

May 13 - let sleeping dogs lie
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I read with interest on readers' comments about the latest book on the May 13 incident authored by Dr Kua Kian Soong. While I do not want to delve into the accuracy of what the author wrote, I cannot but feel that the book has touched some raw nerves among certain sections of the Malay and Chinese society whose family members had died in the tragic incident nearly 40 years ago.

The author has gone into a minefield by publishing this book as old wounds will be reopened and people regardless of race might get emotional when discussing this black incident which nearly destroy the nation's fabric. Let sleeping dogs lie and let the matter rest - one man version's of the incident is not the whole truth. There were other people who were the main actors of the racial riots.

It is a well-known fact that the first prime minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, had to relinquish his post due to the May 13 incident as a lot of young Malay Turks were angry with him for overstaying his welcome. He also did not formulate an assertive policy to help the Malay community compete with the Chinese in business and commerce. His downfall is due to the fact that the Malay community thought that he had given 'too much face' to the Chinese businessmen. His private lives didn't go down well with the Muslim Malay community either.

The NEP, which was the product of the racial riots, has managed to produce a Malay middle-class which can compete with their non-Malay counterparts in this country. But sad to say, the noble aim of the policy to restructure Malay society to be at par with others has been hijacked by the ruling elites to enrich themselves, their families and cronies.

Although we are on the threshold of reaching 50 years of nationhood, race relations between the various communities are in a fragile state. The Kampong Medan incident some years back shows how a small misunderstanding can turn into a bloody brawl where scores of people can be killed or maimed. It doesn't help either when a 'keris' is wielded during an Umno meeting and racist remarks made which have hurt other people's feelings.

And then we have a minister making racist remarks against a minority community in the United States, all of which doesn't help in nation-building. It makes one wonder how such dimwits can reach the pinnacle of Malaysian politics.

Abject poverty, however, will lead to racial riots and the government, to its credit, has managed to reduce poverty among the various races in this country since independence. While poverty affects all of society, it must be said that the economic pie should be evenly distributed amongst all strata of society - rather than just among the elite - in order to reduce the economic gap between the rich and poor.

A majority of our citizens who were born after May 13 1969, did not suffer the hardships that their forefathers faced during the racial turmoil and while it is a good thing that various books have been published, we should move on with life and let the black incident be in the past.

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