

Hard hitting speech on a variety of subjects

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ON FRIDAY Sept. 27 Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad delivered his presidential address which lasted two hours. It was a hard hitting speech as was to be expected, from a president of Umno who revels in calling a spade a spade.

It was a wide ranging speech and he touched on a variety of subjects which are of vital interest not only to the Malays but to the non-Malays as well.

I call on all the citizens of this country to read this speech carefully because it will have a bearing on many important facets of life in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister stated that the Malays recognised the rights of the other races as citizens of Malaysia. He added that most of them are loyal to the country.

This was very reassuring, coming as it does on the heels of what Dr Mahathir himself said recently when he called the non-Malays *pendatang*.

This had sent shock waves amongst the non-Malays in this country. Many of them, especially in Malacca and Penang, have lived in this country for centuries and after their long stay in this country, they have been called *pendatang* i.e. immigrants by none other than the Prime Minister himself.

Take my own case for example. I was born and bred in this country. The only languages I speak are Malay and English and I have not thought of migrating to any other country.

Like Sir Walter Scott, I wish to proclaim: "Breathes there a man with soul so dead who never to himself has said, this is my own my native land!" And I can assure Dr Mahathir Mohamad that thousands, nay hundred of thousands of non-Malays have such feelings and views as well.

Freedom of religion and Islamisation

THE former is guaranteed to non-Muslims under our Constitution but it would trouble the non-Muslims if there were obstacles placed in the propagation of their religion amongst the non-Muslims in this country.

As for Islamisation, non-Muslims do not know enough of it and they fear that creeping Islamisation may turn them into Muslims.

Money politics

I AM glad that Umno itself realises that money politics is a pernicious evil which if not rooted out will in the end destroy the party itself.

I congratulate Datuk Aziz Tapa of Malacca for reminding the delegates that it was moral decadence that eventually destroyed the once great Roman Empire in the early years of the Christian era.

I will go further and say that Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* should be compulsory reading for the members of the Umno Supreme Council.

If that is done, it may arrest the decadence that has already set in

because of the affluence that Umno has acquired.

Although the meeting has not been as lively as it had been in the past few years, nevertheless some of the delegates did not mince their words.

Thus, Encik Abu Bakar of Johore pointedly said that all are involved in money politics including the leaders. Haji Khalid Yunus of Negri Sembilan urged Supreme Council members to discipline themselves before calling on the party members to follow suit. To his question whether he was right in making that call, he received a deafening YES!

This reminds me of the story that is making the rounds in this country. It goes: When the MIC gets into trouble it goes to Sai Baba; when Umno runs into business snags it turns to Ali Baba but when MCA runs into trouble it calls on Ghaffar Baba! And if he runs for the presidency of MCA he may well win!

Royalty

DR MAHATHIR also warned both royalty and commoners that the institution of royalty in this country is being corroded by businessmen who worked hand in glove with royalty in business ventures where the latter used their positions to secure an advantage over their competitors.

Rural poverty

DELEGATE after delegate pointedly reminded the leaders that all the Ministers, deputy ministers and quite a number of Umno MPs are returned from rural constituencies and yet not enough is being done for rural areas.

As a doctor, I am saddened that no delegate has asked the Supreme Council why medical facilities are still inadequate in rural areas.

Is it because when the ruling elite fall sick they are well taken care of in well-equipped modern hospitals in the urban areas; and when these are not adequate the ruling elite seek treatment in Harley Street or the Mayo Clinic?

Have the rural people so little clout that they cannot get modern rural health centres with well-trained staff?

The MCA

DR MAHATHIR had of course to touch on the MCA crisis as quite a number of the marginal seats depend on the non-Malay votes.

But he could not resist the chance to take a swipe at those in the MCA who at the beginning of the crisis asked the Umno to intervene and when Umno did so by lending the services of Ghaffar Baba, these very same MCA members cried foul because Umno was interfering in the affairs of MCA!

Some MCA members have taken umbrage at the references to the MCA in the Umno General Assembly.

Wage claim

NOW Cuepacs can see that Umno has bared its fangs and thrown the mailed fist at the workers of this country. They were told that the Government will not negotiate in the shadow of threats from the unions.

The workers say quite correctly that picketing and strikes are the only weapons that the workers of this country have. To ask them to give up these weapons would make the workers feel naked.

AND so the curtain has fallen on the 36th General Assembly. Umno has girded itself for the coming election battle. As the delegates leave the Dewan Merdeka, well may they exclaim: "To the polls!"