

Malays say they join DAP for its struggle, not for power
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By Jennifer Gomez

Far from being mere yes-men as alleged by an Utusan Malaysia columnist recently, the Malays who join DAP do not believe in self-entitlement but instead accept its culture built on merit, a Malay DAP federal lawmaker said.

These Malays are also academically accomplished and thick-skinned enough to endure and share the ideals of the party's politics and "don't expect a 30% discount on anything", Raub MP Datuk Mohd Ariff Sabri Abdul Aziz told The Malaysian Insider.

"They understand that elections to the CEC (central executive committee) are not a matter of being given a seat on the basis that a Malay is entitled to many things.

"You have to prove and earn it. Take the sons of Karpal Singh, for example. They are there because they are good, and they are not Chinese."

Citing another example, that of Batu Kawan MP Kasthuri Patto, Ariff said she was not in the party because she was the daughter of former DAP leader P. Pato, but because she was talented and genuine.

However, becoming a member of the democratic socialist party was a bold step for any Malay as he was opening himself to the vilest of condemnation, including being labelled the running dogs of the Chinese, betrayer of the Malay race, apostate and abandoning Islam, said Ariff, a former Umno assemblyman.

This would ring true given the claims by Utusan Malaysia columnist Ku Seman Ku Hussain on July 4 that Malay DAP members were mere "yes-men" and needed to be in higher positions to really change the perception that the opposition party was Chinese-centric.

Ku Seman also labelled the DAP Malays as an "unfortunate" generation, saying they were playing cheerleaders for a party which attacked Malay interests.

"If DAP's pull factor is that it transcends race and religion, then there is only one race that stands out in the party.

"The race is still a main factor in DAP. Only the Malays in the party are too stupid to understand that fact."

But Ariff countered that their numbers and positions did not matter, instead it was more important that the issues articulated and fought by the party were getting the support of the people.

He said that all one needed to do was to look at the quality of the current DAP leadership, adding that its MPs were among the best.

He added that the Malays who joined DAP were the kind who would feel a sense of shame if they were lagging behind.

"The Malay who joins DAP must feel left behind and slacking when they see people like Tony Pua, Ong Kian Ming, Anthony Loke, (Liew) Chin Tong and many others articulating issues of importance.

"Seeing these people in action ought to produce a feeling of wanting to compete on those terms.

"These are the Malays who will be more attracted to join DAP, and a good example is Zairil Khir Johari."

Ariff said that before the 13th general election, there were around 500 Malay members but this has grown to 2,000 currently, making up 2% of the party's membership with many other young Malays eager to join DAP.

His depiction seems to hit the mark with the Malays in DAP, with newbies, including Impian Kelantan coordinator Syefura Othman, Teluk Intan by-election candidate Dyana Sofya Mohd Daud and rapper Edry Faizal Yusof saying they chose DAP as it matched their own ideologies, and not based on a desire for position or power, which were aspirations of those joining Umno.

DAP Malay members speak up against yes-men claims

Businesswoman Young Syefura Othman, 26, who joined the party a year ago, said DAP fits the bill for her in terms of being a party that champions justice and the rights of the people.

"They have everything I was looking for, and I'm very happy to be part of the DAP family.

"I've not felt sidelined, instead I am very comfortable here," Syefura told The Malaysian Insider.

She said that it was high time Malaysians stopped talking along racial lines and instead, come together to help the country grow and achieve greatness.

"It is very embarrassing that these people keep talking about race and religion in this day and age.

"That too coming from a scholar who should be talking about progressive ideas. Instead of saying things to unite the people, he is going the opposite route," she said of Utusan columnist Ku Seman.

Dyana Sofya (left pic) could not agree more, and said they should actually thank the columnist for highlighting the obvious – that DAP is becoming a party of choice for all Malaysians.

"Ku Seman's article acknowledges the fact that DAP is a multiracial Malaysian party and there is a phenomenon of young Malays now joining DAP."

She said those who joined DAP, like national laureate Datuk A. Samad Said, understood and recognised the party's struggle for the people.

"More of us are joining after getting to know the party, we want to join their fight," she added.

Edry (pic), who is DAP Bandar Utama branch chairman, also refuted Utusan's claims that the Malays were yes-men, and instead said he felt empowered in the party.

"As a member, I have the power to voice my opinion.

"And if I want more power in the organisation, then I need to climb the hierarchy ladder like anyone else," said Edry, who joined the party three years ago.

He added that Utusan was too used to seeing people joining Umno for the sake of power.

"They need to step out of their Umno box and see that there are people who join a political party for the sake of fulfilling dreams and idealism of the party's fight."

The rapper said has only one regret – that he did not join DAP earlier. – July 26, 2015.

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