

## **When recalcitrants morph into rebels**

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COMMENT Every now and then a political party is wracked by the problems caused by a stormy petrel.

The recalcitrant is born, not made, so a degree of prescience about when and how to put out the nuisance is to be greatly valued though rare to find.

It is now PAS' turn to feel the heat generated by the decision to expel its former Selangor state executive councillor Hasan Ali.

NONThe man is not going to go gently into the night; he is determined to cause as much damage as possible.

Though he does not have much support, as evidenced by the lack of nominations from the PAS branches in the state ward in which he was elected, he can count on Umno-wallahs to give him the publicity and audience for his rants.

PAS has gotten rid of him but must live for some time with the consequences of its decision to excise the gangrene from its body.

Hasan is not like Zulkifli Nordin, the former PKR MP who spelt trouble for the party early in his tenure as the representative for the parliamentary seat of Kulim Bandar-Baru.

PKR were tardy in chopping him when they had the chance to in the later part of 2008, after Zulkifli had been flagrant in violating its ideological principles when he barged into a Bar Council-organised seminar on religious conversions.

A chop in time saves the chopping party much public mortification; delay emboldens the recalcitrant to go ballistic with his "I'm the wronged one" theatrics.

Zulkifli, unlike Hasan, is a small fry; so the consequences of the delay in getting rid of him were not too costly to PKR.

In contrast, Hasan is a man with the gravitas of a long-established reputation as a motivational expert.

Reading him wrong means one is saddled with the consequences a long time after one realises the depth of one's misreading.

Hasan's appetite for power

Hasan's ambition was stoked when he was consulted by Umno's Mohd Khir Toyo on the possibility of a coalition government between Umno and PAS in Selangor as results came in on the night of March 8, 2008, that the opposition had won control of the state.

Khir was trying to forestall the formation of a PKR-led administration by propositioning Hasan, who was the PAS commissioner for Selangor, about an Umno-PAS coalition.

The talks reputedly broke down over Hasan's insistence that he be the menteri besar in such an eventuality.

The next morning PKR's Khalid Ibrahim unwittingly whetted Hasan's appetite for power further by offering

him the deputy menteri besar's position in a PKR-led government.

After that Hasan was unstoppable, much like a shark with the scent of blood in the water: he was often a source of dissidence in the state administration led by Khalid.

pkrtaman ehsan selayang ceramah 020810 hasan aliHasan, who held the Islamic affairs portfolio, took perverse pleasure in being at odds with the rest of the Selangor state government.

This he flagrantly demonstrated in the incursion of Jais (Selangor Islamic Affairs Department) into a charity dinner function hosted at the Damansara Utama Methodist Centre in August last year.

Before the initially confused matters of the incursion could settle down into something like clarity, Hasan went public with his alarms about Christian proselytisation of Muslims having occurred at the dinner.

This was a leap that turned out to be unsustainable by the facts, but that mattered little to the PAS legislator.

Hasan was not only unconstrained in raising the alarm about Christian proselytisation of Muslims - this despite a lack of evidence that this had actually occurred at DUMC and elsewhere in the country - he went to make common cause with Himpun, a body that was hastily formed to campaign against the supposed threat.

More than a torn in PAS' flesh

When it transpired that PAS wasn't going to go along with the storm fomented by Himpun with an assist from Hasan over alleged Christian proselytisation, the alarmist was unfazed.

Hasan persisted in his synthetic cause and with that he became not just an embarrassment to the party but a wound in its flesh.

That wound became an abscess when Hasan fulminated against Pakatan Rakyat supremo, Anwar Ibrahim's, predicament in the immediate prelude to the verdict to be delivered on Sodomy II.

The PAS central committee's surgical decision to bring Hasan's brazen run of dissidence to an end with his expulsion was the response of a party that knew any further forbearance towards would convert a torn in its flesh into a dagger at its heart.

NONThe combined lessons of the Zulkifli Nordin (right) episode in PKR and the Hasan Ali imbroglio in PAS would support the conclusion that some prescience is needed when assessing the character of a refractory member.

There are nuances to recalcitrance, the more brazen shades compounded of vaulting ambition and self-appointment as guardians of some confession.

The latter shades are recipes for recalcitrance morphing quickly into rebellion. Good discernment is necessary for an assessment of the threat and a surgical decision is imperative once the menace threatens to go overboard.

Pakatan's attitude towards its dissidents should be - dissent yes, insurrection no.

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