

Utusan invokes Selangor Sultan's statement in slamming those "glorifying" Chin Peng

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BY RITA JONG

Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia has again hit out at those who allegedly support or glorify the late communist leader Chin Peng, who died on September 16 in Bangkok.

In its weekend edition *Mingguan Malaysia* today, *Awang Selamat*, the collective pseudonym for the weekly's editorial team, said there was no reason for anyone to "glorify" Chin Peng as a hero, describing those who did so as evil.

"Even the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, has spoken, calling him the enemy of the state.

"The Ruler said Chin Peng wanted to turn the country into a communist state, and he and his compatriots were responsible for the deaths of many security personnel and civilians," wrote *Awang Selamat*.

The Sultan, the columnist said, had also asked Malaysians to understand history and not to sell their nation's pride by supporting Chin Peng just to gain popularity.

"I laud the Sultan for coming forward to give a stern reminder. The Sultan could have chosen to remain silent but for the sake of the country, he had sent out a clear message especially those who continue to try to re-write history and portray Chin Peng as a hero," said *Awang Selamat*.

He went on that there has been a clear "wave of rejection" towards Chin Peng, with many parties lodging police reports and holding protests against efforts in bringing Chin Peng's ashes back to the country."

"Even Kelantan mufti Mohamad Shukri Mohamad had said that we have never defended nor appreciated him when he was alive. So what else is there for us to fight for after his death?" the columnist added.

Before this, Utusan Malaysia claimed that the announcement of Chin Peng's death was deliberately delayed to September 16 so as to coincide his death with Malaysia Day. It quoted an anonymous source as saying that he died a day earlier.

The paper has been at the forefront of attacks against Chin Peng even days after his death. Today, it front-paged a report of Chin Peng's "admission" that the Communist Party of Malaya did not play a role in getting Independence for the country.

Putrajaya has rejected any attempt to bring back his ashes to be interred in his hometown of Sitiawan, Perak. This was despite Deputy Home Minister Datuk Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar pointing out that the government had no legal power to stop Chin Peng's ashes from being brought in.

Pakatan Rakyat leaders have on the other hand sympathised with Chin Peng, and several of them had gone to Bangkok to attend his funeral.

Kedah PAS leader Fadzil Baharom was among several PAS leaders who defended Chin Peng in the face of attacks from Umno leaders. Fadzil, who attended Chin Peng's wake at a temple in Bangkok, said many Malaysians including PAS members misunderstood the late leader.

PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu urged Putrajaya to reconsider its decision to bar Chin Peng's remains, while the party's Sepang Member of Parliament Hanipa Maidin criticised the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar for saying that border checks would be stepped up to prevent Chin Peng's remains from being smuggled into the country.

Last week, two men were stopped by police at the Penang airport after arriving from Bangkok. They were questioned for carrying memorabilia and mementoes from Chin Peng's funeral. – September 29, 2013.

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