

Left to Dr M, we'll be caught in a time warp
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COMMENT So, after two general elections and no better results, the self-styled leader of the BN Dr Mahathir Mohamad has identified the DAP Chinese as the root of all problems in Malaysia.

In his latest blog posting, Mahathir said that DAP Chinese do not believe in the concept of sharing whilst MCA does. In a multiracial country, unless everyone is willing to give up identifying with their ethnicity, then a power-sharing formula is the only way forward.

Mahathir, as usual, speaks from both sides of his mouth. As his biographer Khoo Boo Teik aptly explained, Dr M is a paradox and very often conflates fact with fiction to make his case.

In this case, he has correctly identified power sharing as a formula for the successful governing of a multiracial country and in the same breath, condemns DAP Chinese for not wanting to share.

As he said, after the 1969 race riots, DAP was the only party that refused to join the BN. This is the first time I have heard about DAP turning down the Alliance's invitation to join the BN. Perhaps DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang can elaborate.

We all know that Mahathir is the patron of Malay rights group Perkasa and he is more a politician than anything else. There are no permanent enemies in politics and Mahathir has been in and out of Umno more times than most of that party's members.

He was kicked out by Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman (right in picture) before rejoining under Abdul Razak Hussein, he left after he failed to control the then-sitting PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and then rejoined when Najib became Umno president.

It remains to be seen whether he will remain in Umno or quit to lead Perkasa and Isma full-time.

Perhaps the best way for DAP Chinese to reform is to invite Mahathir to be a member. The DAP will benefit from Mahathir's long and deep knowledge about politics. Now that Karpal Singh is no longer chairperson, Mahathir can make an excellent chairperson.

Obviously, the DAP Chinese not only needs to learn about "sharing" but they also need to understand winning elections Malaysian style. Mahathir never lost two-thirds majority once during his premiership.

He is also a great visionary and his knowledge about “deep structures” in government will help the DAP win over not only the Chinese but also the other major communities in the country.

MCA cannot share

Whilst it is constitutionally possible to make Mahathir the chairperson of the DAP, it is impossible for the MCA to do the same. So despite its culture of sharing, the MCA cannot actually make Mahathir its president.

It has been under the tutelage of Mahathir when the latter was chairperson of the BN but it cannot actually accommodate Mahathir as the party chairperson. This is the extent of the MCA’s sharing concept.

Today, it cannot even win over Chinese Malaysians because most of them, according to Mahathir, have chosen to become DAP Chinese, the Chinese who do not know how to share. This is despite our shared experience of being victims of potholes, crime, taxes, corruption and the ultimate gift of Dr M: Formula 1 Racing!

If it is true that no single ethnic group in this country must ever have economic as well as political power then the rule should also apply to class. There really should not be a class of people who control the nation’s wealth, rule over its regulatory system, control government-linked companies and all other facets of life in the country.

The reality is that it is not so much an ethnic issue as it is a class issue. At the stratosphere of economic life, there is really very little animosity. The political, economic and religious elite in Malaysia get along very well indeed.

Some of them even dare to compare themselves with the royals. So it is no longer possible to hoodwink the nation any more.

If the BN government has a more competent leadership, if they continued to deliver on their promises of progress and development; if they are strict and stern with religious and political extremism instead of its current selective prosecution, the latest being Selangor deputy speaker Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad (above) who was charged twice with the same “crime”, Malaysians will return to support the coalition.

The government needs to buck up and do so quickly. Whilst it lost its two-thirds majority in parliament in 2008, the popular vote in 2013 and can still stay in power in the next general election by appealing to its vote base through NGOs Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Isma) and Perkasa, it will be at the expense of national development.

Mahathir understands this very well and he can see all the ugly monsters rising in the wake of a weak and some would say illegitimate government. It is not just winning elections that give legitimacy but how elections are won.

More importantly, how a government conducts itself is equally important after elections are over. To date, the government is not very impressive and that is putting it mildly.

Dr M, DAP should consider muzakarah

So, if Dr M has failed to reform Umno, cried publicly about his failure to transform the Malays and have worked so hard to enrich his Chinese friends only to lose the Chinese ground, what else to do except to reform the enemy, the DAP.

Both Dr M and the DAP should consider seriously a muzakarah (discussion), to discuss their differences and see how the good doctor can help inculcate the "sharing" gene into a political party that was led by the late Karpal (right). Certainly, the DAP will not let Dr M's ethnic origins get in the way.

Mahathir aside perhaps the best thing the government can do right now is to approach national development without the fanfare of its publicity campaign, which is really unrealistic. It is now most important for the PM to demonstrate clearly and positively that someone beside Mahathir is leading the country.

I fear that if left to the good doctor, we will all be caught in a time warp comprising ethnic battles, failed social engineering and a really bad education system. The doctor in the house is bad for the nation's health. Better he is confined in the DAP and those "un-sharing" Chinese people.