

EMBARGO: NOT TO BE USED TILL 5 P.M. ON
TUESDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER.

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, MR. JEK YEUN THONG,
AT THE SREE NARAYANA MISSION'S SYMPOSIUM ON TUESDAY,
3RD NOVEMBER, 1964 AT 5 P.M. AT VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL.

First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Sree Narayana Mission for inviting me to declare open their symposium to-day.

I am particularly happy to note that the theme of your symposium is "Universality of Religions in terms of World Brotherhood". This subject is, I feel, most relevant to our troubled times and it should give rise to much fruitful discussions.

At a time when men of ill-will throughout the world are trying to exploit strong religious sentiments in order to incite hatred and violence, your effort to reaffirm the doctrine of love and peace which is preached by all the religions of the world testify to Malaysia's strong belief in and practice of religious tolerance and harmony. We, Malaysians, have always repudiated any narrow creed of animosity and strife. Time and time again we have shown in concrete ways that we are a peace-loving nation. The concept then of a World Brotherhood is one which has our full support and it is my hope that we will continue to take the initiative, as you are doing to-day, in seeking to foster understanding and compassion among men of goodwill.

May I then perhaps suggest to you that during the course of your symposium you could stress our long history of religious co-operation and tolerance, and emphasize the need to be on the alert lest the sowers of dissensions plant weeds of discord in our midst. It is your task, as you go about in your effort to disseminate world brotherliness among the followers of different religions, to ensure that your exemplary model of Singapore and Malaysia as the paragon of religious harmony will never be marred in any way by blemishes of intolerance and strife. This vigilance should be your watchword because there will be men of ill-will who use the name of God in their efforts to crush others. However, I am confident that you will follow in the footsteps of your spiritual leader, Sree Narayana Guru (whose 110th birthday you are celebrating to-day) in working selflessly for a peaceful, just and indiscriminating society.

Let me therefore say once again how refreshing and resounding your cry of world brotherliness, through the universality of the various religions, is in these times of extreme provocation. The whole world will know that Malaysia sincerely stands for peace. With patience and forbearance we have suffered and ruthless violence of confrontation. Always firmly believing in seeking peaceful solutions, we have never sought to return an eye for an eye. But let our self-appointed enemies be warned not to misinterpret forbearance for an invitation to aggression. There is no doubt in my mind that the people of Malaysia will rise up to defend their country from aggression and injustice just as they eagerly rise up to foster goodwill among their brothers in the world. This is no hypocrisy but a consistent belief in peace and justice.

It is therefore my pleasure to wish you every success in your endeavour to-day and to declare this symposium open.