

Kedah Gerakan 'aye' for state to screen Tanda Putera

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By Susan Loone

Kedah Gerakan sees no problem in the state screening the movie Tanda Putera tonight as part of its Merdeka celebration, despite the party's flags being featured prominently alongside those of DAP in several scenes.

The party's state Youth chief Tan Keng Liang questioned the real objective of those who reject the screening at Wisma Darul Aman at 7.30pm tonight.

Kedah Menteri Besar Mukhriz Mahathir has invited members of the state royalty, MPs and assemblypersons from BN and Pakatan Rakyat to watch the movie, but the latter have decided to boycott it due to the "sensitive and racially-charged" nature of the film.

"Are they objecting to the screening out of their own political interests? Anyone should be free to air the movie. I would advise them to watch the movie first, but they seem to be commenting a lot about it without even watching it," Tan told Malaysiakini.

NONE "If we stop screening movies for political reasons, then it would set a very bad precedent in the future where we urge a boycott just based on our own political interests," he added.

Tan (left) admitted that Gerakan flags were also featured prominently along those of the DAP during violent and bloody scenes to reflect the situation during the May 13, 1969 racial riots.

"But this is true as far as I know. I don't see which part is untrue. Maybe I am not certain of the authenticity of small and minor scenes in the movie but generally, it is a true account that focuses more on the friendship between former premier Abdul Razak Hussein and his deputy Ismail Abdul Rahman," he said.

'Gerakan was part of the opposition at that time'

"Gerakan cannot complain about how it is portrayed in the movie as we were indeed part of the opposition at that time," Tan added.

Tan said the movie has rightly shown that then-Gerakan president Dr Lim Chong Eu decided to make a stand to support Razak due to the "national interest" and to

resolve the political upheaval due to racial conflict at that point in history.

"Pakatan representatives, by saying they will boycott the movie, are they also saying that Umno should boycott The New Village movie?" Tan queried.

The New Village (Kampung Baru), which was supposed to be screened on Aug 22, has been criticised by pro-Malay activists as glorifying the exploits of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, which had ties to the Communist Party of Malaya.

NONETan was responding to Alor Setar MP Gooi Hsiao Leung's (left) comment expressing shock that the Kedah government is hosting the movie screening as an official state event in Alor Setar.

Gooi said except for Mukhriz, no other MB in the country or even for that matter, the PM himself, had even considered the official hosting and screening of the movie.

He added that Mukhriz should be aware of the controversial nature of this film, which its critics say has the propensity to disturb the racial harmony between the different communities in the country.

On Pakatan representatives boycotting the state event, Tan said that no one should be forced to see any movie.

"We can't force people to watch Tanda Putera but we should not ask for it not to be screened. It is the people's choice to do what they want. Malaysians are mature enough to judge the movie themselves, there is no need for us to judge for them," he said.

Tan, a practising lawyer in Alor Setar, says he will not be going for the event as he has watched the movie with his wife.

"Let others who have not watched it have my space," he said.

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