

Tanda Putera failed to show Tun Razak's contributions, says DAP's Zairil Khir
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BY LEE SHI-IAN

The first DAP politician to have watched Tanda Putera says the movie failed to portray the efforts of the country's second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in developing Malaysia and was thus a waste of taxpayer money.

Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari said the movie is a perversion of reality and an example of how the DAP has been victimised and misrepresented in recent times, especially over the central executive committee (CEC) election.

"As the movie was fully funded with a RM4.8 million grant from the National Film Development Corporation (Finas) and the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDEC), the one-sided portrayal of the Chinese as the main instigators of the racial riots is also not surprising," he said in a statement today.

Tanda Putera has been the centre of controversy following concerns that some scenes and dialogues in the film could incite racial tension.

DAP and MCA had criticised the movie for showing that the Chinese were responsible for the May 13 riots in 1969.

DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang was upset with Tanda Putera for showing a scene of several young Chinese youths urinating at a flagpole in the compound of the home of former Selangor menteri besar Datuk Harun Idris.

However, Tanda Putera has flopped at the box office in its first week and has been reduced to being screened in halls with smaller seating capacity at cineplexes.

The movie took RM500,000 over its four-day opening weekend from last Thursday to Monday.

"This is shameful and sad," said Finas Compulsory Screening Scheme (CSS) chairman Datuk Mustapha Maarof, pointing out that the film production cost was RM4.8 million.

The CSS sets out the rules for Malaysian cinema houses to give prominence to local productions.

Zairil said his biggest disappointment with Tanda Putera was because it failed in its main objective, to highlight the true achievements of Abdul Razak.

"Abdul Razak, as the nation's second premier, was also known as the Father of Development. This is a sobriquet which reflected his efforts in championing the extensive land reforms in the 1960s and early 1970s," Zairil Khir said.

He cited the births of the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) and the Urban Development Authority (UDA) under Abdul Razak's leadership, which spawned rapid rural development and mass urbanisation of the Malays.

"Felda ensured that rural Malays were resettled into newly developed areas and given land

where they could engage in modern agriculture. UDA had the responsibility of overseeing the urban migration of Malays," said Zairil Khir.

"These initiatives ensured that millions of Malays were lifted out of poverty and rural Malays were given access to education and economic opportunities. This formed the foundation of the thriving Malay middle-class that exists today," Zairil Khir said, describing it as Abdul Razak's greatest contribution to Malaysia.

"Sadly, anyone who watches Tanda Putera will not appreciate any of Abdul Razak's efforts as the only thing viewers will learn is that Malaysia Airlines would today be known as MAL and not MAS if not for the nation's second prime minister," he said.

Zairil Khir concluded that the greatest tragedy of Tanda Putera is that it has failed to contribute anything positive about one of Malaysia's greatest leaders. - September 5, 2013.

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