

When tomorrow comes
Malaysiakini.com
Sept 15, 2008
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During Mahathirism in the 1980s – change management ideology pervaded the psyche of the civil service sector. The ideology was enculturated by the corporate sector and universities picked up the trend and fashioned it into their mission statement, pedagogical processes, and curriculum. Everybody was taught to speak the language of change.

During that time too, circa 1985-1995, even high school students were taught visioning strategies and how to manage change.

Literature of change management, i.e. to change to corporate culture, to change to a society run on cybernetics/information technology became hugely popular.

Knowledge of visioning strategies were brought to the grassroots and even kampong people were in tune with the basic ideas of change sometimes equating it with the Arabic words "islah" and "hijrah" to denote and connote "reforming oneself" and "pilgrimage-ing oneself".

The Malay word "perubahan paradigma" became perhaps the most popular word on television, as its use signified a "better level of intelligence" as perceived by Malaysians imbued with "corporatist ideology".

Nowadays we hear people speaking of "blue ocean strategy". On how to look at our environment as an ocean of both chaos and opportunities and how to think like a dolphin but act like a shark.

The Mahathirist decades essentially prepared Malaysians for that only one thing that is permanent: change. It prepared the country for even for a velvet revolution such as in the Mar 8, 2008 and Permatang Pauh. When he unveiled the mega-project Multimedia Super Corridor (The MSC) which included the Bill of Guarantees for the free-flow of information and no-censorship of the Internet, he called upon the rakyat to "fantasise" with him.

At the moment of writing this article, it is 7 o'clock in the evening (New York) Eastern Time Sept 15. My question is - what will tomorrow bring when Sept 16 comes. Are we ready for political change - big time?

Political change

My initial thought is this: corporate cultural changes occur peacefully - why not political change?

In light of a benchmarked and scheduled possible change Malaysians will be experiencing and in light of the deliverable promised, I am advocating the new regime to disseminate 10 ideas that will augur well with the new era we are ushering into, I call them "ten steps towards cultural freedom" this nation can condition itself with.

Independence and freedom are not slogans but existential states of mind and a condition of 'lived democracy', one in which citizens are aware of how oppressive systems are cultivated.

We cannot be independent until we arrive at these historical junctures, and until we do the following:

1. Free the human mind from all forms of dogmas, superstitions, mental chains, hegemonic formations, and transitional levels of totalitarianism. Our educational system at all levels must strengthen the scientific and philosophical foundation of its curriculum and practices to effect changes in the higher-order thinking skills of the next generation. We should not tolerate any forms of bigotry, racial chauvinism, and retarded form of democracy in our educational system.

education school science class 0404052. Understand the relationship between the 'self and the system of social relations of production' and how the self becomes alienated and reduced to labour and appendages and cogs in the wheels of industrial system of production, a system that hides under the name of the corporatist nation and any other term that masks the real exploitation of the human self.

3. Make ourselves aware that our social systems, through the rapid development of technology and its synthesis with local and international predatory culture, have helped create classes of human beings that transform their bodies into different classes of labour (manual, secretarial, managerial, military, intellectual, and capital-owning) that is now shaping the nature of class antagonism locally and globally.

4. Understand how our political, economic, cultural institutions have evolved and are created out of the vestiges of newer forms of colonialism, institutions that are built upon the ideology of race-based interpretations of human and material development that benefit the few who own the means of cultural, material, and intellectual production.

5. Understand how ideologies that oppress humanity works, how prevailing political, economic, cultural ideologies help craft false consciousness and create psychological barriers to the creation of a society that puts the principles of social contract into practice.

6. Be aware of how our physical landscape creates spaces of power and knowledge and alienates us and how huge structural transformations such as the Multimedia Super Corridor or those emerging corridors that create a new form of technological city-scape (technopoles) that benefits local and international real estate profiteers more that they provide more humane living spaces for the poor and the marginalised in an increasingly cybernated society.

7. Be fully aware of the relationship between science, culture, and society and how these interplay with contemporary global challenges and how we clearly or blindly adopt these rapid changes and transform them into our newer shibboleths of developmentalism – one such policy being the National BioTechnology Program.

8. Put a halt to the systematic stupefaction of academicians and students in our public universities by first incorporating Academic Freedom Clauses in their mission statements and next enculturating intellectualism in these learning environments. The public universities must be restructured based on a new paradigm of leadership. Leaders that enable the ability of our students and faculty to think must be removed and replaced with those that pay allegiance to truth. "Veritas!" or "Truth!" as Harvard University sloganises and lives by.

9. Design an economic system founded upon socialistic principles that meet the needs of the many and curb our enthusiasm to consume conspicuously and consequently create a society

divided by classes and a postmodern caste system. Rethink the progressive dimension of nationalisation instead of pursuing the excesses of privatisation. What good would Malaysia do if its leaders are siphoning the nation's wealth by the billions, stashing them in places such as Switzerland and the Cayman Islands?

campus election voting 021007 college10. Restructure the entire education system that would not only create some variant of a classless society but also one that would evolve into a reflective one instead of being rushed to death along the path of Wall Street by those who owns the means of production.

Sept 16 and change.

We know Sept 16 is tomorrow. We know that radical changes will happen. We know we are ready for such changes. What we need is the will to realign ourselves with the new paradigm and to medicate ourselves of the pain that will come through the changes. Change is good especially if it means celebrating our diversity, curbing our desire for material wealth, punishing those who have stolen from the masses, and making our systems implement equity, equitability, equal opportunity, and empathy as philosophical elements of change.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/89709>