

Title	Revisiting the 1952 Legislation on State Nationality: Inter communal Negotiations and Contentions
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Executive summary

The issue of citizenship for non-Malays was at the heart of interethnic contentions and negotiations during the post-war period right till the independence of Malaya. Despite so, it is also much misunderstood, in particular with regards to the appreciation of the 1952 legislation on nationality and citizenship. Influenced by Ratnam (1965: 93), current Malaysian historiography generally assesses it in a positive light (Heng 1988: 155, Oong 2000: 158), and official national history narrative describes it as a “sacrifice” made by the Malay community (Ting 2009). This paper contends that this is only half of the truth, and argues that while the Malay community leaders perceived it as a concession on their part, Chinese community leaders actually perceived it as worse than the 1948 provisions (cf legal arguments made by Carnell 1952). Disappointed with the 1952 legislation, H.S. Lee reportedly urged the British government to set up an independent body or royal commission to address this situation whereby “hundreds and thousands of Chinese were not granted the right to which they are entitled by their birth” (Oong 2000: 158).

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