

Speak out against irrationality
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When Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said, "If we read the mainstream media, intuitively we regard it as an authoritative report whose facts cannot be questioned," the majority of Malaysians disagree. One man's fact is another man's lie.

The discriminating public sees the government machinery protecting the interests of Umno and their sycophants, and hiding the crimes they have committed. What the voting public really hates are hypocritical politicians who are removed from reality.

azlanBloggers, cartoonists, journalists, and rappers are feeling the heat in Malaysia: Namewee of 'Negarakuku' fame raised pulses for taking a stand against racism; Tenaga Nasional did not see the light with Irwan Abdul Rahman's satirical blog; New Sarawak Tribune executive editor Paul Si got a dousing over the article "Is Taib testing the waters?"; the Home Ministry risks being caricatured by cartoonists for banning Zunar's book of political cartoons.

If the government had dealt decisively with the two racist headmistresses, instead of pussy-footing around, we might have been spared another hip-hop video from Namewee. Rap music is not everyone's cup of tea, but Namewee understands the youth.

Namewee increased awareness of racists and racism in his two-minute rap, unlike PM Najib who took two weeks to issue a statement which said little apart from a "zero tolerance" on racism and that "swift action would be taken against those who make racial slurs". We still await the "swift action".

Incredibly, after that prime-ministerial hype, it was Namewee who was interrogated, not the two headmistresses.

Irwan Abdul Rahman aka hassan skodeng 3Last year, Namewee got into trouble for another rap criticising Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) for its frequent power-failures. TNB seems unable to provide a continuous supply of electricity or to take a joke.

Irwan's satirical blog was "TNB to sue World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) over Earth Hour." The article claimed that TNB would be suing WWF for the worldwide 'earth-hour' campaign which was costing them "millions in unrealised revenue."

What Irwan didn't count on was that writing a seemingly innocuous parody about the earth-hour and TNB would upset the corporation, and threaten his career.

Fun dropped from our vocabulary?

If he is found guilty, will writing April Fool's articles be made illegal? Have we dropped fun from our vocabulary?

How about the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission lawyer Abdul Razak Musa, who gave a stellar one-man comedy act during his cross-examination of Dr Pornthip Rojanasunand. He must also be censured.

He certainly brought the Malaysia legal profession and civil service into disrepute. Even the judge was laughing AT him.

We were certainly upset with his bumbling performance. He has discredited a profession and embarrassed a nation.

Apparently he has also harmed "education". After watching "that video" my nephews and their peers believe they need not go to university but drop out and become lawyers.

sarawak tribune paul si 020910Paul Si, the seasoned Tribune editor who published the article on Taib Mahmud, knew that he would provoke Taib. What he didn't envisage was that all the top editors would face a lengthy tirade from Taib's daughter, Hanifah, who gave them the "hairdryer treatment" until 2.30am.

The valiant Si, who took full responsibility for the "offensive" article so that others would be spared punishment, would be wise to take his expertise elsewhere. Taib hates to be crossed and there are many who will support him, to protect their interests.

NONEWhilst a sense of humour is important, a sense of perspective is also necessary. Zunar's books, '1Funny Malaysia' and 'Perak Darul Kartun' were banned because the ministry's chief secretary, Mahmood Adam, complained they were unsuitable - "The publications have been banned for contents that can influence the people to revolt against the leaders and government policies."

The public does not need the state to control its reading nor have its "fun" rationed.

Malaysians are a tad sensitive and make countless police reports against those with whom they disagree. The waste of police time and resources must be phenomenal. Our policemen do not need distractions.

Poll: Mainstream media not trusted

In a recent poll by the Merdeka Centre, six out of 10 Malaysians did not trust the mainstream media. It revealed that 57% of Malays and 58% of Chinese polled said they did not trust the mainstream media, while 33% Malays (30% Chinese) trusted it and 10% Malays (12% Chinese) said they did not know.

Meanwhile, PM Najib said that the public could trust the mainstream media because its reporting was based on facts, unlike the alternative media where the online portals and blogs wrote "half-truths and were inaccurate".

He said, "The mainstream media has one strength which cannot be found in the alternative media - they are fact-based. Its principles are based on facts, as compared to blogs which are personal, usually a one-man show and opinion-based."

If Najib carps on about the distrustful, inaccurate alternative news media, then why was DPP Farah Azlina Latif transferred from Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial?

She was alleged by a blogger to have had an affair with the prosecution's star witness, Saiful Bukhari Azlan. Why was this woman's removal effected on the strength of a blogger's comment?

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said his ministry had never taken sides when handling incidents which involved churches and mosques. He said, "For some cases, it takes a longer time to investigate and to be solved".

lim guan eng slaughters cow 310810 lim quang eng nizar jamaluddin Can he explain why the two racist headmistresses cases are dragging on, and yet Namewee's interrogation and censure was swift? Can he explain why racial sentiments are allowed to foment with the delay in investigating "doctored photographs"?

In the final analysis, more Malaysians must speak out and protest against the irrationality that is ruining our society.

Why should people who have petty grievances and are easily slighted silence journalists, bloggers, rappers, cartoonists, human rights activists and anyone else who dares to highlight serious issues of public interest?

Police reports and court action should never be used to block good, responsible journalism or debate. At the end of the day, the people with most to lose are the general public because they will not get to know the truth. We must vigorously defend our right to freedom of expression.

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