

**Will DAP remain 'secular first'?**  
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The historic doa recital at the Penang DAP convention seeks to portray DAP as having the potential of being more efficient in carrying out Islamisation than the Malay-Muslim parties themselves.

In my blog posting at Hartal MSM, I asked if DAP were to come to power, would it introduce doa in Chinese and Tamil schools?

My question may sound rhetorical but it should make you stop and reflect on the Islamisation road on which DAP is rushing headlong.

After all, it is so keen on pioneering Islamism in situations where previously the influence of Islam was absent.

DAP's attempt to ingratiate itself with the Malay community has been gearing into an overdrive. On the other hand, the party is observing an elegant silence as to the consequences from this said engagement with Islam.

For example, Lim Kit Siang has yet to respond to Nik Aziz who stated that Lim could be the deputy prime minister if he is Muslim.

Is the requirement for such an office holder to be Muslim something DAP agrees with? PAS and DAP are partners in Pakatan Rakyat and as such must clarify their common policy on an issue as fundamental as this.

DAP's inaction, as PAS keeps pushing the envelope, is beginning to make people think that the so-called secular party has compromised on upholding secularism.

Compare the attitude of DAP before and after the last general election.

On January 15 2008, Kit Siang blogged about the 'fundamental and constitutional rights as (non-Muslim) citizens of a plural nation'

Kit Siang even wrote the following, "I commend the parent of the school prefect who not only gave full support to his son, a Form Five student who had been a prefect since he was Form Two, to stand firm on principle to the extent of being prepared to resign as school prefect and for bringing this issue (songkok as compulsory uniform for JB English College prefects) into public domain to bring public pressure to end abuses and misuses of power and rank disregard of the legitimate rights and sensitivities of all communities and religions in plural Malaysia."

The above statement by Kit Siang was written two months before March 8 and prior to DAP's marriage of convenience with PAS.

Contrast how pre-March 8, Kit Siang was so adamant in his objection on songkok being forced on non-Muslims and how post-March 8, his son Guan Eng is actively promoting selendang, which like it or not, has religious connotations of tutup aurat.

Worth highlighting is a DAP insider's take on how his party is guilty of appeasement.

The following is a reproduction of the comment by Norman Fernandez, who wrote:

"I as a DAP leader fully endorse what Helen Ang is saying. After savouring victory in 2008, most DAP leaders have been ambivalent to PAS's hardline and unilateral couldn't-care-less attitude. I think DAP has been appeasing Malay/Muslims, fortifying whatever Chinese rights and been indifferent to Indians problems.

"Lim Guan Eng as a Christian could use verses from the bible if he wish to make a point but plays to the gallery to gain Malay/Muslim votes and PAS's affection and support by instead openly styling himself as a Caliph.

"Lord knows the necessity. Instead of maintaining principles, DAP and many of its elected leaders have been 'mollycoddling' with PAS. See how DAPSY chief, Anthony Loke (is) standing together with the ultra-conservative Pemuda PAS head Nasrudin Hassan (Tantawi) demanding the revocation of the sports betting licence."

Fernandez also wrote: "On the issue of hudud and Islamic state, it has only been Karpal Singh who has stated his open stand. Have you heard the other elected leaders state their objection? Kelantan is always the model. But that is a flawed model because only 2 percent of their populations are non-Muslims.

"Has DAP highlighted to PAS the genuine apprehension to hudud and Islamic state by using the status of non-Muslims in Afganistan, Pakistan, Sudan or even Egypt? Instead, DAP sings in unison how happy non-Muslims are in Kelantan under PAS not realising there are other leaders in PAS who don't share the same viewpoint with Nik Aziz and after him could be more conservative leaders.

"DAP leaders either have not read Ketua Pemuda PAS Nasrudin Hassan's blog or have chosen to keep silent when the PAS leader justifies why non-Muslims cannot be PM or DPM by quoting the al-Quran and saying that Muslims are forbidden to take non-Muslims as friends. So what Helen Ang writes has some truth and basis."

The comment by Fernandez appeared in the feedback section to Helen Ang's Dec 9 column. Like Fernandez, I've similarly noted in an earlier letter that PAS Pemuda chief Nasruddin is constantly pronouncing 'this cannot', 'that cannot', 'this is un-Islamic', 'that is un-Islamic'.

DAP is clearly trying very hard to appeal to the Malay electorate. But just who is this model Malay voter DAP reckons it can win over? What is his profile?

If it is the orthodox Malay, DAP will need to persuade them that the party is lebih Melayu dari Melayu, lebih Muslim dari Muslim and thus quite capable of protecting and furthering Malay-Muslim interests.

Or else if DAP wants to appeal to the liberal Malay, what attraction does it hold by being seen as lebih Melayu dari Melayu, lebih Muslim dari Muslim?

We liberals – 'liberal' in the sense that we prefer a secular country to one practicing hudud – might as well just go for the genuine article Umno or PAS rather than settle for a celup version cap Cina (Chinese brand).

As the last two years have amply shown, PAS dulu, kini dan selamanya remains dyed-in-wool Islamist whereas DAP has changed like a chameleon and is now taking on the PAS colour.

Pray tell, if PAS seeks the Islamic state, and Umno and PKR are Malay-dominated parties that are duty-bound by the religion of their members to support PAS in this matter, to whom then should I turn to seek protection for my [hopefully secular] rights as enshrined in the federal constitution?

From the looks of it, not from DAP anymore.

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