

PM'S NATIONAL DAY CALL

Let's rekindle nationalism

NST 31 AUG 1985

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.
— The nation needs a resurgence of the spirit of nationalism to propel it to greater heights, the Prime Minister said tonight.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in spelling this out over RTM on the eve of National Day, felt that since two out of three Malaysians were under 30 they would not have witnessed the struggle for independence.

And as the years go by he feared that there would be fewer and fewer people imbued with this spirit that led to the nation winning its independence 28 years ago.

He warned of the threat of neo-colonialism which came by way of economic control, imposition of political ideologies and cultural subversion.

This had to be countered by Malaysians who were knowledgeable in all fields, including religion.

Recounting the historic gathering in Malacca when Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman returned from London and the colonial flag was lowered at the Selangor Club padang to usher in Merdeka, Dr Mahathir said:

"There were people who came alone. Not many had cars... many came by bus or walked. In short the response was spontaneous. It was not arranged.

"All this was because they had known the bitter life under colonialism... a life of oppression... restriction

"When independence was declared, it was the moment, the time which was most meaningful to them. What more when freedom was achieved through struggle and a spirit that drove right into their very soul.

"It was a national spirit but one that was not arrogant.

"With the increase in the number of those born after Merdeka, the appreciation of independence is waning. This is indeed a contrast to what was felt by the generation which lived under colonialism."

On neo-colonialism, Dr Mahathir said colonialism in whatever form would curb "our freedom".

Freedom

"The independence that we fought for in the past will be useless if neo-colonialism is allowed to replace it.

"The most effective approach to face this new style of colonialism is through the mastering of knowledge in all fields including religion, and by equipping ourselves with skills.

"Thus, can we channel our spirit of nationalism towards achieving knowledge and skills which are useful in the sustenance of our freedom as well as in the maintaining of our dignity and strength of religion, race and country."

Dr Mahathir said nationalism meant unity and it was imperative that the people avoid any type of influence that could lead to discord.

MALACCA IS VERY FITTING CHOICE:

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"We must examine critically any calls, propaganda or emotions that accuse another race of being weak or wrong. We must examine our actions which can lead to conflict or disunity.

"History has proven that discord leads to destruction and backwardness. No society can achieve success if the people are not united."

In this connection it was important to study the history of other civilisations besides that of this country.

If there was greed, self-interest and incessant fault-finding, society would become weak or would eventually be destroyed or even come under colonial rule again.

"Let us be mindful of this. Let us not worship discord. Rather, we should work towards instilling (the spirit of) unity so that we do not destroy what we have achieved and instead attain a higher level of success.

"It was this unity that had helped win the fight against the Malayan Union, the British rule in the peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak and the communist threat in 1960.

"It was, therefore, appropriate that the theme for this year's National Day celebrations is *Nasionalisme Teras Perpaduan* (Nationalism The Foundation of Unity)."

The choice of Malacca as the venue for this year's national-level celebrations was very fitting because Malacca was not only the centre of the first empire in the history of the country but also where the date of independence was announced.