

LETTER | Putrajaya must honour Onn Jaafar

Malaysiakini

16 April 2021

M Santhananaban

LETTER | It is interesting that we now have a lively debate in certain informed circles on approaches to our history.

More than fifty years ago with eminent historians like Wang Gungwu and RR Bonney we took the first steps towards writing a Malaysia-centric history after the earlier phase of Euro-centric history taught in our educational institutions.

In the drive and the haste to achieve development and create new successes, we seem to have overlooked our nation's own key founders.

After more than twenty years of developing Putrajaya, our national administrative centre, there does not seem to be any single facility of note to honour Onn Jaafar.

It was Onn Jaafar who together with some other distinguished nationalists

founded Umno and took the first steps towards the country becoming an independent, sovereign and modern nation.

Onn Jaafar was a most broadminded leader who believed in an all-inclusive and united national society and placed great importance on the mastery of both Bahasa Malaysia and English.

He placed overarching importance on the attainment of peace, welfare and justice for the people.

He was also a selfless leader who endured much hardship in order to debate, discuss and disseminate information about topical issues. During his years of exile in Singapore, he created a greater awareness of the plight of his people.

Few leaders have shown this kind of selflessness, this visionary sense of national purpose and sacrifice in wanting to contribute to a multiracial, united, strong and well educated Malayan (as we were then) nation.

The Tunku acknowledged Onn Jaafar's role and changed the name of the road on which the Prime Minister's Department is situated.

The Tunku had Jalan Brockman renamed Jalan Dato Onn. The Tunku wanted

every letterhead of the Prime Minister's Office to bear Onn Jaafar's name so that future generations would remember this illustrious pioneer of a united nation.

It is perhaps appropriate and timely to rename Putrajaya's key thoroughfare after this legendary leader who was ahead of his time.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/letters/570930>