

**Stop bringing up the ugliness of May 13, please
Malaysianmirror.com
23 August 2010**

COMMENT "REMEMBER May the 13th, the Chinese-Malay riot. It is sad to see the fabric of Malaysia's society moving in opposite direction, and if they need to look for a guilty party, then both of them only need to look into the mirror. I hope Malaysians know that racial harmony and tolerance are more than just words. All have to work hard to preserve that fabric in our society."

That statement by a blogger is a timely reminder of what may occur if politicians start hurling racial tirades at each other. And this is exactly what is happening in Kuala Lumpur this past week. Unfortunately, it is the top leaders in the country who are not behaving as they should have. Why? I think it's all because of their desire to score political points among their respective communities. This does not augur well for politics in the country.

In the heat of it all, MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek seemed to tread on unfamiliar ground when he practically told Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin off. In their public quarrel, Chua urged Muhyiddin to recognise that the socio-economic conditions in Malaysia have changed and thus there was no need to invoke memories of the 1969 racial riots.

Chua expressed 'disappointment' with Muhyiddin's statement when the DPM reminded MCA of the May 13 incident, adding that discussions on the country's future need not be clouded by racial sentiments.

"The socio-economic conditions in Malaysia today are totally different from that in 1969 and Malaysians are capable of having rational discussions without beating the racial war drum.

"All we ask for is a fair share. Rest assured that the MCA has no plans or interest to deprive other communities of what is rightfully theirs," said Chua.

Chua and Umno leaders have been engaging in a war of words following the MCA-organised Chinese Economic Congress recently, which among others, called for a reduction in the federal government's 30 percent Bumiputera equity targets.

Defending the congress' 13 resolutions, Chua said neither the MCA nor the congress had touched on special rights of the Bumiputera community.

In this public spat, I have to be on the side of Dr Chua. It's not because I'm Chinese. Frankly, I am not impressed with Chua's presidency of the MCA so far. If the MCA claims that the party is representing Chinese Malaysians and that Chua is the leader of Malaysian Chinese, I don't think I can accept that.

I am a Sarawakian and I am unable to accept Chua as my leader. Why? His political baggage is too 'heavy' and I have no desire to carry it for him. I'm sorry for being judgmental but it's difficult to accept too that he took over the MCA presidency by 'betraying' the former leader, his own party president then. In politics, we should all behave like gentlemen for as long as is necessary.

But I'm backing Chua in his row with Umno leaders because I feel that it's totally unnecessary to bring up the ugliness of a racial riot like the May 13 incident whenever differences of opinions crop up among politicians.

May 13 is a shameful episode in our nation's history. It is best buried and forgotten. Yes, Malaysians have learnt a lesson from it and that's good enough. Having recognized that, we have to move on and not be clouded by that unfortunate blast in our history. Surely, there is nothing much to gain by invoking such a painful memory of people losing their lives because of some silly politics. It was a time when Malaysians forgot that they were Malaysians. Now, we must never forget that we are all Malaysians.

Unfortunately, the MCA-Umno racial spat came about at a time when Malaysians are about to celebrate Merdeka on August 31. Surely, the celebratory mood has been dampened. For us in Sarawak, let's be thankful that we can now officially celebrate our Independence Day on September 16

For the people of Sarawak and Sabah, I am doubtful that they get emotional when talking about May 13. Others may not share my sentiments but allow me to use myself as an example of why May 13 is just another day.

In 1969, I was in Form One – still naïve and uninterested about major happenings in the country. I cannot recall anything about May 13 at all. I knew nothing about politics or elections. All I knew was that Tunku Abdul Rahman was the Prime Minister of Malaysia and that the Chief Minister of Sarawak was Datuk Penghulu Tawi Sli.

And hey, May 13 took place in Kuala Lumpur – that's so far away. It's another faraway land and not in Sarawak or Sabah. I'm sure that even today, the people of East Malaysia still hardly feel anything for May 13. Sabahans would probably feel more for the air crash that took the lives of their Chief Minister Tun Donald Fuad Stephens and several Cabinet ministers on 16 June, 1976. Why? It happened at home, of course.

Forty one years later, I have to say that I don't feel much for the May 13 incident. If people in Kuala Lumpur want to riot and kill each other because of their racist streak, that's their business. I want no part of it. In fact, I detest it whenever the incident is brought up. I think it's unfair to include Sarawakians and Sabahans when leaders used the May 13 racial riots as a warning for possible racial dissent.

As far as I'm concerned, there is hardly any racial issue in Sarawak. Dayaks, Chinese, Malays and others in Sarawak are a different breed altogether and this is something which they have proudly held on to. Indeed, the racial harmony in Sarawak is something which those across the South China Sea should emulate and nurture.

Then, there is no more necessity for reminding Malaysians of the ugliness of the May 13 race riots. In fact, it should have been buried in the dustbin of history long ago.

So please you guys in Kuala Lumpur. If you want to quarrel over racial issues please do not drag us Sarawakians, into your fight. We want no part of it. And again, please be reminded that May 13 is a very West Malaysian episode of shame. None of us over this side were involved. Please don't keep on reminding us of such an ugly event.

Copyright © 2009 www.malaysiamirror.com

Source :

<http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/41-opinion/48947-stop-bringing-up-the-ugliness-of-may-13-please>