

Will the real Malay please stand up?

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Who can blame the poor modern Malay for being confused about his identity when someone of Indian extraction claims to fight for their rights and a Chinese convert calls the non-Malays immigrants?

Former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad said recently that Arabs, Indians and Indonesians who came to Malaya became constitutional Malays, because they adopted the Malay language, their customs and traditions, and they were Muslims.

Mahathir (left in picture) also said that Malays still required affirmative action policies as their businesses were still weak and failing. He disagreed with calls from various quarters for the government to stop helping Malays as these policies had not met their goals.

Last year, Mahathir warned the Malays that they would "lose their power" if Pakatan were to assume control of the country because Pakatan leaders were "a bunch of self-serving and racist politicians".

Mahathir took pot shots at Perak ex-mentri besar, PAS's Mohamad Nizar Jamaluddin, whom he said "had followed DAP's orders until he fell". Despite Nizar's Malay name and Muslim faith, Mahathir accused Nizar of being a DAP tool and that the Perak government under Pakatan was a "Chinese government".

He also spoke ill of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and accused him of ignoring the rakyat but was using the party to further his own ambition of becoming prime minister.

Then of course, we have the Utusan Malaysia columnist Dr Ridhuan Tee Abdullah (right) who is less proud of his Chinese identity and frequently uses his assimilation into the Malay culture, his embrace of Islam and his proficiency with the Malay language to attack the non-Malay communities.

Tee had said that non-Malay-speaking Malaysians and the "ultra kiasu" will be the stumbling block to the government's transformation programmes.

So who is the ordinary Malay?

By the law of the land, every Malay is born a Muslim. When Article 11 of the constitution states that every person has the right to profess and practice his own religion, this excludes the Muslims.

Last week, Shiites in the country, who have been termed a "deviant" sect, were banned from promoting their faith to other Muslims but were free to practise it themselves.

In the last three decades, more Malay women have been donning the tudung because of peer pressure. Others complained that if they did not, their chances of promotion, especially in the civil service, were limited.

In the last decade or so, more Malay children have been segregated according to sex, and prevented from playing together. Several girls, including toddlers, are also made to don the

tudung and dress conservatively. Their dress precludes the girls from participating in more rigorous playground activities and when indulging in water sports, little girls have to wear complete head to toe outfits.

A heierarchy exists in the city

What must the rural Malay think when he sees his urban cousins frequent the clubs like Zouk or Loft? Little does the rural Malay know that a hierarchy exists in the city.

The children of politicians and influential Malays go to international schools unlike their rural cousins in the Felda settlements who just drop out from school.

In the cities, Malay kids are subject to western influence. Cheerleaders are common at school sports. School proms are held at five-star hotels, for end-of-year parties. Girls go around in slinky creations that would make their parents blush.

Alcohol is freely consumed and they think nothing of being with the opposite sex. Those who do drugs only consume "designer drugs", whereas in the Felda settlements, the kids huff glue and chase the dragon. Incest in the rural communities is a big problem because kids (and adults), have no other sexual outlet.

For the Malay elite, conditions at home are the same as any luxury hotel. They have television projectors and several maids unlike most households which are only allowed one maid, unless there are exceptional circumstances, like a sick relative in the house, in which case they might be allowed two maids.

The privileged Malay children are chauffeur driven, enjoy at least three holidays a year in Europe or the Americas and have credit cards and an allowance that would make most people with a job envious.

The next tier of urban Malay enjoys more freedom than his rural counterpart but not as much as the Umnoputra or crony offspring. He can only enjoy a drink in the privacy of his own home to avoid the debacle that people like Kartika and her friends had to endure.

If he has a girlfriend, he can only see her in public places and even then, he may not touch her for fear of the moral police who are ready to pounce on him. Unlike his more privileged Umnoputra cousin who seems to evade capture by the moral police, he has to be very vigilant as he seems to be an easy target.

Last week, Isa Samad, the chairman of Felda, accused the opposition of raising issues to erode the confidence of settlers in the government. Are they really?

Racist rhetoric and religious intolerance

Mahathir, Isa, and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his cabinet have been confusing the Malays with their racist rhetoric and their religious intolerance for so long that the Malays are incapable of thought and analysis.

The Malay mind and his behaviour are closely scrutinised. He has no leeway so that when faced with several restrictions, he finds it easier to let the government do his thinking for him.

That is why he needs those crutches that the government tells him he requires to get on in

life.

The way the Malay raises his children has affected the Malay youth and his perception of life in Malaysia.

He is told he deserves all sorts of perks and privileges. He forgets about compassion and equality. He becomes arrogant when Umno praises him for being part of the ketuanan Melayu breed. Ketuanan Melayu has made Malays lose their values and their self-respect.

Is it any wonder that Malays who venture outside of the country tend to remain overseas, as both physical and mental freedom is like an elixir of life?

Sadly by allowing Umno to think on his behalf, the Malay does not liberate his mind. He becomes ignorant and insecure. He fails to understand many things in the real world and his lack of knowledge is perhaps his greatest failing.

The Malay of today is a confused human being.

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