

# Time to re-write history: UMNO Merdeka story a lie

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A demand was made that the nation's history be rewritten and the true story be told. This was welcomed by the audience, a crowd of around a hundred people from various background – student, activist, leftist and general public.

The forum organized by the Socialist Party (PSM) on the theme “Independence Under Emergency” was an attempt to voice out the nation's Independence history from the point of view from the left. History is always written from the point of view of the victor and UMNO has distorted history and have claimed to be the sole champion of Independence.

UMNO version of history is dodgy and incorrect. It is blatant lie said the panelist at the forum today.

The forum started with an opening speech by PSM's National Secretary, Comrade S.Arutchelvan. He raised a nine point argument about history and among them

1. The days leading to Merdeka saw a climate of repression on the trade Union and the student movement.
2. It was British maneuvering as well as Tengku's threat which resulted in Independence be called during emergency period.
3. The misconception that Malaysia is 50 years is false as Malaysia came to birth only in 1963, and that was also under severe repression and suppression of the leftist.
4. The role of British capital and its economic interest in this colony.  
UMNO was last party to call for Independence as well as the least who have sacrificed for Independence.
5. The independence was obtained by not spilling a single drop of blood was false as it was bloody war which resulted in more than 20,000 deaths and detention of 34,000 people.
6. AMCJA-PUTERA was the first multiracial coalition and not UMNO-MCA-MIC
7. The failed attempt of Independence in 1945 upon the surrender of Japanese.
8. The de-facto emergency of the ISA called a day after the 1948 emergency was lifted on 31<sup>st</sup>.  
July 1960 only to be replaced 24 hours later by the ISA.

The was followed by Fahmi Reza's video presentation of the period between 1945-1948 especially the role of AMCJA-PUTERA and Hartal 1947. The video was shown for the first time and had interviews and past footages and received tremendous applause from the crowd.

Chen Jian, a prominent researcher of Malaysian left history spoke on several issues leading to the Independence, The Baling talk and positions held by the MCP at different periods between 1930 till 1957. MCP was the first political party formed to establish a Malayan Workers and Peasants Soviet Republic as early as in 1930. He said, *"The MCP and the Left's scarifies of their lives, blood and sweat and all belongings in life are numerous and tremendous, so many of them were killed, detained and arrested, tortured and harmed beyond imagination, banished and deported, exiled or*

*family broken, livelihood damaged and many other unmentionable sufferings. Their noble deeds are most respectful, but their history was completely distorted and now is time to restore its facts.*

Ishak Surin – a founder member of Parti Rakyat in 1955 as well as the first Secretary General of Parti Marhaen in 1969 led by Boestaman spoke about the need to put back history in perspective and educating of the younger people about history.

These were followed by Q & A session moderated by Comrade Rohana Arriffin. One interesting question posed to PAS and PSM leaders was if the Islamic party can work with the socialist. Both Ishak and Arul said that there is definitely an avenue to work together to fight the common enemy. Arul said that Islam is not our enemy but capitalism.

The lively session ended with most of the participants happy to hear an alternative story of history. A history which is not told in the school textbooks or newspapers or television. It is the history of the people and their struggle.

Letchimi Devi, the host reminded the participants to take back a booklet prepared by PSM and help circulate it. It is just a small attempt to put history back in perspective.

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