

B E018 AAE
 MAHATHIR-DEMOCRACY
 BH



88
 KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 28/ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY HIT OUT AT GROUPS ACCUSING THE GOVERNMENT OF BEING UNDEMOCRATIC, AND SAID MALAYSIA PRACTISED DEMOCRACY AND ITS ADMINISTRATION IS BOUND BY THE LAWS OF THE COUNTRY.

IN AN ADMINISTRATION BASED ON THE LAWS, THERE WERE CERTAIN PRINCIPLES THAT MUST BE RESPECTED AND NO ONE WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE LAWS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS OPENING THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE.

THE THREE-DAY ASSEMBLY IS HELD IN DEWAN MERDEKA OF THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE (PNTC).

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO UMNO PRESIDENT REGRETTED THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, WHO IS RESPECTED AS A STATESMAN, HAD SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DEMOCRATIC.

→THE TUNKU, UNFORTUNATELY, IS CONFUSED AND HAS BEEN ENDOILED IN THE POLITICAL PLAY OF CERTAIN QUARTERS TO SERVE THEIR OWN PURPOSES,→ HE SAID.

DESPITE BEING INVITED, THE TUNKU, FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUN HUSSEIN ONN AND FORMER UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT DATUK MUSA HITAM HAD NOT TURNED UP FOR THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AN EVENT NORMALLY ATTENDED BY PARTY VETERANS, HE ADDED.

ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THE UNDEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WAS THE COUNTRY'S FIRST GOVERNMENT (UNDER THE TUNKU). -- MORE
 1346MST 28 10 88

B E020 AAE
 MAHATHIR-DEMOCRACY 2 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE THAT UMNO, THE THEN ALLIANCE AND THE CABINET WERE NEVER CONSULTED WHEN THE TUNKU ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF MALAYSIA AT A FUNCTION IN SINGAPORE.

IF DEMOCRACY HAD TRULY EXISTED AT THAT TIME, SUCH A MOMENTOUS DECISION WOULD FIRST BE REFERRED TO ALL QUARTERS FOR THEIR VIEWS, HE SAID.

SIMILARLY WITH SINGAPORE'S SEPARATION FROM MALAYSIA, THE FINAL DECISION WAS MADE IN LONDON AND THE LATE TUN ABDUL RAZAK, AS THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, WAS ONLY INFORMED OF IT.

THE LATE TAN SRI SYED JAAFAR ALBAR WHO OPPOSED THE DECISION WAS DROPPED AS UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL.

BEFORE HIS ADMINISTRATION TOOK OVER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID, PUBLICATION PERMITS WERE DIFFICULT TO GET. FOR CRITICISING UMNO, COPIES OF THE MINGSIAN MARTA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED IN SINGAPORE WERE TAKEN OUT OF THE JOHOR BAHRU RAILWAY STATION AND BURNED ON THE ORDERS OF THE THEN UMNO PRESIDENT.

UMNO THEN BOUGHT OVER THE UTUSAN MELAYU AND THE STRAITS TIMES NEWSPAPERS. WHEN THE CHINA PRESS PAPER CRITICISED THE MOVE, ITS LICENCE WAS CANCELLED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HE SAID MORE NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, INCLUDING THOSE OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT, WERE GIVEN PUBLICATION PERMITS SINCE 1981, AND THE GOVERNMENT ONLY WITHDREW THE PERMITS OF PAPERS TRYING TO FIT THE RACES AGAINST EACH OTHERS, AS HAD HAPPENED OCTOBER LAST YEAR. -- MORE
 1331MST 28 10 88

0765

B E033 AAE
MAHATHIR-DEMOCRACY 3 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT (ISA), HE SAID CLAIMS THAT ONLY THE COMMUNISTS WERE DETAINED UNDER THE ACT IN THE PAST WERE NOT TRUE.

HE SAID MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE WENT UNDER DETENTION DURING THE TIME OF THE THREE PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTERS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF PAS, THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE DAP. AMONG THEM WERE DAP LEADER LIM KIT SIANG, FORMER CABINET MINISTER AZIZ ISHAK AND EDUCATION MINISTER ANNAR IBRAHIM.

AT THE END OF 1968 AND IN EARLY 1969, LABOUR PARTY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES RESIGNED FROM THEIR SEAT ONE BY ONE AND THE GOVERNMENT AMENDED THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION SO THAT VACANCIES NEED NOT BE FILLED IF THEY OCCURRED SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF THE NORMAL TERM OF PARLIAMENT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID WHAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS DOING HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT BY PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS, AND IN FACT SOME OF THEIR PAST ACTIONS WERE MORE UNDEMOCRATIC.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW UPHELD BY THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID IT WAS TRUE THE RULERS WERE NOT SUBJECT TO ORDINARY LAWS BUT THEY WERE STILL NOT FREE TO DO ANYTHING THEY LIKED, TO THE EXTENT OF COMMITTING CRIMES.

+IN REALITY, ALL OF US, WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER OR THE LABOURER, JUDGE OR CRIMINAL, ARE SUBJECT TO THE LAW,+ HE ADDED. --
MORE

1628MST 28 10 88

0766

B E034 AAE
MAHATHIR-DEMOCRACY 4 KUALA LUMPUR

ON THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, HE SAID LAWS FORMULATED BY MAN COULD BE AMENDED BUT THE AMENDMENTS SHOULD SATISFY CERTAIN PRINCIPLES.

+WE CANNOT FOR INSTANCE AMEND THE LAWS TO DISSOLVE THE COURTS,+ HE ADDED, AND SAID IF THE GOVERNMENT DID SO, PARLIAMENT WOULD THEN BECOME THE HIGHEST COURT OF THE LAND, ABOVE EVEN THE SUPREME COURT.

TO PROTECT JUDGES FROM PRESSURE FROM ANY GROUP, A SPECIAL PROVISION WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE CONSTITUTION TO MAKE THEIR REMOVAL DIFFICULT. A JUDGE COULD ONLY BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE BY HIS FELLOW JUDGES THROUGH THE APPOINTMENT OF A TRIBUNAL. THE KING IS BOUND BY THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE TRIBUNAL.

PERHAPS SACKING OF JUDGES HAD NEVER BEFORE HAPPENED IN THIS COUNTRY, UNLIKE COUNTRIES LIKE CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND INDIA, HE SAID.

+HOWEVER, WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT JUDGES IN MALAYSIA THAT THEY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS BEING ABOVE THE LAW?+ HE ASKED WHEN COMMENTING ON THE STATEMENT BY THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUP WHICH WANT REINSTATEMENT OF SACKED LORD PRESIDENT TUN SALLEH ABAS AND TWO SUPREME COURT JUDGES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS GROUP HAD RESORTED TO VARIOUS MEANS TO FRUSTRATE UMNO AND VACATED SEATS TO FORCE BY-ELECTIONS, AND ALL THEIR ACTIONS WERE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE OPPOSITION IN THE COUNTRY AND CERTAIN MEDIA OVERSEAS.

THE MOTIVE OF THE FOREIGN MEDIA AND THESE GROUPS WAS TO DESTABILISE THE COUNTRY AND THWART ITS DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID. --
BERNAMA

1630MST 28 10 88