

Author of Asli research comes under fire

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DELEGATE after delegate took to the stage and spoke against any move to question the social contract.

Many of them trained their guns on the Asian Strategic Leadership Institute — the think-tank behind the controversial study on Bumiputera equity ownership.

Several Umno representatives targeted Dr Lim Teck Ghee, the author of the report which suggested that Bumiputera corporate equity had reached 45 per cent.

Umno Youth representative Datuk Reezal Merican Naina Merican chided Lim for challenging the official figure of 18.9 per cent, prepared and later reconfirmed by the government's Economic Planning Unit (EPU).

"This is tantamount to changing the social contract. Worse, a senior Cabinet minister and president of a component party insinuated that the government had lied about the corporate equity numbers. Our patience has limits."

Lim, a former World Bank senior official, submitted his original report on behalf of the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) to the government early this year.

The report became the centre of a controversy when it was

brought up again at a forum several months ago.

Kedah delegate Datuk Dr Ku Abdul Rahman Ku Ismail, who also hit out at Lim's report, accused Asli of conducting the research with ill intention.

"The research clearly included government-linked companies, which are not Bumiputera-owned but government-owned.

"The intention is if the Bumiputera equity had reached more than 30 per cent or 45 per cent, then there would be no reason for the spirit of the national economic policy to be upheld.

"The irony is how could Asli endorse the findings of the research when we know that the Bumiputera equity ownership is only 18.9 per cent," he said.

Lim, who was the director of Asli's Centre for Public Policy Studies, resigned recently after the institute withdrew support for his report.

Malacca representative Datuk Idris Haron said the government should monitor think-tanks and private organisations conducting research on Bumiputera corporate equity.

"The Asli findings are wrong. We do not want this to happen again.

"Government agencies like the EPU can assist and teach these organisations how to cal-

culate equity."

But outside the hall, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar attempted to inject some moderation into the strong language employed by some Umno delegates.

For a start, he said that their views

did not necessarily reflect the government's position.

"Let us not rekindle very sensitive issues that can create dissension among Malaysians of different communities here. We cannot afford that."