

Not anti-government, but pro rakyat
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Douglas Tan

It has been a while since I have written a piece. Yes, there have been plenty issues of issues cropping up over the political landscape since Chinese New Year.

There was Sharizat's Abdul Jalil's leave of absence, Dr Chua Soi Lek saying that the Chinese owe their prosperity to BN, Ibrahim Ali handing out pak kam as ang pows to elderly folk, 1Care and the epic debate between Dr Chua and Lim Guan Eng.

Despite all of these juicy topics, I did not feel the inclination to write, and I'm sure that my fellow colleagues in the online media world have done a brilliant job.

However, I want to tackle an issue which has been bugging me since I began writing as a columnist, and also campaigning actively for the Opposition, and in particular, the DAP.

I have been frequently asked why many young people and myself are so anti-government, and so intent in causing trouble and instability. I believe that is a fair question which deserves a fair explanation.

"Evangelis DAP"

I make no secrets of my political affiliation. I am proudly and unashamedly an active member of the DAP and I believe in what the party does and in their plans for our nation, where every citizen is treated fairly regardless of race, language or creed.

Does this mean by any stretch of the imagination that I believe the DAP is perfect? Certainly not. No political party can claim to be free from corruption, croynism or favouritism.

However, the concern would be the severity of these political vices and whether it would severely impact the ability to govern a nation effectively.

When I wrote on the DAP National Convention, I was roundly criticised by Helen Ang who accused me of being an "Evangelis DAP" (Evangelist for the DAP) and also condemned me for my faith.

She wrote that people like me spew out an extremely one-sided and unbalanced views and that our country would descend into Nazism and Communist dictatorships if left unchecked.

Despite finding her article to be generally offensive, I could not help but laugh at the irony of her comments. I did not respond initially as I did not believe that I should dignify her comments with a response.

But I would like to make a point that the reason why I think and write this way is because I have intimately seen both sides of the coin and formed my own conclusions.

Justified bias?

Was I biased when I wrote my article on the DAP National Convention? Of course I was. Was it one-sided? Most definitely. Why did I do this? The reason is simple.

Politics is perception. Journalists are supposed to frame up the truth in a manner which is supposed to be even-handed and impartial. The fact of the matter is that we are human.

We would tend to favour one side over another. Is this correct? In an ideal world, perhaps not, but we do not live in an ideal world.

In the world of the free press, differing opinions of political events offer the reader a variety of view points and allows the individual to make up their own mind on the matter.

In the United Kingdom, The Guardian is a well known conservative paper, The Times is more politically in the centre and The Daily Mail is unabashedly right-wing.

How does this compare to our situation here in Malaysia? The Star is the mouthpiece of the MCA, and the New Straits Times is so blatantly pro-Umno it has to be given away to schools and hospitals for free!

Then there is the blatantly divisive Utusan Malaysia and the Metro Harian carries their opinions derived from Bernama.

The only semblance of favourable reporting towards the Opposition parties come from the Chinese press including the China Press and Sin Chew. But even then, the political leaning would always be more towards BN.

So how about The Rocket, Harakah Daily, Suara Keadilan, Malaysia Today, Malaysiakini, Free Malaysia Today, The Malaysian Insider and Malaysia Chronicle?

As party newspapers and online news portals, do they even attempt to offer a balanced point of view? Or is our desire for free media driven to the extent that it would appear that we have to write articles to the other extreme?

Is this necessarily in order for opposing view points to meet in the middle in the mind of the reader?

Anti-government rhetoric?

The fact of the matter is that in the arena of press and broadcast media, it is simply not fair. The Opposition's only saving grace is the Internet for the dissemination of information.

Despite all of this, and despite the argument for a fair media, is the Opposition and pro-Opposition journalists like myself guilty of disseminating misinformation? To a certain extent, yes we are all guilty of this.

Does this make us anti-government at all? No it does not. Until today, as the Umno-BN government has been in power coming to 55 years, Malaysians are unable to distinguish between the BN party and the government.

We cannot really be blamed for saying things like "The Opposition control Penang, Kelantan, Kedah and Selangor." As a matter of fact, this statement is fundamentally wrong.

When the Opposition becomes a state-government, they are no longer the opposition, but the ruling coalition.

This idea is incredibly difficult to grasp, as Malaysia, like Singapore, is an example of an extremely successful pseudo-democratic system.

The reason behind this is that no other party or coalition has ever governed these countries in their short histories.

Furthermore, Umno-BN holds the Guinness World Record for being the longest serving party or coalition in any country which calls itself a democracy.

This is not necessarily a bad thing in itself, but it throws up serious questions of accountability.

My government, my country

I sincerely believe that not a single citizen of this beautiful country wants anything but the best for our country.

When we have a government that does the right thing, and operates efficiency and professionally for the betterment of our lives, why would we not have any reason to support this?

At the end of the day, it is the goal, not the political party, which is the ultimate concern of the rakyat.

Though there are indeed anarchists, hardcore Perkasa supporters and die-hard DAP supporters, the vast majority of the country wants a government which puts our collective interests first, before the interests of any individual groups, lobbies or parties.

What we want is a sincere, accountable and transparent government that implements policies without favour which would stimulate a more competitive, market-driven economic environment, eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable and practical social advancement.

BN was incredibly successful in doing all these things for many years, but with mounting financial scandals, unchecked spending, a ballooning subsidy bill, mounting government debt, immeasurable capital outflow and excruciating inflation, I would now call their governing ability into question.

Can the Opposition govern? They have been incredibly successful in Penang, moderately successful in Selangor and consistent in Kedah and Kelantan.

Does this mean that they can take the reins of power at the federal government? No, it is not an automatic entitlement. Running a country is dramatically different from running a state.

Many members of the public are driven to political apathy by the sheer volume of politicking and finger pointing both sides engage in.

Pakatan Rakyat, need to take the manifesto promises and resolutions they have made and actively put it into action now.

Wakil rakyat have to eat, drink and sleep around the interests of the rakyat. With all the anti-Opposition propaganda being expounded, the final resort is roll up their sleeves and tie up their sarongs and get to work with the personal touch.

Would I vote for BN if they truly had the people's interests at heart? Absolutely 100 percent. I am not anti-government, nor shall I ever be anti-government. But I do think it's time for a change, don't you?

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