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Those working must pay up their study loans without delay

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"WHEN we are in politics, we should love the party more than ourselves," so said the veteran Umno member and former Senator Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Tapa (NST, June 3).

These words of wisdom have been backed by many years of party experience.

Umno had led the Alliance then and the Barisan Nasional Government of today. All these years, Umno has been the backbone of the Malays and has been doing its best to improve their lot.

One of its many achievements was the creation of opportunities for higher education by providing study loans and scholarships. This was because the majority of Malays were from poor families.

Today many have become successful businessmen or are holding high positions in the Government or private sectors. There are also many who are multi-millionaires. They are the products of Government projects.

But are they grateful to the Government?

I have my doubts. Many have turned their back on the Government by not repaying their study loans.

I refer to "40pc have not repaid PSD loans" (NST, May 31).

They seem to have forgotten that had it not been for the Government's assistance they would not be enjoying their success today.

Because they have "forgotten", others are deprived of the opportunity for higher education.

They know what they are doing is not proper but they just cannot be bothered. They have become very selfish.

If the Government had not started such a scheme they would have accused the Government of not taking care of them and would surely demand for such privileges. But now after having benefited from them, they are reluctant to repay their loans.

"Exemptions for top students," another headline said. Now, what more do they want, I ask.

As if this was not enough some even went on to ridicule the Government.

"Has the Government become so desperate for support that it has to publicly claim credit for every minute accomplishment," remarked a young Malay professional (NST, June 23).

If this person had also benefited from the Public Service Department loans, I hope he was not among the 40pc loan defaulters.

Loans taken have to be repaid. This is the universal principle. Even Malaysia repays its loans. Yet the Malays have "forgotten" this principle.

Truly, "Melayu mudah lupa".

They should realise that their negative attitude has cast a bad light on the integrity and dignity of the Malays in general. This may even be construed by others that the Malays have no principles, are untrustworthy and ungrateful. This is a very sad and shameful thing.

On the other hand, look at the Chinese. Their forefathers started classes to educate their children and even had night classes to cater for adults who had to work in the day. This was how important education was to the Chinese.

Today these classes have become high schools like the Pei Fong, the Chung Ling and the Han Chiang, to name just a few. The Chinese built these through collective efforts.

Whenever a school needed funds, it is not unusual to see many Chinese

philanthropists right down to the lowly trishaw pedlars getting themselves involved in such fund-raising projects.

Besides schools, they also built temples like the Kek Lok Si in Penang and the Cheng Hoon Teng in Malacca which are now tourist landmarks.

Perhaps the Malays should emulate the Chinese in this aspect and not rely too much on the Government.

To quote Abdul Aziz again, "The Malays are taking things for granted. They have the perception that they will always be protected."

Because of this, I am sure the Malays would not like to carry the tag "The Malays are being cared for from the womb to the tomb".

Before independence, Umno and the Malays were hardly known to the world. Today this has changed.

But don't take my word for it. Just think back the comments by foreign observers who were at the Umno 55th General Assembly recently.

The Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad concluded his marathon speech by saying "Come on Malays, have you forgotten?"

And I call upon all those loan defaulters to search their conscience. Be proud of your race.