

**Gerakan wiped out: I willing to pay the price**  
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Malaysians have spoken and the government needs to heed the voice asking for change. In a nutshell, BN has lost because some of its leaders had become too arrogant and forgot that they came from the very grassroots that elected them. The writing has actually been on the wall, ever since 2006. Any complaint that the people voiced out was often brushed aside in a 'I-know -best' manner. Some ministers became so arrogant that they acted like they cannot be wrong. They have become oblivious to problems faced by the people.  
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Not only that, they began to behave like they cannot be wronged and they cannot be caught. There was so much of abuse of power and misuse of public funds. Rules and ethics were forgotten. If the country is doing very well, people might not notice so much about the abuse of public funds. But when economic growth is not benefitting the people and inflation is causing people to tighten and re-tighten their belts, yet they see billions of public money going down the drain into someone's private pockets, it is no longer a matter of inflation. Bread and butter issues turned into hatred for the ruling.

In 1789, during the French Revolution, when the people of France were living in economic and political malaise and a mob of hungry people marched to the Palace of Versailles, the Queen of Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, asked a courtier that if the mob had no bread to eat, why didn't they 'eat cake'? So much out of touch was she as she had lived a lifestyle of excesses while the people were dying of hunger.

Malaysia is not that bad, luckily, but when people are poor and see the political leaders are out of touch with the masses, a similar feeling of discontent arises. That discontent, in fact, cuts across racial lines and affects all races. It is sad that BN leaders have lost touch with the people. They have been totally out of touch with reality and unable to feel the pulse of the people. Indeed, they try to cover up all the misdeed through an absolute control of the printed media. They are so out of touch that they have not realised the power of the Internet.

They have forgotten that the world is no more as hierarchy-based as before. The world is being flattened and people, even in a developing country like Malaysia, know their rights better than in any other time in the history of the country. When people took to the streets to convey their discontent, the leaders failed to find out the reasons why because they were more interested in using the archaic method of using force to suppress dissent.

The ruling parties have become rotten, especially the leading component Umno. It has become so entrenched in money politics that any projects formulated is not in the interest of the people but rather for the leaders themselves. The component parties like MCA and Gerakan have really no say in policy formulation. They thus concentrate on the job of providing excellent local services, which is not what an educated electorate wants. Drains and local issues should by right be solved by local councils, not by legislators such as assemblymen and members of Parliament.

While some of the grassroots in these minor component parties did voice out their discontent, the leaders themselves are more concerned about playing internal politics and consolidating their own power within the party. Some are busy plotting for their kin to

succeed them. After all, they think of themselves like the royals and want their children or relatives to continue their political dynasty, even when the anointed sons or relatives are way below par and have no sense of a mission to fight for the people. After many years of walking in the corridors of power, they have forgotten the primary aim of a politician is to represent the people and not their own family.

Even when choosing candidates for the election, the ruling parties did not consider the best and the most winnable, but rather the most loyal and most obedient, apart, of course, from allocating the safe seats to their own kin first. Even those who have been taking money from the people are chosen to be candidates. Even those who are potential bankrupt are allowed to stand. Even perpetual losers who have disappeared from party and community work for the past four years were suddenly recalled to be candidates again, treating the party like a 'reject shop'.

For the country, this is a watershed moment. It dawns on me that this is going to be the beginning of a two-party system that I have always advocated, a two-party system that can provide the necessary check and balance on each another. Malaysians are more matured now. Malays are voting for DAP, Chinese are voting for PAS and that is a good sign that people are starting to be fed-up with the racial politics that Umno has played all along.

This is a good beginning and I am in a way glad that this is happening, despite the fact that my own party, Gerakan, has been almost totally wiped out. If that is the price we must pay for a two-party system, I am willing to pay that price and hope that future generations of Malaysians will live in an environment of equality, peace, freedom, prosperity, transparency and accountability.

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