GOVERNING MALAYSIA

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Contents

Preface
Notes on Contributors
Abbreviations

CHAPTER 1 Malaysia at 50 — An “Electoral One-Party State”? ....... 1
Wong Chin Huat & Norani Othman

CHAPTER 2 Malaysian Constitution After 50 Years ...................................... 59
Abdul Aziz Bari

CHAPTER 3 The Monarchy and State Governing ............................................. 75
Abdul Aziz Bari

CHAPTER 4 Federalism in Malaysia ................................................................. 91
Jayum Jawan

CHAPTER 5 The Cabinet: Highest Decision Maker of The Land ... 113
Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin & Norma Mansor

CHAPTER 6 Government Agencies and Public Services ......................... 141
Sharifah Hayaati Syed Ismail

CHAPTER 7 The Legislative: The Role and Functions of
Parliament ................................................................................................. 165
Wan Achar Wan Ahmad

CHAPTER 8 The Judiciary and the Constitution ............................................. 185
Faridah Jalil

CHAPTER 9 Political Parties in Malaysia: People and Politics ........ 225
Mohammad Azis Yusoff & Jayum Jawan
CHAPTER TWO

Malaysian Constitution After 50 Years

Abdul Aziz Ban

Introduction

THE CONSTITUTION OF MALAYSIA — FEDERAL and state constitutions — officially came into being on 31 August 1957. However, the foundations and contents of the Constitution have been around much earlier than that. And after the document was given legal effect on that date it continued to develop through various means. These included formal amendments by parliament, interpretation by the court as well as through the emergence of certain practices, which fill the gaps left by the provisions of the Constitution.

Looking at the form and structure one may get the impression that the Constitution is heavily influenced by the British. However, if one takes a closer look at the key institutions, such as the monarchy, as well as the working of other institutions, one would get the feeling that the Constitution is very much a locally-inspired document not to mention the fact that locals too took part in the various drafting stages of the Constitution way back in 1956-57.

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