

BN's golden rule: keep them simple, stupid!

MalaysiaKini.com

March 20, 2012

By Baru Bian

The leaders of the Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party's (SPDP) and Party Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) have, by their recent statements, exposed the modus operandi that has perpetuated their abuse of power and the oppression of the rakyat for over 40 years: keep the people simple and ignorant.

At all cost, prevent any advancement from reaching them so that they remain grateful to the BN for the little scraps that are thrown at them once every five years.

William Mawan's statement in The Star recently, with regard to why he thinks holding the elections on 3 June is not a good idea beggars belief: "If election is held during this time, the young, educated professionals who work in the cities might bring everything that is new that in turn, could change the mentality of the people in their kampung and longhouses".

This statement betrays the fear the BN politicians have that the rural folk will one day wake up to the sobering truth that the only people who have benefitted from this BN government are the BN politicians themselves and their families and cronies.

Mawan's desire to keep the rural people as ignorant and unaware as the proverbial frog under a coconut shell suggests that the BN government has no desire at all to help them grow and advance with the times.

What is it about changing their mentality that frightens the BN so much? How are we ever going to catch up with the developing world if our government prefers to keep the rakyat in the dark ages?

Is this the reason why healthcare and educational opportunities and facilities are so primitive and inadequate in the rural areas?

In this day and age, up to 500,000 homes are still not connected to any electricity grid, and the majority of the rural population has no access to the internet and other amenities.

The government has no business harping about SCORE and the miraculous riches it will bring to the rakyat when it has not provided the basic education and facilities for the people to be able to participate in it.

To top it off, we are told that bringing 'everything that is new' to the kampong is not a good thing.

Obviously, encouraging the population to acquire knowledge is detrimental to the BN's health, as with knowledge (and critical thinking) comes the realisation of the people about the power that they wield.

James Masing's statement, also in The Star is equally astounding: that the rakyat are the bosses only for one day every five years, i.e. during polling day, and that the rest of the days for the next five years, the elected YBs are the bosses and the rakyat are to be 'subservient', having no right to challenge anything the bosses choose to do.

The Borneo Post quotes him: "If their YBs, for instance, pass a law which tells the rakyat to walk backward, the rakyat must walk backward".

It is extremely disturbing and disappointing that this veteran politician should cite as an example a law which clearly would not advance the welfare of the people and which cannot reflect the will of the people.

Yet what an apt example for him to put forward - it reflects perfectly the policies of the BN government.

Keep the rakyat backward and poor while the BN politicians push forward with their self-enriching land-grabbing schemes.

In fact, the government policies over the past few decades have forced the rakyat to walk backwards - they are actually getting poorer.

As proof of this, the Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah said that since 2007, the rate of poverty in Sarawak had increased from 4.2 percent to 5.3 percent in 2009 (The Star 1 Nov 2011).

What a shameful legacy for the BN government.

Our elected representatives are given the privilege to sit in their positions of authority so that they can serve the will of the rakyat.

'Rakyat' is not defined according to political leanings and even if it is, the will of the opposition may well be the will of the majority, given the gerrymandering and dirty politics practised by the BN government.

Our elected representatives are not given wholesale power to act on their whims and fancies.

Using this twisted reasoning to justify a decision made in an obvious case of abuse of power will intensify the resentment of the people against a tyrannical government.

Despite the best efforts of the BN government to keep the Sarawakian rakyat simple, they not going to buy James Masing's revolutionary and unique take on democratic principles.

His perverse defiance in the face of criticism and reproach (even from some BN leaders) does not bode well for him, but has contributed in no small way to building up support for the message of truth and promise of good governance by the opposition.

It is clear that the time has come for the people to unite and show the elected representatives who the real bosses are.

