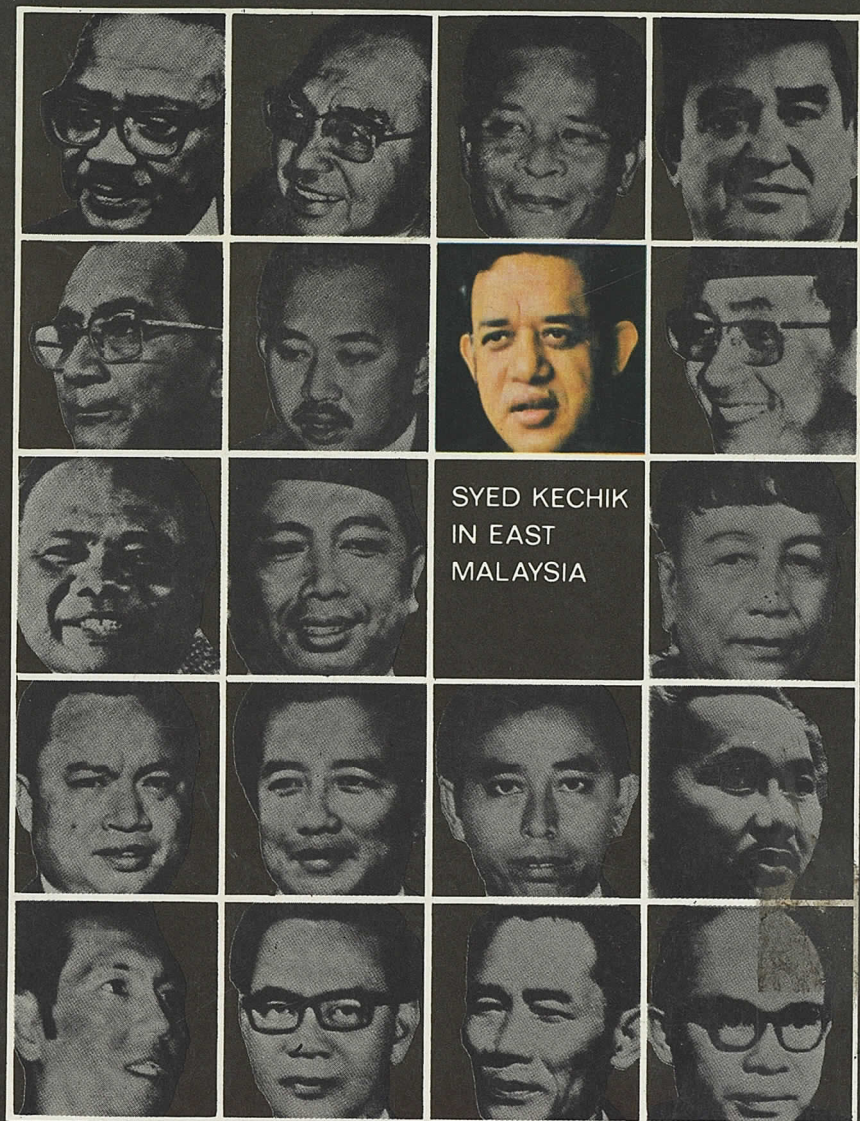


The Politics of Federalism



SYED KECHIK
IN EAST
MALAYSIA

BRUCE ROSS-LARSON

When Malaysia was formed in 1963 to amalgamate the independent Federation of Malaya with the British colonies of Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah, there was more optimism about joint prospects than understanding of the problems involved in forging a new state and nation. The first years were fraught with difficulties, both political and constitutional, that resulted in the separation of Singapore in 1965 and in threats of secession in Sarawak and Sabah. Although these threats were greatest in the months immediately following the Singapore separation, secessionist sentiment in the East Malaysian states persisted well into the 1970s.

In late 1965, a Malay lawyer by the name of Syed Kechik was instructed by Kuala Lumpur's top leadership to go to Sabah to do what he could for the cause of federalism. He thought he would be away from the federal capital for a few months at most, but ended up staying there permanently. Initially, he acted as an arm of federal persuasion. Subsequently, he was instrumental to the rise and reign of Tun Mustapha as Chief Minister of Sabah. His influence spread on occasion to Sarawak, where he was also involved in shaping fundamental political circumstances. This book is the account of Syed Kechik's influence on the course of politics in Sabah and Sarawak, and of the influence of those politics on his life.

The author graduated from Yale in 1966 and joined the Peace Corps for two years' service in Kenya. He returned to the United States to work in banking and institutional investment, and in 1970 and 1971 undertook the writing and photography for a series of eight books published by the U.S.-based Creative Educational Society. Ross-Larson arrived in Malaysia in 1972 and became a lecturer at the Mara Institute of Technology's School of Mass Communications. He edited *Sabah and the Sabah Foundation*, published in 1974, and together with three Malaysians authored *Contemporary Issues in Malaysia*, to be published in 1977 by Heinemann Educational Books. He currently is writing *Malaysia: 2001*, also to be published in 1977.

S/M \$7.50 (US \$4.00 postpaid)

