

**The fate of Gerakan
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Much has been written about Gerakan in the last week. Ever since Dr Lim Keng Yaik's interview in

Off The Edge, the tenor of these discussions is more desperate, forcing some sort of action by the party's rank and file.

Some have given up on the party, some feel the party should leave the BN and others do not want to do anything. Of course, those who have benefitted from the BN system feel a sense of loyalty to that structure. But Dr Lim Keng Yaik is right when he said that the party has compromised itself by keeping things under wrap.

Yet, this is the best time for Gerakan. It is a non-sectarian party in a coalition with much weaker race-based parties. Perhaps, that was why Dr Lim Chong Eu made his cryptic remark some months ago about the well-being of the BN.

Perhaps Chong Eu was thinking about the BN in its original form where coalition partners were treated with respect and as equals. If Dr Keng Yaik's revelations are true, it appears that the BN has not been living up to its consensus-style politics after all.

Sometimes, the internal politics of one powerful component party dictates terms for the rest. In short, the BN supreme council is perceived by the public to be akin to a rubber stamp.

So, in such a situation, what should Gerakan do? Dr Lim Keng Yaik is correct again to suggest that if the present party policy cannot carry the grassroots, then the party will have to consider leaving the coalition. More importantly, it must leave the coalition on a high note.

A veteran Gerakan leader in Penang said that the best way is to stay put and reform the BN. Koh Tsu Koon is now very vocal. If it is public perception that the land scams are happening because of the interference of other component parties, as alledged by Dr Keng Yaik, Koh need not swallow the bitter pill all alone.

The people of Penang may not have supported him in the last general elections but they certainly do not think of him as corrupt or only interested in "money, money, money" as alleged by Keng Yaik about some other component party.

So, it is only logical that Dr Koh and all aspiring Gerakan leaders band together on such a reformist platform, go public with their thoughts and make sure they institute a fairer decision-making process within the BN. The public must see this translated into action.

The hour of Gerakan is now. It has to strike whilst the iron is hot. If the party chooses to leave the BN after it failed to reform it, it may still have a political future. To do nothing and hope that the electorate will simply return them to power five years down the road is to take an even greater risk.

What most Malaysians want is a more equitable society. Gerakan's party constitution, its

track record and its ideology is now more relevant than ever before. The situation outside should not demoralise members, it should energise them instead.

Think positive but as the Gerakan adviser said, change the BN now or get out.

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