

28 AUG 2003

Abdullah-Onn

DATUK ONN LEFT A LEGACY OF COURAGE, SAYS ABDULLAH

JOHOR BAHRU, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the greatest legacy from the struggle of Umno's founder, the late Datuk Onn Jaafar, was the courage, high fighting spirit and unity that had enabled the people to fight whatever enemy to achieve independence.

The deputy prime minister said that although Britain at that time was a big and strong nation, the courage, high fight spirit and unity of the people ultimately forced Britain to grant Malaya independence.

"For me, the biggest lesson is that if we are brave, willing to unite, fight with full spirit...nothing will obstruct us from achieving our objective," he said.

He said this when launching the Malay version of the book, "Reflections of Pre-Independence Malaya", written by Datuk Mohamed Abid, a close relative of Datuk Onn, here.

"Imbasan Peristiwa-Peristiwa Sebelum Kemerdekaan Malaya" was translated by Shajaratuddur Sh. Abdul Halim.

The English version was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya on June 12.

Abdullah said Datuk Onn's struggle also gave the people, especially the Malays, their first taste of victory in seeking independence when he broke down the factionalism and parochialism among them.

Although he was no longer here, his fighting spirit, courage and pursuit of unity were remembered and revered by hundreds of thousands of young people from Umno today, Abdullah said.

"Hopefully, this book can be circulated and read and more of the young generation in Malaysia can benefit from it," he added.

On the back cover of the book Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying: "Dato' Onn led the Malays at a time when he was needed most by the Malays in their history. The Malays were nearly driven out of their own state! Dato' Onn alone can be considered as the first Malay to lead the country's fight against the British.

Abdullah's quote reads: "Without Dato' Onn, there would be no Umno, without Umno the Alliance would not have been born, there would be no Tunku Abdul Rahman, without the alliance between Umno, MCA and MIC, we would not have achieved independence."

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, in his speech, said Mohamed, the author, was a witness and observer of Datuk Onn's life as he was part of it.

"Datuk Mohamed Abid has strung these short notes into a chain of pearls that can give a more complete, meaningful and factual glimpse into the life of Datuk Onn," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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