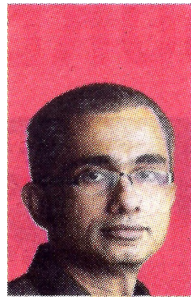


An hour with Dr M, arguably better than an Avengers' movie



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"I ALMOST called him 'pastor'," I told my colleagues after the interview with Tun. It could have been the bidding of the tongue or the mind; both, like independent governments, don't always act in concert.

But perhaps it was the anxious heart, for this was my first-ever interview with the man.

The truth is, I have had a love-hate relationship with him. When Rashid told me some months ago about a planned rendezvous with the PM, I thought to myself, "Well, Steven and George, I am finally going to talk to the guy we despised so much".

The three of us were at law school when two Supreme Court judges and Tun Salleh Abas were dismissed. It was painful for them, it was disgusting to us. But this was just one of the many episodes in Tun's long reign that hardened our hearts against him.

But learning and suffering,



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, flanked by Pakatan Harapan (PH) leaders, speaking at a press conference after chairing a PH meeting in Petaling Jaya, Dr Mahathir says a major accomplishment of the PH government is staying together after one year.

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companions to all who truly live, have shown us more about Tun's actions. Of how they moved in the shadows, emerging as black or white and sometimes grey, but always marching to a goal that his mind saw as clear as daylight.

Rest assured, though, this interview is not an Orwellian attempt to whitewash Pakatan

Harapan's and Tun's record. Like Churchill, Dr Mahathir is neither the ultimate statesman nor the greatest villain. The historians and those who come after us will have more to consider. But only God will truly judge.

But now that he's right in front of us, I wanted him to answer what's been bothering me for a

long time. What rabbit is he going to pull out of the hat to correct the wealth and income disparities in this country?

To be sure, it is a global disease, but what is our prescription? We have been fed a government narrative for the longest time that the poverty rate is dropping, but this wealth-gap time bomb is

growing too.

He knows it. I could almost sense those thoughts in the wizened but unbowed brow. I was amazed by him, but I was not interested in platitudes nor fawning adoration. I believe neither was he. We wanted straight answers. I think he understood that. Indeed, just like my pastor.