



**Buffoon-o-phobia  
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As both a fan and brother-in-arms of Zulkiflee Anwar Ulhaque, aka Zunar (*below*), I congratulate him on his success in baiting the BN regime's gang of buffoons and

goons with his witty and gritty cartoons.

And, of course, I envy him too. Having hoped in vain for years to have my own BN-phobic books banned and thus turned into best-sellers, I'm tremendously jealous that he's achieved this feat four times, with *1 Funny Malaysia*, *Perak Darul Kartun*, *Isu Dalam Kartun*, and now the latest collection of his work, *Cartoon-o-phobia*.

He's also managed to get himself arrested by the laughable forces of law and order, thus highlighting the hilarious hypocrisy of Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's statement excusing last year's notorious BN-inspired 'cow's head' protest at a Hindu temple.

"In this day and age," as you'll recall that Hishammuddin declared at that time, "protests should be accepted in this world as people want their voices to be heard. If we don't give them room to voice their opinions, they have no choice but to protest."

But such permissiveness applies only to protests by government supporters and sympathisers, apparently, and not to critics, opponents and lampooners of the powers that be.

Not that Zunar could care less about such dire double standards, having stated after his recent release on bail from police custody that "this won't change my mind on cartooning. I will keep on drawing until I change from comic strips to prison stripes."

There's certainly plenty of fresh material for him to draw on for inspiration. For example, almost simultaneously with the launch and banning of *Cartoon-o-phobia*, Prime Minister Najib Razak was reportedly offering his help to President Barack Obama to assist the US in overcoming Islamophobia in American society.

"The most important step is to provide the basic knowledge about Islam", BN mouthpiece 'news' agency *Bernama* quoted him as explaining, and claiming that "Islam also guarantees the rights of not only Muslims but also that (sic) of non-Muslims."

Disgraced over the centuries

Given remarks as risible as this, it seems to me testament to Zunar's cartooning genius that he can make Najib look even more ridiculous on paper than the man is in real life.

As Najib very well knows, only lunatics like that fundamentalist Christian flake from Florida who recently threatened to burn the Quran are idiotic enough to come out as Islamophobes. As irreligious as I may personally be, as far as I'm concerned there's nothing to be phobic about in Islam or any of its competitors.

On the positive side, they all seem to advocate similarly desirable values and virtues. And on the downside they're all given a bad name by a minority of their adherents who fail to practice what their faiths preach.



Catholicism, for example, the religion into which I was born, in principle represents Jesus Christ's teachings of peace, love and charity.

But it's been disgraced over the centuries by those members of its congregation who have used it as a cover for a catalogue of crimes ranging from the persecution of opponents as in colonial South America and the Spanish

Inquisition to priestly paedophilia.

And Italy, the country where it's headquartered, was, like Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal, Hitler's fascist ally in World War 2, and is still the spiritual home of the Mafia.

Then there's the Church of England, which apparently sees the very idea of female clergy or homosexuality as sacrilegious, despite the fact that it was founded by King Henry V111 to enable him to divorce and/or murder several of his wives and steal the Catholic monasteries for himself and his cronies.

In other words, it's not Christianity that's the problem in my book, but some of the far-from- Christ-like 'believers' who use or rather misuse it for their own ends.

Similarly, the situation in Burma under the generals is no great advertisement for Buddhism, and politically-corrupt and poverty-stricken India is no credit whatever to Hinduism or any of its other religions.

Nor, it appears, is non-religion the answer. China, officially atheist under its Communist Party potentates, is as corrupt and people-unfriendly as any theocracy could possibly be, as is Russia under the God-forsaken rule of its robber-oligarchs.

As for Islam, from the admittedly little I know of the Quran, its message is as benevolent as can be, and it even, as Najib asserts, "guarantees the rights of not only Muslims but also that (sic) of non-Muslims."

Goon-o-phobia they deserve

So it's not the religion of Islam that's to blame for the murder and mayhem committed in its name by al Qaeda, the Taliban and similar terrorist organisations.

Nor is it the fault of the faith that Islamic states like Iran and dozens of Islamic-majority countries from Afghanistan to Sudan, Pakistan to Somalia, Mauritania to Indonesia and Malaysia, are mired in corruption and repression.

In short, it's not Islam itself that's responsible for Islamophobia, or even bigots claiming belief in other faiths, but those Muslims who misuse and abuse Islam for their personal power and gain.

Like Najib Razak (*right*) and his fellow Muslims in the Malaysian government, for example, who far from guaranteeing the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims alike as Najib claims, deny their citizens of every faith their fundamental rights like free news media, peaceful assembly and protest, corruption-free civil services and the protection of an independent, impartial system of justice.



The lying, thieving Muslims who run Malaysia with the connivance of their cronies of other creeds, shouldn't be allowed to confound their critics with false claims of Islamophobia, or to confuse the issue with self-serving offers to help counter Islamophobia in the US or anywhere else.

What they're faced with is not Islamophobia, but the buffoon-o-phobia and goon-o-phobia they so richly deserve, and the fact that no amount of cartoon-o-phobia or Zunar-phobia can save them from the fate they'll eventually face for their sins against both the *rakyat* and their religion.

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