

The end of imperialism and colonialism  
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The deputy prime minister's defining assurance that there will be no political party agenda in the proposed review of the history syllabus is crucially significant, because only by his means can the subject be studied meaningfully and serve the purpose intended.

This can be achieved by adopting the theoretical perspectives of imperialism and colonialism to show that Malaysia evolved as a multicultural society particularly as an aftermath of the Portuguese and Dutch invasions followed by British occupation.

Indeed the country only attained independence and peace after a continuous period of nearly six hundred years under western imperialism and colonial domination.

While the committee of experts will obviously record and outline the origin, growth and development of the nation state, special emphasis will need to be placed on the multicultural dimension of the population, because it is well known that even at the time of the Portuguese invasion about ninety different ethnic groups resided in Malacca.

But special attention should be given to the period commencing with British colonial rule, because this was the period when the nation came within the ambit of modern political and economic development that determined the nature and complexity in the pattern of race relations that emerged and has continued to this day. More importantly, this was the most significant period because it also led to political independence and to peace.

Indeed, modern Malaysia has been compared to the United States of America, because their very existence was due to the migrations that occurred in their formative years. However, unlike the US, the social formations of political and ethnic diversity in Malaysia was influenced, if not determined, essentially by British Imperial interests and colonial capitalism. Therefore, although the respective societies that emerged were essentially multicultural in structure, the social institutions imposed by colonialism emphasised ethnic differentiation based on the stratification of political power that permeated the entire society. This ultimately led to inherent and intractable social conflict in the political economy resulting in revolt and revolution.

It is submitted therefore that the period of British colonialism must accordingly be seen as an integral and intertwined part of the declaration of the Emergency in the history of Malaysia. The panel assigned to record this would obviously exhaust the variety of sources at its disposal, but it is respectfully submitted that the availability of the book "The Finest Hour: Malaysia-MCP Peace Accord in Perspective" would make this task more realistic.

There are three other important reasons why this book should be considered the source for the history of the Emergency. For reasons of brevity they are outlined as below;

1. The book is the source for the insertion of the chapter on "Revolt and Revolution in Malaysia" published in the Blackwells' (Oxford) International World Wide Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (2009). The citation reads that the book was the only source that adequately met the standards of academic scholarship, reliability and validity of the social history as required by Blackwells, selected from a bibliography of references dating back to

the 1500's

2. The book vividly explains why Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the then prime minister initiated and orchestrated the entire political process leading to the promulgation of the peace accord with the Malayan Communist Party.

3. Chin Peng the leader of the Malayan Communist Party, who was a signatory to the peace accord, has appraised the book as a "realistic account" of the Malaysian Emergency. This was done through his lawyer Chan Kok Keong

4. The recent (2010) TV/historical channel screening of the Malaysian Emergency has portrayed the war as that fought between the people and the British colonial power and not between the local Chinese community seeking to set up a communist state. Judging by the theoretical framework adopted by Blackwells, this perspective could only have been derived from that portrayed in the book.

There has been widespread public interest in the review of the history syllabus and the government owes it to the people and the future generations of Malaysians to ensure that the above considerations are incorporated in the revised history once and for all.

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