

MCA does not vet members, says Dr Chua
Malaysian Insider
Sept 5 , 2013
By EILEEN NG

MCA has admitted that it does not conduct any background checks on potential members and those with links to secret societies or triads could become members.

Its president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said vetting is only done when members are recommended as candidates for general election.

"We render services to everyone. We have an open door policy. Anyone, as long as they are Malaysia citizens above 18 years of age, can become an MCA member. That's all."

He said asking a potential member if he is a gang member is an exercise in futility.

"We will never, in our questionnaire, ask a potential member if he is a gang member. Even if you ask, they will never tell you the truth," he said after chairing the MCA central committee meeting today.

The party's past association with the underworld was dredged up when former Criminal Investigation Department director Tan Sri Zaman Khan Rahim Khan revealed that a former triad chief was a low-ranking party division chief in Penang.

He told Bernama yesterday that he arrested the triad boss-turned-politician in Thailand before he was brought back to Malaysia.

However, today Bukit Aman's secret societies, gaming and anti-vice principal assistant director Datuk Abdul Jalil Hassan said triad boss Ong King Ee @ Jackie Chan had turned over a new leaf and had joined MCA.

He was the party's Gurney Drive branch chairman but quit MCA in 2003.

When pointed out that Chan was a former MCA member, Dr Chua quipped: "It's all over, history. That one you have to ask Ong Ka Ting (former party president)."

Chan's party membership had put former MCA president Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting in a spot when a picture emerged on the Internet at the height of the party crisis in 2001.

It showed them shaking hands and lent currency to the then Youth chief Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat claim that triads had infiltrated the MCA.

Ka Ting then admitted knowing Chan and that he was also aware the man had a record of having been held in detention under the Emergency Ordinance when he joined MCA in 2000.

Chan was formerly the dragon head of Sio Sam Ong (Three Emperors), which was active in the northern states. Their members were mainly Hokkien-speaking folk.

The group came to prominence in 1992 when hired killers stormed a pre-wedding celebration in Sungai Petani, Kedah and shot dead six people.

Chan was later detained in connection with that case and was held under the Emergency

Ordinance for two years.

Checks at the MCA headquarters confirmed that Chan quit the party in 2003.

Party sources in Penang said following the huge publicity, he left the country. Chan is now understood to be based in a neighbouring country.

His supporters, who joined MCA with him back then, have either left the party or are inactive.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today said they had identified members of political parties who were former triad members.

He declined to name any of them, saying if these politicians were former members, they might have repented, adding it would be unfair to associate them with these societies now.
- September 5, 2013.

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