

My protest vote against MCA
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With the next general election looming on the horizon, Chinese Malaysians must be careful in casting their votes and not make the same mistake of the previous election whereby MCA candidates were overwhelmingly supported.

We have witnessed many events since the previous election which show that the MCA is unable or unwilling to voice the concerns of the Chinese community in the country. The recent Umno general assembly has revealed the cowards in MCA as they did nothing even after the fiery speeches by Umno delegates threatening the Chinese community for daring to question their 'ketuanan'.

The remark last year by Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew on the marginalisation of the Chinese community in Malaysia struck a chord with many non-bumiputeras here but what did the MCA do? They happily (most probably under the order of Umno) made a public statement refuting Lee's claims. What they did was unthinkable when they themselves know about the uneven playing field in this country.

The claim by Umno that the Malays in Penang were marginalised also revealed the inability of MCA to stand up and speak for the Chinese community when the Chinese were blamed for this so-called marginalisation. Penang Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon was humiliated in front of the prime minister and also the whole country.

I have one question here - is Penang not a state of Malaysia? If it is, doesn't the constitution of the country apply there? And if the constitution applies, aren't the Malays given the special rights and privileges as spelled out in it? By this reasoning, how can they still claim that they are marginalised?

Being unable to compete even with the special handicap points is not marginalisation. By the same token (in reference to the statement by Lee Kuan Yew on the marginalisation of the Chinese), being successful and wealthy in spite of discriminative policies does not mean that there is no marginalisation.

Let's not forget the issue with Deputy Higher Education Minister Dr Ong Tee Kiat who was lambasted by Education Minister Hishammuddin Hussein Onn for raising doubts on the construction work of a Chinese school.

MCA have also failed to do anything concrete with regards to the issue of inter-faith discussions which were unceremoniously stopped under the order of the prime minister. The bumiputera equity calculation issue also saw MCA keeping timidly quiet and letting DAP do all the questioning on the perplexing set of data and methodology presented by the government.

Lately we have seen how the MCA and Umno have organised parties and events in conjunction with the Chinese New Year and we have also seen the tossing of many 'yee sang' and many other such similar activities in the press. Let's not be deceived by all this. If MCA wants to get the Chinese votes, they must do more than just host open houses and getting Umno leaders to toss 'yee sang'.

A recent report in a Chinese daily on the RM1.409 million given by the Education Ministry in 2006 for 248 Chinese schools is also a big joke. The amount works out to about RM6,000 for each school. Seriously, what can you do with a RM6,000 budget for the whole year? A simple renovation for my small house costs more than RM10,000 alone!

Compare this to the RM600 million bonanza given by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi late last year to the 200 Umno constituencies for contract works and you can see that the MCA has failed the Chinese community in the education aspect.

I would like to urge the Chinese community to vote for the opposition during the next general election. We have seen enough of the cowardice and timidity of the MCA in trying times. They are nothing but spokespersons for the Umno. Let's give DAP and Keadilan a chance.

The Chinese community in Penang must be especially careful lest they see the chief minister's post being rotated if they continue to support MCA and the BN. The way I see it, Koh is powerless to do anything if Umno decides that the post must be rotated.

As for me, I am casting my vote to anyone who contests against BN in my constituency. Just like in the US in November last year when the win for the Democrats was not so much a reflection of support for the party but rather a protest note to the Republicans for their failure in Iraq. So too will be my vote which will be more of a statement against BN rather than any expressed support for any opposition party.

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