

فرساتوان سجارا مليسيا
PERSATUAN SEJARAH MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE FORMATION, ACTIVITIES, AND TRENDS OF
PENGHULU ASSOCIATION OF KELANTAN (PPKK) FOR THE YEAR
1953 to 1962: A BRIEF SUMMARY

by

Wan Abdul Rahman Latiff,
Tutor,
Jabatan Sains Politik,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur.

It has been maintained that political clientelism, as a concept, afforded a kind of 'conceptual linkage' to the 'missing link' between micro and macro sociological or system-centered theories that have dominated the field of developmental politics (Cf. Rene Lemarchand, 1972:68). Village leaders, traditional or modern, from this very perspective serve as important indicators since they provide most of the brokerage functions mediating between the village society and the larger social order. This brief note, to be sure, is not intended to provide a grand conceptual framework for the purpose of substituting the above 'missing link'; it is only aimed at seeing the manner in which village leaders — in this particular case, the Penghulu — relate themselves, through an organizational body, to the state and even to the nation.

The Persatuan Penghulu-Penghulu Kampung Kelantan (PPKK)* was formed through the initiatives of a District Officer, a Penggawa, and a Penggawa's Clerk (Kerani Penggawa). It was in early 1953 that the then District Officer of Bachok, Haji Nik Abdullah Bin Nik Hassan, suggested the idea. The idea was readily supported by the Penggawa of Daerah Gunung Timor, Wan Abdullah bin Wan Su

and his clerk Inche' Mohammad bin Salleh.

The idea came to fruition in early 1954 and it was not until 4th February, 1955 that the Association was formally registered with the Registrar of Societies under The Societies (Registration) Rules of 1953 subjected to Societies Ordinance, 1949. The Association's first address was given at Teratak Pulau, Gunung Timor, Bachok, Kelantan.

The formation of PPKK was wholly a Bachok affair with its headquarters in Teratak Pulau. The principal members of the Executive Committee of the PPKK for the period of 1953-1954 were as follows:

- President: Ismail bin Awang,
Penghulu of Bukit
Chendor, Bachok.
- Secretary: Ibrahim bin Abdul
Rahman, Penghulu of
Teratak Pulau, Bachok.
- Treasurer: Awang bin Mamat,
Penghulu of Belukar,
Bachok.

What is apparent from the

*Henceforth I will be using the abbreviated form PPKK or Association. It is interesting to note that in Kelantan the term Penghulu is Ketua Kampung for other states in West Malaysia; and Penghulu for other states is Penggawa for Kelantan.

above brief discussion is the fact that PPKK was, from its early inception, the brain-child of the State Bureaucracy. The interest shown in its formation by the District Officer, the Peggawa and his clerk is a clear indication of this, and more particularly, the interest shown by the Peggawa of Gunung Timor, Wan Abdullah bin Wan Su.

After its shaky start in 1953, PPKK showed promises when in May, 1954 a second Annual General Meeting was held at Sekolah Kebangsaan Pak Badol, Gunung Barat, Bachok, and the attendance was rather encouraging. The attendance numbered at 85 and to mark the occasion a cow was slaughtered. A small donation was also collected from the members.

The PPKK, even though prior to its formal registration as a society, already managed to send three of its committee members to attend a convention held by The Association of Village Heads of Malaya (Persatuan Ketua-Ketua Kampong SaMalaya) on 28th of August, 1954 at the Sultan Sulaiman Club, Kuala Lumpur. The PPKK was represented by the President, Secretary and Penghulu Ismail Ahmad from Pasir Puteh.

On the day of its acceptance by the Registrar of Societies, PPKK had a membership of about 200. On the first of April, 1955 another Annual General Meeting was held, venued at the Majlis Ugama Islam, Kota Bharu. The meeting was attended by 153 members. It was from this date that PPKK felt itself responsible to play the role as a pressure group by pushing through several demands to the State Government, among other things the need to increase their annual bonus

which was at this time stood at \$M10. They also demanded concessions like clothings and fire-arms. A delegation of four was later sent to meet the State Secretary regarding the above demands.

On 19th October, 1956, the Third Annual General Meeting was held at Sekolah Kebangsaan Kete-reh, Kota Bharu, which was attended by 193 members. Among the resolutions adopted at the meeting were, firstly, to renew their demands to the State Government; secondly, to visit different parts of Kelantan holding talks in order to explaining to the people the Association's functions and activities; and thirdly, to urge the State Government to form an Investigation Committee to formulate a special scheme for the Penghulus throughout Kelantan. The Association held, for this particular year, six committee meetings and efforts were concentrated on increasing its membership so as to buttress its financial position. The efforts did not meet much success.

Again, on 10th March, 1957 PPKK sent two representatives to Kuala Lumpur to attend the Gabungan Persekutuan Ketua-Ketua Kampong SaMalaya General Meeting. The Association was represented by the President, Ismail Awang and Inche' Noh bin Mamat, Penghulu Buloh Poh, Kadak, Kota Bharu. The president was taken ill during the journey, and was hospitalised for four days after the meeting. The expense for the trip were borne by the committee members.

By their fourth Annual General Meeting which was held at Maahad Muhammadi, Kota Bharu, on 27th of July, 1957 it was clear

by then that PPKK was financially weak. However, PPKK managed to finance a penchak silat show as a contribution to celebrate the nation's Independence on the 31st of August, 1957.

The year 1958 was an important and decisive one for PPKK. It was this year that the Association received its new adviser, Nik Hussein Fathi, the Penggawa of Gunung Timor who replaced Penggawa Wan Abdullah. Nik Hussein Fathi can be considered as the single most important figure responsible for the smooth functionings of PPKK. As the association's advisor he revitalised the disintegrating Association which was fraught by financial difficulties. The membership of PPKK at this time reached a total of 208. PPKK was further encouraged by the assurance from the Member of Parliament of Pasir Mas, Inche' Yaakob bin Awang who affirmed that the State Government was prepared to look into the possibility of introducing a new Special Scheme for the Penghulus. A number of delegations was then sent to meet the State Executive Working Committee, the State Secretary, and other officers. Hence, on 28th August 1958 the much-awaited New Scheme was passed by the State Government. Though Entrusted with increased responsibilities the Association nevertheless accepted the New Scheme which entitled them to a \$M240 annual bonus. The passing of the New Scheme, however, had something to do with the coming National General Election which was due to take place in July, 1959. The New Scheme was again reviewed in 1960 and by this time PPKK

was financially stable, and due to its energetic advisor, the Association was making a name for itself through out the country.

For a third time, on the 5th of April, 1961 a representative of PPKK was sent to Kuala Lumpur to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Village Headmen of Malaya.

By 1962, it was clear that PPKK was making headway and its presence was felt by the society in general and the State Government in particular. Though not all its demands were met, for example the possession of fire-arms, it seemed to be satisfied with what it had achieved. In short, under the guidance of the new advisor, the Association's activities were rather organised and very much 'streamlined'.

Although faced with financial difficulties, PPKK's efforts to relate itself to the centre met with some success mainly due to the existence of the primordialistic sentiments. If nothing else, this brief survey of PPKK's activities and performances challenges the axiomatic conception that Kelantanese values – in this particular case, as expressed by the village leaders, the Penghulus – are very much peripheralised and in constant contradiction with the central values (Cf. Nash, 1974).

References

- (1) Manning Nash, 'Ethnicity, Centrality and Education in Pasir Mas', in William R. Roff (ed) *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*. Oxford University Press, 1974.
- (2) Rene Lemarchand, 'Political Clientelism and Ethnicity in Tropical Africa: Competing Solidarities in Nation – Building', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 66, no. 1, March, 1972.