

**Malays versus the malaise**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Mar 05, 2008**  
**Dean Johns**

Democrats of other races can kick, scream, demonstrate and vote all they like against the Barisan Nasional robber-barons and their minions, but let's face it: Malaysia will never get rid of this indolent, incompetent and corrupt regime without the enlightened militancy of the Malay meritocracy and its increasingly numerous supporters. MCPX

I'm all too conscious that I'm venturing onto shaky ground here, aware as I am that BN jealously guards the topics of race and religion as its exclusive preserves, the more powerfully to manipulate sectarian passions and prejudices to its advantage. And also, as a total outsider, I'm woefully ignorant of many of the subtleties and nuances involved in these perennially sensitive subjects.

But still the point has to be made. Malaysia will never be rid of BN, or achieve true democracy, or reach its social and economic potential, without the opposition of the Malay majority.

Of course PAS has for years been the principal force opposing BN, at least on the East Coast. But as persistent as it's been, and as successful in places, it's been too theocratic and old-hat to appeal to most progressive Malays, let alone to Malaysians of Chinese and Indian ancestry. anwar ibrahim vk lingam hearing pc 290108 talking

### **Malay leadership**

So, when most people think of a Malay-led renaissance for modern Malaysia, the first organisation that comes to mind is the Parti Keadilan Rakyat, and the first name that of Anwar Ibrahim. Though some see him as terminally tainted by his involvement in the Mahathir-era BN, a great many more clearly consider him sainted by all the suffering he's survived in the decade since his trials. And he certainly appears more intelligent, inspirational and far more highly esteemed internationally than all the current BN 'leaders' put together.

He also enjoys the staunch loyalty of his wife, the self-effacing but much-admired Wan Aziza, and his tyro politician daughter Nurul Izzah, as well as a multitude of other PKR members and voters.

Another Malay leader, as charismatic in his fashion as Anwar, but by contrast a lone wolf rather than a party animal, is Raja Petra Kamarudin of Malaysia-today.net He's a fearless and ferocious fighter for freedom, integrity and fairness, and has a massive and fiercely dedicated following.

Raja Petra has suffered official harassment for his anti-BN activities, as has the more laid-back but no less respected figure, Ahirudin 'Rocky' Attan, veteran journalist and elder statesman among political bloggers of all races, including fellow Malays like Nuraina A Samad, Ahmad A. Talib, Amin Iskander, Fathi Aris Omar, Ibrahim Yahaya, Malik Imtiaz Sarwar, Maria A Samad, Nizam Bashir, Norizan Bin Sharif, Ruhanie Ahmad, Rudi Mustapha, Sheih (kickdafella), Zaharin Mohd Yasin, Zan Azlee, Aishah, Fuziah Salleh, Malay women in Malaysia and dozens if not hundreds of others.

Lawyer Haris Ibrahim also wields a good deal of influence in the Malaysian blogosphere, with his campaigns through The People's Parliament for boycotts of the BN-controlled mainstream press, support for Barisan Rakyat and "Say NO to BN".

Marina Mahathir of rantingsbymm.blogspot.com seems to wield lots of clout in Malaysian cyberspace too. As the daughter of a former prime minister she has a tough task balancing personal loyalty to her father with opposition to some legacies of his premiership, but achieves it admirably, at least most of the time, by employing her considerable literary talents to criticize wrongdoers on principle rather than along party lines.

Zunar, savage caricaturist of government wrongdoing and wrong-headedness, and indeed Malaysia's sole political cartoonist, is also a Malay. As are a great many Malaysiakini.com columnists, journalists, designers and other staffers.

### **Not 'champions' of Malays**

Malays have also been highly prominent on the streets as well as in cyberspace, notably at the Bersih rally.

None of my focusing on the Malay personalities here is intended to diminish the heroic roles played by Indian and Chinese Malaysians in opposing the never-ending domination of the nation by BN. In fact the opposition is rapidly becoming as multiracial as the Malaysia it so strenuously advocates.

I only single-out the Malays to make the point that, while BN in general and Umno in particular have traditionally claimed "ownership" of Malay hearts, minds and votes, more and more Malays are feeling as misused, abused and marginalized as Malaysians of other races are, and are as dedicated to changing the situation. And only the Malays have the overwhelming numbers to do it, either in alliances with non-Malay Malaysians or all by themselves.

A thought that leads me to suggest looking at this whole issue another way. Let's imagine for a moment that there were no other races in Malaysia besides the Malays. Would the government and governance of the nation be any less corrupt, inept and iniquitous than it is now? Would there be less of the top-level corruption resulting in crimes like the Altantuya murder? Would less cronies be awarded Approval Permits, monopolies and tender-free, commission-bloated contracts? Would there be any fewer massive rip-offs of public money like Port Klang Free Trade Zone scheme and the Bakun Dam? A lower incidence of criminal collusion between developers and local government agencies? Less rampant corruption in the judiciary, the police force and other civil services?

Of course not. Umno-BN are not the 'champions' of the Malays that they crack themselves up to be. They don't 'protect' the majority of Malays, they prey on them behind a pretense of defending and protecting Malay/Muslim rights and privileges from the clutches of the other races.

This hypocrisy is looking more and more hollow as the Malays increasingly outstrip Chinese and Indians as a proportion of the population and grow in awareness of how they've been played for fools by their thieving political masters and lying media.

Only the Malays can cure Malaysia of the Umno/BN malaise. And with so many Malay

leaders and opinion-makers emerging in opposition, we may not have to wait for too many elections after this one before they finally up and do it.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/79178>