



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES, SINGAPORE

THE POLITICS OF ACCOMMODATION
An Analysis of the 1978
Malaysian General Election

Ismail Kassim

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PREFACE

As a journalist with the *New Nation* (Singapore), this writer has been covering political developments in Malaysia since 1975. During the 1978 general election, he was there for two weeks covering the campaign. For this purpose, he visited Penang, Kedah, Perak and the Federal Territory, interviewing dozens of politicians, ranging from state level leaders down to the grassroots party worker, and had numerous discussions with Malaysian journalists and observers as well as with the ordinary voters. Some of the information released to the author was given in confidence, and therefore could not be attributed to the sources. He is greatly indebted to all of them for the insights they had given to him on the nature of Malaysian politics. In the writing of this report, the author has drawn, wherever relevant, on his earlier political features for the *New Nation*. He wishes to place on record his appreciation to his Editor, the Group Editor of *New Nation* and *Times Periodicals* and Deputy to the *Times Organization* Editor-in-Chief, Cheong Yip Seng, whose decision to send him on periodic trips to Malaysia, including the election coverage, enabled this paper to be written. His thanks also go to the Editor of the *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies*, Christine Tan, for diligently going through the final manuscript, and to the ISEAS pool of typists for typing the final draft. Whatever defects remain, the author accepts full responsibility.

20 August 1978
Singapore

Ismail Kassim

ABBREVIATIONS

Barisan	--	Barisan Nasional (National Front)
Berjaya	--	Sabah United People's Party
Berjasa	--	Barisan Jumaah Islamiah Malaysia Bersatu
DAP	--	Democratic Action Party
KITA	--	Kaum Insaf Tanah Ayer
MCA	--	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	--	Malaysian Indian Congress
PAJAR	--	Parti Rakyat Jati Sarawak
PAS	--	Partai Islam
Pekemas	--	Social Justice Party
PNRS	--	Parti Negara Rakyat Sarawak
PPB	--	Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu
PPP	--	People's Progressive Party
PSRM	--	Partai Socialis Rakyat Malaya
Pusaka	--	Parti Perhimpunan Social Bersatu
SAPO	--	Sarawak People's Organization
SCA	--	Sabah Chinese Association
SCUP	--	Sabah Chinese United Party
SDP	--	Social Democratic Party
Sedar	--	Sabah Democratic Rakyat Parti
SNAP	--	Sarawak National Party
SUPP	--	Sarawak United People's Party
UMAT	--	Parti Umat Sarawak
UMNO	--	United Malays National Organization
UPP	--	United People's Party
USNO	--	United Sabah National Organization
W	--	Workers' Party

Note: Party is spelt as partai in West Malaysia and parti in East Malaysia. The English equivalent of the Malay names of some of the parties have not been given as they are not in general usage.

