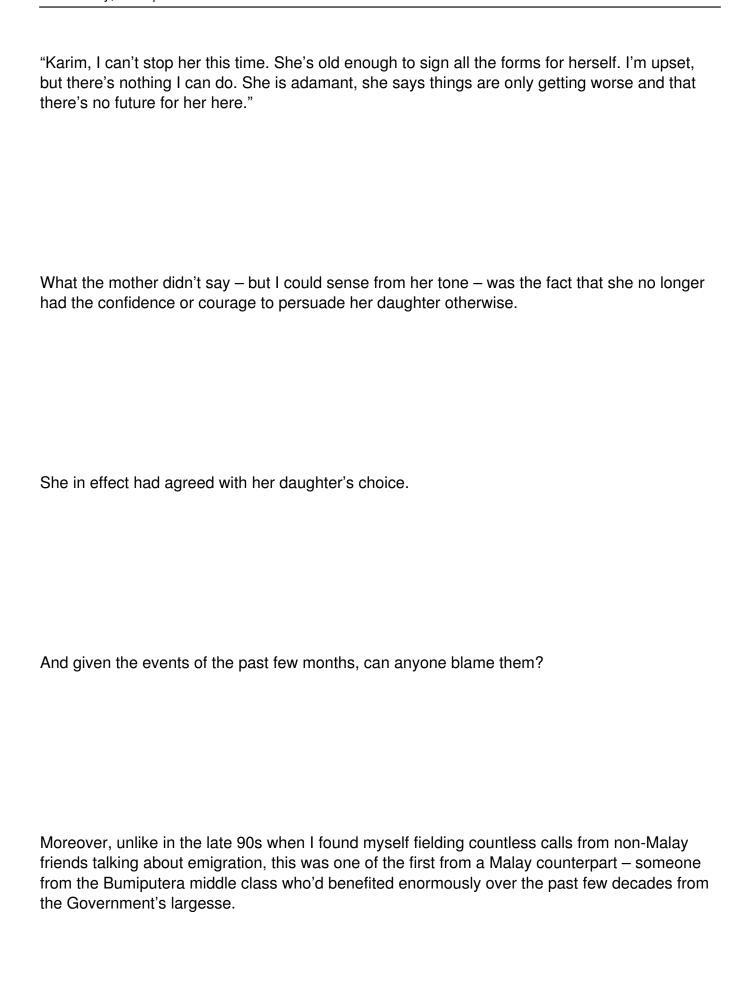


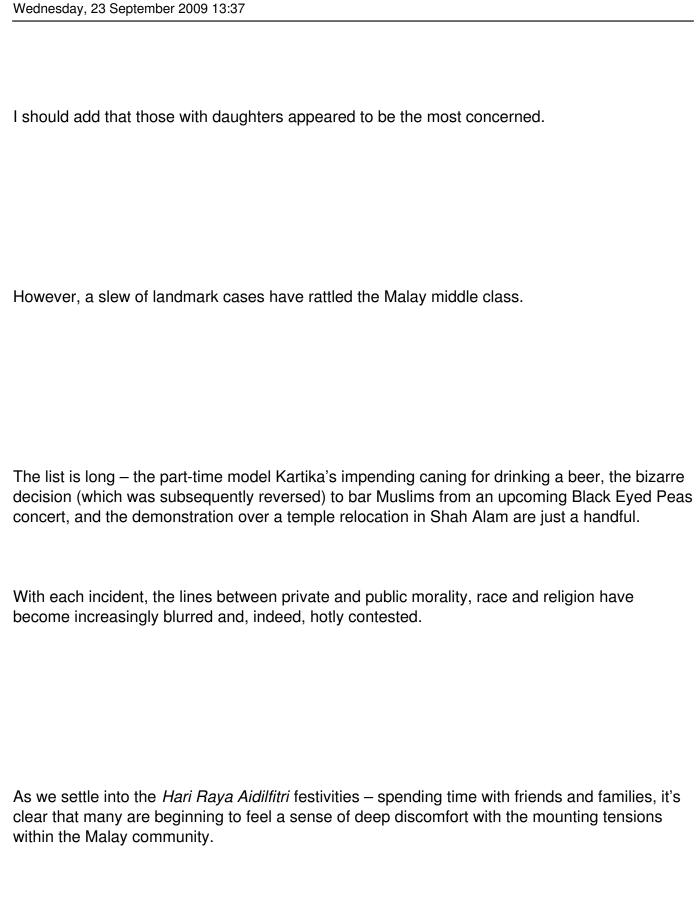
By Karim Raslan

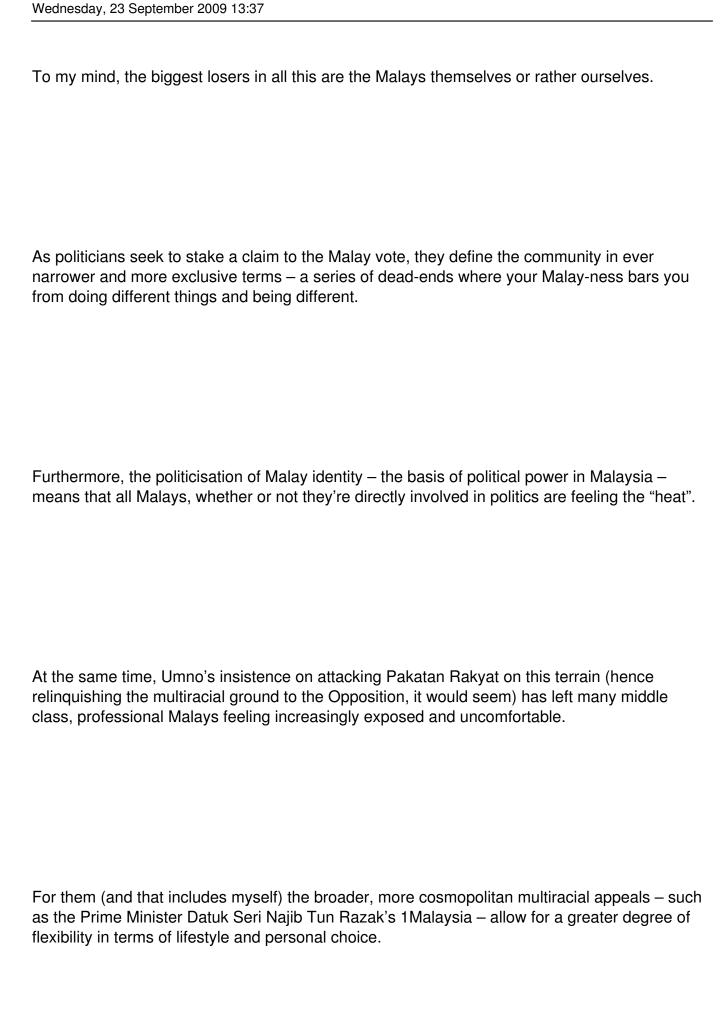
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LAST week I received a call from an old friend. She was agitated because her daughter had decided to apply for permanent residency abroad.

I can still remember the call. She had started talking almost as soon as I answered the phone:



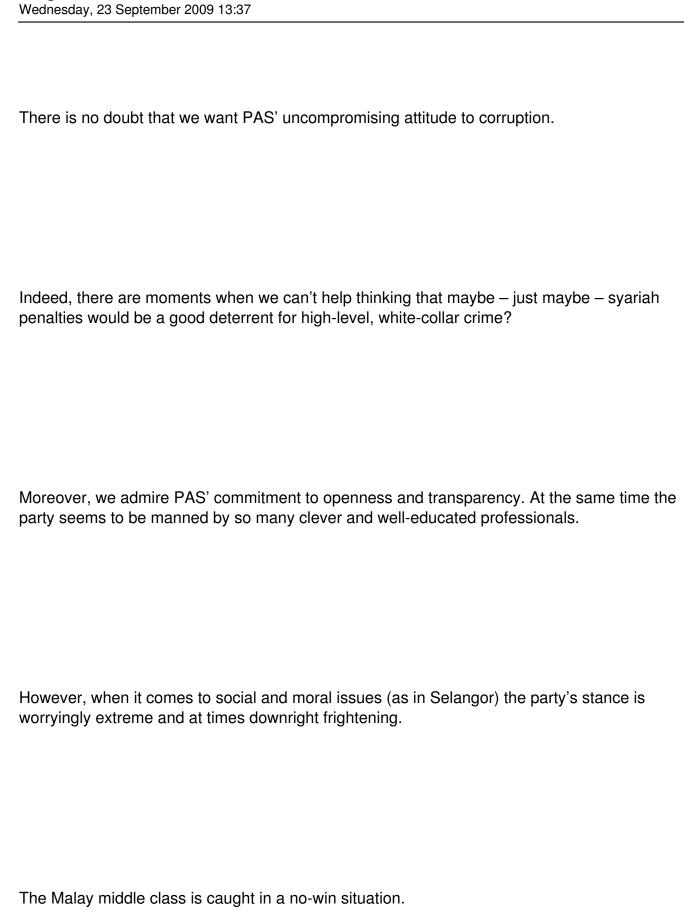




Nonetheless, we've started to view Umno with alarm, seeing party members as rowdy, corrupt,

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ill-disciplined and greedy.
We also worry at the current unrepentant tone and the way "winning at all costs" has supplanted any other higher aspirations.
At the same time PAS' antics in Selangor in particular remind us of what the Ullama-led party is capable of when the opportunity arises.
The constant pressure to take the moral high ground, neglecting more serious governance and social issues, reveals the conservative faction of PAS' narrow-minded bigotry at its very worst.
So where does that leave the Malay middle class?

Well we're nowhere. We are lost and we are without a voice.



We desperately want Umno to clean up its act, to reform and repent, but this seems increasingly unlikely.
At the same time Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has all but disappeared from view and PAS is seeking to dominate Pakatan's social policies.
Is it any wonder that some Malays – some of the best and brightest – are starting to vote with their feet?