

Dr M: Tunku being slammed to hurt Umno
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PUTRAJAYA, Sept 12 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed today said the country's founding father Tunku Abdul Rahman was being demonised by politicians in their attempt to discredit Umno's role in the country's fight for independence.

The country's longest-serving prime minister said the Tunku was being made a whipping boy in attempts to alter the history, with efforts to downplay his role and that of other Umno leaders who helped secure the country's rule.

"Tunku's fight was for all people... there is a difference between the two struggles," Dr Mahathir said today.

"These leaders demonise Umno leaders... so that Umno cannot be proud of its struggles," Dr Mahathir said today during a taped interview session on RTM.

Conceding that it was true communists then had fought against the British, Dr Mahathir said the Communist Party was only concerned only about their own benefit and not for the rest of Malaya.

"They (communists) wanted to free the country from the British, but for them it was so they could take over the country instead.

"Do not glorify communists like Chin Peng... without basing things on the truth," said Dr Mahathir.

The current furore over Malaysia's history first started when Utusan Malaysia alleged last month that PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu had said that those who attacked the Bukit Kepong police station during the pre-Merdeka insurgency were freedom fighters.

During the Emergency (1948-1960), communist insurgents had attacked the Bukit Kepong police station on February 23, 1950, killing 25, while the country was still under British rule.

The Malay daily also stated that the PAS leader said the Tunku, the country's first prime minister, and Umno's first president Datuk Onn Jaafar were not freedom fighters.

Professor Datuk Dr Zainal Kling, representing the National Professors' Council, had fuelled the debate by stating recently that Malaysia was never a British colony.

Dr Mahathir had yesterday urged the government to ensure that historical accuracy be given priority over political expedience as "there were attempts to alter historical facts into fantasy."

He said today that as he had lived through "British, Japanese and Thai rule and then British military and civilian administration and then the formation of Malaysia," he found that various parties were making non-factual statements and "inventing history."

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