

What the Chinese really, really want
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COMMENT At least, we now know thanks to DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng that "PAS has never killed a single Chinese. This is a fact." The implication being that Umno has? Is this a "fact", too? So, the Chinese have nothing to worry about.

And by the by, no need to worry about that syariah law that PAS seems so keen about; hudud does not kill people, people do.

If you really are multiracial party, wouldn't it be accurate (as a nod to your non-Chinese members) to argue that "PAS has never killed a single Malaysian" (To the best of my knowledge they did not kill A Kugan, Aminulrasyid Amzah and Ahmad Sarbaini, just to name a few) and does the DAP really think that the murder of Teoh Beng Hock was racially motivated instead of politically motivated?

Don't get me wrong, from what I've heard and read, Lim did make the appropriate noises when it came to the inclusiveness of his party but the reality is what the Chinese want, what they really, really want, is a Chinese party who will champion their community. Most times all this "justice and fairness" talk seems more like a fait accompli.

What was excruciating besides the horrendous translations during the live debate was the spectacle of Chinese MCA and DAP supporters (not to mention the "titans" themselves) whooping and hollering to the communalist tune of the Umno dance factory.

lim guan eng chua soi lek debate press conference MCA, the sole member of Umno's First Wife Club, attempting to regain the attention of the Chinese community from the newly cosmetically enhanced DAP, with the most vulgar of come ons - money, money, money, Chinese schools, PAS, PAS, PAS.

For far too long the Chinese community had it easy. There was the role of watchdog and running dog and sometimes depending on the issue; the MCA was chided on its role as the latter without any real consequence.

The Malays had the choice between the gravy train which was Umno and piety which was PAS, and although the gravy train only had room for a select few, it was obviously better than the alternative, which was waiting in religious chains for a handout from God.

The Indians, of course, chose MIC instead of establishing deep roots within the DAP. The Orang Asli and the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak had very little choice since their subjugation to Umno involved a whole different set of oppressive state measures that non-Malays are largely ignorant of.

Mainstream political pundits may be excited about a new era of political debate and the apparent (to them) "edge" MCA chief Dr Chua Soi Lek had over Lim but the reality is, the debate was nothing more than the equivalent of a fairly tame Internet flame war, where two grown men strayed off topic and spoke to their respective peanut galleries, with the occasional taunts (questions which really had nothing to do with the topic at hand) from their opponents supporters.

The debate itself highlighted everything which is wrong with the repellent MCA. Chua's admonishment to Lim for giving false hope (isn't "false hope" an oxymoron?) to the non-Malays (and Chinese specifically) that the top roles of public service was beyond them by virtue of "race" points more to the MCA's subservience to their duplicitous master rather than the bitter (hopefully for the time being) BN-created reality.

A reversal of roles?

After watching this debate I'm extremely pessimistic that we will ever move beyond our communal preoccupations. I have no idea if the DAP can sustain its multiracial ambitions seeing as how at the drop of a hat they will engage the MCA over the issue of "Chinese interests". Or put it another way, are the multiracial ambitions of the DAP merely window dressing?

If Pakatan Rakyat ever comes into power and the MCA somehow survives (there is always a need for dissenting voices) will the guardianship of Chinese interests fall to them? Will the MCA reform and play the role the DAP had played for so long?

Will the DAP continue its multiracial stand when history has shown that the Chinese vote will swing to whomever they think best protects their "interest". And let's face it, the interest of the nation takes precedence over any single community.

lim guan eng chua soi lek debate reaction from audience And since we're indulging in communal expectations and fears, if ever the time comes when Pakatan begins the arduous task of dismantling the state's (read: Umno created) apparatus of racism and bigotry, would the same be done for the private sector which is plagued by its own forms of discrimination? A private sector dominated by the Chinese community.

I haven't heard anyone make the argument that no such discrimination exists or that the state has no business involving itself in the private sector.

There's always a combination of communities which is left out of the discourse when it comes to political issues in Malaysia. This time it was the Indians and Malays. Let me be specific - the Indians and Malays who buy into this whole PKR and DAP are multiracial parties concept. This is exactly what the racist Umno desires.

The hawks in Umno realise that the MCA is hemorrhaging Chinese votes and the only way this will stop is if the Chinese and other communities are reminded why they fear each other. They need to be reminded that only Umno, with the complicity of their non-Malay lackeys, can keep the peace and maintain stability.

It also plays up on the fears of the Malay community seeing how much influence the Chinese have on their political future.

The attacks that the DAP has been under by the outsourced thugs of Umno of the alleged "alliance" between the DAP and the PAP and the attacks Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has received for his so-called pro-Jewish stance and the attacks from former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad of how Pakatan are merely puppets of American and Jewish interests, all contribute to the siege mentality that Umno is determined to instill in the Malay community.

Still playing the same game

We have been told by Pakatan that the rules of the game have changed. Then why is it they are still playing by the same old rules? This debate does nothing but warm the hearts of the hardcore racials within Pakatan for whom the term "multiracial" is just a variation of the concept of 1Malaysia to be used whenever convenient to fish for votes.

Imagine an alternate scenario where the DAP stuck to its guns and refused to debate the MCA on this racist topic but rather demanded for a debate between Anwar and PM Najib Razak since these two are contenders for the Putrajaya throne or demanded that the topic centre on issues affecting all Malaysians, whom the DAP claims to represent.

As it is, this debate merely confirms that the rules of the game hasn't changed - that the DAP's role in

Pakatan is to pick up the Chinese vote as is PKR and PAS to scoop up the Malay vote.

And what exactly was at stake here? The Chinese vote? The desperation of MCA and the by-elections wins of the DAP is evidence that voting members of the Chinese community have chosen to reject MCA and the rotting BN.

If the DAP had chosen not to debate the MCA, what did they (DAP) think the Chinese community would do? Abandon the DAP and go running back to MCA?

No, this was a gesture by the DAP to reassure those Chinese who don't sincerely buy into the whole multiracial thing going on in the DAP that their interest would always be protected. Maybe this is the nature of Malaysian politics until the rapidly growing Malay demographic completely erodes any utilitarian value of having multiracial parties.

The "sloppy seconds" debate in English or/and Malay proposed by Lim and Chua, is just adding salt to the wound. The DAP and Pakatan had its chance to make a symbolic gesture or who knows even stick to its multiracial principles but instead chose to play the same old game.

Umno and BN should be kicked out of Putrajaya but every time I see Pakatan in action or imagine the day when PKR, PAS and the DAP eventually reaching Putrajaya with their respective cultural baggage, I am reminded of the final scene in 'The Candidate', where the senator-elect who has compromised everything on his way up, asks - "What do we do now?"

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