

The Sabu Saga
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By TOTA - TA Online

When PM Najib Abdul Razak announced the day before Malaysia Day on 16 September 2011 that the government would abolish the detestable ISA, the Emergency Ordinance and other draconian laws, the mainstream print and electronic media exclaimed that a new dawn was breaking and that Malaysia was taking a leap forward.

Anyway, it was mere promise and sceptics warned that the police and Umno-aligned right-wing groups would throw a spanner in the works. Even as hopes were raised about the restoration of human rights and civil liberties guaranteed in the Constitution, Mat Sabu was charged for expressing an opinion about an historical event. Mat Sabu was vilified, indeed crucified, by Umno leaders and the Umno-owned print and electronic media for expressing an opinion about the murder of policemen and their families in Bukit Kepong in 1950. I am no advocate of communism or communist ideology but I will defend people's right to express an opinion on history, politics or national affairs.

Mat Sabu is accused of distorting history, telling lies and insulting our policemen and soldiers. Umno leaders are carrying out shamelessly a crusade portraying him as a traitor to his country and race. He has received death threats. An attempt was made to burn down his home. There were suggestions to take away his citizenship or banish him.

Let us look at Umno's role in the way our history is taught to school children. Grippled by Islamo-fascism, Umno has used the Curriculum Development Centre, to teach Umno's version of Malaysian history which is full of lies, distortions and misinterpretations through omission as well as commission. A few examples will suffice to support this:

A half-past six PM told a lie that Malaysia is an Islamic state. According to the Constitution, Malaysia is a secular state with Islam as the religion of the Federation. So a non-Muslim can become the Prime Minister.

Umno's opposition to the Malayan Union in 1946 is not the starting point for the struggle for independence. It began a good ten years before Umno came into existence. A broad coalition known as AMCJA-Putera had a post-war anti-colonial programme in 1945. They produced the People's Constitution and even organised a hartal. The British used brutal methods to suppress the movement and its leaders suffered imprisonment. Fahmi Reza has documented the struggle of AMCJA-Putera both on audio and video.

The Malay Regiment is just one of the military units – not the sole – to battle militant communism. Commonwealth forces from Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji made tremendous sacrifices in the battle to defeat the communist insurrection. This fact is omitted from our history books.

The role played by the Chinese and Indians in the development of the country is hardly mentioned in the history books. What Malaysia is today is due to the tin and rubber industries. The main exports after independence were rubber and tin. Thousands of Indians died of malaria and tuberculosis working in the rubber plantations. The Chinese worked in the tin mines under very difficult and trying conditions. These facts are not mentioned in the history books.

Instead, the following monstrosity about non-Malays is found in the Form Five History textbook:
"Kemajuan dan kemakmuran Tanah Melayu telah berjaya menarik minat imigran untuk datang ke sini. Masyarakat tempatan seharusnya lebih giat, berinisiatif dan bersedia mengusahakan sendiri kekayaan

Negara jika tidak, orang asing yang sentiasa mengintai peluang untuk mengambil ruang tersebut akan mengambilalih peranan kita, seperti yang berlaku hari ini. (The development and prosperity of Tanah Melayu had attracted immigrants to come here. Locals should be more proactive and take the initiative to harvest the country's riches on our own otherwise the aliens who have always been eyeing opportunities may take advantage of the openings available and take over our roles, as is happening today.)"

The role of MCA and MIC leaders together with Tunku Abdul Rahman is not emphasised in the history books.

So, Umno's lies form a huge catalogue indeed comprise a history book of lies.

Umno always accuses the Opposition of being opportunists. The Sabu affair has exposed Umno leaders as opportunists without par! See how Umno has made political capital out of a tragedy! The Bukit Kepong incident took place in 1950. Since Sabu's speech in Tasek Glugor on 21 August 2011, Umno opportunists have seized every opportunity to portray themselves as defenders of the police and the soldiers. Every right-thinking Malaysian has to ask why Umno waited more than 60 years to do something for the widows and descendants of those killed in Kepong. Widows of the soldiers killed there had not received their pensions all this while.

Now Umno opportunists are suddenly distributing goodies in cash and kind to the widows and descendants, one of whom remarked that what they are receiving now is long overdue and it was better late than never. Defence Minister Zahid seized the opportunity, with the government-controlled print and electronic media in attendance, to sprinkle scented water over the graves of the slain soldiers – only more than 60 years later. He should have kissed the tombstones for greater credibility!

Anyway, whatever Sabu might have said or might have not said, he did a great favour to the widows and descendants of those killed in Kepong. Without Sabu, the political opportunists in Umno would have completely forgotten them – as they had done for more than 60 long years.

Umno frequently accuses the Opposition of having a hidden agenda in every cause they promote. Now Umno leaders stand shamelessly exposed and naked as opportunists in this Kepong gimmick.

TOTA is the pseudonym of a contributor to TA Online

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