

18 NOV 2003

West-Politics

LOCAL POLITICIANS URGED TO STUDY WESTERN CIVILISATION

BANGI, Nov 18 (Bernama) -- A Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) academician today called on the country's politicians to study and understand Western civilisation which has influenced all aspects of human life.

Prof Datuk Syed Hussein Alatas said all local politicians needed to understand important factors, like the principles and development of Western civilisation, which had been influential since the 16th century.

To do so, they needed to read publications on the subject, he said when expounding on why Malaysians needed to learn about Western civilisation when discussing Occidental Studies and the establishment of UKM's Institute of Occidental Studies here today.

"A person who does not want to learn about Western civilisation is someone who is extremely stupid," he said.

The Institute was created based on the call by former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at the Umno General Assembly in June that Malaysians needed to learn about the West.

However, Prof Syed Hussein, who is a principal research fellow in UKM's Malay Civilisation and Nature Institute, said not all aspects of Western civilisation, like negative values which went against human norms, should be emulated or learned.

Among the things which could be studied was patriotism or the love of one's country, he said.

Meanwhile, UKM Vice-Chancellor, Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Salleh Mohd Yasin, said the Institute was an academic and intellectual effort to learn about European customs in Europe, North and South America, Australasia and Russia.

The Institute was established on Oct 1 at the behest of the Government and headed by a Director, Prof Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, he said.

-- BERNAMA

HM AHH EMK SRI