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# Ong: Textbooks should consider sensitive issues

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Textbooks and reference books should be balanced, taking into account the sensitivities of the different communities in the country.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said books published must not be based on the views of just one or two individuals.

"That will be very personal and biased. It will be unfair if the book is used as a textbook. This will send wrong signals to the younger generation," he said.

He was commenting on Universiti Putra Malaysia's teaching guide on the Ethnic Relations subject, published in January, which discusses issues such as the May 13 incident, the Kampung Medan riots and the Malaysian Chinese Election Appeals Committee (Suqiu).

Ong said the MCA felt that the guide should not draw conclusions on certain incidents that would jeopardise the relationship and harmony between the

various ethnic groups.

Malaysians, he said, should not forget the country's history.

"The country achieved its independence through various political parties that represented its major races. We fought hard for it. Don't let a few incidents override our historical background," he cautioned.

He said the contributions made by everyone from the pre-Merdeka days up to today must be appreciated.

Yesterday, Higher Education

Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed had said the ministry was willing to improve on the guide and correct facts in the book that were not balanced.

"We have noted his assurance," said Ong.

Meanwhile, Gerakan Youth has protested against the guide because it said the party's general election victory procession and statements by party leaders were one of the reasons for the May 13, 1969, riot.

"This is a distortion of histori-

cal facts," the movement's chairman Datuk Mah Siew Keong said in a statement.

"The guidebook is misleading and baseless and contradicts the Gerakan's non-racial approach and its initiative in promoting national unity and ethnic harmony," he added.

He said the Higher Education Ministry's "good intention" of making Ethnic Relations a mandatory subject for university students should not be politicised.