

**Are we in Hutu-land?**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
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As we were finishing our lunch, Khalid Ibrahim was approached by a youth in Pemuda BN attire, and intimidating words were used on him soon after. malaysiakini has a good account of the incident, titled: BN group roughs up Khalid, photographers.

...We are not party to their ideological differences in partisan politics, so we steered clear of their 'conversations' and prepared to leave. Our casual attire for comfortable photographing also ensured that we are not wrongly mistaken as Parti Keadilan Rakyat's cadre. We were there merely as men-at-work, photographers on assignment.... We were wrong. We were surrounded by over 20 rowdies, and the long and short of it, my colleague, who wound down his window to inch carefully his way out from the besieging scene, was smashed at close range with the sharp portion of the mineral water bottle...He tried to evade but still broke his glasses, bleeding. Without the glasses, he drove the both of us out of the danger zone until some PKR members escorted us in another vehicle to safe ground in Ijok town centre. (Thanks Cikgu Li.)... We kept our cool and tried hard to avert any eventualities as we didn't want this incident to be spun as an ugly chapter of over 20 Malay youths attacking two Chinese photographers in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, the unasked question must get answered some days when the fanatical election fever is over - Jeff Ooi narrating on Ijok, Screenshots.

If what we are seeing and reading about the campaigning process in Ijok these last few days, what is the meaning of "voting" to the voters?

If votes can be bought and sold, for whatever reason of "economic necessity", and if gangsterism and political violence is going to be the regular feature of elections, where are we heading towards?

If what's at stake here is power that will create billionaires out of the few, and every means necessary is used to buy power, are we and our generation doomed? Democracy is for sale - wholesale.

T.I.A. - "This is Africa"!?

What have 50 years taught us? What then must we do?

### **Dangerous trend**

From slogans to songs to scenes of chaos, we see the increasingly dangerous trend of campaigning.

It is not issues that are brought to the platforms but most violent ways to assassinate characters.

The image of Malaysia's minister of education, yelling and screaming is even a scarier one if we consider education as a gentle profession. How do we make sense of one entrusted with the education of the children in our multicultural Malaysia being a major player in the

trumpeting of a race-based and rage-based politics?

And what is the image of our youth at these sites of campaigning? It seems like we are degenerating into incivility, not befitting the supposedly political maturity we ought to have acquired after 50 years of merdeka.

And why do we read of incidences of "attacks" on political candidates? Who controls these crowds? Why can't the leaders tell their followers to behave and to show the world how a "first class" kampong-styled political campaign looks like? With the "first class" infrastructure we build with the blood, sweat, and tears of the rakyat and the cheap labour of those we invite in, why do we have a "fourth-class" campaigning in Ijok?

### **The meaning of a "vote"**

What is a "vote"? What goes into a "vote" What is the psychology of voting these days? How much does a vote cost?

What have 50 years taught our children what a "vote" – that special rights of an individual /of a free human being in a democracy/sovereign country – means?

50 years ought to have given us a solid foundation of the freedom to choose – intelligently. This generation ought to have been wise enough to vote out a corrupt regime, peacefully, without having to listen to inflammatory campaign speeches and being harassed and thrown bottles and planks at. We should have matured.

It ought to have taught us that a vote is a precious thing to be used to delegate power to the citizens to bring down corrupt-to-the-core governments that instill fear in the citizens and institutionalise a clever system of patronage and patrilineage politics styled after the feudal culture of symbolic and political-economic gift-giving. We should have been more ethical.

It ought to have taught our children the essential tools of critical thinking so that they may recognise the styles of propaganda derived from race-based politics shoved into their minds through the ideological state apparatuses such as the media and educational institutions. We should have created a nation of creative and critical thinkers not easily bought off by state propaganda.

50 years of merdeka ought to have this generation in each constituency being empowered enough to determine the political destiny and choice they are to take - without taking bribes and being bought over by those the robber barons who visit every four years or every time a local politician dies. We should have spread wealth equitably and not use the wealth of the regime to control and manipulate voters.

We have made a wrong turn. Worse - we are being brought to a wrong turn - to the point of no return. We are evolving into a "demonocracy". Into a culture of gangsta politics.

### **Gangsta politics?**

The youth in Harlem, The Bronx, Detroit, and East Los Angeles, have their gangsta rappers. We are breeding ours. Ijok is its birthplace.

Adolf Hitler had his youth brigade running around creating chaos and institutionalising

terror.

I hope we are not seeing The Mat Rempit Brigade being used to abuse our youth that are being used in ways that the robber barons are finding useful. This will be the worst form of injustice we are doing to our youth who are supposed to be educated into the future generation of leaders that will continue to renew society through systematic and peaceful en-block replacing of corrupt-to-the-core regimes.

Our "North Pole bound" Mat Rempits or "Mat Cemerlang" as they are fondly called/"nobat-ized" should have better things to do than to be involved in a gangsta-rapper type of politics. They should not be used to "ram" our already ailing political culture into the "pits" of our political alleys. We should have not produced them en-mass and batch-processed through our conveyor-belt styled education system.

Can the police handle worse situations come the general election? We might have to institutionalise nationwide online-voting systems if we fear bigger chaos – only to perhaps discover how rigged those machines will be. Whoever controls technology controls the means of reproducing power.

We have seen how the students are being reduced to become obedient followers in our public universities through the work of Biro Tata Negara. We have seen how the National Service, borne out of an urgent need to feed our cronyistic needs, plagued with irresponsible designs of safety, is used to create a cadre of followers. We have even seen how the mouth and the mind of our university lecturers are being "duck-taped" to so that they may think about and speak of the ideology of the ruling party and still be affiliated with "world-class" Malaysian universities.

Unbelievable - for a country that is not yet Africa. But the signs are there - from the rampant corruption to the "rempitisation" of our election process.

We not only are inviting another wave of colonization - one without armies and colonies. But worse, the new mandarins and maharajahs are in our midst. They are yelling and screaming for votes, bringing offers the voters can't refuse. Shame on the voters too!

Is this Ijok—or Hutu-land? We must decide and redefine our destiny.

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