

Malaysia Is Merdeka In Name Only
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A country that has won Merdeka, in name only, cannot be considered free or independent if its people are afraid to speak up to determine their future.

Isn't it time we thought in terms of liberating our minds from the shackles of Umno? We need to be free from thinking that only Umno is our saviour. We need the liberty to appreciate freely that Malaysia is a product of all its peoples and not a success just because of the one race.

When the country was a colony, the vanguard of freedom fighters had a common objective – independence. Today, we seem to have lost our sense of direction. We are like a rudderless ship and with no skipper to steer us, we are aimlessly drifting with the tide.

On 31 August 1957, Malaya achieved its independence from its colonial masters. However, it appears that we have swapped one set of rulers, the British, for another, Umno.

Others will rubbish this claim and say that the real problem is because the current Umno has evolved into a hybrid monster of the old Umno. Maybe the truth lies somewhere in between.

Umno duped everyone, including their partners in the BN-coalition, the MCA and the MIC. These two component parties believed that they were representing the interests of the Chinese and the Indians of Malaysia. They took their cue from Umno, to create more fear and instability. Between them, they engineered ways and means to control the people.

First, the government used scare tactics on the people. Then, they started to demoralise those whom they had just frightened.

We have seen a steady increase in threats including death threats, unlawful arrests, detentions, fire-bombings and protests against law-abiding citizens. To spread the fear, so that the hidden threat reaches as many people as possible, the mainstream media helps Umno.

One shopkeeper said, "I dare not open my mouth to criticise because the police would catch me. That would be it for me and my family would never see me again."

How can a country be considered independent if its own people are afraid to say and speak their mind, because they know their freedom will be curtailed?

Second is the silent majority, who is aware of what is going on but for one reason or another, refuses to voice its disapproval.

What is it that motivates them? Is it fear, apathy or their indebtedness to Umno? Why do they remain silent and give the rabble-rousers the courage to continue and destroy the harmony, previously enjoyed by Malaysians?

Those who do not benefit from Umno's largesse are full of resentment. It is not just non-Malays against Malays, for within the Malay ranks, there is also great animosity.

Umno is aware that the ability to choose, depends on the freedom to make choices. However, when people are indebted to Umno, in one way or another, then the freedom to choose is no longer there.

Politicians who have no concept of governance and who are devoid of policies, have no qualms about using religion to divide and rule. For these people, their only hope for an increased following, is by instilling fear.

We have observed several downtrends in our educational policies and seen the nation become divided because of our educational system and the preferential treatment being given to the majority race.

Again, Umno is aware that with an educated and confident nation, it would be more difficult to rule.

Without the ability to free our minds of Umno's brainwashing, many of us become impressed with the show of wealth and the line-up of mega-projects, that Umno displays.

If we liberated our minds and thought rationally, we would wonder why it is possible to find billions to build these monuments to Umno and its leaders, but very little money in comparison can be found to help the ordinary people?

For decades, Umno conned us with cheap slogans and we went along with them. Originally, the rakyat was complacent, but no more.

The turning point was reached in 2008, when it was shown that Umno was slacking. That is why any initiative on our part to strive for change has been challenged forcefully, by Umno. That is why we saw the EO-6 or PSM-6 being detained. That is why Umno have discovered so many perceived threats to Islam. That is why Bersih was seen as a danger to Umno's leaders.

Many of us may have lost hope and may refuse to vote because we may feel it will not make a difference.

That would spell an even greater disaster for Malaysia. If the poor utilised their power to vote and went out to vote for people who would represent their interests, only then would there be, a true democratic revolution. The rakyat may find that finally, their needs and that of their community, will be met. Now that would be liberating.

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