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Time Umno Youth woke up

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THE many analyses and criticisms of Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein's leadership of Umno Youth indicates all is not so well in the movement vis-a-vis Umno itself.

The Youth movement has always been pivotal in training future leaders of Umno and its success was also reflected in Keadilan's fortunes when its leaders, who are former Umno Youth stalwarts, won a few seats.

Gerak gempur, jangan gempur or jangan campur, seems to be the order of the day. It is now a timid movement, instead of roaring to fend enemies off its territories.

As a member of Umno who watched from the sidelines the goings-on in the Youth movement, I cannot help but feel sorry for Hishammuddin as he is surrounded by well-wishers instead of doers, and others who are just waiting to eat him up, given half a chance.

Criticism is by no means harmful, but threatening to resign every time things are not right in the party is a stupid thing to do. Instead of just angling for pity and seeking solace in calls asking these people to withdraw their resignations, the Umno Youth leader should look inward and seek help.

Rumours and negative reports abound regarding Umno Youth's inability to face future political challenges. This does not augur well for the Malays who had held to the belief that Umno was the only champion of their future generations.

It is being challenged by no other than former Umno members themselves who have found solace in supporting Keadilan. It is not because Umno is bad, but Keadilan appears to be a venue and outlet to vent one's frustrations and challenge the authorities.

For those who do not fancy wearing a skullcap or sporting a goatee and being identified with Pas, Keadilan is the answer.

Say what you want, throw stones at the police, stop any bus you think is carrying phantom voters, it all boils down to one thing: What is Umno Youth going to do about it?

These detractors have the foreign media on their side and Suhakam is ever ready to censure the police for over-reacting. Sometimes, I wonder if they think we are in some city in South America or Africa where the Opposition is constantly harassed, kidnapped and maimed for life, or even killed.

We are indeed blessed by leaders from different racial backgrounds who have one political belief, i.e., "peaceful co-existence" in a country where extreme views are looked upon with disdain and problems are solved through strong political will and racial goodwill.

The Opposition parties are treading on dangerous ground and they know it. They cannot deny that they are associated with and supported by outsiders. They get to be in news highlights outside the country, and these are good for their ego.

Perhaps, if it is not too insulting to some of these Umno Youth activists, I suggest they should go back to basics and learn the art of war, tactics and strategy as well as the art of propaganda and political indoctrination.

Do not just look at the possibility of becoming CEO of a public-listed company, or harass Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin for contracts, or write to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for special

favours.

Umno Youth must be revamped, its membership drive taken to the grassroots level, universities and colleges.

Give the Youth movement a new life, be more aggressive, revive the gerak gempur and convince them Umno should be the No. 1 choice.

Tell the people that the Opposition is nothing but a group giving voice to unfulfilled egos, fully supported by outsiders and neo-economic and political colonialists intent on subjugating Malaysia.

Umno Youth should also do a soul-searching exercise and choose leaders committed to the overall political agenda of the party. They should not lead the Youth movement for a self-enrichment trip, or wait for a political appointment to statutory bodies or as a political proxy in public-listed companies.

The problems seen today are partly due to these leaders who feel they are rich enough to influence party elections and that they have the money to bring Hishammuddin to his knees.

Others are known to align themselves with certain business entities and non-Malay business figures to influence the Youth election.

Selling your soul to the devil will definitely enrich oneself, but will also give birth to would-be devils in the party.

As an Umno member, I am upset over the Lunas debacle, but Umno Youth should not be blamed for the defeat.

Neither should the deputy Youth chief take personal blame for the fiasco.

It must be remembered from now on that any seat left vacant requiring a by-election should be given to a popular candidate, irrespective of the BN party they represent.

Lunas is one lesson that an unpopular candidate not accepted by the people is doomed to defeat.

The use of propaganda, rumour-mongering and gangster tactics are apparently the effective campaign machinations of the Opposition.

Police inaction added to the boldness of the Opposition and the BN attitude of over-confidence drove the final nail in the coffin. Lest others tend to think that Umno will become a senile weakling, the Youth movement should wake up from its slumber.