

Pak Samad: Tunku merely independence receiver
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Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, referred to as 'Father of Independence', was just a "receiver of independence" handpicked by the British colonisers to safeguard their interests in Malaya, says national laureate A Samad Said.

"To me, Tunku was not an independence fighter. He was a receiver, the person approved by the British to 'receive' independence... the British felt that the 'receiver' must be a person who could take care of their interests in Malaya," he told a public forum in Kuala Lumpur last night.

The septuagenarian, more popularly known as Pak Samad (right), said he had worked together with leftist leader Ahmad Boestamam during pre-independence days.

According to him, Boestamam, after negotiations with another leftist politician Burhanuddin Al-Helmy and Tunku on the independence issue, told him that the British wanted to hand the country to a suitable candidate, who was Tunku.

Therefore, compared with the true freedom fighters such as Boestamam, Mat Kilau and Burhanuddin, Tunku was just a "receiver of independence" (penyambut kemerdekaan).

"Umno was formed after Boestamam, Burhanuddin and others had formed their political parties to fight for independence.

"The British did not want to negotiate with these people (leftist politicians) because they would not safeguard the interests left by the British," Samad said.

He pointed out that individuals who had fought for independence were not given the chance to govern the nation because the aristocrats controlled political power.

Clarion call to younger generation

"Tunku, Abdul Razak Hussein and Hussein Onn were aristocrats.

"Mahathir (Mohamad) was not an aristocrat until he was conferred the title of 'Tun' and became one. Abdullah (Badawi) is an aristocrat, as well as Najib (Abdul Razak)."

Therefore, according to Samad, the current government leaders were more inclined to protect the interests of the middle and the upper classes instead of understanding the woes of the grassroots.

He pinned his hope on the new generation, urging them to make a bold decision to change the current administration.

"I'm not saying that Pakatan Rakyat is a good guy, but if you don't try, you would not know."

The forum, titled "Whose Independence Day?" also had bilingual columnist Lee Ban Chen and Suara Rakyat Malaysia chairperson K Arumugam as speakers.

Lee, a former unionist and Labour Party activist in the 1960s, chastised Malay daily Utusan Malaysia for publishing caricatures that illustrated the 'cruelty' of the Malayan communists.

He challenged the Umno-owned newspaper to prove that the misdeeds depicted in the caricatures indeed happened.

On Tuesday, the daily printed six contentious caricatures drawn by artist Hamzah Mohd Amin to 'expose'

what he claimed the Malayan communists had done to ordinary people during pre-independence era.

Among others, the illustrations showed Muslims being forced to eat pork before being shot dead; children and old people being thrown into a fire; and bodies of those killed used as fertiliser for vegetable gardens.

Lee said the continuous attacks on communists by the government was against the Hatyai Peace Accord signed between Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and the government of Malaysia in 1989.

"Can the government adopt a hostile attitude against CPM and make baseless allegations against it?"

"Does the government still recognise the Hatyai Peace Accord? Does it comply with the contents of the agreement?"

"CPM has not done anything in the past 20 years. It is also seldom involved in politics."

"But just because of a remark made by (PAS deputy president) Mohamad Sabu on the contribution of leftist activists and CPM in fighting for independence, the CPM was attacked straight away," Lee said.

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