

have given to us in the past. We shall do our best to assist you and your Council because it is the Government's policy to assist all voluntary organisations.

THE IMAGE OF MALAYSIA

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THREE NATIONAL TASKS

There are three important national tasks in which public relations can play a vital role, The first, said Tun Razak, is to project a correct image of Malaysia abroad, as a democratic, freedom-loving nation which wishes to be friendly to all nations. He was speaking at the general meeting of the Institute of Public Relations, Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur on 23rd April, 1966.

I am very happy to be your guest here today and I am even happier to discover that an Institute of Public Relations actually exists in Malaysia, a fact of which I was not previously aware.

Your Institute must have been extremely modest in your own publicity to have kept quiet so long and this silence on behalf of your Institute reminds me of a poem I heard in my youth:

"The codfish lays a million eggs
While the faithful hen lays one.
But the codfish does not cackle.
To inform us what she's done;
So we disregard the codfish.
While the faithful hen we prize.
Which only goes to prove
It pays to advertise!"

However, I understand that your aim in this Institute is to base your activities on solid professional and ethical foundations before seeking recognition. I do hope that you will make an effort towards building up a thriving Public Relations Institute because the new and modern technique of publicity and public relations is something which is of vital importance to our nation at this stage of development, particularly in view of the dishonest propaganda techniques used so unscrupulously by militant Communists, their associates and a few countries following communist techniques.

From the national stand-point we have three great national tasks to accomplish in the field of public relations. The first is to Project a correct and truthful image of Malaysia abroad as a

democratic freedom-loving nation which wishes to be friendly to all nations.

To achieve this aim we certainly need to acquire and develop the most modern techniques of publicity projection. I believe, as I am sure all of you do, that the art of projecting publicity is now no longer an amateur task but one which is becoming more and more technically professional.

Therefore, both within the structure of Government and within the private sector, we must stimulate a higher sense of awareness of modern publicity methods so that Malaysia is properly projected throughout the world and so that the peoples of other nations will be better informed, have the same confidence in Malaysia as we have in ourselves, and so pave the way for greater international understanding.

To those of you here today who belong to private organisations you may think that this task is entirely a matter for the Government. That is not so. You have an equally important part to play in achieving this aim whether you belong to a local firm or to an international firm carrying on business in Malaysia, because by virtue of your investments in this country your future progress is closely tied up with the future progress of our country and the further Malaysia is projected into the international field of human understanding and the greater benefits if we, as a nation, achieve from this, these benefits will be shared by all who are active participants in the private sector of our economy.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many private firms for the good work they have done in this field.

The task of projecting our nation is made more difficult because we have to battle against the tremendous odds of false propaganda which is the main ingredient of the Communist techniques in attempting to subvert and dominate our nation.

I believe that the correct way of counteracting such propaganda is not to descend to the same depths and the same methods of cheap falsehoods but rather to employ the clean and straight methods of "*pure publicity*" based on truth and hard indisputable facts.

Members of the Press could assist and co-operate in projecting our image correctly. Instead of merely stating the plain facts they could by using the correct techniques, help give the right and proper picture of our country and what it stands for to the outside world.

Regarding cheap publicity I remember also the story of the Hollywood film star who was asked how she liked her new publicity agent and she replied, "He is wonderful. Since I employed him I have been robbed twice, my house has been burnt, and my car has been wrecked, and I have had my life threatened by an anonymous enemy since all because of good publicity."

I am sure however that your Institute will help to lay the foundation of honest professional methods and set high standards for all publicity organisations in this country to follow and maintain.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on our second national task, which all of you can help in every media of publicity, is to use every possible means to strengthen our racial harmony and understanding within our shores.

And in this connection the Press, in particular, has a tremendous part to play in continually moulding public opinion towards national racial unity and harmony. As you know public opinion is sometimes difficult to define.

I remember an American politician telling me that "Public opinion is something like a donkey he owned when he was a boy." He said that in order to keep up the appearance of being its driver he had to watch the way the donkey was going and follow behind.

Similarly, if the seeds of complete racial harmony and understanding are properly nurtured in the public opinion of all Malaysians. then, the few minorities who try and mislead our people on racial issues will be forced by the strength of *majority opinion* to keep quiet and to follow behind in silence as we progress to our goal as a harmoniously integrated community.

Now our third national task is to promote and strengthen the growth of democracy in which we in Malaysia so strongly believe. In my opinion, one of the mainstays of democracy is a well informed public so that all our citizens themselves have sufficient facts and information to form their own opinion and make their own decision without being influenced by subversive groups led by irresponsible leaders.

Therefore your Institute, and all its Members, can help tremendously to ensure the security and sovereignty of our nation because I believe good publicity on the domestic front, resulting in a well informed public opinion, is one of the best antidotes to Communist and other forms of subversion.

WITH THE PRIME MINISTER



Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, are seen in an extremely happy mood in this picture.