

Recolouring May 13 history
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Christine Chan

May 13 is undeniably a black spot in Malaysian history. But some Malaysians have decided to turn things around and commemorate the event differently.

NONE"Instead of seeing May 13 negatively, we could use this as a lesson to unite us," said businessman Anas Zubedy who spoke yesterday on how to recolour that day.

Anas, (right) who is known for his full page advert in The Star which reportedly cost RM 1.5 million last year, suggested to the 100-strong audience at Starbucks Bangsar Village that May 13 could be remembered by simple gestures of unity.

"We could say a simple prayer, have a unity meal, exchange gifts and most importantly parents can talk to their children about the necessity of unity," he explained at the Live & Inspire series which feature a motivational speaker every Thursday at that venue.

NONEFounder of the Live & Inspire series Tim Fernandez (right) concurred, saying that instead of seeing May 13 in black and white, we should recolour that memory.

"Malaysia is not proud of the incident, but we can shift to remember and appreciate the racial differences among us," he added.

When asked if a reconciliation committee is necessary for Malaysians to live and learn, Anas said that we do not need to know the gruesome details of that day.

May 13 shrouded in mystery

"Even if a single Malaysian was killed, we should be unhappy. It is not important to know who started it as that is just immature finger pointing," he said, adding that as long as we admit that a mistake is made, we should move on.

Anas was five on 1969 and recalled his father coming home in a hurry on that fateful day and frantically bolting up all the doors at home.

"He took a parang and kept it close to him. Of course I was too young to understand then," he shared with the crowd comprising all races of all ages.

NONEGrowing up in a Chinese area in Penang, he said that although his was the only Malay family there, he believed that his neighbours would come to their rescue if attacked.

"I believe that only a small group of Malaysians failed while Malaysia had succeeded, because not all Malaysians were participatory to the May 13 riots," he added.

Given the significance of the event, the audience were still blurry about what happened on that day 41 years ago.

Little is known

A member of the audience, only known as Aisha apologetically asked:

"May I know what actually happened that day?"

Another pointed out that not much details of May 13 are found in school history text books, hence she asked if it is possible to incorporate more information on the incident to educate the young.

Meanwhile, 20-year-old student Joyce Chin thought that May 13 was about "some conflicts between the Chinese and Malays".

"I remember studying this in history but there were no details as it was considered 'sensitive'," she said.

Her classmate Khairy Al-Fiqry recalled his grandfather telling him about the incident in Kampung Baru where the "parangs were flying".

"We should discuss it, so we can learn how to be better than we were before," he added.

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