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Educated young Turks must consider their nation-building role

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ARE the urban educated youths of Malaysia going through a particularly expressive anti-establishment phase or are they so blind that they will not see?

A case in point is that those who have benefited the most from the National Development Policy and the current Government's largesse seem to be the very same who will turn against the political party instrumental in eradicating poverty among their own race.

Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, acting chief of Umno Youth, said at the Umno Youth assembly on June 17 that the party remained the sole vehicle for the struggle to elevate the status of all Malays, while Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) was spearheading the interests of one man.

Somewhere in time, it has been forgotten that the NDP is not about Bumiputera development per se but about redressing economic disparities and race relations management.

The education and university quotas are in place to ensure the Bumiputeras get a chance to continue higher education on par with other races. Most Bumiputera teenagers who receive these privileges are from the lower- and middle-income groups, and from the rural areas.

It is fine that the educated Bumiputera youths want to be recognised for their skills, but those in the "strings pulled" category should not forget the means through which they have reached this stage in life.

Those who fancy themselves as intellectuals now claim the NDP (the successor to the New Economic Policy) is skewed in its implementation where only a few are seen to be reaping the economic profits. If the NDP were terminated, wouldn't the majority be the ones to suffer?

Do they want the State scholarships, Federal loans and myriad grants from national companies to be given to other deserving communities? The urban scene of coffee cafes, bistros, nightspots, branded goods and flashy, expensive cars is not representative of the country. Perhaps it is indicative of their spheres of influence that the educated Bumiputera youths believe that money equals success.

These youths, perhaps spoonfed for too long, should buckle up and work within the system to change any perceived deficiencies of the NDP so that it can benefit more Malaysians and their children. For the latter are the ones who will be the biggest losers if Malaysia's educated young Turks today cannot make a clear decision on what they want for the future.

If the Opposition groups had their way, the young Malays are supposed to shun Umno for the likes of Keadilan, Pas, the DAP and Parti Rakyat Malaysia.

At the end of the day, all must acknowledge that Umno has a proven track record. It has the capacity to adapt and improve its ability to fulfil its obligation to the majority.

It has co-operated well with its political partners to bring about progress in Malaysia's 42 years of independence. Can anyone see Pas with its Islamic state or Keadilan with its "Anwarian state" (and no clear political stand) doing that?

The privileges accorded to the Malays and indigenous people of Malaysia can be repealed if circumstances warrant it. They are not God-given rights. But those among the young Malays who think the privileges are no longer necessary, after benefiting from them, should think hard.

Have the inequities been adequately redressed? They must also be aware

that destroying Malay unity in this time of political volatility may well open festering wounds that Malaysians may not be equipped to deal with.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad pointed out that: "It is the people's money which is financing their studies ..."

Those degrees and doctorates are owed in part to the simple, hardworking people whose contributions the young Turks are not often cognisant of. A portion of all earnings go towards income tax from which sums are allocated to education funds like State scholarships.

Malaysians perceive their interests more pragmatically; history has taught the people to fear, not an authoritarian government, but the chaos of riots, the heartbreak of death in violence, and the shackles of poverty.

In the West, the rights of the individual are all-important, superseding that of the community and family. Malaysians, like other Asians, value the rights of the community as much as those of the individual, and regard them as mutually complementary. The educated young Turks of Malaysia should consider all factors and their role in making this nation a better place, and make the right choice for all Malaysians tomorrow.