

Utusan's minions talk gibberish again

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Tiger is tickled pink by Utusan Malaysia bewailing Malaysiakini for operating on shady principles and practicing stone-age journalism.

It's the weekend. Tiger is already in the mood for not doing much. There's nothing quite like lazing about in Tiger's own semi-detached cave, sitting back in a cozy deer hide sofa, sipping a few cold blooded ones and watching Animal Planet on the Discovery Channel.

Admittedly, Tiger doesn't get out much anymore. Tiger has previously let off steam about mankind stripping away much of Tiger's play space. Every time Tiger peeks out of the cave, all it sees are noisy cranes, trucks and rigs.

Often Tiger goes wistful, pining for the good old pre-historic days. When men were conquerors. Tigers ruled the jungle. And journalists were.....?

Sorry. Tiger is temporarily distracted by the headline of Utusan Malaysia accusing Malaysiakini of practicing "kewartawanan zaman batu" or stone-age journalism.

Utusan Malaysia editor Zulkiflee Bakar says that Malaysiakini is unethical in its reporting and surreptitiously operating under a façade of fairness and transparency.

"Everyone knows its inclinations, purpose and hidden agenda," says Zulkiflee. Shock. Horror.

Utusan, that self-appointed champion of Malay supremacy and bumiputera sanctimony is speaking from its usual high horse. No surprise there.

Let's give them credit where credit is due. Utusan is nothing if not consistently and predictably moronic.

This is the same Utusan that yelled "Apa Lagi Cina Mahu" after the last general elections, scapegoating the Chinese when voters of all races had voted in droves against the incumbent Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

This is the same Utusan that said that media practitioners are allowed to spin the facts to paint a "desired picture" and to launch a "gentlemanly attack" against the opposition.

This is the same Utusan that in its last gasp for a financial lifeline, indignantly called for more government-linked companies (GLCs) to advertise in its repulsive pages, ignorant of the fact that advertisers' own financial lifelines are dependent on readers who are repulsed by Utusan's content.

And now it has accused Malaysiakini of stone-age reporting.

To steal a riposte by the late Christopher Hitchens, Utusan's conduct is like that of a man, having relieved himself in his own hat, makes haste to clamp the brimming chapeau on his own head. Over and over again.

Utusan also reminds Tiger of the clumsy Minions, pill-shaped animated cartoon characters that stumble and totter about spouting indecipherable gibberish.

That's where the similarity ends, though. The cartoon Minions are cute and cuddly. Utusan's Minions are plain mean and snarky old codgers.

Utusan are playground bullies whose victims have long outgrown them and moved out of town. Arguably, their shrill outpourings have lost even shock value.

Utusan's writings hardly inspires genuine discussion or heated debate anymore. It cries wolf far too often and, at best, the crowd giggles and shrugs collectively. Its relevance, together with its circulation, has faded sharply.

Readers seeking intellectual succour and factual reporting from mainstream media have long deserted Utusan. Sure, occasionally it comes up with something as fatuous as "Apa Lagi Cina Mahu" and eyebrows (and temperatures) are temporarily raised, often for the wrong reasons.

But in the current media landscape's bigger scheme of things, apart from being an object of increasing ridicule, Utusan is largely ignored. For a newspaper, that is a fate probably worse than death.

And, oh, the movie that the cute and cheeky Minions are in? It's called "Despicable Me".

It's a mantra that the Utusan team must take to heart every time they write.

GRRR!

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