

Obama will be a constant reminder for us
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Malaysia will never be the same again during the widely-anticipated eight years and two terms of President Barack Obama's administration built on the great ideals which since Nov 4 makes America, truly, the greatest nation so far in the history of civilizations.

Already, there is generally an ominous silence from Umno, and that's telling! They fear that change is coming to Malaysia to wreck their dreams of paradise built on the sweat and ruination of others.

democrat american election obama 070108 02Having re-captured the moral high ground on Nov 4, Obama's America will henceforth be a constant reminder of our woeful inadequacies as a people and a nation.

Our leaders and royals - who suddenly seem to have a 'nosy parker' penchant for making unwelcome, uninvited political and religious pronouncements -- will have to walk the tightrope the next eight years with their heads hanging low in shame and think of all the people in whose name they have been callously making hay while the sun shone, even when the nation continued to burn.

How can anyone in his right mind now root for Ketuanan Melayu, the "social contract" - a simple generosity that non-Malays extended to the Malays for a time in the first flush of independence and has now been thoroughly distorted to mean something else which they (the non-Malays) didn't intend at all, the NEP in all its deviations and distortions; and other self-serving pet theories, fixations and hang-ups.

It is for no reason that Royal Professor Ungku Aziz has called the so-called social contract, now being bandied about like James Bond's 007 Licence to Kill - as "a figment of the imagination".

And similarly both Anwar Ibrahim and Zaid Ibrahim have labelled Ketuanan Melayu "as a miserable excuse by a few to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority, and a failure", respectively. These are Malays who have finally seen the light.

In the wake of Nov 4, how can anyone with any sense of decency, fair play and justice reject Hindraf's call for equal rights for all and the politics of what brings us together as a people - read Pakatan Rakyat, the BN without Umno and the emerging Third Force in Malaysian Borneo -- as distinct from Umno's politics of what separates us?

Will we now see a concerted purge of the hardcore card-carrying Umno right-wingers who have systematically infiltrated every branch of government, the system and the establishment during former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir's Mohamad's long rein of deceit?

These creatures of habit continue to squat on all for seemingly no rhyme nor reason even when their self-serving agendas are fulfilled.

It seems that no one can even breathe, or pass gas for that matter, without their permission.

The emergence of Hindraf as a hydra-like phenomenon is a direct reaction to the existence of these infiltrators along the corridors of power and the halls of bureaucracy and unless they are purged and purged quickly, the Hindraf phenomenon will continue unabated and continue to haunt us all.

Shattering the glass ceiling

What else is there in the story of Obama which can inspire us?

Obama, despite being brought up at a Muslim school in Indonesia during his early childhood days and having a paternal grandmother with a "Muslim-sounding name" - Hussein, an irony considering Saddam Hussein whom Bush hanged in his place - back in the old country in Kenya, shattered the glass ceiling.

That he refused to be discriminated against, refused to dignify any form of discrimination, has been made abundantly clear and we can take heart from this for the first time in the battle against our own demons and that of others.

However, there's crucial difference here for all of us in Malaysia. Obama wouldn't have made it as the first black in the White House, had the United States of America still practiced institutionalized discrimination and racism based on superficial differences and squatted on the black community. Déjà vu?

Obama would not have made it either if he had been persuaded in his own mind by the self-serving arguments of the white supremacists everywhere - losers who draw their importance from making an absolute nuisance of themselves to others - that no sane white person would vote for a black person, or people of colour, in the White House.

The cynics among the white supremacists, educated beyond their intelligence, never tired of pointing out with dry humour that the White House was, well, white and not black.

Wasn't it originally green and burnt black during the American Civil War to free the slaves and had to be painted white to cover the burn marks? Beneath its present white exterior, the White House is actually black.

The white supremacists were not worth dignifying. Others, of course, saw beyond black-and-white considerations and realized that life had indeed many shades of grey.

Obama came across as an idea whose time had come . . . abstract, complex and sophisticated and standing for truth, honesty, justice, and with a sense of fair play and decency besides democracy and human rights, all the very qualities that have been found so wanting in our leaders.

Unlike many of our leaders in government, he's not a stuffed shirt, does not put on airs and has his firmly planted on the ground. His is no pompous act.

What we have here is a man of great substance.

A long journey ahead

Not someone like our leaders, who are given to form rather than function and lacking in

substance, all dolled up in western suits even during the height of the noonday sun in the searing, humid tropical heat and frothing and foaming and frothing at the mouth in public on issues of no consequence, as if they are about to have a real fit.

Many even make public speeches in the Hitler-style, ranting and raving as they raise their voices to the maximum pitch short of being bundled off to the nearest loony bin.

Obama is free of our pet theories, fixations and hang-ups.

Like the opposition's March 8, 2008 political tsunami, Obama's campaign ran like clockwork. The organisation, speed, efficiency, response time, real timing and outpouring of energy was incredible as seen in the mother of all political tsunamis which swept America from California and the Rocky Mountains to Florida, Massachusetts and the Great Lakes.

No wonder he shattered all existing records in the race to the White House viz. the highest ever count of the electoral college votes, the highest ever popular vote count and the capture of both the Senate and the Congress.

The mind is an incredible thing to waste. What the mind of man can contemplate and conceive, it can achieve. Someone very wise, unknown to many of us, said that once.

It was not so long ago that the great civil rights leader and Gandhian disciple, the Rev Martin Luther King, prayed: "I dream of an America one day where my children will be judged, not by the colour of their skin, but by the strength of their character."

In Malaysia, we have hundreds and thousands of miles to travel, before we can see our Obamas set our people and nation free from the shackles and bondage of the past.

The years since independence, and especially during the Mahathir years, has seen the institutionalization of state-sanctioned discrimination and racism in the name of the first inhabitants, but in reality, an elaborate resurrection of India's centuries long evil caste system, and its erection and foisting on all Malaysians.

We have our Brahmins as well, the Umnoputras, squatting on all and even defecating on their own community as well in return for a few crumbs from time-to-time from their well-laden tables.

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