

Academia blamed for hijack of history

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KOTA KINABALU: A political activist has accused academics in the country of shirking their duty of ensuring that the authentic version of Malaysian history is taught in schools and tertiary institutions.

Zainnal Ajamain, who has written books dealing with the Malaysia Agreement of 1963 (MA63), said K S Jomo was right when he recently criticised peninsula-based politicians for being clueless about East Malaysians' needs, but added that the economist should have also taken academics to task.

"We must point fingers at academics who have allowed politicians to hijack the institutions of higher learning in the country," he told FMT.

He said the hijacking had led to the teaching of a warped version of Malaysian history.

Zainnal claimed to have learned that most Malaysians had not heard about or read the MA63 in its entirety.

He added that none of the universities in the country encouraged students to learn about the formation of Malaysia.

"The academics have allowed the real history to be totally erased from the minds of intellectuals in universities and from secondary schools and primary schools," he said.

"The history we read today teaches our sons and daughters the prominence of Malaya and whatever civilisations it had there, while the contributions of Sabah and Sarawak are purposely forgotten.

"Perhaps Jomo did not realise that Malaysia is no longer run on the basis of federalism but as a unitary state."

Last Nov 4, Jomo told a forum in Kuala Lumpur that Barisan Nasional as well as opposition parties were insensitive to the needs and aspirations of East Malaysians and practically clueless about how the majority of the people in Sabah and Sarawak felt.

He claimed that peninsular politicians had never seriously dealt with the realities of federalism and never fully recognised that Sabah and Sarawak joined Malaysia on terms that were different from the terms for peninsular states.

Zainnal, who is also an economist, said MA63 had been breached in several ways over more than five decades.

“Both sides of the political divide in Malaysia currently believe that Parliament is supreme,” he said. “They no longer hold to the precept that the Federal Constitution is supreme. So Parliament can pass any law it likes even when these laws are unconstitutional.”

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