

**Understand History To Avoid Being Led Astray, Says Rais**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 25 (Bernama) -- The people, especially the younger generation should learn and understand the history of the country to avoid them from being led astray, said Information Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim.

He said history is an important subject in school for it enable accurate historical facts to be imparted without prejudice and distortion.

"Young people have never endured difficulties during the struggle for independence, they have not often heard the sacrifices made by leaders like Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak, Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Tun Sambanthan and Mat Salleh.

"If they do not understand history and the noble struggle made by the leaders, our mistake is because we never made them acquainted with history," he said when opening the History of Malaysia Colloquium at Universiti Malaya here, today.

Rais said a call by certain quarters for Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) leaders like Chin Peng and Rashid Maidin to be honoured as heroes could be sidestepped by studies and research conducted by local historians.

He said according to UM lecturer Dr Ho Hui Ling in his research entitled "The atmosphere in Malaya During Emergency 1948-1960 - A Survey ", 1,865 members of the security forces were killed and 2,560 injured by CPM insurgents.

"A large number of civilians were also killed in traditional villages. Indeed, the atrocities inflicted by communist insurgents during the Emergency was unprecedented.

"The rationale that Chin Peng and his comrades should be forgiven does not arise for they were mired in violence, killing thousands of people and destroying properties. There is no forgiveness for them.

"Why certain quarters feel that the leaders of communist terrorists should be forgiven and given a place in the society?

"Their acknowledgment is based solely on sentiment for they want to be seen to speak freely and argue independently," said Rais, adding that certain quarters were also oblivious to history by disputing what was enshrined in the Federal Constitution, he added.

He said history should be understood, appreciated and capitalised to foster unity.

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