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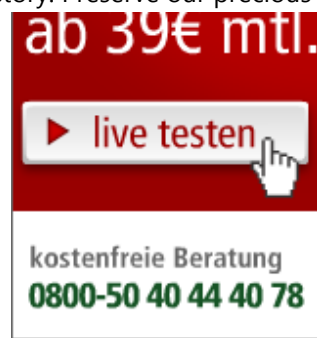
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The advertisement features a red background. At the top left, the logo for 'ebuero AG' is displayed with the tagline 'Das Büro der Zukunft'. To the right of the logo are two small award icons: 'TESTBEREICH' and '1. Platz'. The main text in the center reads 'Büroservice für Steuerberater'. Below this text is a photograph of a smiling man in a light blue shirt talking on a mobile phone. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text 'Ihre Sekretärin' is written in white.



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History: Preserve our precious past

2011/06/08

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A FEW weeks ago, I had the privilege of spending some time in San Francisco, California. It is a modern city with an old world feeling.

I could see signs or reminders of history. It might not even be ancient history but it is appreciated and cherished, nevertheless.

Development and construction were carried out around these historical sites. And when they have to clear a place, there would always be reminders in the new building of what was once there.

They are able to accommodate their subway system alongside trams and cable cars that are more than 100 years old.

Let us look at Kuala Lumpur. Take, for example, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. If one was not told, one would not know that it once housed the Turf Club, where horse-racing was held every Sunday.

Take the Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, a spanking new mall that stands on what was once the Bukit Bintang Girls School. I don't see any sign that pays homage to a school that churned out illustrious women who contributed to the nation.

In the Pavilion, there should be a hall that at least mentions or shows photographs of this school. We should not think that it would not interest the tourists, and don't always cater for tourists alone. Think of the value of history.

We, in Malaysia, seem to love to eradicate the past and destroy history. In Kuala Lumpur, a number of old buildings have been demolished. Even Pudu Prison was demolished whereas the Alcatraz in San Francisco still stands.

Apparently, in Kuala Lumpur, we need more malls, hotels and luxury condominiums.

In San Francisco, an old strip used by the postal air service has been turned into a park. How did I know that? Because there is a small stone plaque to commemorate its existence.

Mark my words, the old Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Sungai Besi will be turned into yet another area filled with shopping malls, hotels and luxury condominiums.

And once this happens, future generations will never know that it once housed the first international airport. Another historical site consigned to the dust.

We seem to constantly change old street names in the hope of paying tribute to someone or trying to erase our colonial past. But what of the earlier people who also contributed to the development of the city and the nation?

Do we only remember the most recent contributors and forget the past? Is this what we want to teach our children, grandchildren and youth -- forget about history and only think about the present?

The current state of affairs falls squarely on us and the leaders. Because we paid scant regard to history and instead preferred to see history only in our mould, the present generation has forgotten history.

They disregard history and have even forgotten that there is such a thing as the Rukun Negara.

And we want them to remember about the struggle for independence when we ourselves have failed to instil in them the culture of why it is important in the first place.

In San Francisco, almost every restaurant that I went to carried photographs of the past.

The pictures showed how people used to look like and how they used to dress. How proud they are of their history.

In Kuala Lumpur, unless we go to a museum or an exhibition, we will hardly get to see such sights. History should not be consigned to the museum alone but also be living and breathing alongside the present.

What we have in Malaysia are new buildings that seem afraid to be associated with the past.

There is a need to remember and dignify history. This should not be just a government campaign but should be a voluntary effort by everyone. If not, we will be like those who forget history and are destined to repeat it. It is already happening.

MEGAT SHAH RIZAL NOOR IKHSAN, Hulu Kelang, Kuala Lumpur



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Well Lit. Sessions for June with Umapagan

This month, both Well Lit. Sessions in Klang Valley & Penang will feature **THE IMPERFECTIONISTS** by Tom Rachman. Check the Well Lit. pages every Wednesday in Life & Times for the dissection of this book.

Klang Valley: Wednesday, **June 29, 8:30pm** at Leonardo's Dining Room and Wine Loft, 61-1 Jalan Bangkung, Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar (03-2096 2226)

Penang: Thursday, **June 30, 6:30pm** at Agua restaurant, Straits Quay, Jln Seri Tanjung Pinang, Tanjung Tokong (04-890 8668)



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History: Preserve our precious past

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