

MENGINGATI SAID ZAHARI
PATRIOT DAN PEJUANG KEBEBASAN

怀念赛.扎哈利
刚强正直的自由战士



Remembering Said Zahari
PATRIOT AND FREEDOM FIGHTER

edited by YAP HON NGIAN



MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR PAK SAID
ZAHARI

Kuala Lumpur
Sunday 22 May 2016
Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

Singapore
Saturday 4 June 2016
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Imprisoned For 17 Years

IN SAID ZAHARI'S OWN WORDS

I was arrested in Operation Cold Store under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on 2 February 1963 by the British colonial government, aided and abetted by the prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew. I was 34.

Lee Kuan Yew imprisoned me without trial for nearly 17 years. I was released on 22 August 1979.

At the time of my arrest, I was married to Salamah Abdul Wahab and we had three children — Roesman, a boy, Norman, another boy and a girl, Rismawati. My wife Salamah was then six months pregnant with our last child. Noorlinda was born when I was behind bars.

I am a Malay and a Singapore citizen by birth. I was educated in Singapore in both Malay and English.

My father came to Singapore from Java in his teens. He died when I was a few months old. As a child, I helped my

widowed mother to augment the family's meager income by selling kuih (local Malay cakes) that she made, in our village — Kampong Kebun Bunga.

By 1951, I was already a reporter for the Malay newspaper, *Utusan Melayu*. The paper was published in peninsula Malaya and Singapore. Both territories were under British colonial domination at that time. In 1954, I was transferred to its office in Kuala Lumpur.

In 1957, when *Utusan Melayu* moved its headquarters to Kuala Lumpur, I was Chief Reporter in its Kuala Lumpur office. By 1958, I was News Editor of its Editorial Department. In 1959, I became Editor in Chief.

As Editor in Chief, I led the historic strike of *Utusan Melayu* for editorial independence which began on 20 July 1961 and lasted 93 days.

During the strike, I left the Malayan capital of Kuala Lumpur to visit and encourage the *Utusan Melayu* strikers in Singapore. When I was there, on 30 August 1961, the Malayan authorities imposed a ban on my re-entry to the peninsula on the ground that I was a Singaporean.

Back in Singapore, I became active in the Partai Rakyat Singapura (PRS) and was elected to be its new president on 1 Feb 1963, the very eve of my arrest.

The allegations against me were entirely baseless. I was accused of being pro-communist, a subversive and security threat. Not a shred of evidence was ever produced to substantiate those allegations which were four in number. Let me rebut those allegations.

First allegation

I was accused of being a pro-communist, a subversive and a security threat for leading the *Utusan Melayu* journalists' strike for editorial independence in 1961.

Utusan Melayu, founded in 1939, was an independent Malay newspaper published in the Jawi (Arabic) script. It reflected a Malay identity which in turn created a consciousness and fostered an overwhelming national spirit during the years of the Malay struggle to free our country (peninsula Malaya and the island of Singapore) from the British colonialists after the Second World War, beginning with the fight against the Malayan Union and after that for independence.

Clearly, the British colonial authority was uncomfortable with the *Utusan Melayu* strike because it was for freedom of the press, democracy and social justice in newly independent Malaya. Malaya gained independence in 1957. Such an editorial principle would be a stumbling stone to the scheme of the British colonialist, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, the prime minister of Malaya and Lee Kuan Yew, the prime minister of Singapore to hoist the British neo-colonial Grand Design of Malaysia upon the people of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei.

All sorts of pressures were put on the leadership of *Utusan Melayu* and its journalists to support the colonial government's policy in Malaya and Singapore. I was told to stop criticising government policies.

Despite pressures, *Utusan Melayu* continued its independent stand of criticizing government policies which were seen as being against the interests of the Malays in particular and the people in general. The central colonial government in Kuala Lumpur persisted in their acts of suppression. In Singapore, *Utusan Melayu* was banned from military camps and police departments at one time. However, the prohibition was useless as military and police personnel

continued to seek out *Utusan Melayu*. This was because, at that time, the paper had a special column for military and police personnel, most of whom were Malays.

Around 1959, Yusof Ishak, the Editor in Chief received a sudden directive from Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaya to implement a new policy essentially aimed at ending *Utusan Melayu's* role as an independent paper. Tunku Abdul Rahman wanted to make the *Utusan Melayu* a mouthpiece of his political party UNMO. Although *Utusan Melayu* had supported the Tunku for merdeka (independence), it was unwilling to be a tool of any political party — holding editorial independence to be its principle. The Editorial Department did not accept this directive, and it was subsequently withdrawn by the board of directors. As a result, Yusof Ishak resigned as Editor-in-Chief and I succeeded him.

As Editor in Chief from 1959, I had supported the demand for land by Hamid Tuah and the Sungai Sirih landless farmers. *Utusan Melayu*, under my leadership, gave support to the Agriculture Minister Aziz Ishak when he criticised the attitude of some government officers in the rural areas as “still ha(ving) a colonial mentality.” It also supported Aziz Ishak when he tried to set up small factories to produce urea fertilizer to benefit the small farmers in the face of opposition from the Tunku and foreign economic interests.

On the international front, *Utusan Melayu* sided with Asian and African peoples struggling against the colonialists and imperialists bent on perpetuating their power. *Utusan Melayu's* position was complicated by the fact that the foreign policy of the Alliance Party, led by the Tunku at that time was too pro-British and generally more pro-Western. In the Irian Barat (West Irian) issue, *Utusan Melayu* not only lashed out at the stand of the Dutch colonial power and its supporters at the United Nations Conference, it also criticised

the Malayan government which had only recently attained its own independence and yet took a neutral stand, instead of supporting anti-colonial Indonesia. Likewise, *Utusan Melayu* condemned US aggression against Cuba and its complicity in the murder of Patrice Lumumba in Congo.

From 20 July to 21 October 1961, journalists in *Utusan Melayu* began a strike for editorial independence, a total of 93 days. We received the support of our colleagues in the administration and printing departments.

The breaking of the strike ended *Utusan Melayu's* role as a firm fearless voice of the people and champion of the oppressed.

Second allegation

I was accused of being pro-communist, a subversive and a security threat for assuming the leadership of Partai Rakyat Singapura (PRS) with promises and commitment to rebuild the party into a strong anti-colonial party.

Towards the end of 1962, I decided to join the PRS as I was convinced that it was the one party with the potential to unite the Malays in Singapore. Side by side with other anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist parties, PRS would fight for the national liberation of Malaya including Singapore.

The central committee of PRS held an extraordinary meeting on 1 February 1963 to which I was specially invited together with Hussein Jahidin. We were unanimously elected to the position of president and secretary-general respectively, thus ushering in PRS' new leadership for 1963/64.

As the new president, I was to announce a new policy and direction for the PRS's struggle in the context of intensifying political development in Singapore and Malaya particularly, and Southeast Asia generally. I would also draw the political

guidelines for the party's struggle in the years ahead. Also we had to decide on meaningful and effective guidelines and cooperation with other opposition parties in Singapore.

I wanted PRS to grow and develop into a progressive Malay-based political party in Singapore, strong and able to unite and represent the interests of the Malays in particular and the multiracial population in general. I aimed to gain the cooperation of other left-wing political parties in the struggle against the British colonialists and their stooges. I saw that PRS had tremendous potential to act as an effective bridge linking in solidarity the major communities in Malaya — the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians.

Together with other left-wing opposition leaders, I had envisaged the possibility of establishing a form of power-sharing between Malays and Chinese in Singapore as had happened in Cyprus. There, the people of Greek descent and those of Turkish ancestry had shared power after receiving independence from Britain. Should the Malaysia merger proposition fall through, a system of government *à la* Cyprus could be a model.

It is my opinion that problems of inter-communal relations, especially between the Malays and the Chinese must be handled very carefully in any initiative towards a political solution for Singapore as well as Malaya. The main conditions for achieving harmony, well-being, happiness and peace in an independent Malaya were cooperation, mutual understanding and close and warm relations among the Malays, Chinese, Indians and other communities

In the 1950s and early 1960s, PRS had faced problems of weak leadership, ideological conflict and harassment from all sides. The PAP regarded it as a hideout for “communist elements.” The special branch moles were active at all levels

of the party, right up to the central committee.

Lee Kuan Yew was known to detest PRS because he wanted the People's Action Party (PAP) to monopolise the left-wing movement in Singapore.

In 1958, just before the city council elections, the PRS had approached the PAP to form a united front to face the elections. Lee Kuan Yew declined though other PAP leaders like Ahmad Ibrahim were quite in favour of the idea as he was in agreement with PRS politics at that time.

Lee Kuan Yew's hatred of PRS turned into anxiety when a split occurred in the PAP and Barisan Sosialis was formed towards the end of 1961. Despite its weak and powerless state, the PRS still worried Lee Kuan Yew. The PAP became shaky when a great number of its activists joined the Barisan Sosialis under the leadership of Lim Chin Siong. Besides the PAP, there was now the Barisan Sosialis whose left-wing ideology and strength Lee could not deny.

Lee Kuan Yew must have reckoned that when the left-wing PRS was re-energised with a new spirit, it would make a pact to cooperate with the newly-formed Barisan Sosialis, which would then be a formidable rival to his party. It might undermine the political aspirations of Lee Kuan Yew and the British colonial authorities.

The restructuring of the PRS leadership began on the historic night of 1 February 1963 when I was elected as the new president. It would tell the people of Singapore, particularly the ethnic Malays that it could compete actively in the political arena of Singapore. Based on the ideology of "socio-democratic-nationalism" that was liberal, progressive and revolutionary, the party could spread its influence among the 200,000 Malays in Singapore at that time. Moreover, we would plan for effective cooperation with other political

parties on the common political platform of the struggle for national liberation.

Thus it was not surprising that Lee Kuan Yew and the British colonial authorities would use power to prevent PRS developing into an influential, powerful and well-established organisation. I had to be crushed as soon as there were indications that the PRS would be revived and strengthened.

Third allegation

I was accused of being a pro-communist, a subversive and a security threat because of my “link to Indonesia.”

Left-wing Malay nationalists, inspired by the Indonesian republican nationalists, were in fact perceived by the British and Malayan authorities as a greater long-term threat because of their potential support base within the politically influential Malay community.

Following World War II, the British colonial authorities viewed the rise of progressive nationalism and anti-imperialism in Indonesia under Sukarno and its extensive influence over left-wing parties in Southeast Asia as the greatest threat to their defence and perpetuation of Anglo-American interests and hegemony in the region, over and above any threat from the Malayan Communist Party.

In other words, left-wing Malay nationalists in Malaya and Singapore, inspired by the Indonesian republican nationalists, were in fact perceived by the British and Malayan authorities as a greater long-term threat because of our potential support base within the politically influential Malay community.

To achieve their aim to neutralise Malay nationalists from the influence of progressive nationalism and anti-imperialism coming from Sukarno, the British, Singapore and Malayan authorities embarked on a two-prong strategy.

Firstly, they conspired to amplify the dangers of the communist threats, to strike fear among the people, especially the Malays. These communist threats were alleged to emanate from the Barisan Sosialis and the PRS.

Secondly, they conspired on the Malaysia project, which on the surface was embarked to give independence to the remaining British colonies in the region — Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and the protectorate of Brunei — which would all merge to form Malaysia. But in reality, the project was aimed at curbing the rise of progressive nationalism and anti-imperialism in Indonesia under Sukarno, and thus defend and perpetuate Anglo-American interests and hegemony in the Southeast Asian region.

It was evident that the British, Malayan and Singapore authorities regarded me as one such left-wing Malay nationalist in Malaya and Singapore, inspired by the Indonesian republican nationalists, who posed a greater long-term threat to their interests because of my support base within the politically influential Malay community.

However, the British colonial authorities had not provided a shred of evidence that my so-called “link to Indonesia,” if any, was pro-communist, subversive and or a security threat.

In fact, a declassified British document, CO 1030/1873 S2005, to the Secretary of State from Lord Selkirk dated 13 February 1963, states that there was probably very little evidence to link Indonesia ... “except that Said Zahari was probably in the pay of the Indonesian intelligence. Lee (LKY) is hoping that SZ (Said Zahari) would reveal a lot more information under interrogation but had so far said nothing of significance.”

Even this allegation that I was in the “pay of the Indonesian intelligence” was based on fallacious evidence. I had written a book on the Irian Barat issues and the Indonesian Embassy in

Singapore purchased 100 copies and made me a cheque for \$250 (each copy costing \$2.50). This constituted the evidence for the so-called “link to Indonesia.”

Fourth allegation

I was accused of being pro-communist, a subversive and a security threat for allegedly strategizing and planning the Brunei uprising. The news reported that “Said Zahari was privy to the Brunei revolt and had conspired with Lim (Lim Chin Siong) and AM Azahari (PRB) to go against the British with force.”

I had lunch with Lim Chin Siong (Secretary-General of Barisan Sosialis) and AM Azahari (President of Partai Rakyat Brunei) at Rendezvous restaurant in Singapore in early December 1962. Azahari, who led the Brunei independence movement, was going to Manila that evening on his way to the United Nations to take up the issue of Brunei independence from the British government. A few days later on 8 December 1962 there was an uprising in Brunei. Azahari and I were alleged to have supported that armed revolt.

The Brunei armed revolt was the god-sent excuse for the British, Malayan and Singapore authorities to falsely justify the arrests under Operation Cold Store, to neutralise any and all opponents to the issue of merger under Malaysia of Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak.

The British colonial officers, the Malayan government under the leadership of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, and the Singapore People’s Action Party headed by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had a series of endless tripartite meetings fraught with disagreements. They schemed to oppress and crush the opposition parties in Singapore and

Malaya. It was a blatant conspiracy that was characteristically anti-communist and anti-democratic.

It also ran against the Afro-Asian spirit which was advancing the cause for national freedom for all of Asia, Africa and Latin American continents from the colonial and Western imperialists — Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Italy and the United States of America.

In Asia, India, Pakistan and Burma wrestled themselves from the clutches of the British. After Malaya achieved its independence in 1957, the British remained the only colonial power in Southeast Asia. It was unwilling to release its hold on Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah). The two latter regions on Kalimantan Island had been controlled by the British while the rest of Kalimantan became part of the Republic of Indonesia after it declared independence on 17 August 1945.

Those remaining British colonies were viewed as economically and militarily strategic areas in Southeast Asia in Anglo-American politics. The British and the US felt that President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia had political influence that spread to Malaya, Singapore and Brunei. This influence was especially felt among Malay nationalist fighters who viewed Indonesia as the centre of political power, capable of pioneering the national struggle for freedom of the entire archipelago from western domination.

The opposition political parties in the three countries were inspired by the Indonesian anti-colonial, anti-imperialist political movement in their struggle. This scenario threatened the British colonial interests, and subsequently became a cause of concern for the United States and other Western powers, including Australia and New Zealand. They needed conservative, pro-western and anti-communist local leaders

for their former colonies, namely Malaya and Singapore.

In Singapore, the PAP, established in 1954, controlled Singapore politics ever since it won the first general election in May 1959. But the party had split into two factions in the middle of July 1961. Those who no longer followed Lee Kuan Yew's leadership were expelled from the party and they formed a new one — the Barisan Sosialis. They believed that he had betrayed the original anti-colonial political policy of the PAP. Barisan Sosialis became the PAP's antagonist in the political battle designed to dictate the designate leadership of Singapore after the island's constitution was amended to allow for elections to be held in 1963.

The position of Barisan Sosialis was consolidated when it received strong support from PRS and Partai Pekerja Singapura (Singapore Workers' Party). Both were progressive opposition parties even with scant supporters. PRS, a progressive Malay ethnic-based nationalist political party in Singapore was initially a network of three political parties with similar ideologies: Partai Rakyat Malaya, PRS and Partai Rakyat Brunei.

New blood from this political alliance alarmed Lee Kuan Yew and the British colonialists as they realised that the defection of almost half of the leadership and members of PAP to Barisan Sosialis could potentially, at any time, cripple the PAP and eventually take over Singapore's leadership after the 1963 elections.

If Barisan Sosialis were voted into power, British political and economic entrenched concerns in the Southeast Asia region would have no guarantee of prevailing. So for the benefit of the colonialists, Lee Kuan Yew must be saved from being removed from Singapore politics. The PAP must be saved from destruction.

The scheme hatched by the British to protect its interest

in the region was the Malaysia merger proposal. However, the British Grand Design of Malaysia was in danger of unravelling before it could be clinched. Apart from developments in Singapore as outlined above, necessitating that Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP be saved from destruction if an impending election were to be “bersih” (“clean” in Malay), that is, free and fair elections, developments in Brunei threatened merger too. The Partai Rakyat Brunei under the leadership of AM Azahari won the first election in the British Protectorate in 1962. The people’s support for Azahari had increased to almost 100 percent. The Sultan himself saw that and was prepared to accept reality. Azahari had begun to approach the Sultan to explain the Partai Rakyat Brunei’s political plans and had pledged undivided loyalty to him. In October 1962, I visited Brunei and saw with my own eyes the people’s support for Azahari. Even Lord Selkirk reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that “(T)he Brunei Government Fact Finding Commission recorded stiff and almost 100% opposition from all sections of the population to Malaysia.” (DO. 169/11 p.26. Telegram 46, 1 February 1962).

Equally disturbing to the British too was that in line with the United Nations decolonisation process, Azahari and several Sarawak opposition leaders had discussed and finalised plans to send their representatives to the United Nations (UN) to present a memorandum demanding independence for North Kalimantan.

Although the British had once planned to unite the three territories into one unitary state, they now saw the plan of a Kalimantan Utara nation as a threat to their interests as it was no longer their creation and they would not be able to control it.

Hence British intelligence agents undermined Azahari’s

plans. The Brunei revolt which broke out on 8 December 1962 was the results of provocation and schemes laid by British intelligence agents (Greg Poulgrain, *The Genesis of Konfrontasi*, 1998).

The execution of the British colonialist political agenda in Brunei not only crushed the political aspirations of Azahari and the people of Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak, but also dragged Indonesia into the Malaysian crisis, according to British plans.

The Prime Minister of Malaya Tunku Abdul Rahman made his speech on 27 May 1962 and said that the time would come when Malaya would need to have an understanding with Britain to unite with Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and also Brunei into a nation called Malaysia.

While he welcomed the formation of Malaysia in principle, Azahari wanted to create an independent North Kalimantan state that could then join Malaysia which was in accordance with the United Nations' principle of self-determination by colonies.

The vice-president of Partai Rakyat Brunei, Hafidz Laksamana, issued a statement in Brunei in which he appealed to Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and the people of Malaya to give their support, first to the struggle for national liberation of the people of North Kalimantan territories still under British colonial rule before proposing that they unite with the Federation of Malaya and Singapore to form Malaysia.

Azahari's plan to form a United North Kalimantan state had the support of the Bumiputera of Sarawak and the ethnic Chinese population. It was the same for Sabah.

PRS led at that time by Adbul Wahab Shah and the Workers'

Party led by David Marshall pooled resources with the Barisan Sosialis to oppose the British-PAP promoted merger.

I saw the formation of Malaysia as a neo-colonial project, one aimed at safeguarding British political and economic interests as well as the hegemony of Western powers in Southeast Asia, one motivated by colonialist and imperialist distaste and fear of surging Asian nationalism, particularly of Indonesian nationalism under the leadership of President Sukarno.

I expressed this opinion while speaking at a forum held at the University of Singapore organised by the University Socialist Club, shortly after Tunku Abdul Rahman's announcement of merger.

I suggested that a genuine "Malaysia" should have the independent Republic of Indonesia as its hinterland. I also emphasised that the historical, political definition of "Malaysia" itself referred to a geographical entity encompassing the whole of the so-called "Malay Archipelago," including especially Indonesia.

I also said at the forum that the British-inspired Malaysia project was not meant to promote the national interests of the people as claimed. Rather it was to be used to curb the sweeping current of the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist uprising not only of the peoples of Southeast Asia in particular, but those of Africa and Asia generally. In Southeast Asia, the uprising for national liberation and independence was led by the people of Indonesia and Vietnam under the respective leadership of Sukarno and Ho Chi Minh.

An informal discussion followed the forum in which I laid bare the wicked intentions of the Western imperialists to continue their divide and rule policy in Southeast Asia,

particularly the Malay Archipelago so that their politico-economic control and hegemony over the area could be perpetuated. The British had played an important role in that neo-colonial scheme by raising the racial political elements of the concept of Melayu Raya (Greater Malay Nation) or Indonesia Raya (Greater Indonesia) originally proposed by Muhammad Yamin and strongly supported then by Sukarno. Their intention was to create fear and anxiety among the non-Malay and non-Indonesian population of the archipelago. Although the concept had a strong geographical, historical and ethnic basis, Sukarno himself had long rejected it, especially after Malaya had achieved independence in 1957. But the colonialist elements continued to harp on the subject to create conflict between the indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Not surprisingly, Lee Kuan Yew inflamed Chinese fears and anxieties by invoking the “Indonesian bogey.”

More importantly, I assert then and now that the anti-communist hysteria of that era was strongly directed at the politically dominant Malays who were encouraged to believe that a communist Singapore would eventuate should the merger proposal not go ahead.

I wholeheartedly supported Lim Chin Siong when he explained the Barisan Sosialis’ stand on merger:

“The Malaysia Plan, openly backed and encouraged by the British, was meant neither to give freedom and independence to the territories concerned nor was it to encourage national unity among them.

In the fight to gain independence for Malaya and Indonesia, nationalist leaders in these two countries had proposed a Melayu Raya plan, that is, a larger Malaya or Malaysia together with Indonesia. To the genuine nationalists, the Malaysia merger should be meaningful to national unity, and national unity requires the eradication of all forms of

colonialism. Socialism never opposed this ambition. They have always continued to support the plan of a larger economic union and the pooling of various resources of the region to improve the living standards of the people.”

It was my constitutional right to openly differ in my political opinion from the British and Singapore authorities on the formation of Malaysia.

I was a political — not security — threat

The British colonial authorities and their collaborator, Lee Kuan Yew, justified Operation Cold Store on the ground that Singapore’s security was threatened by the communists intent on gaining power through unconstitutional means. But this contention had no validity because the Malayan Communist Party was already a diminished force in the late 1950s as evidenced by the Federation of Malaya’s official declaration of the end of the Emergency in 1960.

Selected Poems by Said Zahari

Kelahiran Tanpa Kebebasan

Bukanlah aku tidak lapar,
aku menolak makanan;
atau aku tidak mengantuk
maka aku terus berjaga.

telingaku terus mendengar
tangisan seorang bayi

Berbulan dalam kesepian
Itulah punca kebimbangan
berjam lamanya ke detik ini
Itulah debaran tanpa akhirnya.

lalu datanglah berita
ketibaan anak kecilku

Akulah ayahnya
kebebasanku telah diramas
dunia semakin kecil
menjadi sebuah penjara yang gelap.

anakku baru lahir
ke dunia yang belum bebas.

22 Mei 1963

Tears

I saw tears down your cheeks
sparkling like diamonds,
beautiful like shining stars
in a clear night sky.
I saw sorrow
dancing in tune with your sobs.
My heart beats faster, my lips tremble.

Then I saw courage,
confidence and determination,
peering from behind the sorrow.
How cruel, how inhumane!
So high, so huge
this partition between us.
For so long!

But in spirit we are one,
as always,
bound by unbreakable bonds
of love and longing for justice.
Neither this prison wall
nor a hundred years of incarceration
shall diminish my love.

*Hari Raya card to Sal
20 November 1969*

The poem is reproduced from Tan Jing Quee, Teo Soh Lung and Koh Kay Yew eds. *Our Thoughts Are Free: Poems and Prose on Imprisonment and Exile*, Singapore, Ethos Books 2009.

怯懦的狗腿

四年前的一天
我被带到这不见天日的地方
单独囚禁在
一个灰暗单调的世界。
我的世界？
有个小洞眼的水泥箱！
它还有别的名字——
黑牢，地狱，审讯室。
四年前它发出恫吓
要给我的脑袋一颗子弹
当面对我的挑战时它却局促不安
怯懦的狗腿！
这回不再使用威胁
代之以可耻的自由
放弃吧！出卖你的灵魂
去换取没有灵魂的自由
“没有别的出路了
要嘛投降，不然就在这里烂掉。”
我的坚定令它坐立不安，
它们的失败已经注定。
吓唬不了，面具也已被撕破
于是它们敲起了退堂鼓
只留下我
独自在这囚笼里。

赛·扎哈里，1967年5月

机会主义者

昨天他说他爱你
今天他离你而去
他不曾爱过你。

昨日他为你的伤口哭泣
今日他摇了摇头
看着仍在滴血的伤口
他何曾在乎过你。

昨日他以身相许
誓与你站在一起
今日只管把你忽略
让你受尽污损
因为他，正是他
无耻的机会主义者！

赛. 扎哈里，1967年

北雁 选译自

《Our Thoughts Are Free》

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Said Zahari: Pejuang Tulen Rakyat

SYED HUSIN ALI

DUA HARI sebelum Said Zahari meninggal, Jomo dengan isterinya Noer bersama saya pergi mengunjungi rumah anak perempuannya di Puncak Alam. Di sana Said sudah lama terlantar di atas katil dalam biliknya.

Kami berbual-bual, akan tetapi Said yang lebih rancak bercakap. Dia bercerita tentang beberapa peristiwa di masa lampau. Tuturannya, yang pelat keIndonesiaan lancar, ingatannya kuat dan kelucuannya masih segar. Sejak aku kenal dia, Said memang lucu orangnya.

Oleh kerana sifatnya yang lucu ini ramai teman Said mengatakan dia tidak serius. Ada di antara mereka mengatakan bahawa beliau tidak akan tahan lebih dari tiga bulan jika kena penjara. Sebaliknya, sifatnya inilah yang memberi Said kekuatan untuk tahan selama tujuh belas tahun dalam penjara-penjara Lee Kuan Yew.

Sebenarnya di sebalik kelucuan Said tersembunyi kekuatan semangat yang kental, fikiran yang tajam dan kesabaran yang gigih. Apa yang tersembunyi ini diketahui terutama sekali oleh sahabat-sahabat seperjuangan yang bersama meringkuk dengannya dalam penjara.

Said seorang wartawan terkenal. Beliau bekerja lama di akhbar Utusan Melayu, sehinggalah menjadi Ketua Pengarang. Di bawahnya Utusan menyemarakkan semangat perjuangan negara untuk kebebasan dan perancangan rakyat untuk keadilan. Beliau menentang kemiskinan sama kuat dengan menentang penjajahan.

Semasa Said memimpin Utusan Melayu, Kerajaan Umno-

Perikatan di bawah Tunku Abdul Rahman, memulakan tindakan untuk mengambil alihnya. Mungkin Tengku kurang senang dengan sikap Said dan akhbar itu yang mirip kekirian dari segi politik, terlalu kuat mempertahankan kebebasan media, dan tidak memberikan sokongan penuh kepada Kerajaan Malaysia semasa melawan Konfrontasi Indonesia.

Said dengan sebahagian besar kakitangan Utusan tidak bersetuju dengan tindakan mengambil alih ini. Khabarnya, telah disampaikan kepadanya bahawa jikalau beliau mengikut kehendak-kehendak kerajaan, Said akan dianugerahkan gelaran Tan Seri. Dengan demikian beliau boleh menjadi Tan Seri yang pertama di kalangan wartawan.

Said menolak tawaran ini. Untuk menentang tindakan Tunku hendak mengambil alih Utusan Melayu kerajaan, Said bersama hampir semua kakitangan akhbar itu mengambil keputusan untuk melancarkan mogok. Mogok Utusan Melayu ini mencipta sejarah, sebagai mogok paling lama oleh pekerja-pekerja Melayu, iaitu selama lebih kurang 100 hari. Ia juga merupakan mogok yang dilancarkan khusus untuk mempertahankan kebebasan media.

Semasa mogok ini Said, yang lahir di Singapura, telah pergi ke pulau itu untuk memungut derma bagi membantu mogoknya. Apabila hendak pulang ke Kuala Lumpur, tempat kerjanya, beliau disekat dan terus diharamkan masuk ke Semenanjung. Said bekerja secara bebas dalam bidang penulisan dan penterjemahan. Beliau memperkuat lagi tali persahabatannya dengan kawan-kirinya di Singapura, khusus dari kalangan para pemimpin kesatuan pekerja, seperti Lim Chin Siong.

Said mempunyai hubungan rapat dengan pemimpin-pemimpin Parti Rakyat di Malaya (waktu itu) dan di Brunei. Beliau mengambil keputusan untuk memimpinnya. Malangnya, sehari selepas dipilih menjadi Ketua, beliau ditahan di bawah Operation Coldstore, bersama 113 orang pemimpin Barisan Sosialis serta kesatuan pekerja, pelajar, golongan professional dll.

Said Zahari dituduh oleh Perdana Menteri Lee Kuan Yew

sebagai seorang komunis dan dipaksa untuk mengakui tuduhan ini sekiranya hendak bebas. Selama 17 tahun beliau dengan tegas menolak tuduhan palsu ini, walaupun beliau pernah diugut untuk dibunuh dan sungguh pun sangat kasih dan cinta yang mendalam terhadap isteri dan anak-anaknya.

Begitulah kekuatan jiwa manusia yang sangat gagah berjuang mempertahankan keadilan serta kebebasan dan menentang kezaliman serta penindasan.

Kira-kira enam tahun selepas Said ditahan, kami mendengar berita bahawa beliau akan dibebaskan. Selepas berbincang dengan beberapa orang kawan di Kuala Lumpur, termasuk Dr Rajakumar, saya telah turun ke Singapura untuk menemui kawan-kawan lama dan bekas pelajar saya di Universiti Malaya.

Kami bercadang mengumpul orang Melayu untuk menyambut kebebasan Said. Akan tetapi, bila sampai waktunya Said tidak bebas dan terus ditahan. Hanya lebih 12 tahun kemudian baru saya tahu sebabnya. Ini berlaku apabila menghadiri sebuah majlis peluncuran buku kumpulan sajak-sajak oleh beberapa orang bekas tahanan politik Singapura.

Dalam majlis itu saya berucap dan menyentuh tentang peristiwa Said tidak jadi bebas. Selepas majlis itu Dr Poh Soo Kai menghampiri saya dan berkata dalam bahasa Inggeris, “Sekarang saya baru tahu mengapa Said tidak dibebaskan.” Rupanya rancangan kami hendak menyambut Said sampai ke telinga Perdana Menteri kuku besi Singapura.

Mengikut khabar, sepatutnya Soo Kai bebas bersama Said. Soo Kai bebas, akan tetapi Said tidak jadi dibebaskan. Rupanya Sir Harry Lee Kuan Yew takut benar sekiranya Said terbukti mendapat sambutan ramai rakyat Singapura. Bukan saja beliau memaksa Said mengakui tuduhan palsu dia seorang komunis, bahkan Lee takut sekiranya ramai rakyat menyambut Said dan sama-sama menolak tuduhan palsu tersebut.

Akhirnya selepas 17 tahun Said bebas. Selama itu beliau

telah berjuang dan berkorban dengan gigih. Dalam tempoh itu juga beliau menulis beberapa buah sajak, setengahnya dapat diseludup keluar dan diterbitkan oleh kawan-kawan rapatnya Usman Awang, Dr Rajakumar dan Dr Syed Husin Ali. Sajak-sajak ini menaikkan semangat sesiapa yang membacanya.

Beberapa buah daripada sajak ini menyatakan perasaan kasih yang mendalam Said terhadap isterinya Salmah dan anak-anaknya. Sebenarnya dalam tempoh masa Said meringkuk dalam tahanan, Salmah isterinya beserta anak-anaknya telah melalui pelbagai duri dan ranjau. Pengorbanan dan perjuangan mereka tidak kurang daripada Said.

Derita yang ditanggung oleh beribu anggota keluarga orang tahanan politik dan pengorbanan dan perjuangan mereka, bukan saja di Singapura bahkan di seluruh dunia, tidak begitu diketahui akan tetapi tersangat tinggi nilainya. Sesungguhnya, merekalah kebanyakannya yang telah memberikan kekuatan orang yang ditahan itu.

Semua tahanan politik tanpa bicara dengan keluarga mereka, seperti Said Zahari dan Salmah serta anak-anak mereka perlu kita ingati dan beri penghormatan setinggi-tingginya. Banyak cara untuk mengingati dan menghormati mereka. Cara yang terbaik ialah dengan menghayati semangat mereka dan meneruskan perjuangan mereka demi pembebasan dan keadilan yang tulen bagi semua rakyat jelata.

Petaling Jaya
26hb April 2016

Hilangnya sebutir bintang di angkasa nusantara

ABDUL RAHMAN EMBONG

BERITA PEMERGIAN secara mengejut Allahyarham Said Zahari - seorang patriot ulung, pejuang kebebasan dan ikon kewartawanan di Malaysia dan Singapura bahkan di rantau Nusantara - telah tersebar luas di dalam dan luar negara.

Walaupun tersentak dengan berita sedih ini, ahli-ahli keluarga, kawan-kawan seperjuangan dan para peminat Pak Said sudah mula menerima hakikat bahawa beliau sudah tidak ada lagi dalam kalangan kita semua.

Pak Said telah meninggal dunia semasa tidur di rumah kediaman anaknya Rismawati di Puncak Alam, Selangor pada kira-kira 12.30 tengahari 12 April 2016 dalam usia 88 tahun.

Said Zahari dilahirkan dalam sebuah keluarga Melayu keturunan Jawa di Kampung Kebun Bunga, Singapura pada 18 Mei 1928.

Beliau mendapat pendidikan Sekolah Melayu di Singapura sebelum Perang Dunia Ke-2, dan meneruskan pengajian untuk memperoleh sijil Senior Cambridge selepas pendudukan Jepun, sambil dalam senyap-senyap mengikuti gerakan perjuangan kemerdekaan menentang penjajah British.

Beliau kemudian menceburi bidang kewartawanan dengan menyertai akhbar Utusan Melayu pada 1951 yang ketika itu gigih meniup api perjuangan kemerdekaan bukan sahaja di Malaya tetapi juga di tanah jajahan yang lain.

Oleh sebab bakat dan ketokohnya, beliau diberi kepercayaan

untuk memimpin akhbar itu selaku Ketua Pengarang pada 1959.

Pada 1961, apabila pimpinan Umno dan pemerintah Malaya yang tidak senang dengan kelantangan Utusan telah berusaha mengambilalih pemilikan akhbar tersebut dan mengubah polisinya, Said memimpin pemogokan bersejarah Utusan selama tiga bulan menentang tindakan Umno tersebut demi membela kebebasan akhbar.

PAHIT GETIR DI PENJARA

Cabaran demi cabaran menimpa hidup beliau sekeluarga.

Pada 2 Februari 1963, beliau ditahan di bawah Akta Keselamatan Dalam Negeri oleh rejim Lee Kuan Yew Singapura selama 17 tahun, mengakibatkan anak-anaknya dibesarkan tanpa bapa di sisi mereka.

Namun berkat kegigihan Puan Salamah, isteri Pak Said, bukan sahaja anak-anak itu mendewasa dengan baik bahkan Pak Said juga dapat memperteguhkan azam dan menundukkan segala pahit getir di penjara.

Beliau antara tahanan politik paling lama merengkok dalam tahanan sama ada di Malaysia mahupun Singapura serta dianggap sebagai ikon nurani suara kebebasan dan keadilan oleh ramai angkatan lama dan juga angkatan baru.

Beberapa tahun setelah keluar daripada tahanan, beliau berpindah dari Singapura ke Malaysia untuk bersama-sama dengan anak-anaknya dan menyambung kehidupan dan perjuangannya.

Seorang wartawan dan penulis yang tajam pena dan daya imajinasinya, pelbagai kisah hidup, perjuangan serta pemikiran beliau mengenai tanahair, perjuangan anti-penjajah dan pembebasan umat manusia telah dirakamkan dengan baik dalam tiga jilid memoir beliau, *Meniti Lautan Gelora* (2001), *Dalam Ribuan Mimpi Gelisah* (2006), dan *Suara Bicara* (2015).

Pemergian Salamah, rakan karib seperjuangan yang juga isteri beliau, secara tiba-tiba kerana serangan sakit jantung pada Disember

2004, sebelum Pak Said sempat menyiapkan jilid kedua memoirnya telah memberikan pukulan berat kepada Pak Said, tetapi beliau menerimanya dengan tabah. Pak Said tinggal bersama-sama anak dan cucunya.

Dalam tempoh ini, beliau terus menerus dikunjungi oleh kawan-kawan lama, para wartawan dan juga aktivis-aktivis angkatan muda yang ingin menimba ilmu dan pengalaman serta mendapat inspirasi daripada semangat juang beliau.

PERJUANGAN BELUM SELESAI

Beliau sering muncul di pelbagai media melalui temuramah mengenai pelbagai isu dalam dan luar negara khususnya mengenai kebebasan media dan juga sejarah perjuangan melawan penjajahan.

Namun dalam beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini semenjak beliau jatuh sakit dan semakin uzur, memang orang ramai tidak banyak lagi mendengar berita Pak Said.

Kali terakhir beliau muncul di khalayak ramai ialah pada 2 Ogos 2015 semasa pelancaran jilid ketiga memoirnya, *Suara Bicara: Fragmen Memoir Said Zahari* di Kuala Lumpur.

Dalam dewan yang penuh sesak dengan para hadirin di Bangunan LLG itu, Pak Said yang berkerusi roda menyampaikan ucapannya buat kali terakhir di hadapan umum.

Walaupun nada suaranya tidak segagah seperti dahulu, gema pesannya tetap menusuk kalbu: ‘Hidup adalah perjuangan’.

Dua tahun sebelum itu, sebuah esei beliau diterbitkan dalam buku koleksi khas bersempena ulangtahun ke-50 penangkapan besar-besaran oleh rejim Lee Kuan Yew di bawah Operation Cold Store.

Judul esainya, “How Could I Die, The Fight Is Not Over” yang membawa maksud ‘hidup perlu diteruskan kerana perjuangan belum selesai’ mencerminkan semangat juangnya yang gigih dan merupakan legasi yang diwariskan kepada kita semua khususnya generasi baru.

Pak Said sudah tidak ada lagi bersama kita tetapi jasa beliau tetap dikenang dan disanjung.

Sebagai tokoh wartawan yang berprinsip dan berani, beliau berdiri pada garis yang jelas dan tegas.

Sekalipun beliau tidak pernah dinobatkan sebagai Tokoh Wartawan Negara sungguhpun beliau antara pejuang awal yang gigih membela kebebasan dan etikaewartawanan yang murni melalui akhbar Utusan yang dipimpinnya, peranan dan sumbangan beliau tetap mendapat pengiktirafan oleh pelbagai pihak di dalam dan luar.

Dalam gelanggang politik, Pak Said diakui sebagai seorang patriot ulung, seorang pejuang anti-kolonial untuk kemerdekaan dan kebebasan.

Beliau juga pejuang perpaduan kaum serta lambang ikatan sejarah dan perpaduan rakyat Malaysia dan Singapura.

Kita tidak lupa satu keisimewaan Pak Said iaitu kemahirannya dari segi bahasa.

Selain amat mahir dalam Bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris, beliau juga menguasai bahasa Mandarin yang dipelajarinya daripada kawan-kawan semasa dalam tahanan sementara beliau pula mengajar tahanan-tahanan lain khususnya kawan-kawan Tionghua bahasa Melayu.

Alangkah senang dan bahagia kita menyaksikan setiap kali beliau mengadakan Majlis Rumah Terbuka Hari Raya, tetamunya pasti berbilang kaum.

Beliau melayani semua tetamu itu dengan penuh ramah mesra dan kita sering mendengar beliau berbicara dalam bahasa Mandarin dengan kawan-kawan Tionghua.

CERIA HINGGA AKHIR HAYAT

Pak Said ialah seorang tokoh ulung dengan kegigihan yang amat luar biasa. Beliau teguh tidak berganjak dalam tahanan sekalipun

menghadapi pelbagai seksaan fizikal dan mental dan nyawanya terancam.

Beliau juga tidak tunduk kepada penyakit dan sentiasa bersikap ceria, suka berjenaka dan optimis hingga ke akhir hayatnya.

Pak Said pernah diserang angin ahmar pada Julai 1993, namun beliau bangkit semula dengan gigih melawan penyakit sehingga sempat menerbitkan dua jilid memoirnya.

Walaupun sekali lagi diserang angin ahmar pada Disember 2012 yang menyebabkan tangan kanannya lumpuh, namun penyakit itu tidak dapat menundukkan semangat juangnya yang tetap gigih dan beliau bertekad menyiapkan jilid ketiga memoirnya.

Kita juga amat terkesan dengan sifat beliau sebagai seorang tokoh berjiwa besar.

Sebagai pencerminan daripada jiwa besarnya, beliau tidak menyimpan sebarang dendam peribadi terhadap mereka yang merampas kebebasannya.

Hakikat ini jelas terpancar apabila berbicara dengannya dan juga tersurat dalam memoirnya yang pertama, *Meniti Lautan Gelora*.

Apabila mantan Perdana Menteri Singapura, Lee Kuan Yew, yang bertanggungjawab menghumbkannya ke penjara meninggal dunia pada 23 Mac 2015 pada usia 91 tahun, reaksi Said begitu bersahaja.

Menurutnya, isu beliau dengan Lee Kuan Yew bukan soal peribadi; ia mengenai dasar sebuah rejim zalim yang membangun sebuah negara pulau menjadi sebuah negara maju dengan membisukan dan menghapuskan hak asasi pihak lawan serta memecahbelahkan keluarga para pejuang dan menghancurkan jalur hidup mereka.

MEMELUK PERTIWI

Said Zahari berdiri sebaris dengan pejuang-pejuang kebebasan yang hebat, yang telah mengorbankan masa muda mereka yang paling berharga dalam penjara dan mengobarkan semangat juang yang tidak boleh ditundukkan.

Walaupun diri Pak Said dan tokoh-tokoh lain yang senasib dengannya pernah dipenjarakan, jiwa mereka bebas memeluk pertiwi manakala pemikiran mereka menjangkau luas di persada dunia. Mereka telah memahatkan nama yang harum dalam sejarah perjuangan kebebasan dan keadilan manusia sejagat yang kekal abadi.

Pak Said sudah tidak ada lagi dengan kita, tetapi meminjam kata-kata penyair agung A Samad Said, dalam ketiadaan amat terasa kehadirannya.

Dalam kenangan, kita tetap merindui dan menyanjungi imej besar Pak Said!

Semoga Allah mencucuri rahmat ke atas roh beliau, dan meletakkannya dalam kalangan orang-orang yang beriman!

Alfatihah!

Datuk Abdul Rahman Embong adalah seorang profesor emeritus dan pensyarah di Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Pak Said Yang Aku Kenali

HISHAMUDDIN RAIS

PADA AWALNYA, aku membesar dalam sebuah pekan kecil. Keluarga kami tinggal dalam pekan Kuala Klawang — sebuah garrison town. Arwah ibu menjadi guru di Sekolah Umum B Kuala Klawang. Ini sebelum Inggeris berundur dari Tanah Melayu.

Pekan Kuala Klawang pada ketika itu dipagar kawat berduri. Rumah guru teletak di belakang sekolah — sempadan pekan dengan kampung. Pagar tinggi berduri ini betul-betul menjadi pagar rumah kami.

Darurat telah diistiharkan pada tahun 1948. Aku lahir tiga tahun kemudian. Ertinya aku dibesarkan dalam suasana darurat.

Aku tahu apa itu ration card/kad resen. Aku tahu beras, gula, minyak dan tepung dikawal. Aku tahu dan merasai ‘berkurung’. Aku melihat susu tin yang dibeli telah ditebuk dahulu. Aku melihat konvoi hari Selasa dan Khamis datang dari Seremban membawa bahan makanan untuk jualan. Aku melihat soldadu Inggeris berkeliaran di Kuala Klawang. Aku nampak kem askar Gurkha di pekan Kuala Klawang.

Akhirnya aku menjadi generasi yang masuk sekolah pada tahun 1957 — aku generasi peralihan — dari pentabiran Inggeris beralih ke pentabiran di bawah kerajaan United Malays National Organisation.

Tetapi aku tidak tahu apa sebenarnya yang sedang berlaku. Walau pun keluarga aku adalah pembaca setia Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman. Akhbar tulisan jawi ini memang selalu berada dalam rumah kami dan menjadi sumber berita.

Kemudian ketika aku dalam darjah satu, keluarga kami berpindah dari pekan Kuala Klawang ke kampung Ulu Klawang. Dari budak pekan aku menjadi budak kampung. Darurat masih berjalan.

Kampung Batu Serembai — hanya 3 batu juahnya dari pekan. Tetapi dalam tahun 1958 — kampung aku sama seperti kampung-kampung lain di Tanah Melayu — tanpa api letrik dan bekalan air paip.

Di kampung akhbar Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman jarang sampai. Sesekali dalam hutan belakang rumah aku ternampak soldadu Gurkha dan soldadu Afrika membuat rondaan. Ini menjadi berita perbualan kami. Tetapi aku masih tidak tahu apa sebenarnya yang sedang berlaku.

Di hadapan rumah guru ada sebuah kedai kampung - kedai runcit, kedai beli getah dan kedai teh. Dalam kedai ini ada Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman.

Kedai runcit ini melanggan akhbar dari Seremban. Akhbar ini ditumpangkan ke dalam bas dari Seremban. Dalam pukul 8 pagi bas ini akan melintas di kampung aku. Si Pemandu akan membalingkan akhbar ini ke hadapan kedai.

Justeru kedai runcit inilah menjadi tempat orang kampung berkumpul untuk mendapat berita dari Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman.

Ketika ini radio satu alat moden amat jarang dimiliki oleh orang kampung.

Akhirnya keluargaku turut sama melanggan Utusan Melayu dengan 'bas dari Seremban'. Justeru pada hakikatnya aku dibesarkan oleh Utusan Melayu. Pada hari Ahad pula ada Utusan Zaman yang mengenalkan aku dengan berita dalam negara, berita dunia, cerpen, sajak dan wayang.

Tapi aku tidak tahu apa dia Utusan Melayu. Aku tidak faham akan peranan Utusan Melayu. Aku tidak tahu siapa penulis. Tidak tahu siapa pemberita dan siapa pengarang akhbar Utusan Melayu.

Tetiba pada satu hari bas dari Seremban tidak lagi membalingkan akhbar ke luar tingkap. Aku tidak tahu kenapa. Aku teringat hampir

satu minnngu kami tidak ada akhbar. Kemudian kami diberitahu oleh Tuan Empunya Kedai bahawa Utusan telah mogok. Ini pada tahun 1961.

Aku tidak tahu apa mogok. Aku tidak faham apa maknanya mogok. Apa yang tahu ialah Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman tidak dicetak lagi. Maka bas dari Seremban tidak membawa akhbar ini. Pulang dari sekolah biasanya aku membaca Utusan tapi bila Utusan tidak sampai aku tidak membaca apa-apa.

Satu minggu kemudian Utusan datang kembali. Tapi kali ini telah jadi nipis tidak saperti dahulu. Lama kelamaan Utusan Melayu dan Utusan Zaman kembali saperti sedia kali.

Sebenarnya aku tidak tahu apa yang telah berlaku.

Beberapa bulan kemudian tetiba seorang lelaki dan isteri pulang dari Kuala Lumpur. Keluarga mereka tinggal tidak jauh dari rumah kami. Mengikut surah yang aku dengar Sang Suami telah dibuang kerja. Mereka pulang ke kampung untuk memulakan hidupan baru.

Mengikut al-kisah Sang Suami terlibat dalam mogok Utusan. Sang Suami seorang buruh di bidang cetakan. Lalu Sang Isteri berkisah tentang mogok. Aku masih tidak tahu apa itu mogok. Sang Isteri membawa cerita ceriti tentang bagaimana mogok berjalan.

Aku langsung tidak faham tentang cerita mogok ini. Ketika ini aku baru masuk darjah empat.

Tetiba untuk pertama kalinya dalam hidup aku mendengar perkataan — UNION. Sang Isteri berkata mogok dapat sokongan union. Union yang masak nasi. Union beri makanan. Union union union. Ketika itu aku tidak tahu apa itu union.

Tahun 1969 — aku menjadi pelajar MCKK. Pada bulan Mei 1969 — sekali lagi akhbar Utusan Malaysia - yang dulunya Utusan Melayu gagal sampai ke Kuala Kangsar selama satu minggu. Krisis politik besar sedang berlaku di Kuala Lumpur. Aku mula mencari dan membaca. Mencari untuk memahami apa yang telah terjadi.

Fikrah aku mula mendapat pencerahan. Pembacaan aku semakin luas.

Tahun 1971 — aku menjadi anak mahasiswa Universiti Malaya. Selesai sahaja minggu orientasi aku melamar untuk menjadi ahli Kelab Sosialis.

Dari Kelab Sosialis aku mula tahu tentang ISA — tentang tahanan tanpa bicara. Tentang Operation Cold Store. Tentang apa itu Malaysia. Tentang Parti Buruh. Tentang Parti Rakyat. Tentang Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaya. Tentang Parti Komunis. Tentang perjuangan para nasionalis.

Baru aku sedar kenapa ada soldadu Inggeris dan Gurkha di Kuala Klawang. Aku mulai faham apa itu penjajahan dan apa itu neo-koloni. Aku mulai faham tentang ekonomi dan kelas.

Aku mula sedar kenapa Malaya. Aku difahamkan bahawa Singapura itu sebahagian dari Tanah Melayu. Manakala pembentukan Malaysia ini adalah projek British. Sabah dan Sarawak berhak menentukan hak mereka untuk merdeka.

Pada tahun pertama aku di UM — aku berpeluang mendengar forum Boestamam di Dewan Kuliah F Fakulti Sastera Universiti Malaya. Kemudian sesudah forum aku mengekor para ‘senior’ untuk bertandang ke rumah Rustam — anak Boestamam yang duduk ditepi kampus UM. Aku pelajar tahun pertama hanya mendengar apa yang mereka bincangkan.

Fikrah aku makin terbuka dan segar sedia untuk mendapat pencerahan.

Dari Kelab Sosialis aku mendengar nama Said Zahari. Dari kelab Sosialis aku dapat tahu Said Zahari ialah bekas Ketua Pengarang Utusan Melayu. Dari Kelab Sosialis aku dapat tahu pada ketika itu Said Zahari sedang ditahan oleh Harry Lee di Singapura.

Kaum kiri memanggil Lee Kuan Yew — Harry Lee. Ini kerana dia adalah anak didik British. Harry Lee menjadi budak suruhan British yang amat setia.

Kelab Sosialis memberi aku pencerahan tentang apa itu Operation Cold Store yang berlaku pada 2 Februari 1963. Kenapa Harry Lee menangkap lebih 100 orang para nasionalis kiri dan para aktivis Parti Buruh dan Parti Rakyat.

Said Zahari Ketua Pengarang Utusan — pada ketika itu bertugas di Singapura - ditangkap dalam Operation Cold Store.

Dari Kelab Sosialis aku mula berkenalan dengan Usman Awang yang kami panggil Tongkat. Mulanya aku tak faham kenapa Tongkat. Akhirnya baru aku tahu — Tongkat Warrant — adalah salah satu nama pena Usman Awang. Aku juga diberitahu Tongkat adalah kawan baik Said Zahari.

Aku juga dapat tahu bahawa Tongkat pernah menjadi anggota pengarang Utusan Melayu ketika Said Zahari menjadi Ketua Pengarang. Tongkat dan Said Zahari adalah dua sosok yang melancarkan mogok Utusan pada tahun 1961.

Baru aku sedar kenapa bas dari Seremban gagal membawa Utusan ke kampung aku. Baru aku teringat kembali perkataan — union.

Pada tahun 1971 aku mendapat pencerahan tentang mogok Utusan. Baru aku tahu bahawa mogok Utusan dijalankan selama lebih satu bulan untuk menentang parti United Malays National Organisation mengambil alih akhbar suara Melayu ini.

Said Zahari Ketua Pengarang Utusan telah menentang langkah menjadikan Utusan suara dan alat propaganda kerjaan. Said Zahari melancarkan mogok untuk menegakkan hak kebebasan akhbar bersuara.

Hebat sosok yang bernama Said Zahari ini. Tapi masih belum pernah berjumpa kerana dia masih dalam penjara.

Pada bulan Ogos 1973 — Yevgeny Yevtushenko — penyair besar dari Rusia datang melawat Malaysia. Aku tidak tahu siapa sebenarnya sosok Rusia ini. Salah satu acara untuk penyair ini ialah membaca sajak di Universiti Malaya.

Aku masih ingat lagi malam itu di Dewan Fakulti Pendidikan Yevtushenko telah membaca puisi Babi Yar. Aku pun tidak tahu apakah itu puisi Babi Yar ini.

Apa yang aku ingat malam itu ialah aku membawa 10 buah buku Puisi Dari Penjara. Aku cuba menjual buku sajak ini. Ini adalah sajak-sajak Said Zahari yang telah dikumpulkan oleh kawan baiknya

Tongkat. Sajak-sajak ini dalam dua bahasa.

Bagaimana sajak ini sampai ke tangan Tongkat - sampai hari ini aku tidak tahu.

Pada malam itu — aku berjaya menjual beberapa buah buku Puisi Dari Penjara. Dan hingga ke hari ini aku masih ingat lagi siapa pembeli buku yang berharga 3 ringgit itu tetapi memberi aku sekeping 10 ringgit tanpa meminta bakinya.

Jualan buku ini untuk dana keluarga Said Zahari.

Kemudian aku berkelana selama 20 tahun. Di Kota London anak-anak mahasiswa dari Malaysia dan Singapura berkumpul. Saban tahun ada resolusi dari kumpulan pelajar yang menuntut Said Zahari dibebaskan.

Akhir aku mendapat khabar pada 22 Ogos 1979 Said Zahari telah dibebaskan oleh Harry Lee setelah 17 tahun dalam penjara tanpa bicara.

Aku pun pulang dari berkelana. Aku difahamkan Said Zahari kini dikenali sebagai Pak Said sedang menjadi penulis tamu di Universiti Kebangsaan.

Aku masih ingat lagi pada tahun 1996 — aku datang Univeristi Kebangsaan Bangi untuk mendengar kuliah Pak Said. Inilah kali pertama aku melihat wajah Said Zahari. Kita berkenalan. Malah dari sini hubungan aku dengan Pak Said menjadi rapat. Pada hari raya aku dan kawan-kawan bertandang ke rumah Pak Said yang kini telah menjadi penduduk tetap Malaysia. Kami hubungi berhubung bertanya khabar.

Aku masih ingat lagi pada bulan November 1999 Pak Said telah dijemput khas untuk memberi kuliah pertama kepada para aktivis yang akhirnya menjadi penggerak Universiti Bangsar Utama. Untuk nota sejarah kuliah ini diadakan di Port Dickson.

Univeristi Bangsar Utama masih terus aktif. Kelab Bangsar terus berjalan. Stesen radio internet terus berjalan. Kuliah terus berjalan. Setiap Ahad petang terus beramal jariah memberi makanan kepada warga msikin kota.

Pada tahun 2015 — anak-anak muda dari Universiti Bangsar Utama telah dijemput untuk merakamkan lagu-lagu dari puisi Pak Said. Kumpulan The Bangs'art telah mengambil sajak-sajak Pak Said untuk didendangkan. Ini satu penghormatan yang besar kepada anak-anak muda dari Bangsar Utama.

Album ini telah dirakam. Album ini akan menemui kita semua tidak lama lagi. Bait-bait perjuangan dari sajak Pak Said adalah petanda bahawa perjuangan para nasionalis sedang diteruskan.

Buku memoir Pak Siad, buku sejarah tulisan Pak Said, bait-bait sajak Pak Said akan terus menjadi ubur pencerahan.

Anti nasional kata mereka
Nah! Ini buktinya
Benarkah begitu?
Jika:
Menghancur kolonialis
Menentang habisan imperialis
Menghapus penindasan
Melebur kezaliman
... inilah Anti Nasional
Ya! Aku anti nasional
Akhirnya ingatan aku ini akau akhiri dengan sajak Tongkat:

Suaramu dari penjara
Mereka akan berkembang
Menghancur manusia biadab
Dan rakyat nanti
Tidak takut lagi
Salut Said Zahari
Salut untuk mereka yang berani

Kembalinya Pejuang Sakti

(Pak Said Zahari Dalam Kenangan)

MOHD NASIR HASHIM (PSM)

Saudara Pak Said yang ku sanjungi
Pahlawan Nusantara yang ku kagumi
Aku mengenali diri mu... dalam nukilan mu
ketika merantau ke Negara asing
mengutip ilmu menara gading

Saban hari kami tuntutan kebebasan mu
canangkan keperwiraan mu
mendengarkan sajak-sajak keazaman mu

Agar nama mu berkumandang di bibir sejagat
semerbak wangi... bak adunan bunga-bunga
syurgawi yang menghiasi perjuangan suci

Kerana enggan mengorbankan harga diri
Kau disumbat dalam kotak konkrit
yang berbalut duri... bergigi besi
Tahun demi tahun... di kurung
meniti garis yang sepi
dalam pulau bergari benci

Tidak mahu mengaku kalah
Tidak pula berpatah arah
walaupun dunia mu kian berkecai
dalam jutaan serpihan... berbalut rintihan
Jiwa mantap... cekal memperkasakan diri

Maka semangat mu
merangsang keazaman peribadi
Makin menghargai nilai hubungan dialektika
Ideologi berkesinambungan dalam arus perjuangan
dan gantian kepimpinan

Kami turut bergembira
Pabila kau dibebaskan dari cengkaman kuku besi
Namun keparat bangsat tetap menghina
mendustakan kebenaran
dan membenamkan harapan

Kami menemui mu dalam debaran hormat
Senyuman indah menjemput ke kamar
buku-buku pula dipelawa sebagai saksi
Maka dialog rancak mengupas kebenaran
meleraikan hipokresi bergelumang dalam kepalsuan

Ingin membina jambatan baharu
merapatkan lagi... lompang generasi
Menyusun cebisan-cebisan realiti
di persada sejarah songsang... tak terperi

Yang satu ingin mencedok pengalaman
dan keazaman
Yang satu lagi kepingin berita dan cerita
kerana sudah lama dimamah penahanan

Dalam ketenangan malam
Kau menghunus pena sakti mu
lantas melafazkan bahasa keramat
Tabah selongkar sejarah mu
meluahkan tinta-tinta ilham
memadamkan kepahitan
pulau sangkar maut

Maka kau perbetulkan sejarah dusta
mendedahkan wasiat penjajah dan kerabat tempatan
yang meracuni minda dan mengagungkan keangkuhan

Kami berbicara tentang liku-liku perjuangan
tentang pengorbanan memperkasakan rakyat
Menyalakan kembali maruah dan keyakinan diri

Kami tenang bersama mu
Senyuman mu menggamit semangat
anak-anak muda yang dahagakan
ilham dan pedoman
Suara lembut mu mengatur bahasa
Kejernihan air mata meluahkan hikmah kasih sayang
Cuba selindung... meremehkan kekuatan batin diri
namun terserlah jua... ketegasan jiwa

Begitulah pertemuan-pertemuan abadi
Kau lah Sosialis sejati
mengiringi simfoni lagu dialektika
dalam getaran kuasa rakyat

Saudara ku...
Pemergian mu disulam kesedihan bertindih kepiluan
Terkelu sejuta kata dan rasa
Memuncak rintih kerinduan dan harapan

Pemergian mu itu tidak kami restui
Namun takdir sudah berbisik manja

Bergembiralah... saudara ku
Kerana kau bertemu kekasih mu lagi
senyum menanti kepulangan mu itu
berseri menuju ke pangkuan Illahi

Saudara ku... komrad ku
Bila berpeluang... tolehlah... tegurlah kami
agar kami tidak tersasar jauh
dalam pancaroba kehidupan ini

Pergilah dulu komrad ku...
Kami restu dalam titisan
Kan ketemui lagi... nanti
menceritakan betapa murni
perjuangan mu itu
Betapa mulianya pengorbanan
membatalkan sistem kapitalisme
yang berkiblat pada penindasan
dan mempertuhankan keuntungan
Berganding padu... memperkasakan rakyat

Salam perjuangan... saudara kami
Salut hormat... komrad sejati

Like Steel Without Stain

CHIA YONG TAI

I RECEIVED THE news of your passing very soon after you left us. My heart broke. I felt as if blood from every part of my body was gushing into my heart. My limbs felt weak...I could barely stand still. In no mood to prolong the conversation, I muttered a few quick words of thanks to the messenger.

I was alone in the house and I mourned in silence, staring forlornly into the air-well which was exuberant with plant life. My vision was blurred as my eyes had welled up. Inevitably, flashbacks of things associated with you and of the times we were together flooded my mind.

I felt close to you, as if we were kindred. As your health deteriorated, I felt I needed to take care of you. Indeed, you are a principal figure of the family of progressive activists who work continually for a better tomorrow.

Pak Said, you are an icon to those who dare to stand up to Lee Kuan Yew. In the early 60s, you were among those whom Lee feared and imprisoned without trial - some were incarcerated for 15 years, others 17, 19 and even 32 years!

Pak Said, your name will be etched forever as an indictment of Lee Kuan Yew, a cruel and mean politician.

Lee Kuan Yew literally destroyed the lives of his political opponents by throwing them into prison and making them languish there for years on end. Lee was a mean-spirited man.

He prolonged their imprisonment simply because these men refused to concede to his demand of “admitting to the guilt he accused them of and apologising to him”.

Within the confines of Singapore prison, Pak Said, you wrote these poignant words:

A resolve has been chiselled
This cruelty
This evil
Can no longer be allowed
I shall oppose it with all my strength.
(Excerpt from “Resolution” — Poems from Prison)

You remained true to this resolve up till the day you died.

* * * * *

If Chin Siong is like comet in the sky,
Said is like steel without stain on earth.
Said is the epitome of the Malay hero-warrior.
Gentle, friendly and accepting on the outside
Strong, patient and resolute on the “in-Said”.

I mourn the departure of my political mentor, a comrade,
a friend, a kindred soul.

Pak Said Zahari Dalam Kenangan

Kau telah pergi,
Ku tau ke mana.
Ke syurga –
Sepadan bagi orang seperti mu
Yang sepanjang hidup
Berjuang demi rakyat yang tertindas
Demi negara, nusa dan bangsa
Tanpa apa-apa tuntutan balas budi dan jasa.

Berhadapan dengan musuhmu yang berkuasa,
Tak pernah kau tunduk
Tak pernah kau terima jawatan
Begitu jua pangkat yang mereka tawarkan.
Itulah kau, Pak Said,
Kemewahan peribadi bukan matlamat hidupmu.
Justeru sikap ini
Ketabahan jiwa yang lawan-lawanmu tak dapat tembusi
Kau tetap jujur pada pendirian dan perjuanganmu,
sehingga saat kau menarik nafas yang terakhir.

Aduhai Pak Said yang dikasihi,
Mana kau kini?
Dapatkah kau dengar rintihanku?
Juga keluhan beratus-ratus rakan yang lain?
Kami sungguh bersedih atas pemergianmu
Kami tetap merindui wajah tenang penuh inspirasi mu.
Rendah diri, baik hati dan peramah sifatmu
Sopan, mesra dan jujur hatimu
Cerdik, cergas dan tajam akalmu.

Di sanubarimu...

Terpahat kepercayaan dan tekad yang gagah perkasa,
Musuh-musuhmu di Singapura tak bisa faham mengapa,
Penyiksaan penjara belasan tahun
Kau tak menyerah, kau tak mengalah;
Kesengsaraan dialami isteri dan keluarga tanpa suami dan bapa
Kau tak putus asa.
Ya, kerana kau tahu misi hidupmu
Berjuang menghapuskan kolonialisme dan imperialisme
Menentang segala penindasan dan ketidakadilan
Membentuk satu masyarakat yang saksama dan makmur.
Menegakkan kebenaran bahawa waktunya akan tiba
Kaum tertindas akan bangkit bersuara
Tak kira bangsa dan agama,
Menghalau kaum menindas bersama-sama sistem zalim dan tidak
adil.

Andainya Chin Siong bintang di langit
Maka Said besi waja di bumi
Yang tak tercemar.

Kau disanjung para aktivis semua kaum,
Pemimpin jiwa mereka semua.
Kau juga kebanggaan bangsamu
Membukti kepada semua rasis lawanmu
Keramahan dan sopan santun Melayu itu bukan satu kelemahan.

Kau pergi begitu pantas
Ku tak sempat mengucapkan selamat tinggal.
Kau memang bertuah Pak Said,
Kembali ke sisi Allah dengan tenang.

Ku yakin di sana,
Seperti di Penjara Changi dahulu,
Kau tidak keseorangan.
Di dalam,
Ramai rakan seperjuangan yang sezaman bersamamu,
Di luar,
Beribu-ribu lagi, tua dan muda, bersatu hati denganmu.

Masa kita berpisah
Adalah masa kau bertemu dengan Kak Sal.
Kau tak ada pada saat dia paling memerlukan kau
Dia tak ada pada saat kau paling memerlukannya.

...

Sekarang
Kedua-dua kekasih boleh bersama-sama hingga di akhirat.
Bersyukurlah kita semua.

Pak Said,
Masa untuk kau bersemadi
Masa bagi orang-orang muda mengibarkan bendera
perjuangan mu
yang belum selesai

Rehatlah Said Zahari
Kau sentiasa dalam kenangan.
Salut Said Zahari
Salut untuk mereka yang berani!

Chia Yong Tai
Pulau Pinang
8 Mei 2016

Tribute to Pak Said Zahari — Resolute on the In-Said

You have left.
You must be in Paradise...
As that is only befitting of mortals like you.
You laid no claim to award or reward
But spent your entire life
Ceaselessly fighting for the oppressed,
For the people, for the nation and for our motherland.

Face-to-face with those in power,
You did not bow, you did not flinch.
You turned down their offer of post and position
For personal wealth and comfort were not your life's goals.
Your conviction endowed you with an inner strength no one
 could break.
You remained faithful to your aspirations
Till you drew your last breath.
That was you, Pak Said.

Oh, my dear and beloved Pak Said,
Can you feel my grieving,
And the sorrow of hundreds of your friends?
How sad we are over your passing.
We miss your serene countenance that inspires
That smiling, kind and friendly face,
That courteous, humble and honest speech,
That active, clever and sharp mind.

In your heart was etched a powerful love and resolution,
That was rock solid and invincible.
Thus, the powers-that-be in Singapore could not fathom
How torture of 17 years of imprisonment
Could not break a man like you.

Your wife was bereft of her husband
Your children bereft of their father.
Yet you never surrendered in despair.

You knew your life's mission:
To bring an end to colonialism and imperialism,
To oppose all oppression and injustice and
Build a society that is just and prosperous.
You upheld the truth that there will be a time
When all the oppressed,
Regardless of race or religion,
Will arise and dispel the oppressors along with their cruel,
unjust system.

If Chin Siong is like a comet in the sky
Then Said is like steel on earth
Without stain.

You were an inspiring leader
Held in high esteem by activists of all ethnic groups.
Your example demonstrated that Malays are gentle, but not
weak.
You are the Malay hero-warrior.

You left in such haste —
I had no time to say adieu.
You are blessed, Pak Said,
To return to Allah's fold without the suffering of illness.

Over there, I am sure,
You are not alone.
Just as when you were in Changi Prison!
Inside there
Many of your former comrades will be with you

Outside here

Thousands, both young and old, are of one heart with you.

The time you left us

Is the time you will meet Kak Sal.

You were not with her at the moment she needed you most

She was not with you at the moment you needed her most

Now both you lovers will be together till the end of time.

Thank God for that.

The time has come for you to rest, Pak Said

The time has come for our young to hoist the flag of the
unfinished struggle

Rest in peace, Said Zahari

You will be forever in our hearts.

Salute to Said Zahari!

Salute to the courageous one!

Chia Yong Tai

Pulau Pinang

8 May 2016

一代豪情壮士，千古良师益友

(忆马来前锋报前总编辑、进步诗人赛. 扎哈利)

丹斯里拿督林源德、拿督林源明

2016年4月12日，与友人旅游冰岛、挪威时，惊闻赛. 扎哈利已回归真主怀抱。噩耗传来，同游中有识赛□查哈利者无不感慨万千，唏嘘伟人的星陨日落，顿时冰岛本已寒冷的天气，对我们来说就更加刺骨寒心了。而我们的脑海也掀起了历历在目对赛. 扎哈利的种种回忆。我们曾于1963年至1966年间在樟宜监狱（E Hall）与他共同生活一段时间，对于他的离去颇有感触。

赛. 扎哈利是一名社会主义知识分子、诗人，曾任《马来前锋报》总编辑、《人民报》编辑、人民党主席等职，他也曾和友人设立NTB翻译服务社。

李光耀政府于1963年2月2日展开“冷藏行动”，逮捕百多名左翼人士、职工会领袖，以便打击反对新马合并、社阵、人民党的政治势力。赛□查哈利就在这次行动中未经法庭开审，即被扣上违反“公共治安法令”、马共分子、亲共、外国特务等罪名而被捕入樟宜监狱。同时期被扣留的南大生包括戴渊、陈国防等人。

1963年大选过后的9月26日，政府展开第二次大逮捕，社阵落选候选人、工会重要领袖、南大校友与南大生被拘捕，史称“926事件”。我（林源德）、王发祥等部分扣留者在这次大逮捕中被送到中央警局，经历14天单独严厉的审问后，分别被送去樟宜E座监狱（E Hall）。E座监狱有A、B、C（Block）三栋监房，我当时与林福寿医生、赛. 扎哈利等人被分配到B Block。林源明（我的弟弟）不久也被逮捕进来与我同住。同时被扣留的其他南大校友还有林建生、

林世昌、钟文彬、谢和成、周增禧、云昌锭等，分别关在不同的监房。E Hall这时关押超过百人，有政治人物、工会领导、专业人士、南大校友与学生。我们成立生活管理委员会，由赛.扎哈利、林福寿医生、王发祥及其他工会领导；对外与狱长交涉应得的供应，对内则管理膳食、成立学习班、由林福寿医生负责医药、辅导等事务。大家集体分工合作，同舟共济，互相扶持，以维持正常的生活规律。我们也利用E Hall内的小园地种植蔬菜与花卉，提供给那些每周约见家属（Jumpa）的狱友，让他们把鲜花送给亲人，他们也把家属提供的食物拿出来跟大家分享共食。

我们在狱中开设华语班、马来文班与英语班。赛.扎哈利及其他巫裔扣留者负责教导马来文。徐金聪、王发祥是赛□查哈利的华语老师，他们两人被释放后，我（林源德）成为他第三位华语老师，而赛.扎哈利也教导我马来语。在这种情况下，我们两人建立了永固的友谊。我随后在牢中获教育部马来语第三级（高级）证书，也是得益自赛□查哈利的教导。1965年8月9日，新加坡脱离大马，所有大马籍狱友被遣返大马。我是较早前单独被遣送到霹雳Batu Gajah的扣留营，以后彼此就失去联系了。

1979年，赛.扎哈利获释，旋即流放乌敏岛一年。从入狱到完全释放，前后共17年。他回到大马后，我与林源明经常去探访他，即使后来他不便于行，我们还是推着他坐轮椅去吃饭叙旧。不久前还打算去探访他，不料他已撒手骤逝。

赛.扎哈利性格刚正，择善而固，意志坚定。当初东姑.阿都拉曼与李光耀都很欣赏他，并有意延揽他，但是他仍坚守知识分子与媒体人的独立人格与信念，不愿靠拢与向政治势力低头，所以当获选为人民党主席就被对付。赛.扎哈利是个理想主义者，拒绝种族主义，深受报界与各族社会推崇，值得后人看齐。

赛.扎哈利是一位真君子，他无畏强权，坚持正义。他肯定了新马民主发展史的曾经艰辛，也给南洋大学的存在一个正确价值的定位。

赛.扎哈利同志的思想 与人格典范

李万千

深受国内外左翼及友好人士敬重的赛.扎哈利（1928-2016）同志，已经在2016年4月12日和大家永别了，享年88岁。因此，《人民历史中心》（PSR）和新加坡《8号功能》（F8）已经订于6月初，在新马两地同时出版一本纪念册子，收录以华、巫、英三种语文撰写的文章。希望通过缅怀和纪念，以达到表扬赛同志在新马左翼运动中的杰出贡献与典范精神，并激励年轻的一代，延续新马人民未竟的事业。

我很乐意地接受了，为这本小册子撰写一篇中文稿件的邀约。为此，我重读了赛同志政治回忆录三部曲中的第一部：《人间正道》与第二部：《万千梦魇》，同时也阅读了他最新出版的第三部回忆录：《Suara Bicara : Fragmen Memoir Said Zahari》^{（注一）}，得益不浅。

对赛同志的回忆录，亚都拉曼恩蓬教授给予极高的评价，把它喻为一座“知识丰碑”，“（体现了）一位有坚强原则，不向一切困难低头的努山达拉族人的杰出与伟大的精神。回忆录所揭示的斗争事迹，是在一个特殊的历史时代里，一位特殊领袖坚定意志的结晶。它作为史料被记录下来，成为所有致力于实现自由、公正与人道者，永不磨灭的文献。”^{（注二）}

赛同志是爪哇裔马来人。父亲扎哈利在上世纪20年代到新加坡来，由于是一名有固定薪水的司机，生活还不错。后因腹部患疾突然逝世，从此改变了一家人的命运。年方27

岁的母亲阿美娜，被迫负起养育5名子女的重担。当赛入狱后，也是27岁的妻子莎拉玛同样必须负起养育4名子女的重担。两个伟大的妇女——母亲和妻子，都吃尽苦头。母亲等不到孩子出狱，就含恨离开了人间；而妻子最终也因心脏病爆发，不治身亡，比丈夫早走12年。

赛同志和其他数以千计、万计不经审讯政治拘留者一样，都付出了无法估计的惨重牺牲和代价。然而，他经受住一切严峻的考验，为人民事业奋斗一生，树立了可贵的思想与人格的典范。

首先，被赛以“顾问”相待的亲密战友 MK 拉惹古玛医生（1932-2008）早在上世纪70年代就对他进行了以下的概括：“赛查哈利——公民及爱国者，报人，民族主义者，社会主义者，最后成为革命者。谁结识到他是幸运的，谁小看他就必须自我检讨，而与他的斗争相对抗的，在目睹了斗争如何将普通的人改变为坚不可摧的力量时，肯定会害怕的发抖！”（注三）

赛作为反帝反殖，争取国家独立和人民主权的公民与爱国者，是众所周知的，相信只有李光耀政权才会加以质疑和否定；而作为维护新闻自由的报人，也已经由于领导著名的《马来先锋报》罢工事件，及撰写与出版回忆录三部曲这座“知识丰碑”而载入史册。

在1968年当爱妻患上癌症时，因为担心孩子今后没有人照顾，赛竟然要求朋友们设法安排，把孩子送去中国的寄宿学校接受教育，这说明当时他是十分认同中国的社会主义制度。说到最后成为革命者，应该是较为广义的说法，由于受到中国文化大革命思潮的影响，主要体现在对议会主义的批判和对群众斗争的认同；以及反对改良主义，主张政治制度的整体改变等。无论如何，民族主义始终还是赛最为一贯的主要思想。

其次，赛能够坚持坐牢17年而屹立不倒，关键在于他敢于藐视敌人想迫使他屈服，否则就让他“烂在牢里”的沮

咒；此外，四度的单独监禁（有时长达数月之久）、高职的诱惑、甚至死亡的恐吓，都动摇不了他。由于赛和谢泰宝、何标、林福寿、傅树介等一批战友，发挥了敢于斗争，不怕牺牲的精神，才可能最终击败政敌的疯狂进攻，保住了政治拘留者的整体尊严！

相对而言，“红萝卜”有时比“大棒子”更难应付。根据赛的揭露，和赛有过关系的，其中就有四人，或由于背叛左翼，如蒂凡那；或曾经是李光耀的特务，如纳丹；或和他一样曾经是报人，如前《马来前锋报》总编辑尤棱夫伊萨，或《国际联合报》前记者黄金辉，由于愿意臣服及听命于李光耀，结果都在不同时期当上了新加坡共和国的所谓总统！

赛之所以令人佩服，就在于他并不稀罕这些以出卖原则和尊严换来的高官肥缺，不论面对“大棒子”还是“红萝卜”，赛都能够保持住“我自岿然不动”的境界！

有人询问赛，他之所以能够长期坐牢，及在荆棘满途的环境下坚持斗争的秘诀到底是什么？赛的答复是：“我可以把它归纳为一个词——希望。我对人道，对斗争的理想，对各族的朋友，对家人，对祖国新加坡和马来西亚，都紧握一把希望，对世界与未来的希望。希望即使被禁锢了，即使失落了，即使被黑云遮住了，也不会失去它的光辉。”^{（注四）}这种放眼世界与未来的远大视野，及永远沐浴在希望的光辉里的乐观主义精神，是值得加以发扬的！

第三，赛做到了希腊哲学家亚里斯多德的著名命题：“吾爱吾师，吾更爱真理”。最显著的例子，就是他与沙末伊斯迈（1924-2008）的关系。沙末无疑是赛“最为仰慕的导师”^{（注五）}，在赛的心目中，沙末是“《马来前锋报》反殖马来民族主义喉舌的象征和荣誉”^{（注六）}，甚至是“马来报界和政界的典范”！^{（注七）}

但由于在1957年，沙末在东姑全面镇压与收编《马来前锋报》之前，对本身被流放印尼的事件一直保持“秘密”，也不愿抗争；在《马来前锋报》罢工被镇压的过程中，他和

东姑之间的关系也有可疑之处；到1958年从耶加达回到吉隆坡之后，他就辞去在《马来前锋报》的职位，加入《海峡时报》集团，主持《每日新闻》的业务。用赛的话就是：“他是在替英国人支持的敌人报纸工作啊！”^{（注八）}发展到这个地步，赛只能无奈地反问聪明的读者：沙末伊斯迈，吾师乎？^{（注九）}

此外，赛同志不怕权威的批判精神；善于联系各地新旧左翼力量，营造各族亲善交往与团结的氛围；克服年老病痛等生理局限，坚持完成回忆录三部曲的艰巨任务等，都具有典范的意义。由于篇幅所限，就不再展开讨论了。

注释

注一：三部曲的第一部和第二部都有巫、华、英三种版本，第三部目前只有马来文版本。

注二：引自《Suara Bicara》页173。Abdul Rahman Embong 是赛查哈利在国民大学任客座作家时的指导教授。

注三：引自《Suara Bicara》页144，请参阅页141-144，Dr MK Rajakumar 于 1973年撰写的《Said Zahari Manusia Istimewa》，此文是为纪念赛坐牢10周年而出版的赛的《囚歌》诗集的序文。

注四：引自《Suara Bicara》页4，请参阅赛撰写的《前言：我为何要写〈紧握一把希望〉》页3-6。

注五：引自《人间正道》页90。

注六：引自《人间正道》页55。

注七：引自《人间正道》页90。

注八：引自《人间正道》页88-89。

注九：参阅《人间正道》第15章标题，页90。

赛. 扎哈利同志和我们永别了

王瑞荣

我带着沉痛的心情悼念新加坡人民的好儿女、坚定的反殖斗士、争取祖国独立、自由、民主和平等的伟大战士赛. 扎哈利同志逝世！

他生前是新加坡人民党Partai Rakyat Singapura 主席；他也是《马来前锋报》总编辑。

李光耀利用英国殖民主义者和当时的马来亚总理东姑. 阿杜拉曼于1963年2月2日的冷藏行动逮捕了赛和其他100多名人士，他们都反对李光耀提出的条件使新加坡加入马来西亚。

当新加坡退出马来西亚后，李光耀并没有释放赛和其他100多反殖爱国志士。李光耀逮捕并监禁他们的理由是因为他们反对新加坡加入马来西亚。但是在新加坡退出马来西亚后，李光耀还继续监禁他们。

他被监禁了17年后获得释放，释放后长期和儿女居住在马来西亚。

我一直想找机会和前人民党的同志一起探望我们党的主席。但是由于大家时间与工作等因素都无法成行。

我终于在2016年4月1日和友人到他在马来西亚吉隆坡蒲种安南的住家与他见面。

事实上，我从来就没有见过赛老。因为在受委任人民党主席时我还是一个小男孩，啥都不懂。在他当上党主席不过

几天，就在1963年2月2日的冷藏行动下被行动党非法逮捕，并在不经审讯的情况下长期监禁17年。

我和赛老的家人还算有一点缘分。那是因为当时赛老的小女儿琳达（Linda）就在咱们人民党芽笼东支部上幼儿班，每天她的姐姐都会按时带她上下学。在要到樟宜监狱探访赛老时，她又是会缺课。她是赛老的宝贝女儿，因为她是在赛老被单独关在当时的中央警署时出世的。赛老还为此写了一首著名的诗歌。

赛老在监狱里坚持了17年。这是一场意志和斗志与邪恶魔鬼之间的斗争。同样的，赛老的妻子和孩子，为了支援赛老在狱中的斗争，他们历经了各种生活煎熬！

在赛老坐牢期间，全家的生活担子都落在妻子的肩上！她在面对行动党法西斯政权威迫利诱时，仍然以在芽笼士乃摆卖马来人的传统椰浆饭来支撑这个家。一旦当天下雨，他们一家就没有收入。当天如果适逢探访赛老的日子，他们也无法开档口。他们母女俩回来都会与老师们分享与赛老见面的天伦之乐。尤其是琳达，她会在爸爸的跟前演唱幼儿班老师教她中国文革时期的歌曲和舞蹈。

我对赛老及其家人一直以来就致以崇高的敬意。

今年4月2日，适逢老前辈傅树介医生的新书：《生活在欺瞒的年代》在马来西亚吉隆坡举行发布会。我约了一位同志一齐前往出席。

赛老的家距离吉隆坡市约200公里。行车时间约2小时。我们在抵达赛老的家时，她的女儿出来迎接我们。这是一套2室一厅带卫生间的平价居民住宅，是马来西亚政府专门提供给低收入家庭公民的住房。赛老的女儿是马来西亚公民，赛老也因此得与自己的女儿住在一块儿。

我们进入屋内，她的女儿告诉我们，赛老在房间躺着。她说，现在赛老已经无法坐在轮椅上了。他的一切起居生活都得有人照顾。

我们进入房间见到赛老都一一向他老人家致以亲切的问候。我们倾听赛老谈起往事。他也一一问起当年与他在战壕里战友们的近况，特别是那些和他一块儿被监禁的前南大生的近况。

同行的陈国防大哥都一一回答了他的询问。

我也告诉他有关一些从沙特的南方商业港口吉打市到圣城麦加的近况。我告诉他，中国胡锦涛主席与沙特国王签署一项建造一条吉打链接麦加圣城的专用铁路。他听了非常高兴。

我们告诉他，我们此行的另一个目的是要出席傅树介医生在4月2日的新书发布会。

他听完后，向我们表示希望也能够出席。

赛老是傅树介医生的亲密战友。他提出要求出席这个盛会是可以理解的。他怀念着自己的老战友，同时要为自己的老战友出版历史巨作表示支持。但是基于健康理由，我们请赛老安心在家休息。我答应把会场现况制成视频给他老人家。

我给了他一张已经制成的傅树介医生在新加坡举行的新书发布会视频，并答应把今年农历初三新加坡的老朋友们春节聚餐视频让朋友转交给他。

赛老讲一口流利华语。他的华语是在17年的牢狱生涯里向同牢房的南大学生学习的。

我们见到赛老时，他已经无法坐在轮椅上了。尽管他自己已经卧病床上，但是，他还是关心着祖国新加坡人民争取自由、民主与平等的斗争。

我在与他聊天时看到了老人家的革命乐观主义精神，让我更加坚定不移地继续坚持自己的信念！

赛老同志，您的战友，祖国和人民永远不会忘记您！

安息吧，赛.扎哈里同志！

A giant in our political struggle for independence

DR POH SOO KAI

SAID ZAHARI WAS my comrade in Changi in our long years of imprisonment without trial when we were both arrested under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance on 2 February 1963. The reason for the arrest, code-named Operation Coldstore, was the British wanted to preserve the efficiency of the military base in Singapore. The base was essential to British imperialist policy of interfering in the internal affairs of countries in this region, for example, Indonesia and China. Said was in prison until November 1978 when he was transferred to Pulau Ubin, and finally released on 22 August 1979.

Before he became well-known as one of Singapore's longest-serving political prisoners, Said had already gained fame as the editor of *Utusan Melayu* who stood up against the attempt of the UMNO-led Tunku Abdul Rahman government to end the editorial independence of the respected paper.

It was in the same spirit of refusing to be intimidated by political authorities and refusing to tell untruths to the public even when it was his career or freedom that was at stake that sustained him through the most difficult stretch of his life.

Said steadfastly refused to sign any security statements, the only way that a political prisoner could gain release.

As a journalist Said was head and shoulders above his

peers at *Utusan Melayu*. He had not only a superb memory that allowed him to recall matters clearly; he also had an acutely analytical mind and a grasp of the big picture. He could type out a news story in no time, working with sketchy notes.

However, what would have been his biggest scoop did not make it to the newspapers.

Said covered the Baling talks of December 1955 between the chief minister of the Federation Tunku Abdul Rahman; the head of the MCA Tan Cheng Lock; and Singapore's chief minister David Marshall, and leaders of the Communist Party of Malaya for an end to the jungle war. The talks failed despite much hope and anticipation generated that the Emergency would be over.

Said had the sharpness of mind to ask the Tunku at Baling if he was disappointed with the outcome. The expansive Tunku replied as he was wont to: that he had intended the Talks to fail.

This would have been headline news, but Said was told by the UMNO leaders that he would not be allowed to report it.

The Baling talks was a public relations exercise to let the people of Malaya think that the Tunku had tried his best to end the Emergency, while at the same time convince the British that they could trust that he was anti-communist.

I was introduced to Said by *Utusan's* then assistant editor Samad Ismail. Said was posted to Kuala Lumpur in 1954, and on one occasion I called upon him at his home in Petaling Jaya with Chin Siong and Rajakumar.

This superficial acquaintance become a bond of close friendship and respect, when he came to Singapore to collect funds for the *Utusan* strike. He would drive down with Rajakumar before he was banned from entry to Malaya. Their discussions, it turned out, were taped by magnetic devices attached to his Peugeot car.

He found out only during interrogation when he was in prison. However, there was nothing incriminating in the tapes.

Said told me of an episode where the PAP tried to win him over. It took place during the *Utusan Melayu* strike of 21 July to 21 October 1961 against the loss of editorial control by the paper of which Said was then the editor, and which was supported by the non-editorial staff of the paper as well.

The PAP had expelled its left wing following its loss of Anson in the by-election on 15 July.

Devan Nair, who led the PAP-backed unions telephoned Said to offer his support. But Said was staunch. He replied that he would welcome Devan's show of support by his coming to the picket lines at the Singapore office of *Utusan*, where Said was. Needless to say, Devan was no supporter of the independence of the press, and did not turn up.

That Said was a well-respected figure whom the PAP treated seriously as a potential threat to its Malay ground was clear. Said was arrested a few hours after he was elected as president of Partai Rakyat Singapura, and would doubtlessly have stood in the 1963 election, which in the event was called 7 months after we were arrested in Operation Coldstore.

Our understanding and appreciation of each other grew when he was transferred to Moon Crescent Camp. We were determined not to be brow beaten nor compromised. We were living together for almost four years, before we were separated.

Towards the end of 1973, I found myself with Said again, this time in a room on the top floor of Special Branch headquarters at Robinson Road, which was a holding centre for political prisoners who were soon to be released. We were both informed that we would be released. We were there for three months. In fact, the Deputy Director of ISD "Shanghai

Wang”, which was what we called Wang Hsu Chi, had told Said that on his release, he should not try to be politically active among the Malay groups, as the PAP already had all of them covered.

However, Said was not let out, whereas I was, on 13 December 1973. It was a very foul blow to him. Shanghai Wang told Said that this was because he had smuggled out his poems, which were published. Said’s poems were really no secret by then, and Special Branch would certainly have been aware that they were being published when they brought Said to Robinson Road.

To me, it is more likely that Lee Kuan Yew changed his mind about releasing Said when he realised how much of a following Said had. Said had told his wife that he was going to be released, and she had informed his friends. Usman Awang, Syed Husin Ali and another Malay person who later became a PAP member of parliament got together to prepare a welcome party to greet him.

Said definitely had a following, and was capable of expanding it. This political threat to the PAP is the reason for Said’s prolonged imprisonment. He was a staunch freedom fighter and stood steadfastly for human rights and removal of the PPSO.

As a condition for release in 1979, Said had to take a job offered by *The Straits Times*. He refused. In the end, he agreed to work as editor for the *Asia Research Bulletin*, a joint venture between Dow Jones and Times Organisation.

Former detainees tried their very best to lighten the economic burden borne by his family — it was a daunting job.

Said Zahari won the great respect and admiration of every one of his former comrades who had gone through imprisonment without trial.

He stood out as a giant not only within the Malay community, but also in the political struggle for independence and justice in Singapore and Malaya.

A Literary and Political Giant

G RAMAN

2ND FEBRUARY 1963 is a day of shame for Singapore. That was the day when the police and the security underlings of the Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) government detained 132 political activists of the left in Singapore. They comprised doctors, journalists, trade unionists, school teachers, grassroots and student leaders. Among them was Said Zahari, editor of the *Utusan Melayu*, the national daily read in Singapore and Malaya and President of Partai Rakyat Singapura. They were the cream of the political left in Singapore. The PAP had codenamed this fell swoop of the progressives as “Operation Cold Store.”

They were held under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance (PPSO) where a detainee can be held in prison without trial indefinitely and without recourse to the courts. The allegation against those held was that they were communists, pro-communists or members of the Communist United Front (CUF). Said was accused of being a member of the CUF.

But were there communists or pro-communists in Singapore at the time of Operation Cold Store? Was there a CUF? The answer to these questions have been provided by the British High Commissioner, Lord Selkirk, at that time. In a secret memo to Duncan Sandys, Secretary of State for the Colonies on 8th September 1962 he said:

“The fact is that no evidence at present that communists or communist sympathisers in Singapore

intend to resort to illegal activities or violent action. So long as this remains the case, I do not see how the examination of individual cases can produce justification on security grounds for arbitrary arrest, nor is there a political case for arrests...”

(Cited in an article titled “Operation Coldstore: A Key Event in the Creation of Modern Singapore” by Geoff Wade in “The 1963 Operation Coldstore — Commemorating 50 Years,” edited by Poh Soo Kai, Tan Kok Fang and Hong Lysa)

It must be remembered that this note was sent on 8th September 1962 before Operation Cold Store and before merger and Singapore’s independence in 1963. The quote is from the most authoritative person responsible for Singapore’s security at that time. Selkirk represented the British Government and he was reporting on the internal security of Singapore. Despite his advice, why did the arrests take place?

We look to the same authoritative source for the answer:

“He (LKY) seemed to accept that this (the detention of Lim Chin Siong) was a desirable end and in fact, claimed that he himself had suggested this to S.B. (Special Branch) a year ago (i.e. early 1960 not long after Lim’s release) that the best way to deal with Lim was a direct attack, but that S.B. had persuaded him to adopt the alternative policy of detention of prominent trade unionists nearest to Lim.”

(Despatch dated 29th April 1961 from Selkirk to the British Government cited in “Operation Coldstore” mentioned above, page 172).

That was the diabolism that LKY practised during his entire political career, stabbing his erstwhile comrades in the back as he did with Lim Chin Siong, betraying the trust of Devan Nair who he elevated to the highest office in the land

and subsequently accusing him of alcohol addiction when he was certified not to be an addict by Alcoholics Anonymous of the U.S.A., the report of which was not published, and other acts of treachery just too many to recite.

Said was a victim of the vicious fairy tale that LKY created before and after the arrests under Operation Coldstore. He wanted Said implicated in something more than being a member of the CUF. Material in the archives released by the British Government show the desperation of LKY. Writing in "Lim Chin Siong and the 'Singapore Story'" T. N. Harper, a Cambridge historian, says:

"One week after the arrests, Lee Kuan Yew was impatient that new material be prepared for publication. He particularly hoped for more evidence of Indonesian involvement, especially from Said Zahari. However, Selkirk told London, 'I understand that as yet interrogation has yielded little or no new material' and 'so far he has said nothing of importance'" (citing Selkirk's memo to Sandys of 13th February 1963).

Was Said's detention therefore justifiable? For that matter were the detentions of the 132 in any way justifiable?

With the disclosure of the revealing archival materials from the British, the answer is a resounding "NO". Despite these self-evident facts the PAP government sticks to its shameful distortion of history.

The PAP Government banned a film by Singapore's Martyn See on Said's detention titled "Zahari's 17 years." The reason for the ban was that it "gives a distorted and misleading portrayal of Said's arrest and detention under the ISA." The Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts went on unashamedly to argue that it was an attempt by Said "to exculpate himself for his past involvement in Communist

United Front activities against the interests of Singapore"! In light of documents now made public, courtesy of the British Government, this pathetic defence is reprehensible. The day must come when the truthful narrative of why the ISA was invoked by the PAP Government to detain innocent men and women indefinitely should be told. Otherwise the suffering of so many detainees and their families under the yoke of one man, LKY, will remain unremedied — a dark blot in the annals of Singapore's history.

Said was a giant and remains so in Singapore history. He was a prized choice to be recruited by any political party. LKY tried to have him on his side. But Said opted to be on Lim Chin Siong's side.

Said was editor of *Utusan Melayu*, the leading Malay newspaper in Singapore and Malaya. Yusof Ishak who was on the Board of Directors of the *Utusan* as well as its Managing Editor threw in his towel when UMNO pressurised him to be more pro-UMNO in the paper's reportage. When UMNO was determined to take over the newspapers, Said led a 93-day strike in Kuala Lumpur as well as Singapore. He was a hero. Recalling his days in *Utusan Melayu* where he spent most of his adult working life he is quoted in an article in the *Aliran* that

"When the spirit of struggle against imperialism was so high, to work for *Utusan Melayu* at that time was to work for my people and my country."

Said stood true to his convictions. He did not stoop to accept the carrot that was dangled before him by LKY. In LKY's eyes Said would have been a symbol of a multi-racial Singapore, an intellectual of his own right. But Said rejected such offers unlike some others who fell to the temptation. They stride on our political stage compromising their own ideals with hollow high office.

When temptations failed to sway Said, the government resorted to threats. Said recounts an incident that took place in prison. Ahmad Khan, the then Deputy Director of the Special Branch, told Said when he interrogated him,

“Encik Said, we are all Muslims, as brothers in Islam, we should speak frankly during this holy month of Ramadan.”

When Said did not pick up the cue to co-operate with the government, Khan told him,

“You can even get killed you know? We can transfer you from this place of detention to another place in the middle of the night. In the street, we could push you from behind to make it appear as if you were trying to escape.”

Said stood firm not flinching for a moment. That was the heroism of Said. His two autobiographical publications, *Dark Clouds at Dawn* and *The Long Nightmare* bear out his heroism and his idealism. The books are very moving and an inspiration to those who fight for liberty and freedom. One commentator paid him this homage:

“His unebbing will is a reminder to us that the causes he championed and suffered for, whether against the Internal Security Act (ISA) or the right to freedom of the press, are as relevant now as they were 50 years ago. His voice still rings clear and defiant: *Perjuangan belum selesai!* (the struggle is not over).”

Muhammad Fadli bin Mohammed Fawzi in “The 1963 Operation Coldstore in Singapore” page 241.

We salute you Said!

Remembering Said Zahari

TAN KOK FANG

THE NEWS OF Said's passing came to me when I was at a conference in Xiamen. A friend who had only recently accompanied me to Kuala Lumpur to visit Said had informed me. I was deeply saddened but not entirely shocked, because in my recent visit to him, Said looked frail and emaciated. He had to lie down so as to get some relief from the pain on his lower back. He was unable to sit in a wheelchair.

Before that visit, friends had warned me that Said's memory had been slipping away and that he might not recognize me. So when I entered his room that day, I was curious enough to want to put that to the test. After the usual greetings which we always conduct in Malay, Mandarin and English in that order of precedence, I popped the question: Said, maseh kenalkan saya?(do you still recognize me). It only took him a few seconds to blurt out the words: Aiyah, Kok Fang lah! This was followed triumphantly with a slightly mischievous smile.

But, I came away from that visit feeling that much as we would like to see and hope for a turn for the better in Said's condition, there are things that exist outside of the usual realm of our subjective wish and control. I remember making calls to friends telling about my visit and urging them to quickly follow in my footsteps to pay Said a visit as fast as they could, because in my most reluctant judgment, he was probably running on his last lap.

That day, I told Said that I was writing a book and I wanted him to read it to give me his comments. He asked me when it would be ready. I said before the end of this year. Without further thought, he said: "Please be quick". As I think back now, I start to realize that those simple words uttered in the course of a plain chat had without doubt also carried a signal that he probably knew the inevitable was near. Now, as I mulled on that brief meeting, I am swarmed with regrets. I should have stayed longer. I should have engaged Said more in reminiscing about the "good old days" in Changi when we fought the demons, inner and outer, in all sorts of ways and rejoice at our fighting spirit steeled and friendship deepened. I should have tried, mindful that it must be done in a most calm, subtle and sincere and respectful manner, what more he wanted accomplished.

I came to know Said on the occasion of Operation Cold Store in 1963, when we were thrown into prison together with about a hundred and thirty patriots and left wing activists by the PAP government. We have been incarcerated in "E" Hall and about a year later, in "E" Dormitory, also in the vast Changi Prison compound. With the exception of some periods of differing lengths when either of us was transferred away to the Central Police Station for solitary confinement and for intensive interrogation or to Mount Rosie in preparation for our release, we met literally every day in the day. I do not have to say that under such circumstances, you get to know one another pretty well. The fact that it was an unwelcome interlude forced upon us for anywhere from four and a half years, in my case, and seventeen long years in Said's meant that friendship can be forged and tempered as hard as steel.

Said had been a journalist and a remarkable one by most standards across the globe. He held the post of Editor-in-Chief

of *Utusan Malayu*, the influential Malay national paper in Malaya, including Singapore before even reaching the age of thirty. What an achievement! His boss and predecessor then was Yusof Ishak, who later was to become the Yang de Pertuan Negara and first President of the Republic of Singapore. But Said had not crowed about this during much of the time we became friends. However I had knowledge about this long ago. I have always maintained that the young Said must have been really outstanding and brilliant to have caught the eye of Yusof Ishak to win the appointment as his successor in the paper.

In Changi, there had been mood swings in one kind or another in most of us in response to political developments and changes outside. Also, shifts in the well-being of our families and friends, etc. affected our mental state in more ways than one. However, we tried to keep them within manageable proportions. Over time, we inevitably succeeded in steeling our nerves to deal with such tormenting incursions as appropriate as conditions allowed. As Said was the only breadwinner in his family, his incarceration had exacted enormous sufferings on the part of his family. We were to read about his agonizing cries and strident denunciations against his cruel captors in many of his poems from prison. In one of my many visits to him in Shah Alam, I was pleasantly surprised to meet with a group of his admirers, all Chinese from KL, who came with a guitar to visit him and to sing songs which they had composed using several of these poems as lyrics. And for all you know, they were there to sing for Said's birthday! How refreshing and thoughtful!

As we settled down in Changi, Said started to learn the Chinese language in all seriousness. He walked the talk. For we believe then and now that as members of a multi-racial society,

we should learn each other's language in addition to our own mother tongue. This way, not only can we communicate better with one another, we are therefore able to bond much better than by relying on a foreign language to do the job.

So, in the same way, with few exceptions, all Nantah boys, threw ourselves into the mighty torrent of learning Malay. Needless to say, Said was kind enough to make himself available at all times as the indispensable resident "ce'gu" (teacher). His contribution in this was invaluable because as we progressed from *Darjah Satu* to *Darjah Dua* and *Tiga*, we moved into more difficult stuff such as pantun, *adat isti'adat dan kebudayaan*, Munshi Abdullah and history, etc. to learn and understand, knowledge which only an indigenous person such as Said, with the right kind of background could appropriately impart. As a result, the overall achievements of the learners in terms of the speed of progress and the high rate of passes were so high that the examiners from the Ministry of Education were deeply impressed.

Anyone who has some encounters with Said will readily concur that he was a gentle, witty, and a most approachable person. Needless to say, his proficiency in the use of the Chinese language endeared him much to the Chinese-educated. They simply adored him. They held him up in high regard not only as a model of an indefatigable fighter for justice and human dignity, but also as a trusty friend and great teacher. So, over the years, many of them would travel from Singapore, Johore, Ipoh or Penang to visit him no matter whether he was living in (not too far-off) Subang Jaya or (the remote corner) of Shah Alam.

I see in Said most importantly as a brother from the Malay community who is truly broad-minded and progressive, capable of taking in the "big" picture. He has a strong sense of fairness and possesses a kind of folk wisdom inherited

probably from his Javanese origin. In numerous encounters during our years of friendship, he would bring in the Malay perspectives which we deeply cherished. Needless to say, such are essential inputs which must go to form the values and substance for the kind of society to which we all aspire. It is enlightening for us too to hear from him about the fears, concerns, as well as the hopes of the general Malay folks as opposed to that of the Malay aristocrats. Said is very much aware that achievements in mastering the Malay language by many Nantah boys in Changi has nothing to do with political considerations. It had to do in large measure with their love of the language and their inclination to enjoy living with our fellow Malay brethren and appreciate their culture.

So it is in this spirit that I want to say to Said: “Brother, we shall miss you dearly” and in Chinese: “祝愿你一路走好，好兄弟!”

Salute to Said Zahari: The Mandela of Malaysian and Singaporean journalism has passed on

JOMO KS

MORE THAN ANYONE else in Malaysia and Singapore, Said Zahari's name will surely be immortalised as symbolising the struggle for press freedom. The defining moment was, of course, the *Utusan Melayu* strike of 1961, when he led his colleagues to resist the takeover of the newspaper by interests tied to UMNO, the ruling party then and now.

The strike was remarkable for many reasons, two of which need special mention. First, it involved Malay workers in a country where labour struggles had mainly been associated with ethnic Chinese and Indians. The strike lasted more than 90 days — impressive by any standards — and marked the end of the honeymoon of organised labour with the post-colonial government.

Second, and even more remarkable, the strike was not primarily over workers' welfare, but instead, sought to resist the imminent takeover and transformation of the previously independent Malay-language newspaper into an instrument of the ruling party.

Dark clouds over Singapore

Said Zahari was also one of the most prominent victims of repression by Lee Kuan Yew's government in Singapore. He was arrested together with over a hundred others during the republic's 'Operation Cold Store' in early February 1963. He remained incarcerated without trial for 17 years, at the end of which he was confined by the authorities to a small island in the Tebrau Straits separating the island republic from Johor.

Throughout this time, his Malaysian-born-wife Salamah suffered great tribulations supporting their family, including their youngest daughter Noorlinda, who was born after his arrest. In the early 1970s, Said's poems from prison, smuggled out, were compiled, edited and published by his closest friend, the late Usman Awang, with English language translations by another dear friend, the late Dr M. K. Rajakumar, the last chairman of the Labour Party of Selangor, with assistance from former Senator Dr Syed Husin Ali, himself a political detainee for six years after his arrest following the 1974 student-led Baling protests.

An inspiration

His poems and Usman's own *Salute to Said Zahari* were read and recited by thousands of students, activists and sympathizers in Singapore, Malaysia and abroad for years, encouraging struggles by countless others inspired by Said's own selfless and resolute determination despite his ordeal.

But behind Said Zahari the icon, was Said Zahari the man. His memoirs, published two decades ago, reveal how a 'good son' — and grandson — grew up to make extraordinary and selfless sacrifices for a better, more just and democratic post-colonial nation with no thought of personal gain or advantage. They also reveal Said Zahari for the human being he was.

Affable, generous, trusting, loving, humble and all too human, but also principled, defiant and uncompromising when it counted.

Said Zahari's memoirs were not just political, but also personal, candidly sharing reminiscences of a long gone era, without the cosmetic editing 'great men' demand of their biographical narratives. Born of Javanese parents and just a little younger than Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Mohamad, he grew up as a young Muslim-Malay boy in a rustic Singapore which no longer exists.

His memoirs tell of growing up, the Japanese Occupation, coming of age, and his early working life in what must surely have been among the most exciting working environments in late colonial Malaya — the *Utusan Melayu* editorial office in Singapore, led by Yusof Ishak (later, the first president of Singapore) and A. Samad Ismail, the doyen of Malaysian journalism and unofficial patron of the progressive nationalist Malay literary movement, Asas 50.

Said Zahari was then sent north in 1955 to open the Kuala Lumpur office before Merdeka and covered the historic Baling peace talks. His memoirs revealed that Federation of Malaya Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman never wanted the talks to succeed, but agreed to them to gain political advantage.

Banished, detained

To break the *Utusan* strike in 1961, Said was banished from re-entering Malaya by the Tunku. The following year was no less eventful, as the nationalist Parti Rakyat Brunei (PRB, the People's Party of Brunei) captured all but one of the elected seats for the local authorities in the colonial sultanate. At the end of 1962, many PRB leaders were detained or exiled after a failed insurrection doomed from the outset. The rebellion

occurred after the newly-elected PRB-dominated legislative council was ignored by the colonial authorities.

Barely two months later, in early February 1963, Said Zahari himself was arrested under Operation 'Cold Store' for 17 years, only hours after he agreed to lead the PRB's fraternal party in Singapore, the Partai Rakyat Singapura (PRS). (A fuller account of developments in the region then can be gleaned from Greg Poulgrain's *The Origins of Konfrontasi*).

After such an extraordinary life, Said Zahari remained modest, but generous and avuncular in his dealings with all. It says so much of him and so many of his colleagues that they came out of their protracted experiences of incarceration with so much of their humanity intact, if not enhanced. I often wondered whether Said Zahari would have made a successful transition from journalism to politics if he had not been so cruelly, cynically and quickly contained on the night of his political elevation.

But the course of subsequent events suggests that history is on Said Zahari's side, namely the side of truth. Very importantly too, Said Zahari's memoirs reveal a complex and diverse Left, quite unlike the monolithic image promoted by the powers-that-be, lazy historians and the servile media. This was evident in his reviews of the debates and differences among the Left in Singapore, his friendships with Lim Chin Siong — the most popular Singapore politician of the time — and others, his criticisms of a communist agent's dealings with Lee Kuan Yew, and his Bangkok meeting with Chin Peng, the long-time secretary-general of the Communist Party of Malaya.

Generous spirit

Before being allowed to move to Kuala Lumpur two decades ago, he often stayed with us in PJ when he was allowed into

the country. I remember how some who had collaborated to cause him untold misery sought to redeem themselves, and always marvelled at his generosity of spirit.

One can only feel privileged to have known him when one contrasts his magnanimity with the petty vindictiveness which characterises so much of our society's modern political and social life.

Although he said little about the matter, I saw how Said Zahari sought — despite his limited means — to try to compensate his family for his protracted involuntary absence. This must surely be one of the most difficult crosses one like him has had to bear. Can one ever compensate? How does one do so? How does one retain a broader perspective in trying to do so?

During his lifetime and beyond, we have all partaken of his love for truth, freedom, humanity, and other cherished values, for which we will be eternally grateful. His was truly a life of great sacrifice for principles which continue to move us more than half a century later. Both Malaysia, Singapore, and indeed the region, will forever owe him and his comrades a debt which can never be repaid. It is a privilege to salute Said Zahari, and in doing so, to be inspired by his life.

* This is the personal opinion of the writer or publication and does not necessarily represent the views of Malay Mail Online.

** Revised from the Foreword to Said Zahari's political memoirs published in Malay, English and Chinese.

*** See more at: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/what-you-think/article/salute-to-said-zahari-the-mandela-of-malaysian-and-singaporean-journalism-h#sthash.QimzCPAH.dpuf>

The embers of his spirit and sacrifice burn in our hearts

MUHAMMAD FADLI BIN MOHAMMED FAWZI

IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *Nineteen Eighty Four*, one of the slogans of the ruling party was that 'he who controls the past controls the future, and he who controls the present controls the past'. In the novel, the regime arrested potential dissidents and made the political prisoners confess publicly to their supposed crimes. The official records would then be changed to suit that version of history, with any aberrations destroyed and rectified.

While Orwell's novel was a critique of Stalinist USSR, control of the historical narrative is not limited to merely totalitarian governments. Various governments have tried to inscribe its own official version of history. Such measures range from appointing official court scribes, to yearly screenings of propaganda films to destroying or refusing to disclose official documents. Historical narratives form the basis of how the status quo came to be legitimate.

In the official narrative, Singapore is intertwined with the guidance of the PAP. This was despite the threat posed by the violent extremists and ethnic chauvinists menacing the political harmony and stability crucial for Singapore's development and survival. Such threats necessitate authoritarian measures further legitimated by the veneer of 'Asian values'. However, if narratives can form the basis for legitimacy, they can also form the basis for resistance. Said's life and struggles stand in stark contrast to this official narrative.

A starting point to understand how his life story challenges the official narrative would be the newspaper that he headed, the *Utusan Melayu*. *Utusan Melayu* itself does not fit well with the official narrative. Although avowedly nationalist, it was not the vehicle of narrow nationalism it is today. It gave space to various anti-colonial groups of different races ranging from student groups to trade unions. This depiction is problematic for a generation brought up to associate Malay nationalism with ethnic chauvinism. *Utusan* also brought together in close collaboration establishment approved figures such as Yusof Ishak as well as those denounced as communist such as Samad Ismail. While supported by UMNO in the struggle for independence, the paper's independent commentaries proved an inconvenience for UMNO after independence was achieved. *Utusan's* status as an independent newspaper was ultimately threatened after Yusof was forced to resign. However, Said resisted UMNO's attempts to seize control to the bitter end by bringing the first and only historical strike on the basis of freedom of the press. This strike for press freedom is in stark contrast with claims that the struggle and desire for rights is antithetical to Asian culture and values which emphasise harmony and deference to authority.

As a result of his leading role in the strike however, Said, a Singapore citizen, was not allowed to enter Malaysia. Stranded in Singapore, Said was to take over the leadership of Partai Rakyat, a left Malay nationalist party which had fallen in disarray. His objective in taking over the leadership of the Partai Rakyat was to moderate it by returning to its original ideology of socio- democratic nationalism. Rather than advocating violence and conflict as a strategy for overthrowing the system, he had wished to reach out to various other political actors with similar goals. Such efforts would have strengthened and deepened Singapore's democracy, rather than destabilise it.

His plans were cut short however when he was detained for seventeen long years, during which he endured constant hardships. During these years, his mother passed away, his wife contracted cancer and he missed his children growing up. He also endured the constant smear that he was a communist with the implication that he was not religious. However it was his religious upbringing which gave him succour and strength during those long years in prison. Later during his exile on Pulau Ubin, he had organised nightly Quran reading sessions with his neighbours. While this deep religiosity would surprise those who had believed the dark lies about him, those who were close to him would know better. His Mandarin tutor Sim Kim Chong, and his lawyer TT Rajah, each gave him beautiful copies of the Quran as appreciation of their friendship.

These aspects of Said's life raises jarring questions which coalesce into an alternative version of history. This alternative narrative begins after the Second World War where in the face of rising nationalist movements, the British were in no position to maintain colonies as they did before. However, resources such as tin and rubber from Malaya were crucial to the post-war rebuilding effort. Their solution was to pass power to elites who would protect their economic interests. As this would set the elites against the mass based anti-colonial movements, the colonial powers also bequeathed them their colonial security and intelligence apparatus to shore up their rule. This conflict would then be reframed into a Cold War dichotomy of the Capitalist versus Communist nations. Thus while the left of the time consisted of various groups with differing ideologies and praxis they were often lumped together into a homogenous Communist 'other'. Like Said, those detained the longest were often not the greatest security threat by any measure, but the most formidable and implacable political opponents.

In this interregnum of calm between a troubled past and

an uncertain future it is tempting to overlook Said's struggles as a relic of such a bygone era. However, many of the struggles which Said fought for still remain unfulfilled today. In terms of press freedom, Singapore ranks at an ever declining 154th in the World Press Freedom index. The main legislation under which Said was held under, the Internal Security Act, still remains on the books. Meanwhile, issues of economic and social justice still persist. In terms of inequality Singapore ranks amongst the highest in the world. Singapore also prides on its multiculturalism and meritocracy but it cannot be ignored that many of the lower income in Singapore who live in rental housing are Malays. Meanwhile, the political terrain seems as inhospitable as ever for those seeking a freer and just Singapore outside the ambit of what is tolerable to the powers that be. But this was probably no different from Said's time where the challenges were just as formidable. He probably knew that the odds were long and the price was steep but nevertheless fought hard and sacrificed much.

For this, those of us who understand his story, Said Zahari remains an inspiration. At his core, he represents the everyman, from humble birth without riches or power. But despite his modest background he would defy impossible odds to build a better society for the people he loved. And yet, even when things seemed hopeless and dire, he stayed true to himself and to what he believed in.

The embers of his spirit and sacrifice burn in the memory of our hearts evermore.

Telling it as it is, as it was

TAN PEK LENG

SAID ZAHARI WAS 23 when he joined the *Utusan Melayu* and the struggle for press freedom and for independence. He was 34 when he became president of the Partai Rakyat Singapura (PRS) and took up the leadership to forge a multi-racial progressive political force. The same night he was elected president of the PRS, he was detained under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, later to be renamed the Internal Security Act (ISA).

He was 51 before he was released from incarceration, and 73 when he finally chronicled his life's tumultuous path in order 'to tell the other side of the story' in his memoirs, *Meniti Lautan Gelora* (Dark Clouds at Dawn). As we mark his recent passing, it is sobering to reflect that after well over half a century, the three darkest clouds which hovered persistently over Said's life have not yet dispersed.

The press still remains fettered by legal constraints and political constrictions — indeed, the Malaysian government is considering further tightening various relevant laws. The Pakatan Rakyat once offered hope for the emergence of a multi-ethnic political coalition championing the democratic cause, but self-destructed in the face of the ruling coalition's own decline. The ISA continues to cast its insidious shadow over the lives of those who would stand up for justice and freedom.

Breakfast meetings

In an old interview, Said once pondered the parallels between the past and the present. Said signed on as a reporter with *Utusan Melayu* in 1951, “when the spirit of struggle against imperialism was so high”, he recalled. “To work for the *Utusan Melayu* at that time was to work for my people and my country”.

Imbued with this strong sense of mission, the journalists were prepared to stand their ground whenever the colonial government attempted to curb their freedom of expression. It was with a sense of pride that they exposed attempts by British colonial officers to intimidate them. It thus came as a great shock when, after independence, Tunku Abdul Rahman’s government seemed equally bent on bringing the press under its control.

The *Utusan Melayu* was accused of unfair coverage of government news and giving too much prominence to the opposition parties. When these allegations were refuted at a face-to-face meeting, Tunku resorted to inviting Yusof Ishak, then editor-in-chief of *Utusan Melayu* and later, the first President of Singapore, to his residence to have ‘breakfast’ with him.

“At each of their ‘breakfast’ sessions, Tunku criticised and condemned Yusof Ishak. After attending many such ‘breakfast’ sessions with Tunku, refuting the criticisms and baseless allegations, there came a time when Yusof Ishak’s inner resistance and patience were tested to the hilt,” relates Said in his memoirs. Yusof Ishak felt he ‘no longer had the strength to fight this blight’ and resigned from the *Utusan Melayu*, but the onslaught from the government continued, with new directives from Tunku, constant haranguing by UMNO ministers, the takeover of the *Utusan Melayu* board of directors by UMNO

stalwarts, and finally, a ‘four-pronged policy’ that effectively spelt the end of discretion and autonomy for the editors and journalists.

The editorial staff of *Utusan Melayu* responded to the ‘four-pronged policy’ by mounting a tenacious strike that lasted exactly three months, from 21 July to 21 October 1961. It was the peak of a spirited fight for press freedom, but its crushing also brought an end to *Utusan Melayu*’s role as a firm, independent newspaper. Further, it brought an order by Tunku, permanently banning Said from entering Malaya — an order that was not rescinded until 1989.

Cold Store

In recounting these events, Said observed that political interference in journalism was not new. What is regrettable is that whereas in his days, the editors took the lead in resisting such meddling, the task is now left to the rank and file journalists while the editors are not adverse to taking orders from their political masters.

However, he was much encouraged by the memorandum by 581 journalists to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on World Press Freedom Day 1999 calling for the repeal of the Printing Presses and Publications Act, which to him represented the first collective action to revive press freedom. Said continued to abide by the tenet that journalists are obliged to report the truth, expose untruths and maintain intellectual honesty.

Dark Clouds at Dawn is also, in part, a history of Singapore because of Said’s integral role in that history. But it is written from a perspective few were privy to as those who shared that point of view were rounded up and put away in a single swoop — the Operation Coldstore of 2 February 1963 in

which more than a hundred political leaders, trade unionists, student activists, community leaders and journalists opposed to the Lee Kuan Yew regime were thrown into prison for years, without trial.

The wide arrests effectively paralysed the Barisan Sosialis, the Partai Rakyat, university student unions and other mass organisations which questioned the motives behind the formation of Malaysia and also the political agenda of Lee Kuan Yew's Peoples' Action Party (PAP).

Dream dashed

Said's memoirs recounted the ideological and political struggles preceding the independence of Singapore through its merger with Malaya — a struggle over who should represent the people of Singapore and how and whose interests they should defend — a struggle that Lee Kuan Yew terminated by throwing all his rivals in jail.

However, the political differences were not limited to those between the left-wing and the PAP. Within the left, a number of issues and stances hindered the forging of an effective multi-ethnic united front. The strong advocacy of 'Peking-oriented socialist ideology' by a few Chinese members within the PRS alienated Malay members who regarded it as a deviation from the 'socio-democratic nationalism' which was the founding ideology of the party.

Said felt strongly that the PRS needed a strong and principled leader who could win over the Malays and, at the same time, assure the Chinese that the leadership would not espouse 'a narrow and anti-Chinese Malay nationalism'. Unfortunately, his dream of restructuring the PRS along these lines were dashed with his imprisonment.

Said surmises, nonetheless, that lessons can be drawn from the failures of the past to benefit the present. One failing of the Socialist Front and the Partai Rakyat was that although there were close relations among the leaders from the different ethnic communities — as with Said’s intimate friendship with Lim Chin Siong, MK Rajakumar, etc — at the rank and file level, the parties remained largely separate ethnic entities.

Further, although the parties could agree on broad issues of upholding social justice, eliminating oppression and the struggle for independence; questions of language, culture and religion were more difficult to reach a consensus on. Similar problems afflicted the Putera-AMCJA and the Socialist Front’s attempts at coalition-building in Malaya.

Gruelling experiences

Said’s account of his arrest and detention arouses the uncanny feeling of how little has changed in the police tactics of long hours of interrogation, sleep deprivation, subjecting the detainee to the full-blast of the air-conditioner and other forms of physical abuse, attempts to extract confessions by claiming betrayal by other detainees and even threats of a staged shooting. Later ISA detainees were similarly disoriented by solitary confinement and being held without communication with anyone except their captors — leaving them in a vulnerable state to be abused and manipulated.

Detention without trial allows the powers that be to dispose of those that stand in their way without solid proof or grounds. In Said’s case, the charges against him were not even consistent over the years. Although he was initially alleged to have been ‘an intelligence agent of a foreign power’, this charge was subsequently dropped. Sixteen years later,

however, he was accused of having ‘refused to renounce violence as a political instrument’ when no such charge had been laid against him previously.

Even though one of the key charges against him was his opposition to the Singapore-Malaysia merger, he remained incarcerated when Singapore was expelled from the federation. Also, Lee Kuan Yew did not make a single reference to Said in his memoir. If Said was such a big national threat as to warrant a 17-year detention, why was he not even worthy of a mention in Lee Kuan Yew’s memoir?

All these are but testimony to the fact that the ISA has been a convenient tool for the authorities to lock away those who are ‘inconvenient’ to them — which is why both the Singapore and Malaysian governments have so vehemently resisted repealing the Act. Despite the gruelling experiences they endured for years, detainees’ memoirs of their years behind bars are always filled with remarkable accounts of how they sought to fashion an ordinary life out of their far from ordinary circumstances — and Said’s is no exception. Organising language classes, cultivating their own vegetable plots, cooking meals for one another, engaging in debates allowed the days to pass faster, and Said could even allude to them as ‘happy times’.

A mother’s fear

But the solitude and loneliness of the long nights were a different matter. The pining for long-separated loved ones conspire with sleeplessness to make the darkness of the night drag on endlessly. The emotional turmoil became unbearable at points when crisis struck the family, as when Said’s wife, Salamah, had to undergo a mastectomy.

Said's poignant descriptions of those moments of anxiety and of his ailing mother's fear that she might not live long enough to see him released, strikes home the cruelty of the ISA. Indeed, Puan Asmah breathed her last while her son was still interned. But Said, like many detainees before and after him, have emerged from his agonising confinement with his commitment, beliefs, principles and humour intact — a testament to his strength of character.

TAN PEK LENG was a journalist in the mainstream media in the mid-1980s when there was a brief spell of relative press freedom. She then turned to academia and now works in a research institute.

A Giant among Humanitarians

BETTY L KHOO-KINGSLEY

I WAS CAPTIVATED when I was first introduced to the ‘suspected’ Communist’ — a man deemed so dangerous that the then PM of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, ordered the ISD to seize him at dawn, torture and imprison him without trial.

Intrigued too because this big brown bear of a man had a wide warm smile and twinkling brown eyes. A more unlikely ‘fearsome communist’ I couldn’t imagine!

Our friendship began when Said Zahari, on his release from Pulau Ubin (where he had been detained for one year following his release from Changi) was given the job of editing the *Asia Research Bulletin* by the Times Organisation.

At the time I was executive editor of Times Periodicals (publisher of *Her World* and other lifestyle magazines) and we, *Asia Research* and Times Publishing, were housed in an industrial building in Paya Lebar.

Over our regular lunches — often joined by Times colleagues because Said’s genial personality and humour drew people to him naturally — Said would recount with chuckles how his jailors-tormentors had thought that, by not only throwing him into solitary confinement for weeks, and then putting him, a Javanese-Muslim, among Mandarin-speaking Chinese, they could isolate and break him.

Instead Said decided to learn Mandarin. He became not

only fluent in speaking the language but ended up being able to read Chinese language newspapers! And the Mandarin-speaking 'suspected communists' (among them Dr Chia Thye Poh, Lim Chin Siong, Dr Lim Hock Siew) became his closest and life-long friends.

There never appeared to be any trace of repressed anger or bitterness in Said. Sometimes, when work or outside life became stressful, Said would half-jokingly say, "Aiyoh, It was more peaceful in Changi."

In fact, in those days Changi prison had fruit and vegetable gardens which the prisoners cultivated for their own food.¹ Said's health, after the early years of torture and settling down to prison routine, improved with outdoor work and eating fresh produce (meat was not only expensive but considered too much of a luxury for prisoners).

Said even got to like his simple prison-peasant fare, and one of the first things he told me was that he had contemplated turning full vegetarian.

Alas, when he was back in the bosom of family and close friends, they plied him with all the rich and meaty dishes they thought he had been deprived of. It became just too difficult to become a vegetarian.

But while Said, the affable raconteur, never brought up the subject of his horrific experiences when he socialised, reading his first and second memoirs — *Dark Clouds At Dawn* and *The Long Nightmare* — brought me to tears.

I felt Pak Said's anguish and his guilt at having made his beloved wife Salamah and his children suffer extreme poverty and pain. Guilt overwhelmed him when, on his release after 17 long years, he learned how Salamah had hidden her pain and "trained my children to hide the truth of their extreme hardship."

“An example of their canny act was when once they came without the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and a packet of my favourite groundnuts, which I had asked for the week before.

“My son Roesman, quickly apologised for his forgetfulness and Sal and Rismawati joined in and blamed Roesman for his carelessness.

...I never thought in my heart of hearts that they were in such dire condition that they could not afford to buy a magazine and a packet of groundnuts.”

“They were always clean and smartly dressed, never a sad or tear-stained face, not even a cry, not even once throughout my long incarceration. This gave me joy throughout our countless half-hour meetings.”

It also probably helped keep him sane.

Not that Salamah did not get intense pressure from family and friends to divorce Said and remarry. She did but so strong was her love for Said and her belief in his ideals that she steadfastly refused to buckle.

But while Salamah appeared stoic outwardly, her intense suffering triggered cancer five years after Said’s arrest at dawn.

In 1968, Salamah, only 32, was found to have breast cancer. Pregnant with their fourth child, Salamah had experienced the very worst kind of trauma imaginable. Having ‘police’ invade their house at dawn, seeing her husband roughly manhandled, handcuffed and whisked away — and imprisoned without trial.

Remember this was over 40 years ago when cancer was still rare and fast foods were not the norm, especially for simple Malay families — and Salamah was slim.

Very fortunately, Salamah’s cancer was detected early enough and she had a competent and caring woman surgeon,

Dr Alice Chia, who performed the operation in SGH.

When Said, escorted by two special branch officers, was allowed to visit the next day, Salamah was still barely conscious but Dr Chia assured Said: “Mr Said, do not worry about your wife. She’s doing fine. Your wife is very strong and very brave. We will take good care of her.”

Fortunately for the couple, there was also Dr Beatrice Chen, the wife of fellow political detainee Dr Lim Hock Siew who ‘had taken special care of Sal ever since she was found to have breast cancer and to be in need of an operation. Beatrice was a real comfort to my wife,’ Said wrote in *Dark Clouds at Dawn*.

This emotional support (from newfound friends) was so crucial to Salamah’s recovery because Said was not allowed to see her again until several months later when she was well enough to visit him in Changi Prison.

Even then they could only stare at each other across the glass partition. And cry.

Emotional and financial help also came to Salamah and the children during their darkest hours. Said recounted in his memoirs.

“Salamah ran a school canteen to support the family. Once, after three days of continuous rain and declining sales, Sal had only (S\$5), far from enough to be used as capital for the next day.

“The children suggested: Tomorrow why not close the canteen and wait until the rain stops ... you can rest, Mak...”

Yes, rest! That was all she wanted. Her daily routine was: up at 4 am to prepare food. She had to be there by seven and would only return home at three thirty

in the afternoon. Then at around four, she would have to go to the market to buy provisions for the next day, prepare them until midnight, when she would rest her weary bones, only to awaken again at four in the morning, the next day.

“Before she slept, she would recite verses from the Quran. She had fallen asleep for only a few minutes when she heard someone knocking on the door of our house at 676 Changi Road ... she woke Roesman and both of them opened the door.

“Sal was surprised to see a Chinese man... he was Lee Eu Seng, the General Manager of the *Nanyang Siang Pau* newspaper. He had just been released after being detained under the ISA for more than a year, charged with allowing the newspaper to ‘play the Chinese race card’ to oppose the PAP.

“Eu Seng asked how Sal and the children were holding up, and told them that he was my neighbour in prison. Before he left, he shook Sal’s hands and wished her ‘good night’. Eu Seng placed an envelope in her palm, saying ‘Puan Salamah, this is my sincere contribution towards the children’s school expenses.’

“When Sal told me how my friend Lee Eu Seng had unexpectedly arrived at her front door, she reminded me ever so often since I was in prison that ‘life is in the hands of the Almighty’.

Said had never appeared to me to be a religious man. In fact, once he said to me: “Betty, every time I am at a function I would head for the non-Muslim buffet table. But then a Muslim would quickly say: ‘Said, Said, over here is the Muslim food.’ Aiyoh, I had no choice but to follow him.” And he chuckled.

“The only thing I don’t eat is stones,” he said to me when I asked him what he didn’t eat.

Yet, reading Said’s memoirs I realised that Said had no need of rituals and appearances because he was deeply spiritual. His kindness, his gentleness, came from a well of deepest love and compassion for all of humanity — even animals. I learned that Said drew strength, time and time again, especially during his periods of solitary confinement, from the teachings of Kiai Tasim, a Muslim cleric at the Kampung Kebun Bunga Mosque, Singapore.

Said had written in *The Long Nightmare*:

“Somehow, my memories of him (Kiai Tasim, the village cleric) became as vivid as when I had listened to his teachings with my village friends in the 1930s and 1940s.

“We were schooled by him to abhor cruelty and tyranny, and not to cast such acts towards our fellow men, even to animals, as we were all the Almighty’s Creation.”

Said also acknowledged how his mother had taught him “to have faith in the Almighty and patience especially when faced with hardships, or when there was no one to turn to.”

“To this day, when circumstances warrant it, I never fail to recite these divine prayers,” Said said.

After reading this, I finally understood why Said would not recant on TV to regain his freedom. Not long after I had got to know Said, I asked him: “Why didn’t you recant?”

“Betty, how can I recant when I was never a communist? I can’t confess to what I never was.” The principles Said and his equally courageous comrades lived by were founded on truth and faith so strong that even threats and torture could not shake.

For this Said earned the admiration of his journalist peers like Johan Jaaffar, who had, like Said, edited the *Utusan Melayu*, “but more than three decades apart.”

Jaaffar, wrote in the *Star* on 18 April 2016, his tribute to the late Said Zahari with the heading, ‘Paying a hefty price for his principles.’

“Said had no regrets for what he did and never wavered from the belief that journalistic independence is paramount for any democracy. He was the embodiment of a true man of principles...”

While never a card-carrying commie, Said Zahari certainly believed in the ideals of Karl Marx and how communism had transformed a feudal China dominated by cruel landlords into a nation where (at least in ideal theory) it was “from each person according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

In the pre-communist world girl babies had been drowned at birth and women were regarded as possessions, slave girls or concubines. But under the communists, women were given the opportunity to study and many even become engineers and physicists.

Said was a man who loved his wife, had regarded Salamah as his soulmate, his helpmate and he was so grateful that Salamah worked tirelessly and kept the family going while he languished in prison. So, not long after his release, we his admirers were very happy to see pictures of Said and Salamah deservedly honoured and feted everywhere in Malaysia, in Thailand and in China. They got the red carpet treatment wherever they went. There is even a Chinese version of his memoirs.

Said was effortlessly popular with all races. He was authentic in his big-heartedness and, being fluent in English, Chinese and of course Bahasa Melayu, he communicated with

sincerity and ease. Salamah was a gracious hostess and she too spoke English. She had studied in Methodist Girls School (but had to drop out to support her siblings) and they happily entertained an endless stream of visitors.

My lunches with Said in Singapore came to an end when I left the Times group in 1990/91, and in 1994 went with my (late) second husband, Richard Kingsley to live in Darwin-rural, Australia. At about the same time, Said and Salamah went to live in KL with their adult children.

Said and I lost contact for about 10 years. I returned to Singapore when Richard suddenly died of a heart-attack on 21 December 2004, eight days earlier than Salamah who had also died of a heart attack.

It was only when I went to KL in 2006 and, with the help of soul sister Khadijah Shaari Yeong and old friend See Meng that I managed to rekindle my friendship with Pak Said.

Here's what Sis Khad says of Pak Said: "He lived in my neighbourhood (Subang Jaya) but it took Betty from Singapore to bring me to his doorstep. I had never met anyone like him up close till then. My world just expanded. I thought about him a lot as I had his foto right behind me when I sat down at the dining table... as if he's looking over my shoulders.... And I feel secure that there's always someone, somewhere who's sacrificing his or her life for the likes of me who are too lazy to move their butts out of their comfort zone..."²

"May his soul be amongst the chosen ones... amin!"

*BETTY L KHOO-KINGSLEY is an environmentalist,
co-founder of Starseed Solar Village, Johor*

A Tribute to Said Zahari

TEO SOH LUNG

IT MUST HAVE been in the early 1970s that I first heard of the name “Said Zahari”. A friend had brought several copies of a little poetry book called *Poems from Prison* to a gathering. I bought a copy and took another copy to sell to a Catholic priest. I was surprised at his reaction. He looked startled and didn’t buy the book. I didn’t know then that the little anthology was classified by the Singapore government as an “undesirable publication”. And I didn’t know that Said Zahari was a political prisoner who had then been detained without trial for many years. At that time, I was ignorant of the Internal Security Act (ISA) which allowed indefinite detention without trial. On hindsight, I think the priest must have known who Said Zahari was. I am not sure, however, if he knew anything more than the fact that Said Zahari was in prison. I think the fact that he was in prison was sufficient to terrify a religious person.

I was moved by Said Zahari’s poems. “Born Unfree” in particular remained vivid in my mind. Said Zahari’s anxiety for the birth of his child shortly after he was imprisoned was beautifully expressed:

Not that I was not hungry
I refused the food;
Nor that I was not sleepy
I kept awake. ...

It ended with:
My child, just born
Into a world yet unfree.

Until then, I had never read any prison poem. Said Zahari's poems gave me much food for thought. In later years, I realised that the ISA and its predecessors, the Emergency Regulations and the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, have been in existence since 1948. Thousands of innocent people have either been imprisoned without trial or banished under the law. They have been unjustly labelled as "communists, pro communists, Euro communists or Marxists" by the PAP government. These labels stick and deeply affect the lives of those imprisoned as well as their families. What they went through were never discussed even among friends. The general public on the other hand know very little of the sufferings endured by these prisoners and their families.

Said Zahari was quickly forgotten when I became too busy with work. Life however is often filled with surprises and coincidences. Hari Raya brought me into contact with Said Zahari again in the early 1980s. I cannot remember whether I was brought to his house at Changi Road for lunch or I had invited myself there. I was then a young lawyer running a rather unconventional law office in Geylang with two other women lawyers. It was from that Hari Raya celebration that my law firm came to know Said Zahari and his wife Salamah. Subsequently, Said Zahari told us that Salamah baked delicious cookies for sale. And so it became a practice for our firm to buy cookies from Salamah for festive occasions like Chinese New Year and take orders for cookies from our friends.

During all those years that I was in touch with Said Zahari, I never once asked him about his prison experience. Neither can I recall Said Zahari telling us about his 17 years' ordeal in

prison or even mentioning Operation Coldstore where he and over a hundred opposition leaders were arrested. Somehow, there was an absence of curiosity on my part to ask and a reluctance on his part to tell what he went through. This reluctance to talk of prison experiences is common among former ISA prisoners. And so it was with complete ignorance of what life would be like in prison that I was suddenly arrested and imprisoned under the ISA in 1987. It was a shock and awe experience for me and I believe for all my friends too!

In 1994, *To Catch a Tartar, A Dissident in Lee Kuan Yew's Prison*, the first book about imprisonment under the ISA in Singapore was published in the United States by Francis T Seow. He was my counsel and was arrested when he came to visit me in prison in 1988. Seven years later, Said Zahari published *Dark Clouds at Dawn, A Political Memoir*. It was launched in Kuala Lumpur. Several of my friends and I drove to Kuala Lumpur to attend the launch. The book was not launched in Singapore because of the unwelcome political climate. But for many years, the book was sold by Said Zahari's friends. This book is today widely available and publicly displayed in bookshops. In 2007, Said Zahari published *The Long Nightmare, My 17 Years as a Political Prisoner*. This book is also available in Singapore.

Dark Clouds at Dawn gives valuable insights into the life of a political prisoner. Said Zahari was arrested when his wife was only 27 and his children were aged three, five and six. Another daughter was born three months after he was incarcerated. We cannot imagine the hardship experienced by Said Zahari in having to leave his young family to fend for themselves for 17 long years. He was the sole bread winner before his arrest. The constant thought that he had neglected his wife and children for 17 long years because he wanted to uphold his principles must have been torturous. We also cannot imagine how his wife and children suffered when they went through those 17

years, selling food to earn a living. No matter how much help friends gave to the family it would never be sufficient.

I will always remember Said Zahari's cheerful disposition, his warm smile and gentle words. He has never uttered an unkind word about anyone. There is no hint of anger in his books. His harshest description for Lee Kuan Yew who was his friend before his arrest and who ordered his continuous detention was "he was a vindictive man". Similarly, he did not blame his former boss, President Yusof bin Ishak for signing and renewing his detention order every two years though he must have known that Said Zahari was innocent of the allegations made against him.

In 2015 when I visited Said Zahari to celebrate his 87th birthday in Kuala Selangor, I was very happy to see that he was his usual cheerful self. Though illness had resulted in his inability to walk and live independently for many years, he accepted his condition without bitterness. He was always happy to have visitors. On that occasion, he was treated to music by a band of young musicians, The BangsArt, and surrounded by his children, grandchildren and many friends both young and old. I could see that he was really happy when I went to greet him. Smiling, he said to me, "I don't know these young people but they know me." I assured him that it was perfectly fine that they knew him and that was all that is important.

I'd like to remember Said Zahari as he celebrated his 87th birthday. He was so happy to be with his family and his many young and old friends and fans who laughed and sang for him. A man much loved by his children, grandchildren and all his friends.

A Humble Man

YAP HON NGIAN

THE NAME SAID Zahari sounded familiar and yet unfamiliar at the same time. Familiar because as of early 1960s, those who kept abreast with the political reality of Malaysia and Singapore, at some point in time, had to be introduced to personalities such as Lim Chin Siong, Said Zahari, Dr Lim Hock Siew, Dr Poh Soo Kai, TT Rajah, and Chia Thye Poh. It was also unfamiliar because the name remained a name without really knowing who Said Zahari was and what he stood for. To progressive students studying abroad like those in the Malaysian and Singapore Student Movement (MASS Movement) in London and the Federation of United Kingdom and Eire Malaysian and Singaporean Student Organizations (FUEMSSO) in the UK, his name was synonymous with Operation Coldstore, the Internal Security Act (ISA), and repression in Singapore. In the mid 1970s, student activists in the UK made a commendable attempt at translating three poems of Pak Said “Born Unfree”, “Joy” and “Dungeon of Horrors” into songs. These were rendered at student conferences and gatherings.

It was not after my return from an overseas stint that I began to have better insights into Pak Said’s political landscape. It was around 1982 that I first met Pak Said. The occasion was Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Ever since Pak Said was released from the PAP prison in 1979, he and his family had been holding ‘Hari Raya Open House’ for his friends and comrades at his

residence in Upper Changi. A few of us (the so-called UK returnees) visited Pak Said to share with his family the joy of festive celebration. There was already a big crowd nudging every corner of his living room and spilling over to the outdoor spaces. Other than his signature hospitality, Pak Said was too busy to attend to us, the “younger generation”. He left it to his family to make sure we had enough of the Hari Raya delicacies. Who could blame him? A gathering with his contemporaries was after all a rare occasion in those days.

It was years later in 2003 that I got the opportunity to drop in on Pak Said and his family in Subang Jaya, KL. The late lawyer, Tan Jing Quee, his wife Rose and I were attending a conference on “Rethinking Ethnicity and National Building” held at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia which was organised by the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) and convened by my London-days friend, Professor Rahman Embong and his colleagues. We paid Pak Said a courtesy call. To him I was a total stranger. Had it not been for Jing Quee who was one of his close friends, I would never have dreamt of making acquaintance with this legendary figure in Malaysian politics, and then Singapore and Malaysian politics.

While Pak Said’s wife Salamah, with Rose’s help, was in the kitchen preparing a meal, Jing Quee and Pak Said were like pals frequently chiding and poking fun at each other. They alternated their bantering between Malay and English, with Mandarin peppered in at appropriate junctures. One thing I notice about these so-called members of the Old Left (both English- and Chinese-speaking) is that many of them are effectively multilingual, and these two veterans could converse in Malay, Mandarin and English without much fuss. Had I been monolingual, I would have lost the fun and nuances of their jokes and altercations. It was a scintillating experience. The show of sodality between them was as natural as the flow of water.

That also happened to be the first occasion I heard Pak Said speak in Mandarin, albeit with a limited lexicon. Since then, visiting Pak Said with my F8 (Function 8) colleagues has almost become a must whenever we are in KL.

Much has been said and written about Journalist Said Zahari who used to rub shoulders with the likes of Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of Malaya, and Yusof Ishak, the first President of Singapore. Yet he was arrested during the 1963 Operation Coldstore which saw 111 people being rounded up and detained in one fell swoop. He was released only 17 years later.

Next to me are two volumes of Pak Said's memoirs: *Dark Clouds at Dawn – A Political Memoir* (2001) and *The Long Nightmare – My 17 years as a Political Prisoner* (2007), in which he writes about his life as a student, a journalist, a political initiator and a political prisoner. 17 years in detention was doggedly sustained by 17 years of resolve. His family was thrown into a limbo and his thoughts were with them all the time. But between "recanting" and upholding principles he chose the latter. For that he had to pay the price of being detained for that length of time by his nemesis, "the vindictive Prime Minister", as he put it.

How can one not revere his indomitable spirit? What made a person take the path of suffering instead of giving in to fabrication, bullying and intimidation? After all, Pak Said's youngest daughter was only a few months from birth when he was detained without trial by the notorious ISA.

In May 1987, I was, together with 23 other "Marxists", detained under the same ISA for being involved in a "Marxist Conspiracy" as labelled by the PAP government. I was detained twice for a period of 8 months, three of which was solitary confinement. Vincent Cheng was kept for the longest period of time, more than three years. This episode is resurrected

here not to draw any comparison. There is nothing to compare between a few years and 17 years (or 32 years in the case of Chia Thye Poh). There is nothing to compare between the ill-treatment and torture meted out to the 1987 detainees and those confronted many times more brutally by our predecessors, particularly those in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

A slight incursion could perhaps be made from the subtle impact our predecessors had on us. Indeed, the images of Said Zahari, Dr Lim Hock Siew, Dr Poh Soo Kai, Ho Piao and my detainee friends from the secondary school days kept flashing across my horizon when anxiety and uncertainty ruled the days. The question confronted was still the same one: What made a person take the path of suffering instead of giving in to fabrication, bullying and intimidation?

In 1961, the split in the PAP resulted in the formation of the Barisan Sosialis. Particularities aside, the general framework was one of battles between those who were determined to carry out the anti-colonial struggle to its fruition, i.e., independence for Malaya and Singapore, and those who were slated by the British to preserve the neo-colonial interests of the Western powers after they leave the scene. However, the anti-colonial forces in Singapore were too weak to take on Lee Kuan Yew and the like, partly due to the massive arrest of left-wing student, trade union and political leaders carefully and sinisterly planned in 1963. Singapore has since paraded a colonial servant, Stamford Raffles, as its national icon.

The books written by Pak Said cited earlier draw a vivid picture of the issues and principles Pak Said had to face in leading the *Utusan Melayu* strikes and venturing into local politics. He refused to kowtow to the leaders of UMNO when they wanted the newspaper Pak Said and his colleagues were running to submit to their whim and fancy. He was banned from re-entering Kuala Lumpur as a result. The steely

character I see in many ex-political detainees could have been forged through trials and tribulations such as those Pak Said experienced. In Martyn See's documentary "Said's 17 Years" produced in 2006, Pak Said's ungrudging stance in narrating his ordeals during his imprisonment is out of the ordinary. He was momentarily worried for his life only when his interrogators threatened to bump him off on the sly. He worried more about his family than for himself. Otherwise, his reply towards his accuser was tit-for-tat. If you accuse me of being a communist and instigating violence, put me on trial and I will defend myself. But the authority did not seem to have the gall to take on his challenge. Instead, Martyn's documentary has since its completion been banned in Singapore.

My friends and I often think about this question: would people like Said Zahari, Lim Chin Siong, Dr Lim Hock Siew, Dr Poh Soo Kai, TT Rajah, Lee Tee Tong, Ho Piao, and James Puthuchearay have done a better job if they had come into power in the 1960s? We are not sure when it comes to the material wealth that is opulently showcased in Singapore today. But as the saying goes: all that glitters is not gold. Material wealth alone cannot be the sole yardstick by which a society is judged.

One thing we are quite certain is that if political figures such as those mentioned above had turned Singapore history the other way round, the relationship between the peoples of Malaysia and Singapore would not have been so strained. The income disparity in Singapore would not have been so wide. People would have been more prepared to stand up and speak up for their rights. The media landscape would not have been so flat and monopolised. Nor would the power of government have been so abused and monetised.

When ministers and high officials have to be paid heftily before they are prepared to serve the country and people, the

essence of public office is that much denigrated. The call for volunteerism or dedication or patriotism to come forth is that much weakened. Loyalty is only a byword with little substance.

Professionals such as Pak Said and Dr Poh may be paid meagerly or nothing at all for what they have written and contributed. They do not have an entourage of researchers or journalists to assist in their undertakings. That is the case because they are said to have stood on the “wrong” side of history. But history in many countries has also shown that people who stand on the side of justice and persist in their struggle will triumph eventually. They continue to be prolific writers and share their knowledge and experience in spite of the odds. I have found that ex-political prisoners such as Pak Said and Dr Poh are very jealous about safeguarding their integrity and dignity. This could perhaps be the answer to the question about their unflinching spirit raised earlier.

The last time my F8 friends and I saw Pak Said was in September 2014. He was on a wheelchair and looked frail. He kept saying he was not as robust as he used to be. But that did not stop him from having spirited exchanges with the younger members among us. He might have lapses of memory but the resonant voice and laughter were unmistakably his. He was still his jovial self. He is no crapehanger.

Just as I was wondering if he could see through the third volume of his trilogy, I was naturally happy when I heard from Rahman Embong that it was indeed in the making. I have utmost respect for Pak Said, who is known as “the champion of press freedom”.

(This piece first appeared in the third volume of Said Zahari’s memoirs, *Suara Bicara*, published in 2015.)



Comrades at heart,
picture taken in 1962



Celebrating Said
Zahari's birthday
in 2015





Celebrating the launch of Said Zahari's third volume of memoirs in 2015



Obituary published in Lianhe Zaobao on 17 April 2016. The message says: In memory of former chairman of Partai Rakyat, comrade Said Zahari
Fighter for the people — whose illustrious name is etched in history;
Vanguard of justice — whose noble spirit is felt far and wide.

In Memory of
PAK SAID ZAHARI
(1928 - 2016)

We fondly remember Pak Said Zahari who passed away on 12 April 2016. He never failed to greet us with his hearty laughter and warm smiles whenever we met him. Despite his illness, he was always cheerful, and an inspiration to all of us.

Pak Said was truly a nationalist. As editor of *Utusan Melayu*, he fought for press freedom and was imprisoned for 17 years without trial. A writer and poet, his poems were smuggled out of prison and published, earning him an even longer period of detention. He carried on his fight for our freedom after his release, publishing *Dark*



Clouds at Dawn: A Political Memoir in 2001.

Pak Said, they branded you “anti-national”. But we know you as the quintessential nationalist.

Fondly remembered by:

KC Chew
Priscilla Chia
Michael Fernandez
Hans Goh
Henry Goh
P. Govindasamy
Koh Kay Yew
Maylene Lai
Muhammad Fadli Bin Mohammed Fawzi
G. Raman
Sinapan Samydarai
Jason Soo
Chris Tremewan
Rachel Zeng

Members of Function 8:

Chan Wai Han
Chin Wey Tze
Chng Suan Tze
Fong Hoe Fang
Adrian Heok
Ho Choon Hiong
Isrizal Mohamed Isa
Low Yit Leng
Pak Geok Choo
Tan Tee Seng
Teo Soh Lung
Wong Souk Yee
Yap Hon Ngian

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18 May 1928 - 12 April 2016

To many of us, Pak Said Zahari was a mentor, a comrade, a friend, a kindred soul. He was locked away for 17 years without trial from 1963 for his belief in freedom and democracy. But Said, as he is lovingly known to many of his friends from all walks of life, young and old, never lost his zest for living. Ever smiling, earnest in thought and words, this giant of a man will always remain in our hearts.

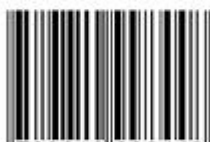


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