

**YOURSAY | History should be based on facts, not politics**

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**Yoursay**

YOURSAY | 'Acceptance and tolerance are what is lacking in our society.'

Kim Quek: Independent historian Ranjit Singh Malhi is correct in his narration of the completely Malay-centric school history textbooks since 1996.

Such teaching of history that virtually obliterates the role and contribution of non-Malays in nation-building for the past two centuries has undoubtedly contributed to the deeply ingrained "Ketuanan Melayu" mindset among Malays - as if the country belongs only to the Malays.

The proof of this phenomenon is the completely racially polarised voting patterns in the 15th general election, with virtually all non-Malays voting for multi-racial Pakatan Harapan while the overwhelming majority of Malays voting for the Malay-only Perikatan Nasional.

Unless this serious and fundamental flaw in our education system is corrected, all

efforts of reforms to build the “New Malaysia” under the government led by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will be futile.

Anwar should therefore include the proper correction of our history textbooks to reflect our truthful history as an urgent and indispensable item in his reform agenda.

Fair Play: Ranjit, no doubt Anwar would read your message and act on it. Here is why. A true history covering all the events, minor and monumental, leading to the independence of Malaya in 1957 and later the formation of Malaysia in 1963, is the most important national treasure a nation could ever possess.

No doubt Anwar will recognise all these events leading to nationhood status and ensure the documentation of the journey to nationhood in 1957 and later 1963. Our first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman started the journey by taking the first step. Our 10th prime minister Anwar will lead the nation to International recognition and acceptance as a world-class nation.

6th Generation Immigrant: Anwar should hopefully be drawn immediately to read this open letter personally and put an end to the desecration of Malaysia's place in world history - we are all jigsawed into each country's world history are we not?

Today, Malaysia's contorted history is like a jigsaw piece that already cannot fit anywhere into that bigger piece of the completed puzzle. For example, there are many versions of Anwar's political battles against former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad or even versions of former prime minister Najib Abdul Razak's 1MDB debacle - all reported worldwide.

How would Anwar or his grandchildren feel if Malaysian historical recorders only have Mahathir and Najib's versions and interpretations in Malaysia's history books?

Come to think of it, hasn't all these been happening already since 1971, the government's New Economic Policy (NEP) has been slowly garbled to mean something different. Correct and true history is important, it must fit like a jigsaw in our future.

MS: Ranjit, I do hope Anwar finds the time to read your letter and do what is required. He should know what action by way of a policy directive is required to correct the blatant politicisation of history by Malay supremacists.

If he doesn't know where to start, he may consider getting historians in your mould to present to his government a series of actionable steps which Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek may incorporate into her plans for 2023.

BlackDeer5292: I was at one of the state museums a few months back and was curious about the lopsided portrayal of the various ethnic groups within our country. Suffice it to say that not much attention or pride was given to the exhibits for the minority cultures, it was quite disheartening to see as a loyal, tax-paying, and patriotic Malaysian.

While I wholeheartedly applaud and am rightly proud when any one culture is portrayed with so much grace and grandeur, the sidelining of other cultures is very apparent to any local or foreign visitor to our cultural centres. We ought to be proud of our multiculturalism, we are one of the very few countries in the world that are recognised for this uniqueness.

Just as having a strong family takes hard work from each member - father, mother, and children, so a good, strong country takes hard work and sacrifices from everyone. Don't expect it to be easy, but know that we are family and Malaysia deserves our best.

Maya: Ranjit, if people are willing to accept the truth, only then will things happen. Acceptance and tolerance are lacking in our society. Sadly, we are all not critical thinkers and accept whatever is written as the holy truth. The students just mug the facts to excel in exams. They have no choice because they never read the real version.

Worst still, history is rarely given any importance by academia and hence we are in this deep hole. They say change is difficult to come by.

Anwar is not going to stir the hornet's nest at least not in the near future. Moreover, our education system itself is in shambles and needs to change. How Fadhlina will handle or change anything will be a clue in which direction we are headed before the truth about history will be appreciated.

SK1008: History is about facts that occurred. I am now 72 years old. Why should the history I studied as a primary student from 1957-1962 be different from what is taught today? History cannot be changed. There is nothing to be ashamed of in documenting the truth. We still moved forward as one nation.

Headhunter: Let's be honest, our history was not written by historians but by politicians disguised as historians. Sabah and Sarawak have an equally rich history but little is mentioned of the two states in our school textbooks.

Magnanimous46: Thank you, sir, for your continuous effort to address the distortion and half-truths in our secondary school history textbooks. But apparently, the education authorities are not interested. They prefer to let sleeping dogs lie. Does this mean they condone the alleged obliteration of the historical role played by the non-Malays in pre and post-independent Malaya?

Do they not want the young minds in our schools to know the contributions and sacrifices made by the non-Malays towards nation-building? Does this also mean the alleged improprieties were knowingly and/or deliberately condoned for a specific political agenda that amounts to racial bias and prejudices against the non-Malays?

It is said we can wake a sleeping man but not one pretending to sleep. The alleged racial bias and manipulations in our history text took place during the decades of the Umno/BN era. Interestingly they are now senior partners in Anwar's government. So the problem is not outside the government and accordingly, it should not be an issue fixing the matter provided they are all thinking of a united Malaysia visualised by the Agong. Would Anwar be up to honouring his election promises to treat all Malaysians fairly and inclusively irrespective of origin, race, and religion?

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