

Where does Anwar go from here (or there)?

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The letter Anwar, be brave, say no to discrimination which resembles a reaction to the opposition leader's apparent endorsement of certain discriminatory laws, presents the writer as amateurish in taking Anwar to task.

Perhaps as the letter suggests, Anwar was misquoted or more likely quoted out of context.

However, does the writer honestly expect the leader of the opposition to embrace a more liberal and/or secular view and therefore invite brickbats from the conservative and religious segment of society and even from his supporters?

In deriding the government that "knows not the difference between a democracy and a theocracy", the writer should note that there are many western/secular states which are democratic that do in fact have similar "discriminatory laws" in their books, instituted and maintain by means of popular legislation.

Being either a democracy or a theocracy has little to do with the writing of such laws although they are more prevalent in many theocratic states for obvious reasons.

The man-made laws of the land are to a far extent, the sum of views and values of the majority populace/electorate, for much of our world, even in some pseudo-dictatorships.

The letter goes on to pontificate on the promises of Anwar and prescribes the ideals of a true unifying leader of all Malaysians.

Does the writer not have a clue on the life and times of this Anwar Ibrahim?

Given Anwar's track record, can any Malaysian be confident in this person leading a formidable opposition to form a regime that respects neither race nor religion?

He is a "proponent" and a "champion" for sure, a proponent of political Islam and a champion of the Islamist, in my humble opinion.

His heyday as the glorified leader of Abim, of which many current and former members form his support base, should be a fair indication of his persuasions and hence his ulterior goals.

It is simply baffling to know how Malaysians can be so politically naïve after being played for fools time and again for so long.

One must understand the vicious forces that are at play, the volatile dynamics between the various political parties that traditionally function along the lines of race and religion, and our feudal culture of patronage and appeasement.

The point is, Anwar is caught between a rock and a hard place.

His disapproval, or the lack thereof, of any forms of legislation that purportedly discriminate against homosexuals or any other "marginalised" groups, is sure to cause a stir come what may.

This in spite of the simple fact that homosexuality cuts across all racial, ethnic, and religious lines.

The writer may do better by questioning PAS' on-and-off plans of instituting Syariah rule and for that matter, Islamic statehood, should he/she want to clamour for a "Malaysia for Malaysians" of which the letter has been extrapolated to suggesting that Anwar has completely abandoned this concept.

A more constructive argument may include nudging Anwar to make good on his "plans" to establish a shadow cabinet to rationally present "superior" alternatives to all that is formulated, modeled and instituted by the BN system.

Above all, convince Pakatan Rakyat to carve out a common manifesto by which all parties shall pledge their honour by, in order to at least placate any concerns of internal struggles and external disputes.

This rebuttal is not to condone any discrimination or of any particular minority group or to belittle the writer's efforts to uphold fairness.

But to invest any hope in Anwar to be the engine of "change" and "progress" is grossly imprudent.

Perhaps, a more realistic approach would have seen Anwar asserting genuine leadership by tackling the many "sensitive" issues head-on, instead of mitigating existential threats by avoiding the many political hot potatoes that be.

Given what a colourful orator he is, it is simply a matter of political will.

On the other hand, Malaysians need not be blindly obsessed with national unity to the point of muting our diversity and/or adapting western style liberal ideas.

Successful multicultural countries do not predicate unity upon the glossing over of differences among groups but instead establish strong and equitable frameworks that simply do not favour any one entity over another but instead provide for individual rights and liberties within the bounds of the law.

In a nutshell, attaining harmony through mutual respect.

There is simply no need to consult with the most prominent of clerics in faraway lands in our discourse of nation- building.

Our southern neighbour is a sterling example worthy to emulate.

One may believe that Anwar may lay claim as having been "reformed" by his very fall from grace and the ill treatment meted out to him by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

We can only hold our breaths as only time will tell, as the Malay saying goes, a tiger will never lose its stripes.

Once again my fellow Malaysians, after 55 years of having more of the same, where do we go from here?

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