

The naive and sentimental Malaysian patriot

MalaysiaKini.com

Aug 28, 2013

By S Thayaparan

"The duty of a patriot is to protect his country from its government."

- Thomas Paine

COMMENT With each passing year, it gets more and more difficult to celebrate Merdeka. With each passing year, the Umno establishment attempts to coerce some form of "patriotism" that gives form to the charade that we are one big happy multiracial family.

NONEThe latest brew from the cauldrons of Putrajaya as espoused by Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek (left), is the playing of the national anthem and two patriotic clips before movie screenings for a couple of days before and after Merdeka.

"The movie-goers shall stand up when national anthem is played to show respect. And cinema operators will in charge of monitoring this," he said.

So let me get this straight. Some young cinema ushers are going to "monitor" a group of Malaysians in their patriotic duty of standing up for the national anthem.

Shabery continues in what was described as a "quip" but I like to think of it as an ominous fascist foreshadowing, "I hope I don't have to arrange police personnel to station in the cinema."

With the crime rate as it is, with the home minister going on about giving a list of "gangster organisations" that supposedly threaten the fragile security of this country, which in turn necessitates, the creation or reviving of repressive laws, the good minister thinks it appropriate to post police personnel at cinemas to ensure that Malaysians are patriotic.

In addition, think of the endless permutations of the politics of hate something like this could foster. Pro-establishment blogs would no doubt have a field day uploading pictures of "disrespectful" Malaysians who do not stand up for the national anthem or whatever other acts could be termed as disrespectful to 'Malay' institutions.

No doubt these uploaded pictures would prominently feature Malaysians from the

Chinese community because according to the right-wing narrative coming out of Umno, the so-called Chinese tsunami is what endangers their hegemony at this point of time.

Apa lagi Cina mahu?

Utusan Malaysia, the Umno mouthpiece goes on about "Apa lagi Cina mahu?" which begs the question after 56 years, the Umno powers-that-be do not know. Meanwhile during the fasting month, the rather ludicrous suggestion of "fasting in solidarity" with our Muslims brothers and sisters was attempted in the hopes of fostering unity.

NONENever mind that there has been no movement from the Muslim community that has ever attempted such an act of goodwill on a national-level concerning observing the religious obligations of non-Muslims.

Certain Islamists in this country are so intent on safeguarding the sanctity of Muslim houses of worship that they are willing to demolish such a holy site if it is "infected" by the inclusion of another religion on its premises.

Meanwhile, "director of criminal investigations (CID) Bukit Aman Hadi Ho Abdullah said the police records of known gang members revealed that 71 percent were Indians." So, I guess we know what Indians 'mahu', right?

Perhaps if Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had any intention of doing his job he would not be asking Deputy Minister in the PM's Department P Waythamoorthy to quit the government but instead ask the law enforcement agencies to work with the cabinet member specifically chosen (or we are told) to address this problem and come up with workable solutions.

Robber cops

Of course, Waythamoorthy having beseeched the Indian community to return two-thirds majority to Umno-BN is discovering that taming the beast from the inside is near impossible but what is worse is that such efforts are in direct contradiction to the business as usual agenda of this supposed "reforming" regime.

Any comment of mine on the plight of the Orang Asli and the 'other' bumiputera of this country would merely be lip service to whatever principles were supposed to get them out of the quagmire they are in but so far, neither alliance has seen fit to address their plight with any sincere effort.

A few days before our big Independence day celebration, normally characterised by closed roads and displays of patriotism, The Sun runs a story titled 'Robber cops' of one Malaysian who went out of his way to foil snatch thieves only to discover they were off-duty police officers.

Saravanan Batumalai is an example of a right-thinking Malaysian acting on nobler instincts to protect a fellow Malaysian, which to me is the best example of patriotism.

Another example is the comment piece by the ever-reliable R Nadeswaran - 'No cover up' - which not only deal with Saravanan's act and the police response to it but also reaffirms his stand on having an ombudsman for all enforcement agencies and government departments and not just an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) for the police force.

Nades's stand has earned him some rather unflattering commentary from certain quarters but in my opinion is perfectly reasonable and well-defended.

Hari Raya open houses

Ever since the ascendance of Pakatan Rakyat as a credible alternative to BN, and the total dominance the alternative alliance has over the online discourse, dissenting voices have been marginalised or vilified. From issues such as the Lynas debate and issues of race, both alliances have sought to control the discourse through hate speech or through the 1Malaysia or Bangsa Malaysia propaganda.

This is something any right-thinking Malaysian should be cognisant off. Reading about these so-called robber cops got me thinking of the recent open house I attended by invitation by the Royal Malaysian Navy held in KD Sri Gombak.

There not only did I reconnect with comrades I had lost touch with, but I also spent a great deal of time with former crew members from the various ships I served on. These "ratings" (other ranks) that were mostly Form Three dropouts had served under me in various capacities over the years.

They insisted I meet their families and informed me that time spent in service enabled them to guide their children to higher education and a "better life". Every single one of them reminded me that discipline, hard work and a "hippy Indian officer" that was very tough but fair, ensured they get the required skills and proper mindset to survive and prosper with honour after service.

Every time I read about another scandal involving the security apparatuses of the

state or I read jingoistic statements from personalities using these institutions for propagandistic purposes, I get extremely upset. These days such institutions have been politicised and they have no credibility whatsoever.

Whenever I see military or police parades, I am reminded of another time and service that produced Malaysians like those I met at the Hari Raya open house. Thank the heavens the Umno establishment has had a rethink in the way how it handles public demonstrations because, the image of the security forces in the minds of the rakyat these days, is one that is used against them instead of institutions which are supposed to safeguard their interest.

Personally, I have had enough of slogans, propaganda and the promises of a better Malaysia. As long as we do not progress this Merdeka celebration like many others before it and after, will always be a farce orchestrated by the likes of 'Tanda Putera' director Shuhaimi Baba.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/239514>