

Umno-haters' and Barisan-baiters' Club

Contributed by admin
Friday, 06 November 2009 16:17

By Pak Bui The explosion of political blogs and internet news sites over the last five years has left our Ministry of Information hacks and our mainstream Malaysian TV and news editors staggering, dazed and confused.

The pent-up emotions of the Malaysian public have been suppressed for half a century under a BN mass media mafia. Now set free by greater public access to the Internet, these emotions have swept over the blogs and comments sections of internet news portals.

Any glance through my favourite sites, the usual suspects like "Hornbill Unleashed" and the various Malaysia news portals (Today, Kini, Mirror, Insider and the Nut Graph), yields a huge chunk of readers' comments. I admit many of these are repetitive, ignorant and even bigoted, hidden behind pseudonyms. But there are some carefully considered and informative views and heartfelt appeals for justice too.

There are, also, the occasional salvos by Umno cyber-troopers. Now and again, Umno propagandists wade in with their racist comments, particularly on Malaysia Today, aiming to convert heaven-knows-who. These half-literate cyber-troopers are, despite the "glamour" of their titles, armed only with rusting pea-shooters and water-pistols. They repeat tired Umno drivel, that only Umno can ensure Malay dominance, and that Pas is helping Chinese take over Malaysia, and so on.

The most apt riposte is usually delivered via a democratic vote of all the other readers. The chance to vote comments up or down means the jaded Umno racist invective is quickly buried under a mountain of downturned thumbs. RPK publishes all comments, just as Hornbill Unleashed does, as long as they are not obscene or incendiary. It makes me smile to see these comments being treated as they deserve, with this electronic coup de grace, rather than being deleted by the webmaster.

The mainstream Malaysian media have reacted predictably, by turning up their own partisan volume, trying to drown out dissent, and trying to build up their own news websites. But the Utusan, the Star and the NST are poorly equipped to fight this virtual war. The KTS mouthpiece, the Borneo Post, and the Naim organ, the Eastern Times, are even worse off, and more laughable.

These slavish newspapers have failed to compete with the appeal of the new electronic media, and certainly cannot match the higher quality of foreign news channels, like Al-Jazeera, the BBC, the Guardian newspaper, the New York Times, and the Washington Post – all of which are accessible for free. As an example, the BBC's coverage of the official seizure of 10,000 bibles in Bahasa Melayu in Malaysia, because they contained the word "Allah" for God, has been streets ahead of the coverage in Malaysia's mainstream media. Lively interest has ensued in this Malaysian exercise in arbitrary power: the news story was the seventh most popular worldwide, on the BBC's news website.

[READ MORE HERE](#)