

**Fear didn't come first, abuse by the state did**  
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YOURSAY 'Thayaparan can't speak of the inculcation of the culture of fear without the parallel inculcation of the culture of abuse.'

The manufacturing of the fear culture

your sayOnyourtoes: The 'state' of Malaysia today is due to non-Malays being subservient, Malays being fearful to be branded as traitors to their own race and religion, and a government since independence that is ever intrusive and instrumental in engineering fear and insecurity among its citizens.

I must say these are the common theme and observation made when analysing the current situation.

Some questions: First, do you think the non-Malays dare and know how to be defiant, especially before the age of Internet and online media?

Lee Kuan Yew tried very hard to convince Malaysians that the model adopted by the Alliance government then was not workable and sustainable over the long run.

It took us more than 50 years to realise that we were on the wrong path and that also I am not sure, at this juncture, whether we are able to find the correct route.

Second, do you think the Malays are ready to change? Yes, many have become more educated and exposed, but they have also become more 'indoctrinated' over years by the state apparatuses.

I think I understand the sentiment of Pakatan Rakyat leaders by not going all out to dismantle the present 'national ethos' precisely because of Malays' insecurity and parochialism.

It will take time to change incrementally and appreciate the benefits of being more cosmopolitan, inclusive and multicultural.

Anonymous\_3hdchd: Spot on, Commander (Rtd) S Thayaparan. This is one of the best pieces I've read in a long time.

When I first came here 20 years ago, I was struck by my wife's teenage Malay cousins (nice, well-spoken, football-loving kids) who were totally incapable of thinking outside religious and racial confines.

Any comment that deviated from orthodoxy was met with 'cannot, cannot, lah'. These youngsters (i.e. those educated under the NEP dispensation from the mid-70s onwards) were shockingly conservative and victims of a narrow-minded, fear-based system.

Yes, ban the racist BTN (Biro Tatanegara) by all means, but the single biggest step toward progress would be to remove Agama classes from the schools and reduce the powers of ignorant ustaz who serve only to divide Malaysians into two distinct groups from the age of six onwards.

Paul Warren: Somewhere through the centuries, I believe the Malays had been inculcated with a faith system that ingrained in them a sense that Islam was to them a matter of personal believe and practice.

Hence you never heard of syariah-style impositions of the hudud law amongst them in the past. I stand corrected if I am wrong in that assertion.

However, somewhere along the way, power brokers discovered the elevation to the seats of power and

authority lay in the simple invocation of a divine call.

Hence you find very little criticism coming from any Muslim of Hasan Ali's claims that Islam in Malaysia is endangered. I suppose it is hard to criticise anyone speaking from the pulpit or in defense of Islam.

Some would say that the sermons read in mosques on the Friday before Anwar Ibrahim's acquittal were contradictory to the founding of Islam itself as well as politically motivated, and yet there was very little criticism.

Of those who want Islam to be personalised, their voices are lull.

Blackknight: I beg to differ with many others who saluted this 'great' piece of writing. Thayaparan seems to imply that the non-Malays are equally responsible for the plight of the fear culture prevalent among the Malays.

It is their self-interest, arrogance, supremacist thinking and religious bigotry that has got the majority of the Malays to where they find themselves. They fell for the Umno social engineering hook, line and sinker because it catered to their self-interest.

Let it not be forgotten that Lim Guan Eng paid a heavy price when he dared step out of the confines that Umno under Dr Mahathir Mohamad had prescribed for DAP and other non-Malay political leaders.

He was sent to prison because he dared challenge the notion that only a Malay leader can defend a Malay against another Malay. And the likes of the MCA were rubbing their hands in glee.

Manjit Bhatia: Thayaparan can't speak of the inculcation of the culture of fear without the parallel inculcation of the culture of abuse. Because without one, the other's worthless.

For decades, Malaysians have been cowed by the culture of abuse foremost, so allowing for the culture of fear to flourish and co-exist. The culture of fear is the corollary of the culture of abuse.

Recall the 1969 race riots: fear didn't come first; abuse (state violence) did. Fear became institutionalised once abuse was bedded down as the Umno regime's 'legitimate' response to those who dared transcend the boundaries of regime-orchestrated fear.

Their manifestations, as the gatekeepers regime subservience and psychological conditioning of Malaysians, is found in the apparatus of state terror - the police, Special Branch, the Royal Malay Regiment (all Malays); in fact, the entire armed forces of the regime.

Matsalleh1: Thayaparan, what an interesting and thought-provoking article! Your style is not always very clear, if I may say so, and I fear that may do some disservice to your argument, which is excellent and convincing.

You have very accurately identified the great flaw in this otherwise so promising country. If Malaysians find the courage to tackle it, Malaysia will become what so many of us 'mat salleh' who have affection for the country know it can be.

But the country is far gone down a dangerous path and it won't be easy - not at all. I hope readers will read you carefully.

Anonymous\_3f35: This comment piece by Thayaparan beautifully articulated the cause of Malaysia's problems and the pretty simple way to go forward, provided, yes, provided we have the courage to take on the forces of fear-mongering head on.