

Dr M: Genesis of racialism began with PAP
Malaysiakini.com
September 14, 2010

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has blamed Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) and its founder Lee Kuan Yew as the root cause of racialism in Malaysia.

In a lengthy blog posting today to rebut Lee's assertions in a recent interview with the New York Times, Mahathir argued that Singapore's short two-year union with Malaysia between Sept 16, 1963 to Aug 9, 1965 was enough to "sow the seeds of Chinese racialism".

chedet mahathir blog 210508"Before Singapore joined the Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak to form Malaysia, there was less racial politics in the Federation of Malaysia," he claimed in a posting entitled 'Malaysia according to LKY'.

Recounting the 1955 elections, Mahathir said that Malays, who then made up 80 percent of the population, were willing to offer several constituencies to the few Chinese and Indian candidates and ensured that they won.

As a result of the thumping victory by the Alliance (predecessor to BN), the country's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman rewarded the minorities with one million unconditional citizenship, reducing the Malay majority to 60 percent, said Mahathir.

lee kuan yew" In 1963, Singapore became a part of Malaysia. Despite having promised that the PAP will not participate in Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak politics, Kuan Yew reneged and the PAP tried to displace the MCA in the Alliance by appealing to Chinese sentiments in the Peninsular.

"Of course, the slogan was 'Malaysian Malaysia' which implied that the Chinese were not having equal rights with the Malays. If this appeal to Chinese sentiments against the Malays was not racial, I do not know what is racial.

"But the Peninsular Chinese favoured working with the Malays in Umno. They totally rejected PAP in 1964," he said.

Damage done in a few short years

Followed by the Singaporean race riots of 1964 and the booting of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia, the PAP-induced 'Chinese racialism' and its "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan was picked up by DAP, argued Mahathir.

This, he said, led to that the Alliance's second largest party - the Chinese-based MCA - to question Malay special rights while Umno was at the same time "clamouring" for more Malay economic clout.

This, said Mahathir, served as the backdrop for the 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur.

"With the background of Singapore's activities in Malaysia in the short three years of its membership, can we really believe that if it had not been 'turfed out' race relations would be better in Malaysia?

"Racism in Malaysia is clearly the result of Singapore's membership of the country for just

three years," he added.

Kuan Yew's 'amnesia'

Mahathir was responding to Lee's claims that race relations in Malaysia would have been better had Singapore not been expelled from the Federation of Malaysia as it could have reproduced city state's model of treating its citizens equally.

Taking jabs at the 'Singaporean model', Mahathir said that unlike Malaysia, Singapore was a country in which its majority Chinese citizens controlled 95 percent of the economy while its minorities are poor.

Coupled with Lee's notoriously authoritarian administration, which saw many dissidents being jailed, had Singapore still be a part of Malaysia, the PAP would "will ethnically dominate and control Malaysian politics".

"No dissent would be allowed and certainly no one would dare say anything about who really runs the country," he said.

"Amnesia is permissible but trying to claim that it is because Singapore had been 'turfed out' for the present racist politics in Malaysia is simply not supported by facts of history.

"Lee Kuan Yew and I saw the same things and know the reasons why," he said.

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