

# Malaysia's 1982 General Election

Harold Crouch

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**MALAYSIA'S 1982 GENERAL ELECTION**

by

**Harold Crouch**

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## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to provide a general overview of the 1982 general election in Malaysia. It makes no pretence at being an in-depth analysis of why Malaysian voters voted as they did but it is hoped that the data presented will be of use to scholars, students and general readers interested in Malaysian politics. In accordance with the wishes of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies that studies of this type on topical issues should be published with reasonable haste, this work was written in May, the month after the election which was held on 22 April 1982.

No attempt has been made to provide individual sources for statements of fact, it being felt that this would only clutter up the text unnecessarily. The data have been taken largely from current newspapers, especially the New Straits Times, Utusan Malaysia, the Star, Business Times and Watan. Data on the racial composition of constituencies are not officially available but unofficial compilations are in existence and these have been used in this study. Data on earlier elections have been drawn from Ismail Kassim, Race, Politics and Moderation: A Study of the Malaysian Electoral Process (Singapore: Times Books International, 1979) which was originally published in the ISEAS Research Notes and Discussion Papers Series, and from Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing

and Michael Ong, editors, Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), as well as from R.K. Vasil, The Malaysian General Election of 1969 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972).

It is expected that this work will form the basis of a chapter in a broader study of the 1982 election to be edited by Mohamed Abu Bakar of the History Department, University of Malaya.

9 June 1982  
Bangi, Selangor

Harold Crouch



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## INTRODUCTION

As expected, the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN -- National Front) won an overwhelming majority of seats in the national parliamentary election held in April 1982. The BN also won convincing victories in the eleven peninsular state elections held at the same time. The extent of the BN's victories, however, was less expected. The main opposition party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), representing mainly non-Malays, had its seats in the national parliament reduced to a mere nine while the main Malay opposition party, the Parti Islam Sa-Malaysia (PAS), only managed to equal its 1978 performance with five seats although it improved its position at the state level. Despite their heavy defeats in terms of seats, however, the two main opposition parties more or less held their own in terms of votes, their overall percentages falling only slightly.

The election, which was held more than a year before the term of the parliament elected in 1978 was due to expire, was presented as being necessary to provide a mandate for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had taken over the premiership from Datuk Hussein Onn in mid-1981. The legitimacy of Dr Mahathir's succession, however, was never in question. A more compelling reason for holding the election early, it appears, was the deteriorating state of the economy.

Heavily dependent on international trade and investment, the Malaysian economy was being increasingly threatened by the world recession. Rubber and tin prices had fallen and, together with oil prices, there seemed little prospect of them rising again in the near future, while the expansion of manufactured exports had also been checked. There seemed little likelihood that the world economy would be moving out of recession soon so that there was no chance that the Malaysian economy would be growing rapidly again before the term of the parliament expired in July 1983. Although nothing was said about the looming economic crisis during the campaign, the Prime Minister himself admitted, seven days after the election, that the economy "is not all that good at the moment".<sup>1</sup> It thus seemed wiser, from the point of view of the government, to go to the polls earlier rather than later.

The election also gave Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, an opportunity to carry out a kind of "mini-revolution" within their own party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) which is the dominant party in the BN coalition. Adopting the slogan "Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy", they discarded many party veterans in favour of "new faces" in UMNO's line-up of candidates for the election. Several ministers and deputy ministers were replaced, five new state Menteri Besar were appointed, more than half of the members of state executive councils were replaced and almost half of the sitting members of parliament and the state assemblies lost party nomination. The election thus provided a convenient occasion for the new party leadership to overhaul the party's representation at all levels.

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1 New Straits Times, 30 April 1982.

The election was also a test for the non-Malay, especially the Chinese, parties in the government. In the past, support for UMNO from the Malay community had always been stronger than support for the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Gerakan from the Chinese community. The influence of the non-Malay parties in the government depends in part on their capacity to demonstrate their electoral strength against their main challenger, the opposition DAP. In the 1978 election, the non-Malay BN parties had lost seats to the DAP and suffered a corresponding decline in influence in the government but in 1982 they regained many seats. An election also allows each non-Malay party the chance to improve its standing vis-à-vis the other non-Malay parties in the government. In particular, the MCA and the Gerakan are pitted against each other as rivals as much as they co-operate as partners in the governing coalition. In the 1982 election both parties gained in different respects, leaving their relative positions more or less unchanged.

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## THE CONTESTANTS

In the early 1970s the BN succeeded the Alliance as the ruling coalition. The three-member Alliance, consisting of UMNO the MCA and the MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress), had easily won the 1955, 1959 and 1964 elections, but faced difficulties in 1969. This prompted its leaders to expand its base by bringing hitherto opposition parties into the coalition. By the time of the 1974 election, the BN consisted of nine parties but this grew to eleven before the 1982 election. The BN, like the Alliance, continued to be dominated by its major Malay component, UMNO. The main Malay opposition party, PAS, at first joined the BN but was expelled in 1977 after conflicting with UMNO and was replaced by the small splinter group from PAS, Berjasa. On the non-Malay side, however, the positions of the MCA and the MIC as the sole representatives of their respective communities in the government was challenged by the entry to the front of the Gerakan and, less seriously, the small Ipoh-based People's Progressive Party (PPP). Although multi-racial in character when founded in 1968, the Gerakan increasingly directed its appeal at Chinese voters and thus became a rival to the MCA. The BN also included the three parties of the coalition who were ruling Sarawak and, in a unique arrangement, both the government and opposition parties in Sabah. The only major parties outside the BN were the DAP, appealing pri-

marily to non-Malays, and PAS, whose base of support was exclusively Malay.

In a sense, the real political struggle in Malaysia takes place in parties between elections rather than between parties during elections. All the major, and most of the minor, parties experienced intense competition between factions for positions in the party leadership during the period between the 1978 and 1982 elections. In most cases the struggle between groups and individuals did not involve important policy differences, although contrasting nuances and emphases were sometimes discernible, but centred on the control of the party machine and of party nominations that this entailed. In most cases, at least some semblance of harmony was restored between top-level contestants when losers were compensated with important party posts but it was often more difficult to bring their supporters at the middle and lower levels together again, with the result that rivalries continued and in some cases, dissident groups joined other parties.

## The Barisan Nasional

### UMNO

UMNO has always been the dominant party of the Malay community. Its main base of support has been in the southern and west-coast states where the Malay community lives side by side with large non-Malay communities. Fearing "non-Malay domination", the Malays in these states have been more solid in their support for UMNO than those in the northern states where the overwhelming majority of the population is Malay. In the northeastern states of Kelantan and Trengganu and the northwestern state of Kedah, therefore, UMNO's

pre-eminence has been much less marked compared with the other states.

Under the leadership of Datuk Hussein Onn, who had succeeded Tun Razak as Prime Minister on the latter's death in 1976, UMNO won 69 of the 74 parliamentary seats that it contested in the 1978 election, and secured control of all the peninsular state governments except Penang where the Chinese community formed the majority. Datuk Hussein, however, was forced by failing health to resign in July 1981. Since early that year his deputy, Dr Mahathir, had been effectively performing most of the duties of the Prime Minister and thus firmly established his claim to the succession. Unlike previous changes in the premiership when the deputy had, in effect, automatically succeeded his predecessor, this time Datuk Hussein waited for the annual UMNO assembly which unanimously elected Dr Mahathir as president of the party in June 1981 before handing over the premiership to Dr Mahathir.

In contrast to the election of the party president, a vigorous struggle took place for the post of deputy president of the party and, therefore, Deputy Prime Minister. The contest was between the Minister of Education, Datuk Musa Hitam, from Johore and the Minister of Finance, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, from Kelantan. Although Dr Mahathir adopted a formal stand of neutrality it became clear that he in fact favoured Datuk Musa with whom he had been associated in the late 1960s in voicing dissent against the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tengku Razaleigh, who had masterminded the defeat of PAS in Kelantan in 1978 after almost two decades of PAS rule, was regarded by many in UMNO as too accommodating towards Chinese business interests and it seems that lack of support for him from Pemuda UMNO (the UMNO youth organization) and the followers of the former Pemuda UMNO leader, Datuk Harun Idris, may have been crucial

in enabling Datuk Musa to win, with 722 votes against Razaleigh's 517. (Datuk Harun, who was serving a gaol sentence for corruption, proved that he still had substantial support in the party by winning one of the three elected vice-presidencies of the party.) The split within the party between Musa's followers and Razaleigh's, however, was not unbridgeable, especially after Dr Mahathir persuaded Razaleigh to withdraw his earlier threat to leave the Cabinet if he lost.

The rise of Mahathir and Musa -- the "2Ms" -- to the leadership of UMNO marked a change of generations although in fact Mahathir is only a few years younger than Hussein. Unlike the previous leaders of UMNO -- Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak and Datuk Hussein -- who all had royal or aristocratic origins and had received much of their education in England, Mahathir and Musa had been born into commoner families of modest means. Both Mahathir and Musa had gained reputations as "ultras" in the 1960s when they criticized the party leadership for failing to adopt vigorous measures for the upliftment of the Malay community and both had been disciplined by the party in 1969 -- Mahathir being expelled from the party and Musa dismissed from his government post. Both had also held the important education portfolio in the Cabinet which had enabled them to muster support from the Malay schoolteachers who usually make up about half of the membership of the UMNO assembly and are often vocal in expressing "ultra-Malay" sentiments. As the author of the banned book, The Malay Dilemma,<sup>1</sup> Mahathir in particular was regarded with suspicion by much of the Chinese community to the extent that the MCA had pointedly refrained from welcoming his appointment as Deputy

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1 The ban was lifted and the book translated into Malay and Chinese after Dr Mahathir became Prime Minister.

Prime Minister in 1976. Nevertheless, as ministers, neither Mahathir nor Musa stood out as more "pro-Malay" than the rest of the party members. Having achieved the change of direction for which they had fought -- in the form of the New Economic Policy and associated reforms -- both Mahathir and Musa emphasized the need, just as their predecessors had done, for UMNO to continue to work in co-operation with the representatives of the non-Malay communities. At the same time they seemed to represent a more "technocratic" approach to government, exemplified by their 1982 election campaign slogan, "Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy". Mahathir and Musa seemed to be seeking out well-educated younger leaders with professional backgrounds and technocratic skills in contrast to the wheeler-dealer, patronage-dispensing politicians who had dominated the party machine in the past.

### MCA

The MCA has been UMNO's major partner since the 1955 election but the party has never established itself as the undoubted leader of the Chinese community in the way that UMNO has in the Malay community. The MCA's basic problem has been that it is clearly UMNO's junior partner and is therefore inhibited in struggling for Chinese causes, while opposition parties appealing to the Chinese community do not suffer from such a constraint. On the other hand, the MCA's strength lies in the fact that it is part of the government and thus is able to deliver at least some of the goods, particularly to the Chinese business community which looks to the MCA to protect its interests. It is impossible on the basis of electoral statistics to know exactly the voting strength of the individual parties in the BN but it has been estimated that the MCA holds the loyalty of about 40 per cent of

the Chinese community. Nevertheless, the party has performed reasonably well in elections, except for the disastrous year of 1969, because Malay votes channelled through UMNO to the BN have enabled MCA candidates to win even when they have not had majority support from their own community. In 1974 the MCA won 19 of the 23 parliamentary seats that it contested, but only 17 out of 27 in 1978.

The MCA suffered from internal faction fighting during the 1970s but by 1982 it seemed that the party leadership had established its ascendancy, even if only temporarily. The internal party struggle involving the leadership of Datuk Lee San Choon, who had been president of the party since 1974, burst into the open in 1977 when Datuk Lee decided to replace his deputy, Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew, the Minister of Health. Datuk Lee's candidate for the deputy leadership, Tan Sri Chong Hon Nyan, was opposed by Datuk Michael Chen, the Minister for Housing and New Villages, who succeeded in mobilizing both his own and Tan Sri Lee's supporters to defeat Datuk Chong. The victory of Michael Chen, who at that time had a reputation for being "too accommodating" towards Malay sensitivities, seems to have been due to resentment over Datuk Lee's precipitate replacement of Tan Sri Lee rather than widespread support for his own approach. When Michael Chen challenged Datuk Lee for the party leadership in 1979 he was defeated although his ally, Datuk Richard Ho, the Minister of Labour, won the deputy presidency. Tension within the party remained high and it appeared that a new challenge would be launched at the next party election in 1981. However, early in 1981 Datuk Lee expelled some 61 influential members who were expected to support Michael Chen. With the odds turning against him, Chen decided not to make his challenge while Datuk Lee agreed to retain Richard Ho as his deputy. Later, Michael Chen and many of his supporters left the MCA and joined the Gerakan. The exit of Michael Chen allowed Datuk Lee to strengthen

his grip on the party and left Richard Ho in a very exposed position.

Lee San Choon's leadership of the MCA has not been very inspiring. Essentially a party politician skilled in political manoeuvring, he seems to lack both the technocratic skills which are being emphasized by the new UMNO leadership and the capacity to provide the Chinese community with a new vision of its place in Malaysian society. The party's main slogan in the election campaign was "Chinese Unity" but it was not clear what it was for. Under Datuk Lee's leadership, the MCA had built up a giant company, Multi-Purpose Holdings, raised funds for a new MCA building, and provided scholarships for Chinese students but it seems that the party can do little more than defend existing Chinese interests while it lacks specific policies to advance them. Unable to demonstrate that it has the support of the majority of the Chinese community, the party has been forced to accept relatively minor portfolios in the government while the key departments were given to UMNO.

### Gerakan

Founded as a multiracial party in 1968 the Gerakan steadily changed its character during the 1970s to become a party based on the Chinese community. The party's expansion has been mainly at the expense of the MCA. One of the party's original leaders, Dr Lim Chong Eu, was a former president of the MCA, and his later party, the United Democratic Party, became a core group in the Gerakan and provided it with much of its organizational structure with its base in Penang. In 1973 a second wave of MCA dissidents, based mainly in Perak and Kuala Lumpur, joined the Gerakan. This group of young leaders, including Dr Lim Keng Yeik,

Paul Leong and Dr Tan Tiong Hong, had been dissatisfied with the MCA leadership's lack of vigour in promoting Chinese interests. Finally, another wave of MCA dissidents led by Michael Chen moved into the Gerakan in 1981. The Gerakan ideology, true to its origins as a multiracial party, had stressed the need for Malaysian Chinese to avoid emphasizing specifically Chinese issues and to concentrate on problems common to Malaysian society as a whole but the party's increasing identification with the Chinese community and the growing role of former MCA activists have resulted in the party adopting a stance closer to that espoused by the MCA. The Gerakan had at first appealed mainly to the better-educated, English-speaking Chinese but it later realized that its future expansion depended on winning the support of the "Chinese" Chinese and this meant competing with the MCA's unabashed emphasis on its Chinese character. That the Gerakan had moved a considerable distance in this direction was illustrated by its success shortly before the 1982 election in recruiting several prominent activists in the Chinese education movement who had links with the United Chinese Schools' Committees' Association and the organization proposing the establishment of the Chinese-language Merdeka University.

The Gerakan's main stronghold has always been in Penang where, as an opposition party, it defeated the MCA-led state government in the 1969 election. After joining the BN, the Gerakan continued to control the Penang state government and has sought to expand its influence in other states, especially Perak. The Gerakan's membership in the BN has led to constant conflict with the MCA as it naturally challenged the MCA's position as the leading Chinese party in the government. The MCA has demanded that it be restored to the leadership of the state government in Penang while the Gerakan has fought for a larger role in Perak and the other states. As partners in the BN,

however, they have not been able to compete with each other openly in elections but have been mainly limited to attempts to persuade the UMNO leadership of the merits of their respective cases.

Like the other parties, the Gerakan too has not escaped internal party conflict in recent years. The struggle within Gerakan was set off when the party president and Chief Minister of Penang, Dr Lim Chong Eu, announced his intention to resign from his party post in 1980. Dr Lim supported as his successor the candidature of Datuk Paul Leong, the party secretary-general who, as Minister of Primary Industries, was the Gerakan's sole representative in the federal Cabinet. Datuk Leong, however, was opposed by Dr Lim Keng Yeik. Both had joined the Gerakan in 1973 after having been expelled from the MCA but they differed markedly in personality and style. Datuk Leong had acquired an excellent reputation as an effective minister of the technocratic type but he lacked mass appeal while Dr Lim was more populist in style. In the contest Dr Lim emerged victorious. Although Dr Lim and Datuk Leong appeared to continue to work together, their supporters in the party remained divided and in 1981 disciplinary action was taken against some members of Datuk Leong's camp, resulting in Dr Tan Tiong Hong, one of the Gerakan's four members of parliament, and a few others crossing to the MCA.

Under Dr Lim Keng Yeik's vigorous leadership there seemed little prospect of bridging the gap between the Gerakan and the MCA. The Gerakan was determined to retain control of the Penang state government and increase its representation in other state assemblies and in parliament where its seats were far fewer than those of the MCA despite its claim that its mass base was expanding.

## MIC

The MIC was the third member of the original Alliance and has remained as a minor party in the BN. Comprising some 11 per cent of the population in Peninsular Malaysia but only 7.5 per cent of the electorate, the Indian community does not constitute a majority in any parliamentary or state constituency and forms a substantial minority in only a few state seats. Lacking bargaining power, the MIC has never been allotted more than four parliamentary seats by either the Alliance or the BN, a little more than one-third of the seats it would receive if its share of seats were in proportion to the Indian segment of the population. It is generally believed that the party attracts the support of about three-quarters of the Indian community, especially those living on plantations, while its support among urban Indians seems much less.

The weakness of the MIC has been compounded by its record of internal disharmony. Factionalism in the party has been so deep and bitter that it is not uncommon for local branch elections to end in fist-fighting and chair-throwing between rival groups. The present factional alignment in the party had its origins when the then president of the party, Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, supported S. Subramaniam, the party secretary-general and Deputy Minister for the Federal Territory, for the post of deputy president in 1977. Subramaniam, young and university-educated, lacked the grass-roots touch of parliamentary backbencher, Samy Vellu, who in challenging Subramaniam was also challenging the party establishment. Samy Vellu won the contest and thus succeeded to the acting presidency of the party when Manickavasagam suddenly died in 1979 while Subramaniam suffered a further setback when he was defeated by a DAP candidate in the 1978 national election. In control of the party machine, Samy Vellu took measures against members of the Subramaniam camp but at the party assembly in 1981 a

truce was declared under which Subramaniam did not challenge Samy Vellu for the presidency while Samy Vellu supported Subramaniam for the vice-presidency. It remained to be seen, however, whether the agreement between the top leaders would be observed at lower levels in the party.

As long as the MIC remained internally divided it could not expect to be allotted more parliamentary and state assembly seats by the BN leadership. The MIC was usually hard put to win the seats it was contesting without demanding more. Lacking a base area of its own in the form of Indian-majority constituencies, it was dependent on the goodwill of its BN partners.

### PPP

The PPP had been a force in Perak politics, especially in the Ipoh area, during the 1960s when it energetically rallied lower-class non-Malay voters. Led by two flamboyant Ceylonese brothers, D.R. and S.P. Seenivasagam, the party lost much of its special appeal, however, when it joined the BN and especially after the deaths of the Seenivasagam brothers. The much reduced party then tore itself apart in factional struggles which were eventually settled in court. The party lost three of the four parliamentary seats it was allocated in 1974 and lost the remaining seat in 1978 although it held on to one state seat only to lose it in 1981 when the incumbent crossed to the Gerakan.

### Berjasa

Berjasa was created in the wake of the split in PAS

which brought down the PAS-led BN government in Kelantan and led to the expulsion of PAS from the BN in 1977. Led by the former PAS Menteri Besar of Kelantan, Datuk Mohammad Nasir, and in alliance with the BN, Berjasa won 11 seats in the 36-member Kelantan state assembly in the March 1978 state election but failure to reach agreement on terms for joining the BN meant that it was not included on the BN ticket in the July 1978 national election. It thus obtained no seats in parliament although its leader, Datuk Mohammad, was appointed to the Senate and joined the Cabinet. After much argument within the party, Berjasa eventually joined the BN and began to establish branches outside Kelantan, but its influence remained extremely limited.

### The Sarawak BN

In Sarawak, the BN consists of the Partai Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), and the Sarawak National Party (SNAP). The BN won all but one seat in the 1978 parliamentary election and 45 out of 48 seats in the state election held in September 1979. But the dominance of the BN disguised sharp conflict between its constituents. The state government, headed by Tan Sri Datuk Patinggi Rahman Yaakub, was dominated by the PBB whose base was in the Muslim Malay-Melanau community which made up only 19 per cent of the population but had the backing of Kuala Lumpur. Compared with the PBB's 18 seats in the state assembly, the SUPP, based on the Chinese community which made up about 30 per cent of the population, had only 11 seats while SNAP, which was largely Iban who made up about half of the population, won 16 seats. In elections it was common for individual BN parties to unofficially sponsor "independent" candidates to contest against other BN parties in the hope of reducing their representation in the assembly.

All three successful independents in the 1979 state election appeared to have been of this type.

In addition to inter-party rivalry, there was conflict within the parties. In 1981 Rahman Yaakub, who had been under pressure from many quarters to step down and whose health had been deteriorating, finally resigned and was replaced by Datuk Amar Taib Mahmud, the federal Minister of Defence who, despite being Rahman's nephew, was an influential critic of the former's administration. Within SNAP also, there was tension between the group led by Datuk James Wong and that of the federal Minister of Energy, Telecommunications and Posts, Datuk Leo Moggie. In a contest for the party presidency, Wong, who stood for a multi-racial party, defeated Moggie, who argued that political reality required that the party strengthen its Iban image. By contrast, in SUPP the leadership of Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, the federal Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, seemed unchallenged, but Tan Sri Ong was on the point of retirement.

### The Sabah BN

Rivalry between the component parties of the BN in Sarawak was mild, however, compared to the situation in Sabah. Berjaya, a party of dissidents from the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), had been established in 1975 with the connivance of leaders of the national government in Kuala Lumpur in order to end the rule of Tun Mustapha. In 1976 when federal intervention permitted the first "fair" election in Sabah since Tun Mustapha took power in 1967, Berjaya succeeded in mobilizing Kadazan and Chinese, as well as some Muslim, support to win 28 seats against the Muslim-based USNO's 20. Although both Berjaya and USNO were members of the BN, efforts to persuade them

to form a coalition failed; instead Berjaya ruled alone, increasingly adopting some of Tun Mustapha's methods to stay in power. In the 1978 federal election, Berjaya won eight out of the nine seats it contested and USNO won five out of six while the final seat was left open for a battle between two "independents", one in fact representing Berjaya and the other USNO. The Berjaya-backed "independent" was successful, as was another Berjaya-supported "independent" who defeated an official BN candidate from USNO. The next state election in March 1981 saw a landslide victory for Berjaya which won more than 60 per cent of the votes and 44 of the 48 seats. In control of the government machinery, Berjaya had experienced no shortage of funds which it had used liberally to win support while USNO claimed that the election was a fraud. Despite the bitter rivalry between the two parties in Sabah, both were partners in the federal parliament in Kuala Lumpur although USNO had no representation in the government.

## The Opposition

### DAP

The DAP, which had its origins in the Singapore-based People's Action Party during the period when Singapore was part of Malaysia, emerged as the main non-Malay opposition party in the 1969 election. Although the DAP was formally multiracial and included a sprinkling of Malays among its office-bearers and candidates, its electoral successes were virtually limited to urban constituencies with large non-Malay majorities; all its representatives in parliament and almost all in the state assemblies were non-Malays, mainly Chinese. The DAP performed its opposition role by raising a wide range of general issues. It accused the government of, among other things, tolerating corruption,

infringing democratic liberties, and failing to implement its policy to eradicate poverty. At the same time the DAP became the most vocal defender of specifically Chinese interests, particularly those relating to language, education and the Chinese place in the economy under the New Economic Policy. Unrestrained by an alliance with a Malay party, as the MCA and the Gerakan were, the DAP appealed largely to non-Malay, especially Chinese, voters. It increased its seats in the federal parliament to 16 in 1978 and won 25 state seats, most of which were in Perak and Penang. With 21.5 per cent of the votes in Peninsular Malaysia, the DAP must have obtained close to half of the Chinese votes and a substantial share of Indian votes.

The DAP's growth has, however, been obstructed by a series of internal upheavals. Unlike intra-party conflict in the BN parties which was usually confined within the party and less commonly led to dissidents switching from one BN party to another, faction fighting within the DAP often ended with the dissidents leaving the DAP and joining one of the BN parties which had more to offer in the form of patronage. The most recent outbreak of conflict in the DAP took place after the party narrowly lost a by-election for a state seat in Penang in November 1980. Having already announced its goal of winning control of the Penang state government in the next general election, the failure in the by-election was a major setback and led to recriminations against the party secretary-general, Lim Kit Siang. The conflict in Penang also seemed to involve tensions between the largely English-educated state leaders and a Chinese-educated group. In the wake of the upheaval, three DAP members of parliament joined the MCA, reducing the DAP's representation in parliament to 13. At the same time, three Penang state assemblymen resigned or were expelled, thus leaving the party with only two members in the assembly. Crossovers also took place in other states, bringing the DAP's overall state representation down from 25 to 18.

Despite its factional disputes, the DAP has proved its resilience in the past. The party appears to have an almost impervious base of support in the urban areas where the Chinese working and lower-middle classes make up a majority of voters. But the party's lack of control of any part of the government's administrative apparatus has meant that, in contrast to the MCA and Gerakan, it has had no patronage to distribute and thus has been at a disadvantage in the struggle for the support of the middle sector of the Chinese community. At the same time the DAP's hopes of winning control of a state government seems unlikely to be fulfilled as long as it is unable either to attract significant Malay support or to ally itself with a strong Malay party.

### PAS

On the Malay side the main opposition party is PAS. With its political ideology based on Islam, PAS's appeal is limited almost entirely to the Malay community. Unlike UMNO, whose main strength is in states where the Malays face large non-Malay communities, PAS is strongest where the Malays are an overwhelming majority. In the 1969 election PAS, which had controlled the Kelantan state government since 1959, won more than 50 per cent of the votes in both Kelantan and Trengganu where Malays make up more than 90 per cent of the population. According to one study, part of PAS's success in Kelantan lay in its capacity to mobilize the support of the poor peasantry who regarded UMNO as the representative of the urban establishment and the landlord class.<sup>2</sup> In the 1969 election PAS also

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2 See C Kessler, Islam and Politics in a Malay State (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

succeeded in expanding its influence outside its traditional strongholds. Its most spectacular advance was in Kedah, a state in which more than 70 per cent of the population is Malay, where it won more than 40 per cent of the votes, but it also obtained significant support in UMNO's strongholds in the other west-coast states. In response to this challenge UMNO persuaded, or pressured, PAS in 1973 to join a coalition which eventually became the BN. Under the coalition arrangements PAS retained control of the Kelantan state government and obtained representation in the federal and some state governments. The coalition, however, did not last long and ended in 1977 after factional conflict in PAS between its president, Datuk Asri Muda, and the Kelantan Menteri Besar, Datuk Mohammad Nasir, led to the latter's defeat in the state assembly and expulsion from the party. PAS was then expelled from the BN and Datuk Mohammad's new party, Berjasa, joined with UMNO to win all but two of the thirty-six state assembly seats in the March 1978 state election. Although PAS won only 33.5 per cent of the votes in the Kelantan state election, its share in that state increased to 43.6 per cent in the national election held four months later. The events of 1977-78 were a major setback for PAS. In comparison with the fourteen parliamentary seats it had won under the BN banner in 1974, it obtained only five in the 1978 election and its overall percentage of votes won in Peninsular Malaysia was only 17.7 per cent compared with 23.8 per cent in 1969. PAS's co-operation with UMNO and the other BN parties during the previous five years had undermined its credibility.

During the 1970s PAS attracted increased support from young, better-educated Malays in urban, professional occupations in contrast to its traditional local leadership of village imams and religious teachers. The increased number of Malay graduates, who had gone through the secular educational system,

was itself a result of government policies which had greatly expanded educational opportunities for Malays. Many of the young recruits to PAS had been activists in the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM -- Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement). By the late 1970s several of this group had reached important positions in PAS, such as the party deputy president, Ustaz Fadzil Nor, and the secretary-general, Ustaz Nakhaie Ahmad. The party's "Young Turks" were not yet strong enough to challenge the "Old Guards" directly but they supported Haji Yusuf Rawa, a party veteran, when he challenged Asri for the party presidency in 1981. Asri, however, retained his position after Yusuf withdrew at the last minute. Asri then consolidated his position by replacing Nakhaie as secretary-general with his old, loyal colleague, Datuk Abu Bakar Omar. Nevertheless, the dissident group was growing in influence within the party and had gained virtual control in Trengganu.

The basic problem for PAS is similar to that of the DAP. PAS's base of support is limited to one community. While it could conceivably gain office in one or two Malay-majority states, it has no hope of participating in the federal government except in alliance with other parties, including non-Malay ones. But the nature of its appeal to its own followers is such that it might be endangered by too open an association with non-Malays while sharp local rivalries make renewed co-operation with UMNO difficult.

### PSRM

The PSRM (Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaya -- Malayan People's Socialist Party) is a largely Malay party which has adopted socialism as its ideology although in recent years it has also placed emphasis on Islam. The party last won a parliamentary seat in the 1959 election and last won state seats when it obtained two

in Pahang and one in Penang in 1969. Concentrating on Trengganu in 1974 it took almost one-third of the votes in the state but still failed to win a seat either in parliament or the state assembly. The return of PAS to the opposition in 1978 deprived the PSRM of the opportunity to consolidate its position and it was again reduced to electoral insignificance in that year's election. Lacking the ideological appeal of PAS and the capacity of UMNO to provide material rewards for its supporters, the PSRM still faces great difficulties in expanding its base of support.

### SAPO

SAPO (Sarawak People's Organization) was formed shortly before the 1978 election. Its leader, a young Chinese lawyer in Sarawak, won a parliamentary seat but his party was essentially a "one-man band" with little organizational strength.

### Others

A number of tiny "mosquito" parties also contested the election. Among them were the Socialist Democratic Party formed after a Penang-based faction was expelled from the DAP in 1978. Pasok, Pusaka and the Sabah Chinese Consolidated Party fielded candidates in Sabah and Pajar had a candidate in Sarawak. In addition there were many independents, both genuine and sponsored by BN parties, especially, but not only, in East Malaysia. Some of the independents were disappointed aspirants for nomination on the BN ticket.

TABLE 1

State of Parties in Parliament at Dissolution, 1982  
(gains and losses through crossover since 1978  
are shown in brackets)

	BN	133 (+2)	Opposition	21 (-2)
UMNO	69	PBB	DAP	13 (-3)
MCA	20 (+3)	SNAP	PAS	5
Gerakan	4	SUPP	SAPO	1
MIC	3	Berjaya	Independent	2 (+1)
Non-party	1	USNO		

TABLE 2

State of Parties in State Assemblies at Dissolution, 1982  
(gains and losses through crossovers and by-elections are shown in brackets)

	BN	UMNO	MCA	G'ikan	MIC	PPP	B'jasa	DAP	PAS	Ind
Johore	31	20	10	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Kedah	20(+1)	15(+1)	3	1	1	-	-	-	6(-1)	-
Kelantan	34	22	1	-	-	-	11	-	2	-
Perak	35(+3)	23	6(+1)	5(+3)	1	-(-1)	-	6(-3)	1	-
Trengganu	28	27	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pahang	32	24	6(-1)	1(+1)	1	-	-	-	-	-
Negeri Sembilan	21	15	5	-	1	-	-	3	-	-
Malacca	17(+1)	13	4(+1)	-	-	-	-	3(-1)	-	-
Selangor	29	20	5	1	3	-	-	3	-	-
Perlis	12	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Penang	24(+4)	9	5(+3)	9(+1)	1	-	-	2(-3)	1	-(-1)
	283(+9)	198(+1)	48(+4)	17(+5)	9	-(-1)	11	18(-7)	10(-1)	1(-1)

### III

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#### THE CONTEST WITHIN THE BARISAN NASIONAL

From the point of view of the opposition the most important aspect of an election is the contest between the government and the opposition, and the opportunity this gives to win seats from the government. But in the Malaysian context it is a foregone conclusion that the overwhelming majority of seats will be won by the BN. From the government's point of view, therefore, the contest with the opposition, although important, is not necessarily the most important aspect of the election. For the BN parties, the allocation of seats between parties and between individuals and factions within parties is at least as important as the election itself. An election provides the opportunity for the rival parties in the BN to improve their positions vis-à-vis the other parties. It also allows the party leaders to overhaul their own party's representation in parliament and the state assemblies in order to improve its image and performance and to better reflect changing factional alignments. In Malaysia, the BN members who lose their seats usually do so not because they are beaten by the opposition in the election but because they fail to be renominated by their party.

## Allocation of Seats Among Parties

The first task of the BN leadership was the allocation of seats among its component parties. Seats won in the previous election are usually retained but there is scope for bargaining over seats held by opposition parties. In 1982 the overall allocation of seats was changed only slightly. Of the 114 parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia, both the MCA and MIC received the same number of seats as in 1978, with 28 and 4 respectively. The PPP, which lost the only seat it contested in 1978, was not renominated and the seat was given to the Gerakan which thus had seven candidates compared with six in 1978. Berjasa was given two seats while UMNO's allocation was reduced from 74 to 73 and the solitary non-party BN member in 1978, a former Berjasa leader, retired. At the state level, UMNO obtained 207 of the 312 seats, two less than in 1978, while Berjasa got 13, one more than in 1978. The MCA obtained three extra seats from the Gerakan in Penang, increasing its total from 59 to 62, while the Gerakan obtained four extra seats outside Penang to compensate for the three lost to the MCA and thus increased its number from 17 to 18. The MIC was left with only nine seats compared with the eleven it had contested in 1978 while the PPP had three seats compared with four in the previous election. In East Malaysia, the distribution of parliamentary seats in Sarawak was not changed, with nine going to SNAP, eight to PBB and seven to SUPP. In Sabah, Berjaya obtained eleven seats, two more than in 1978, while USNO's share was reduced from six seats to five.

The main problem in seat allocation involved the conflicting claims of the Gerakan and the MCA centred on the Penang state assembly. The Gerakan had controlled the state government since 1969, firstly as an opposition party and then as a member of the BN. The MCA, which had led the state government until 1969, naturally resented Gerakan rule but, as a fellow-

member of the BN, was unable to mount an open electoral challenge. Although both the Gerakan and the MCA were given three parliamentary seats each to contest in Penang in 1978, the Gerakan was allotted eleven state seats compared with the MCA's five which meant that there was no possibility that the MCA could regain control of the government. Unable to advance through negotiations, the MCA resorted to supporting Sabah-style "independents" against some Gerakan candidates in the 1978 election and called for an open contest in 1982 with each party running under its own banner rather than as partners in the BN. The national BN leadership rejected the MCA proposal but instead allocated eight state seats each to the MCA and the Gerakan with the understanding that the party winning more seats would head the state government. The Gerakan protested strongly against this decision which deprived it of three candidates in Penang but it was compensated with an extra parliamentary seat and four more state seats, in Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Johore and Pahang -- all states in which it had not won seats before although it had already acquired a Pahang seat as a result of a crossover from the MCA. The Gerakan thus took a step further towards its goal of establishing itself as a truly national party but at the same time it faced the risk of losing control of the Penang state government.

The allocation of seats between the Gerakan and the MCA was also affected by the party-switching that had taken place since the last election. Michael Chen, now in the Gerakan, had a strong personal following in the safe Ulu Selangor parliamentary constituency which he had won as an MCA candidate while Dr Tan Tiong Hong, now in the MCA, had won the marginal Kepong seat in Kuala Lumpur as a Gerakan candidate in 1978. The Gerakan naturally wanted Michael Chen to remain at Ulu Selangor while the MCA insisted that Ulu Selangor was an MCA seat. Eventually Michael Chen had to move to the Beruas seat in Perak which had

been won by the DAP in 1978 while Dr Tan moved from Kepong which was returned to the Gerakan. The net result was that the MCA gained the safe seat vacated by Gerakan while the Gerakan got two marginal seats. In protest Michael Chen's former political secretary stood as an independent against the MCA in the Ulu Selangor seat.

While the MCA gained seats from the Gerakan, the latter was compensated at the expense of the MIC, PPP and UMNO. The MIC which had won nine of the eleven state seats it had contested in 1978 now obtained nine seats while the PPP, which had won two seats out of four in 1978, got three in 1982, one of which was in fact a strong DAP seat which had initially been offered to, but rejected by, the MIC. However, the MCA agreed to take over the parliamentary constituency of Damansara in Kuala Lumpur which the MIC had lost to the DAP in 1978 while it gave the MIC the safe Segamat seat in Johore which was vacated by the MCA president, Datuk Lee San Choon. The MIC thus gave up two doubtful state seats but was able to exchange a doubtful parliamentary seat for a safe one. The PPP also lost one of the seats which it had contested unsuccessfully in 1978 but it had little bargaining power because of its poor performances in 1974 and 1978 and so was not compensated.

Bargaining on the Malay side was between UMNO and Berjasa. Having won eleven of the twelve seats it had contested in the 1978 Kelantan state election, Berjasa had hoped to expand beyond the Kelantan state assembly both into other states and into the national parliament. In the end Berjasa retained its twelve state seats in Kelantan, obtained a state seat in Perak and was allotted two parliamentary seats, one in Kelantan and the other in Kedah. Thus UMNO surrendered one state and two parliamentary seats to Berjasa but it gained the parliamentary seat in Perak vacated by the retiring non-party BN member, making a net loss of only one

parliamentary seat. UMNO also gave up one other state seat which provided one of the Gerakan's extra seats.

The only other change in seat allocation was between Berjaya and USNO in Sabah. Badly beaten by Berjaya in the 1981 state election USNO was in no position to demand more seats and was forced to accept five, the number that it had won in 1978. Berjaya, on the other hand, obtained eleven seats, comprising the nine it had won in 1978 plus two won by the Berjaya-supported "independents". The battle between Berjaya and USNO, however, did not end on nomination day as five Berjaya members were nominated to stand as "independents" against the five USNO candidates.

#### Allocation of Seats Within Parties

An election provides party leaders with a convenient opportunity to change their party's representatives in the national and state legislatures and also to reshuffle the membership of the Cabinet and state executive councils. Final choice of candidates rests with the Chairman of the BN who is also the Prime Minister and President of UMNO but in practice it is usually the president of each party who chooses the candidates for the seats allotted to his party. In making his choice the party president is naturally influenced by the preferences of party members in the constituencies but it is not uncommon for him to impose his own candidates. The selection of candidates is greatly influenced, of course, by the outcome of earlier factional struggles within the parties although members of losing factions are usually not neglected altogether.

The selection process saw the retirement of three ministers in the federal Cabinet, only one of whom --

TABLE 3

## Seat Allocation Within the BN, 1978 and 1982

	Parliament			State Assemblies		
	Allocated 1978	Won 1978	Allocated 1982	Allocated 1978	Won 1978	Allocated 1982
UMNO	74	69	73	209	197	207***
MCA	28**	17	28	59	44	62
Gerakan	6	4	7	17	12	18
MIC	4	3	4	11	9	9
PPP	1	-	-	4	1	3
Berjasa	-	-	2	12	11	13***
Non-party	1	1	-	-	-	-
PBB	8	8	8	-	-	-
SNAP	9	9	9	-	-	-
SUPP	7	6	7	-	-	-
Berjaya	10	9	11	-	-	-
USNO	7	5	5	-	-	-
	155*	131	154	312	274	312

\* One seat in Sabah was contested by both Berjaya and USNO.

\*\* The MCA contested only 27 seats because one candidate's nomination papers were rejected on technical grounds.

\*\*\* UMNO contested only 205 seats and Berjaya only 11 because of rejected nominations.

the veteran SUPP leader, Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui -- went voluntarily. The other two, Datuk Seri Shariff Ahmad of UMNO and Datuk Richard Ho of the MCA had been on the wrong sides in intra-party factional strife. In addition three deputy ministers, two from UMNO and one from SNAP, also failed to regain nomination. At the state level three Menteri Besar and a Chief Minister were not renominated although two of them were given parliamentary nominations.

The biggest turnover was in UMNO. Of the 69 members in the previous parliament only 38 (55 per cent) were renominated. In Pahang, where factional struggles had been especially severe only one of UMNO's six members of parliament was renominated, one of the casualties being Datuk Seri Shariff Ahmad. In Perak only four members out of ten were renominated. In the state assemblies only 106 (54 per cent) of the 198 sitting members were renominated, the biggest changes being in Selangor, Johore and Pahang. In Selangor where the Menteri Besar retired, only seven out of twenty UMNO assemblymen were renominated, among whom were only two members of the old executive council. In Johore, too, the Menteri Besar retired together with most of his executive council while only eight of the twenty assemblymen were renominated. In Pahang, where conflict between the Menteri Besar, who had been appointed after the 1978 election, and the Sultan had intermeshed with protracted faction-fighting between the so-called "Old Guards" and "Young Turks" culminating in the "Young Turk" Menteri Besar's resignation in November 1981, only ten out of the twenty-four UMNO assemblymen were renominated while many of the new candidates were "Young Turks". Among the Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers who were not renominated, Adib Adam of Malacca, Datuk Rais Yatim of Negeri Sembilan, as well as the "Young Turk" former Menteri Besar of Pahang, Abdul Rahim Abu Bakar, were all given parliamentary seats while Tan Sri Othman Saat of Johore and Datuk Hormat Rafie of Selangor retired.

TABLE 4

## Renominated UMNO Incumbents, 1982

	Parliament		State Assemblies	
	Old members	Renominated	Old members	Renominated
Johore	11	6	20	8
Kedah	9	7	15	11
Kelantan	10	6	22	17
Perak	10	4	23	12
Trengganu	7	5	27	15
Pahang	6	1	24	10
Negeri Sembilan	3	1	15	10
Malacca	2	1	13	6
Selangor	6	5	20	7
Perlis	2	0	10	6
Penang	2	2	9	4
Federal Territory	1	0		
	69	38 (55%)	198	106 (54%)

While particular local and individual factors played an important part in these changes, the stand taken by local leaders in the previous year's contest between Musa and Razaleigh for the party deputy presidency was also influential. Adib Adam, for example, had supported Musa while Tan Sri Othman Saat had sided with Razaleigh.

Changes in the other BN parties were less drastic. The MCA renominated seventeen (85 per cent) of its twenty sitting members of parliament and twenty-nine (66 per cent) of its forty-four members in the state assemblies. The main casualty was Datuk Richard Ho, the party deputy president and Minister of Labour and Manpower, who had been a close associate of Michael Chen but had not followed him to the Gerakan. Apparently fearing that the party president, Datuk Lee San Choon, might fail in his challenge to the DAP for the seat of Seremban and thus be replaced by Ho as the most senior party leader in parliament, the dominant anti-Ho group demanded that he be left out of the list of candidates. Another notable aspect of the MCA's nominations was the continuation of an earlier trend to select young, well-educated candidates, often with professional backgrounds, instead of the "towkay-type" businessmen who had set the tone of the party in the past.

In the case of the Gerakan and the MIC there were no changes at the parliamentary level. All four sitting Gerakan MPs and all three MIC MPs were renominated. At the state level also, the Gerakan retained almost all of its sitting members, renominating thirteen out of seventeen; the MIC, however, kept only three of its nine state representatives, among those dropped being a prominent opponent of the party president, Datuk Samy Vellu.

In East Malaysia, just over half of the thirty-six sitting BN members of parliament were retained.

In Sabah, Berjaya renominated seven out of its nine parliamentary members and included one who had sat as an "independent" in the previous parliament, while all of USNO's five members were replaced. In Sarawak the three BN parties each renominated four of its sitting members out of eight in the PBB, eight in SNAP and six in SUPP.

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THE CONTEST:  
GOVERNMENT VERSUS OPPOSITION

Malaysian elections are heavily weighted against the opposition. This is partly due to the nature and dynamics of the community-based party system. The Malaysian party system could be viewed in class terms, with the UMNO, MCA and other parties of the BN seen as representing the interests of the upper classes within their respective communities while PAS and the DAP represent the Malay and non-Malay lower classes. But, unlike the parties representing upper-class interests, those representing the lower classes have been unable to form an alliance because of their communal identities. An alternative explanation of the system sees it in communal terms with the "moderates" in each community joining together in the BN while the "extremists" turn to PAS and the DAP. While both the class and communal approaches are needed to fully explain the Malaysian party system, it is the communal approach which is most useful in explaining why it is virtually impossible for the opposition to defeat the government in a national election.

As long as identity as a member of a racial community is felt to be stronger than identity as a member of an economic class, the "moderates" in each community have a built-in electoral advantage because, by definition, moderates from different communities

can co-operate with each other whereas "extremists" cannot or, at least, find it much more difficult to do so. Thus UMNO, the MCA and the other BN parties support each other's candidates under a common BN banner while the PAS and DAP candidates stand alone. It is thus possible for an UMNO candidate to win although he has only a minority of the Malay votes because of non-Malay support channelled through the MCA, the Gerakan and the MIC. Likewise, MCA, Gerakan and MIC candidates can win, despite failing to secure a majority of non-Malay votes, because of Malay support channelled through UMNO. Thus, in a constituency with evenly divided Malay and non-Malay voters, PAS could win a majority of the Malay votes and the DAP a majority of the non-Malay votes but they could still lose to the BN. For example, PAS and the DAP could together win 60 per cent of their community's votes (that is, 30 per cent of the total vote each) but the BN candidate would still win with 40 per cent of the total vote even though neither UMNO nor the MCA individually could win more than 40 per cent of their own community's support. This situation arises because PAS cannot hope to win significant non-Malay support while the DAP, despite its efforts in this direction, has not been able to attract substantial Malay support. It is generally only in constituencies made up overwhelmingly of voters from a single community that PAS and the DAP have good prospects of winning.

Apart from the party system, the electoral system also stands in the way of an opposition victory. The electoral system strongly favours the party that can win in Malay-majority areas either on its own or in tandem with non-Malay partners. In practice this means UMNO. The Malaysian constitution does not limit the differences in size between the constituencies with the result that some constituencies contain very many more voters than others. The biggest constituency, Petaling in Selangor, with 114,704 voters, has more than four times as many voters as the smallest

peninsular constituency, Kuala Krai in Kelantan, with 24,445 voters and, if East Malaysia is taken into account, more than ten times as many as the smallest constituency, Jalau in Sarawak, with only 10,724 voters. In general, the large constituencies are rural and Malay. As a result, although Malays form only 54 per cent of the peninsular population, they make up a majority of voters in 79 (69 per cent) of the peninsular parliamentary constituencies and an even larger proportion of the 312 state constituencies. It is only in Penang that Malay-majority constituencies are a minority. As long as UMNO continues to hold the electoral support of the majority of the Malay community it is almost impossible for the BN to be defeated at elections at the national level and, in most cases, at the state level.

The opposition parties are also at a disadvantage in other ways. As parties whose support comes mainly from particular communities and whose votes are won by expressing communal frustrations, they are inhibited by the fear that the issues they raise might be considered "sensitive" and therefore illegal under the Sedition Act. However justifiable such an Act might be in a communally divided society, it is clear that its provisions limit the scope of the opposition parties much more than the government. The freedom of the opposition parties to rally support has also been limited by the fear that over-forceful confrontation with the government might lead to detention under the Internal Security Act. Originally intended to give the government special power to deal with the communists, the Act has been used against non-communist opposition as well. During the period since the 1978 election, two DAP members of parliament and the chairman of the PSRM who had been arrested in 1976 have continued to be detained under the Act and a number of PAS activists were arrested after a demonstration by peasants in Kedah in 1980. The Act has also been used to settle factional disputes within UMNO itself.

Although the replacement of Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie by Datuk Musa Hitam as Minister of Home Affairs promised a more liberal application of the Act and saw the release of many detainees, the Act remains a deterrent to vigorous opposition.

In presenting their messages to the voters the opposition parties were further circumscribed. The ban on open-air public rallies imposed before the 1978 election remained in force so that parties were restricted to indoor ceramah sessions which limited the size of audiences. Opposition access to the mass media was also restricted. The opposition parties rejected a government offer of radio time in proportion to the distribution of seats in the previous parliament on the grounds that this gave far more time to the government than to the opposition. No such offer, however, was made in the case of television, the news programmes of which were filled with ministers opening schools, temples, bridges, roads and virtually anything else that could be opened during the weeks before the election. Access to the press was also limited for the opposition. The New Straits Times group which is owned indirectly by the government through Pernas, the Utusan Melayu group owned by UMNO, and the Star controlled by the MCA, gave prominent attention to defections and rumoured defections from the opposition parties but provided only passing coverage of the campaign issues they raised. Finally, the BN as the party in power experienced no shortage of money for the campaign while the opposition parties, with no prospect of gaining power, were unable to raise funds from business sources.

That the BN scored an overwhelming victory in 1982, as it had in earlier elections, was, therefore, not surprising. What was surprising, however, was the increase in its majorities in the national parliament and many state assemblies. In analysing the Malaysian election results it is necessary to deal separately

with the contest for the Malay vote in the peninsula, the contest for the non-Malay vote, and the quite different contests in Sarawak and Sabah.

### The Malay Vote

Despite the participation of Berjasa, the PSRM, a sprinkling of Malay DAP candidates and independents, the contest for the Malay vote, which made up 56.0 per cent of the electorate, was essentially between UMNO and PAS, and was centred on the Malay-majority states in the north. The struggle between UMNO and PAS has at least three dimensions. Firstly, it is a contest between rival patronage machines for the control of access to patronage. This aspect is most apparent in Kelantan where the state government had been controlled by PAS until 1978 and which was the state where PAS's prospects of winning in 1982 were brightest. During the two decades of PAS rule, PAS supporters had been favoured in the distribution of land, licences, concessions, contracts and government jobs but this was reversed when UMNO came to power in 1978 and similarly favoured its supporters. The PAS challenge to UMNO in 1982 was in part an attempt to gain or regain control of the means of patronage while UMNO was fighting to retain it. Secondly, there appears to be, at least in some areas, a tendency for UMNO to win the support of the better-off, better-educated, and more urban Malays as well as part of the poor who are dependent on them while most of PAS's support comes from the poorer sections of the society, especially among the peasantry, although its leaders do not have their origins in that class. Finally, the conflict between UMNO and PAS has an ideological dimension, UMNO's emphasis being on Malay "nationalism" while PAS's stress is on religion. However, this distinction is not as sharp as it might appear to be at first glance because many religious functionaries

support UMNO while PAS is no less concerned with Malay rights than UMNO. More importantly, UMNO, in contrast to PAS, is identified as the party of modernization and economic development.

The main challenge from PAS to UMNO was in Kelantan, and to a lesser extent, in Trengganu and Kedah. The 1978 election, coming shortly after a party crisis, the dismissal of the state government in Kelantan, and the imposition of emergency rule on that state, had been a disaster for PAS so that it could hardly fail to improve its position in 1982. As usual, UMNO promised economic development with the threat, either explicitly or implicitly, that any state electing a PAS government would be deprived of developmental funds from the centre while constituencies electing PAS candidates would be discriminated against in the distribution of development projects and other facilities. PAS, on the other hand, complained about the dismissal of pro-PAS local government officials after the BN came to power in Kelantan, compulsory acquisition of land for development projects, discrimination in the distribution of subsidized fertilizer, and other local issues. In some areas, especially in Trengganu, rivalry between UMNO and PAS reached a level where accusations and counter-accusations of being infidel were made and sometimes UMNO and PAS members prayed at different mosques and refused to attend weddings and funerals of members of the other party.

The PAS campaign was affected by rivalry between the so-called "Old Guards" and "Young Turks" in the party. In Kelantan, the Old Guards, led by the party president Datuk Asri, controlled the party and brought back as candidates several members of the controversial "Gang of 20" which had been at the centre of the party crisis in 1977. In Trengganu, however, the party was dominated by Young Turks headed by the youth leader, Mustapha Ali, and Ustaz Hadi Awang, who did

not even invite Asri to campaign in their state. In Kedah, on the other hand, both Old Guards and Young Turks were prominent among the party's list of candidates. Meanwhile, UMNO was able to undermine part of PAS's appeal to the young and better-educated party sympathisers when it succeeded, a few days before nomination day, in recruiting Anwar Ibrahim, the president of ABIM, to stand as an UMNO candidate for a parliamentary seat in Penang. Anwar, who was a close associate of the PAS Young Turk leader, Ustaz Fadzil Nor, and had campaigned for PAS in the 1978 election, had been considered as a possible successor to Asri if he had decided to enter politics on the PAS side. His disillusionment with PAS and "defection" to UMNO hurt the morale of PAS, especially its better-educated, younger generation.

In the election, PAS suffered a slight decline in its overall peninsular vote, from 17.7 per cent in 1978 to 16.4 per cent in 1982. However, the party contested only 82 seats compared with 88 in 1978. If the party had contested an extra six seats and maintained its average vote per constituency in them, its percentage would have been 17.6, virtually the same as in 1978. Although far behind UMNO in the peninsula-wide contest for the Malay vote, the significance of the election for PAS lay in its performance in the Malay-majority states. In Kelantan it won 46.5 per cent of the parliamentary vote compared with 43.6 per cent in 1978. Assuming that the 6.6 per cent of the Kelantan electorate who were non-Malay did not support PAS, the Malay vote must have been almost evenly divided between UMNO and Berjasa on the one hand and PAS on the other. In Trengganu, the vote for PAS increased from 38.1 per cent in 1978 to 41.4 per cent. Again assuming that the 6 per cent of the Trengganu voters who were non-Malay supported the BN and taking into account the votes for the independents, PAS must have won about 44 per cent of the Malay votes while UMNO got about 55 per cent. In Kedah, the PAS vote

fell from 39.6 per cent in 1978 to 32.4 per cent although there was no reduction in the number of candidates. A possible reason for the swing against PAS in Kedah may be the fact that in this election the Prime Minister was a "son of Kedah" which may have influenced former PAS supporters to turn to UMNO. Assuming that the non-Malays who form 25.8 per cent of the electorate did not support PAS, which may in fact not be entirely valid in Kedah, PAS would have obtained about 44 per cent of the Malay votes, leaving 56 per cent to UMNO. In Perlis, PAS won 32.2 per cent, slightly less than in 1978, which meant that it obtained about 39 per cent of the Malay votes while UMNO received 61 per cent. In the other states, however, UMNO was far ahead of PAS in attracting Malay support. It should, however, be remembered that PAS did not contest all the seats in these states. In addition, small percentages of the Malay votes were won by PSRM and independent candidates.

In the parliamentary election, PAS won only five seats, the number it had obtained in 1978. Of the five, four were in Kelantan and one in Kedah. Compared with 1978, PAS retained two of its Kelantan seats and one in Kedah while winning two more in Kelantan but lost one of its Kedah seats and its single Penang seat. These results reflect the general swing to PAS in Kelantan (although one of its gains in Kelantan, the Rantau Panjang seat, may have been due to unrest in UMNO over its candidate, the former Deputy Menteri Besar, Datuk Hussein Ahmad, who had aligned himself with the Musa forces against Kelantan's own Tengku Razaleigh) and away from PAS in Kedah, while its loss in Penang was to UMNO's charismatic new candidate, Anwar Ibrahim. At the state level, PAS increased its representation in the Kelantan state assembly from two to ten, two of which were returned unopposed and another won against an independent because three BN candidates -- one UMNO and two Berjasa -- had been disqualified for making

TABLE 5

The PAS Parliamentary Vote as a Percentage of  
Malay Voters, 1978 and 1982

	1978			1982		
	PAS % of votes	Malay % of voters	PAS votes as % of Malay voters	PAS % of votes	Malay % of voters	PAS votes as % of Malay voters
Kelantan	43.6	93.0	46.9	46.5	93.4	49.8
Trengganu	36.7	94.2	39.0	41.4	94.0	44.0
Kedah	39.6	74.7	53.0	32.4	74.2	43.7
Perlis	33.5	82.7	40.5	32.2	82.4	39.1
Pahang	18.5	62.6	29.6	20.1	64.4	31.2
Malacca	11.4	51.8	22.0	12.3	51.8	23.7
Perak	9.6	44.8	21.4	13.0	44.2	29.4
Selangor	9.9	48.1	20.6	7.3	48.6	15.0
Johore	7.6	53.1	14.3	6.7	54.8	12.2
Kuala Lumpur	6.5	29.9	21.7	2.9	30.7	9.4
Negeri Sembilan	7.9	46.2	17.1	4.5	47.4	9.5
Penang	10.8	33.9	31.9	2.5	33.2	7.5

mistakes in their nomination forms. Among the successful candidates was the party leader, Datuk Asri, who won a state seat although he was defeated in his attempt to win a parliamentary seat. The PAS victories were at the expense of six of Berjasa's ten candidates and one of UMNO's twenty-two candidates. The poor performance of Berjasa was in part due to an increasing perception of it as a puppet of UMNO. Berjasa also lacked adequate grass-roots organization, suffered from internal conflict over the selection of candidates, and in some areas was unable to co-operate effectively with UMNO. In Trengganu, PAS also achieved an advance by winning five state seats out of twenty-eight compared with nine in 1978. On the other hand PAS experienced a setback in Kedah where it won only two seats compared with seven in 1978. The solitary state seat it won in Perlis was due to the disqualification of the UMNO candidate because of errors in his nomination form, while it lost the single seats it had in Penang and Perak. Overall, PAS won eighteen state seats compared with eleven in 1978.

The contest for the Malay vote was clearly won by UMNO which succeeded in 70 of the 73 parliamentary seats it contested and 196 of the 205 state seats. With the votes of the majority of the Malays to which was added a proportion of non-Malay votes, the BN won in almost all the Malay-dominated constituencies. UMNO's success in mobilizing Malay support has been due partly to its ability to present itself as the only effective defender of Malay interests in a communally divided society. But it also possesses a well-entrenched party machine at the grass-roots level geared to providing patronage and material benefits to its supporters which are not available to its opponents. Unlike PAS, UMNO can "deliver the goods". On the other hand, however, PAS proved that it could still mobilize the support of almost half of the Malay votes in the four states where Malays make up more than 70 per cent of the population.

## The Non-Malay Vote

The battle for non-Malay votes was primarily for Chinese support between the MCA and the Gerakan on the one hand and the DAP on the other. Of the peninsular electorate, 44 per cent was non-Malay of whom 35.5 per cent was Chinese, 7.5 per cent Indian and 1.0 per cent others. The support of the Indian community, especially those in the rural areas, is usually assumed to be for the government although a substantial number of urban Indians favour the DAP. Despite their minority position, the votes of the Indians can be crucial in closely fought urban constituencies and the tendency of part of the urban Indian population to oppose the MIC can contribute to DAP victories. On the basis of electoral statistics, however, it is impossible to analyse Indian voting behaviour because Indian votes are lost among those of the other communities in the overall votes for the BN and the DAP.

More can be said, on the other hand, about the Chinese votes. The three Chinese-oriented parties differ to some extent in their bases of support in the Chinese community. The DAP draws much of its support from the urban lower-middle and working classes. Thus, the larger the Chinese lower class in a constituency is, the better the DAP's prospects. On the other hand, the established Chinese business classes ranging from the commercial and mining magnates down to small-town businessmen as well as much of the white-collar middle class tend to support the MCA. The Gerakan's support came initially from part of the English-educated professional group but it has expanded to win broader middle-class support including that of medium and small businessmen, especially in Penang and Perak. The MCA and the Gerakan, through their participation in the government, are also able to extend services to the lower classes and thus can to some extent eat into the DAP's base.

Despite their differing bases of support, all three parties respond generally to the same frustrations felt by the Chinese community. The Chinese feel discriminated against in almost every field. The main aim of the New Economic Policy is to improve the economic position of the Malays. This inevitably involves discrimination against the non-Malays in the provision of business opportunities such as through licences, contracts, credit and so on, as well as in employment. Discrimination is also felt in the civil service where almost all the higher posts are occupied by Malays while at lower levels Malays are given preference for promotion. Similarly, the upper reaches of the armed forces are Malay-dominated as are the fighting units of the army. In education, Chinese and Tamil remain as media of instruction only in primary schools (apart from the independent Chinese secondary schools) and even this is often challenged by Malay politicians, while quotas operate against non-Malay students gaining entry into local universities.<sup>1</sup> In expressing these grievances and frustrations, the MCA and the Gerakan argue that little can be achieved in defending non-Malay interests without strong representation in the government while the DAP prefers to struggle more aggressively and openly for non-Malay causes.

A major disadvantage for the DAP is its weak appeal to Malays whose votes channelled to the MCA and the Gerakan enabled the BN to win many seats. Of the fifteen peninsular seats that the DAP won in 1978, thirteen were in constituencies where the Chinese made

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1 The frustrations of the Chinese community were expressed in a booklet, The Malaysian Chinese: Toward National Unity, published by the Federal Territory MCA Liaison Committee shortly before the election. The views expressed in the booklet can hardly be distinguished from those of the DAP.

up more than 60 per cent of the voters, while there were more than 60 per cent Chinese in 23 of its 25 state seats. In an attempt to overcome this weakness in 1978, the DAP nominated a large number of Malay candidates in the rural areas, especially in Perak, but these candidates won little support. In 1982 the DAP made an electoral pact with the small PSRM which contested only four parliamentary seats and fifteen state seats. The PSRM's own capacity to draw Malay votes was slight, however, and the pact did not help the DAP much. Of more importance, perhaps, was what appeared to be an informal understanding -- called an "unholy alliance" by the government -- between the DAP and PAS where each party would nominate candidates for seats it could not possibly win in order to assist the other party. Thus, a Malay PAS candidate standing in a non-Malay majority constituency could draw Malay votes away from a non-Malay BN candidate and thus give a better chance to the DAP, while a Chinese DAP candidate standing in a Malay-majority constituency could deprive an UMNO candidate of part of the Chinese votes and thus improve the prospects of PAS. In all, there were 18 non-Malay majority parliamentary seats and 51 state seats which were contested by PAS and 10 Malay majority parliamentary and 12 state seats contested by the DAP. While this arrangement did not greatly help PAS, several DAP candidates in 1978 won by margins of less than the number of votes gained by PAS. In 1982, however, this was the case in only one seat, the Triang state seat in Pahang.

Another aspect of the contest between the BN and the DAP was the rivalry between the two BN partners, the MCA and the Gerakan. In 1978 this rivalry had gone to the extent of the MCA sponsoring independents to stand against Gerakan candidates in Penang while in some other areas the DAP even received support from members of the BN party not standing in the particular constituency. Both the MCA and the Gerakan had an interest in the other losing as many seats as possible

as this would increase the pool of vacant seats to be allocated in the next election and thus provide a chance to gain at the expense of the other. In 1982, open conflict between the two parties was far less widespread although "independents" stood in some seats. But it was only in two state seats that this may have affected the result. The Gerakan blamed "sabotage" by an MCA-supported "independent" for its defeat in the Pasir Berdamar state seat in Perak while the participation of an ex-Gerakan "independent", in addition to the PAS candidate, contributed to the defeat of the MCA in the Triang state seat in Pahang.

Both the MCA and the Gerakan tried to demonstrate that each was better able than the other to win seats from the DAP. Having lost ground to the DAP in 1978, the MCA in particular needed to perform well in order to improve its credibility in the eyes of the UMNO leaders in the government. Taunted by the DAP for claiming to represent the Chinese community while its leaders stood in safe constituencies with large numbers of Malay voters, the MCA decided to field top leaders in DAP-held seats. The most dramatic case was that of the party president, Datuk Lee San Choon, who gave up his safe Johore seat of Segamat to contest in Seremban against the DAP president, Dr Chen Man Hin, who had held the seat since 1969. Datuk Lee had been challenged by the DAP secretary-general, Lim Kit Siang, to stand against him in one of twelve urban Chinese-majority seats. Although Seremban, with 63 per cent of its voters Chinese, had the second lowest percentage of Chinese of the twelve seats, Datuk Lee showed that he was prepared to risk his political future in order to win back seats from the DAP. Another leading MCA figure, Tan Koon Swan, moved from his safe seat of Raub in Pahang to contest the DAP-held Damansara seat in Kuala Lumpur. Tan's risk, however, was not as great as that of the party president because Damansara did not have a Chinese majority and its Malay population was growing. In Perak also, a

prominent MCA leader and member of the state Executive Council, Peter Chin, left his state seat to contest Ipoh, a constituency with 75 per cent Chinese voters held by the DAP.

The Gerakan, too, adopted a new approach in its effort to win votes from the DAP. The issue of Chinese education has always had a strong emotional appeal to the Chinese-educated majority in the Chinese community. The continued existence of Chinese-medium primary schools and the demand for a Chinese-medium university have become symbols for the preservation of Chinese culture in general. Several months before the election, the introduction on a preliminary basis of a new primary school syllabus, based on the "3Rs", in the Chinese and Tamil as well as Malay schools had caused a stir because the teaching materials supplied to teachers were in Malay, and Chinese culture seemed to have been downgraded. Although the government explained that teaching materials would eventually be made available in Chinese and declared that it had no intention of changing the character of the Chinese and Tamil schools, the "3Rs" issue became a major element in the DAP campaign. At the same time a court decision on an appeal against the government's rejection of the proposal to establish the Chinese-medium Merdeka University was pending. Although the Gerakan, believing that non-Malay interests could best be protected if direct confrontation with Malays were avoided, had in the past not taken up the cause of Chinese education as vigorously as had the DAP and the MCA, it suddenly decided to make a bid for wider Chinese support by recruiting, a week before nomination day, several leading figures in the Chinese education movement, two of whom became Gerakan parliamentary candidates. The United Chinese Schools' Committees' Association and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (often collectively called Tung Chiao Chung), although not formally committed to any political party, had tended in the past to side with

the DAP, and their support for the Gerakan was unexpected. It seems that they had first approached the MCA but had not received the virtually unconditional support that they claimed they received from the Gerakan which, despite its earlier stand, now apparently endorsed the views of the Chinese education movement and thus appears to have put at risk its relationship with UMNO.

Contrary to the expectations of most observers, the election resulted in a heavy loss of seats by the DAP which won only six peninsular seats out of the fifty-six it contested, compared with fifteen in 1978. On the other hand, the MCA won twenty-four seats out of twenty-eight compared with only seventeen in 1978, while the Gerakan increased its representation from four to five out of seven seats contested, and the MIC gained an extra seat when it won all four allocated to it. At the state level, the MCA increased its seats from 43 to 55 and the Gerakan from 12 to 15, while the MIC retained all nine that it held and the PPP regained the single seat it had won in 1978 but had lost when the incumbent later crossed to the Gerakan.

The 1982 election saw the best performance of the government in the Chinese majority constituencies since the 1964 election. Of the fifteen parliamentary seats in which the Chinese made up more than 60 per cent of the voters, the BN in 1978 had won only two, but in 1982 it won nine although by then the percentage of Chinese voters in one seat had fallen to less than 60 per cent. Among the DAP's losses were Tanjung in Penang with more than 80 per cent of its voters Chinese, Ipoh and Menglembu in the Kinta Valley of Perak with more than 70 per cent of voters Chinese and which had never been won by the government since independence, and four seats with more than 60 per cent Chinese voters. At the state level, the DAP in Perak had its nine seats in 1978 reduced to four in 1982 and in Penang from five to two while it also lost seats in

the other states where it had won in 1978. Overall, the DAP lost ten of the parliamentary seats that it had won in 1978, held five, and managed to wrest one, the 72 per cent-Chinese Kepong seat in Kuala Lumpur from the BN. At the state level it lost seventeen seats, held twelve and won four from the BN (one each in Penang, Perak, Selangor and Pahang). Among the leading party figures who lost seats were the party chairman, Dr Chen Man Hin, who lost to the MCA president in Seremban; the secretary-general, Lim Kit Siang, who won his parliamentary seat but lost at the state level; the organizing secretary, P. Patta; the publicity secretary, Chian Heng Kai; the treasurer, Lee Kaw; the Perak chairman, Lim Cho Hock; and the secretary-general of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, V. David.

Despite its heavy loss of seats, however, the DAP's share of the total vote did not fall drastically, the party obtaining 20.3 per cent compared with 21.5 per cent of the peninsular parliamentary votes. The fact that the DAP continued to win more than one-fifth of the votes casts doubt on the MCA's claim that it had the backing of the Chinese community through its call for "Chinese unity". It is difficult to estimate the degree of support of the Chinese voters for the various Chinese parties because of the unknown number of Indians and Malays supporting the DAP. If we assume, however, that three-quarters of the 8.5 per cent of the electorate comprising Indian and Other categories voted for the government and that Malay support for the DAP was insignificant, the DAP's 20.3 per cent would consist of 2.1 per cent of votes by Indians and others, and 18.2 per cent by Chinese. The percentage of Chinese votes for the DAP would thus be slightly more than half of the 35.5 per cent of the electorate that was Chinese. If, however, it is assumed that the DAP won, say, one-fortieth of the Malay votes, the Malay component in the DAP vote would amount to 1.4 per cent so that the DAP's Chinese votes

would be reduced to 16.8 per cent or about 47 per cent of the total Chinese votes. An estimate of the distribution of the Chinese votes between the DAP and the BN thus depends on the estimates of the Indian and Malay votes for the DAP. Account should also be taken of the probability that the proportion of eligible Chinese voters who actually voted was less than the national average so that the DAP's share of the Chinese votes cast would be correspondingly higher. Whatever the estimate, it is clear that the DAP still attracts very substantial support from the Chinese community, apparently more than any single BN party.

The question arises then why the DAP lost so many seats while its share of the total vote fell only slightly. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that there were fewer independents and small-party candidates in 1982 with the result that their share of the total vote declined from 3.7 per cent to 2.0 per cent. This appears to have contributed to the 4.2 per cent increase in the government's share of the total peninsular votes which may have been vital in some closely contested seats. But more importantly, the DAP lost support in its traditional stronghold areas while it gained in some non-traditional areas. In several states the DAP increased its votes by fielding candidates in seats it had no hope of winning. This happened in Penang, Pahang, Kedah, and Kelantan. Overall, it fielded 56 parliamentary candidates in 1982 compared with 51 in 1978. On the other hand, it lost support heavily in Perak where it fielded only 13 candidates compared with 19 in 1978. Apart from Perak, the largest falls in its percentage share were in Selangor, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur -- all areas where the Chinese population is large.

The decline in the DAP's votes in its stronghold areas was in part due to the changing racial composition of these Chinese-majority urban centres. As a result of the implementation of the New Economic

Policy, rural Malays are moving to the cities, thus reducing the Chinese preponderance. Although the Chinese still form a large majority in the urban centres, the increased population of Malays can sometimes provide the BN with the votes it needs to win marginal seats. This factor, however, was not crucial in 1982. Although the Chinese proportion of the electorate has declined in 11 of the 15 seats won by the DAP in 1978, this decline alone was not enough to explain the loss of any particular seat.<sup>2</sup>

The DAP's losses were due primarily to a swing of Chinese urban voters to the BN. This might reflect the increasing urban prosperity during the past four years which has allowed more and more citizens, including the Chinese, to rise on the social ladder by moving to new housing estates and acquiring the other attributes of middle-class status. It might also be due to a sense that opposition members of parliament, however well they express deeply felt frustrations, can do little to obtain the basic social amenities required by urban dwellers, especially when the government actively discriminates against areas returning opposition candidates. For the educated,

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2 If, however, the racial breakdown of voters in the Seremban constituency published by the New Straits Times on 11 April 1982 was accurate, the Chinese proportion of voters in that constituency had fallen to slightly less than 60 per cent, a decline of more than 3 per cent since 1978, while the Malay proportion had risen by 2.8 per cent. As Lee San Choon won with 50.9 per cent of the votes, a margin of 0.9 per cent, the changing racial composition of the constituency may have been decisive. However, other sources give a smaller change in the racial composition of the constituency and it is these figures that have been used in this study.

TABLE 6

**DAP Performance, by Parliamentary Constituency  
and Percentage of Chinese Voters**

Constituency	% of vote	Change from 1978	% of Chinese voters	Change from 1978
<b>(a) <u>Seats won in 1978 and 1982</u></b>				
Jelutong (Penang)	55.2	+ 5.3	63.6	-4.3
Bukit Bendera (Penang)	54.8	+ 5.0	74.9	-0.2
Kuala Lumpur Bandar (KL)	72.0	- 6.3	79.4	-1.9
Sungai Besi (KL)	53.7	-20.7*	71.5	-3.5
Kota Malacca. (Malacca)	54.5	- 4.7	69.6	-0.5
* The BN candidate was disqualified in 1978				
<b>(b) <u>Seats won in 1982 but lost in 1978</u></b>				
Kepong (KL)	50.5	+30.0	72.2	-0.1
<b>(c) <u>Seats won in 1978 but lost in 1982</u></b>				
Tanjung (Penang)	48.5	+ 3.0	86.8	+1.1
Bukit Mertajam (Penang)	44.1	+ 4.9	63.2	+0.8
Ipoh (Perak)	43.9	-17.7	75.3	-1.9
Menglembu (Perak)	47.1	-14.6	75.7	-0.2
Batu Gajar (Perak)	45.0	-12.3	68.9	-1.5
Beruas (Perak)	31.7	-13.2	53.6	+1.0
Petaling (Selangor)	46.7	-14.0	61.4	-1.6
Damansara (KL)	34.5	-12.6	44.1	0
Seremban (NS)	49.1	- 7.8	63.0	-0.4
Kluang (Johore)	41.9	- 8.0	59.5	-3.0

middle-class voters, the Mahathir-Musa government's emphasis on suppressing corruption and improving bureaucratic efficiency may have had some appeal although it is difficult to assess how important this was to the average voter. Another important factor was the support given by the Chinese education movement to the government through the Gerakan although only one of its two candidates was successful. The DAP also made a tactical error by switching established sitting members to new constituencies and there appears to have been factional trouble in Perak.

From the point of view of the rivalry between the MCA and the Gerakan, honours were more or less even. The MCA won 24 of the 28 parliamentary seats it contested, 7 more than in 1978, while it took 55 of 62 state seats, compared with 44 in 1978. On the other hand, the Gerakan won 5 of the 7 parliamentary seats it contested, one more than in 1978, and 15 of the 18 state seats, compared with 12 in 1978. In the vital state election in Penang where both parties had been allocated the same number of seats, the Gerakan won all eight while the MCA lost two, including the seat contested by its state leader Lim Kean Siew who would have become the Chief Minister if the MCA had done better than the Gerakan. Thus the Gerakan retained control of the Penang state government.

### Sarawak

There was no doubt that the BN would win a large majority of the seats in Sarawak. The question was rather how the election would affect the balance between the parties within the ruling alliance. The parties which faced the greatest challenges were the SUPP, which was opposed by four of the DAP's five candidates, and SNAP which was confronted by several rebel independents.

In the 1982 election the PBB held its eight seats either unopposed or with substantial majorities. The SUPP, however, lost two seats to the DAP but won back the seat held by SAPO, giving it five seats out of the seven it contested. The party which experienced the greatest problems was SNAP which faced three sitting members of parliament who had won their seats as SNAP candidates in 1978. Two of them, Datuk Edmund Langgu, the former Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and Datuk Edwin Tangkun, were not renominated by the party while Patrick Uren had been expelled in 1979. All three stood as independents and won, Langgu defeating Datuk Dunstan Endawie, a former party president and Malaysian High Commissioner to New Zealand. SNAP thus won only six of the nine seats it contested.

Overall the BN won 56.8 per cent of the votes in Sarawak while the DAP obtained 18.2 per cent. The remainder was divided among numerous independents and the two small parties, SAPO and Pajar.

## Sabah

The main contest in Sabah was not between the BN and the opposition but between the two components of the BN. Berjaya had been allocated eleven seats but decided to nominate "independents" against the five USNO candidates. With full support from the state government machinery, the five "independents" won, thus eliminating USNO from the federal parliament. Although all five had been Berjaya members, one being the party youth leader, it seemed unlikely that they would be permitted to sit as BN members of parliament because of their breach of BN discipline.

The DAP also contested two seats in Sabah, retaining the seat of Sandakan which it had captured in 1978. In the wake of Berjaya's defeat in Sandakan,

the Chief Minister, Datuk Harris Salleh, dismissed the District Officer, the Chairman of the Town Council and another senior official. He also persuaded the state governor to withdraw the title of "Datuk" from the former Berjaya head of information, Haji Halik Zaman, who had stood as an independent against the Chief Minister.

Technically the BN, consisting of Berjaya and USNO, won 51.8 per cent of the votes although in fact Berjaya together with its five "independents" won more. The rest were spread among a large number of independents and candidates of small parties.

TABLE 7

## Election Results

## 1. National Parliament

Parties	Seats contested	Seats won		% of votes	
		1982	1978	1982	1978
Barisan Nasional:	154	132	131	60.5	57.5
UMNO	73	70	69		
MCA	28	24	17		
Gerakan	7	5	4		
MIC	4	4	3		
Berjasa	2	0	-		
Non-party	-	-	1		
PBB	8	8	8		
SUPP	7	5	6		
SNAP	9	6	9		
Berjaya	11	10	9		
USNO	5	0	5		
DAP	63	9	16	19.6	19.2
PAS	82	5	5	14.5	15.5
SAPO	1	0	1	0.01	0.3
"Berjaya Independents"	5	5	1	1.0	0.2
Others	58	3	0	4.5	7.4
		154	154		

The BN won 12 seats unopposed in 1982 and 9 unopposed in 1978.

TABLE 7 (continued)

## Election Results

2. Peninsular Malaysia

Parties	Seats contested	Seats won		% of votes	
		1982	1978	1982	1978
Barisan Nasional:	114	103	94	61.3	57.1
UMNO	73	70	69		
MCA	28	24	17		
Gerakan	7	5	4		
MIC	4	4	3		
Berjasa	2	0	-		
Non-party	-	-	1		
DAP	56	6	15	20.3	21.5
PAS	82	5	5	16.4	17.7
Others	20	0	0	2.0	3.7
		114	114		

The BN won 6 seats unopposed in 1982 and 5 unopposed in 1978.

TABLE 7 (continued)

## Election Results

3. Parliamentary Seats by State (Peninsula)

State	UMNO	MCA	Ger	MIC	BN	DAP	PAS
Kuala Lumpur	1	1	-	-	2	3	-
Perlis	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Kedah	10	2	-	-	12	-	1
Penang	3	2	2	-	7	2	-
Perak	11	6	3	1	21	-	-
Selangor	6	4	-	1	11	-	-
Malacca	2	1	-	-	3	1	-
Negeri Sembilan	3	2	-	1	6	-	-
Johore	11	4	-	1	16	-	-
Pahang	6	2	-	-	8	-	-
Trengganu	7	-	-	-	7	-	-
Kelantan	8	-	-	-	8	-	4

TABLE 7 (continued)

## Election Results

4. Parliamentary Percentages by State (Peninsula)  
(1978 percentages in brackets)

State	BN	DAP	PAS	Others
Kuala Lumpur	51.9(25.1)	44.6(55.0)	2.9( 6.5)	0.6(13.3)
Perlis	67.8(60.8)	-	32.2(33.5)	- ( 5.7)
Kedah	61.2(57.1)	6.0( 0.8)	32.4(39.6)	0.3( 2.4)
Penang	56.3(47.1)	36.1(27.3)	2.5(10.8)	5.2(14.8)
Perak	61.2(55.5)	25.4(36.5)	13.0( 9.6)	0.3( 0.4)
Selangor	63.6(57.6)	24.3(30.2)	7.3( 9.9)	4.8( 2.3)
Malacca	66.4(55.8)	21.2(32.7)	12.3(11.4)	- ( - )
Negeri Sembilan	67.3(57.6)	27.4(29.4)	4.5( 7.9)	0.8( 5.1)
Johore	73.7(77.3)	14.4(15.1)	6.7( 7.6)	5.2( - )
Pahang	60.4(66.8)	17.2( 8.8)	20.1(18.5)	2.3( 5.9)
Trengganu	57.4(58.4)	-	41.4(38.1)	1.2( 3.5)
Kelantan	52.8(56.4)	0.6( - )	46.5(43.6)	0.1( - )

TABLE 7 (continued)

## Election Results

5. State Assembly Seats

State	UMNO	MCA	Ger	MIC	Ber	PPP	BN	DAP	PAS	Ind
Perlis	9	2	-	-	-	-	11	-	1	-
Kedah	19	3	1	1	-	-	24	-	2	-
Penang	10	6	8	1	-	-	25	2	-	-
Perak	23	9	3	1	1	1	38	4	-	-
Selangor	20	7	1	3	-	-	31	1	-	1
Negeri Sembilan	15	6	-	1	-	-	22	2	-	-
Malacca	13	5	-	-	-	-	18	2	-	-
Johore	20	10	1	1	-	-	32	-	-	-
Pahang	24	5	1	1	-	-	31	1	-	-
Trengganu	22	1	-	-	-	-	23	-	5	-
Kelantan	21	1	-	-	4	-	26	-	10	-
Total	196	55	15	9	5	1	281	12	18	1

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## THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Dr Mahathir and the BN had campaigned on the slogan "Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy" and it was expected that the new federal and state governments would to some extent reflect this emphasis. Dr Mahathir apparently believed that the federal government appointed after his accession to the premiership in July 1981 had not had time to prove its mettle because few changes were made in its composition after the election. Major changes, however, were made in the state governments where the standard of administration had often been very low and opportunities for corruption many. During the previous year the public esteem of many of the state governments had suffered a heavy blow following the publication of the Auditor-General's reports on state administration which revealed extraordinary inefficiency and waste, as well as the probability of corruption.

### Federal Government

The 24-member federal Cabinet appointed after the election was almost the same as that appointed by Dr Mahathir when he took over the premiership in July 1981. The exceptions were three ministers who had not been renominated for election to parliament and one

other minister, Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, who was appointed Ambassador to Indonesia. The four new ministers who were appointed were taken from the same parties as the men they replaced so that the balance between parties in the Cabinet remained unchanged. Two of the new ministers were the former Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan, Datuk Rais Yatim, and the former Chief Minister of Malacca, Adib Adam, who were both aged around forty, university-educated, and regarded as sound administrators. The overall distribution of positions among the parties remained unchanged with UMNO holding thirteen posts -- slightly more than half, and including the key portfolios of Defence, Home Affairs, Finance, and Trade and Industry. The MCA had four while Gerakan, MIC, Berjasa, PBB, SUPP, SNAP and Berjaya had one each. The Berjasa minister, Datuk Haji Mohammed Nasir, was not an elected member of parliament but a senator. The most notable omission from the Cabinet was the former Menteri Besar of Pahang, Haji Abdul Rahim Abu Bakar, whose entry to the Cabinet was apparently postponed in deference to the feelings of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agung (King), who, as Sultan of Pahang, had clashed with Rahim during his term as Menteri Besar.

At the level of deputy minister, seven new appointments were made. These were to replace the three deputy ministers who did not contest the election and one veteran who was retired, while three new positions were created. Of the three new positions, one each was given to UMNO, the MCA and the MIC. In all, thirteen deputy ministers were from UMNO, six from the MCA, two from the MIC, one from Gerakan, two from PBB, one from SNAP and two from Berjaya. The seven new deputy ministers included five who had won seats in parliament for the first time in the recent election although one had been a senator and another had served in a state assembly. Among the new deputy ministers were UMNO's recent recruit, Anwar Ibrahim, Dr Tan Tiong Hong, the former Gerakan leader who had

crossed to the MCA, and S Subramaniam, the MIC deputy president. Of the others, three were essentially "technocrats" with proven professional skills rather than powerful party bases of support, two being former civil servants and one an academic. At the level of parliamentary secretary, one new post was created and filled with a Gerakan appointee.

The announcement of the new Cabinet disappointed the MCA which believed that its excellent performance in the election, at least in terms of seats, merited not only an increase in Cabinet posts but also the appointment of MCA leaders to key departments. As it turned out, the MCA representatives remained at the "second-level" departments of Transport, Health, Labour and Manpower, and Housing and Local Government, although the party gained an extra deputy ministership. Several leading MCA figures, such as Tan Koon Swan and the MCA Youth leader, Lee Kim Sai, remained on the backbenches.

### State Governments

In contrast to the almost unchanged composition of the federal government, a large-scale overhaul was performed on the state governments following the election. Under the Malaysian federal system the states have formal autonomy in appointing their leaders but in practice the heads of state governments, at least those belonging to UMNO, are selected by the Prime Minister and the members of the state executive councils are appointed in consultation with him. The sweeping changes in the composition of the state governments were thus a result of a deliberate decision by the national leadership.

The first change was the replacement of four Menteri Besar and one Chief Minister, including the

Johore Menteri Besar, Tan Sri Othman Saat, who had held office since 1967 and was the longest-serving state leader. Besides Tan Sri Othman, all the remaining heads of state governments, except Dr Lim Chong Eu of Penang who had won office in 1969, had been appointed since the mid-70s and had far less entrenched personal bases of support. Of these, only Datuk Harris Salleh in Sabah, Datuk Seri Wan Mohamed Wan Teh in Perak, and Datuk Amar Wan Mukhtar Ahmad in Trengganu had held office before 1978. Only two of the five new government heads -- in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan -- were members of the previous state governments while two -- in Pahang and Malacca -- were former federal deputy ministers, and one was the Deputy Prime Minister's political secretary. Most of the new leaders were very young, Datuk Najib Tun Razak of Pahang being only 29, the new Menteri Besar in Negeri Sembilan and Johore being in their early 30s and the Chief Minister of Malacca being in his late 30s.

The appointment of new Menteri Besar culminated a process begun under earlier prime ministers of reducing the independent political power of the state leaders. Most of the new appointees were clearly the Prime Minister's men rather than the choice of the local UMNO organization and, in contrast to the "old style" politicians who had dominated local-level party machines, most of the "new style" leaders were university-educated and acquainted with high-level administration. They were dependent more on the central leadership than on local patronage machines and could thus be expected to carry out the administrative reforms required by the leadership even when they were resisted by local politicians. Unlike most "old style" politicians for whom an appointment to head the state government was the pinnacle of their political careers, the position of Menteri Besar was for the young leaders merely a stepping stone to higher levels. They therefore had every incentive to

keep their record clean and to prove their efficiency and trustworthiness.

The overhaul of the state governments was not limited to the position of Menteri Besar but extended to the executive councils as well. Of the 88 members of the state executive councils in the ten states (except Perlis) for which statistics are available, 53 (60 per cent) were not members of the previous executive councils. In Negeri Sembilan and Selangor the Menteri Besar was the only survivor of the old administration while in Johore two out of nine remained and in Kedah three out of nine. Of no less importance were the backgrounds of some of the appointees. In contrast to the typical state political leaders of the past, many were highly educated with substantial administrative and professional experience. Several were former civil servants who had served as district officers or in other administrative posts, one had been the managing director of the Bank Rakyat, another was a former dean of the engineering faculty at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and there were also doctors and lawyers. The sweeping changes in the state administrations tended to break up established relationships and thus reduce, at least temporarily, opportunities for corruption, while the inclusion of experienced high-level administrators promised to improve the quality of administration.

In terms of the balance between parties there was almost no change, however. The only important reshuffle took place in Penang where it appears that, as part of the bargain between the MCA and the Gerakan, the national leadership had been able to extract promises that whichever party headed the new state government would include a representative of the other in the executive council. Thus the Gerakan gave up one of its positions to the MCA, allowing it for the first time since 1969 to have a post in the Penang state government.

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## CONCLUSION

The 1982 general election in Malaysia did not represent a departure from the established electoral pattern. The multi-communal government front again won an overwhelming victory over an opposition divided between a Malay party and an essentially non-Malay party. Although the non-Malay opposition party lost seats while the Malay party won the same number that it had held in the previous parliament, both proved their resilience by more or less maintaining their electoral support in terms of votes. About two out of every five voters once again voted for opposition candidates.

The most striking aspect of the election results was the DAP's heavy loss of seats in the peninsula. At first glance the government, especially the MCA component, seemed to have demonstrated that it had at last convincingly won the confidence of the Chinese voters, but a closer examination of voting figures suggests that the DAP probably got more Chinese votes than the MCA. It was clear, however, that support for the MCA had grown in the urban, Chinese-majority constituencies which had formerly been DAP strongholds while the DAP appears to have compensated for this by fielding candidates in other areas where they won votes but not seats. Whether the MCA will continue to hold this support will depend on how effectively it

can represent Chinese interests in the government; its failure to gain extra and more important posts in the Cabinet after the election does not auger well in this respect. Moreover, it seems inevitable that the Gerakan will not be able to satisfy the aspirations of the Chinese education movement. In the long run, however, the DAP's position is likely to be undermined gradually by demographic change as Malay urbanization leads to a decline in both the number of Chinese-majority seats and in the size of Chinese majorities. In 1978 there were 22 Chinese-majority seats but in 1982 there were only 20 while the number of seats with more than 60 per cent Chinese declined from 15 to 14.<sup>1</sup>

The election also showed the durability of PAS in its stronghold areas. While PAS offered little challenge to UMNO in the contest for Malay votes outside the four northern and northeastern states with large Malay majorities, PAS won about half the Malay votes in Kelantan and substantial support in Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis. But its chances of ever winning power at the state level in the latter two states, where non-Malay minorities are larger than in the former two, are slight. Assuming that all non-Malays vote for the government, PAS would need about 67 per cent of the Malay vote to gain a majority in Kedah and about 61 per cent in Perlis, whereas it would need only 53-54 per cent in Kelantan and Trengganu. In view of these poor prospects outside Kelantan and Trengganu it is perhaps not surprising that some elements in PAS have begun again to think of the possibility of returning to the BN.

The most important outcome of the election was, however, not the result of the contest between the

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1 In 1982 there were 79 Malay-majority seats, 20 Chinese-majority seats, and 15 seats where no single community had a majority.

government and the opposition but the changes within the government occasioned by the election. The new UMNO leadership replaced a large proportion of the party's representatives in the federal parliament and state assemblies and it carried out a thorough overhaul of the state governments. This reconstitution of the party's state and local level leadership was naturally resented by some of the party veterans who were displaced in the process but it seems unlikely that they will be able to mount successful challenges against the new order. Whether the new leaders will live up to the campaign slogan of "Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy", however, remains to be seen.