

**THE LAUNCH OF COFFE TABLE BOOK “EXPRESSIONS OF MERDEKA MALAYSIA”
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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh, salam sejahtera dan salam
1Malaysia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. We are gathered here today to launch a record of a very significant period of our history, that part without which we will not be what we are today: a glorious nation looking forward to even greater success.

2. For we owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who fought for an independent and free Malaya. If not for 31 August 1957 we might not be today's Malaysia, celebrating Malaysia Day on 16 September, because the law of probability does not discount the influence of all possibilities.

3. When the Federation of Malaya was born embracing the Malay states and the crown colonies of Penang and Melaka, the heart of Southeast Asia was set to be logically defined, metaphorically pulling together two land masses divided by a thousand miles of sea, the South China Sea.

4. And so the history of Malaysia is not complete without the Malay Peninsula's struggle for independence. Driven by the need to divest the motherland from foreign occupation, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was formed. Winning self-determination for Malaya gave her first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the wherewithal to helm a larger federation and take it to a prosperous future one, as we see it today: a politically stable, peaceful and economically prosperous nation of several ethnicities slowly, but surely, being glued into one.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. It is then my obligation as the country's incumbent Minister of Education to launch a coffee table book that seeks to remind and educate Malaysians of what our nation is all about; of the struggles of the component member states that came together to free ourselves of a single foreign oppressor. We, at the time of the formation of Malaysia were the victims of British hegemony.

6. This book arrives at an opportune moment when prosperity and peace are being taken for granted by those who, for some reason, do not appreciate the fact that it is a myth to believe the nonsense that more freedom was extant under the British. Yes, but only for a westernised urban population facilitating the colonisers.

7. Otherwise, freedom only meant that the Malays were left to a policy of separate development as were the natives of Sabah and Sarawak, this last where a White Rajah supplanted himself and then in the end when it was no longer feasible to carry on, gave the territory over to the British. The Chinese and Indians, meanwhile, were in large part here as indentured labourers.

8. Today, having taken our lives into our own hands, together we see a nation united in diversity, an almost unique achievement envisioned by our founding fathers and mothers.

Ladies and gentlemen

9. This book seeks to locate our awareness as a nation, to bring to the fore a relevance often forgotten: Malaysia, an inheritance not to be pilfered away in the way of misinformation. It helps contextualise such myths as the Communist Party of Malaya being no less nationalistic and, in fact, may be more so as the rewriting of the Bukit Kepong assault history seems to suggest. In a blink of an eye the policemen – many of whom lost their lives -- were redrawn as traitors. That they were as much victims of colonialism is conveniently forgotten.

10. I have to commend the author, Dato' Mutalib Dato' Seri Razak for coming up with this book. Dato' Mutalib is not a novice when it comes to writing and producing books. Prior to this, he has published a book on the Emergency period, called "The Malayan Emergency Revisited". For your information, in 2007, when he was the Chairman of Media Prima Berhad, he produced a documentary entitled "Jungle Green Khaki Brown," also about the Emergency era, which I had the privilege of launching.

11. Coming back to this book, I must say that Dato Mutalib has made a tremendous effort in putting together so much invaluable information in the way of pictures, which not only feed our nostalgia but, more importantly, bring alive the words coined. Indeed, as the book itself states "a picture paints a thousand words". I am sure it is his cherished hope that the pictures will provoke further curiosity especially in the younger readers.

12. Speaking of young readers, I think this book is an excellent source of reference

for young people who wish to be enlightened on how the country achieved its independence and subsequently became a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural nation called Malaysia. For this reason I think libraries, be they public libraries or school libraries should make them available to students.

13. Our evolution from then until now, contrasting the history as told by the pictures and today's reality, may well be the stimulus needed to grow a patriotism and love of nation that will spur the country towards even more development; one that is sustainable and innovative where excellence is the national trade mark.

14. After all, 57 years of independence is time long enough for 1Malaysia to stop being a slogan and become a description of this country: berbilang kaum, berbilang agama dan beseikutu dan satu di bawah naungan "Jalur Gemilang".

Ladies and gentlemen

15. On that note of national affirmation I launch the book "Expressions of Merdeka Malaysia".

Thank you.

Wabillahi al-taufiq wal hidayah wassalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.