

## **Hwa Beng: Current batch of MCA leaders have to go**

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**by Andrew Ong**

As the verbal jousting between MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek and his deputy Liow Tiong Lai rages on, one party stalwart is urging MCA delegates to ignore it and treat it like a sideshow.

For former MCA central committee member Lee Hwa Beng, neither man has shown that they have the capability to turn the party's fortunes around despite ample opportunity to do so.

mca cc meeting 050913 chua soi lek"People like Chua (left), Liow and Wee Ka Siong have to go. We have to look beneath them for new leaders because public perception of these people is not good.

"They must go for MCA to come up," Lee, who was fielded by MCA as a general election candidate five times in a row since 1990.

Lee said the 2,380 delegates that will be voting for the next party leadership on December 21 should be looking for leaders that the public, in particular the Chinese community, are willing to support.

Such leaders will not come from the current crop judging from the general election results and they are likely to be the ones that were dropped from the candidates list, opined Lee.

"To me, ideally, Ong Tee Keat should be the president and Gan Ping Sieu should be the deputy. Then there are people like Wong Nai Chee that needs to come out," he said.

Who do the Chinese want?

Tee Keat has had one run as party president but it ended in disaster.

A bitter feud with Chua resulted in an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) passing a narrow vote of no confidence against Ong, eight days shy of a year since taking helm of MCA on Oct 18, 2008.

Another EGM was called on Mar 28, 2010 to choose a new central committee. Tee Keat tried to defend his presidency against Chua and Ong Ka Ting but came in last,

thus making his 18-month tenure as MCA president the shortest ever.

NONE Assuming that all things remain equal since 2010 - that Tee Keat (left) can only garner 25 percent of the votes from the delegates - wouldn't that make a successful comeback extremely unlikely?

"I agree. The party may not like him, but ask the Chinese and see. Interview them and ask 'Who will make a good MCA president?'. They will say Tee Keat," said Lee, confidently.

Despite failing miserably to placate party warlords, Tee Keat's tenure as MCA president, more importantly as transport minister, has no doubt left a lasting impression.

He had branded himself as a no-nonsense leader. The presidential council which Tee Keat led endorsed a disciplinary council's recommendation to sack Chua, who was then deputy president, over his sex scandal.

But he will be best remembered for ordering the probe on the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal after taking over as transport minister, which has unearthed a long list of malpractices which has led to prosecution of former MCA president Lim Liong Sik and former deputy president Chan Kong Choy.

Why delegates dislike Tee Keat

Tee Keat's role in exposing the wrongs of the BN colleagues involved in the PKFZ scandal may have earned him praise from the public, but less so within MCA.

"Delegates don't like Tee Keat," said Lee, bluntly. "He's not a good PR man. He doesn't go around drinking and dining with everybody. I know him well."

And he should. Lee was the Port Klang Authority chairperson with Tee Keat in charge of the transport ministry. Together, the duo were the face of the PKFZ probe.

"Take me for example. When I was with PKA, I was hospitalised a few times. He didn't even send me flowers or ask how I was. But that's him.

"Once at a meeting, I still had a drip on my arm. He didn't ask me how I was or what I was suffering from," said Lee, who suffered from gall bladder problems in early 2009.

For Lee, come December, MCA delegates need to look beyond what Tee Keat can do for them and instead ask themselves what he can do to salvage the party in the eyes of the voters.

"MCA members must look at what the Chinese want, rather than what the MCA members want. Politics is after all (managing) public perception.

"Otherwise, to me, MCA will be a footnote in history," he said.

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