

I will not apologise, says Zam

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Press Digest

by Kong See Hoh
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

INFORMATION Minister Datuk Seri Zainuddin Maidin says he knows history and will not apologise for his statement that monuments have been erected for communists at private Chinese cemeteries, *Sin Chew Daily* reported yesterday.

"I was a reporter before, I have studied history and I can easily see through the thoughts of those who support the communists and those who don't.

"Of course I know who these people are, but I don't want to mention names, so I will definitely not apologise," he said.

Zainuddin, who was announcing changes to RTM1 and RTM2 programmes for the coming year at the department in Putrajaya on Tuesday, told reporters this when asked if he would say sorry to the Chinese community for his remark.

He stressed that he had not misinterpreted historical facts.

Asked if he would accept an invitation to visit the war monument at the Nilai Memorial Park to dispel any misconception about it, Zainuddin said he would not as he was busy.

"As information minister, I am part of history, I bear witness to history, I understand history. Therefore I definitely haven't made a mistake or misunderstood history," he said.

Asked if there might have been a miscommunication, he said he doesn't understand the Chinese language and would not know how the Chinese press reported the matter, but that the Malay press had not misunderstood his remark.

Zainuddin said MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting had also mentioned the history of the three major races in the country taking a united stand to fight communists.

Ong understands history, he said, adding that he shares Ong's anti-communist stand.

"MCA founder Tun Tan Cheng Lok was attacked by the communists in 1949," he said.

Giving the reporters a lesson in history, the

minister said: "All Chinese should study history to understand how the country fought the communists."

The young should read books about the communists in Malaysia, such as Dr Cheah Boon Kheng's *Red Star over Malaya* and *Chin Peng: My Side of the Story*, to understand what the country went through, he said.

Zainuddin also suggested that the media interview former police officers who have fought the communists as well as historians like Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Khoo Kay Kim.

However, Khoo refuted Zainuddin's remark that anti-Japanese fighters were communists.

He told *Sin Chew* that to prevent suspicion and misunderstanding among the races, he felt compelled to correct the misconception that anti-Japanese war heroes were communists.

Khoo said it is important for everyone to remember that one should not equate anti-Japanese fighters with communists.

He said those who took part in the anti-Japanese campaign were basically divided into two groups – the communists, and the Kuomintang loyalists (a centre-right political party in Taiwan that has been fighting communism).

"Today, the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) is history, whereas the Kuomintang loyalists established the MCA. Both the groups fought the Japanese during World War II."

On Zainuddin's statement that the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) was the front-line fighter of the CPM, Khoo said that although MPAJA was set up by the communists, not all anti-Japanese fighters joined the MPAJA. He said the anti-Japanese movement was not led by the communists, and the fighters included Malays and Indians.