

Book Review 'Hak Untuk Berbeza Pendapat: Sebuah Lakaran Biografi Tentang Lim Kit Siang' (Malay Version)

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Lim Kit Siang has been at the forefront of Malaysian politics since the Democratic Action Party was registered in 1966. Though he has detained without trial twice - in 1969 and 1987 - for three years, he remained a key political figure who stands against race-based political structure adopted by the coalition government. The courage and integrity of the former journalist in won parliamentary democracy and liberal values when dealing with authoritarianism has formed the political landscape of Malaysia deeper than assumed so far. Lim Kit Siang cannot be ruled out, then and now. Notwithstanding, there are not many stories written about this politician. This book was written based on a long interview with him. It was an attempt to correct the gaps in knowledge about him and to draw up a full life story of this inspiring figure.

The author is asked to prepare this book in a very short time. But he could not have imagined doing it as soon as approval to publish it achievable between his good friend Liew Chin Tong (Bukit Bendera MP and leader of Refsa), Lim Hui Ying (daughter of Lim Kit Siang) and the author's own. He was always interested in Malaysian politics and always wanted a book about Lim Kit Siang. So, when the opportunity arose to his own writing, he was much less excited. He thanked Chin Tong and Hui Ying for the opportunity.

Since the completion of Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman - The Reluctant Politician (ISEAS) in 2006, the author imagine if he had the opportunity to write a book about one of Malaysia's political leaders engaged since 1970 until today, he will succeed in covering certain forms throughout history since the 1950s; and if the politician from the opposition, of course, better. Book about Lim Kit Siang sure will fill the space perfectly. The author imagine, anyone who is interested in Malaysian politics certainly cannot wait to read about Lim Kit Siang life - whether Malay, Chinese, Indian, Kadazan, Iban, Melanau, Portuguese, Serani, Baba, Nyonya, Bugis, Minangkabau, Tamil, Thai, Kelantan, Kedah, Sri Lanka, Aborigines and others. Lim Kit Siang life is a key to understanding the development of Malaysia.

The author tries to complete this book by provides detailed footnotes to the terms, names, historical events, etc. mentioned by Lim Kit Siang in the interview. He also decided to use the inserts as a way to help readers explore the special atmosphere every age mentioned in the interview and the questions touched. He did not use the method of attachment at the end of the book as it is commonly used; otherwise he divides the materials into three sections and inserts them between the interview dividers. This is to make it easier for readers' reference. He hopes in the near future there will appear a book more complete and comprehensive about Lim Kit Siang and his political life so it can be contemplated by Malaysian and the world.

The author had planned to interview all day used as the basis for this book filled with Lim Kit Siang insights about life and philosophy, about Southeast Asia and South Asia, the global power politics, about the rise of China and India and its meaning for Malaysia, and the new social forces in the country.

In exercising his right to dissent and express his views publicly, Lit Kit Siang told us that if these rights are not used, our human dignity, human integrity and sense of justice will shrink and die. During the interview also the author recognizes the great hardships to be borne by the families of people like Lim Kit Siang. They are the forgotten victims, while they are not a little suffering. Lim Kit Siang also a very important part in the political history of Malaysia that we harm ourselves when we do not seek to know more about the trials and obstacles he has faced. The fact that this expression - the trials and obstacles - used so often in this interview, whether for recounts his own experiences or the experiences of his colleagues become a reminder for the author about the sacrifices that have been made by people like him. They can take the easier way - a lot of times they even had a chance to take the easy way out when faced with threats, incarceration, police investigation, bullying in Parliament, in public humiliation, intimidation and violence. But they did not choose the easy way. Lim Kit Siang did not choose the easy way out for over forty years. Seeing this fact alone is enough to make us wonder, no matter what our political beliefs. We do have the right to dissent.

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