

True spirit of Umno flag

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THE IDEA:
The Umno flag incorporates the dominance of Islam in the Malay world, the sovereignty of the rulers and the colours of legendary warrior Hang Tuah.



KUALA LUMPUR: Many versions have been given as to who designed the Umno flag and how it came into being.

But few people know that the flag was the work of well-known academic Prof Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the nephew of Umno founder Datuk Onn Jaafar.

His design of red over white with a green-coloured keris in the middle surrounded by a circle of yellow is all too familiar now.

The design was accepted by Umno the year it was formed and it has remain unchanged.

Soon after becoming Umno's first president in 1946, Onn asked Dr Syed Muhammad, then 17, to draw a flag for the party.

According to Onn's grand-nephew, Datuk Mohamed Abid, many people, including Umno's current leaders, did not know the history and origin of the flag.

"That is sad because the flag reflects the true spirit of Umno, and I believe credit must be given where credit is due," Mohamed said in an interview.

Mohamed said he was researching for his book *Reflections of Pre-*



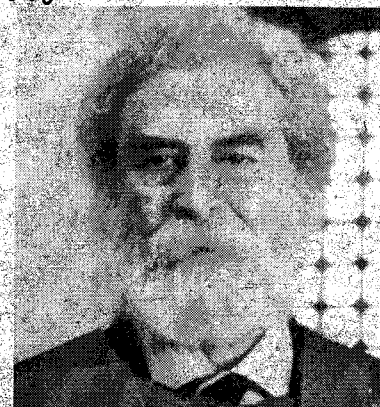
Mohamed: Said many people do not know the history of the flag.

Independence Malaya when Dr Syed Muhammad told him Onn had requested that he design the flag because of his artistic ability.

In the book, Dr Syed Muhammad related that the Umno president wanted the flag to incorporate the dominance of Islam in the Malay world, the sovereignty of the rulers and the colours of legendary warrior Hang Tuah.

Hang Tuah was known for his courage, bravery and loyalty.

According to Mohamed, Dr Syed Muhammad worked on several designs and Onn chose the one that was



Dr Syed Muhammad: Was asked by Onn to design the flag.

to become the Umno flag.

In the book, Dr Syed Muhammad explained that the colour red symbolised bravery, white purity, the circle of yellow unity of the Malay rulers and the green keris the Malay race, as it was a sacred weapon of the Malays and among the important regalia of the rulers.

On the proposal by Umno Youth to name the flag, Mohamed said: "I believe it is more important that Umno members observe and emulate the spirit depicted in the design of the flag than try to name it."