy in Malaysia," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 235-262.

148 The Guardian, Vol. 8, No. 6 (September 1976), p. 1; New Straits Times, August 20, September 7, 1976; New Sunday Times, August 22, 1976.

149 New Straits Times, February 28, September 11, October 20, 1976, January 1, 31, April 2, May 25, June 20, 1977.

150 New Sunday Times, July 3, 1977.



increased responsibilities in the federal government, but seemed pleased about the December 31, 1977 Cabinet reshuffle.<sup>151</sup> The MIC, in a break with the past, has started campaigning for more seat allocations for the party in the next general elections, but it is unlikely that this will escalate to conflict proportions.<sup>152</sup> At the state level, the organizations of both the MCA and the MIC have complained about their limited role in the state governments of Perak, and especially Penang. Relations with the Gerakan are cool, particularly between the MCA and the Gerakan. This could lead to tensions between the parties in Penang at election time, but it is unlikely to cause any serious national coalition problems.

Under Dr. Lim Chong Eu, the Gerakan has been a staunch supporter of the National Front, and the Chief Minister has consistently pledged the party's "full commitment" to the coalition.<sup>153</sup> However, some Gerakan members have had complaints. Deputy Minister Dr. Goh Cheng Taik said that he was worried about certain circles in Kuala Lumpur, that there was a "disinclination to keep faith on matters agreed upon in Tun Razak's time".<sup>154</sup> Another member, Encik Tan Gim Hwa, was even more blunt. In calling for a review of Gerakan's position in the National Front, he said

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151 See *ibid.*, January 1, 1978. The MCA gained one additional full Minister, and now had four Ministers and four Deputy Ministers. While the four MCA Ministers did not hold any key portfolios, the four Deputy Ministers were appointed to Ministries which were of vital concern to the MCA (Trade and Industry, Finance, Education and Information).

152 *New Straits Times*, July 3, 1977. An editorial, commenting on the MIC's call for more seats, stated that a "passive role does not of course accord with its new image" (*ibid.*, July 4, 1977).

153 *Ibid.*, June 21, 1976.

154 *Ibid.*, Dr. Goh Cheng Taik is a close associate of Dr. Lim Chong Eu, and thus it is probable that his complaint was an approved statement.

that the party's position was only slightly better than the PPP's.<sup>155</sup>

The Gerakan's relations with its partners at the state level in Penang have been cause for some concern. Almost all of the Gerakan's partners have been unhappy with the state government at one time or another, mostly over appointments or because of lack of consultation.<sup>156</sup>

Dr. Lim Chong Eu had to urge his party members at a Penang State Gerakan Conference in 1976 to "stop bickering with the MCA" and concentrate on development.<sup>157</sup> The top National Front Leaders have also tried to mediate in the Penang intra-coalition disputes,<sup>158</sup> fearful that rank-and-file animosity between the partners could weaken the next electoral effort in the state. As long as Dr. Lim Chong Eu runs Gerakan, and Gerakan controls the Penang State Government (its *raison d'être* as a political party), however, it is unlikely that the party will lessen its commitment to the National Front.

The PPP has never really recovered from its poor performance in the 1974 General Elections and the death of its President, Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, on July 4, 1975. The party split after a succession dispute; Encik Khong Kok Yat was elected President and the faction under

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155 Ibid., August 16, 1976.

156 See, for example, ibid., December 21, 1976.

157 Ibid., May 24, 1976.

158 For instance, the federal government set up a bumiputera economic task force to study the problems of the Penang Malays and to confer with Dr. Lim Chong Eu about them (New Sunday Times, February 8, 1976 (edit.); New Straits Times, May 17, 1976).

Vice-President Encik R.C.M. Rayan left the party.<sup>159</sup> The PPP also lost the Presidency of the Ipoh Municipal Council.<sup>160</sup> Before the Ipoh Municipal Council was reorganized, the PPP had 15 out of 18 Councillors and the Presidency. With the reorganization in July 1975, the PPP held 13 of 22 seats on what was now called the Board of Management.<sup>161</sup> In July 1976, only eight PPP members were named to the Board, and the PPP lost majority control of its political lifeline.

The PPP is in a dilemma about its membership in the National Front. It probably will not be offered many seats at the next general elections. Yet going into the opposition would jeopardize the appointments of the top PPP leaders to the Ipoh Municipality Board, and it also might not procure any electoral wins for the party. While the Kinta District usually votes heavily for the opposition, the DAP has stepped strongly into the area. The PPP may want to leave the Front before the next elections, but if it is allocated even a modicum of seats, there is a good chance that it will stay in the Front.

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159 Sunday Star, July 6, 1975, New Straits Times, August 25-30, December 16, 1975, May 18, July 8, August 12, 1976.

160 Following the death of Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, Encik Nasir Taha was named as Acting President. On October 1, 1975, Senator Dato Lee Loy Seng, an adviser to the MCA, was appointed as President. In mid-1976, Dato Liew Why Hone of the MCA was named as President. See ibid., July 9, 24, September 26, 1975, July 2, 1976.

161 Two previous PPP Councillors were not appointed to the expanded Board. The new Board consisted of 13 PPP, 4 UMNO, 2 MCA, 1 MIC, 1 Gerakan, and 1 with no party affiliation (ibid., March 7, June 18, July 1, 1975).

In Sarawak, the state government coalition partners appear to have been working together reasonably well, although the real test of the strength of the coalition will not come until negotiations for seat allocations for the next general elections are underway. As in Peninsular Malaysia, the emphasis has been on economic issues and development. The SUPP has shown some signs of uneasiness since SNAP joined the National Front, and the party obviously has been unhappy with the state government's position on matters dealing with land. Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui said that the administrative machinery "must be improved" and that it was "urgent for a proper land policy to be formulated".<sup>162</sup> In mid-1977, the SUPP threatened that if the state government did not find a satisfactory solution to the land problem before the next general election, the party "might have to review its position in the Front".<sup>163</sup> Clearly, the growing problem of landlessness and squatters affects primarily the Sarawak Chinese, and this is the SUPP's electoral constituency. The July 1977 Sarawak Cabinet reshuffle, which gave the SUPP Deputy Chief Minister, Datuk Sim Kheng Hong, the new portfolio of Minister of Development, described as the "second most senior Ministry in the hierarchy", possibly has helped reduce this conflict.<sup>164</sup>

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162 Ibid., December 23, 1976.

163 K. Das, "State Dissent Worries UMNO", op. cit., pp. 17-18.

164 New Straits Times, July 2, 1977.

The Sarawak National Front Government will face a stern test in allocations for the state seats at the next general elections, with numerous areas of conflicting interests between the partners, and it is going to require a strong predisposition to compromise, as well as considerable negotiating skills, to keep the coalition in good order for the elections.

In Sabah, relations between Berjaya and USNO have failed to improve, and the anomaly of the two National Front partners being rivals at the state level shows few signs of being corrected in the near future. In May 1977, Tun Mustapha came out of retirement and was returned unopposed as President of USNO. The bête noire was back in the political arena, acknowledged still to wield considerable influence in Sabah.<sup>165</sup> However, Sabah's state elections are not synchronized with the rest of the country, and thus Berjaya need not hold a state election in 1978 even if there is a general election.<sup>166</sup> Nonetheless, with Chief Minister Datuk Harris determined to reduce timber exploitation by fifty per cent, thus "potentially damaging traditions of political patronage" in a state where it was believed "you have to spend money to stay in power",<sup>167</sup> the return of Tun Mustapha was cause for the Kuala Lumpur leaders to be concerned.

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165 See *ibid.*, April 30, May 9, 19, 28, June 10, November 12, December 6, 1977. The USNO General Assembly confirmed Tun Mustapha's election on May 29, 1977. Also see Rodney Tasker, "Marcos on Sabah Settlement," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 5, 1977, p. 28.

166 Sabah's last state election was in 1976, whereas the rest of the states held their state elections in August 1974 as part of the general election.

167 See Anthony Rowley, "Forests: Save or Squander?" and "Sabah Cuts its Log Exports", Far Eastern Economic Review, December 2, 1977, pp.46-55 and pp. 58-60.

### Maintaining the Coalition

The 1976-1977 non-election period was one of both adjustment and also coalition stresses and straits for the National Front. The coalition appeared to be functioning well as concerns policy coordination and the business of governing. Nearly all of the parties have been concentrating on economic and development issues, and on the implementation of the Third Malaysia Plan. There have been tensions, however, between the various partners, especially at the rank-and-file level, and these disputes have placed a substantial demand upon the time and energy of Datuk Hussein Onn to resolve. The size of the coalition, with regard to the number of parties and party leaders, and the diversity of party outlooks and special interests, has created some not unexpected coalition problems. In addition, the newness of the National Front has contributed to a situation of areas of competition between the partners over political territory or influence of uncertain or unacknowledged dominance. The "settling down" process has been hindered also by the change of leadership from Tun Razak to Datuk Hussein Onn, and by the political uncertainties spawned by the serious crisis inside the core party of the coalition. As will be seen, the National Front "family" did not in fact remain intact to the end of 1977.

PAS Leaves the National Front

On December 16, 1977, after several months of crises, and in the face of a National Front 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 National Front, and top federal leaders, and PAS defiance of the National Front whip in Parliament.

The origins of the trouble can be traced back to Kelantan, with the appointment of Datuk Mohamad Nasir as the Mentri 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.<sup>168</sup> In 1975, the controversy over the Mentri Besar, part and parcel of the 1977 conflict, mushroomed into a crisis of serious proportions.<sup>169</sup> True to his word, Datuk Mohd. Nasir<sup>170</sup> 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

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168 See New Straits Times, September 10, 23, 1974; The Asian Student (San Francisco), November 19, 1977; interview with Haji Wan Ismail bin Haji Ibrahim, PAS Deputy Mentri Besar, Kelantan (June 2, 1975).

169 Haji Wan Ismail said that the Mentri Besar was the "biggest bone of contention in the National Front" (interview, June 2, 1975). Datuk Mohd. Nasir, however, passed it off as a "family squabble" which he could survive (interview, June 5, 1975).

170 Datuk Mohd. Nasir is considered to be a completely honest man; humble, dedicated, idealistic, very popular with the people, but without political friends (partly because of his honesty), especially in PAS (interviews in May and June 1975).

pressed for investigations into land deals made by previous PAS state governments.<sup>171</sup> 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 National Front.<sup>172</sup>

In May 1975, the Kelantan PAS Liaison Committee voted that it had "no confidence" in the Mentri Besar.<sup>173</sup> Apparently Datuk Asri then showed the documentation of this vote to Tun Razak and asked to have the Mentri Besar replaced; the Prime Minister, however, declined to take any action.<sup>174</sup> In Kota Baru, social censure was added to other pressures to force Datuk Mohd. Nasir to step down: he was not invited to a gala party thrown by Datuk Asri for PAS members.<sup>175</sup> For weeks there were rumours in Kelantan that PAS would try to topple the Mentri Besar through a "no confidence" vote in the state assembly.<sup>176</sup> However,

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171 See New Straits Times, March 22, April 14, July 3, August 31, 1975, May 4, November 6, 16-19, 1976.

172 See Chapter 3, pp. 232-235.

173 Interview with a Kelantan UMNO member (May 31, 1975). The Liaison Committee action was not publicly announced, although it had reached the rumour circuit.

174 Interview with a former PAS State Assemblyman and member of the State Executive Council (June 1, 1975).

175 This was in May 1975. Reported in an interview with a high-ranking Kelantan politician (June 3, 1975).

176 Interviews in May and June 1975. Some of those interviewed believed Datuk Mohd. Nasir could get enough PAS support, in addition to the assured votes of UMNO and the MCA, to survive the vote. However, several others believed that the Mentri Besar would lose a "no confidence" vote; that all of the PAS SAs, under orders from Datuk Asri, would vote against the Mentri Besar.



this did not occur.<sup>177</sup>

From about July 1975, when Datuk Mohd. Nasir withdrew his challenge for Datuk Asri's post of national PAS President,<sup>178</sup> the efforts to remove him as Mentri Besar temporarily abated, and the friction between PAS and the National Front over this 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 National Front.<sup>179</sup> 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 National Front, with the understanding that the 1976 PAS Congress would decide whether or not the party should remain in the Front.<sup>180</sup>

In the next year, relations between PAS and its National Front 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

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177 There are numerous possible explanations for this: either PAS was not certain it could defeat the Mentri Besar; it feared what action Tun Razak might take and it was reluctant to chance a break up of the National Front; it was worried that the Palace (the Sultan of Kelantan) would work against the party; the factions inside the Kelantan PAS groups opposed to Datuk Mohd. Nasir were too divided for sustained joint action; or PAS leaders feared that the action would split Kelantan PAS and that the Barisan Bebas group would join up with Datuk Mohd. Nasir and his supporters to form "New PAS", which could present a formidable challenge to PAS in future elections.

178 New Straits Times, June 25-26, July 4, 13, 16, 23, 1975.

179 Ibid., July 29-31, 1975.

180. Ibid., July 31, 1975.

reported that the PAS delegates had expressed satisfaction with the cooperation among the Front'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 National Front could be settled through discussion.<sup>181</sup>

Although intrigue continued in Kelantan, with Datuk Mohd. Nasir denying in December 1976 that there was any "leadership crisis" in the state or that he was about to resign due to ill health,<sup>182</sup> the PAS national leaders in early 1977 seemed satisfied with the workings of the National Front. In April 1977, Datuk Asri stated that there was no question of PAS withdrawing from the National Front, 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>183</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.<sup>184</sup> He refused, and the

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181 Ibid., August 5-6, 1976

182 Ibid., December 14, 1976.

183 Ibid., April 27, 30, 1977. Also see ibid., June 11, 1977 (Haji Hassan Adli).

184 The sequence of events is listed in the Far Eastern Economic Review, November 18, 1977, p. 14.

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 Mentri Besar to step down. This having been ignored, on September 29, 1977, PAS expelled Datuk Mohd. Nasir from the party.<sup>185</sup> The reaction to this was the dissolution of fifty Kelantan PAS branches, and the resignation of Uztaz Ali Taib from the National Executive Committee.<sup>186</sup> Then, on October 15, 1977, the Mentri Besar was defeated in a vote of no-confidence in the Kelantan State Assembly, with PAS members voting solidly against him.<sup>187</sup> 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.

As spasmodic violence continued and the state government appeared unable to function properly, the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir said that a State of Emergency might be imposed on Kelantan.

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185 This decision was confirmed by the PAS Executive Committee on October 10, 1977.

186 K. Das, "Challenge Brews for Hussein," *ibid.*, October 21, 1977, pp. 13-14.

187 The vote was 20-0 in the 36-member Assembly, with 13 UMNO, 1 MCA and the Mentri Besar walking out before the vote (the Speaker did not have a vote). See K. Das, "The Kelantan Crunch," *ibid.*, November 18, 1977. Until the vote was taken, it was apparently believed by a number of people that the Mentri Besar had enough PAS support in the Assembly (or that Kelantan UMNO could secure enough PAS support for him) to defeat the motion.

Datuk Asri rejected this solution, saying that it would be an "emergency of convenience", and he called for PAS to be allowed to form a new state government. He warned that PAS was prepared to quit the Front if necessary.<sup>188</sup>

On November 8, 1977, the Yang Dipertuan Agung 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.<sup>189</sup> In spite of the invoking of the whip by the National Front, 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 Parliamentary Secretaries. The Deputy President of PAS and Local Government and Federal Territory Minister, Haji Hassan Adli bin Haji Arshad, of Perak, however, refused to resign from the government and voted with the National Front on the Bill. He said he supported the Bill because it is "obvious that the Kelantan leaders involved cannot come to a solution by amicable means",

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188 See K. Das, "Opposition Waits in Hope," *ibid.*, November 11, 1977, pp. 12-13.

189 *New Straits Times*, November 7-9, 1977; *New Sunday Times*, November 6, 1977. The Emergency Powers (Kelantan) Bill 1977 was proclaimed under clauses (4) (5) (6) of Article 150 of the federal Constitution. Encik Hashim Aman, the Secretary-General to the Minister of Defence, was named Director of Government. On November 11, 1977, Datuk Hussein Onn announced that he had requested Datuk Mohd. Nasir to carry on as Menteri Besar, under the Emergency rule, until "further developments" took place (*The Asian Student* (San Francisco), December 3, 1977).

and the Bill would help prevent the situation in Kelantan from further deterioration.<sup>190</sup> He was then expelled from PAS.

For a while it appeared certain that PAS either would withdraw from the Front 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.<sup>191</sup> Datuk Asri stated that PAS would remain in the National Front and that PAS members of the State Executive Committees would not be affected.<sup>192</sup> Likewise, Encik Ghafar Baba, the Secretary-General of the Front, said that it was up to PAS to decide whether it would remain in the National Front or withdraw; that the Front Supreme Council had no plans to meet on the issue.<sup>193</sup>

However, conflict and provocation continued. The PAS Kelantan State Assembly Speaker and PAS Exco members resigned their positions in protest over the emergency regulations, and in Kedah, PAS demanded that the Mentri Besar resign or face a no-confidence motion, an action designed to embarrass the UMNO-led state government.<sup>194</sup> Datuk Asri

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190 New Straits Times, November 9, 1977. Also see ibid., November 22, 1977.

191 See K. Das, "Reconciliation of Sorts", Far Eastern Economic Review, November 25, 1977, pp. 12-13.

192 New Straits Times, November 9, 11-12, 1977.

193 Ibid., November 11, 1977.

194 Ibid., November 17, 19, 28, 1977. The no-confidence motion in the Kedah State Assembly was defeated on December 21, 1977 (ibid. December 22, 1977).

appeared to believe that the National Front Constitution required the unanimous support of all the other component parties, under Article 12, in order to expel PAS, and he seemed to insinuate that this fate could be avoided.<sup>195</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>196</sup>

At the end of November, it was announced that the National Front 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 Front 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>197</sup> On December 9, 1977, UMNO held a special delegates meeting, including representatives from the Youth and Wanita wings, and gave unanimous support to the National Front Supreme Council.

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195 Ibid., November 16, 1977.

196 Perlembagaan Barisan Nasional (Pindaan Yang Terbaharu), 1975 (mimeo), pp. 7, 10.

197 New Straits Times, December 6, 1977. Also see ibid., November 29, December 5, 1977.

decision. 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 Front, but not with its present leaders. "UMNO feels that close cooperation between it and PAS can no longer be maintained with the present attitude of the PAS leadership."<sup>198</sup>

The PAS leaders, most of whom were on the PAS Central Committee, met and decided that PAS could not accept the Front ruling, stating that the party was prepared for any eventuality.<sup>199</sup> 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 National Front Supreme Council met on December 13, 1977 and voted to expel PAS from the Front 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>200</sup> On December

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198 Ibid., December 10, 1977.

199 New Sunday Times, December 11, 1977.

200 New Straits Times, December 14, 1977. Interestingly, USNO, again under the leadership of Tun Mustapha, did not oppose the decision, despite the friendship between Tun Mustapha and Datuk Asri and the mutual support between the two parties in the past.

16, 1977, all 13 PAS MPs crossed the floor, and PAS announced that it considered itself expelled from the Front and now in the opposition.<sup>201</sup>

It appears that PAS was willing to precipitate a breakdown of relations in order to better its position in the Front and increase its influence among the electorate, and also to gamble on removing the irritations caused by the Kelantan Mentri Besar. The continuation in Kelantan, under the direction of the Mentri 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 Mentri Besar for "its own purposes".<sup>202</sup> Datuk Asri reportedly said that UMNO "has the ambition of becoming the leading party in Kelantan...There has been a constant undermining of our position, which we cannot allow...".<sup>203</sup> The PAS leaders may have believed that

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201 Ibid., December 17, 1977. Tengku Razaleigh announced that all PAS members serving on statutory boards would be removed. Ambassadors would not be replaced if they did not oppose the Front, he said. The opposition in Parliament now numbered 23 (13-PAS, 9-DAP, 1-Pekemas), plus 2 Independents: the two former UMNO Deputy Ministers arrested under the ISA (the Sabah MP, Encik A.K. Aliuddin, rejoined Berjaya on December 14, 1977 (ibid., January 9, 1978)). Also see New Sunday Times, December 18, 1977; K. Das "Party's Technical Knockout", Far Eastern Economic Review, December 30, 1977, p. 9; K. Das, "'Back to 1969' Warning by Asri", ibid., January 6, 1978, p. 13.

202 Interview with the Kelantan Deputy Mentri Besar, Haji Wan Ismail (June 2, 1975).

203 The Asian Student (San Francisco), November 19, 1977.



the party could vote the Mentri Besar out of power, 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 Front. 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.<sup>204</sup> It was obvious the UMNO was supporting the Kelantan Mentri Besar and would interpret surreptitious efforts to remove him as contravening the spirit of the coalition.<sup>205</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).

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204 At the PAS Extraordinary Congress, held on December 25, 1977 after PAS left the Front, Datuk Asri told the delegates that PAS already had sixteen branches in the Prime Minister's constituency, and a number in Dr. Mahathir's constituency. See K. Das, "'Back to 1969' Warning by Asri", *op. cit.*, p. 13.

205 Kelantan UMNO, out of power for nineteen years, was eager to contest against PAS for control of the state. However, it cooperated with and supported Datuk Mohd. Nasir as Mentri Besar.

The crisis followed a not untypical pattern for the breakdown of a coalition: disagreement over the coalition rules; imperfect communications; misjudgment 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.

PAS in the opposition meant that UMNO 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 coalitions and compromises would clearly depend on the electoral strength of PAS as an oppositional force.<sup>206</sup> The first test followed quickly.

#### 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.<sup>207</sup> The contest for the 36

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206 A weak Malay party cannot put enough pressure on UMNO, through "outbidding", to disrupt the consociational practices of the Front.

207 There had been speculation that the Kelantan state elections might be held after the general elections, and that Emergency rule would be maintained until then.

state assembly seats would be between PAS, the National Front, and the newly-registered Islamic party, Parti Berjasa, formed by Datuk Mohd. Nasir.<sup>208</sup> It was widely believed that the Front and Berjasa would cooperate to oppose PAS. When nomination papers were filed, the National Front and Berjasa opposed each other, as well as PAS and some Independents, in 13 of the 36 constituencies. However, it quickly became apparent that the Front-Berjasa strategy was to split the vote in areas which otherwise might have voted strongly for PAS as the Islamic party. The National Front 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 Mentri Besar.<sup>209</sup>

There were 95 candidates for the 36 state assembly seats. PAS put up a candidate in every seat, the National Front put up 24, Berjasa 25, and there were 10 Independents.<sup>210</sup> In the wake of the Emergency, public rallies were banned for the campaign. As usual in Kelantan, the key campaigning method was the "ceremah" (an informal small group dialogue session at the kampung level). Since PAS had perfected the ceremah technique, the ban on rallies was viewed as disadvantaging the Front.<sup>211</sup> The National Front and Berjasa campaigned

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208 Berjasa is, like PAS, based on Islamic principles. Its membership is comprised largely of former PAS members.

209 Sunday Times (Singapore), March 12, 1978.

210 New Straits Times, March 13, 1978.

211 Asiaweek, Vol. 4, No. 10 (March 17, 1978), p. 17.

on economic development and clean government in the state, and on promises of federal financial assistance for development plans. PAS campaigned on the party's opposition to Emergency rule in Kelantan and on its expulsion from the Front, as well as on upholding Islamic principles.<sup>212</sup> Interestingly, Datuk Asri was not a PAS candidate for a state seat.

The day before polling, the Press reported that the "outcome remained anybody's guess".<sup>213</sup> The lopsidedness of the election results was therefore a complete surprise. The National Front won 23 and Berjasa 11 (including a convincing win by Datuk Mohd. Nasir) of the seats, with PAS reduced to 2 seats.<sup>214</sup> As the party with the larger number of seats, the National Front would name the new Mentri Besar (almost certainly former federal Minister Datuk Mohammed Yaacob). 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

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212 Tapes of Datuk Asri's speeches on these subjects were widely circulated (*ibid.*). According to K. Das, it was thought that the Emergency rule might have "alienated many Kelantanese who initially supported Nasir" ("UMNO Tries a Test Run", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 3, 1978, p. 14).

213 Sunday Times (Singapore), March 12, 1978.

214 Straits Times (Singapore), March 13-14, 1978. PAS won the constituencies of Manek Urai (won by UMNO in 1974), and Sering (won by the PAS incumbent), both by majorities of less than one hundred votes.

win went to a new candidate). The former Deputy Mentri Besar, Haji Wan Ismail, lost by a large margin, as did the prominent party member Datuk Wan Mustapha.<sup>215</sup> 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 National Front-Berjasa coalition was 153,351, or 64.5 per cent.

Table F: The March 1978 Kelantan State Elections:  
Seats Contested and Won by Parties

Party	Contested	Won	Total Vote	Average Vote per seat	Average Vote for seats contested
National Front	24	23	88,671	2,463	3,695
Berjasa	25	11	64,680	1,797	2,587
PAS	36	2	79,514	2,209	2,209
Independents	10	0	4,709	131	471
Totals	95	36	237,574		

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

215 New Straits Times, March 13, 1978. Haji Wan Ismail was closely identified with the efforts to remove Datuk Mohd. Nasir as Mentri Besar.

Table G: The March 1978 Kelantan State Elections:  
Types of Contests and Seats Won by Parties

Contestants	Number	Seats Won		
		National Front	Berjasa	PAS
National Front-PAS	9	8	-	1
National Front-PAS- Independent	2	2	-	0
Berjasa-PAS	11	-	10	1
Berjasa-PAS-Independent	1	-	1	0
National Front-PAS- Berjasa	6	6	0	0
National Front-PAS- Berjasa-Independent	7	7	0	0
Totals	36	23	11	2

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

PAS in the Opposition; Berjasa to Join the Front: Implications  
for the Grand Coalition

An editorial commented about the state elections that "ābove all, the decision of the Kelantan electorate brings to an end the uncertainty and sense of crisis that has prevailed since last October".<sup>216</sup> Another Press report noted that the "election results also silenced talk that Malay unity had been split following PAS' ouster from the Front...".<sup>217</sup> PAS will

216 Ibid., March 13, 1978.

217 Ibid.

probably not pose a threat of consequence to the National Front in the next general elections. The party appeared demoralized with the loss of Kelantan, and it is still split over the question of Datuk Asri's leadership. If PAS cannot win a majority in Kedah (or, less likely, in Trengganu or Perlis), or significantly extend its influence in other Peninsular Malaysia states, it will find itself in the political wilderness. Given the Kelantan vote, PAS also has to worry about its parliamentary membership--nearly half of its MPs come from there.

Berjasa, which has announced that it will seek to join the National Front,<sup>218</sup> has started to set up branches in Kedah, Perlis, Perak, Selangor and Pahang. Although the party was registered just prior to nomination day for the Kelantan state elections and is not really prepared, organizationally or financially, for a wide general election campaign, it should be able to compete strongly against PAS in some of the seats. A Press report noted that PAS fears that Berjasa "might prove as effective, and deadly to PAS, as in Kelantan".<sup>219</sup> As an alternative to PAS, because it is an Islamic party, Berjasa can appeal to those more conservative and strongly religious Malays--a constituency in which the more secular UMNO has always had difficulties against PAS. Berjasa

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218 Ibid.

219 Straits Times (Singapore), March 14, 1978.

will, in effect, replace PAS as the Islamic party in the coalition. Given the Kelantan election results, it now appears unlikely that attempts at "outbidding" by PAS will jeopardize the consociational practices of the National Front by impressing UMNO leaders with the overriding urgency of meeting Malay demands regardless of non-Malay interests.



CHAPTER 6: CONSOCIATIONALISM IN MALAYSIA

"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>

It is necessary in this concluding chapter to answer more explicitly the key questions posed for this thesis.<sup>2</sup>

- 1) Can either or both the Alliance and the National Front be considered as consociational political systems, as defined in this thesis? In what respects do they fit or not fit Lijphart's model?

Consociationalism, as defined in this thesis as a variant of Lijphart's model, can be viewed independently of "democracy", and it can function where political power is not balanced, even in a bi-polar situation where one segment is politically dominant. The essential requirements for consociationalism are overarching elite cooperation and stable non-elite support. The first is necessary in order to form a consociational-type system, and the second is necessary for the successful functioning of that system. Additionally, there are successful consociational devices or

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1 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).

2 See Chapter 1, p. 80.

practices, namely government by "grand coalition", mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy, which are considered useful for institutionalizing overarching elite cooperation. These devices, which help characterize the system, all run counter to the principle of strict majority rule, the pattern of government-versus-opposition, and the idea of winners and losers. Finally, there are some "favorable conditions" which may influence the prospects of success for an attempt at consociational-type politics.

In Malaysia, in the presence of politically salient ethnic cleavages, the political elites of both the Alliance and the National Front have responded in a consociational manner and have employed consociational practices. They have demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and compromise on the difficult issues dividing the ethnic communities, such as in the original "bargain" concerning relative shares of political and economic power.<sup>3</sup> Despite the political dominance of the Malays, the Malay political elites have been willing to share governmental power with non-Malays, and to bargain and compromise on many divisive issues. The political elites have been committed to system maintenance, and they have been acutely aware, especially since May 13, 1969, of the danger of ethnic violence. As Tun Tan Siew Sin once noted,

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3 On "the bargain", see Chapter 2, pp. 112-117.

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> Finally, the political elites have been able to institutionalize the "rules of the game" and procedures for elite cooperation.

To have a successfully functioning consociational system, there must be stable non-elite support. 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 agreements 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 non-elite support. However, this support slowly dwindled. By 1969 the Alliance was being

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

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

6 Straits Times (Malaysia), February 22, 1973.

successfully outbid on both its ethnic flanks, a fact revealed partially in the electoral results. Following the trauma of May 13th, the National Front was instituted in its place, with additional partners, to gain once more broad-based non-elite support.

Some of the consociational devices or practices have been employed by the Alliance and the National Front. Both the Alliance and the National Front represent a form of "grand coalition" government (a larger-than-minimal coalition representing all of the major segments or "pillars"), which is the most important of the consociational devices.<sup>7</sup> The Cabinets of the Alliance and the National Front have always had representatives of the major ethnic groups. Among the practices complementary but secondary to the grand coalition government are the mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy. The practice of the mutual veto (minority veto) has not been formally instituted and remains only marginally and informally implemented. Informally, the principle of compromise and "package deals" has helped protect some of the major interests of each community, as has the practice of reaching consensus and unanimity in the higher councils of government and party. The mutual veto operated more successfully before May 1969, within the guidelines established by "the bargain". Since then it has become more difficult for the non-Malays to feel secure about being able to protect their major interests, except through elite cooperation, and there remains

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 1, p. 22.

no formal power of minority veto.

Another consociational practice, proportionality, operates in varying degrees. It operates in the allocation of Cabinet appointments and access to government decision-making bodies in general, in patronage posts, and roughly in the allocation of electoral seats among the component parties. Influence over policy-making decisions has not been proportional. In effect, UMNO, in consultation with the other parties, decides on government policy. However, the views and wishes of the other parties have rarely, if ever, been completely ignored, and the result has often been policy compromises or concessions on implementation.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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

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8 Tun Tan Siew Sin noted that "when one party asks for concessions, that party always tries to bear in mind the difficulties of the other party or parties, so that the final solution does not bear too harshly on any one community" (Sunday Times (Malaysia), August 12, 1973).

9 See Arend Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, A Comparative Exploration, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977, p. 151.

at thirty per cent.<sup>10</sup> While these are just targets, the non-Malays have viewed it as significant that their share of the economic cake is both adequate and specified.<sup>11</sup> In some respects, this is the new "bargain".

The final consociational device, segmental autonomy, has not had much effect in Malaysia, mostly because it operates most effectively as a form of federalism, whereas in Malaysia, despite its federal structure, the ethnic groups are geographically intermingled. However, where it can operate, in control by the minority over areas of its "exclusive concern" (i.e. cultural and educational activities), it was more effective before May 1969. Since then there has been an increase of government intervention in these areas.

There are also several "favorable conditions" which may affect the prospects of success for consociational practices.<sup>12</sup> These are conditions found in the society, and they tend to change only slowly, if they do change at all. Malaysia has a mixed record on these conditions. The favorable conditions found in Malaysia are small size, some prior traditions of elite accommodation among the Malays, and some segmental isolation. The latter condition is slowly becoming less favorable to consociationalism as the spheres of economic competition between the ethnic groups increase.<sup>13</sup> On the unfavorable side of the ledger,

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10 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.

11 The President of the MCA has called on his party to make plans to ensure that the forty per cent share of the "economic wealth" that has been promised to the non-Malays be achieved (The Guardian, Vol. 7, No. 7 (August 1975), p. 4).

12 See Chapter 1, pp. 26-28.

13 See Chapter 4, pp. 306-307.

Malaysia does not have a multiple balance of power between the segments, overarching loyalties to moderate the ethnic cleavage, or any salient cross-cutting cleavages to lower the intensity of ethnic hostility. The societal conditions in Austria (1945-1966) were somewhat more conducive to consociationalism than those in Malaysia. However, Austria, the closest approximation to Lijphart's pure model, also did not have a multiple balance of power, it probably had less segmental isolation than found in Malaysia, and it had very few examples of prior traditions of elite accommodation. Further, the cleavages in Austria were much more reinforcing than crosscutting. It needs to be repeated that these "favorable conditions" are neither necessary nor sufficient for the formation and successful operation of consociationalism. Austria did not have all favorable conditions nor did its elites employ all of the consociational devices, but "the ideal type of coalescent elites [was] approximated very closely",<sup>14</sup> and there was a high degree of stable non-elite support.

There are some differences between the Alliance and the National Front as regards the practice of consociational-type politics. In both the Alliance and the National Front, there is evidence of a considerable degree of overarching elite cooperation, signified most prominently by the inter-ethnic sharing of governmental power. It also seems clear, however, that while the Malays have always dominated politically, there was more scope for bargaining, trade-offs, and package deals under the

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14 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Alliance than there is under the National Front. Nevertheless, there is still bargaining, and there are some compromises under the National Front.

It appears that there was "enough"<sup>15</sup> stable non-elite support for the Alliance in the beginning, but it gradually eroded. The National Front replaced the Alliance, brought additional parties into the ruling coalition, and apparently, using the 1974 election results and the absence of ethnic violence in recent years as indicators, it has re-established stable non-elite support.<sup>16</sup>

The political elites of both the Alliance and the National Front have employed some consociational practices. There has been a grand coalition government<sup>17</sup> and rough proportionality in most political spheres, although not in influence over policy. The non-Malays had more influence over policy under the Alliance than with the National Front.

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15 It is, of course, difficult to measure what is "enough". Perhaps it can generally be ascertained that there is "enough" support when election results do not threaten to throw the current elites out of power, when there is an absence of ethnic violence, and when there is general compliance with government directives and policies.

16 Although it is preferable for the government to have "diffuse" support with a deep commitment, it is adequate for the government to have "specific" support, tied to government performance, and also simply to have compliance and/or apathy. (See Chapter 1, p. 15) The rioting in Kelantan in late 1977 was not an example of ethnic violence; it was strictly a Malay affair.

17 It might appear that the National Front is no longer a "grand coalition" since PAS left the Front. However, it is still more of a grand coalition than was the Alliance (after the mid-1950s). It still meets the essential requirement of including the legitimate representatives of all of the major segments or "pillars". PAS does not represent an ethnic "pillar", it represents a small section of a "pillar" which is already represented in the coalition by UMNO; the latter of which can claim vast legitimacy as the representative of the Malays. Further, the newly-registered Parti Berjasa intends to apply to join the Front, and this will also compensate for the departure of PAS.



There is no permanent protection for the non-Malays via a formal veto mechanism. However, under the Alliance, "the bargain" established political and economic guidelines which were faithfully observed, and this served in some ways as an informal veto, which is partially absent under the National Front. The final practice is segmental autonomy. Given that it has had little applicability for either the Alliance or the National Front, it appears that the non-Malays had more freedom and control over their cultural and educational activities under the Alliance than they have now under the National Front. Although the societal conditions tend to be rather static, there was less ethnic economic competition (or more segmental isolation) in the days of the Alliance than there is now under the National Front.

From this comparison it appears that the Alliance was more consociational than the National Front. As regards elite consociational practices there was clearly more political give-and-take between the ethnic partners under the Alliance. Viewed in another perspective, however, the character of the political system as a whole may be more consociational under the National Front, because of the broader partnership and more limited political competition. It may also prove that the National Front will be more successful in maintaining stable non-elite support, a requirement for the successful functioning of a consociational system.

The Alliance fits Lijphart's model to a sufficient degree for him to identify it as a "reasonably successful consociational democracy"

until May 1969.<sup>18</sup> It fits in the ways already described, and additionally Lijphart feels that Malaysia under the Alliance was democratic enough to be considered for his model. Lijphart does not consider Malaysia under the National Front, however, to be an example of consociational democracy for two reasons. First because the country is no longer democratic enough. Second because the Malays are too politically dominant. It is in these same respects, of democracy and political dominance, that consociationalism as defined in this thesis differs from Lijphart's model. It is possible that a reasonably strong case could be made that Malaysia is democratic enough, but it is maintained here that democracy need not be considered when viewing the conflict-management practices of consociationalism. As regards political dominance, this condition does not prohibit consociationalism even in Lijphart's own model. Lijphart has simply decided that the Malays are too dominant under the National Front, although they were also dominant under the Alliance. It is undeniably true that the Malays have been more politically dominant since the riots of May 1969. However, it is believed here to be important that the Malays, with a majority, 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

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18 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., pp. 150-157.

of these practices may be more limited, but the practices are still consociational.<sup>19</sup>

As defined in this thesis, both the Alliance and the National Front can be considered consociational to the extent that they appear to satisfy the requirements for consociation: overarching elite cooperation and stable non-elite support (until the Alliance's support declined). Further, they employ some consociational practices, most notably the grand coalition government, and societal conditions are reasonably well suited, or at least not prohibitive, to such practices.

The problem with "extent" is that it is difficult to quantify and interpret. The pure consociational model is an ideal type. Consociationalism can be viewed on a continuum, and one country may be regarded as more consociational than another, yet both might be considered as consociational systems. On the other hand, a country which simply employed some consociational devices might not qualify at all as a consociational political system. What "extent" then, is required for either or both the Alliance and the National Front to be considered as consociational political systems?

Arend Lijphart has looked at countries around the world which seem to exhibit some of the characteristics of consociational democracy.<sup>20</sup>

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19 Perhaps a "dominance proposition" could be ventured: consociationalism can still function successfully in a setting of political dominance, given two conditions. The elites of the dominant sector must recognize the danger of disregarding the vital interests of the other sector(s) and continue to seek to resolve issues through bargaining and compromise, and the elites of the non-dominant sector(s) must regard their situation as tolerable and bargaining as meaningful.

20 In Democracy in Plural Societies..., op. cit., passim.

According to Lijphart, "The closest approximation to the ideal type of consociational democracy is the case of Austria during the era of grand coalition Cabinets from 1945 to 1966. The other three cases [The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland]...deviated in some significant respects from the pure model, although they come sufficiently close to be classified as consociational democracies. Conversely, some of the nonconsociational democracies have a number of significant consociational elements."<sup>21</sup> Further, he found that consociational democracies exist, or existed, in several additional countries: Lebanon, Malaysia, Cyprus, Surinam, and Netherlands Antilles.<sup>22</sup> Lijphart calls Canada and Israel "semiconsociational" countries.<sup>23</sup> These two countries have utilized some consociational devices to help mediate cleavages between the segments in their respective societies, but nevertheless the nature of politics in these countries is governed essentially by majority and adversarial rule rather than by consensual and coalescent strategies. Lijphart also identifies and discusses some other countries which practice, or did practice, some elements of consociationalism, such as Indonesia, but which he would not consider to be consociational or semiconsociational systems.

While these guidelines are useful, in the final analysis a pronouncement on Malaysia still remains subjective. It is believed here

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21 Ibid., p. 105.

22 Ibid., pp. 147-161, 201, 206. 217-218. He also discusses Nigeria, 1957-1966, but admits that "Nigeria's only possible claim to consociational status must be based on its federal system...". He goes on to say that even this was designed in such a way as to "virtually guarantee its failure" (p. 163).

23 Ibid., pp. 119-134.

that, although the Alliance was more consociational in its elite practices than the National Front, both governments are consociational to a sufficient extent to be considered as consociational political systems. They satisfy the requirements for consociationalism, and they employ some of the practices. The principle of strict majority rule, the pattern of government-versus-opposition, and the idea of winners and losers do not characterize the system. The character of the political system is described well by a non-Malay elite, the President of the MCA, Datuk Sri Lee San Choon: "We have in the Barisan Nasional [National Front] 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>24</sup>

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24 The Guardian, Vol. 7, No. 7 (August 1975), p. 3 (Presidential Address delivered at the 1975 MCA General Assembly).

- 2) From the case of Malaysia, what can be learned about coalition behavior? What can be learned about the nature of the grand coalition, as found in Malaysia?

Perhaps the most significant element of coalition behavior in Malaysia is the importance of personalities, namely the personal friendships and conflicts between the political elites as conditioned by such factors as similarities and differences in social and educational background, 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 newspapers".<sup>25</sup> Personality is probably the least predictable and quantifiable and the least rational aspect of coalition behavior, since personal proclivities often override cost-benefit considerations. This is especially so in a country like Malaysia, where "saving face" and observing the proper protocol for rank are culturally important.

There are numerous examples in Malaysia of the intervention of personality in coalition behavior.<sup>26</sup> The Tunku was not willing to bargain with PAS. He did not trust the leaders, and he disliked the party's fanaticism on some Malay nationalist and Islamic issues. Also, just before the separation of Singapore, the Tunku's relations with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew were at such a low point that it would have been

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25 Straits Times (Malaysia), April 26, 1971

26 See Chapter 3, p. 240.

virtually impossible for the two to have reached any accommodation, even if the Tunku had still been willing to continue talks. In Sarawak it was considered highly unlikely that SNAP would join the state government until Datuk Ningkan was replaced as SNAP President because of his poor relationship with Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yakub, and this was in fact the case.<sup>27</sup> In Sabah there is the anomaly of USNO being in opposition in the state even though both USNO and Berjaya (the government party) are members of the National Front, a situation which is overwhelmingly a consequence of personality conflicts.

Tun Razak is perhaps the most important illustration of the impact of personality on coalition behavior.<sup>28</sup> He was temperamentally more flexible and pragmatic than the Tunku, or, evidently, Datuk Hussein Onn. He was a gifted coalition-builder, partly because of his negotiating skills and partly because he inspired trust and confidence. Virtually all the leaders of the parties in the National Front coalition testified publicly at some time or another that they were satisfied with the coalition arrangement because they could trust Tun Razak. Several people

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27 See Chapter 5, pp. 315-320.

28 In consociationalism the behavior of the elites is the crucial variable. However, it may well be the case that in developing countries the personality and behavior of the top leader is even more important. In some of the European consociational countries, for example, the top leaders have been more of a collectivity, with the personality of one particular leader seemingly not so vital (e.g. Switzerland's Federal Council).

interviewed in 1975 also volunteered the opinion that it was only Tun Razak who could hold the National Front together.<sup>29</sup> He inspired confidence by his ability both to build and to maintain coalitions.<sup>30</sup>

The grand coalition, as explained in Chapter 1,<sup>31</sup> is a larger-than-minimal coalition which includes representatives of all the important cleavage segments in that society. It is usually formed because the political elites believe that there is a need for consensus and wide representation for attaining legitimacy and stability, and because they want to co-opt outbidders. Further, they believe that there is a "common advantage" in sharing power if by so doing some negative outcome for the society can be avoided. These conditions apply in Malaysia.<sup>32</sup>

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29 These included Encik Khalil Akasah, Dato Dr. Neo Yee Pan, and Dr. Lim Keng Yaik. Interestingly, the conflict with Datuk Asri and PAS over the Kelantan situation did not explode in 1975 under Tun Razak, but did in 1977 under Datuk Hussein Onn (see Chapter 5, pp. 356-367). Tun Razak had, of course, created conditions for the problem in Kelantan by seeing that Datuk Mohd. Nasir was appointed the Menteri Besar. He had also activated the confrontations with Dato Harun and Tun Mustapha, which were unresolved at his death, and with which Datuk Hussein Onn handled with considerable decisiveness and skill. The Kelantan problem involving PAS was not a direct confrontation situation (until the end) and it required extensive managerial skills and delicate compromises to avoid a breakup such as occurred in December 1977. Tun Razak was probably more adept at handling such a situation than Datuk Hussein Onn, who tends to be uncompromising, especially if there is a moral issue involved.

30 It might be said, however, that Tun Razak did not institutionalize the National Front sufficiently, although he might have managed to do so if he had lived longer.

31 See Chapter 1, pp. 62-67.

32 See Chapter 3, pp. 238-239.



Several observations can be made about the nature of the Alliance and National Front grand coalitions. First, they have been permanent and semi-institutionalized--but still dependent on individual skills like Tun Razak's. 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 Front of several peripheral parties, in and out of the coalition without upsetting the basic structure. Fourth, as discussed earlier, 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.

Probably no grand theories can be devised about the grand coalition. The only clear similarities in the grand coalitions which have existed in several countries,<sup>33</sup> are their larger-than-minimal size, the kind of motives which led to their creation, and their function as a device for a consensual style of political rule.

3) What are the main differences between the Alliance and its successor, the National Front, in managing the political system generally, and, particularly, in following consociationalist-type practices and forming coalitions?

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33 Such as, at various times, in Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany, Lebanon, and Israel, in addition to Malaysia.

The Alliance and the National Front 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 National Front method of rule was "time-tested",<sup>34</sup> and Tun Razak noted that the Front was "not different, only larger".<sup>35</sup> Further, in style and in organizational structure and rules, the Alliance and National Front are also quite similar.<sup>36</sup> In many respects, the National Front 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.<sup>37</sup> First, the National Front is much larger than the Alliance, with many more coalition partners. It has a stronger and wider base of non-elite

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34 Interview (June 30, 1975). Also see Sin Chew Jit Poh, January 23, 1973, as quoted in Intisari Akhbar Harian (Dr. Lim Keng Yaik).

35 Pelopor, No. 3 (1975), pp. 15-16 (UMNO Publication).

36 See Chapters 2 and 4 on the Alliance and National Front, respectively.

37 See Chapter 3, pp. 181-186. Some of the perhaps less important differences between the Alliance and the National Front are: some ethnic groups are represented by more than one coalition partner; there are some non-exclusively ethnic parties in the Front (see Chapter 4, 302); and Sabah and Sarawak have been drawn more closely into the mainstream politics of the Peninsula than they were under the Malaysian Alliance Party/Grand Alliance Organization (see Chapter 2, pp. 109-112).

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, the leaders of the various parties in the National Front do not share the close relationships that existed in the Alliance, and there is a larger range of social and educational background differences among the various leaders. One consequence has been that Tun Razak and Datuk Hussein Onn have had a considerably expanded role as intra-coalition arbiters than the Tunku had with the Alliance.<sup>38</sup> Another consequence has been that the conduct of politics has been less informal in the Front. The advantages lost by less informality probably have been compensated by the style of Tun Razak and Datuk Hussein Onn of encouraging full and open discussion in the formal councils of government.

Second, although UMNO was the dominant party in the Alliance, it is even more dominant in the National Front. The difference is in degree and openness. After May 1969, it was clear, right down to the kampung level, that UMNO was running the country. As a corollary to the New Economic Policy, it was necessary for UMNO to state more clearly and assert more actively its dominance.

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38 The Tunku believes that the larger coalition is more unwieldy, that there is less commitment among the parties, and that any party could break away at any time (interview, May 7, 1975). It took time, the force of personality (charisma), and a process of institutionalization to build up commitment to the Alliance. With the National Front it can be expected to take even longer, since there are more parties and fewer charismatic leaders in the top circle.

Finally, and most importantly, the National Front differs from the Alliance in that the political elites who devised the coalition-building scheme and the Front, namely Tun Razak and his close associates, also provided an overall strategy to guide the Front 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.<sup>39</sup> Milton J. Esman observed the same thing: 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>40</sup> Esman, writing before the period of extensive coalition-building and the formation of the National Front, believed that Malaysia needed a "guidance model" which would do more to anticipate ethnic issues, design strategies of action, improvise possible trade-offs, and develop accommodative habits of thinking and behavior.<sup>41</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

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39 Interview with Encik Khalil Akasah (June 12, 1975).

40 Milton J. Esman, Administration and Development in Malaysia, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972, pp. 258+259.

41 Ibid., pp. 266-271.

official coercion and force.<sup>42</sup> In many ways, this is a blueprint of what the political elites have attempted to do under the National Front government.<sup>43</sup> While under the Alliance the political elites also practiced a consociational style of rule, they took no steps to remedy the problems of a declining base of non-elite support and increasingly prevalent outbidding by counter-elites. With the formation of the National Front, the 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 consociational 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 (discussed below) designed

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42 *Ibid.*, p. 269. Also see Milton J. Esman, "The Management of Communal Conflict", *Public Policy*, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (Winter 1973), pp. 49-78, esp. p. 77.

43. Esman, *Administration and Development...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-271. However, the political elites have not adopted some of Esman's recommendations. For instance, in calling for an economic "climate of growth and opportunity", Esman warns against curtailing opportunity for Chinese economic activity (*ibid.*, pp. 267-269). The government, in its efforts to help Malays get into the modern economic sectors, has sometimes appeared not to be overly concerned about the effects on the Chinese. However, the country has maintained an acceptable rate of economic growth, the Chinese have shown great resourcefulness and adaptability, for instance, by finding new forms of economic organization, such as giant investment corporations. The government has also recently shown more concern about the economic position of the Chinese; for example, some of the more pro-Malay aspects of the Third Malaysia Plan were toned down before publication and some revisions were made in the Industrial Coordination Act. In another way, also, Malaysia's elites have not followed Esman's recommendations. He believes that the senior administrative group should be trained to play an active role as agents of conflict management (*ibid.*, pp. 261-266). He believes they could use their status and legitimacy to combine an authoritative role with a mediative one; that they could facilitate a reliable flow of inter-ethnic communication, and perform other similarly valuable services.

to protect the system from ethnic violence resulting from abuse of open political competition.

4) What other practices, apart from consociational-type practices and coalition-building, have been employed by the ruling elites? What rules of the game have been established for the Malaysian political system?

After the riots of May 13, 1969, a State of Emergency was declared and Parliament and the state assemblies were suspended. A National Operations Council under the directorship of Tun Razak was established to restore order and run the country, in conjunction with the Cabinet. 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.<sup>44</sup> 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,<sup>45</sup> the political elites established the National Consultative Council (NCC), the Department of National Unity (DNU), and the National Goodwill Council (NGC). The latter was

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44. See Chapter 3, pp. 181-184. Alex Lee likewise noted, "The Alliance must realize that...the loose arrangement which worked before whereby the elites of both races must work together on a personal basis is not enough" (in Patrick Low (ed.), Trends in Southeast Asia, No. 2, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, July 1971, p. 52).

45. Additionally, the political elites announced the New Economic Policy, which will be discussed under a later section, and they decided on a consociational coalition-building strategy which led to the formation of the National Front, and which has already been discussed.

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.<sup>46</sup> The NCC, prelude to the coalition-building strategy, was a consociational organization and has been discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>47</sup> The DNU (now the National Unity Board) was created as a research-type unit to ponder the causes of ethnic conflict and to recommend possible solutions. It was intended to "take the long-term view, to think in 'generational terms'...".<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> 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 Agung 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;

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46 On the NGC, see R.S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, Politics and Government in Malaysia, Singapore and Vancouver: Federal Publications Ltd. and University of British Columbia Press, 1978, ch. 5.

47 See Chapter 3, pp. 185-186; Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch.5.

48 Ibid., ch. 5.

49 Except for the more substantial National Solidarity Classes, with an enrolment of approximately 60,000.

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, although Upholding the Constitution is pointedly not so vague.<sup>50</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<sup>51</sup> 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>52</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

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50 See Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 5. 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).

51 See Chapter 3, pp. 162-163; Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 5: Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill 1971, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1972.

52 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.



subject to the approval of the Conference of Rulers,<sup>53</sup> was broadened to include additional Articles.<sup>54</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 an offense, but to incite the Malays and non-Malays of this country to cut each other's throats and to destroy our country."<sup>55</sup>

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

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53 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 Agung, 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.

54 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.

55 Parliamentary Debates..., op. cit., p. 188. Also see his speech summing up the deliberations, ibid., pp. 230-236.

for the accommodating elites by "shedding the democratic excesses of the old system".<sup>56</sup>

Consequently, 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.<sup>57</sup> 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 opposition MP, Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, former President of Pekemas, appreciated that 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>58</sup>

Second, the "bargain", which allowed for unhindered Chinese economic activity and consequently Chinese economic dominance, was

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56 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.

57 See Chapter 3, p. 183 fn. 72. On the "bargain", see Chapter 2, pp. 112-117.

58 Straits Times (Malaysia); April 2, 1973. Likewise, 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).

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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

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.

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59 See the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1971; Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-1975, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1973; Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1976; Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 10; R.S. Milne, "The Politics of Malaysia's New Economic Policy," Pacific Affairs, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 235-262.

60 See Parliamentary Debates..., op. cit., p. 195 (Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie). He said that "Malays and other indigenous people must move into the modern urban sectors of the economy, not merely as workers and not merely as employees. They must eventually have a roughly proportionate stake in ownership and control of urban type activities".

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 Electoral Commission submitted its new delimitations of election constituencies. The creation of the Federal Territory worked in favor of the National Front 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.<sup>61</sup> 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 National Front had a good chance in one of the seats and some chance in another.<sup>62</sup>

The new delimitation of election constituencies for Peninsular Malaysia in July 1974 also worked to the advantage of the National Front. First, the total number of parliamentary seats was increased from 144 to 154, thus easing slightly the difficult task of allocating

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61 In May 1969, the Alliance won only 14 of the 28 Selangor state seats and was unable to form the state government immediately. This situation alarmed the Selangor Malays and contributed to the tension that led to the May 13th riots in Kuala Lumpur (see Chapter 2, pp. 138-144).

62 In fact, the National Front won these two seats in 1974.

seats among the larger number of competing partners in the new coalition.<sup>63</sup> Second, the previous rule of a 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 being the disparity in Perak between Menglembu with 51,300 voters and Grik with 16,400.<sup>64</sup> Encik Fan Yew Teng noted that "it is not only the great disparity between rural and urban constituencies that so much characterizes the 1974 delimitations, but there is also a deliberate bias in terms of electoral weightage against what are traditionally Opposition strongholds".<sup>65</sup> 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 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

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63 The total number of state assembly constituencies was also increased.

64 "The 1975 General Election: A Post-Mortem," speech by Encik Fan Yew Teng printed in The Rocket, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1974), pp. 7-9.

65 Ibid., p. 7.

themselves from the competition of the opposition.<sup>66</sup>

5) What are the chances of success, as measured in stability, for the consociational-type practices used in Malaysia? How can the ruling elites avoid being outbid? How can they convince their respective ethnic communities that they are best suited to represent their interests?

When considering the prospects of a successfully-operating consociational political system in Malaysia, one must look to UMNO and the top UMNO elites. UMNO is the most powerful and influential political

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66 Gordon P. Means wrote about the pre-1969 era: "So long as democratic institutional forms are followed, the allocation of power within society is determined essentially by two kinds of activities: (1) through the formation of inter-communal coalitions; or (2) through manipulating the 'rules of the game' by shifting political boundaries or tampering with the constitution" (Malaysian Politics, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, p. 415). In the post-riots period, the political system has been characterized by both (1) and (2). It should be added that even without the more stringent rules and altered boundaries, the opposition would not be able realistically to compete as a possible alternative government; it has little hope of coming to power nationally in the near future. This is primarily because the opposition is divided, and the opposition parties are dominated by single ethnic groups and tend to take a more extreme range of positions on ethnic issues than the Front. Probably the only way the opposition could present itself as a viable alternative would be if an opposition front coalition were to be formed, with a credible Malay party component included, and if all the partners were willing to be moderate and compromising in order to maintain the coalition. However, even then, the opposition coalition would still have difficulties since the government effectively preempts the great political centre. On the difficulties of forming and maintaining an opposition coalition, see R.K. Vasil, Politics in a Plural Society, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 183-221 (the Socialist Front).

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 rules for accommodation in the ruling coalition and formulate government policy. Clearly, UMNO and its top elites are the key to the durability of the National Front and to the practice of consociational-type methods in general. Given the participation of UMNO, the composition of the National Front 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 appears 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 National Front, which commanded extensive electoral support in 1974. As one DAP leader put it, "When one of the concubines gets old and worn out, it is necessary for UMNO to replace it with a new addition".<sup>67</sup> Several politicians interviewed, including Dato Dr. Neo Yee Pan, the Secretary-General of

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67 Interview with Encik Yeap Ghim Guan, DAP National Vice-Chairman and head of Penang DAP (May 23, 1975).

the MCA and a Deputy Minister, believed that the National Front would begin to lose some support by the next general election.<sup>68</sup> If this is the case, it might be expected that after several more elections there would once again be a need for an UMNO-led realignment of political forces to bolster support.<sup>69</sup>

However, there are some factors which could disrupt the cycle.<sup>70</sup> First, the personalities (as displayed in attitudes and behavior) of the top elites, especially the UMNO Prime Minister, are of crucial importance. For the consociational-type practices to exist or succeed, the political elites must be willing to bargain and compromise.<sup>71</sup>

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68 Interview (March 26, 1975). Note that this view was expressed before PAS left the Front. The cycle of gradually declining support begins almost immediately: the new partners in the Front did not bring all of their supporters with them when they joined.

69 Unlike the Alliance, however, membership in the National Front is not closed and static. It is possible that instead of an abrupt realignment there may be a continual adjustment by co-opting new members of the opposition.

70 There is one factor, which although highly improbable for the near future, should at least be briefly mentioned. The cycle could be interrupted if more of the major political parties were more ideological, such as Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia. In this event, UMNO leaders would be reluctant to bring them into the ruling circles, and the ideological parties, more concerned with principles than sharing power, would probably be uninterested in joining a coalition.

71 Lijphart, *op. cit.*, p. 1. Datuk Lee San Choon noted that Malaysia had survived so far because of the common sense and tolerance of the leaders had prevailed over chauvinism and extremism (New States Times, November 1, 1976).



The Prime Minister must be able to juggle and 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. In 1975, several politicians interviewed were convinced that if Tun Razak stepped down in the next few years, the National Front could easily fall apart. It did not collapse when Datuk Hussein Onn became the Prime Minister, although in December 1977 an important partner, PAS, left the Front. Datuk Hussein Onn has continued the tradition of practicing a consociational style of politics, but he is disadvantaged by not being a seasoned politician. In any country, the top leader must understand the conduct of politics if he is to succeed.<sup>72</sup> How quickly and how astutely Datuk Hussein Onn absorbs the intricacies of politics and coalition behavior will have a bearing on the future of consociational-type practices in Malaysia.

A further consideration with regard to the political elites is the question of the "second generation" leaders. It was once thought that the "second generation" leadership coming to power would consist of those who possessed different (less Western) social, educational, and linguistic backgrounds, who would not have been party to the agreements worked out at the time of Independence, and who might be closer to

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72 The example of President Woodrow Wilson comes to mind: an honest man with honorable goals who failed in his more important efforts largely because he lacked a sense of the effective conduct of politics.

"grass-roots" sentiments and less willing to be accommodative.<sup>73</sup>

However, the "second generation" that is now assuming positions of power in Malaysia is similar in education and political approach to the original leaders.<sup>74</sup> In the case of some former young "radicals", such as Dr. Mahathir and Datuk Musa Hitam, the combination of maturity, the responsibilities of office, and the experience of reaching decisions through compromise, has had its expected moderating effect.<sup>75</sup>

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73 See Means, op. cit., p. 147; James F. Guyot, "Creeping Urbanism and Political Development in Malaysia." CAG Occasional Papers, Comparative Administration Group, American Society for Public Administration, 1968; pp. 36-37; Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968, p. 447, 449, and esp. 452; W. Howard Wriggins, The Ruler's Imperative, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 216.

74 There is a difference, however, of fewer of the "second generation" leaders being of royal descent or very high social background. In the MCA, the change of leadership from Tun Tan Siew Sin to Datuk Lee San Choon represented a change from English-educated to Chinese-educated control of the party. However, this has made no appreciable difference in the MCA's political approach or attitudes towards accommodation. Further, Datuk Lee is promoting the rise of some new, young and English-educated members in the party. See Wang Gungwu, "Malaysia: Contending Elites", Current Affairs Bulletin (Sydney) (December 1970), pp. 46-47.

75 Datuk Musa Hitam explained that even those UMNO leaders who were considered "radicals" "would eventually move towards the centre as they move up the ladder of leadership" (New Straits Times, June 21, 1976).

Further, the ranks of the second-echelon leaders are filled in large measure <sup>76</sup> with individuals of a similar background and political outlook, and those who have risen from the "grass-roots" have been socialized to a considerable extent to the prevailing values and norms.<sup>77</sup>

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76 There is a lack of statistical background data available on Malaysia's current political elites and second-echelon sub-elites. A limited amount of information, unfortunately not up-to-date, may be found in: Stephanie Glicksberg Neuman, "The Malay Political Elite: An Analysis of 134 Malay Legislators, Their Social Background and Attitudes", Ph.D. Thesis, New York University, 1971 (for the years 1955 to 1964); Leo Ah-Bang, "Elite Cohesion in Malaysia: A Study of Alliance Leadership," M.S.S. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1972 (background on 32 Cabinet members); Neil John Funston, "Malay Politics in Malaysia, 1945-1969: A Case Study of the United Malays National Organization and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party", M.A. Thesis, Monash University, 1973 (biographical data on selected Malay leaders); and Goh Cheng Teik, The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, glossary (profiles on some party leaders).

77 There is another factor concerning the political elites, the second generation of leadership, and the process of elite socialization in Malaysia which, although the data are not available to quantify it, should be mentioned. There has been apparently a high rate of deaths among politicians in office who are reasonably young (i.e. mostly in their fifties). In addition to deaths among MPs, state Ministers and state assemblymen, there have been six deaths since mid-1975, representing the loss of a Prime Minister and two Cabinet Ministers, one Chief Minister, three Party Presidents, one Party Deputy President, one Party Youth President, and one Municipal Council President (Prime Minister and UMNO President Tun Razak, federal Minister and MIC Deputy President Dato Athi Nahappan, federal Minister Datuk Ali Haji Ahmad, Chief Minister and Berjaya President Tun Fuad Stephens, PPP President and President of the Ipoh Municipality Dato Sri S.P. Seenivasagam, UMNO Youth President Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar). Additionally, MIC President and federal Minister Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam and Chief Minister and Gerakan President Dr. Lim Chong Eu, are reportedly in poor health, and Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn's health, as the result of a major heart attack several years ago, is considered fragile. A continuation of a relatively high rate of mortality among active middle-aged politicians, while it does provide for "elite circulation", could prove destabilizing to the system.

Another factor which could disrupt the cycle would be a serious breakdown of deference among the Malays, especially among the UMNO rank-and-file. The system of deference has helped provide autonomy and 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.<sup>78</sup> The key to deference is rank.<sup>79</sup> The basic division is Raja 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.<sup>80</sup> Today rank can be attained by blood, position (the former often a help in gaining the latter), age, and honorific titles awarded by the Rulers or the the Yang Dipertuan Agung.<sup>81</sup> Thus the Tunku, son of the Sultan of Kedah and also the Prime Minister, held considerable rank both by blood and position.<sup>82</sup>

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78 See J.M. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya, London: The Athlone Press, 1965, passim; N.J. Ryan, The Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, chs. 12-13, 18.

79 See Mahathir bin Mohamad, The Malay Dilemma, Singapore: Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1970, pp. 170-171.

80 Gullick, op. cit., p. 65.

81 However, the honors lists are submitted by the political leaders of the states and the federal government, respectively. Rank by position, age, and honorific titles also accrues to the non-Malays, as well as wealth, but there is a less deferential value system behind it.

82 The Tunku faced a deference-protocol dilemma when his nephew, the present Sultan of Kedah, was elected the Yang Dipertuan Agung. One of the reasons for the Tunku's resignation as Prime Minister was because he would be required to kneel to the King, whereas as uncle, it would be improper for him to kneel before his nephew.

In the political arena, deference operates to insulate the top Malay leadership from personal criticism and challenge.<sup>83</sup> This protection also extends to policy areas, and to some degree is helpful in policy decisions requiring ethnic compromise. As an example, in 1974 the Malaysian government decided to establish relations with the People's Republic of China.<sup>84</sup> It might have been expected that this move would be unpopular and perhaps even unacceptable to the Malays. However, the fact that it was Tun Razak who wanted a new China policy and that care was taken, before the new policy was made public, to send party envoys around the country to explain the decision to UMNO divisions, was enough to dispel fears, and the new policy was accepted without much controversy.<sup>85</sup> Culturally, the Malay 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,

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83 A notable exception was Dr. Mahathir, who criticized the Tunku in a letter. When copies of the letter were circulated publicly, however, the Tunku saw to it that Dr. Mahathir was expelled from UMNO. He was later readmitted by Tun Razak and is now the Deputy Prime Minister. On deference and feudalism, see Mahathir bin Mohamad, *op. cit.*, pp. 9,104.

84 See Milne and Mauzy, *op. cit.*, ch. 9.

85 Neither the Tunku nor Tun Mustapha agreed with the new China policy, however.

mass communications, and urbanization, which tend to weaken old cultural values. As stated before, the Malay political elites are vulnerable to outbidding because they are required to compromise ethnic claims. They are also in a dilemma about the impact of modernization--they would like a "mental revolution", but without destroying deference.<sup>86</sup>

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. In 1975, some of the party leaders were booed by the delegates when their names were mentioned or they rose to speak (but Tun Razak was not). In 1976, Tan Sri Syed Jaafar Albar was elected UMNO Youth President in the Youth Assembly even when it was known that Datuk Hussein Onn favored the other candidate. These are relatively small "rebellions" against a formidable cultural tradition, and an editorial observed, concerning Datuk Hussein Onn: "To the Malay mind to challenge him would almost amount to an act of heresy".<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, the top UMNO leaders have been active in urging party members "to retain and preserve old values".<sup>88</sup> Malay deference has not yet broken down to any serious extent, but the process is underway.

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86 See Senu Abdul Rahman, Revolusi Mental, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Utusan Melayu, 1971; S.H. Alatas, The Myth of the Lazy Native, London: Frank Cass, 1977, pp. 147-163.

87 New Sunday Times, March 28, 1976 (edit.).

88 New Straits Times, May 21, 1977 (Dr. Mahathir). Also see ibid., April 30, and July 1, 1977.

Another factor which could disrupt the cycle would be a major split in UMNO. If this 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>89</sup> In addition to the rewards, there is a body of myth surrounding 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>90</sup>

Another factor which could disrupt the cycle and thwart the practice of consociational 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

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89 See Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 7. 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.

90 Also, in a crisis, Malays traditionally turn toward their established leaders. The conduct and results of the elections at the 1978 UMNO General Assembly should reveal a great deal about the state of UMNO unity.

tolerable to other ethnic groups".<sup>91</sup> There is no precise way of predicting what is "too much". The Chinese commercial class is believed to have a great deal of tolerance as long as it can "eke out a living".<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, some of the working class and young Chinese in the cities and the poor Chinese in general are frustrated.<sup>93</sup> 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>94</sup>

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91 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.

92 Interview with Encik Fan Yew Teng, MP and DAP National Organizing Secretary (June 17, 1975).

93 Interview with Encik Lee Lam Thye, MP and DAP National Publicity Secretary (July 1, 1975). Encik Yeap Ghim Guan 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).

94 Interview with Encik Lee Lam Thye (July 1, 1975). The same opinion was expressed by Encik Yeap Ghim Guan (interview, May 23, 1975). Also see Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 11.



However, as stated earlier, the government has recently seemed more aware that it cannot neglect the economic interests of the Chinese too much, as shown for instance in the Third Malaysia Plan.<sup>95</sup> 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. Finally, some of the top government leaders appear to appreciate the value of the opposition as a "safety valve".<sup>96</sup> One DAP leader recalled that a senior UMNO federal

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95 See this Chapter, p.400, fn. 59.

96 For the most part the government seems to regard the opposition as a nuisance and as performing mainly a negative and disruptive role. Only a few of the opposition Members of Parliament, such as Dr. Tan Chee Khoo, are considered to be a "Loyal Opposition". However, even for the government, the opposition performs some useful functions. First, it acts as a "safety valve" for those discontented with the government, and it allows the government to retain some semblance of parliamentary democracy. Second, the opposition can perform a limited pressure group or "watch dog" function on government policies, and it serves the government as a feedback mechanism on public opinion. While the opposition cannot defeat government legislation, it can point out areas of particular grievance. The government has, on occasion, responded to non-Malay opposition complaints, for example, in altering the tone and emphasis of the Third Malaysia Plan more towards concern for poverty among all ethnic groups, and in the realm of implementation. Likewise, individual opposition MPs are often able to secure assistance for their constituents; for instance Encik Lee Lam Thye said that he was able to get government help on specific and local issues, such as providing more places for hawkers and in starting to build more low-cost flats (interview, July 1, 1975).

Minister asked him, after a session of Parliament, why the DAP could not recruit more of the "disillusioned chaps" into their party.<sup>97</sup>

None of the factors which could interrupt the cycle and interfere with the practice of consociational 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).<sup>98</sup> If it falls very short of its targets (mostly projected for 1990), the stability of the system and its consociational practices could be threatened.<sup>99</sup> Malay expectations are high,<sup>100</sup> 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 National Front'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.<sup>101</sup> There is concern now that the

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97 Interview in 1975.

98 For references on the NEP, see this Chapter, p.400, fn. 59.

99 There would likely be considerable pressure by the Malays to have an all-Malay government which would try to achieve by authoritarian means what could not be accomplished by consociational practices.

100 See Straits Times (Singapore), September 18, 1974. Datuk Musa Hitam said that the government "knows that expectations are high, due to its own doing. The development policies and programmes especially in the education field, have liberated the masses from chains of unquestioned loyalty to leaders...".

101 Dr. Lim Chong Eu believed that the National Front would survive, not because of national consensus or integration, but because the Front could "deliver the goods" (interview, April 25, 1975).

NEP is creating a new class of Malay millionaires and a high demand for young Commerce and Business Administration-educated Malays, but it is not significantly penetrating the rural Malay masses. It is still too early to judge how well governmental efforts based on the NEP are doing. Certainly, there has been a visible impact, yet there are also indications that some targets are behind schedule.<sup>102</sup> 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.

The success of Malaysia's consociational political style and the stability of the 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 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 non-elite 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 National Front. Now UMNO must contend with a major opposition party on

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102 E.g. Malay ownership in the corporate sector (Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-1980, op. cit., p. 33 and 190). Up to 1976 it was not clear that the targets for the relief of poverty had been completely met (Milne and Mauzy, op. cit., ch. 10).

its flank, just as the non-Malay component parties must face the challenge of the DAP and other parties.<sup>103</sup> Outbidding from the Malay side is UMNO's more important concern, because, although the party wants ethnic accommodation, it will probably not willingly sacrifice its dominance, which depends on a solid Malay base, for the sake of compromises with the non-Malays.

Second, in addition to co-optation, the government has enacted legislation designed to limit political competition by removing certain ethnically sensitive issues (e.g. National Language, Malay Special Rights) from the arena of legal political debate.<sup>104</sup> Enforcement of these provisions, under the Sedition Act, has been effective. Since the issues proscribed are the ones which the opposition previously used most effectively to mobilize ethnic support against the government, the opposition is handicapped and its ability to outbid reduced.

Finally, the government has been determined and unrelenting in expounding its message to the people:<sup>105</sup> first, if ethnic violence is to be avoided, there must be tolerance and compromise among the

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103 Unlike the attraction "Malay unity" held for PAS supporters when it joined the Front, there is probably no way to bring the DAP into the ruling coalition without it losing its support to another, or a new, opposition party, even if the Front wanted to co-opt the DAP and even if the DAP leaders were interested.

104 Except as pertains to implementation of these subjects. See Chapter 3, pp. 162-163.

105 Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie stressed that it was important for the political leaders to "direct and instruct" the masses (interview, July 3, 1975).

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 in this way, there will be nothing but chaos and violence (and perhaps even a communist take-over) if things are managed any other way. How well the message has penetrated, and to what extent it has become internalized, is difficult to judge. The 1974 General Election seemed to indicate that the message had at least been heard, but then that was the first election since the 1969 riots, one which might have been expected to impress electors with the need for moderation. The next general election will be a better indicator.

It appears that the National Front will win the next general election by a wide margin, but probably not so overwhelmingly as in 1974. Similarly, it seems likely that in the short term at least, the chances of success for the consociational-type practices used in Malaysia to maintain a stable polity are quite good. In the long term, the government's success in implementing the New Economic Policy to the basic satisfaction of all the ethnic communities will play a vital role in determining the character of the Malaysian political system.

6) Given that consociational theory was developed from a study of European democratic systems, what tentative suggestions can be made, from the Malaysian experience, for modifying the theory so that, while retaining some essential features, it may be usefully applied to a Third World country such as Malaysia?

Based on the Malaysian experience, a case can be made for modifying Lijphart's consociational democracy scheme so that it can be made appropriate for understanding politics in Third World countries. The suggestion is that, in practice, consociation in developing nations is best accompanied by at least some controls on political competition, despite a resultant curb on democratic practices.<sup>106</sup> The suggested modification is that Lijphart's stated goal for a divided society, that stable democratic government should be attained and maintained by consociational democracy, should be amended.<sup>107</sup> The realistic goal is to achieve and maintain stability by the use of political controls or sanctions, while retaining some features of democracy, such as bargaining, even although in a restricted context. At the same time, it is not inconceivable that at some later stage, if the consociational lessons have been learned by the society at large, political controls might become less necessary. In fact, if consociationalism is to be considered ultimately successful it probably must work towards its own successfully planned demise--it must resolve in a more lasting way

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106 The suggestion that consociationalism can be separated from the requirement of democracy, as part of the theoretic model, has been discussed in Chapter 1, pp. 28-34.

107 Lijphart, op. cit., p. 1.

way the crises that made consociationalism necessary in the first place.<sup>108</sup> To be successful, it must evolve into some form of dependably stable polity rather than degenerate into civil war; it must resemble Austria rather than Lebanon.<sup>109</sup> The best justification for a consociational approach, other than the basic fact that there may be no reasonable political alternatives, is that it can provide the time and relative stability needed to work out and resolve some of the main issues dividing the society.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike the European democratic nations from which Lijphart's consociational democracy theory was developed, the Third World nations are involved in the unsettling process of political and socio-economic modernization. This process can easily lead to instability

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108 Lijphart notes that consociational practices have been declining in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland from their peak in the late 1950s, not as a result of failure, "but because consociationalism by its very success has begun to make itself superfluous." (see ibid., p. 2).

109 Lijphart considers Lebanon a relatively successful case of consociational democracy because it operated for an extended period of time--1943-1975 (and also Malaysia, 1955-1969), whereas he considers Cyprus a case of a consociational failure because it lasted only three years (1960-1963). See ibid., p. 147. There are extenuating explanations for Lebanon, of course, in that what was a functioning consociational system was overwhelmed by the increasingly disruptive presence of large numbers of Palestinians in semi-independent camps as well as external pressures caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

110 Dr. Lim Chong Eu believes that economic development will be Malaysia's "salvation", but that "it needs time" (interview, April 25, 1975).

and chaos.<sup>111</sup> The effects of modernization have often been to increase mobilization, encourage the growth of ideology (including ethnic or regional nationalism), encourage competition between groups, and weaken deference, all of which can combine to undermine stable non-elite support for the political leaders.<sup>112</sup> In a developing country with politically salient reinforcing cleavages, in which the political elites are trying to reach compromises on divisive issues, the possibility that they may lose their stable non-elite support is a critical danger. If the case of Malaysia has some wider applicability, then one method which may generally be helpful to maintaining stable non-elite support is to limit political competition, at least to the extent of removing sensitive ethnic issues from the realm of legal political debate, so that the ethnic communities will not easily be mobilized against one another by counter-elites on these divisive issues. This is the key difference between consociation as practiced under the Alliance, and consociation as practiced by the National Front.

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111 See Huntington, *op. cit.*, ch. 1; Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., pp. 176-178; Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIV, No. 4 (December 1970), p. 1114.

112 Dr. Mahathir commented that "in the early days of UMNO there was no difference between what the leaders wanted and what the rank-and-file wanted. Today, times have changed and so has the political climate" (*New Straits Times*, July 1, 1977).



Lijphart's concluding statement in his latest book is as follows: "For many of the plural societies of the non-Western world, therefore, the realistic choice is not between the British normative model of democracy and the consociational model, but between consociational democracy and no democracy at all."<sup>113</sup> Accepting Lijphart's selection of choices,<sup>114</sup> his concluding statement can be amended to: For Malaysia and perhaps other similarly divided societies of the non-Western world, therefore, the realistic choice is not between the British normative model of democracy and the consociational model, but between consociational practices combined with limited political competition, which may achieve stability, and attempted consociational democracy, which will probably succeed in achieving neither stability nor democracy.

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113 Lijphart, op. cit., p. 238.

114 The third possible situation is one where there is no attempt at democracy or consociation. However, given the divisive nature of the societies being considered, I think Lijphart has made his point by using the word "realistic".

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.
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 BARJASA and PANAS. In 1973 it merged with Pesaka to form the PBB.
"bumiputera"	The Malay word for indigenous, or "sons of the soil".
BUNAP/SANAP	A Sabah Chinese-based party formed in 1962 by a merger of UP and DAP. In 1965 it merged with the SCA 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 states in Malaysia, in consultation with the respective Mentris 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.

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

- 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.
- "Mentri 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.
- 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 since 1959, and it briefly controlled the state of Trengganu.

- 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 Dusun 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 Muhammad.
"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 three 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 Agung"	The Malay equivalent of "King".

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- Abdul Kadir bin Mohd., Student at Universiti Sains Malaysia, campaign worker for Barisan Bebas Kelantan, Penang and Kota Baru (two interviews).
- Abdul Rahim bin Abdul Kadir, senior civil servant, UMNO Division treasurer, Kelantan, Kota Baru and Kuala Lumpur (three interviews).
- Abdul Rahman, Tunku, the first Prime Minister of Malaya and Malaysia, 1957-1970, Penang (two interviews).
- Abdullah Ahmad, Datuk, former UMNO MP and Deputy Minister, Kuala Lumpur.
- Alatas, Dr. Syed Hussein, Professor, former National Chairman of Gerakan, former Senator, member of the NCC, Singapore (two interviews).
- Ang Eng Hock, Encik, member of the MCA Central Committee, Editor-in-Chief of The Guardian, Kuala Lumpur.
- Chan Siang Sun, Encik, Deputy Minister of Education, President of MCA Youth, Kuala Lumpur.
- Chin Gan Ooi, Peter, Perak State Secretary of the MCA, Ipoh.
- Choong, T. C., Pekemas, former Perak MCA Deputy Secretary, member of the Perak Task Force, Ipoh (two interviews).
- Fakhrudin bin Haji Abdullah, Muhammad, Teacher, leader of Barisan Bebas Kelantan, former member of PAS, leader of the "March 14th Revolt", former MP, Pasir Mas.
- Fan Yew Teng, Encik, DAP National Organising Secretary and International Secretary, Director of the DAP Political Bureau, MP, Kuala Lumpur.
- Ghazali Shafie, Tan Sri Haji Muhammad, Minister of Home Affairs, member of the UMNO Supreme Council, Kuala Lumpur.
- Harun bin Haji Idris, Dato, former President of UMNO Youth and Menteri Besar of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur.

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- Hassan Adli b. Haji Arshad, Haji, Minister of Local Government and Federal Territory, former Deputy President of PAS, Kuala Lumpur.
- Kamaruddin b. Mohd. Isa, Dato Sri Haji, Deputy Minister, former Menteri Besar of Perak, Kuala Lumpur.
- Kassim Ahmad, Encik, National Chairman of Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia, Penang.
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- Lee Lam Thye, Encik. DAP National Publicity Secretary, MP, Kuala Lumpur.
- Lee San Choon, Datuk Seri, President of the MCA, Minister of Labour and Manpower, Kuala Lumpur.
- Liew Why Hone, Dato, President of Ipoh Municipality, Ipoh.
- Lim Chong Eu, Dr., Chief Minister of Penang, National Chairman of Gerakan, former President of the MCA, Penang.
- Lim Keng Yaik, Senator Dr., National Deputy Chairman of Gerakan, former Minister With Special Functions (New Villages), member of the Perak Task Force, Ipoh.
- Lim Beng Hui, Managing Director of Kong Ming Bank, brother of Datuk Ling Beng Siew, Kuching.
- Linggi, Leonard, PBB official, former state Minister of Local Government, son of Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Kuching.
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- Mak Hon Kam, Perak State Chairman of the MCA, MP, Ipoh.
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Nahar Shahabuddin, Datuk Syed., MP, member of the UMNO Supreme Council, Kuala Lumpur.

Nasir, Datuk Haji Mohd., Mentri Besar of Kelantan, Kota Baru.

Neo Yee Pan, Datuk Dr., Secretary-General of the MCA, federal Deputy Minister, Kuala Lumpur.

Ong Kee Hui, Tan Sri, President of the SUPP, federal Minister, Kuala Lumpur.

Ong Yi How, Encik, MCA Penang State Assemblyman, former member of Pekemas and Gerakan, Penang.

Pang Tet Tshung, Datuk, former Sabah state Minister, former President of the SCA, Kota Kinabalu.

Pillay, Dr. Chandrasekaran, Lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang (several interviews).

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Puthuchery, Dr. Mavis, Lecturer, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (two interviews).

Rayan, Encik R.C.M., former Vice-President of the PPP and Ipoh Municipal Councillor, former MP and Perak State Assemblyman, President of the United People's Party (UPP), Ipoh.

Sam Ah Chow, Datuk, Penang State Chairman of the MCA, Penang.

Sambanthan, Tun V. T., former President of the MIC, Head of the National Unity Board, federal Minister from 1957-1974, Kuala Lumpur.

Seenivasagam, Dato Sri S. P., former President of PPP, former President of Ipoh Municipal Council and former Senator (died in July 1975), Ipoh.

Sidi Munan, Encik, former Executive-Secretary of the Sarawak Alliance, former Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, former head of Pesaka Youth, Kuching.

Sopiee, Dr. Mohd. Nordin, Journalist for the New Straits Times, Kuala Lumpur (two interviews).

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- Tan Chee Khoon, Dr., former President of Pekemas, MP, Kuala Lumpur.
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- Tan Gim Hwa, Encik, Penang State Assemblyman, Gerakan Penang State Secretary, Penang.
- Tan Siew Sin, Tun, former Minister of Finance, 1959-1974, President of the MCA 1961-1974, now Financial Adviser to the Government, Kuala Lumpur (two interviews).
- Tan, T. Y., former Secretary-General of the SCA (now dissolved), Kuching.
- Teh Siew Eng, Dato, founder of the Perak Task Force, former Senator, former Perak State Assemblyman and member of the Perak Executive Committee, Ipoh (four interviews).
- Wan Hashim bin Haji Wan Ahmad, PAS, former member of the Kelantan State Executive Committee and the Kelantan State Economic Development Board, Kota Baru.
- Wan Ismail bin Haji Ibrahim, Haji, Timbalan Mentri Besar of Kelantan, PAS National Treasurer, Kota Baru.
- Wan Mustapha, Datuk, Lawyer, former Senator, former Representative to the United Nations, former PAS National Executive Committee member and PAS legal adviser, Kota Baru.
- Wee Khoon Hock, Datuk (Dr.), Senator, Chairman of Kelantan MCA, Vice-Chairman of the Kelantan State National Front Committee, member of the MCA Central Committee, former Kelantan State Assemblyman, Kota Baru.
- Yassin, Datuk Mohd., former USNO state Minister, former Sabah Acting Chief Minister, Kota Kinabalu.
- Yeap Ghim Guan, Encik, National Vice-Chairman of the DAP, Head of Penang DAP, Penang.
- Yeh Sui Yen, former MCA official, Singapore.
- Yong, Datuk Stephen, Deputy President of SUPP, MP, former Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister, Kuching.

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- Chan Heng Chee, Dr., Lecturer at the University of Singapore.
- Cheong Mei Sui, Reporter for the New Straits Times.
- Funston, Neil John, Lecturer at Institute of Technology, MARA, Kuala Lumpur.
- Lee Kuan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore.
- Noorani, Mohd., Deputy Director of MARA.
- Pathmanaban, K., MP for the MIC, former member of the Economic Planning Unit.
- Rajendram, Selvendra, Special Assistant to the Director, USIS, Kuala Lumpur.
- Ratnam, Professor K. J., Director of Policies Research Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia, member of the National Unity Board.
- Razak, Tun, Prime Minister and President of UMNO until his death in 1976.
- Sandhu, Kernial S., Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.
- Tan Ban Cheng, Executive Editor of The Guardian (MCA).
- Whittleton, Jack, former First Secretary, Canadian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.
- Zain, Azraai, Encik, former Special Private Secretary to Tun Razak, now the Malaysian Ambassador to the United States.