

**Umno attacking Mat Sabu to protect own version of history, say analysts**  
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**By Boo Su-Lyn**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 4 — Umno's relentless media attacks against PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu shows the Malay party's desire to defend its version of history, analysts have said.

The nation is engulfed by history debates following the alleged remarks by the PAS leader at a political gathering last month about the attack on Bukit Kepong in 1950 during British occupied Malaya.

Political analysts told The Malaysian Insider that Umno wanted to maintain its interpretation of history — which has been "propagated in schools and by the official media" — that it was the main force behind the nation's fight for independence.

"Of course, the Umno at that time is totally different from the Umno of today, and independence came about through the efforts of various forces, including the Malayan Communist Party," said Lim Teck Ghee, the director of policy reform organisation Centre for Policy Initiatives (CPI).

"However, the hope is that the Umno propagandist and self-serving version would be the unchallenged and pre-eminent interpretation of that period of our history," he added.

Umno Youth said yesterday it would amass all former soldiers, policemen and kinsmen of the Bukit Kepong tragedy victims in a nationwide roadshow — called the Pentas Patriot or Patriot Stage — to counter Mohamad's view of the fire-fight.

Mohamad (picture), widely known as Mat Sabu, stirred controversy when he told a Bukit Gelugor ceramah that freedom fighters attacked the police station — which killed 25 — during the pre-independence communist insurgency.

The maverick politician has since been accused of being a communist sympathiser by Umno leaders and sniped at daily in Umno-owned newspaper Utusan Malaysia, despite denying that he had used the word "communism" in his speech.

Umno appears determined to use Mohamad's statement to woo support from the Malay electorate, among whom communism remains a bogeyman, ahead of anticipated snap polls.

Mohamad, however, has pointed out that Muhammad Indera — one of the individuals he praised in his ceramah on August 21, was already recognised as a freedom fighter by Umno-controlled daily Berita Harian on August 13, 2010.

Muhammad, better known as Mat Indera, was a Malay communist leader who led the guerilla assault against the police barracks manned by policemen under the British administration.

Monash University political analyst James Chin echoed Lim's remarks, saying: "The real history of Malaysia is (that) Umno is just one of the independence fighters; they're not the

only one. They're trying to paint themselves as the only one."

The Malay Nationalist Party (PKMM) was the first Malay political party formed after the Japanese Occupation in 1945 that fought for independence. Umno was formed in 1946 by Datuk Onn Jaafar.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) political scientist Dr Sivamurugan Pandian stressed that rewriting history should be left to historians to prevent misunderstandings that could affect race relations.

"Looking in depth, I think what is being contested now is to recognise communism contribution among the Malays," he told The Malaysian Insider.

"Confusion will prolong not only among Malaysians, but also PAS or PR (Pakatan Rakyat) supporters themselves," added Sivamurugan.

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