

Repression: Will it be Umno's recipe for success?

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On the anniversary of people's power, 'Makkal Sakthi' and 'ren min de li liang' , a review of Umno's response to their worst electoral outing in 51 years shows that the party has failed to reinvent itself to meet the people's aspirations for a healthy democratic two party system.

On the contrary, it has chosen to go down the road of repression and racial extremism. The DPM and Umno president in-waiting said desperate times call for desperate measures.

The power grab in Perak and destabilisation attempts of the Pakatan governments in Kedah and Selangor are desperate measures.

As Umno loses its popular support, it relies on repression to cling on to power thereby becoming an illegitimate regime. As a consequence, Umno has to stir emotional issues of race, religion and royalty to mask its unlawful and undemocratic rule.

This stratagem may work unless the people act with courage and conviction to resist this usurpation of people's power.

According to the theory of government, each of us as individuals has rights. Each of us for the purpose of an ordered society gives some of these rights to the government. The government must exercise these rights and powers for the interest of the common good.

John Locke in his 'Second Essay of Civil Government' said that the government becomes a usurper and a tyrant when the powers of the government are exercised not for the common good but for their own private advantage.

He said: "Whenever law ends, tyranny begins, if the law be transgressed to another's harm; and whosoever in authority exceeds the power given by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command, to compass that upon the subject which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate, and acting without authority may be opposed, as any other man who by force invades the right of another."

Moral rights forfeited

The history of civilisation is the history of the cycle of oppression and liberation. The word most frequently used to describe oppression is tyranny.

According to tradition, once it is established that a ruler has become a tyrant, he forfeits the moral right to govern and the people acquire a right to resist and protect their interest against the injustice and oppression.

A tyrannical regime has no legitimacy. It may be the de facto government and it may be recognised by other governments and is therefore the de jure government, but if it is a tyrannical regime, it is from a moral point of view, illegitimate. The people then have a moral duty to rise up and oppose the illegitimate regime.

Umno used the ISA to detain Hindraf leaders, blogger Raja Petra Kamaruddin, Selangor exco member Teresa Kok and Sin Chew reporter Tan Hoon Cheng. This was not done to protect the common good but to protect Umno's rule.

The police are used to arrest and prohibit the people from exercising their constitutional freedoms of assembly and free speech. Peaceful demonstrations are brutally stopped by tear gas and chemical-laced water fired from water cannons.

Ceramahs in Perak are banned. Candlelight vigils in Petaling Jaya are declared illegal. Lodging police reports are prohibited.

Government institutions are perverted and subverted. Senior civil servants by disingenuous arguments make shamelessly biased decisions to pander to their political masters' desires.

In Perak, the Election Commission refused to call for by-elections after the Perak speaker declared three seats vacant. The state secretary booted out the menteri besar and his exco when a motion of no confidence on the menteri besar has yet to be tabled in the assembly.

The police cordoned off the state assembly building to prevent the elected representatives from attending.

The assembly secretary countermanded the speaker's call for a sitting, then locked the doors of the assembly hall and throws away the keys for good measure. The state assembly had to be held under a refuge of a rain tree. We now have Rain Tree Democracy.

The judicial commissioner disqualified a litigant's duly appointed lawyer and appointed the opponent's lawyer for the litigant against his wish. This is a kangaroo court dispensing Palm Tree Justice.

In Selangor, MACC issued a public statement that it had found there was a good case of corruption against Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim. If putting petrol into his car used for state official functions and donating cows to the poor are corrupt acts, why is receiving RM530 million for buying a submarine not?

The MACC commissioner has violated the first principle of justice that a man is presumed innocent until he is convicted. The commissioner had become prosecutor, judge and jury.

In the case of Elizabeth Wong, there was a media frenzy in violating her privacy as the media rushed in like sharks to kill her political career. That was not journalism. That was gutter politics.

The illegitimate regime

Arumugam Vengatarakoo pkr kedahIn Kedah, PKR state rep V Arumugam had to resign as the state exco member and state assemblyperson to safeguard his family from harm.

After attempted bribery failed, they threatened and kidnapped him to coerce him to cross over.

Although he identified the perpetrator, the police released the perpetrator allowing him to make further threats. State legislators Lim Soo Nee and Tan Wei Xu received bullets when they rejected offers of several million ringgit to cross over. Although a video had been taken by the then BPR officer of the negotiations and offer, the only action taken by the MACC was to transfer the officer.

Umno has betrayed the peoples' trust in transgressing the powers given for its own ends. It has become a tyrannical regime.

A tyrannical regime cannot continue to rule for very long without becoming more and more violent. As the majority of the people begin to demand their rights to put pressure on the tyrant, so will the tyrant resort to more and more desperate, cruel, gross and ruthless forms of tyranny and repression.

The reign of a tyrant always ends up as a reign of terror. It is inevitable because from the start the tyrant is an enemy of the common good.

Umno has lost the moral authority to govern. As the oppressed majority becomes more and more insistent and puts more and more pressure on Umno, we will see Umno taking more and more repressive measures.

There can only be more and more detentions, bans, propaganda, declaration of a state of emergency and other desperate and tyrannical measures. This is because Umno cannot reform. The people have a moral duty and obligation to oppose the illegitimate regime.

Martin Luther King Jr in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail wrote: "There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. There are two types of laws: just and unjust.

"One has not only a legal but also a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility not to obey unjust laws. I would agree with St Augustine that an unjust law is no law at all."

It is our moral responsibility to oppose an unjust regime and to return the government to the people.

Barack Obama is president of the United States of America today, because Martin Luther King Jr and the people had dared to stand up for change.

We have to make our stand today if we want our children to live in a just and fair society tomorrow. If not Malaysia will be a country where everyone lives in fear.

Harry Truman said: "Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of the opposition, it has one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."

An illegitimate regime must be opposed. We must be brave enough to come out of the darkness of fear and step into the light of justice and liberty.

Umno's four assumptions

Umno is counting on four assumptions to sustain their repressive regime:

- 1 A few in the ruling elite are able to oppress the majority through the use of force on the few dissidents to deter the others;
- 2 There will be government officials willing to perform the various functions to maintain the regime. These include surveillance, arrest, the running of prisons and detention camps, controlling the court system and the general management of the government;
- 3 The opposition is fractious and will not be able to coordinate in a manner to offer an effective challenge;
- 4 The use of emotional and sensitive issues will provide the ideology required for the selected majority to sustain the regime;

This strategy is a time-tested and proven formula. It was used with great success by Dr Mahathir Mohamad each time he faced a challenge.

The first assumption is based on the premise that all individuals are prudently rational individuals.

It assumes that each individual acts where there is a positive payoff and not act when there is none.

The assumption rest on the rational behaviour of the individual that if he acts to seek change and there

are insufficient others who do, there will be no change and he will suffer the sanctions by the repressive apparatus of the oppressors without any gains.

If he does not act and there are sufficient others who do, there will be change and he will gain the benefits of change without incurring personal costs. Therefore it is rational for him not to act. This is the lone gunman theory.

This is the reason why a lone gunman can hold several persons hostage. Each hostage knows that if all of the hostages are to pool their resources together, they will be able to overcome the gunman. However, they also know that the first to make a move will be shot. So they are unable to act because no one wants to be the first to be shot. This is why the Hindraf leaders have been detained without trial.

Rallies are turned into illegal assemblies and Pakatan leaders are charged from sodomy, illegal assembly to corruption or visited by invasion of privacy and have their reputation smeared. This is the lone gunman warning the others that they will suffer the same fate if they try to move.

This assumption is flawed because the Pakatan leaders like Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Kit Siang and Tok Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat seek change not based on whether others will follow but that it is their moral duty and obligation to society to do so.

They seek change because they believe in the moral values and virtues of a just society. The Umno model does not work with individuals actuated by moral values.

Anwar said in his book, 'Asian Renaissance': "The euphoria induced by the remarkable economic growth must also not blind us to the parallel rise in corruption, bribery, nepotism and abuse of power. Vice cannot take the place of virtue whatever may be the ends."

These leaders believe in the values of truth, virtue, integrity and justice. They have no fear of the lone gunman. In challenging the regime, the assumption and hold of the lone gunman is broken.

Their courage and conviction to seek change have given hope to the masses. The masses now dare to believe that change can happen. This is the meaning of the New Dawn, Harapan Baru, the New Hope.

The many and diverse oppressed individuals and groups now dare to stand up. This is the meaning of tsunami politics. From Perlis to Sarawak, the long suppressed desire for liberty from oppression will gush forth. From every corner of the nation all will stand up together and Umno will not be able to stem the tide.

Discourse is not dissent

The second assumption that the opposition parties are fractious is flawed. Discourse is not dissent. The public and Umno after 26 years of iron rule by Mahathir are not used to public discourse. This is because in Barisan Nasional, Umno brokes no dissent.

In Pakatan, discussions are held until a consensus is reached in the course of which every party's interest is taken into consideration. When all three parties are seeking truth there can be no dispute because there is only one truth. In the past each was seeking the truth from a different path, today, we all walk together on the same road to truth and justice. There is no coordination problem in Pakatan.

The third assumption that there will be officers who will do the oppressors bidding is also flawed. Although there are a few who have dishonored their profession, not all will fail.

For each one that failed many others will carry out their duties with honor and dignity. There will be enough officers whose dislike for the illegitimacy and immorality of the regime will return the government agencies to the correct path.

The assumption is that the emotional and sensitive issues will be sufficient for the Malays to keep the illegitimate regime in power.

This is flawed because upon raising the consciousness of the Malays to the truth, this assumption will fail.

The enlightened members of society must work hard to persuade the rest of the oppressed majority that the regime is fundamentally illegitimate because it is exploitative, it is corrupted and that the true benefactors of the corrupt system are the elitist oppressors and not them.

Ketuanan Melayu will never bring harmony to Malaysia. Ketuanan Melayu cannot succeed because no regime can be sustained on hate, corruption, immorality and abuse of power. It is only with Ketuanan Rakyat that we will be able to raise the nation to the heights that God had intended when we see our diversity as our strengths and not our weakness

The desperate strategy of repression, race, religion and royalty has serious flaws. It is a recipe for disaster for Umno. There will be regime change. It is no longer a question of IF but a question of WHEN.

Mahatma Ghandi said: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall. Think of it... always."

We must take action, we must strive and persevere but we can take heart that in the end truth and love always wins. Think of it ... always.

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