

# Mahathir invites all Malays to join Umno Baru

29 OCT 1988

① Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. (All)

UMNO Baru has invited to its fold all Malays, including former Umno members and those in PAS, the DAP and PSRM.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Umno Baru did not want disunity among the Malays because this could erode their political strength and threaten their survival.

Opening the Umno Baru general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday, he cautioned the Malays against being used as "tools to cripple themselves."

In his two hour speech, the Prime Minister touched on:

- EFFORTS by Umno Baru leaders to unite the Malays and opposition by dissidents from the old Umno;

- PREVIOUS changes made to the Umno constitution and the party leadership;

- EVENTS that led to the deregistration of the old Umno and the registration of Umno Baru;

- DEMOCRACY and the judiciary in Malaysia since independence;

- FOREIGN threats to the country's stability;

- MALAYSIA'S success in trade and industry;

- THE New Economic Policy after 1990; and

- DEVELOPMENT of education and Islam.

Dr Mahathir said the party believed that Malay unity and political strength were crucial for the stability and well-being of the nation.

The fate of the non-Malays also depended on the Malays being politically strong, he said.

"If we feel responsible to the nation and all in the country, we must make ev-

"If we are politically weak, it will be difficult for us to achieve anything. If it is crippled altogether, all the hopes of the Malays will be nothing more than wishful thinking," he added.

In a democratic country, he said, it was important for the leaders to have the people's support to develop the nation.

The Prime Minister said the Malays were still lagging behind the others.

The Malays were, however, fortunate in that they were not an oppressed race like the blacks of South Africa, he added.

"We were jolted by the British with their Malayan Union plan.

"In fear, we became united and dared to challenge the British. We were successful.

"That gave us the high position once held by those who colonised us.

"And from then too began the clamour for positions and posts by those with selfish interests.

"Today we have reached a dangerous place. We have still not achieved the objectives of our struggle. And others have exploited the split among us," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Umno Baru was no different from the Umno that was formed at Istana Besar in Johore Baru in May 1946 and declared unlawful in February this year.

"We are still the same Umno, the party that has represented the Malays since 1946 and formed with the aim of opposing the Malayan Union.

"We are the party that fought for Independence, that fulfilled the people's needs and gave them their

gle to achieve Independence but also amended the party's constitution to consolidate the power of the president to carry out the struggle."

Dr Mahathir said the first amendment was made to the constitution to change the composition of the Umno supreme council so that the secretary-general, the treasurer and five council members were appointed by the president.

This was to ensure that Umno's central administration was controlled by the president and to allow him to gain the support of the majority in the supreme council, Dr Mahathir said.

The constitution was amended a second time to strengthen the central Umno body, he added.

"At that time, the State Umno controlled all divisions in the State concerned.

"The amendment dissolved the State Umno and in its place were the Umno State liaison committees which had no executive powers. The divisions dealt directly with and were controlled by the Umno headquarters.

"The State liaison committees only co-ordinated the activities of the divisions. Delegates to the general assembly were no longer State representatives but representatives of the various divisions."

Dr Mahathir said that various changes were made to the constitution since the party was formed, but they had never changed the essence, fundamental objectives and aspirations of Umno.

"Umno remains Umno, the leading party representing the spirit, ambitions and struggle of the

only given posts as president (now known as Speaker) of the Dewan Rakyat."

Dr Mahathir added that when Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn were Prime Ministers, they too had reasons to replace certain Cabinet members.

"Let us not pretend that before this there were no dismissal of those opposed to the views of the majority.

"I would like to remind you that those relieved of their Cabinet posts last year had not kept to their oath of keeping government secrets."

He said that in their efforts to take charge of the party, the dissidents focussed their attack on only one person.

"Because this person held the highest post, the dissidents thought that if he could be ousted and replaced by the person most ambitious to fill the seat, the new leader can take in other people of his choice to fill other key posts," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that the Malays and Malaysians in general would not be so easily duped.

"They will not easily believe that if this dissident group takes over no Minister or Deputy Minister will lose his seat," he said.

Dr Mahathir said despite the many changes to the party's constitution over the years and the expulsions of various members, the party remained intact because it was generally accepted by both members and non-members as the party most capable to champion the plight of the Malays.

"Dragging the party to

ery effort to shore up the political strength of the Malays.

"In view of this, Umno Baru is prepared to accept any Malay who wants to be its member, whether he is a former Umno member or not.

"We are prepared to discuss with anyone interested in joining the party. We are prepared to accept members of PSRM, PAS or the DAP and other Malays. They can apply to join us if they are willing to adhere to our policies and struggle," he said.

If they joined Umno Baru, he said, they would have the same rights as others already in the party as provided for by the constitution.

"These rights, however, must be exercised responsibly. All we are asking, all that we are appealing for is for an immediate stop to the split among the Malays."

Dr Mahathir said the position of the Malays was far from secure because they had not made great strides in the various fields.

"We face greater challenges ahead to forge a Malay race that is respected by the world," he added.

He said the party was not formed merely to achieve political ends.

"It was formed to protect the rights of the Malays and their future and the position of Islam and the nation," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays needed political power to achieve the goals.

rights after Independence, and gave the Malays their special position as bumiputras in Malaya and later Malaysia.

"Umno was the backbone of the Alliance and later the Barisan Nasional. The ruling that it is an unlawful party is a technical matter. The decision to deregister it is also technical. The decision to register it again also becomes a technical matter.

"Umno as the tool of the Malays in their struggle had never ceased to exist," Dr Mahathir said.

He said that Umno, as a "living body," had evolved with developments in the nation and the changing times.

In its early stage, Umno focused its attention on uniting the Malays to oppose the Malayan Union. The party, led by Datuk Onn Jaafar, succeeded in this effort, he said.

"Later Datuk Onn suggested that Umno, the party of the Malays, become a party of all races. This was a deviation from the basis and spirit of Umno.

"Datuk Onn's suggestion was not consistent with the political needs of the Malays. Umno, therefore, rejected the leadership of Datuk Onn and those with the same views."

After this, Tun Abdul Razak and others loyal to the Umno struggle invited Tunku Abdul Rahman to lead the party, Dr Mahathir said.

"The Tunku not only stepped up the Umno strug-

Malays.

"Just as the exit of Datuk Onn and his supporters did not affect the strength and struggle of Umno for the Malays, likewise the removal of several Umno leaders by the party president and other party leaders had not affected Umno," he added.

He said the party stalwarts dismissed included Encik Aziz Ishak, a Cabinet member (who wanted to open a paper factory and fertiliser plant) and Khatijah Sidek (Wanita head).

Dr Mahathir said he was once sacked as a member of the supreme council and from Umno because he had criticised the Government.

The Prime Minister said it was not reasonable of certain Umno dissidents to accuse him of expelling several Cabinet members merely because they lost in the party elections.

"Is it all that absurd? When Datuk Onn, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang, Datuk Zainal Abidin, Datuk Nik Kamil and other founder members were rejected by the majority of party members, they were not accepted in the Cabinet when the nation achieved its Independence.

"But while they were not in the party leadership, Datuk Nik Kamil, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang and several original leaders of the party continued to work hard to achieve Independence for the country.

"When Datuk Nik Kamil and Datuk C.M. Yusof returned to Umno, they were

court was something that did not previously cross the minds of the members. The court ruling (that Umno is unlawful) is alien to Umno. It is not Umno's choice.

"It (the court decision) was not the wish of Umno although a small group of members with self-interest had probably hoped for it," he said.

The Prime Minister said the party had harboured unregistered branches since its beginning in 1946.

"This, however, had not posed a problem before because members were loyal to its cause. They chose to resolve all their problems through the avenues available, such as the disciplinary bureau and the supreme council.

"Whatever their grievances, the members did not resort to finding solu-

tions outside Umno because it would only serve to tarnish the party's image."

Dr Mahathir said it was only after Umno was infiltrated by people who were not loyal to the party and who did not have the Malay spirit that the issue was taken to the courts.

"They chose to put the party behind self interest, and their own political motives. It did not matter to them that the party becomes chaotic, weak or illegal. To them, the most important thing is the chance to take over the party leadership."

He said the application to form Umno Baru was made after the old Umno was officially deregistered. The application was the first to be made for a political party that used the name "Umno" after the old party was deregistered.

"Its registration was

therefore appropriate. And after it, no other party can register with a similar name."

Dr Mahathir said the addition of the word "Baru" after "Umno" was mainly to avoid confusion with the old party in relation to the management of assets by the Official Assignee.

"In fact, after the original party was deregistered the party that replaces it can use the original name without adding other words to the name.

"This, however, could cause some difficulty to the Registrar of Societies and the Official Assignee in matters related to the management of the old party's assets and other businesses connected to Umno."

Dr Mahathir said that Umno Baru, which was registered on Feb 13 this year, was in effect the legal

body to continue the policies, spirit, membership and struggle determined by the Umno formed in 1946.

"The deregistration of Umno was not due to the existence of unlawful branches. It came about because the matter was taken to court.

"In 1984, after the general assembly of that year there were several members who took the party to court. But they did not pursue their efforts to the extent of the party being declared unlawful."

Dr Mahathir said that following the incident the party leaders reviewed the files of all branches and found that more than 5,000 party branches were not registered.

"Many of these branches had not been registered since 1966. But nobody took the party to court," he said.

# PM on democracy and the Rule of Law

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said allegations that the Government was undemocratic were baseless.

He said it was unfortunate that the view was also shared by the country's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Dr Mahathir said it was not right to touch on the administration and actions of the Tunku as he was a well-respected leader.

"It is unfortunate that the Tunku was confused and dragged into the political games of certain people who had their own selfish interests.

"In reality, it was the first Government of Malaysia that was not democratic. It is public knowledge that Umno, the Alliance and the Cabinet were not consulted when the decision was made on the formation of Malaysia at a function in Singapore.

"If democracy had existed then, a matter of such magnitude would have been referred to the people for their views.

"It was the same with the decision to sack Singapore from Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the decision to expel Singapore from Malaysia was made in London and the then Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak was merely informed of the matter.

Dr Mahathir said that the late Syed Jaafar Albar who opposed the move was sacked as Umno secretary-general.

The Prime Minister said permits for newspapers were also difficult to obtain then.

He said that for criticising the Go-

vernment, the weekly *Mingguan Warta* which was published in Singapore was seized at the Johore Baru railway station and burnt on the orders of the then Umno president.

Dr Mahathir said Umno, during that time, also took over the *Utusan Melayu* and bought the *Straits Times*.

"No papers criticised the Government. The *China Press* which criticised the Government had its licence revoked," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that since 1981 the KDN (permits for newspapers) was given freely, even to critics of the Government.

"If we look back, we will see that many newspapers and magazines had been published since 1981. Many of them attacked the Government.

"It was only when they tried to turn one race against another that their KDN was withdrawn, like what happened in October last year."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said that more than 2,000 people were detained under the Internal Security Act during the term of the three former Prime Ministers.

He said the detainees not only comprised communist elements but also politicians from PAS, the Labour Party and the DAP. Among the detainees then were Mr Lim Kit Siang, Encik Aziz Ishak and Encik Anwar Ibrahim.

"Is there any truth that only communist elements were previously detained?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir said that towards the end of 1968 and in early 1969, elected members from the Labour Party resigned one by one to irritate the Go-

vernment.

"Was there not action against them? The leadership condemned the action.

"And then the constitution was amended to provide that in the event a seat fell vacant in the Dewan Rakyat six months before the expiry of the regular parliamentary term, it will not be filled.

"As for town councils, the elections were suspended and appointments were made instead by the Government when it was found that the Opposition parties usually took control of the councils and politicise town administration."

Dr Mahathir said what was being done by the present Government was not anything that previous Governments had not done.

"In fact, there were actions by former Prime Ministers which were more undemocratic.

"Whenever the Government took security measures, only the Opposition parties and the foreign Press accused the Government of not being democratic. Members of Umno, the Alliance and the Barisan Nasional always welcomed the Government's move.

"If we study the records of debates in the Dewan Rakyat and the papers then, we will find that this is true."

The Prime Minister said that accusations that the present Government was not democratic were made by a small dejected group of former Umno members.

"In fact, they are the ones who are undemocratic. When they were given

the power they acted harshly, sacking those they disliked and were rough with those who did not do as they asked.

"Many of those who disagreed with the previous leaders were not nominated to stand in the elections by various State leaders.

"So, who is not democratic — the previous governments or the present one?"

The Prime Minister said that the country, while adhering to democratic rules, was also bound by the legal system. "Nobody is above the law," he added.

"While it is true that the Rulers are above the ordinary laws, they are not so free that they can commit crimes.

"In essence, all of us — whether we are the Prime Minister or a labourer, whether we are a judge or an accused — are bound by the law.

Dr Mahathir said to ensure that judges were free of pressures from other quarters, provisions in the constitution make it difficult to remove judges.

"The power to remove judges does not rest with the Government, the people or the Ruler.

"Only the judges have that power and they must follow specific procedures through a tribunal made up solely of judges.

"The Ruler is bound by the advice of the tribunal. Politicians cannot interfere in this matter. That is what the constitution provides for.

"Such a provision will not be included in the constitution if those who designed it did not want errant judges

removed.

"This provision showed how seriously those who drafted the constitution looked upon the position of the judges and the independence of the judiciary.

"But they too knew that judges were merely human and could make mistakes. Therefore, in specific situations, through a specific process, they (the judges) can be dismissed."

Dr Mahathir said that many opponents of the Government spoke about the Rule of Law but did not want it to be imposed upon certain people, particularly the Lord President.

"What is the meaning of the Rule of Law if there is to be favouritism and discrimination in its application?" he asked.

The Prime Minister said that judges had not been dismissed before because they had not flouted the law.

Such a thing, however, had occurred in other countries like Canada, the United States, Britain and India, he said.

"What is so special about the judges in Malaysia that they consider themselves to be above the law?" he said.

Dr Mahathir said that some people who spoke about the Rule of Law were now trying to amend the laws so that court decisions could be revoked by Parliament.

"Is their claim true then that they respect an administration based on the Rule of Law?"

"Or, is it the politics of self-interest that has caused them to have such views about the removal of judges?" Dr Mahathir asked.

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# Islam and education

NATIONS have fallen because their leaders lost their sense of morals and obligations to religion. This should not be allowed to happen in Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said history had shown that many backward nations grew to be progressive, wealthy and strong but later slid back until they became totally obscure.

The Prime Minister said many Muslim countries had also been affected by leaders who misused their powers and used up their nation's wealth for their personal needs.

He urged Muslims in Malaysia to take heed of such happenings and said it was important that they acquire true Islamic teachings.

Dr Mahathir said emphasis should be given, not on forms that are said to be Islamic, but rather on values that reflect the true Islamic nature, such as sincerity, being truthful, friendly, responsible, brave and other noble values so that knowledge and skills acquired are not misused.

"We have seen before the recession, how affluence made many people, including the Malays, so greedy that they even resorted to cheating and abusing the power entrusted to them.

"Greed also led to a split among the Malays and a power struggle to meet selfish interests.

"For this reason, there are views that it is better not to pursue progress and instead remain with our backwardness," he said.

The Prime Minister said the Government will give more attention to *dakwah* activities. There will be more allocations and manpower will also be increased for this purpose.

He said the contributions and effectiveness of Islamic

institutes of learning — from the kindergarten to the universities — will be reviewed so that they are consistent with the true teachings of Islam and not merely the interests of specific groups.

"Deviations that presently occur must be wiped out," he said.

On efforts to develop education, Dr Mahathir said its role in the development of the community and the nation will be reviewed from time to time.

"A degree from a higher institute of learning does not necessarily mean that the holder is capable of handling any job.

"This is true with regards to the needs of the nation in this technological age.

"The use of modern technology, in a practical way, must be given due attention in the schools and universities.

"We do not need a white-collared engineer who sits in an air-conditioned room and functions as an administrator.

"We do not want professionals who pursue degrees all their life without using their knowledge in their everyday life and within the society.

"We do not need too many people chasing knowledge merely to spread it through theories."

Dr Mahathir said in short, education is carried out with the motive of using knowledge in its practical sense so that the process of industrialisation can be stepped up.

"In a rapidly developing nation, to learn for the sake of learning will not necessarily earn a good assessment compared to learning for the sake of using knowledge for the development of society and the nation," he added.