

ALIAS MOHAMED

PAS'  
PLATFORM

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DEVELOPMENT  
AND CHANGE  
1951 - 1986

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## Preface

In Malaysian politics PAS has featured importantly as an Islamic theocratic party which, through its appeal to, at first Malay exclusiveness and later, religion, has influenced the minds of numerous Malays for more than four decades. Throughout the many years of its presence in the political arena, the party has provoked endless discussions among scholars, political opponents and the media. Since the 1970s, until today, PAS seems to have acquired a new dimension associated with Islamic resurgence the world over. It has given the party a new vigour and a fervent hope of existence that has already engendered a sense of uneasiness and discomfort in a nation of plural and diverse mix. The question that is often asked today is whether one can take comfort in the present national leadership's sanguine effort to keep the party at bay, or whether there is an amorous liaison between this party and some of the national leaders who, on account of their penchant for political extremism, or perhaps, a sense of insecurity, may conveniently bid for time to perpetrate the imponderables.

While this work does not provide answers to this provocative enquiry, it has brought to the fore the otherwise fragmented history of the party, its struggles and changing patterns of leadership spanning over four decades. As new developments have taken place since this study was completed in 1989, it must be emphasized that the present work is meant specifically to provide a useful perspective of PAS' policies and actions by focusing on the principles of the party's struggles, its strengths and weaknesses, its ambitions and intimate affinity with Islam and the Malays.

It is hoped that this book will help those, in particular non-Malays who still find PAS somewhat of an enigma, under-

stand better Malaysian politics today with specific reference to PAS' ultimate objective if indeed it has one.

This book is a revised version of a doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Malaya. In preparing this manuscript for publication, I wish to record my profound gratitude to Dato' Professor Dr. Khoo Kay Kim who supervised my work and also assisted me patiently in reading and editing this manuscript. I benefited immeasurably from the many stimulating discussions I have had with him at various stages of writing this work. To Professor Dr. J.M. Chandran, now with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, who supervised me initially and gave me the impetus to carry on, I express my heartfelt gratitude.

I must also mention Tan Sri Haji Abdul Samad Ismail, former Editorial Advisor of the New Straits Times Group, who took great pains in assisting me to obtain newspaper clippings from the New Straits Times Library in the course of my initial research on PAS during my stay in Canada in 1975-1976. It was Tan Sri Haji Abdul Samad's kind assistance too when he was Group Editor-in-Chief who provided me with a fellowship from the New Straits Times which made my graduate studies in Canada possible during this period and encouraged me immensely to continue my research for the doctoral degree from where I left off in 1976. While I owe my knowledge of academic discipline to Professor Dato' Khoo Kay Kim, it was Tan Sri Abdul Samad again whose influence helped me to take a deep interest in the field of journalism.

Last but not least, I am indebted to Mrs. Lau Beng Thye for her devoted industry in preparing this manuscript for publication. Without her untiring efforts this book would have been further delayed.

25 June 1994  
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Alias Mohamed

## Foreword

This is almost certain to be a controversial work. The subject dealt with lends itself to controversy. Among all the opposition parties in Malaysia, it is PAS that has displayed the greatest tenacity and capacity for survival. Beginning from 1955, when it captured the only seat against the overwhelming victory of the Alliance, until the present, it has remained the only party which can provide significant rivalry to UMNO.

PAS has diehard supporters within the country and it has drawn the sympathy of foreign scholars who usually have, one may say, an obsession with the need to adopt an anti-establishment stance.

Alias Mohamed's undisguised intention is to demonstrate that though, from the beginning, PAS has publicly stated that its ideology is Islam, in practice, from time to time, its programme for action has been quite pragmatic and, unavoidably, influenced by its leadership with significantly different predilections.

Explaining human foibles and idiosyncrasies is, manifestly, a difficult and hazardous preoccupation. One can lay no claim to being certain about anything. Those who attempt to do so by using a particular model of analysis is indulging in speculation as much as those who provide a personal perception of events. Kelantan's unique political behaviour is a case in point.

The subject is discussed not only among scholars but also the man in the street. Opinions differ. Even Kelantanese themselves (and Alias Mohamed himself is one) cannot claim to be able to give the ultimate correct answer. It would be presumptuous for any scholar to dismiss, in cavalier fashion, the explanation of another on the grounds that the latter's is based on "airy generalization" just because the answer given lacks the precision that one can expect from the physical sciences.