

# Dr M raps DAP and Semangat over GSP

MST 26 JUN 1990

By K. Bala and  
Hisham Mahzan

ARAU, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed regret that certain Malaysian trade unionists were falling for the ploy of their American counterparts to help retard Malaysia's economic growth.

The Prime Minister singled out MTUC president Zainal Rampak and secretary-general Dr V. David and their respective parties — Semangat 46 and DAP — as betrayers of the nation over the move to revoke the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) status of Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir told a Press conference at the end of his one-day visit to the State that foreigners, especially the AFL-CIO, had no right to make rulings or impose its values on the Malaysian Government.

"We need not employ outside forces to do whatever we need to do ... where is our freedom?" he said.

Elaborating on why the American unions were motivated by their own interest, he said they were of the opinion that developing countries could not compete against them.

"They want all investments to remain in their country. By doing so they can produce the goods and sell them to us because we no longer can compete against them."

Citing South Korea as an example, he said the American unions, envious of the country's industrial success, had instigated the workers to go on strikes, saying there was no freedom for the workers.

The subsequent industrial unrest had left South Korea with a trade deficit, even though not too long ago it had big trade surplus.

The main reason these MTUC leaders were instigating electronic workers in Malaysia to form a national union was to enable them to widen their influence and their political base.

A bigger membership for the MTUC would also mean more income for them to operate, he said. If the 130,000 electronics workers in the country are placed under one organisation they would be very strong and may even threaten the electronics industry.

He advised Malaysian electronic workers not to fall for such ploys because they would end up being the losers.

He said salaries in the electronic sector were not low and with continued growth they could expect better remuneration.

Dr Mahathir said the move towards in-house unions in the industry was for their own benefit.

"Electronic firms who are doing well can pay them well," he said, adding that a national union could be harmful to employees of small firms who would not be able to afford to pay their workers high wages.