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## The Role of The Socialist Club Influences The Students in The University

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### Abstract

The rise of students with "Student power" in the 1960s and 1970s has coloured world politics. Many national leaders fell due to student movements, such as De Gaulle in France and Sukarno in Indonesia, as well as in Thailand and South Korea. The influence of students and their associations in the homeland also contributes to or colours Malaysian politics. The series of demonstrations that are organized, whether related to issues in the country or abroad, get the attention of the people and the government. An influential student association at that time was the University of Malaya Student Union (PMUM). Departing from the premises, movements, and actions of PMUM, especially during involvement in PMUM from 1972–1974. The actions of PMUM are often aimed at the interests of the Socialist Club and the struggle for socialism in the homeland. After a series of protests that irritated the government, the government finally passed the Universities and Colleges Act 1971 (AUKU 71), which binds the student movement. As a result, the students' movement was completely paralysed when AUKU 71 was amended by the University and University College Act 1975 (AUKU 75). The status of the student association was lowered to that of a high school association; for example, the Universiti Malaya Student Association (PMUM) was changed to the Student Representative Council (MPP). Since then, all student association activities must be approved by the Student Affairs Division (HEP). AUKU 75 achieves the government's desire to curb student movement, but the effect is not only on student associations but on students as a whole.

**Keywords:** Demonstration, Socialism, Students, World Politics

### Introduction

Most countries in the world, especially Malaysia and developing countries see universities as important social institutions in society. Based on that premise, the position of the university is considered to have a noble position, when the university is named 'Ivory Tower'. In developing countries, universities are highly regarded by society and most of the elite are produced by these institutions (Altbach, 1968). The struggle of the students both at the international and national levels, where reached its peak in the 1960s and early 1970s. This study is focused on student unrest at the University of Malaya (UM) from 1972 to 1974. This focus was carried out in those years because the researcher was actively involved in leading

University of Malaya Student Union (PMUM) and the Socialist Club from 1972 to 1974. Almost all the events on campus at UM and the actions taken by PMUM and the Socialist Club involved the researcher. It includes a series of demonstrations and actions that occur after the demonstration.

This study also emphasizes the role of the Socialist Club in influencing students to also act on the issues fought by the Socialist Club. Hamid Tuah's group, the persecution of Tasik Utara slums, and the issue of starvation in Baling. There is also joint action between socialists, nationalists, and Islamists on the Palestinian issue. All these issues were taken together and translated through a series of demonstrations. Although, student leaders from the three ideologies can unite in a joint action, which is to demonstrate but sometimes there is a difference in the next action. For example, they hold anti-Israel and American demonstrations, through the Ramadan War or Yom Kippur demonstrations.

Islamists and nationalists look at religion. While the socialists look at imperialism. Likewise in actions during demonstrations. Nationalist and Islamist leaders, only want to demonstrate in front of the AIA Building, where the American Embassy is located. Meanwhile, the socialist side went further, namely to bring the students to demonstrate in front of the Lincoln Center Building. Lincoln Center for socialists sees it as a symbol of the spread of capitalist thought. While in front of Lincoln Center, the socialist students with a militant nature have thrown stones and sticks to break the glass wall of Lincoln Center. On the other hand, nationalists and Islamists tried to prevent and save the glass walls of Lincoln Center.

### **Research Problem**

The field of studying the struggle of students in the 60s and 70s has been produced in various forms of research. Not only produced in the study of books, and memoirs but also for academic studies at all levels. However, not all have been studied and published. There are spaces or gaps that need to be studied and filled by researchers. In order to fill this void, the researcher took the opportunity to conduct a study on the role of students focused on the student movement from 1972 to 1974.

Many things about the student struggle, in the years 1972 to 1974 have been touched upon. For example, the Tasik Utara slum issue, the UM Campus seizure issue, the famine issue in Baling, the arrest of student leaders by the FRU at the National Mosque, and the riots on the Federal Highway. These things are touched upon in a report and not in depth. This is where the researcher's role is to explain in detail, which the researcher considers being gaps or deficiencies from previous studies.

Meredith L. Weiss, in the book *Malaysian Student Activism*, touches on the events, but more in the form of recording, and there are even errors. The best example is the incident on the night of the UM Campus coup. Meredith L. Weiss stated that the researcher along with several other student leaders was kidnapped and tied up. Most researchers, recording the same thing as Meredith L Weiss, include K.S Jomo, Ahmad Shaberry Chik, and Hassan Karim. The three of them wrote, with the title "Malaysia" in the book *Student Political Activism*, An International Reference Handbook, edited by Phillip G. Altbach. Meanwhile, during the actual event, the researcher was alone in the PMUM President's room, waiting for the anti-campus coup.

In the incident, student leaders were arrested inside the National Mosque and taken away in an FRU truck. Meredith L Weiss, could not explain how and who could release the student leaders. The same goes for other researchers, who only mention that the student leaders were arrested and taken away in an FRU truck. Most researchers only report on the

incident at the National Mosque, and stop there. Meanwhile, the release of student leaders such as Ibrahim Ali and Anwar Ibrahim, the leader of ABIM is part of history in the Baling Famine issue demonstration.

A study of the student struggle, focusing specifically on the years 1972 to 1974 at UM. Accordingly, focus on the role and influence of socialism and how it can dominate PMUM. Since the time to be studied has been more than 45 years, then of course there are problems in this study. Although the study is related to the researcher, there are still problems here.

To overcome the problem, friends involved in the student struggle, who are not from UM, such as Ibrahim Ali and Anwar Ibrahim. All of these people were successfully interviewed regarding issues related to them. Syed Hamid Ali, Sanusi Osman, and Halim Ali are senior student leaders who are involved in the struggle of PBMUM, PMUM, and Social Club. Syed Husin Ali is a PSRM member, who was involved in the formation of the UM Socialist Club. While Ibrahim Ali, the leader of KSITM, was involved in a series of demonstrations with the researcher. While Anwar Ibrahim, the leader of PBMUM, PMIUM, and ABIM, was interviewed regarding his attempt to amend AUKU 1975 when he was Minister of Education Malaysia (1986-1991).

Among the contemporaries in PMUM and the Socialist Club who were interviewed were Hishamuddin Rais, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Haris Pardi, Adi Satria, Hassan Karim, Bashkaran, Lim Hwee Seng, and Chia Peng Koi. All of them is to give explanations, statements, confirmations, and clarifications regarding issues that cover current movements and actions at UM. There is a very important figure to interview, but that figure has passed away. For example, the researcher must interview Abu Zer Ali, who became the President of the UM Socialist Club in 1973/1974. His era as the President of the Socialist Club was a year when the club's position and influence were so strong on the UM campus. Therefore, there are some very important things to record through him, unfortunately, they had to be obtained from a second source, namely the friends of the Socialist Club. Of course, it is not as accurate as if it was obtained from Abu Zer Ali himself.

### **Literature Research**

The struggle of the students of the homeland has been talked about a lot before from various angles. Junaidi Abu Bakar made a specific study on the effect of AUKU 1975 on student activities and studied students' attitudes towards AUKU 1975 as well as the effect on education. Raghavan studied the student struggle in 1972/73 only, with an emphasis on the New Economic Policy, including scholarships for Malay-bumiputras and student political activities. Meredith L. Weiss has made such an extensive study about the student movement, since before independence, after independence, after AUKU 1975 until 2010. Meanwhile, Muhammad Abu Bakar has presented the history of the awakening of UM students from the 60s to 1972, and talks in detail about AUKU 1971. However, there are still some things that need to be perfected by the researcher.

The study made, or the study highlighted, is more of a historical record of student activities. However, Raghavan and Junaidi Abu Bakar presented their findings from two different areas. Raghavan focuses more on issues that cause racial problems, in addition to discussing the acceptance of socialism by UM students. Meanwhile, Junaidi Abu Bakar showed how the impact of AUKU on the livelihood of the students, the campus community, and the student association [4].

There is no specific, detailed, and in-depth study of the leftist student movement or socialism that has been made. Whereas the students' activities in the mid-60s and 70s were

heavily influenced by the left, especially at UM. The peak of the student movement in Malaysia was from 1972 to 1974, which was marked by a series of demonstrations on and off campus. Behind the action is the role of the socialists through the Socialist Club, which dominates PMUM. Based on this awareness, the researcher tried to confirm, and even record in detail the activities of the socialists at UM. Not to mention, the researcher himself was directly involved with other socialist comrades, such as Hishamudin Rais, Abu Zer Ali, Yunus Ali, Haris Pardi, Hamzah Kassim, Halim Latif, and many others. In making an analysis of student politics, Junaidi showed that student political activities that were very significant at the end of the 60s were the cause of AUKU being introduced. To defend his opinion, he presented the activities, awakenings, and series of demonstrations of the students against the government. Then he based his opinion on the activities of the UM Socialist Club, which is said to sympathize with supporting the struggle of the opposition parties, namely the Labor Party and the People's Party (Ali, 2016). Recordings of the student movement in 1972-1974 will be made which will be an important history of the Malaysian student movement. Although the time studied was relatively short, the impact was not only on the students at that time but on the students after. The impact of the students' uprising, which worried the government and its leaders, caused AUKU 1975 to be drafted and implemented.

The attempt of this progressive group can be considered a proto-Socialist Club, because of its general socialist ideals. Syed Husin Ali was directly involved in establishing the University of Malaya Socialist Club (Ali, 2008). At first, he managed to form a sponsoring committee led by Nathan and tried to get approval from the Student Welfare Board but was rejected. The establishment of the Socialist Club began in 1965, but only in 1967 was an application made to the Registrar of Societies to obtain his approval. Only in 1969 was it approved. This delay is likely due to the effects of the Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation linked to the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI). It also creates difficulties in getting support and support from students because of ideological prejudice. Meredith L. Weiss, also explained that after the Socialist Club was disbanded in 1974, the influence of socialism at UM began to decline, and eventually no more was heard about socialist activities at UM. The void was eventually filled by the ideologies of nationalism and Islamism, and the organizations representing those ideologies continued to fight to dominate MPP or PMUM. After the loss of the Socialist Club in the student political arena at UM, militant actions were no longer heard in the student movement in Malaysia (Weiss, 2016).

### **Study Objectives**

In terms of the objective of this study

- i. Identifying how the role of the Socialist Club dominates and plays a role in influencing the PMUM student movement and student activities, including being involved in a series of demonstrations and looting of the UM campus.
- ii. To study the leadership of the Universiti Malaya Socialist Club, which is directly involved in the activities of socialism, not only brings socialism closer to students but also to the public or the community, through a series of demonstrations in the case of Baling Hunger, Tasik Utara slums and Kampung Kerinchi slums.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is important to fill the gap by previous researchers or researchers regarding the movement of students in the homeland. The research done by this researcher can help in studying matters related to the student movement in Malaysia. Especially those involving the

activities or revival of students at UM, because the researcher was actively involved as the President of PMUM in 1973/74. First, to fill gaps or gaps in studies that have been made or published. Also, can correct factual errors or inaccurate statements, and can even damage the truth of history. For example, the writings of Meredith L. Weiss, K. S. Jomo, Hassan Karim, Ahmad Shabery Cheek, and Mohd Ridhwan Alias, who said the researcher was arrested with MTS leaders and tied up. The reality is the opposite, which is explained by the researcher through the title Rampasan Kamus Universiti Malaya. In addition, adding facts that have not been touched by previous researchers may raise questions or deficiencies. The analysis is felt to be the most accurate for a question that has not yet been analyzed.

The analysis is very important to an issue or question. Factual errors, for example, the difference between days or months, still do not spoil the question or issue. But a wrong analysis can spoil the whole issue or question. The movement and rise of the students of the homeland, although not as brave as the rise of the students of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, and Japan who once brought down the regime in their countries. Involvement in student associations can hone their leadership skills. Finally, can help those who are inclined to the field of politics, to be born as political figures. Among them Anwar Ibrahim, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Aziz Shamsuddin, Shahidan Kassim, Ibrahim Ali, and Hassan Karim, figures before AUKU 1975. Meanwhile, figures after AUKU 1975, among them Ismail Sabri Yaakob, Ahmad Shabery Cheek, and Takiyuddin Hassan.

This study focuses on the movement or activities of UM students through PMUM. Clearly, it revolves around activities or activities in 1972 to 1974. In addition, the study is also based on the researcher's involvement in all movements and actions as the President of PMUM. The experiences and activities that are still in the researcher's memory, are very helpful in making this study. Where it guides the researcher, in stepping from one issue to another until the completion of this study.

### **Research Methodology**

To conduct research on a study, then of course a method or method is needed to make the research successful. The success, completeness, or accuracy of the research results certainly depends on the method or method used, even if the framework has been prepared. This method, way, or guidance is called methodology. Therefore, the methodology becomes the most important guide in research studies. Before determining which methodology needs to be used to achieve success in this research, then the meaning or definition of methodology needs to be understood as clearly as possible, before determining which method needs to be used.

Qualitative researchers who are influenced by postmodernism reject the opinion that there are theories above that are the result of thinkers who find questions about what belongs in methodological theory. So, researchers or researchers need to adjust their studies. They can support their studies with the above methodological theories, depending on their suitability.

Qualitative research can be used to uncover and understand what is hidden behind any phenomenon about which little is known. It can be used to get a new and fresh slant on things about which little is already known. Also, qualitative methods can provide detailed information about phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Abu Bakar, 2006) .

The autobiographical study method for this study, because the researcher is directly involved in the events that want to be studied. The researcher was the main actor in student

activities at UM from 1972 to 1974. Therefore, an autobiographical study became the method for this study. In addition to writing honestly and truthfully about all activities, the researcher also made interviews with friends involved as an important primary source. The method used is almost the same as what was done by Abdul Latif Abu Bakar who did a scientific study in producing Kajai's Biography. Among the useful materials are oral sources, which are based on interviews with Kajai's trusted friends who are still alive, current written sources and articles written by Kajai's friends after Kajai died and studies on Kajai as a journalist and Writer".

According to Abdul Latif Abu Bakar, "I started exploring the field of scholarly biography by studying the prominence of Ishak Haji Mohammad as a Malaysian researcher and politician." He also stated, "The experience of writing scholarly biographies at undergraduate and graduate level at the University of Malaysia until it was published by the Universiti Malaya Publishers and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka." He explained that in order to make a biographical study a scientific biography, then the study must be based on clear facts. Either from oral sources, current written sources, articles, official government records, or books. Indeed, the researcher, who produced this dissertation prepared it by relying on the method used by Abdul Latif Abu Bakar, to make it a scholarly autobiography (Altbach, 1968).

Rabeendra Raghavan, doing Ph.D. thesis research, about UM students in the study session 1972/73. The title of his thesis is A Study of The Political Attitudes of Students from The University of Malaya. Although Raghavan's research seems to have limited time, he has made extensive research and reports. Some of the important things he studied were the growth or development of higher education in Malaysia, the government's policy on granting scholarships, students' livelihoods and activities as well as racial problems among students. He made an assessment based on research and analysis to get the answer. The finding was formulated to be used as an answer to the problem studied by him [6].

## **Conclusion**

Some early attempts were made by the progressives to establish a political association at the University of Malaya. At that time the general idea was social justice in a socialist form. The Student Welfare Board had rejected the Beach Forum four years earlier, similar efforts in 1965 (Progressive Club) and 1966 (Student Forum) also failed.

It is possible that the strength of the leftist student movement at UM is due to its history of struggle that started with the Socialist Club at UM Singapore. The continuation occurred when the Socialist Club also existed at UM Kuala Lumpur. Then, the rise of students around the world in the 60s and 70s also affected student activities at UM. So, this tradition of struggle continues when the leaders of the Socialist Club control PMUM. After that, it was so difficult for other groups to get rid of the club's influence and socialize in PMUM. While the birth of the leftist student movement at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), it is likely because of Fatimah Sham Hamid Tuah who studied there. He continued the spirit of his father, Hamid Tuah's fight against social injustice. Fatimah got support and support from Selamat Ahmad Kamal who is an active member of PSRM. After Fatimah Sham Hamid Tuah left USM, the leadership of the Malaysian Science University Student Association (PMUSM) passed to Selamat Ahmad Kamal.

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