

Never trust a politician
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As the political cauldron boils and bubbles there is a need to take a brief look the origins of the current unfolding drama as the country struggles to find her balance.
MCPX

More than bread-and-butter issues sliced the Barisan Nasional (BN) hold on a two-thirds majority in parliament and handed five state governments to Pakatan Rakyat.

For nearly 51 years, the ruling coalition had ensured that the playing field would never be level. The most convenient and powerful tool for this purpose has been the Internal Security Act (ISA) that the British introduced during the Communist insurgency.

isa 00Whenever political expediency dictated, the ISA was always at hand to safeguard the continued rule of the coalition even when it was blatantly obvious that the nation was in no imminent danger to justify its use.

Add to that the coalition's massive propaganda machine greased by public funds to which the opposition had near close zero access, and we have a very pretty picture of the BN version of democracy where the leaders project the image that they are overflowing with wisdom.

The public perception is that the ISA is being abused to maintain the grip on power. Critical thinking has become dangerous.

The devastating side-effects have been a poverty of spirit and intellect, as well as a public grown cynical of politics and politicians. This continues to be strengthened by their current behavior.

Two incidents in January encapsulated the sickness that is permeating the nation at the basic level - school.

A news report datelined Ipoh said that one student had grown his hair and another his beard, to fulfill vows made for Thaipusam the following month. Despite their parents writing to the school authorities, both boys faced the wrath of their respective teachers and were shaven and shorn.

The other incident was in Johor Bharu where one lot of primary schoolchildren was directed to clean toilets, while others attended religious class.

In the first instance, the teachers responsible were made to apologise to the students; in the second, the head honcho of the state education department visited the school and met the pupils involved to listen to both sides of the story.

This was done in the presence of the police after 20 parents had reported the episode. Duty done, the director airily told the media that it was all due to a misunderstanding by the parties concerned. And that was it.

The published photo showed a confident looking 12-year-old relating her story to the

director. She's not going to forget the incident, and neither will the two boys in Ipoh. The wounds will fester into the following generations.

The toilet episode exposed the less-than-subtle instilling of the sense of superiority in some and the opposite in others. But the times are changing.

Once, the parents would have accepted the abuse of their children in silence, but not any longer - and the incidents could have well played into the election scenario and outcome.

Surviving brain-washing

The puzzle over the nature of the environment that could allow the breeding of such elements found somewhat of an explanation in Azly Rahman's column headlined 'A Malay view of ketuanan Melayu'.

It was a fascinating piece about an indoctrination camp he attended together with other students in the 1980s. This included was a song 'Anak Kecil Main Api'. Just one stanza shows the deeply disturbing nature of the camp.

...kini kita cuma tinggal kuasa yang menentukan bangsa,
hasil mengalir, ke tangan lain,
pribumi merintah sendiri

His loose translation is as follows:

'... political power is what we are only left with, one that will decide the fate of our nation, wealth of this nation flows into the hands of others, sons and daughters of the soil suffer (lament?) in solace (alone?)'

The question-marks in parenthesis are mine.

Azly said the minds of the 'campers' were fed the lyrics, penned by the Biro Tata Negara (BTN). This is officially translated as the Bureau of Civil Consciousness, but the Oxford-Fajar dictionary translates tata as 'order'.

This was done when minds were lulled into a somnambulant state, in which the subconscious easily absorbs suggestions. Bluntly put, it was brain-washing.

Azly expressed the belief that the "training programmes that included the song were meant to instill fear of the Malays, not of the others, but of themselves, and to project hatred onto other ethnic groups".

malaysia people rakyatHe estimates that over the decades millions of Malay students may have been taught this song. He doesn't mention the age-group, but a stab would be the mid-teens. They would be adults now, possibly with families of their own. And the poison must've spread wide and deep.

Another way of looking at the BTN's object would be the forging of nose-rings with the leash in the hands of the authorities, for ease of handling the masses.

Governments everywhere rule by fear and, as contradictory as it may seem, they fear the people they rule. The extreme example is Zimbabwe.

To get back to the story, there's rising evidence in the public domain that the charge 'wealth

flows into other hands', is no longer valid as the flow has actually been channelled to a select group of pribumis.

Civilised societies treasure their young as they are the investment for the future. Programmes for them would have been designed to instill self-confidence, encouragement to set the bar high for oneself and to settle for nothing less than the best in any undertaking. That would surely put the spring in their step.

That would have laid the foundations for a stout-hearted community able to confront any challenge thrown up by life or the world.

It's the norm for one generation to provide the best possible for the succeeding generation.

In this case it's obvious that twisted minds of adults have committed the foul deed of injecting demons into tender minds in fulfillment of their own ambitions.

I must confess that I'm lost in admiration for Azly; for it's no small feat coming up for air from such a psychological drowning. A testament to the triumph of the human spirit.

Here's hoping that Azly will write about his struggle to purge his system of the toxins he has been force-fed. It should make for gripping reading as well as provide lessons for all, especially politicians.

Punishing the perpetrators

It's the height of hypocrisy to offer Malaysia as a beacon of racial harmony while playing the dangerous game of undercutting the same when the end result guarantees no winners.

And I see now the probable cause for the two school incidents.

But I'm also reining in despair because I know that there cannot be just one Azly. Bold writers are rising from the community, challenging the establishment on a broad front.

election gombak voters waiting 210304Also March 8 has shown that a new generation of voters who cut across all races, has shrugged off the conditioning they were subjected to and punished the perpetrators. The establishment must be in state of shock over how the nose-rings have made been made ineffective.

The country is in the grip of an agonisingly chaotic and titanic political struggle with a decaying age vainly fighting to keep itself relevant. We are being treated to the unwanted spectacle of politicians sinking ever lower in public esteem.

The tragic fact is that politics have not been allowed to mature and no room is allowed for dissent or space for rational debate. All has been emotional sound and fury, with a steady diet of slogans to replace reality in the last few decades.

The sole objective is to gain power for power's sake. That is the sum total of the nation's politics, without giving due regard to the awesome responsibilities that go with it.

The world is being swept by rapid changes and we are caught in its currents. To survive and do better, each citizen must be treated as invaluable.

The national motto in 1957 was 'Unity in Diversity'. That alone is good enough. Move forward 51 years of independence and see how far we've been forced apart since then.

I would venture to say that present crisis is all about returning to that particular root.

An excellent rule of thumb to ensure that we are holding the course is not to trust any politician. Judge them by their actions, never by their words.

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