

**Nurul Izzah: No response from Dr M, Ibrahim Ali**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**September 28, 2010**

COMMENT Amidst the recent heightening of racial rhetoric, mainly originating from the incumbent ruling power, Umno, former premier Mahathir Mohamad created a minor sensation when he warned that Malays will lose their power and a Chinese or an Indian may become prime minister, if opposition Pakatan Rakyat were to come to power.

This statement was immediately rebutted by Nurul Izzah Anwar (*left*), member of Parliament for Lembah Pantai in Kuala Lumpur and eldest daughter of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim.

In a hard-hitting statement on Sept 24, Nurul accused Mahathir of playing the race card to incite racial animosities and to perpetuate the politics of fear.

The cornerstone of this age-old, race-centric strategy of Umno was Article 153 of the Constitution, which Nurul said Umno has used as a "political instrument of deceit and despair".

Through mass indoctrination that constantly plays the victim mentality that "degrades, confuses and paralyses the community", Umno has caused the Malays to be "enslaved intellectually and emotionally".

Nurul said the purpose of all this is to maintain political hegemony so that the few in the ruling elite can continue to enrich themselves "through corruption, abuse of power and undermining the constitution relentlessly".

To counter such politics, Nurul offered the "Politics of Hope and Liberation" which would transform the Malay mind from misguided fears to one that would "create a confident and liberated community".

She then "humbly offered" to debate with Mahathir to "clarify if his 'fear' for the Malays is really about loss of power or in reality loss of wealth for the chosen few".

Not unexpectedly, Mahathir has maintained his 'elegant silence' to this offer.

Malaysia or Malaysaja?

Interesting, shortly before this incident, Nurul also suggested an "honest constructive dialogue" with Ibrahim Ali, head of Umno's ultra racist wing Perkasa, which is under the patronage of Mahathir Mohamad.

Nurul's offer was contained in her article dated Aug 31, titled "The ultimate Malaysian debate: Malaysia or Malaysaja?" (Malaysia or Malays Only?) which was actually written to quell Perkasa's seemingly endless championing of 'Malay rights' which had escalated racial tension and raised political temperature by many notches.

Perkasa's vocal spokesmen Ibrahim (*left*) and Mahathir seem hell bent - through such vociferous bickering - to stop Prime Minister Najib Razak from implementing his New Economic Model which is supposed to liberalise the economy from the clutches of the economically stifling, much corrupted and skewed New Economic Policy that heavily plays

on 'Malay rights'.

Nurul's article of Aug 31 is in fact an important document that probes deep into the current Malay dilemma that has confronted so many Malays, and by extension, the entire country.

In her article, she explores, analyses, as well as answering some of these crucial questions:

- What exactly are 'Malay rights'? What is the constitutional basis of these rights? What exactly is stated in the famous Article 153 upon which the entire clamour for all kinds of racial privileges seems to have been built? What sort of racial preferences are included and what are excluded in this Article 153?
- What is the nature of Malay discontent? What are they unhappy about?
- What are the true causes of failure to uplift the Malay standard of living despite heavy dosage of the New Economic Policy?
- What are the real solutions to overcome these predicaments?
- What are the serious consequences to the country if racial bigotry were to triumph over rational solution if 'Ketuanan Melayu' advocates win the next general election?

Accurate dissection

Nurul proposes, in her article, to have an "honest constructive engagement or dialogue" with Perkasa to reach a better understanding on key issues and to jointly look for real solutions.

By all measures, Nurul's article is an outstanding achievement, for having accurately dissected Article 153, distinguished facts from myths, analysed ambiguous notions, pinpointed real causes and solutions, and above all, shone with earnest sincerity and honesty to work out common ground for the benefit of all.

But alas, what did she get in return for such gallant effort? Instead of being heaped with accolades and positively reciprocated, she was summoned to a police station where she was subjected to investigation for alleged breach of the Sedition Act based upon a police report lodged by Perkasa earlier accusing Nurul of 'questioning' the constitution in her article!

What a great joke! The one who should be hauled up in the police station for questioning should be the complainant, Perkasa representative Zaira Jaafar, for having made such an unfounded accusation.

She should have been punished or at least warned on the serious consequences of making a false police report and falsely defaming others.

Of late, there has been an alarming increase in police wantonly abusing its power to harass the opposition and dissidents, by subjecting them to investigation on frivolous grounds, confiscating their books illegally, and even arresting them arbitrarily, such as the most recent case of cartoonist Zunar (*right*), who was arrested and shuffled around from one police station to another for not less than six times while all the time unable to make up their mind what law to charge him.

By such disgusting display of illegitimate political partisanship and lawlessness, the police

have defiled the image of the country and further lowered our grade (which has already reached rock bottom) as an investment destination.

And needless to say, such flagrant trampling of the people's fundamental rights has caused their political masters BN to lose more electoral support than they could ever imagine.

Now, turning to Mahathir and Ibrahim Ali's shyness to at least make a decent response to the reasoned proposition of Nuruh Izzah Anwar, we can only conclude that the hue and cry they have been making over the alleged peril to the Malay race cannot withstand the test of rational scrutiny.

They know the truth but are only pretending not to know it. And their refusal to engage in any public debate or dialogue only means that they are not prepared to have their masks taken down.

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