

Post-Malaya Imaginaries: Cold War legacy and the Reconstruction of Intellectual Discourse

Whether it is in the context of Malaya or Malaysia, the Cold War legacy affects not only real contemporary politics, social construction, but also the everyday lives of the people. The latter, such as manifested in the form of settlement in Chinese New Villages, has gradually shaped a persistent “inner martial law” among the mentality and spirits of the Chinese villagers. What was more obvious was the impact of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), which has since created a framework of “pro-communist” or “anti-communist” opposing ideologies and intellectual discourse, resulting in the conditioning of the Cold War mentality in the construction of intellectual imaginaries and discourse. The unearthing of “Post-Malaya Imaginaries” is an attempt to reveal the continuity of historical time and to examine how it conditions the intellectual discourse. It is necessary to break away from the old ways of forming a historical and intellectual structure, reimagining a new discourse to elucidate contemporary problems. This panel deals with the question of historical “ban lifting” in the post-Cold War era through several different approaches and topics, such as the discourse of “Islam and socialism” discussed by the Malay intellectuals, and the cultural Cold War in Sinophone/Chinese Malaysian literature. Focusing on intellectual groups from different ethnicities, the panel seeks to reveal the multiplicities and insidiousness of the Cold War legacy, and to find route to construct an intellectual imaginary and discourse that can overcome the Cold War mentality.

Conveners:

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Single session (3 presenters)