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Ⓟ Seri Dr Mahathir STAR 10 APR 1980

'HIGH AND MIGHTY' HYPOCRITES

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad made a stinging attack today on "high and mighty" British institutions and professionals who sat in judgment on others while turning a blind eye "on their own racialism in their own country".

And he lashed out at them for considering themselves not only an authority on academic standards, "but also the arbiter of political behaviour."

"Without knowing anything about a country they hinted darkly that they would not recognise qualifications unless the politics of the country conform to their personal wishes," he said, in an apparent reference to reports in the bulletin of the Institution of Engineers, Malaysia.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's remarks came when he opened a regional meeting of Commonwealth engineers.

He said:

"Without knowing anything about the situation prevailing in a country, they hinted darkly that they would not recognise qualifications unless the politics of a country conform to their personal wishes.

That they have not been asked to recognise these qualifications seemed to have escaped their notice.

They presume that their former colonial subjects, and the institutions they run would be asking for recognition and for that they should behave themselves.

But British professionals who adopt this high and mighty attitude are quite unable to see their own racialism in their own country.

The recent restriction on foreign students in Britain is typical of an inherent racist bias against non-Europeans.

Knowing that Malaysians and other Asians, due to an accident of history, are forced to go to Britain

"The gains are illusory which may disappear like a mirage when these overtaxed students gradually vanish from the British scene," he said.

He added that the blow was doubly hard when Britain decided recently to grant exemption to Commonwealth students while still discriminating against overseas Commonwealth countries.

He also said that the affinity binding engineering institutions in the Commonwealth was seriously eroded now that the British Government had discouraged students from the Commonwealth from pursuing their higher education there.

Malaysia before independence was subject to much restriction in the field of professional education.

Very few locals were trained as engineers because the British colonial administration wanted lucrative posts and the status of Government engineers reserved for their own kind.

As with the medical profession, on the basis of being Asiatic, fully qualified Malaysian engineers were appointed to inferior posts as compared with British engineers of doubtful qualification.

No matter how well Malaysian engineers performed, they would not be appointed to posts reserved for British officers.

The monopoly of the British was maintained by making only British qualifications recognised for the purpose of practising.

This created the impression that British standards were superior and that those of other countries were unacceptable.

Such was the psychological effect of this colonial strategy that the British institutions themselves to this day believed in their superiority and that no one could really consider himself professionally qualified until the British institutions decided to recognise the qualifications.

Of late, there is a tendency among British institutions and professionals not only to look at academic standards but also to consider themselves the arbiter of political behaviour.

for education, a deliberate policy of keeping them out is applied.

On the other hand, Europeans are exempted.

We do not question the right of any Government to decide on any policy, but the British professionals should recognise the racist in themselves before they so righteously condemn racialism in others.

And above all, do not make disparaging remarks about standards and individuals merely because you don't like the politics.

Professionals should be above such bias.

If you want to be a politician, then the honest thing to do is to quit the profession you trained for and join me as a politician.

The Government does not wish to influence the local engineers as to the company they should keep.

But I would like to state that Malaysia is now an independent country.

We don't need gratuitous advice, especially from those who created our present problem for us by segregating races and denying education.

The Deputy Premier's remarks on British education policy was echoed by Mr Wong Kin Hong, president of the Institution of Engineers.

Mr Wong urged Britain to reconsider her decision to impose higher fees on foreign students. He said Britain should not sacrifice

her long-term interests for short-term gains by charging overseas students the full cost of fees.