

**'Agama, bangsa dan negara' - Umno-style
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A clarion call or a cry to rally the faithful to battle is made particularly so when a group is under siege. For years, Umno used agama, bangsa dan negara (religion, race and nation) as the battle cry to marshal the Malays to its banner. It was Umno's polemical postulating that no other factor could be more important than the protection of the Malay's religion, race and nation, which of course could only be assured by Umno.

But in reality the rousing ethno-religious alarm was exploited more to hide, gloss over or excuse away the Umno-led government's lack of accountability, poor governance, indiscretion and plain corruption, proving Samuel Johnson's warning in 1774 that false use of the term 'patriotism' would be the last refuge of the scoundrel.

Another word used in recent times by the same people with similar base intention has been 'Malay institute'. The current Facebook support of school principal Siti Inshah Mansor, despite her outrageously vocal bigotry against her pupils, is a prime example of blind defence of a 'Malay institute'.

In this notorious incident, we witness Muhyiddin Yassin's absurd call for a committee to investigate a simple case of clear cut bigotry, so obvious it's best left to the police to resolve (as was the issue of Penang mosque sermons). Additionally, the integrity of the committee has started off tainted when it included the Education Director who had already cleared Siti Inshah of any racist polemics. So don't blame cynical us if we see it as a heel dragging tactic to avoid arriving at the truth that a seditious crime had been committed.

And it's precisely this refusal to act promptly and decisively, or to allow the police to act on it without political interference, that has given rise to the partisan speculations now raging on Facebook, only further inflaming the racist speculations? Even Umno Youth Chief, Khairy Jamaluddin has mentioned the lack of prompt resolution as the cause of the Facebook war.

Other examples of rallying blindly to the defence of 'Malay institutions' have been the automatic support given by some quarters to the questionable, worrying and indefensible conduct of the police force, MACC and some senior civil servants. The chief secretary to the cabinet was instrumental in defending the indefensible in a shameful case involving the last.

Then one day Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin made a stunning statement that required an immediate amendment to Umno's battle cry. He declared himself a Malay first and a Malaysian only second, which effectively put paid to the relevance of the last component.

Perhaps to retain the nice ring of the tripodal mantra, the silent consent must have been to replace negara with raja. So we have seen lately, perhaps coincidentally perhaps not, a spate of Umno accusations of lèse majesté against Pakatan-led state governments of Penang, Selangor, and once the Pakatan-ruled Perak. Even Pakatan in Johor was not even spared as the Barisan Nasional must be fearing Chua Jui Meng influencing the Chinese voters in the next election.

But if we carefully examine events and facts, the revelation would be that Umno leaders, past and present, have collectively been the exclusive abuser of royalty, religion and race.

Let's examine the first, raja. One may accuse Karpal Singh of committing lèse majesté

against the Perak sultan but the DAP chairperson did not show any disrespect to the royal person. All he did was to lodge a legal suit based on a constitutional disagreement with the sultan's action, a legitimate pursuit ironically made possible by Dr Mahathir Mohamed when he was PM.

But what about this one - on Dec 10 1992, Dr Affifuddin Omar, an Umno man from Padang Terap, no doubt given the imprimatur by his party leaders, asked in Parliament:

'How can we continue to uphold rulers who are known to be robbers, adulterers, drunkards and kaki pukul (thugs)?' [...]

'They (the rulers) must be made to realise that they do not own this country. They are not Superman but placed on their thrones by the people. 'The real power did not lie with them, but with us - the representatives of the people.'

Which 'non' could have said that and got away? None. Only Umno and Umno alone could have gotten away with its abuse of the raja whom they claim to defend today. Francis Bacon once said: 'The zeal which begins with hypocrisy must conclude in treachery; at first it deceives, at last it betrays', but obviously Umno has done it the other way around.

Then we come to agama. Let's not worry too much about corruption and un-Islamic practices over the last three decades. During the current and most holy month of Ramadan, we have already witnessed an astonishing series of lies emanating from some Umno-linked Malay institutes.

There was also a sinister attempt by a Muslim leader allied to Umno to sell us the lie about a so-called 'new' constitution that will disadvantage the Malay community, a man already notorious for his lying ways. And not too long ago we read of wild boar heads being cast into a mosque to ferment religious conflict. They had to be wild boars because only non-Muslims could openly purchase a pig's head.

And finally on bangsa we have Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a man who served as PM for more than two decades with one singular aim, to build self esteem and confidence in the Malays to be competent and competitive. His noble obsession has been like the burden of Sinbad when he had the Old Man of the Sea sitting on his shoulders.

Yet in one fell swoop he inexplicably destroyed his life's efforts, when he declared that the 'merito-crats', the 'nons', are racists. Did he realise that his in-your-face message to the 'nons' carried along with it another far more painful and devastating message?

He was essentially saying to the Malays that they weren't up to meritocracy. Was he suggesting they are inferior and cannot compete against non-Malays on a level playing field. Perhaps he has implicitly suggested they ignore the examples of Malays like Razak, Dr Ismail, Hussein Onn, Ghazali Shafie and a host of other Malay giants. I wonder whether he excluded himself.

Yes, the man who would be the Moses of the Malays, leading them from the wilderness into a new Promised Land, he who wanted to remove the psychological 'crutches' from them has changed his mind, no doubt implying to them to hang on to those props. I am reminded of Marcus Antonius words about Brutus:

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart.

Raja, agama dan bangsa? Yes, the raja had been resoundingly vilified, the tenets of agama totally and disrespectfully ignored, and the hearts of bangsa torn apart with the most unkindest cut of all - all by Umno.

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