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Administrative Public Relations in Iran

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ABSTRACT

This study begins with a simple question: Why Public Relations? And it ends with a much simpler answer: Public relations is "a many splendored thing..." But how and why? This constitutes the essence of the study which is composed of three distinct parts.

Part one deals with public relations in general. It is based on a comprehensive research and study of source materials on democracy, democratic government, relationships between the government and the governed, public opinion, mass communications, and ultimately public relations. This part serves as a foundation and a corner-stone for the following parts.

Part two covers the administrative public relations in Iran. It starts with a description of the country and its physical, social, cultural, and political characteristics; traces the development of public relations in government administration; and leads to the present situation.

Part three serves as a yardstick to measure the nature and effectiveness of public relations service of the government agencies in Iran, and evaluates it on the basis of the

principles put down in the first part. This is followed by a presentation of certain general, administrative, and technical problems that exist in the government. Then recommendations and suggestions are given for solving these problems and the improvement of government administration on the basis of a sound public relations program.

A careful study of the activities of the government agencies makes it clear that public relations in its modern sense, that has been approached in this work, does not fully exist in Iran. Most of the attempts for maintaining close relations with the masses of the people have been achieved through propaganda and publicity. The emphasis has been mostly on one-way communication - from the government to the public.

Although certain improvements and progress have been effected in the recent years in the field of mass communication, little has been done in relation to two-way communication and relationship with the people, as well as public opinion research. The present tendencies of the government, however, give hope for a bright future in the field of administrative public relations. Certain measures have been taken by the government to make people participate in policy formation through giving their suggestions. Thus, participation which is a hallmark of democracy has come into picture; and participation is the essence of public relations.

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PART ONE

WHY PUBLIC RELATIONS?

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Democracy is something you do; not something you talk about. It is more than a form of government, or an attitude or opinion. It is participation."¹

Although administration is as old as the government itself, democratic administration is largely a development of the twentieth century.² Democratic administration has been defined as "that overall direction of an organization which assures that purposes and policies are shared in the making, that methods are understood and agreed to, that individual potentialities are being enhanced, that corporate or group ends are being realized with a maximum of release of shared creative power and a minimum of human friction. It implies further a periodic, orderly, cooperative review of total performance, of leadership in action, of effectiveness of method at every point. It brings to pass collabora-

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1. George B. de Huszar, Practical Applications of Democracy, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1945,) p. XIII.
 2. Hugh M. Shafer, "Principles of the Emerging Science of Democratic Administration," in Catheryn Seckler-Hudson, Processes of Organization and Management, (Washington, D.C.: The American University Press, 1951,) p. 80.

tion as willing, coordination as informed and continuing, personality growth as an actuality and a continuing promise."³ In other words, the main emphasis in democratic administration is on the participation of all individuals and interested parties, whether inside or outside of the organization, in the policy formation which leads to conduct and operation.

Democracy mainly originates from a belief in the dignity and a trust in the potentialities and possibilities of the common man.⁴ It follows, then, that in a democratic government or administration all the citizens can, and should, have a part. Besides, the achievements of the government mostly depend on the deliberate efforts of all its members.⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a close two-way relationship between the government administration, the government officials, and the masses of the people.

This thesis has been materialized primarily through a study of democracy and democratic administration, both of which are dependent on public opinion and two-way communication. The author believes in democratic ideas and principles, and considers the government and the government agencies as servants of the people. On the other hand, he is interested in the human aspects of the administration and organization, and has much concern to the new field of human relations which

3. Ordway Tead, Democratic Administration, (New York: Association Press, 1951,) pp. 71-72.

4. Hartvig Nissen, Some Human Aspects of Administration, (Brussels: International Institute of Administrative Sciences, 1954,) p. 114.

5. Ibid.

is based on the disciplines of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and social anthropology. He further believes that an effective system of government administration in an economically less developed country, like Iran, should be founded on a policy which tends to broaden the range of personal freedom, economic and social opportunity, and political democracy. This requires better relations with, and more participation by, the public. The fusion of all these beliefs and convictions has culminated in the subject matter of the present study.

The author had to select a "functional" concept or principle of public administration and apply it to the current situation of his country. He chose the concept of public relations which is one of the most significant phases of democratic government. There are two main arguments why public relations is needed in the government:

The first may be called the reportorial argument. A democratic government must report to the people. This does not necessarily involve any element of persuasion. The second may be called the administrative argument. Certain administrative measures will not succeed unless the public or sections of the public are adequately informed about their rights and duties, or unless - foreign policy in some of its aspects is a good example - the public understands and acquiesces in them. Sometimes it may be necessary to go further and to persuade the public to cooperate. Where voluntary cooperation can be secured, it is not only to be preferred to compulsion from the point of view of administrative efficiency. It has positive democratic advantages.⁶

6. J.A.R. Pimlott, Public Relations and American Democracy, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951,) p. 76.

There is, however, a controversy in relation to these arguments. Mary Parker Follett and a few other scholars believe that the government action should reflect the wishes and needs of the people. That is the government public relations should be on the basis of what the people want from the government and not what the government wants itself. In that sense public relations is not imparting information upon the people but rather getting it from them. Therefore, it should not include any element of persuasion or conviction.

It is in the light of a combination of these arguments that the administrative public relations in Iran should be approached.

Public relations, in its modern sense, as a positive, planned activity is a novelty in Iran - whether in government or private business. There has been little, if any, research work or study on this subject. In fact the information about the functioning of the government agencies and their relations with the general public is limited mostly to the editorials of the newspapers and periodicals, and the restricted news stories released by the information offices of the different government agencies and ministries. The books on Iran also have little reference to government administration. These were some of the difficulties that created obstacles in the process of doing research work for the present study. The necessary documents and materials, however, were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, correspondence, and a thorough study

of some of the leading newspapers and weekly magazines, as well as government publications, reports, house organs, and certain unpublished documents since October 1956. Yet, there might be some shortcomings and vagueness in this study because of inadequate information and data. But since it is the first attempt in the field, it could serve as a starting point and a pioneer work for the scholars who would be interested in that aspect of the government activities in Iran.

Public relations as a positive function of the government has not/^{been}widely recognized by all the ministries and agencies. It is, however, evolving under the guise of propaganda and publicity. Until a couple of years ago, with the exception of the period of the nationalization of oil industries in early 1950s, when Dr. Mossadegh's government was in power, the relationship of the government with the people was mostly in one-way direction. Little attention was given by the government agencies to the public attitude, public opinion, and public reactions in formulating their policies and programs. Moreover, the whole picture of the government activities were not freely presented to the general public. There was poor public relations in the government. Even now, many of the positive and progressive practices of public relations are relatively unknown in Iran.

In this study those aspects of the government public relations that have a positive impact upon the masses of the

people will be the core of attention. The subject will be dealt from the administrative point of view. That is what organizations have been created for the purpose of maintaining close relations with the people, how they have functioned, and what are the present state of affairs. The discussion will be within the democratic context, which will serve as a criterion for evaluation of the public relations activities of the government agencies.

In Iran, as well as other Middle Eastern countries, there has been a historic suspicion and distrust of government administration. This suspicion and distrust was further accentuated with the emphasis on a strong central government, and little self-determination by the local and community institutions. The sharp class distinctions, the high rate of illiteracy, and the lack of self and group confidence, on the other hand, have added to the difficulty of communication between the masses of the people and government administration. In recent years, however, there has been a tendency toward decentralization and giving local self-government to the localities. The rate of literacy has increased, and sharp class distinctions are in decline. The country is on the threshold of democracy. To facilitate and to speed this process, public relations is of indispensable value to the government. The importance of public relations in administration and maintaining good relations with the public has been best described as the following:

A sound system of public administration is solicitous about its relations with the public. The way in which government agencies come into contact with the citizen will determine the awareness of the people concerning their rights and obligations, the possibilities of public criticism or support, and the opportunities for complaint or redress of grievances against oppressive administrative actions. The opportunities and procedures for registering such complaints or seeking such redress and the methods by which they are handled by or get lost in the hierarchy of public administration are matters of vital importance to the average citizen. Just as important may be the system of governmental public relations by which policies are explained and procedures are classified. If these matters are neglected, the citizen will feel deprived of his just opportunities and will remain singularly uninterested in efficient administrative operations which are deficient in giving him an elementary degree of recognition as an individual.⁷

* Public relations might be used as an effective technique to remove inertia and civic apathy toward the government, which have their roots in the Iranian society. But it should not be mistaken with propaganda or publicity, which have been used until present.* For this purpose, the first attempt in this study will be*to define public relations in its modern sense as a conscious, positive, planned, and well-organized two-way activity; to distinguish it from publicity, propaganda or other techniques that are used to influence public opinion and public attitudes; and then to deal with the development of public relations in Iran.

7. Special Committee on Public Administration Problems, Standards and Techniques of Public Administration with Special Reference to Under-developed Countries, (New York: United Nations, Technical Assistance Administration, 1951,) pp. 11-12.

Since the life history of the people and their economic, social, and political backgrounds along with the geographical set up of the country have their percussion on the governmental public relations and the shaping the public opinion, the physical, social, and cultural characteristics of Iran will be fully discussed. This will be followed by a comprehensive description of the organization and administration of the public relations activities in the government. Then, these activities will be evaluated and compared with the standards and principles of the positive and progressive public relations endeavor that have been laid down in the beginning of this study. Ultimately suggestions and recommendations will be made for reforming and reorganizing the public relations service of the government agencies. They will culminate in a work program for the public relations activity of the government. It is hoped that through adoption and application of such a program the government agencies would successfully accomplish their public relations functions and attain their objectives...

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

"The only way to compel men to speak good of us is to do good."

"Voltaire"

It has been said that in a democracy all institutions should begin with public permission and exist by public approval.⁸ If this supposition holds true, then all those institutions should be willing to serve the public interest and to inform the public about their policies, their activities, and their plans for future. Through adoption of such a policy they will be able to increase public understanding, to build public confidence, to develop public good will, and to win public favor. This engineering of human relations has been termed as public relations.⁹

The main concern of public relations in any organization is to deal with the human aspect of its administration, and its overall objective is trying to reach the human beings,

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8. Rex F. Harlow and Marvin M. Black, Practical Public Relations, (rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1952,) p. 13.
 9. Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955,) p. 4.

to influence their way of thinking and acting, and to create a reciprocal respect between them and the organization. In the simplest terms, public relations is the art of getting along with the people and of making friends.¹⁰ It is a process whereby an organization attempts to analyze the needs and desires of all its interested parties for the purpose of conducting itself more responsively toward them.¹¹ These interested parties constitute the special "publics" of the organization such as the employees, the clientele, and other affected groups. While the organization is impressed by the reactions and responses of its publics, it also leaves its marks on them and influences them.

Public relations can be best defined as "the communication and interpretation of information and ideas from an institution TO its publics and the communication of information, ideas, and opinions FROM those publics to the institution, in a sincere effort to establish a mutuality of interest and thus achieve the harmonious adjustment of an institution to its community."¹² It is a two-way communication. In that sense it is quite different from press agency,

10. Gene Harlan and Alan Scott, Contemporary Public Relations, Principles and Cases, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955,) p. 4.

11. Marshall E. Dimock and Gladys O. Dimock, Public Administration, (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1953,) p. 403.

12. Cutlip and Center, op.cit., p. 6.

publicity, or propaganda which usually are flowing in one direction — from an organization toward its publics. These techniques, however, may be used as tools of public relations but are not its equivalent.¹³ For more clarification, perhaps it is better to define these terms:¹⁴ Publicity is a systematic dissemination of information to the people from the point of view of one who wishes to inform others. Unlike public relations it is not focused on individuals but rather on the masses. Press agency attempts to build up a person, an idea, or an institution through creation of publicity - worthy events. It is temporary and inconsistent. Propaganda is the systematic and well-organized propagation of an idea, a doctrine, or a cause. It may be good or bad, but since it has a totalitarian implication it has always been feared.†

† The essence of public relations is guiding the people and at the same time being guided by the people. And because the interests, attitudes, and opinions of the different sectors of the people may conflict with one another, it is the job of public relations practitioner to help remove such controversies and conflicts by teaching those publics, and explaining the facts and truth to them.‡

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

The concept of public relations mainly springs from the fields of individual and social psychology, which are concerned with the formation and change of interests and attitudes.¹⁵ Thus, dealing with public opinion, public aspirations, public attitudes, public interests, and public behavior should constitute the focal point of every public relations program. Moreover, those who engage in planning and directing such a program should possess a good knowledge of psychology, human relationships, sociology, group dynamic, social interaction, and opinion formation.*

* One of the most important functions of public relations is influencing the opinion of the public, which is an aggregate of individual opinions. The opinion itself is the manifestation or verbal expression of attitudes. The roots of these attitudes can be traced in heredity, environment, situations, and motivations of human behavior. They are modified by ideas, habits, customs, social patterns, social values, and culture.¹⁶ Communication plays a significant part in this respect, because it is mostly due to the

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15. Committee on Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies, Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies, (Chicago: Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada, 1941,) p. 6.
 16. Harwood L. Childs, An Introduction to Public Opinion, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1940,) pp. 61-75. See also Cutlip and Center, op.cit., pp. 64-70.

nature and content of the media of communication that the attitudes and opinions are shaped. The personality, traits, emotions, and sentiments of individuals, on the other hand, have their impact on the formation of their opinions. Therefore, people are predisposed to favor, to disfavor, or to ignore ideas and institutions, and display their reactions toward what has been communicated to them.¹⁷*

* Attitudes are comparatively hard to change, because usually they have been deeply rooted in an earlier age; whereas opinions have a larger intellectual component, and in case they are proved to be based on false information can be more easily changed.¹⁸ The processes characteristic of the development of opinion in large groups, or publics, are: 1. Reification, 2. Simplification, 3. Stereotyping, 4. Personification, 5. Emotionalizing, 6. Rationalization, 7. Opinion conditioning, 8. Symbolizing.¹⁹ From a psychological point of view, however, opinions are basically determined by self-interest. Any stimuli such as words or events affect opinion only insofar as they have some kind of relationship to self-interest.²⁰ Public opinion and public

17. Leonard W. Doob, Public Opinion and Propaganda, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1948,) pp. 11-32.

18. "Forming and Changing Attitudes of People," Public Relations Journal, Vol. XI, No. 1, (1955,) p. 20.

19. Cutlip and Center, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

20. Ibid., p. 80.

attitudes are in a constant state of flux, and it is on the basis of these everchanging factors that the practice of public relations has been founded. x

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

x Although public relations in its modern sense, is a product of the twentieth century,²¹ its origins can be traced to time immemorial. It began when people first formed into groups, and developed certain rules of human conduct among themselves for the purpose of maintaining good relationships in their society.²² Gradually, a body of procedures and tools developed around those rules to facilitate the functioning of those relationships. This led to the rise of both government and public relations. In that period, however, public relations was of a most rudimentary nature. Gradually, the complexities of life contributed to its development.²³

Close examination of its historical origins reveals the direct relationship between the growth of public relations and the periods of intense struggle for power among the competitive elements of society.²⁴ One of the best

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21. Dwight Hillis Plackard and Clifton Blackmon, Blueprint for Public Relations, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947,) p. 1.
 22. Harlow and Black, op.cit., pp. 3-4.
 23. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
 24. Cutlip and Center, op.cit., pp. 35-36.

examples of it is the period of the American Revolution, when political and economic groups in the United States struggled for power and dominance. Each group tried to make conscious efforts to win public approval and to have public opinion on its side. This was a period of publicity followed by press agency, which can be considered as the genesis of modern public relations. Many other early instances of public relations activity can also be spotted in other countries.²⁵ The real beginnings of it, however, date from the early days of the twentieth century. Edward L. Bernays, one of the foremost pioneers of public relations lists four main periods of its development in the United States:

The first, 1900-1914, was the period of muck-raking on one hand and white-washing publicity on the other. In the second, 1914-1918, our Government tried to sell its war aims and ideals to the American people. The third, 1919-1929, saw the introduction of large-scale industrial publicity. This stems in part from principles and practices successfully tested and proven in the Great War. Since 1929 to the present, public relations activities linking private interests and public responsibility, have been in the forefront of public attention. In the periods 1919 to date, much public relations literature has been published. Ethical standards have been strengthened. Professional practices have been broadened.²⁶

This was a very brief sketch of the story of public

25. Ibid., p. 35. See also E.N. Gladden, The Essentials of Public Administration, (London: Staples Press, 1953,) p. 187.

26. Cited in Cutlip and Center, op.cit., p. 46.

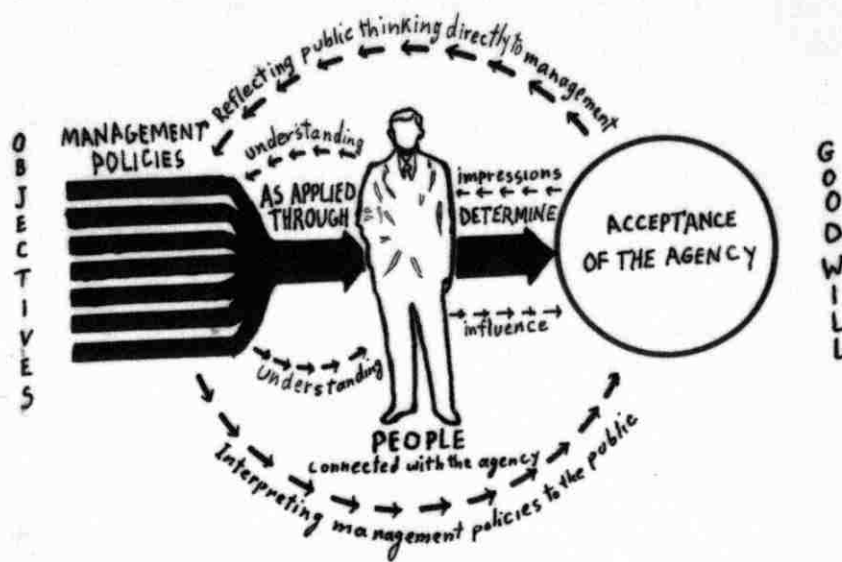
relations until the close of World War II. Since then public relations as a dynamic profession has improved tremendously and has experienced a phenomenal growth. It has found its way in most of public and private enterprises, and now is progressing toward complete professionalism. Efforts have been made in this respect by public relations practitioners to qualify functionally, morally, and through knowledge and expertness for the profession, which is hoped would contribute to the unity, progress, and public welfare.²⁷

One of the basic and most important developments in the field, however, has been "a growing recognition on the part of management that every policy decision and every operating move has a public relations aspect that must be considered."²⁸ At present, public relations has become a responsibility and function of management which analyzes and evaluates public attitudes and public interests; identifies and interprets the policies, procedures, and programs of the organization; and executes a program of action to secure public understanding, public acceptance, and public good will.²⁹

27. Ibid., pp. 470-488.

28. Paul Garrett, "A New Dimension in Public Relations," Public Relations Journal, Vol. XII, No. 10, (1956,) p. 5.

29. Harlan and Scott, loc.cit.



*Adapted from Harlan and Scott,
Contemporary Public Relations*

Another significant development of public relations since the war, is its acceptance and adoption in most countries, including the economically less or underdeveloped areas. It is becoming recognized all over the world. This is due to the understanding of the fact that "public relations is... one of vital strands in the web of democratic government."³⁰ Therefore, to inform the public, to present the facts and information so as to influence public opinion, and to work with citizen groups are becoming the rule. This promises a bright future. Public relations has become a vehicle of democracy.

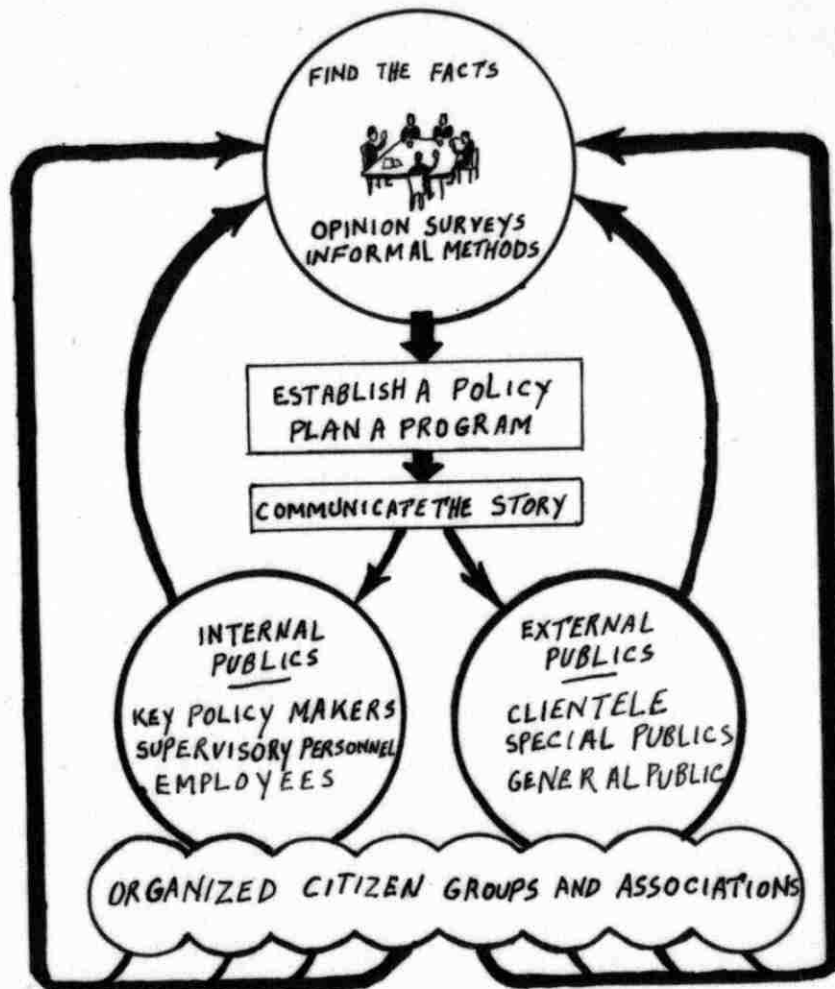
30. Eric Carlson, "Public Relations in International Technical Assistance," Public Administration Review, Vol. XVI, (1956,) p. 274.

* PROCESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

The process of public relations consists of fact-finding, planning, communicating, and interpreting. Fact-finding is doing research work and gathering information about attitudes, opinions, impressions, and reactions of the internal and external publics of an agency. Planning is devising a work program on the basis of the collected facts. It might be remedial or preventive in nature. That is it might attempt to solve the existing problems or to build a reservoir of public support for future activities. Communicating is the interchange of thoughts, ideas, and information. It is almost the most important phase of public relations. Here is a domain where the direct, positive contacts with the public are made through presenting the facts and interpreting them. In communicating, the public relations practitioner should decide on what facts to be transmitted to what public, what media to be used in each case, and how best the media to be employed for achieving the desired objectives.*

* Communication requires understanding on the part of the communicatee. The public relations practitioner in order to be understood should approach his audience carefully. He should begin from the known facts and proceed to the unknown ones. He should also pay special attention to the choice of words, symbols, and timing. The preconceived ideas that the

THE PROCESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS



Adapted from Cutlip and Center, Effective Public Relations.

people have in their minds, usually color the things they read or hear. Emotions and attitudes, on the other hand, influence their thinking and understanding. The popularity of the source and favorability of the subject of information creates readily a positive response in the audience, and is conducive to better success. All these facts should be known to the practitioner of public relations. †

TOOLS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

In communicating and interpreting, the public relations practitioner may work through publicity, press agency, propaganda, and advertising but he uses them very responsibly. His main tools are the printed word, the spoken word, and the image. In employing any of these formal techniques and tools, he should build his appeal upon the principles of psychology, and attune his program to the current public trends. The main objective of the public relations practitioner is to get the attention of the people to his program, and after achieving that end, his major problem is to hold that attention and act upon it.

In maintaining a good public relations program, informal communication and publicity are even of more importance than formal. For this purpose, the internal publics of the organization should be fully informed and well-oriented to the program, because every employee is a public relations man as well, and in his daily contacts with different publics of the organization can establish a desirable atmosphere and relationship. The appearance, activities, tone of voice, and courtesy of the employees, as well as the physical appearance and cleanliness of the organization are also important factors in the success of the program. Another contributing factor to success is maintaining good relations with the press and radio.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GOVERNMENT

* Although governments have always been concerned with the idea of relationship with the public, the modern positive practice of public relations as a planned program first emerged in private business, and was later adopted by the government.³¹ It has been, however, needed more by the government, because in a democracy the government is a public institution which directly deals with the people and is responsible to them. Moreover, there is a distrust and suspicion toward government organizations, and a desire to criticize them. They are considered as corrupt, and those who are working in the government service are sometimes called "parasites." This frame of reference, however, changes from country to country. The causes of these popular attitudes about the government are mainly four: 1. governments originated as despots; 2. they have bureaucratic tendencies and practices; 3. they are complex and have red tape; 4. the people have liberal attitudes and dislike government regulations and restraints as limitations on their freedom.³²

* The development of big and complex governments, and

²⁴ 31. Cutlip and Center, op.cit., passim.
32. John M. Pfiffner and R. Vance Presthus, Public Administration, (3rd. ed.; New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953,) pp. 16-59.

their expansion in every walk of life necessitates the practice of public relations, because expansion has led to more controls by the government. These controls should be exercised in a manner that might be willingly accepted by the people. They have to be explained and clarified, because the negative, or hostile, opinions of the public toward the government agencies are mostly the result of misunderstanding and misinformation. To remedy this situation, the public relations practitioner should inform, explain, and, if possible, try to convince the people - provided these methods are intended toward the justifiable actions. He also should get information from the people about their needs, their satisfactions, and their reactions.

Public relations in the government seeks active cooperation, understanding, and willing compliance of the citizens by the government. Therefore, the objectives of a planned and continuous public relations policy in the government should be:³³

1. To secure the support and compliance of the public and legislators for the new reforms and policies initiated by the government.
2. To explain the complexity of the government functions.
3. To give information about the services provided.

33. Cutlip and Center, op.cit., p. 374.

4. To give the people the opportunity to air their views and opinions, and to transmit them directly to the government.

5. To interpret public opinion to law enforcing agencies.

6. To crystalize public sentiment through persuading and assuring the citizen about the necessity of administrative rules and regulations, and helping him to understand them.

7. To build a reservoir of public support through good deeds for government administration. This is almost the most important part of the program.

These tasks are of a very delicate nature and should be carried out within democratic context.

In most governments there is a ministry, or a central department of information, whose main function is to disseminate information and news about all government agencies. It may engage in a campaign on particular issues, or play on a central theme for a long period of time, or release information and news of the day-to-day activity of the government without any specific objectives. Since there is a general lack of planning and relation of the departmental policy to the informational function, the latter procedure is usually the rule.³⁴ Such a ministry, or department, is the central

34. Ibid., p. 386.

source of information about the government, and serves as the official channel of communication between government and its various publics. It selects the tools and media of communication for transmission of important facts, developments, and government policies to the publics for the purpose of keeping them aware of what is going on in the government. It also keeps the different government agencies and their employees informed about the activities of one another. It engages in research work, as a public relations device, for the purpose of collecting information about attitudes and views of the public toward the government. Finally, it plans and administers a program of work which fulfils these objectives. In relation to internal public relations, it tries to keep the government employees informed about all policies and plans; to develop a willing support in the employees toward their own agency, as well as the government as a whole; to create an integrating mutual interest between government agencies and departments, eliminating harmful competition; and to acquaint the employees with their rights, their duties, and their responsibilities. Another activity of it is to publish an house organ, as well as other publications.*

* Besides these formal public relations activities that are handled by a ministry or a central department of information for all government agencies, there are a great deal of informal public relations activities that fall outside

its territories. They constitute the day-to-day activities of different government agencies in the process of carrying out their functions, and the variety of contacts that occur between the government employees and the clientele, as well as other interested parties. To promote and to ameliorate a positive, informal public relations spirit in each agency, there is need for a special public relations office in that agency. These separate offices will closely be in touch with the internal publics of their agencies, and will take the necessary steps to facilitate their public relations activities, and to educate the employees in maintaining friendly relationships with the clientele and adopting good manners in dealing with them. These offices will take care of remedial public relations in their agencies.³⁵

x Public relations permeates every activity of the government and every move and attitude of the government employees. For this reason, every step that might irritate the public should be avoided.³⁶ An effective, successful, and practical public relations program should rest on the following pillars:

- x 1. Public relations is positive, not negative. You tell the people what you are going to do and how you are going to do it before they hear a distorted

35. Ibid., pp. 175-178. See also R.-Ch. Leblanc, Comment Humaniser les Relations de l'Administration avec la Public, (Bruxelles: Institut International des Sciences Administratives, 1952,) pp. 90-92.

36. Eleanor S. Rufl, Public Relations for Government Employees: An Action Program, (Chicago: Civil Servie Assembly, 1953,) p. 15.

"grapevine" version. You tell them how it worked, even what mistakes you made. And you don't forget to tell them how you corrected your mistakes.

2. Public relations is everybody's business.

Your public relations can't be solely the responsibility of a public relations man. The acts and attitudes of each and every public employee make or break public relations. The employees who come into daily contact with the public are in a sense the "public relations ambassadors" of the agency. But everybody is on the team. A misfiled letter or a needless set of forms can be just as much a public relations hazard as an ill-tempered answer to a citizen's question. You've got to make public relations everybody's business.

3. Public relations is a continuous activity.

You can turn your publicity on and off, but the public is still going to draw some conclusions about you. Better keep them informed. And here is one public relations rule you must never violate: Employees must be told before a new policy or program is announced to the public.

4. Public relations is in everything you do.

Many people think public relations is a news release, an annual report, a speech, an employee newsletter. It is. But it is more than that. It is your tone of voice when you answer the telephone; it is the way you write letters and the way you type them; it is the way you housekeep your office; it is the way you announce examinations; it is how you notify delinquent taxpayers; it is the dependability with which you pick up garbage; it is the neatness of a cop's uniform. Public relations is the effect everything you do has upon your public.³⁷

* Today, public relations has become one of the most important links in the free communications network upon which the stability, cohesion and culture of a nation depends. There-

37. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

fore, it is capable of playing a very significant part in every country to build a communion of purpose, unity, understanding, and support among the people. It has a vital role in creating a sense of community, which is of greatest value to democracies. For these reasons, it seems necessary that all the governments throughout the world should pay ample attention to their public relations activities and adopt a positive, well-organized program of action. It is, ultimately, through public support and public good will that, in the long run, a nation can survive. x

PART TWO

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IRAN

"Iran is a land of extremes, both natural and human. The great differences between the subtropic lands of the Caspian Sea coast and the wind-swept barren mountains of the plateau are matched by the inequalities of wealth and social position among the people. Yet these contrasts are an integral part of the scene in Iran."³⁸

Before discussing the governmental public relations activities and problems in Iran, it seems necessary to consider the essential characteristics of the country, the people, and the institutions that the people have. Iran is a large country with a complex society and structure, therefore, without having some ideas and understanding of the realities of its physical and social environment it would be difficult to deal with the relationships that exist between the government and the people. Each major part of the country has a certain distinctive mode of life, social

38. Lewis V. Thomas and Richard N. Frye, The United States and Turkey and Iran, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945,) p. 28.

outlook, and pattern of behavior that are different from other parts. There is little homogeneity, and significant contrasts are found between the urban life, the settled agricultural pattern of rural people, and the pastoral life of the tribes. The reactions and sentiments of these various sectors of the people toward the government are not all alike. Their needs, their impressions, and their reactions differ from one another. And since the governmental public relations deals with all aspects of the life of the nation, a knowledge of the physical, social, cultural, political, and economic conditions of Iran is a prerequisite to the discussion of public relations and its problems in the government. In fact no effective public relations program could be launched without having a full picture of the diverse characteristics of a country and the life history of its people. One of the distinguished writers in the field of public relations illustrates this point in the following statement:

The basis for an enlightened public relations policy is and always must be thorough understanding of the forces that make those relations what they are, a careful analysis of the social implications of specific practices. Public relations advice, to be worth anything, must be grounded on a comprehensive knowledge of the past, of trends and relationships in the field of social change. It must begin with the life history of the person and the corporation, and more than that with the life history of the... people: their economic, political, and social background.³⁹

39. Childs, op.cit., p. 16.

For these reasons, this chapter will deal with those aspects of physical and social environment of Iran, as well as the characteristics of the people and their institutions that have a bearing on public relations activities and problems of the government.

LAND

Iran consists of a vast territory of about 628,000 square miles, which lies between 25 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude, and between 44 degrees and 64 degrees east longitude.⁴⁰ It is bounded on the east by Afghanistan and Pakistan, on the west by Turkey and Iraq, on the north by the Caspian Sea and the Soviet Russia, and on the south by the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. The length of the country from Gwater in the extreme south-east to the Mount Ararat in the north-west is about 1374 miles.⁴¹ Iran is not very fertile. It is covered with high mountains, and the weather is generally dry all over the country.

From the climatic point of view, Iran can be divided into five major regions: upland districts with non-irrigated farming; upland districts with oasis cultivation because of

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40. Herbert H. Vreeland (ed.), Iran, (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1957,) p. 28.
41. A.B. Rajput, Iran Today, (Lahore: The Lion Press, 1945,) p. 28.

insufficient rainfall; inland depressions; and the two low-land coastal belts, one along the southern shores of the Caspian Sea with heavy rainfall, and the other along the northern shores of the Persian Gulf with hot and humid climate.⁴² Thus, from the total area of the country, which is around 400 million acres, nearly 265 million acres are uncultivable deserts and mountains, 50 million acres forests and jungles, 35 million acres pasture-land, and only 50 million acres arable.⁴³

The site of settlements has been largely determined by the fertility of land and the availability of water, and the sharing of water for irrigation purposes has influenced the shape and distribution of holdings. In the mountainous regions, because of the natural factors, villages and towns have been concentrated in the valleys. In some areas, however, the conditions of climate are such as to force the tribes to adopt a semi-nomadic life with their flocks and herds.⁴⁴

POPULATION

The population of Iran, according to the latest

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42. Ann K.S. Lambton, Landlord and Peasant in Persia, (London: Oxford University Press, 1953,) p. 1.
43. L.P. Elwell-Sutton, A Guide to Iranian Area Study, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: American Council of Learned Societies, 1952,) p. 10.
44. Lambton, op.cit., p. 2.

census in November 1956, is about 19 million.⁴⁵ This figure indicates the fact that the country is sparsely populated. The average density is approximately 30 per square mile. The birth rate is comparatively high and has reached to 45 per 1000, but the death rate and infant mortality are also high.⁴⁶ In recent years, however, because of more concern for public health there has been a decline in this respect. At present, there is a rapid growth in population.

SOCIETY

Iran is predominantly an agricultural and pastoral country. The peasants and the tribes comprise the bulk of the society, and almost 80 per cent of the people live in the rural areas and villages.⁴⁷ Most of these villages are very small, and they have a limited population of about one hundred or so, especially if they are not near the highways.⁴⁸ The village houses are built from baked mud, and generally are grouped around a central square. Transactions are mostly through bartering, and money is little used.⁴⁹ The mode of life of the rural people and the tribesmen is almost the same. Both live under comparatively bad conditions.

45. The Pocket Calendar of the National Bank of Iran - 1336 (1957-58), (Tehran: National Bank Press, n.d.,) p. 23.

46. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 35.

47. Thomas and Frye, op.cit., p. 183.

48. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 28.

49. Ibid.

They have a severe and hard time, and are usually beset by diseases and malnutrition. x The tribal society, however, is an equalitarian one to a high degree. There is little, if any, social distinction in that society. The authority, usually, emerges from the family ties. Everybody has to comply with the strict and universal code of behavior and morals in the tribe.⁵⁰_x

x In the other extreme, there is the modernized society of the city and town people, which reaches its climax in Tehran, the capital of the country. They have a potential influence over the whole nation, and have left a landmark in their outlook and ideas; because it is the urban people who control the government and the business of the country. Every city or town has a bazaar, which is really much more than a market place. Rather it is the political and social center of the urban life. It is from the bazaar that the middle class and the community of merchants exert a great influence over the affairs of the country. Whenever their immediate interests are at stake, the bazaar closes its doors in protest, and threatens to stop the economic life of the country.⁵¹_x

x Outside the bazaar, which has a traditional and

⁵⁰ 50. Ibid., p. 27.

51. William S. Haas, Iran, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946,) pp. 103-107.

conservative atmosphere, there is a strong feeling of modernization and the western way of life. It is upheld by the intellectuals, the government officials, the professional classes, and the upper strata of the business world. In contrast to that, there is the reactionary feeling and outlook of the religious class. Besides these differences of opinions, there are also many local and regional differences all over the country. The widest gap, however, is between the rural and urban population, and because communication is poor and inadequate these differences have persisted.⁵²_x

x Under such diverse conditions, there is one unifying element in Iran, which keeps the country together and guides the nation toward unity and integrity. It is the institution of the shah, who is the head of the state. He is the most influential element in the public affairs of the country. It has been said that "strength is essential to rule Iran, and the strength of the shah resides in the loyalty he can command."⁵³ Power and strength are necessary to run the affairs of a heterogeneous society, which is composed of many ethnic groups, tribes, and minorities with different languages, customs, and tradition._x

ETHNIC GROUPS AND TRIBES

x There are three main ethnic groups in Iran, namely

52. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 3.

53. Ibid.

Iranians, Turanians, and Arabs. The Iranians are originally from the Aryan race who have settled in the country for thousands of years. In the course of time, however, they have intermingled with Turks and Arabs, as well as other ethnic groups, and have absorbed them.⁵⁴ The Iranians constitute the greater portion of the population. The Turanians are predominant in the north and the northwest of Iran; whereas the Arabs live in the southern part of the country, around the Persian Gulf area and the Iraqi borders.

The tribes comprise about 10 per cent of the total population, but as they are better organized and more disciplined than the settled people, they are more important than their size and have a greater weight in the country. They are almost "a state within a state," because in their territories they obey only their own laws.⁵⁵ The tribes are ruled under the strict authority of their elected or hereditary leaders. These tribal leaders who are called khans, have usually benefited from a higher education, whether in Iran or in the West.⁵⁶

All the tribes are not nomadic, and some of them, like Kurds, for the most part have been settled. The

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- ⁹⁶ 54. Donald N. Wilber, Iran: Past and Present, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950,) p. 182.
55. Richard N. Frye, Iran, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1953,) pp. 8-9.
56. Wilber, op.cit., p. 185.

principal tribes of Iran are Kurds, Lurs, Bakhtiariis, Qashqais, Baluchis, Brahuiss, Afghans, Turkomans, and the Turkish-speaking tribes of Azerbaijan. The question of unsettled tribes is quite a delicate and vital one for Iran, because it is a hinderance toward the real unification of the country.⁵⁷

PSYCHOLOGY OF PEOPLE

* The Iranians have a great diversity of ideas and opinions. These ideas and opinions are usually fostered in the family, school, as well as gathering places such as teahouses, clubs, societies, and the bazaar. An exciting talk, or a fervid article in a paper, plays an important role in their reaction and opinion formation. Consequently, a natural leader can easily guide and direct the members of small groups, and through an organized agitation, these small groups may come together and engage in wild demonstrations.

* The Iranians are proud people, they respect their glorious past, boast of their culture and civilization, and feel themselves superior. Out of these characters and

57. For a comprehensive discussion of the tribes see Captain Oliver Garrod, "The Nomadic Tribes of Persia Today," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XXXIII, (1946,) pp. 32-46, and Marie-Therese Ullens de Schooten, Lords of the Mountains, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956.)

attitudes "a conservative backward-looking philosophy of life" has emerged among them.⁵⁸ Moreover, because of their national pride, they look with indifference on the foreigners, and usually try to depreciate the values of their ideas or work.⁵⁹ On the other hand, they have a general feeling of distrust and insecurity toward one another, toward the government, and toward the foreigners. Landlords and peasants do not trust each other, government employees are considered as corrupt and self-seekers, taxes are looked upon like tributes, and political leaders are thought to be venal.⁶⁰

* The Iranians are antagonistic against the outside pressure or control. They are highly individualistic, and consequently they want to be their own's master. Such an attitude prevails in the mind of every person, extending from the family to the nation as a whole. It is an element which inspires an instinct of self-assertion and self-preservation in the minds of the individuals.⁶¹ The best illustration of this point is the adoption of Shiism as a means of self-protection and defense against Islam. x

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58. Thomas and Frye, op.cit., p. 214.
59. J.E.F. Gueritz, "Social Problems in Teheran," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XXXVIII, (1951,) p. 235.
60. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 4.
61. Haas, op.cit., p. 133.

Another characteristic of the Iranians is that they generally look upward for protection, direction, and control. This attitude is primarily learned in the family. They are also very emotional, and thus are open to persuasion and encouragement through stimulation and excitement.⁶² All these characteristics and attitudes are of long standing in the Iranian society. William S. Haas in a scholarly and interesting manner illustrates this point, as well as the Iranian psychology: *

* Surveying Persian society, its composition, and its mentality, one may wonder less that the Persians as a nation survived so well than that they survived at all... Lacking the stable class structure of Western society, deprived of any established political influence, Persian society showed tenacity in spite of the most severe trials, cohesiveness in spite of highly developed and individualistic tendencies, and vitality notwithstanding widespread corruption. All these qualities were centered in and took their force from the inner reserve and remoteness which permeates all aspects of the Persian atmosphere. It gave to the individual and to the nation in the midst of utter enthrallment and misery a sort of independence without which life would have been unbearable... The Persians are true democrats in the sense that they consider everyone any man's equal, but they are by nature opposed to a leveling process which would ignore individual differences and make life colorless and boring. This, indeed, is the last thing a Persian would want to happen. He has a fine appreciation of psychological differences and human values, and he has never failed to pay due homage to greatness - spiritual, moral, or intellectual.⁶³

GOVERNMENT

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Iran

62. Vreeland, op.cit., pp. 5-7.

63. Haas, op.cit., pp. 135-136.

had neither a Constitution nor a limited parliamentary government. The country had been ruled under the absolute monarchy for over twenty centuries.⁶⁴ The king was considered as "the shadow of God upon earth," and was the supreme law of the country insofar as his word complied with the basic principles of the religion.⁶⁵ This, however, did not apply to remote tribal areas which enjoyed a strong sense of personal freedom and independence, and had a customary law of their own. Therefore, "despite the long tradition of absolutism, there existed an equally tenacious tradition of personal freedom and independence. The significance of this is considerable: it explains the paradox by which a people among whom the system of monarchic absolutism has been the most ancient in the East became the first people of the East to throw off the system in favor of parliamentary government. It explains, moreover, the relative facility with which they became accustomed to parliamentary government, and the relative virility which it has manifested in succeeding crises."⁶⁶

In the nineteenth century under the impact of the western democratic ideas, the intellectuals and the educated

64. Wilber, op.cit., p. 150.

65. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 56.

66. Elgin Groseclose, Introduction to Iran,
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1947,) p. 61.

class in Iran were acquainted with the facts about the French Revolution and the "rights of man", and that they should, and could, have the right of self-determination and self-government.⁶⁷ This coupled with the discontent of the people at the maladministration and misgovernment of the country, and the restrictions upon the political freedom by the foreign powers, as well as state bankruptcy, extreme corruption, and internal disorder culminated in the constitutional revolution of 1906. The people rose against the government and fought their way through until they secured a Constitution and a representative system of government for the country.

According to the Constitution of 1906, which was modified by a supplement of 1907 and amendments of 1925 and 1949, Iran is a constitutional monarchy. The powers of the realm are all derived from the people and are divided into three distinct categories.⁶⁸ The legislative power is exercised by the shah and the parliament. The parliament is composed of two houses, the National Consultative Assembly with 136 members elected by male suffrage, and the Senate with 60 members, half elected and half appointed by the shah.

67. Vreeland, loc.cit.

68. "Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907," in Hellen Miller Davis, Constitutions, Electoral Laws, Treaties of the States in the Near and Middle East, (rev. ed.; Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1953,) pp. 120-121.

The judicial power is vested in the religious courts for religious matters, and in the ordinary courts for civil matters. Both of these courts are under the Ministry of Justice.

x Iran is an over-centralized country, but at present there is a tendency toward decentralization. Although decentralization was provided in the Constitution, it was not put into effect. In 1953, however, a decree-law of the government provided for the democratic establishment of village and district councils. Since then more attention has been given to the idea of decentralization by the government, and at present in most of the villages and districts elected local councils, or as they are called "societies," have been organized. x

The centralization of the country began in 1925, when Reza Shah, the father of the present shah came to the throne. Before him, during the rule of the Qajar dynasty, Iran was a feudal state and the control of the central government was largely thrown off by the tribes. In order to unify the country, and to maintain law and order, he established a strong central government. His policy was to awaken the national spirit, to consolidate the national unity, and to assert the authority of the government throughout the country and to defend its sovereignty.⁶⁹ Although

69. Groseclose, op.cit., p. 126.

all of his achievements and reforms were not well thought out and executed, they were mainly for the benefit of the people.⁷⁰ During his reign Iran changed "perhaps more than in any other period of her eventful history."⁷¹

Reza Shah's regime soon took a totalitarian trend, but he maintained the facade of the constitutional government. The parliament, however, lost all the spirit of initiative and became a rubber stamp. He exercised full personal control over the government administration.⁷² Thus, it did not take long when regimentation became the rule in the country. In September 1941, as a result of the occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers, Reza Shah abdicated and his dictatorial regime collapsed. A new era of personal and political liberty started. Since then the parliament has taken more or less the place of the shah as a symbol of authority and power, and its prestige has surpassed that of the shah.⁷³ Yet, there is an informal political equilibrium between the executive and legislative branches.⁷⁴

Iran has been divided administratively into ten large Ostans (provinces), besides the city of Tehran which constitutes a special Ostan. Each Ostan is composed of a number of

70. A. Costa and L. Lockhart, Persia, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957,) p. 12.

71. Sir Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, (3rd. ed.; London: Macmillan, 1930,) Vol. I, p. VII.

72. Wilber, op.cit., p. 100.

73. Frye, op.cit., p. 12.

74. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 61.

Shahristans (counties). There are also four governor-generalcies. The governor generals of Ostans and governors of Shahristans are appointed by the Ministry of the Interior. They are directly responsible to the Minister. Until a few years ago the mayors of municipalities were also appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, but at present the Ministry approves their appointment upon the recommendation of the municipal councils.

Shahristans are effective and logical units of the government, because they are small enough to be under the complete supervision of their administrative structures. The electoral districts for the National Consultative Assembly are usually based upon Shahristans. For these reasons, the governors of Shahristans are among the important figures in the government administration.⁷⁵

Shahristans are also subdivided into Bakhshs (districts) which are not very important administratively. Villages fall under Bakhsh and are subdivisions of it. They are very important units of the government, and it is generally through the village headman that the majority of the people in rural areas come into contact with the government. On the whole, there is little local self-government in the localities.⁷⁶

75. Ibid., p. 63.

76. Ibid., p. 65.

At present the policy of the government is to take some measures for more deconcentration, as well as decentralization.

SOCIAL LIFE

The conditions of social life in Iran, both economically and politically are not satisfactory. The majority of the people live in material poverty all over the country. Many factors have contributed to this aspect of the social life, among which the social organization of the nation, or in other words the class differences, has played a significant part.⁷⁷ Extremes can be noticed in the social life of the people in Iran. There is almost no similarity between the pattern of the social life in the rural areas and the modernized sector of the urban people. The village and rural people are more or less economically self-sufficient and produce their own living requirements. They lead the same life that they have had for centuries. In recent years, however, some changes have occurred in the rural areas. This is due to the community development activities of the government. This new venture aims at rehabilitation and improvement of the villages all over the country, and the betterment of the social life. The security guards of the government

77. Infra, pp. 49-52.

are in charge of maintaining peace and order in the rural areas, assuring the collection of taxes. The people, however, feel that the government does not have any interest in them. The organizations for recreation and the leisure time in villages are almost non-existent. But at present there is an attempt to set up community centers in the rural areas. The villagers are for the most part illiterate, and they have little interest in what is going on in the world.

In the cities and urban areas the outward trimmings of life are quite different. Buildings, dresses, and many aspects of life seem quite western. The people have better education, and higher social position than villagers. Their manner of speech is formal and they converse politely. In small towns people come together in the cafes and teahouses. In these public places they talk about the world events and home affairs, and listen to the radio. During the holidays most of the families go to a holiday trip to the countryside - especially during the summer. In the large cities there are certain kinds of literary and social clubs and societies, where the community activities are held.

One of the main characteristics of the social life in Iran is its fluidity and individuality.⁷⁸ No caste system exists in Iran and the people are in a constant state of flux.

78. Groseclose, op.cit., p. 43.

There is a high recognition and esteem for individual merit. Therefore, the movement of the individuals up and down of the society is almost free. This can be best portrayed by the case of Reza Shah who rose up from the rank of a private in the army and became the monarch of the country. In this sense, as Lord Curzon puts it, "Persia is the most democratic country in the world. Lowness of birth or station is positively not the slightest bar to promotion or office of the most exalted nature."⁷⁹

In Iran there is no hereditary nobility, and this is an important factor which contributes to the Iranian life its characteristic democratic quality. The free and democratic society of Iran, however, also displays some evils which are the product of inattention to moral and social restraints. The country is in a critical economic position, the germ of which is believed to be extreme tendencies of individualism. It has led Iran to landlordism, irresponsible wealth, and acute poverty.⁸⁰ At present, however, there is an inclination to fill the gap which exists in the way of life between the upper and lower classes of the people, to improve the conditions of life, and to encourage cooperation and community action. The social life is, thus, on the threshold of change. Attempts have been made to provide

79. Ibid., p. 45.

80. Ibid., p. 46.

social services for the people and to raise the standard of living. More opportunities are being granted to women.⁸¹

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Although there is no social boundary or borderline in the Iranian society, and the individuality and fluidity of the social structure provides for the general leveling of the society, there exist distinct social classes in Iran. In fact, there has been a socially graded society in the country for many centuries, according to the distribution of power, wealth, prestige and education.⁸² The social classes can be divided into three principal groups, namely a small powerful urban elite group; the middle group consisting of the merchants, artisans, industrialists, and factory workers; and the lower group at the bottom of the social hierarchy, who are poor, powerless, and uneducated and constitute the bulk of the total population. They live in rural areas. The society, however, is dynamic and the members of these major groups easily merge into one another. The social classes of Iran which are distinguishable and have different outlooks are:⁸³

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81. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 30.
82. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 245.
83. Groseclose, op.cit., pp. 49-53.

x Landowners -- Outside of the royal court in Iran, the most solid and influential social class belongs to the large landowners. They constitute the upper class, and their power and wealth is measured by the number of villages that they own. They usually live in the capital and most of them have the key positions in the government or are the members of the parliament.⁸⁴ In short, they are the most powerful class in Iran and virtually run the country. x

x Merchants -- The merchant class, or as they are called in Iran, the bazaar, is generally apart from the landowning class. Yet, they also are interested in land and usually own villages. The range of this trading class is from the simple peddler to the rich and powerful merchant. The bazaar is "the vocal element in the Iranian society."⁸⁵ It is organized into different guilds and groups according to professions. These guilds and groups exert a potential power on the government.⁸⁶ The bazaar is always in touch with the world affairs, and the news reach there very quickly. The sentiment and opinion of the bazaar not only have a great influence in the public opinion, they also play a part in molding the government policy by pressure and lobbying. x

x Clergy -- Except for the period of Reza Shah's regime,

84. Vreeland, loc.cit.

85. Groseclose, op.cit., p. 51.

86. Supra, p. 35.

the clergy have always been a very powerful element in Iran. They have played their part in running the affairs of the state. At present, although their influence has diminished considerably, they still have a say in the political and social life of the country. In the rural areas their power is much more than the cities and towns. The religious leaders are represented in the parliament, and they have the right to declare a legislation null and void, if it does not comply with Islamic principles.⁸⁷

x Artisans -- The artisans are relatively literate and have independence in their work. They live, however, in poverty for the most part. Under age children are also working in various arts and crafts. The semi-skilled, and unskilled laborers also fall under this class. On the whole, the artisan class is almost an unfortunate class. x

x Farmers and Cultivators -- This class of the society who live in the rural areas are the largest and the most neglected class in the country. They are almost illiterate and live under bad conditions. Yet, they provide the food and fruit, and feed the whole nation. This class is usually dependent on the landowners. x

x Workers -- The workers class, or the factory proletariat, is a very new class in Iran. It has come to existence

87. Thomas and Frye, op.cit., p. 200. See also "The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907," in Davis, op.cit., pp. 117-118.

in the past two decades, and is the offshoot of the industrialization and modernization of the country. A few years ago workers were in potential power in Iran and had solid organizations and unions which were manipulated by the Tudeh Party - the communist party of Iran. Since this party has been declared outlaw in recent years, no such communistic organizations exist in the country. The workers, however, have their trade unions to protect their rights vis-a-vis the employers. x

x Tribesmen -- The tribal people have their own society and hierarchical social organization. They do not think about the framework of the national society and the place that they might fit in that society. The leaders of the tribes, however, have moved in the elite group of the urban areas, and usually have top positions in the government, or are members of the parliament.⁸⁸ x

SOCIAL VALUES

x The Iranians usually do not care much about social interaction and group cooperation, and they hardly identify themselves emotionally with the social groups. The family institution is an exception in this respect. The individualistic attitudes and feelings play the primary role in the

88. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 253.

social relationship of every Iranian. Yet, when the whole entity of Iran is at stake he is ready to do his best and to sacrifice. Any commitments of his to any group is generally tentative and any moment he may change his views. The most important element that keeps the people together, in every walk of life, is personal loyalties. Another element is money, which enables the individual to gain a rank in society. The third element is the sacred law of Islam, which has a deeper influence.

The average Iranian is interested in his present emotional state. He generally does not look ahead and does not plan for future. He looks back to the glorious past. He loves arts and literature, and appreciates music. He freely expresses his emotions, cares for the physical strength in men, and believes in the purity of women. He believes also in the fate and destiny. He mostly turns to the inner world of feelings and sentiments. He is strongly disciplined.⁸⁹_x

SOCIAL OUTLOOK

x During the first half of the twentieth century, Iran has experienced a social change, which has been accelerated in recent years. The country has passed from

89. Ibid., pp. 304-315.

feudalism into the modern age of industrialization.⁹⁰ The influence of the western democratic and liberal ideas has greatly affected the social outlook of the people. Since the beginning of this century, the center of attention and interest in the country has been shifting from the shah to the people.⁹¹ The simple subjects of the king woke up and through a revolution made themselves felt. They became the citizens of the country by establishing a constitutional and representative government. The roots of this new institution were so deep-seated and strong that even Reza Shah could not destroy the form the government based on democratic principles. At present, many improvements are being effected almost in every phase of the social life. New methods and techniques in the fields of government, business, and industry are implemented. People get better education, universities and schools are crowded, and better agricultural and public health facilities are provided all over the country. Community development, although a new experience in Iran, is at its zenith. Hope and faith in progress and elevation of the society is prevalent in the hearts of the individuals. Pessimistic and cynical attitudes are in decline. All this might lead to a positive and progressive social outlook,

90. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., pp. 26-31.

91. Rt. Rev. W.J. Thompson, "Iran," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XXXII, (1945,) p. 34.

which is of prime importance to the social welfare and development of Iran. X

RELIGION

Iran is predominantly an Islamic country, and about 98 per cent of the population are Muslims.⁹² The official religion of Iran is the Ithna Ashari version of the Shi'a sect.⁹³ The bonds of Shiism are strong among Iranians, yet, they are tolerant about other religious sects. Six per cent of population are Sunnis. Besides them, there are many minority groups who are freely practicing their own religion.

The most important of the foreign religious minority groups are Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics. There are also two Iranian religious minority groups, namely Zoroastrians and Bahais. Bahais, however, are not officially recognized as religious minority group and in recent years they have been violently persecuted. They are considered as heretics to Shi'as. The four major minority groups, namely Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are represented in parliament.

The Iranians are for the most part zealously religious and the religion is as the marrow of their life. They usually

92. Wilber, op.cit., p. 208.

93. "The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907," in Davis, op.cit., p. 117.

refer to God and His grace, and in the everyday life constantly appeal to the supernatural. To them God is the Father, strict, authoritarian, absolute and at the same time kind, just and noble.⁹⁴ The religious beliefs, however, are not generally popular among the intellectuals.

LANGUAGE

The official language of Iran is Persian which is spoken by the majority of the people, who call it Farsi. It is a member of the Iranian group of Indo-European family of languages. The present language evolved after the Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century. Since then, many Arabic words have entered the language. Consequently, the Arabic script was adopted for writing under the Arab influence. For a period before the tenth century, the Arabic language was the literary language of Iran, and many of the masterpieces of Iranian writers and philosophers have been written in Arabic.⁹⁵

Although Persian was the official language of Iran for many centuries, because of the difficulty of communication some local dialects have developed in the past. Among these dialects are the Bakhtyari, Luri, Baluch, and Gilaki. The Zoroastrians also have their own special dialect.

94. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 289.

95. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 17.

Besides these, there are two other Iranian group languages in Iran, namely Kurdish and Armenian which are spoken by their respective societies.

Among the non-Iranian languages, Turkish is the most important. It is spoken by almost four million people all over the country. The Turkish dialect spoken in Iran is different from one prevalent in Turkey. It is predominantly influenced by Persian language. The Semitic languages, namely Arabic, Aramic and Hebrew are used by a limited sector of the population.

Although the local languages and dialects are generally the spoken media of communication in those areas, the written media is Persian which is provided by law to be taught in the schools throughout the country.⁹⁶

LITERACY

The extent of literacy, that is the ability to read and write, in Iran is comparatively low, especially in the villages and rural areas. The percentage of literate people differs in relation to the sources of information. This is due to the lack of an efficient and accurate system of statistics in the country. The estimates of literacy, however, is said to range from 5 to 20 per cent of the population.⁹⁷

96. Ibid., p. 20.

97. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 276.

To remedy this situation, in recent years, the government has taken necessary measures to combat illiteracy. In 1947, a decree of the Council of Ministers required the employers to set up special classes in the factories and industrial plants for the purpose of teaching the workers and laborers to read and write. Later the number of evening literacy classes were increased. On the other hand, under the auspices of the community development many schools have been established all over the country. These schools have also adult literacy classes, which are held in the evenings. For the tribal areas an interesting device has been made. It is the creation of roving literacy classes, held in the tents of the nomadic tribes. These attempts have considerably increased the rate of literacy in Iran.

One of the main factors of illiteracy is the fact that most of the people are interested in spoken word rather than the written one, and they have a great respect for orators and preachers.⁹⁸ It is through this medium of communication that even the illiterate Iranians are acquainted with the past history, culture, and literature of the country and recite the popular poems.

EDUCATION

The modern educational system of Iran, which has

98. Ibid., p. 53.

developed in the last hundred years, has always been an important tool for indoctrination and dissemination of new ideas. Although it did not follow the pragmatic principles which attempt to educate and prepare the students for a practical life, it played a very significant part in the modernization movement of the country.

The system is in line with the French system of education, which was adopted at the close of the nineteenth century. Certain characteristics of the traditional system of education, however, remained intact. This was mostly due to the influence of the culture and civilization of the country.

The system of education is highly centralized. The Ministry of Education owns the majority of the schools, controls and supervises all the public and private schools, and determines the curricula. The modern educational system was originally established for the education of elite for the government work. Consequently, the higher education was considered more important than the primary and secondary ones. The latter were, and still are, looked upon as preparatory stages for the higher education.

In recent years, there has started a tendency in the government toward decentralization. The Ministry of Education is no exception. This trend is now at the threshold of its application. In order to extend the educational

facilities to the whole country, the Ministry has set up agricultural and vocational schools in rural areas. In this project UNESCO and Point IV have given technical assistance to the Ministry of Education.

The methodology of education in Iran is authoritarian in nature, and the emphasis has been put on theoretical courses. Recently certain ideological, psychological, and political tensions were brought into play in the educational field.⁹⁹ These elements have left their impact on the student body all over the country.

PRESS

The origins of the press in Iran go back as far as 1850, when the first newspaper was published.¹⁰⁰ The press, however, was not very active until the beginning of the twentieth century. It was then that under the impact of the West, newspapers flourished throughout Iran and actively engaged in dissemination of liberal and democratic ideas among the people. The constitutional movement of 1906 was fervently backed and advocated by the press. By that time, the number of newspapers and periodicals in Iran was about 150.¹⁰¹ They played a significant part in awakening the

99. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 275.

100. L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "The Press in Iran Today," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XXXV, (1948,) p. 209.

101. Ibid.

general public, and infusing the ideas of westernization. They were, and still are, considered as "the fourth pillar" of the constitutional government by the citizens.

Until 1921, when Reza Shah - then Reza Khan - came to power and seized Tehran by a Coup d'Etat, the press was at the height of its activity and freedom. The authoritarian approach of the new government was disfavored by the press, and the majority of the papers began to criticize and oppose it.

Reza Shah, in order to silence the opposition, began to suppress the press. Gradually, the control of the government over the newspapers became strict and intense, and their number was reduced to a few. Some of them became the official publications of the government departments.¹⁰³ There was a severe censorship, curtailing the freedom of thought, of speech, and of opinion during Reza Shah's regime.¹⁰⁴ Thus, all the newspapers were forced to adopt a neutral policy, and not to discuss the political issues. They became merely the source of permitted information by the government, and rarely expressed any opinion.¹⁰⁵ Nobody could think of criticizing the government. For almost two decades, the press was employed as a tool of the government for the purpose of promoting its ideals.

103. Ibid.

104. Haas, op.cit., p. 227.

105. Elwell-Sutton, loc.cit.

After abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, the totalitarian regime came to an end, and the people again found an opportunity to express their views and opinions, and to breathe under the democratic atmosphere, much like that of 1906 period. The barriers of censorship were removed. For a time, there was an unlimited freedom of thought and of expression all over the country. As a consequence of this, a surprising number of newspapers and periodicals appeared. The reaction to the old regime was very intense. Everybody who wanted to air his grievances in public published a paper. These papers usually expressed the opinion of an individual or a small group. Therefore, it did not take long, when the press fell into anarchy,¹⁰⁶ because the freedom of press and of opinion was misused and misled by special interest groups without any regard to ethical standards. This was mostly due to the lack of experience and irresponsibility of the editors of newspapers, in relation to democratic principles. Generally they were after their own personal motives and interests, and used their papers and efforts to attain them in one way or another.

Soon, rivalries began between different papers, new political parties and groups emerged, and their organs started propagation to influence the public opinion. They criticized and attacked the government very seriously and

106. Thomas and Frye, op.cit., p. 233.

irresponsibly, as well as one another. The following is a description of the press in that period:

In Iran the newspaper is a tool, a means to an end, in the hands of the wealthy, the influential, the powerful. Men whose influence, wealth, and social standing are threatened, resort to it as a tool, a weapon of defense, and... they wield it like experts...As long as the articles, especially the editorials, are duly seasoned with a generous sprinkling of abuse hurled against the government or any other party or institution that has done something for the public good to the disadvantage of the individual, people read the paper and consume the writings like hot cakes...¹⁰⁷

To remedy this situation, severe measures were taken by the government to suspend the offensive and irresponsible papers. Later, a new press law was introduced by the government.¹⁰⁸ It was an attempt to permit only the more responsible and higher educated people to own and publish newspapers.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it became difficult to everybody to publish a newspaper.

Until 1950, the general tendency of the press was to criticize the government in power, although there were some papers whose main policy was to defend and support the government. Through exciting the public, the leftist newspapers many a time created mobs by arranging for meetings and demonstrations and led them to strikes and agitations.

107. Arthur C. Millspaugh, Americans in Persia, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1946,) pp. 75-76, fn.

108. The Middle East - A Political and Economic Survey, (2nd. ed.; London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1955,) p. 415.

109. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 211.

With the nationalization movement of oil industries in early 1950s, and Dr. Mossadegh's rise to power, the press played a significant part to promote the government's policy of nationalization. The favorable press opinion rendered a great service to the government, and served as one of the main molders of public opinion. After the fall of Dr. Mossadegh the radical papers which opposed the government and were on the watch to criticize it were suppressed. At present, most of the papers are moderate. There is little strong opposition to the government mostly because of the fear of suppression. On the other hand, the newspapers give their opinion mildly and criticize the government administration and their deficiencies somewhat responsibly.

Almost every sector of the people has a paper to present its views and opinions in Iran. Most of the ministries and government agencies have also journals and magazines, which are published regularly to maintain a favorable relationship with the public.

In the past two decades, the Iranian press has passed through an evolutionary period. They have left their impact on the people, and through being engaged in dealing with economic, social, and political problems of the day have informed and educated the public. The people are eager to read or listen to somebody who reads newspapers in a loud voice to a group, because they have a respect to the written word. The awakening of the Iranian people and their new democratic outlook are mostly due to the press.

The newspapers, however, do not last long in Iran. From about 300 papers which were published in early 1940s only a limited number have survived.¹¹⁰ The publication of a newspaper or magazine is an expensive venture in Iran because their circulation is too small and their revenues are low. There are only few newspapers and magazines which enjoy a wide circulation. The provincial newspapers are of little importance and influence. Tehran is the center of publication of the country. Therefore, whatever the capital papers advocate reaches the masses throughout the country and influences molding their opinion. The rise in the rate of literacy in Iran has increased the importance of the press. It is becoming an important medium of mass communication. The government administration should pay ample attention to the press, and to maintain a close and favorable relations with it, in order to gain more acceptance by the people.

RADIO

Radio is almost the most important medium of mass communication to reach the people in Iran. This is due to the high rate of illiteracy, as well as the importance of

110. L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1942,) p. 148.

the spoken word. Although, everybody knows that the radio reflects the viewpoints of the government in power, it somewhat is popular, and the people enthusiastically listen to the radio programs.¹¹¹

There are many radio broadcasting stations in Iran, but the most important of them all is Radio Tehran, which was established in April 1940.¹¹² Other stations were set up later. Most of these broadcasting stations are civilian, owned and run by the government, and are part of the Iranian State Broadcasting System.¹¹³ They are controlled by the General Department of Information and Broadcasting.¹¹⁴ The army and air force also have their own radio stations in Tehran and several other cities, which are used for public consumption.

The news of the radio network are provided by the government and Pars News Agency. The radio programs usually represent the official views of the government and attempt to popularize the government policies and activities. Generally, a series of lectures are given on important questions. The radio network is open for political, social, economic, religious, and educational speeches by the specialists and community leaders. These speeches have to be approved and thus practically censored, by the General Department of Information and

111. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 106.
112. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 149.
113. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 115.
114. infra. p. 102.

Broadcasting. The debates of the parliament, as well as the press editorials are extensively reported by radio.¹¹⁵ For this reason, radio has become one of the most effective, and rapid means of transmitting the news and government information to the people throughout the country. Almost in every/teahouse and cafe in the urban areas there is a radio set. People usually gather in these public places and listen to the news. In rural areas, however, the radio set is a rarity, but the radio news are rapidly disseminated by the word of mouth and grapevine everywhere.

POLITICAL PARTIES

The formation of political parties and groups in Iran has been mostly due to persuasive and eloquent leaders. The people have come together on the basis of common wants and common beliefs, and under the guidance of few leaders have organized political groupings. They have cooperated and worked closely until the cause has been reached, the need attained, or they have faced failure. In each case the result has been usually dissolution.¹¹⁶ During Reza Shah's regime political parties were not permitted. In 1941, with the return to constitutional government, gradually

115. Vreeland, loc.cit.

116. Ibid., p. 82.

political parties began to emerge. The people had found an outlet for their opinion, and almost everybody advocated the cause of democracy.¹¹⁷ At first, some factions were formed in the parliament. They consisted of a group of deputies with similar views and ideas. Although these factions played an important part in the parliament, they had very little relations with the political parties which were developing in the country.

On the whole, the political parties of Iran were not real parties, but rather groups and factions, and in the elections the main issues were personalities and not parties or their policies.¹¹⁸ Generally it has been difficult to form a political party in Iran, because of too much suspicion and distrust that exist in the minds of the people for concerted action.¹¹⁹ For this reason, in a short time many parties emerged and declined rapidly. The Tudeh (Masses) Party was an exception in this respect. It was organized in 1942 by the liberals and leftist intellectuals and survived until 1949, when it was outlawed because of communistic tendencies. Then it went underground. This party had also subsidiary organizations for workers, peasants, women, and students.

117. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran: 1941-1948," Middle East Journal, Vol. III, (1949,) pp. 45-62.

118. Thomas and Frye, op.cit., p. 234.

119. Ibid.

Almost all other important parties were formed from above.¹²⁰ That is they were organized when a new government came to power by the prime minister or members of his government or his supporters in the Parliament and they disappeared when that government fell. During the nationalization of oil industries, when Dr. Mossadegh became Prime Minister, many of the liberal parties cooperated with his government and supported it. After the fall of Dr. Mossadegh all these parties were suppressed by the new government. For a time there was no party in the country. No organized political activity was permitted. The government was seriously engaged in combatting the underground organization of the Tudeh Party. At present, there are two newly created parties which have been organized by certain members of the government and parliament. But they are nominal and are only facades of political parties. Quite recently there has been a discussion on the question of adopting a two-party system in Iran,¹²¹ but the press does not favor it.

As a rule, when political crises pass, political parties fall apart in Iran. The political parties, however, have played an important part in informing the people and making them politically conscious, and somewhat aware of

120. Elwell-Sutton, op.cit., p. 49.

121. "Two-Party or One-Party System," Kayhan, Tehran daily paper, No. 4212, (Teer 13, 1336 (July, 1957),) p. 1.

their power, rights, and responsibilities. Besides the political parties, there have been some interest groups which have also played a part in political arena. They are Muslim fanatics, bazaar groups, and tribes.

COMMUNICATIONS

Iran has about 9,000 miles of first class roads and 15,000 miles of second and third class roads.¹²² The communication system, however, is not satisfactory, because most of these roads connect the cities and urban areas, while the existence of good roads in rural areas and villages is a rarity. On the other hand, paved and asphalted roads and highways are still very few. Although motor transportation has been introduced into the country some decades ago, it is little used in the villages. In the rural areas, the traditional means of communication, such as camels, mules, and donkeys, are still widely employed. Thus, communication is slow in a large part of the country.

Recently, through the community development activities of the government, which embraces the whole country, as well as through the initiative of the local people in rural areas, special attention has been given to the construction of roads and by-roads between villages. Much progress

122. Hushang Rafat-Jah, "Accomplishments to Combat Malaria in Iran", Health for All, Tehran, Vol. III, (1335 (1956-57),) p. 307. See also Iran, (Abadan: Iranian Oil Operating Companies, 1956,) p. 35.

has been accomplished in this respect, but still it is difficult to reach some of the villages, even by animals, during certain seasons.¹²³

The railway system of Iran runs through the country from north to south and connects the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf. The center of railway network is Tehran, wherefrom two lines have been extended toward the east and west parts of the country. There are also one or two other branch lines. The construction of the present railway system which began in 1928 was made for economic reasons and also for the purpose of assisting the process of political unification of Iran.¹²⁴ At present there are about 2200 miles of railway in the country. The future plans include the further extension of the railway network in the whole country, and to link it with the West Pakistan and Turkish railway systems. The railway system is owned and operated by the government.

There is a regular air service in Iran that connects the main towns and cities. The state airlines and private companies both run the air transportation. There are about forty-one civil airports in the country. Air service is still in its infancy in Iran, and the projected plans call for future improvements.

123. Rafat-Jah, loc.cit.

124. Iran, loc.cit.

The postal services operate all over the country, but they are sometimes subject to some delays. The telegraph system covers all the important towns and cities of Iran. Recently, wireless stations also have been established in some of the major cities. There are also telephone services that link the main centers of provinces with one another and Tehran.

The communication system of Iran has improved a great deal in recent years, but it is not adequate to ever-increasing needs of the people. To reach the people and to maintain a better relationship with them requires a better communication network. It will help the different sectors of population to come into more contact and interaction with one another. It will also make the government able to reach the rural people easily and to promote its policies and activities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY

The economic development of Iran on modern lines began under Reza Shah in the 1920s. One of his primary undertakings was a program of economic reforms for the purpose of securing greater material power for the country and directing it toward well-being and progress. The economic history of modern Iran indicates the same tendencies that have appeared in the West since the beginning of this century. It also displays "the same forces at work, stripped of their

complexities that have produced so much of the conflict and confusion of twentieth-century industrial civilization."¹²⁵ Some of the characteristics of the change that took place in Iran, in the period of two decades, 1921-1941, are the following. The government intervened increasingly in the livelihood of the people; metropolitanism grew and cities were faced with prosperity; and financial administration was reorganized, new institutions were created for financial matters, and paper money was introduced and became the main tool of transactions.¹²⁶ The attention was also given to the industrialization policy; home industries were encouraged; modern factories for manufacturing of glass, textiles, paper, leather, as well as sugar refineries and canning plants were established; and mining was developed. All these development policies and plans were prepared by the individual government agencies in their related fields and were also implemented by themselves. There existed no central planning organization in the government.¹²⁷

During the war years the economic development of Iran stopped. But since the close of war the activities in this

125. Groseclose, op.cit., p. 146.

126. Ibid.

127. Hossein Motamen, "Development Planning in Iran," in Middle East Economic Papers - 1956, (Beirut: Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut, 1956,) p. 98.

field have started again. The government felt that there was a redundant need for an overall program of economic development of the country.

In April 1946, a Planning Board was set up to prepare an overall development program encompassing all phases of economy and industry. Such a program was devised and in February 1949, the Seven Year Plan Organization was created to carry out the first seven year plan for the purpose of promoting agriculture, industry, mining, production, and social and economic welfare of Iran. The Plan Organization deals with the problems of education, health, communication facilities, as well as town and village planning, and community development activities. In recent years, much progress and improvement have been made in these fields. The impact of the progress of the economic development upon the general public, and especially the rural people has been imperative.

A second seven year plan for the economic development of the country was adopted in March 1956.¹²⁸ This new plan called for a total expenditure of \$920 million for capital investments and improvement schemes throughout Iran, but later the amount was increased by 20 per cent.¹²⁹

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128. Iran Today, (New York: Iranian Information Service, 1957?,) p. 31.
129. T. Cuyler Young, "Iran," in The Americana Annual 1957, (New York: Americana Corporation, 1957,) p. 400.

The Plan Organization is financed by oil royalties. In the new plan much emphasis has been put on the community development activities and communication system.¹³⁰

130. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

TOWARD SOCIAL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education."

"Thomas Jefferson"

The idea of creation of a central organization in the government to maintain close relations with the public and to influence public opinion, had not been realized until 1939 in Iran. Reza Shah believed that in order to build a strong nation, there need be a kind of public education to prepare the people for social change. It was necessary, he thought, for the awakening of the collective mind of the nation, the attaining of the national and patriotic ideals, and the maintaining of modernization in Iran.¹³¹

The establishment of the new schools, libraries, Tehran University, and other educational institutions were among the first steps toward training and preparation of the

131. Gouvernement Imperial de l'Iran, L'Office National de l'Orientalion de l'Opinion Publique, (Tehran: Secretariat de l'Q.N.O.C.P., 1940,) pp. 1-2.

youth for the future. This, however, was not enough. The nation as a whole needed social education, that is to be trained and educated in line with the new developments and progresses in the country to accept modernization. Therefore, orientation and guidance of the masses of the people who had been brought up under the traditional lines was at stake. The king wanted to inspire in the people a deep-seated nationalistic feeling, and to make them appreciate and be proud of the achievements and improvements under his leadership.¹³² Consequently, the question of social education of the nation became the core of his attention in the late 1930s. It was not an easy task. After a lengthy consideration, the government decided to use persuasive and attractive methods and techniques for adult education and guidance of public opinion. The main objectives were to make the citizen aware of his rights and duties, and to recognize his rank and position in the society. Also to bring about opportunities so that he could benefit from common experience and knowledge; and more important than that, from a public relations point of view, to inform him what the government does, what is expected from him vis-a-vis the government and the nation as a whole, and what is going on in the world.

The general theme of all these activities display

132. Haas, op.cit., p. 169.

that they were on the basis of one-way communication, and were not in compliance with democratic requirements of public relations.

BUREAU FOR THE EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

In January 1939, the government for the purpose of implementing a comprehensive policy of changing the attitudes, thinking, and social outlook of the masses created a Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion.¹³³ It was charged with hammering the idea of nationhood and the ideals of nationalism into the brains of the public, and preparing them for a new, promising life.¹³⁴ This Bureau seemed to be an imitation of the ministries of propaganda in the totalitarian countries. In a short period after its establishment "a torrential rain of lectures, newspaper articles, and pamphlets overflowed the country, and it would have been difficult to decide whether writers and lecturers or readers and listeners were more bored by this monotonous repetition of the same subjects: the duties of the citizens, the new tasks of the women, the progress achieved, social morale, principles of hygiene, and so forth."¹³⁵

The Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion, however, was the first central agency in the govern-

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133. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, p. 147.
See also Gouvernement Imperial de l'Iran,
op.cit., p. 4.
134. Haas, loc.cit.
135. Ibid.

ment of Iran which started to maintain close active relationship with the general public, and to inform them about the activities, policies and intentions of the government. Although in nature it looked, and really was exclusively a propaganda agency, publicizing systematically the government in an exaggerated way, it attempted also to take some steps toward public relations practices. In order to have a better idea about that Bureau, its organization and functions will be considered here.

ORGANIZATION.

The Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion was administratively put under the Ministry of Education. It was directed by a Central Council in Tehran, and local councils in the provinces. The agency had also a Secretariat.¹³⁶

The Central Council was composed of the Minister of Education as chairman, four representatives of Tehran University, two secondary school principals, the directors of Adult Education, Physical Education and Scouts, and Press Censorship departments, and two competent educators. It had the following committees:¹³⁷

1. Committee of Lectures and Conferences

136. Gouvernement Imperial de l'Iran, loc.cit.

137. Ibid., p. 8.

2. Committee of Radio
3. Committee of Press
4. Committee of Textbooks
5. Committee of Theatre
6. Committee of Music

The chairmen of these committees were appointed by the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education, whereas their members were selected to the office by the Central Council and the recommendation of the chairmen.¹³⁸

A decree of the Council of Ministers provided that the Minister of Justice would be in charge of having a general supervision over the activities of the Bureau.¹³⁹

FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

After the creation of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion, the directors of the education offices in the provinces were instructed to organize meetings and lectures for the parents of the students and for other adults in the school buildings. This was the first organized action for maintaining closer relations with the citizens by the government. Therefore, in each

138. Ibid., p. 5.

139. Ibid., p. 9.

educational district of the country, there were organized some conferences every week, in which a large number of people participated. Lectures and speeches were delivered in each occasion, mainly on the subjects intended to shape public opinion. Later, in order to make these meetings more interesting singing, music, and shows were added to the programs.

Another activity of the Ministry of Education immediately after the creation of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion, was to organize special courses on the subject of public opinion guidance for the teachers and principals of the schools in Tehran and the provinces. The main purpose was to train these educators for their new job in a certain line. Pamphlets were published on the subjects to be imparted to the public, and were distributed among the workers in the field to maintain coordination and harmony in the programs and the principles of formation of public opinion throughout Iran.¹⁴⁰ The following were some of the subjects taught to the teachers and principals of the schools, and were to be imparted to the people in order to guide and direct their opinions:¹⁴¹

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140. "Le Rapport de Son Excellence Merat
Ministre de l'Education Nationale,
Concernant les Institutions Educatives
de l'O.N.O.O.P.," Ibid., pp. 17-19.
141. Ibid., pp. 19-21.

1. The political, economic, and social situation of Iran before 1920 - the date of Reza Shah's coup d'etat - and a succinct display of the reforms and the progress achieved in the social, economic, intellectual, and artistic fields since Reza Shah's accession to power.

2. Nationality. The fundamental principles which were the bases of the Constitution and the life of the nation, such as race, language, and other ingredients of nationalism.

3. History. The essential characteristics of the Iranian race, civilization, politics, royalism, the cult of patriotism, and religion of Iran.

4. Geography. Geophysics, geographical unity, and importance of natural resources of the country.

5. Biography of illustrious men. Their character, their influence upon the social life; the great politicians, poets, and philosophers of Iran.

6. Description and presentation of historical monuments and the traces of civilization of Iran. The national history of the country with documentation.

7. Education and training. The principles that should be observed in education and training of the children and the youth for their social formation and guidance of their opinion.

8. Rules of discussion. Principles and rules of discussion and reasoning, distinction of sophism.

9. Services rendered by Iran to the world civilization. Cultural, political, and artistic services.

10. Principles of scout education. The methods and aims of this education.

11. Fighting against superstitions. Prejudices and superstitions among different nations and their origins, various ways of fighting against superstitions.

12. Eloquence. The history and importance of eloquence and presentation of famous orators.

Following these instructions, those who were charged with the task of guiding public opinion were better equipped to deal with the vital problems of the country, and the sound formation of the society on a definite line.

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat acted as a liaison between the committees and executed the orders of the Central Council. It gathered the necessary information for the deliberation of the Council, prepared new regulations and programs, and was in charge of organizing the local branches of the Bureau in the provinces. It also maintained communication between field offices and different committees, and guided local offices in their activities. Other functions of the Secretariat were to organize meetings and conferences in Tehran, to introduce educational films in the meetings, to gather the

news and statistics of the Bureau, and to publish in the newspapers, magazines, and almanachs the news and activities of the Bureau all over the country. Every day there was at least one article in the newspapers concerning the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion.¹⁴² The general public was always informed about the problems of general interest. Thus, whenever the Bureau felt that the people should be acquainted with the activities of the government, it held meetings and conferences. For example, in 1940, on the occasion of the general census of Tehran, the Bureau held some 59 meetings within 20 days to inform the people about it, and to explain to them the purpose and uses of census.¹⁴⁵ The Secretariat on the other hand, published the text of the lectures and speeches which were delivered in Tehran, so that the whole nation could be acquainted with the activities of the Bureau.

COMMITTEE OF LECTURES AND CONFERENCES

This Committee had four sub-committees to deal with the elaborations of the subjects; lectures to be delivered to the general public; studies and information; and publications and prizes. Three kinds of lectures and conferences

142. "Le Rapport de M. Farhoudi, Secrétaire de l'O.N.O.O.P.," Ibid., pp. 45-46.

143. Ibid., p. 46.

were prepared by this committee, namely:¹⁴⁴

1. Special lectures to be given to the student body in the schools.
 2. Lectures to be delivered to the well-educated and the intellectuals.
 3. Lectures to be given to the general public.
- The lectures to be given at the Women's Club were also prepared by the Committee.

In big cities regular weekly conferences were held. The statistics of the Bureau show that during the first year of its activities some 6,663 meetings were organized all over Iran, in which about, 1,200,000 people participated.¹⁴⁵

The Committee of Lectures and Conferences maintained close relations with the newspapers and periodicals. It had certain roving lecturers who travelled throughout the country to give lectures. Moreover, some of the provincial students who studied at Tehran were charged with the task of delivering lectures in their locality whenever they went for vacation home.

COMMITTEE OF RADIO

The Committee of Radio was in charge of radio broadcasting and elaboration of its programs. It had sub-committees

144. "Le Rapport de S.E. A'lam, President de la Commission des Causerie et Conferences," Ibid., p. 12.

145. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

on news, music, agriculture, hygiene and sports, history and geography of Iran, and home economy. The radio program was composed of three parts: news, music, and public information and instruction. Radio was a good medium for propaganda and publicity. For this reason, loudspeakers were installed in the public squares and gathering places for the public use.¹⁴⁶

COMMITTEE OF PRESS

Although there was little, if any, freedom of press during the rule of Reza Shah, and the press was subject to strict censorship, it underwent some developments in that period, especially after the creation of the Committee of Press. The Committee took the lead of the press and directed it to inform the public about the accomplishments of the government. An attempt was made to keep up journalism with modern methods and techniques in the field. For this purpose, a School of Journalism was set up under the auspices of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion to train able journalists and to promote the standard of the press.

The Committee of Press was also in charge of reforming the printing techniques of the periodicals. It gave technical guidance and information to the press by sending

146. "Rapport Annuel de la Commission de la Radio Presente par S.E. Hakimi, Sous-Secretaire d'Etat aux P.T.T.," Ibid., pp. 24-28.

a specialist to visit the printing houses and giving the required help and instructions. New forms and types were introduced, printing standards developed, and the appearance of the newspapers and magazines became finer in typography, methods of mise en page, and distribution of the news and articles to the different pages and columns.¹⁴⁷ Progress was also effected in the field of phototypy and gravure making. The Committee itself published a fine and a luxe illustrated magazine in big format, called Irane Emruz (Iran Today). The main objective of this magazine was displaying the progress and reforms made in Iran, and illustrating the natural beauty and ancient culture of the country. Another activity of the Committee was the creation and development of information service, to collect and provide news for the periodicals.¹⁴⁸

COMMITTEE OF TEXTBOOKS

The Committee of Textbooks was in charge of directing the preparation and publication of textbooks for the primary, secondary, and high schools of the country. The aim was to provide uniform textbooks for the school system and keep it in harmony throughout Iran. The Ministry of Education appointed a group of qualified authors and scholars to engage in writing these textbooks. They were to be prepared

147. "Le Rapport de M. Mohammad Hedjazi, President de la Commission de la Press,"
Ibid., pp. 52-53.

148. Ibid., pp. 49-53.

in a manner to inspire love of the country, government, morality, and action in the student body. Attempts were made to employ, as much as possible, the Persian words and to purge the language from the Arabic words.¹⁴⁹ Regimentation became the rule in every walk of life. All the textbooks and other publications followed these lines and taught the same principles.

COMMITTEE OF THEATRE

The Committee of Theatre was in charge of encouraging dramatic art, or theatre, because it was almost non-existent in Iran. Consequently, a School of Dramatics was established under the direction of this Committee. It was intended to train a group of artists who would display social evils through critical plays, and inspire human feelings in the public. Theatre was an effective medium of social education.¹⁵⁰

COMMITTEE OF MUSIC

Music was considered as an excellent and influential medium for the objectives of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion. It was a character builder and promoter of higher human feelings and sentiments.¹⁵¹

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149. "Le Rapport de S.E. Rahnema, President de la Commission des Livres Classiques," Ibid., pp. 33-37.
150. "Le Rapport de la Commission du Theatre, Presente par S.E.A. Nasre, Sous-Secretaire d'Etat au Ministere de l'Industrie et des Mines," Ibid., pp. 29-32.
151. "Le Rapport du Commandant Minbachina, President de la Commission de la Musique," Ibid., p. 38.

The Committee of Music was created to revive the music of the country and to give it a new impetus. Also to familiarize the youth with the essence and content of the western music. To accomplish this end a Music Conservatory was established, and a Music Magazine was founded to promote the music, and to make it a public recreational activity. The public taste was the main concern of the Committee, and the popular songs and music were used to impress the people. Radio was the main medium of acquainting the public with music.¹⁵²

The Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion worked efficiently until 1941, when Reza Shah abdicated. After that the activities of this Bureau also stopped. There was no room for totalitarian-type propaganda center. It was the end of regimentation in the country. Since then the freedom of press and of opinion has been assured to some extent; and the propaganda is not imposed so openly on the general public. The country has entered into a new democratic era, which requires new institutions. The people have comparatively a free hand in expressing their ideas and opinions.

Another agency which had come into existence after the creation of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of

152. Ibid., pp. 38-42.

Public Opinion, as a central information organization to maintain close relationship with the people, and to attract their interest and favor, was the Department of Press and Propaganda. The establishment of this Department was a second attempt toward public relations in the government of Iran.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF PRESS AND PROPAGANDA

In October 1940, upon the desire of Reza Shah, the government decided to create a Department of Press and Propaganda.¹⁵³ The main objective of this Department was to serve as a central organization for mass communication and dissemination of news and information, whether internal or external. Also for maintenance of harmony and uniformity in the government publicity and propaganda. For this purpose, the Pars News Agency which was, until then, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was transferred to the newly established independent Department.¹⁵⁴ Within a short time, the Department expanded and new offices were added to its original organization - namely the Bureau of Radio from the Ministry of Posts and Telegraph, the Bureau of Journalism from the Ministry of the Interior, and a section of the Bureau of Press Censorship from the General Department of

153. General Hosein-Ali Razmara et al., A Guide to Iran, (Tehran: The Geographical Section of the Army Staff, 1330 (1951-1952),) p. 155 (in Persian)

154. Ibid.

Police.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, the activities of the Department increased, its scope became much wider, and thereafter it was called the General Department of Press and Propaganda.¹⁵⁶ It had a close relationship and contact with the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public Opinion in its educational work.

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The administrative structure of the General Department of Press and Propaganda was as follows:¹⁵⁷

1. General Secretariat
2. Special Secretariat
3. Pars News Agency
4. Bureau of Radio
5. Bureau of Publications
6. Bureau of Journalism
7. Bureau of Foreign Propaganda
8. Bureau of Home Propaganda
9. Bureau of Accounting
10. Bureau of Personnel

During that period the major function of the General Department of Press and Propaganda was the indoctrination of the general public with nationalistic ideas; it served as a positive institution for that purpose.¹⁵⁸ At the same

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid.

157. Ibid.

158. Elwell-Sutton, "The Press in Iran Today," p. 212.

time it attempted to improve the foreign propaganda services; to engage in publishing books and pamphlets of propagandistic value in foreign languages; and to ameliorate the conditions of movies, theatres, and the religious propaganda.¹⁵⁹ On the whole, the idea was to introduce Iran to the outside world, and to transplant certain values and objectives in the general public in Iran. This was the general structure and activities of the Department until 1941, when Allied Powers occupied Iran, and the whole political and administrative set up of the country was changed.

After abdication of Reza shah, in 1941, the General Department of Press and Propaganda lost its independence, under the new regime, and became part of the Ministry of Education; it was responsible to the Higher Education Council, and for a period functioned under it.¹⁶⁰ This was not, however, a satisfactory arrangement. As a result of the instability of the governments, the directors of the Department were frequently changed, and it was not able to carry out its tasks efficiently. The only thing the Department accomplished was to air the policy of the government, and to engage in publicity for it. It usually repudiated the previous government, its policy and its program.¹⁶¹ The practical

159. Razmara et al., loc.cit.

160. Ibid. See also Vreeland, op.cit., p. 113.

161. Written answer to the questions submitted to Hosein Hejazi, the editor of Jahane - No Magazine, Tehran.

and most ~~useful~~ part of the Department was the Pars News Agency, which served as the only source of information and news for the Iranian press, because the majority of them did not have a news service themselves.¹⁶²

For some time, the Department continued its activities under the authority of the Ministry of Education, and in that period a number of changes were introduced into the Department. In 1944, however, because of intense disputes with the press, and the consequent difficulties that arose, the Department was temporarily closed down.¹⁶³

This suspension did not last long; the Department was opened again and was made responsible directly to the Prime Minister himself. Thereafter, more attention was given to it and it was more enthusiastically used by the government. It advocated and backed the policies and programs of the government. Yet, it was not a stable and sound organization and had no definite, well organized work program; rather it ran under the whims and directions of the governments in power. Ingenious methods were used to attract the interest of the people and to mold public opinion in favor of the government. With a change in government the ~~director~~ director general of the Department also changed.

162. Elwell-Sutton, loc.cit.

163. Ibid.

In 1947, when the Azerbaijan question was settled, Radio Tabriz and the Propaganda Office of Azerbaijan, which were created under the auspices of the autonomous government of Democrat Party in that province were put under the authority of the General Department of Press and Propaganda.¹⁶⁴ They were successfully used as means of maintaining close relations with the public in Azerbaijan, and encouraging them for unity, love of the country and shah and compliance with the central government.¹⁶⁵ Some public relations devices were also employed. Many local leaders and respectables were invited to have radio talks, in an attempt to attract their attentions for the central government.

Thereafter, the Department began to expand more and more. It established many branches in Tehran and the provinces, and through using army wireless systems in some of the large cities, opened local radio stations.¹⁶⁶

By 1951, the Department was composed of:¹⁶⁷

1. Secretariat
2. Pars News Agency
3. Bureau of Radio
4. Bureau of Foreign Propaganda
5. Bureau of Home Propaganda

164. Razmara et al., op.cit., p. 156

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid.

6. Bureau of Islamic Propaganda
7. Bureau of Information and Statistics
8. Bureau of Publications
9. Bureau of Accounting
10. Bureau of Personnel

FUNCTIONS

The functions of the General Department of Press and Propaganda, as they had been approved by the Council of Ministers in 1943, were the following:¹⁶⁸

A. For Publicity Inside the Country:

1. To inform the general public about their civic rights and duties; and to encourage them to be active in daily life and to engage in useful enterprises.

2. To uphold patriotic and religious feelings; and to urge an esteem in the people toward the national traditions and supreme legal principles of the country.

3. To promote public morality and to encourage humane feelings and cooperation in the society.

4. To give adequate guidance for physical and ethical training of the youth, and to educate them.

5. To encourage the families to learn methods of housekeeping, sewing, weaving, cooking, and manual works.

6. To inform the people about public hygiene and

168. The decree (n.n.) of the Council of Ministers as approved by Teer 11, 1322 (July, 1943).

public health; to draw their attention to contagious diseases and their consequences; and to acquaint them with first aid techniques.

7. To combat the bad habits such as using opium, alcohol and drugs.

8. To inform the public about modern scientific progress and inventions, especially those that are effective in the way of living of the people.

9. To give practical agricultural information and advice to all parts of the country, considering the requirements of the climate and availability of equipment in each locality; moreover to teach the people how to use small gardens for better farming.

10. To teach the orthography and composition of the Persian language to the public, on the basis of the rules put down by the Iranian Academy; and to inspire literary taste through excerpts from the famous writers.

11. To introduce the great personalities of Iran and other countries in the fields of science, literature, and politics.

12. To give an account of the history of Iran and the causes of the great events and their consequences; and to introduce the historical monuments of Iran and the world.

13. To discuss the sources of wealth in Iran, and to present the economic situation of the country, as well as the outside world.

14. To inform the public of the important internal events, and of the discussions of the parliament; to comment on the approved laws; and to create a favorable attitude in the people toward the proposed bills.

15. To inform the public of the decisions and activities of the different ministries, in relation to the government's policy and the enforcement of laws, rules and regulations.

16. To announce the important home and foreign news.

B. For Publicity Outside the Country

1. To give home news.

2. To discuss the important historical events, with special reference to the glories of Iran.

3. To introduce the famous Iranian men of science, literature, and politics.

4. To illustrate the mental maturity of the people of Iran, and their desire for progress and development.

5. To explain the national slogans of Iran.

6. To show and specify the kind of contributions that Iran expects from other countries, as well as the contributions that she can offer to those countries.

7. To prepare some means of publicity in other countries.

These functions were to be carried out through the use of spoken word, written word, image and music. The most important and widely used medium, however, was the spoken

word and the Department mostly concerned itself with the broadcasting system.

During the period of nationalization of oil industries and the rise of Dr. Mossadegh to power, in the early 1950s, the Department played a significant part in molding public opinion, and maintaining closer relationship with the general public. It reported the editorials and other important articles of the newspapers and periodicals in special hours through radio, and also broadcasted the debates and discussions that went on in the sessions of the parliament. People, from all over the country, sent written group messages supporting the government and its nationalization policy to the Department. These messages were also released through radio. On the other hand, many speeches were delivered by the members of the government, the parliament, and the National Front to inform the public about the new policies and plans of the government, and thus to keep a constant direct contact with the people.

Although the General Department of Press and Propaganda played an important role in the national resurgence of the people and maintained satisfactory relations with the general public through radio, it did not have a well-trained personnel and necessary facilities for an effective mass communication system. The officials had little concept of assessing the needs of the people and then organizing the broadcasting

stations and planning special programs to meet those needs.¹⁶⁹ To remedy this situation, the Department entered into an agreement with the Technical Cooperation Administration of the United States in Iran (Point IV), in 1953.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One of the main objectives of the technical assistance provided by Point IV primarily was to acquaint the radio personnel with the principles of mass communication and to train them on the modern lines of broadcasting practices. Another objective was to provide facilities for preparing educational programs in the fields of public health, agriculture, and education.¹⁷⁰ The first attempt in the field of personnel training was the publication of A Guide for Radio Personnel.¹⁷¹ Later steps were taken toward establishing an efficient system of mass communication, whereby the government agencies could disseminate the necessary information to the public and special interest groups, as well as socially educate them. The chief concern, however, was the development of national unity among the people throughout the country.¹⁷²

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169. Project Plan and Justification Extension: Radio Production Training Project, (Tehran: U.S. Operations Mission, July 15, 1954,) p. 2.
170. Project Agreement for Radio Production Training, (Tehran, September 9, 1953,) p. 1.
171. Ali-Asghar Amir-Moez, A Guide for Radio Personnel, (Tehran: Point IV Publications, 1330 (1951-52),) (in Persian).
172. Project Agreement for Radio Production Training, loc.cit.

The vastness of Iran, the low rate of literacy, and the lack of a good communication system between different parts of the country, as well as the interest of the people in the spoken word,¹⁷³ had made the radio broadcasting the most effective means of mass communication of news, information, and the educational materials of any kind. In order to make the activities of radio more successful and to keep it in line with the progressive methods of information dissemination, the following technical assistance was provided:¹⁷⁴

1. Planning, management, and maintenance of broadcasting installations and training qualified technicians in these fields.

2. Planning and establishing a modern news service and news broadcasts, and training the personnel in the techniques, duties, and responsibilities of objective news gathering, writing, and broadcasting as well as special events coverage.

3. Training the radio personnel in writing, production, and direction of educational, documentary, dramatic, and other types of radio programs.

4. Training the radio staff how to integrate the

173. Supra, p. 58.

174. Technical Assistance Project in Radio and Radio News, (Tehran: 1954,) pp. 2-3.

radio broadcasting into an overall government information service.

5. Coordination of training in the utilization phases of radio with the employment of other audio-visual and mass communication media.

For the accomplishment of these objectives some of the radio staff were sent to the United States and other progressive countries to specialize in radio engineering, recording, programming, production, and direction. At the same time, some of the personnel of the broadcasting stations in provinces were called to Tehran, to be trained and be well-equipped with the new techniques and methods of broadcasting. Besides these, theoretical training was given to twenty nine individuals from the General Department of Press and Propaganda and various ministries.¹⁷⁵

In 1954, the technical assistance program was extended for a two year period.¹⁷⁶ It was intended on the one hand to train more programming personnel in Tehran, and on the other to promote all phases of radio operation at provincial level. It was realized that the easiest way to reach the people in the whole country was the medium of broadcasting. This was necessary to maintain a favorable attitude in the public, and to impart upon them the expert

175. Project Plan and Justification Extension: Radio Production Training Project, p. 1.
176. Ibid.

knowledge and wisdom for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses of people. Moreover, the people could be informed in this way of the activities of the community development program and consequently be well-oriented toward it. Since the majority of the rural population was illiterate and the printed word was not a proper medium to reach them, the radio was considered the sole medium of effective communication for those geographically isolated sectors of the people.

To accomplish these all important objectives the broadcasting system was carefully surveyed by an O and M specialist in 1954. This specialist recommended the reorganization of the administration and planning of radio network, especially in the provinces.¹⁷⁷ It was believed that more emphasis should be given on developing provincial facilities to meet the needs and interests of the people in the whole country. The main idea was to make Radio Tehran as the nucleus of the broadcasting system, with a series of provincial stations which would relay mostly the broadcasts of Tehran and originate programs that have been designed to serve the local interests.¹⁷⁸

GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING*

On the basis of the general survey of an O and M

177. Ibid., p. 2.

178. Ibid.

* In Vreeland, op.cit., this Department has been referred to as the General Department of Publications and Radio, which is the

specialist, which was conducted on the various administrative and technical aspects and activities of the General Department of Press and Propaganda in 1954, it was realized that the existing system was not efficient and adequate.¹⁷⁹ The country needed a nation-wide system of mass communication, whereby the masses of the people could be reached easily and in a very short time. This was necessary for maintaining a close, favorable relationship between the government and the citizens, and for imparting knowledge and basic information on different aspects of the public life. To accomplish this objective, the reorganization of the Department seemed essential.

In February 1955, the reorganization plan prepared by the O and M specialist was submitted to the Department. The plan suggested that the title of the Department to be changed to the National Enlightenment and Broadcasting Organization, and the whole organizational set up to be changed and improved.¹⁸⁰ The reorganization plan was adopted for the most part, and since July 1955 it has been put into effect. The title of the Department, however, was changed

literal translation of its Persian title. Since the Department, in its English publications uses the title of the General Department of Information and Broadcasting, in this work also the same title will be used.

179. Project Plan and Justification Extension: Radio Production Training Project, loc.cit.
180. Written answer to questions submitted to Masud Brumand and Sahak Ghazarbekian of O & M Branch, Public Administration Division, USOM, Tehran.

to the General Department of Information and Broadcasting.¹⁸¹

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The General Department of Information and Broadcasting is responsible for the initiation, development, and direction of the public relations and information programs of the government. It serves as the central point for coordination and dissemination of public information and reports, including preparation and distribution of news stories and other informational releases for the press and radio services in Tehran. At the same time, it provides technical supervision over all regional offices and assists them in their public information programs and problems of local or regional interest.¹⁸²

The objectives of the Department are:¹⁸³

1. To effect the maximum utilization of the broadcasting facilities as a means of providing the general public with world news of interest and value to Iran.

2. To develop and approve regular news broadcasts of the current events of the country and the government, as well as programs in the fields of education, public health, religion, entertainment, and information.

181. Ibid. See also Vreeland, op.cit., p. 113.

182. Reorganization Plan of the General Department of Information and Broadcasting, (Tehran: July 1955,) p. 1.

183. Ibid.

3. To encourage the development of radio facilities and their availability to the masses of the people.

4. To promote the use of broadcasting facilities as a media for advertising by commercial enterprises, on a competitive basis, and to utilize all the revenues acquired thereby in the development of research projects for improving the radio network.

5. To maintain accurate accounting records of all fiscal transactions of the Department, and to publish periodical financial statements indicating the utilization of the government budget allocations, as well as the revenues from commercial advertising.

ORGANIZATION

The administrative structure of the General Department of Information and Broadcasting is comparatively simple. It is an independent agency, run under a Managing Director, who is directly responsible to the Prime Minister.¹⁸⁴ He is appointed by the Prime Minister usually from among the qualified, top government officials for an indefinite period, and can be dismissed any time by him.

184. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 113. In this work it is cited that the Department is under the High Education Council of the Ministry of Education whose chairman is also the director of the Department. This should be due to misunderstanding, because only the previous Department of Press and Propaganda in the early 1940s, as has been referred to in the present study, for a short period was under the Ministry of Education, and since then has always functioned as an independent agency.

The Managing Director is in charge of administration and operation of all the activities of the Department. He maintains constant contact with all the ministries and government agencies, to be able to develop programs concerning the specific objectives and projects of those agencies, which include matters of national and regional interest, information, and education. He also acts as the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Department, and conducts periodic meetings with the Board to develop coordinated plans and policies for the improvement and expansion of the programs and facilities of the Department.

The Department consists of the following organs:¹⁸⁵

1. Board of Directors. This Board is the policy making body of the Department. It is composed of a member of the Royal Court who represents the shah, a member of the National Consultative Assembly, a member of the Senate, the Ministers of Education and Post, Telegraph, and Telephone or their delegates, and the Army Chief of Staff. The term of their office is indefinite. The representatives of other ministries present their views and requirements directly to the Managing Director.

The Board meets regularly at the call of the chairman, once in a month, to review, to initiate, and to recommend

185. Reorganization Plan of the General Department of Information and Broadcasting, pp. 3-11.

plans and policies for providing the general public with educational programs and other persuasive materials designed to effect improvement in the development of the national economy and social welfare, as well as maintaining close relationship with the people.

2. Policy, Plans, and Research Division. This Division is mainly concerned with conducting research studies of the data and information on the phases of programming, as well as the most efficient use of the available facilities of the Department and their improvement. It is in charge of O and M functions of the Department. On the basis of the research studies, the Division prepares and initiates plans and policies for the operation and administration of the activities of the Department, and submits them to the Managing Director, to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors. The Division maintains reference materials on all relevant subjects to be used in preparing programs. It is also responsible to evaluate all operations and activities of the Department.

3. Public Relations and Publications Division. This Division receives all the plans prepared by the Policy, Plans, and Research Division for the purpose of programming. It also develops public relations and public information materials for broadcasting and publication. The main function of the Division, however, from the point of view of public relations is to conduct research studies in relation to the

needs and attitudes of the listeners, as well as their reactions to the radio programs. It has a close contact with the internal and external branches of the Radio Division and advises them in promoting their programs. The printing facilities of the Department are under this Division, and it prepares public relations items for publication in the form of booklets, pamphlets, and brochures. It also publishes a monthly magazine, called Radio Tehran, which is the house organ of the Department. Public Relations and Publications Division serves as the information office of the Department and keeps constant contacts with all information offices of the ministries and government agencies.

4. Radio Division. The Radio Division has two main branches: Internal Services Branch and External Services Branch. The Internal Services Branch is responsible for the selection of news items and arrangement of the programs and materials to be broadcasted in Iran. The main objective of this Branch is to inform the masses of the people directly through radio and to attract their attention to the programs. It has seven sections for this purpose: News Section (Pars), Special Events Section, Political Commentary Section, Development Section, Orchestra and Music Staff Section, Features Program Section, and Production Section. The External Services Branch is in charge of arranging the details of broadcasting programs for the international dissemination,

as well as reflecting the viewpoints and opinions of the government and its relations with neighboring countries.

5. Administrative Services Division. This Division is responsible for performing all routine administrative services of the Department, such as personnel, filing, correspondence, and the like.

6. Office of Comptroller. All the financial and budgetary affairs of the Department are maintained by this Office. It also prepares financial statements for periodic publication.

The Ministry of Posts, Telegraph, and Telephone acts as the technical advisor to the Managing Director of the Department, and supervises all the studio and other technical activities of the broadcasting system.

Since the reorganization, the General Department of Information and Broadcasting, has become more democratic in nature, because the citizens also indirectly, through their representatives, have a say in the policy making and program planning of the Department. Moreover, within this Department which is an intended public relations Department, a special Division of public relations has been created. Therefore, certain steps toward a two-way communication between the government and the general public have been taken in the past two years through this Department. The importance of public relations in the modern sense is gradually on the verge of being recognized by the government. Yet, no well-organized,

positive public relations program, on a sound basis, has been planned and maintained by the General Department of Information and Broadcasting.

BUREAU OF GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

Since 1941, the Office of Prime Minister has always dealt with the question of the grievances and complaints of the citizens, as well as the government employees vis-a-vis the government agencies and administration. Until 1950, however, when the General Bureau of Inspection was organized in the Office of Prime Minister, little attention was given to the complaints and grievances. By creation of this Bureau, inspectors were sent, upon the order of the Prime Minister, to the different government agencies to study and inspect the nature of the problems, the atmosphere of work, and the relations that those agencies had with the clientele. In the case of certain complaints from the government agencies also sometimes some inspectors of Prime Minister's Office were commissioned to go and have spot checks, and to find a solution to the problems. Later in the same year, because of the load of the work, two specialized bureaus were created in the Office of Prime Minister to deal directly with grievances and complaints and to maintain close contact with the government agencies, namely the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints and Bureau of Ministerial Affairs.¹⁸⁶

186. Written answer to questions submitted to Mr. Ahmadi, the Secretary of the Council of Administrative Undersecretaries and the Chairman of the Legal Section of the Office of Prime Minister, Tehran.

The establishment of these new bureaus was a device in keeping better relationships with the masses of the people and interest groups, as well as with the government agencies. The bureaus, therefore, have dealt with the question of complaints against the government, and have served as a liaison between the government and the public. Since the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints has a positive part in the public relations activities of the Office of Prime Minister and the government as a whole, the main concern here, will be the discussion of its functions and of its deliberations.

FUNCTIONS

The Bureau of Grievances and Complaints receives all the letters of complaints and grievances that are addressed to the shah or Prime Minister. In the former case, the letters are referred to it by the Secretariat of the Ministry of Court. The Bureau receives every day about 300 to 350 letters of this kind.¹⁸⁷

The nature and content of the complaints and grievances are usually the following:¹⁸⁸

1. Legal cases asking for justice and redress.
2. Applications for employment in the government.

187. Report on the Functional Statement of the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints, (Tehran: January, 1957,) p. 1.

188. Ibid., pp. 1-3.

3. Requests for financial and technical assistance by farmers and peasants in the field of agriculture.
4. Requests concerning getting benefit from the electricity, telephone, and water systems.
5. Complaints of farmers and landowners.
6. Complaints of the government employees concerning inadequacy of their salary, as well as other administrative dissatisfactions.
7. Complaints from the government officials, gendarme, police, tax collectors and the like.
8. Requests of assistance by those who have suffered from floods and other catastrophes.
9. Miscellaneous complaints.

These grievances and complaints are reviewed by the officials of the Bureau and then referred to the ministry or agency concerned. All the ministries and independent government agencies have their representatives in the Office of Prime Minister. They are the liaison officers between the Office and their respective agencies. Therefore, the complaints are sent through them for consideration and action. Some of these complaints, however, are of a very complex and crucial nature; they are directly sent to the General Bureau of Inspection or the Undersecretary of Prime Minister or Prime Minister himself to be decided upon.¹⁸⁹

189. Written answer to questions submitted to Mr. Ahmadi.

The government agencies should carefully consider the complaints, and as soon as possible prepare a reply and send it back to the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints. The most important duty of the Bureau is to answer the complaints and grievances on the basis of these replies. Many a time most of the persons who have complained or have asked for redress, personally go to the Bureau. Dealing with them is of prime importance and requires understanding.

Since the organization of the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints was not adequate, and there occurred certain delays because of heavy work load and red tape, in January 1957, the reorganization of the Bureau was requested by the chairman.¹⁹⁰ Recently the reorganization has been effected and the work of the Bureau is somewhat facilitated. The General Bureau of Inspection, now is more concerned with the activities of the Bureau and closely cooperates with it. Actually the Bureau functions under its authority. Since the chairman of the General Bureau of Inspection is also the Political Undersecretary of the Prime Minister and acts as the spokesman for the government, the public relations activities of the Office of Prime Minister have been integrated.

The creation of the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints was an active and positive attempt of the govern-

190. Report on the Functional Statement of
the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints,
p. 1.

ment toward better public relations. It has maintained a constant relationship between the public and the government, and its objectives have been to assist and help the public and to build a sense of confidence in the people toward the government. But not much success has been achieved by it. In Iran there is a wide gap between the principle and practice.

Quite recently another step has been taken in the field of public relations by government. It is the creation of a new bureau in the Office of Prime Minister to deal with suggestions and criticism of the people and press about the government services and administration. This shows even more concern by the present government to the democratic principles and promises that a kind of two-way communication might be established between the government and the masses of the people.

BUREAU OF SUGGESTIONS AND CRITICISM

*In June 1957, the Prime Minister ordered the establishment of a Bureau of Suggestions and Criticism in his Office.¹⁹¹ The objectives and functions of this Bureau are: 1. to study and consider all the views, suggestions, and criticism concerning government administration, that are

191. "The Government and the People," Pars, Shiraz newspaper, No. 1982, (Khordad 30, 1336 (June, 1957),) p. 1.

presented by the citizens to the Bureau or are reflected in the press; and 2. to adopt and apply the sound and practical suggestions in guiding the government agencies and officials toward maintaining a policy of public interest and public welfare.

The creation of this Bureau is a well-thought endeavor by the government in the field of positive relations with the public and press. That displays the fact that government has become comparatively conscious about the gulf that exists between its administration and the people, and thus attempts to build a bridge of good will and popular support between them. Soon after the creation of this Bureau a committee, composed of some of the top government officials and administrators, was organized under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister's Administrative Undersecretary in the Office of Prime Minister, to study all the suggestions and criticism received by the Bureau of Suggestions and Criticism.

The citizens have been asked positively to send their constructive criticism and suggestions to that committee. It has been also declared that those who give sound and applicable suggestions will be rewarded and their name will be publicized through radio.

Although this attempt of the government theoretically is a good device for maintaining close relations with the people, and more important than that for participating them in the process of policy making, there are doubts how suc-

cessful it would be in practice. The mere creation of such bureaus cannot remedy the deficiencies of government administration in the field of public relations as has been the case in the past. Something more vital is needed. It is a sincere approach and concern by the government to the citizens. This can be done through deeds and not promises. X

CHAPTER 5

ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GOVERNMENT*

"Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustee are created for the benefit of the people."

"Henry Clay"

X It has been suggested that public relations should be an integral part of the program of government administration.¹⁹² That is from the chief executive down to the office boy, all the employees should look at their actions in the light of public opinion and public attitudes, and do something about it. The top policy forming officials, however, have particularly a very significant part to play in this respect. But in the last resort, public relations is the responsibility of the chief executive. Therefore, there

* This chapter is mainly based on the information and facts gathered through correspondence with Hosein Hejazi, Masud Brumand, Sahak Ghazarbekian, and Amir Seif-ed-Din Jahanbani who have held interviews, on the basis of written questions submitted to them by the author, with some of the officials of the government agencies, especially the directors of the information, or press and propaganda departments and divisions.

⁵² 192. The Committee on Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies, op.cit., p. 66.

has been an agreement on the principle that the public relations functions and activities should be carried out by a special staff unit which is directly responsible to the chief executive.¹⁹³ In that sense public relations is a staff function and consequently should be of an advisory nature. x

In Iran, however, the picture is somewhat different. There has been little, if any, recognition of well-developed, planned, positive, and formal public relations program in government administration. Yet, the government is aware of the importance of public opinion and public attitudes, as well as the need for public acceptance of the government. Therefore, through propaganda and publicity it attempts to win the public support and public good will. But these activities do not follow a set procedure and a well-organized program.

In the laws, ideals, and objectives of the government organizations there can be found some traces and provisions for maintaining good and positive relationship with the general public, but in practice they have been mostly ignored or neglected. The public relations departments of the government agencies, which are usually called information, publications, or press and propaganda departments, function almost like line units and do not have an advisory role; whereas

193. Ibid. See also Plackard and Blackmon, op.cit., pp. 167-170, and Cutlip and Center, op.cit., pp. 157-170.

they should function primarily as staff units and in case it is necessary engage in line functions. They have little prestige and importance in the organizational set up. In fact most of what may be termed as public relations is accomplished without a set plan or a positive basis. However, since the dissemination of information is generally in one-way direction - from the government to the public - it can be said that there is more publicity rather than public relations in the government.

The governmental public relations in Iran has been administered on two main levels. The first is political, covering the government as a whole and promoting its general policies and programs. The second level is the administrative, dealing with the specific policies and activities of various government agencies separately. The former is carried out by the General Department of Information and Broadcasting which is directly responsible to the Prime Minister. It is focused on the general public. The latter, on the other hand, is maintained by the individual public relations offices of the government agencies. It is directed toward special publics and clientele of these agencies.

On the political plane, the General Department of Information and Broadcasting has been very active. It has served the central information office by presenting the official view of the government. Moreover, through the control of radio broadcasting, especially Radio Tehran, it

has disseminated and interpreted the governmental policies and programs to the masses of the people to gain their willingness and confidence. Many a time, the Political Undersecretary of the Prime Minister who is usually the spokesman of the government, and thus plays the role of a public relations man, has been the director of the Department. The Department has functioned as the mouthpiece of the government and has used the mass communication media for popularizing the government in power. Since the organization, activities, and functions of the General Department of Information and Broadcasting have been discussed in preceding chapter, here the main concern would be on the administration of public relations in the ministries and other government agencies.

The information, or press and propaganda departments of the ministries and other government agencies have been active on the administrative plane. The objectives of these departments are generally to inform the clientele, special publics, and employees of the government about the laws, rules, regulations, and new policies as well as the facilities provided by the respective ministry or agency. They usually publish an house organ, both for internal and external publics, which tries to promote the aims and objectives of the ministry or agency concerned, and to get the public attention to their activities.

The public relations functions of any of the ministries or agencies are not always exclusively centralized in only one department or division. Those functions are usually the concern of the top management, but there is no staff unit of public relations to advise the top management in this respect. The information, or press and propaganda departments, as a rule, are in charge of publishing house organs, although some of them even do not have an house organ. The number of their staff ranges from three to eighteen in different agencies. In practice, they have little to do with the positive and planned public relations programs. Their contact with the clientele or other interested groups is almost non-existent. One of the points where there is a direct contact and two-way communication with the people and the government, in relation to public relations work, is the Bureau of Grievances and Complaints in the Office of Prime Minister.¹⁹⁴

The information, or press and propaganda departments, however, have a spokesman, who is the official speaker for the ministry or agency concerned. This man, whenever a ministry or an agency wants to adopt a new important policy or to engage in a substantial project, holds a press conference and informs the press people about it. Another

194. Supra, p. 110.

public relations function of these departments is to maintain a close contact and relationship with the General Department of Information and Broadcasting. They usually prepare a speech or a program related to the activities or objectives of their agency or ministry and send it to be released through radio. In the case of certain ministries, the official spokesman has a regular program in radio. The General Department of Information and Broadcasting, however, does not have any authority over these departments and does not interfere in their activities.

Since the Ministry of the Interior is more in contact with various publics all over the country, and is almost the major link between the government and the people, it plays a significant part in handling the public relations work of the government. For this reason, the discussion of administrative public relations will begin with its educational and public relations activities. Then reference will be made on the public relations departments and their activities in some other ministries and government agencies to exhibit the nature of their work. It should be noticed that the public relations activities of almost all government agencies in Iran are directed toward the external publics. Little attention is paid to the inter-departmental relationships or the internal publics.

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the internal administration of Iran. There are three departments in the Ministry that have something to do with public relations, namely the Department of Information, the Department of Social Affairs, and the Department of Press.

Department of Information. This Department has six sections, among which the Section of Reports on Important Affairs has a positive public relations function. It receives the reports and information sent from provinces and counties, and releases them for public information through radio and press. Its function is mostly of reportorial nature.¹⁹⁵

Department of Social Affairs. This Department is composed of five sections, all of which are engaged in public relations work:

1. Section of Fighting Social Evils. It fights with the consumption of alcoholic beverages, drugs and opium, prostitution, gambling, robbery, crimes and the like through legal as well as propaganda and publicity media.¹⁹⁶

2. Section of Social Education. This Section attempts to be socially educating the masses of the people in order to promote their standard of knowledge, to enlighten and guide their thinking, and to reform those social customs

195. Ministry of the Interior, The Governor's Guide, (Tehran: Ministry of the Interior, 1335 (1956-57), (in Persian), p. A.

196. Ibid., p. B.

and traditions that are incompatible with the modern ways of life. It gives ample attention to the affairs of the women and their rights, trying to facilitate their participation in civic affairs. It also encourages people to cooperative work in order to be gradually accustomed to run their own affairs, and thus to promote the democratic principles in the society. For these purposes, it uses press, books and publications, radio, and audio-visual aids.¹⁹⁷

3. Section of Education and Health. It studies the general condition of education and health all over the country, especially in villages, tribes, and remote areas by the help of the officials of the Ministry in the localities, and through the cooperation of the Ministries of Education and Health, and local benevolents tries to provide health and educational facilities for the people. One of its main objectives is to implement the compulsory education law throughout Iran and to combat illiteracy.¹⁹⁸

4. Section of Settling Tribes, and of the Village Headman. This Section is charged to promote the social conditions of the tribal people, and to encourage them to settle down and live in the houses, instead of tents. Its objective is to bring about an evolution in the nomadic life, and to change the internal administrative system of the

197. Ibid.

198. Ibid., pp. B, and C.

tribes as it seems fit with the current situation. It attempts to raise the literacy rate of the tribal people through radio, propaganda, and moving cinemas and schools. On the other hand, this Section is concerned with the duties and functions of the village headmen, and tries to acquaint the farmers and peasants with the modern methods and techniques of agriculture, animal husbandry, and better rural life. It also attempts to maintain good relations between landowners and peasants.¹⁹⁹

5. Section of Cooperation and Welfare. It deals with the centralization and expansion of the welfare affairs and the organizations that are in charge of these activities in the whole country, such as orphanages, institutions for the poor and handicapped people. It also encourages cooperative works, engages in training the employees of the Ministry, and establishes clubs for the gathering of the employees and their recreation. Moreover, it holds weekly lectures for the purpose of educating the employees of the Ministry and of increasing the level of their general knowledge; and publicizes the policies and objectives of the Ministry through radio and special publications for the internal and external publics.²⁰⁰

Department of Press. This Department has four sections, among which the News Section is mainly engaged

199. Ibid., p. C.

200. Ibid.

in public relations work. The News Section collects all the news and information from the provinces, as well as the capital and releases them through radio and press. It also studies all the articles and editorials of the press which are related to the Ministry of the Interior or its dependent agencies, and take necessary measures about the criticism and grievances of the people and press. This Department also compiles the laws, rules, and regulations of the Ministry for the general use of the employees.²⁰¹

Besides these departments, other departments of the Ministry of the Interior are also to some extent engaged in public relations work through contact with different publics, but there is no centralized department of public relations to take care of all these activities. The Ministry does not have an house organ.

The Ministry of the Interior has four dependent agencies under its control, namely the General Departments of Public Statistics and Civil Registration, Police, Gendarmerie, and Community Development Board. These agencies have their own separate divisions of information, or press and propaganda. The public relations activities of the Police and Community Development Board are better developed

201. Ibid., pp. G and H.

than the other two agencies. For this reason, they are discussed here.

General Department of Police. The Publications and Propaganda Division of the General Department of Police has an illustrated house organ which is mostly directed toward internal public. Besides, it maintains close relationship with the press; has monthly publications in small size for the public on blotting papers, matches and the like; puts out posters for traffic instructions; and has a daily talk on radio giving advice to the people and informing them about the activities of police and the services that police provides for the people.

Community Development Board. The Community Development Board has a well-developed Information and Publications Division, which provides a comparatively effective public relations service. The Division has a good library, an audio-visual training service, and publishes a weekly bulletin which is exclusively for the internal publics. It informs the employees about the policies, plans, and internal activities of the Board. In relation to the external public relations, the Division hands out the news of the development activities of the Board to the press, which are for the most part illustrated. It maintains favorable press relations and provides facilities for the press people to go to the villages in different parts of the country and to witness the accomplishments of the Board.

The Division has published the village societies laws in an interesting illustrated form to inform the illiterate villagers about the provisions of law. It has a monthly magazine for the rural people, written in simple Persian, with a very low subscription rate. It enjoys a wide circulation. The Division organizes conferences in the rural areas for villagers, contacts them informally, and through educational films acquaints them with the improved village life and cooperative work. Quite recently, the Division has arranged for a weekly radio program to disseminate the news of the development activities in the whole country to the general public.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education has always been active in the field of public relations, and in one way or another has attempted to maintain close relations with the people and to educate them. One of the most important activities of the Ministry in the field of public relations was the creation of Home and School Cooperation Society in the schools in 1947.²⁰² It was provided that such societies should be organized throughout the country in the primary and secondary

202. Dr. Issa Sadigh, A Brief Survey of the History of Education in Iran, (Tehran: Book Printing Company, 1334 (1955-56),) p. 203. (in Persian).

schools. The members of these societies are elected by, and from among, the parents of the students for a three year period. The principals of the schools are also members in the society. The functions of these societies are to study the requests of the parents, to remedy the deficiencies and shortcomings of the schools; to supervise in health programs; to assist in the development of the school libraries and museums; to organize meetings and lectures for attracting public interest to schools; to supervise the expenditure of the gifts granted to the school; and to assist financially poor students.²⁰³ This was a democratic step taken for the purpose of public participation in the educational affairs. So far, in the majority of the cities and towns these societies have been organized, and they are active in their functions.

Another step in the field of public participation is the nature of the composition of Education Councils of the counties. They are composed of the governor as chairman, the head of Education Office, the Mayor, a representative of the Municipal Council, the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, a religious leader, a principal of the schools, a representative of the chairmen of the Home and School Cooperation Societies, a local dignitary, and in the counties

203. Ibid., pp. 203-204.

where there is a college or university a representative of them. The main functions of Education Councils are to assist and cooperate with the Education Office; to suggest reforms and changes in the rules and regulations and curricula to the Higher Education Council in Tehran; and to decide on the expenditure of contributions, or funds allocated by the Municipal Council for educational purposes.²⁰⁴

Besides these two devices of providing for the public participation in the educational activities of the Ministry, its different departments such as Adult Education, Compulsory Education, Educational Relations, Physical Education, Teachers' Training, Inspection of Social Affairs, Fundamental Education, Educational Cooperation, as well as Primary, Secondary, Rural, and Vocational Education Departments come into close contact with the people and in one way or another are engaged in public relations service of the Ministry. More specifically, the Press and Propaganda Department carries out the formal public relations activities of the Ministry of Education. It is in charge of collecting and disseminating the news of the Ministry through the press and radio, and conducts a regular radio program on different aspects of public education. It arranges for lectures and conferences, and maintains close relations with the various educational institutions throughout Iran and the press. It

204. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

has an house organ which mostly contains educational articles. Moreover, it publishes books, pamphlets, annual statistics, and the yearbook of the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, the General Secretariat of the Ministry publishes an illustrated monthly bulletin, which includes the news and activities of the different departments of the Ministry, as well as the latest laws, rules, and regulations in the field of education. The Ministry of Education also encourages the publication of weekly or monthly papers in the schools by the student body. Some of the universities have their own house organs and publications, and through them try to reach the people.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The public relations activities of the Ministry of Health is carried out by the Department of Information and Publications which has an house organ. The Department collects health news and information, and releases them through radio and press; it presents the new policies, programs, and activities of the Ministry and holds a regular weekly radio program. The official spokesman of the Ministry, who acts as a public relations man, is in charge of that program. The Department is also active in publishing pamphlets and maintaining close relations with the private health organizations. The most important public relations service of the Ministry, however, is carried out by the Public Health Education Division of the General Department of Public Health.

This Division can be considered as the most developed and better equipped public relations office in the whole government. For this reason, it needs a careful consideration. The Public Health Education Division has four sections which are responsible to carry out its functions. They are:²⁰⁵

1. Health Education Materials Section. This Section is in charge of publishing two house organs; preparing materials for all publications in the field of public health; propaganda; and news release. One of the house organs is an informative and useful magazine for the literate, and deals with the different aspects of public health, as well as health instructions. It has also an illustrated news section on public health. The other magazine is published in a simple language for the general public with minimum education, and is illustrated in a very interesting manner. It acquaints the people with the most necessary principles of public health, and provides them with advice and guidance. The tone of this magazine is quite informal. Both these publications have special sections for questions and answers, and attempt to solve the problems of the readers. The latter, from time to time, conducts an opinion research asking the readers which part of the magazine they like most and what kind of suggestions they have for its improvement. This magazine is available in a very cheap price so that everybody can subscribe to it.

205. Annual Reports of Public Health Education Division for the years 1953-54 to 1956-57.

2. Administrative Services Section. It prepares the budget and schedule of public health education classes; executes them; conducts a regular radio program; and has a library for the use of the internal publics of the Public Health Department.

3. Creative Services Section. This section is in charge of illustrating the health education publications and materials; prepares exhibits, displays, and other demonstrative activities; engages in silk screening; and deals with all kinds of audio-visual activities, especially informative and educational films.

4. Field Services Section. It supervises over the public health education activities and programs in the field offices, and prepares the reports of their work. It also provides public health education programs in the localities wherever the need is felt.

5. Technical Services Section. This Section evaluates the health education activities, the methods and techniques employed, and the materials used. It also engages in research work in those fields. On the other hand, it prepares guidebooks, manuals, and programs for public health education, and holds conferences for public health educators.

The Public Health Education Division through these sections has successfully carried out its public relations services, and by a wide distribution of posters, pamphlets, books, magazines, calendars, and matches, as well as organization of educational exhibits has attracted the interests of

the general public to public health programs. The Division also uses special events for publicity purposes.

MINISTRY OF LABOR

The creation of this Ministry by the government in 1946 was in itself a public relations activity.²⁰⁶ The Ministry is in charge of maintaining good relationship with trade unions, workers and laborers, and raising the level of social welfare and social justice for the workers.²⁰⁷ Many divisions of the Ministry such as Labor Education, Social Service, Vocational Training, Cooperative Associations, Sport, Labor Supervision, and Employment Service are engaged in public relations work. The Division of Information and Publications, however, is specifically in charge of maintaining good relations with the public and releasing information. The Division has a regular radio program for workers, and publishes an house organ as well as other publications. The house organ is an illustrated, interesting magazine written in simple Persian. It has many informative articles, reflects the opinions and views of the workers, and gives them guidance and advice.

206. Vreeland, op.cit., p. 172. See also Razmara, op.cit., pp. 96-102.

207. Ibid., p. 97.

MINISTRY OF ROADS

This Ministry formerly had a sound and interesting house organ, but at present the activities of its Department of Press, Propaganda and Statistics is only through publishing periodic pamphlets about road, and especially railway, construction. All such publications are fully illustrated. They are usually distributed freely, but rarely they reach the general public. On the other hand, the Iranian State Railways, which is a semi-independent agency under the Ministry of Roads, is very successful in its publicity and public relations activity.

Iranian State Railways. In this agency the main trend has been toward internal public relations. There are many employee societies and professional associations for engineers, university graduates, accountants, technicians, and engine drivers.²⁰⁸ There is also a Railway Club which has a wide membership. It gives loans to the members and also arranges for the informal parties and gatherings for the employees.

The top management of the railway has been very conscious about the employee relationships. Many facilities are provided for the railway employees from medical care,

208. Mojtaha Malakuti, Iranian Railway, (Tehran: 1327 (1948-49),) pp. 209-211. (in Persian).

hospitalization to the establishment of schools and cooperatives in the remote field stations. Houses also have been constructed for the operating employees in the field offices.²⁰⁹

The Division of Press and Propaganda, however, is directly in charge of releasing information and publicity. It has an house organ which gives the news of the railway; introduces various regions and their activities; has human interest stories; and a special section is devoted to the readers and their problems. In each issue the life story of two or three outstanding workers and technical employees of the railway along with their contributions are published. The magazine is for the most part illustrated and has many interesting and informative articles, both for the internal and external publics. The Division also publishes many pamphlets for the occasion of the extension of the railway lines to new areas. All such publications are fully illustrated, displaying the development of the Iranian railway system in the past three decades and are distributed freely. This is a very good public relations device.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The public relations service of this Ministry is

209. Railway After Three Decades, (Tehran: Division of Press and Propaganda, 1336 (1957-58),) pp. 86-87. (in Persian)

carried out by the Department of Information which has a monthly house organ. This magazine is illustrated and has educational articles on the different aspects of the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Department releases news to the press and radio, and has periodic publications. It has also a regular radio program to give guidance and advice to the farmers and rural people. There is, however, little attention toward the internal publics. At the end of each year the annual report of the activities of the Ministry is published in the house organ.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Plan Organization which is comparatively a young organization, created in 1949, conducts its public relations service through the Public Relations Department. This Department, however, is not much different from the information, or press and propaganda departments of other government agencies, and engages almost in similar activities. Yet, administratively it is well-organized, because it has been modelled after the American example of a public relations department. It has four divisions: Information Division, Publications Division, Publicity Division, and Public Affairs Division.

The functions of the Public Relations Department follows two definite lines. It has a publication program

and a publicity and propaganda program. The publication program includes publishing of a weekly bulletin and a monthly house organ. In these publications the report of the activities, expenditures, and accomplishments of the Organization in different fields of development are presented. The publicity and propaganda program consists of interviews, lectures, conferences, regular weekly radio programs, release of illustrated news and articles for propaganda purposes to the press, and production and projection of the films of development activities and operations to the public. The Department tries to maintain good relations with the press and to gain their support which in certain cases requires financial assistance to certain periodicals.

NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY

This organization which is a nationalized enterprise, conducts its public relations service through the Press and Propaganda Division. It provides necessary information for different departments and divisions of the Company; maintains close relations with the Iranian oil operating companies; and publishes a monthly house organ. The Division also tries to popularize the Company and works to this end through the press and radio broadcasting. It also arranges certain field trips to the oilfields and

invites the press people to visit those areas and the oil refinery of Abadan. Consequently, articles are published in the press concerning these visits and the activities of the Company. The Division has comparatively effective internal public relations.

OTHER MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES

The public relations services and activities of other ministries and government agencies are not as developed as the ones already discussed. Almost all of them have departments or divisions of information, or press and propaganda, which are mainly in charge of releasing news of the activities and projects of their respective agency to the radio or press. Most of them have also an house organ. The contents of these house organs are in some instances the mere publication of laws, rules, and regulations with certain news of the activities and statistics. Many of them are not illustrated. Yet, there are some magazines published by the government agencies which are among the best publications in the country from the viewpoint of content and the appearance. These magazines are usually published on monthly basis, but some of them are quarterly. Besides these house organs, certain government agencies have also a yearbook. The circulation of the government publications, however, is not high, and for the most part they do not reach the general public.

Although the government agencies do not have positive, well-planned public relations programs, they are conscious about the reactions of the people. In the past few months, the government has been comparatively more active in the field of public relations. The Prime Minister time and time again has emphasized the importance of maintaining good relations with the general public and clientele by the government agencies.

In June 1957, the Council of Ministers decided that the ministers should go periodically on field trips to provinces without previous information, to study the general conditions of the public and their needs, and take contact with them. Then on the basis of these observations the government would take necessary measures.²¹⁰ This is another positive step by the government toward better public relations. There has been, however, little done about the formal and positive public relations. This is a great shortcoming by the government that should be remedied as soon as possible.

A new attempt by the present government in the field of publicity has been the idea of creation of a State Publicity Organization in the Office of Prime Minister to serve as a central agency to disseminate the news of all the ministries and government agencies.

210. "The Trip of the Ministers to Provinces," Pars, Shiraz newspaper, No. 1987, (Teer 11, 1336 (July, 1957),) p. 1.

PART THREE

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6

X EVALUATION AND PROBLEMS*

"In all things, success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."

"Confucius"

X Public relations within the democratic context, as it has been approached in this study, embraces the sum total of all the contacts, attitudes, ideas, impressions, and opinions that constitute the complex relationships between the government and the public.²¹¹ These relationships should be intimate and on a two-way basis in order to foster mutual respect and good will between both parties; otherwise it would not be possible to maintain good public relations. X

X Modern public relations has often been referred to as "a planned program of policies and conduct that will

* This chapter is mainly based on the personal experiences of the author in the government service for over eight years, as well as the information and facts gathered through a year of study of the leading newspapers and magazines of Iran which regularly have articles on the different aspects of government administration and its operation.

54 211. The Institute for Training in Municipal Administration, Municipal Personnel Administration, (5th. ed.; Chicago: The International City Managers' Association, 1950,) p. 366.

build public confidence and increase public understanding."²¹² This statement intrinsically displays the fact that public understanding and public confidence are the key factors in the successful administration of any organization or institution, especially in the realm of government. A good public relations service can be achieved by combination of good conduct, satisfactory performance of the functions by the government, and honest reporting.²¹³ It is the right of the people to know what is going on in the government, because in a democracy the government is the servant of the people and thus should display all its activities to public scrutiny.^x

The following requirements are considered among the most important corner-stones of positive and successful public relations:²¹⁴

1. Appraising and analyzing the public and its attitudes in order to determine what the citizens want the government to do and how to do it.
2. Taking necessary measures for providing accurate answers to the questions of the citizens concerning the government services.
3. According courtesy and respect to every citizen

212. Wright and Christian, op.cit., p.3.

213. Ibid., p. 4.

214. The Institute for Training in Municipal Administration, The Techniques of Municipal Administration, (3rd. ed.; Chicago: The International City Managers' Association, 1947,) p. 526.

who has a complaint against the government, and taking action to satisfy and redress these complaints as well as to prevent their recurrence.

4. Simplifying all procedures involving contacts between the citizens and the government officials and making them as convenient as possible for the citizens.

5. Encouraging the citizens to take active part in the government affairs.

6. Improving the appearance and cleanliness of government buildings, properties and equipment.

7. Keeping the government employees satisfied with their positions, conditions of works, and other material and non-material requirements.

8. Educating and training the government officials to be honest, frank, and cooperative in their relations with the press, and putting an end to any censorship of information of value and interest to the public.

9. Utilizing all media of mass communications to stimulate the interest and willingness of the citizens toward the government.

These necessary ingredients of a good public relations program have their impact not only on public relations activities of the government but also they improve the government service and make it more efficient.²¹⁵

215. Ibid.

x The public relations activities of the government agencies in Iran, if measured by the principles and standards of modern and democratic public relations are not satisfactory. For the most part, these activities have been based on the principles of publicity and propaganda. The emphasis is given to institutional advertising and one-way communication. In that sense, the present status of public relations in Iran is not unlike what prevailed early this century in the United States. Public relations as a positive planned function of the government is not yet fully recognized. Some of the government agencies, however, have taken certain steps toward maintaining positive public relations programs. These agencies are those that have been organized or reorganized upon the recommendations of the American advisors who have presented the modern idea of public relations in Iran. But the public relations activities of these agencies also are not very sound and effective. Little, if any, attention has been given to research work on public attitudes and public opinion, or a two-way communication between the government and the people. The interrelationships among the government agencies also are not satisfactory. x

x On the whole, the main public relations activities and programs of the government agencies consist of institutional advertising, news release, and information dissemination through radio, press, and house organs. There are also

occasional press conferences, public speeches, and demonstrations. But most of these endeavors are usually intended toward special publics and restricted body of educated people. The common man or the general public is somewhat ignored, unless a critical situation comes along. Then the whole government machinery shifts its attention toward the masses of the people. x

x Every new government that has come into power in Iran, has advocated maintaining of a good relationship with the public and has promised many deeds, but in the course of time little has been accomplished in practice. x In the past few months the Iranian government has taken some measures toward better public relations. The martial law which was in force, with few short intervals, since the beginnings of World War II has been abandoned, and political freedom for organizing political parties and groups - except for the communistic parties - has been given again by the government. 216

x On the other hand, further measures have been taken to reorganize all government agencies and to establish an efficient merit system. More concern has been given to the people and the press, and they have been asked to give their

216. "The Government and the People," loc.cit.

suggestions and criticisms on the governmental affairs to a bureau in the Office of Prime Minister for consideration.²¹⁷ The Council of Ministers has also decided that the ministers should go on occasional field trips, without previous information, to study the needs and requirements of the people in the provinces, and to contact them personally. On the basis of these observations and studies the government would act to promote the economic and social conditions of the country.* In other words, attempts have been made to maintain close relations with the masses of the people, to inform them what the government does for the public good, and to look for public attitudes and reactions. All these activities and decisions have their impact on governmental public relations. There exists, however, many problems within government administration, as well as outside the government, that unless solved will preclude effective public relations by the government in Iran. X

* The problems of public relations are also the problems of public administration. They range from the economic problems to political, social, and administrative problems of the country. These problems should be approached in the following pages under three main sub-headings: general problems, administrative problems, and technical problems.

217. Supra, p. 114.

By solving these problems the government would be able to maintain an efficient administration and very effective public relations. X

GENERAL PROBLEMS

X 1. Iran is in a stage of transition from an agricultural economy to an economy of industry and trade. In line with this there is also a transition in the government from the traditional to a more responsible and rational form of administration. These changes have been brought about as a result of the reforms in various walks of life - at first on a revolutionary basis during the reign of Reza Shah, and at present on a gradual and evolutionary ground.

2. There exists a gulf between the government and the people. There is also a great gap among the social classes which penetrates the entire economic, social, and cultural relationships of the people.

3. There are limitations on the range of personal freedom, economic and social opportunity, and political democracy.

4. The people have a historic distrust and suspicion of the government and government institutions. They have individualistic tendencies and try to evade the administrative authority of the government. The social and economic ills such as widespread illiteracy, prevalent

diseases, (uncontrolled inflation), and periodic shifts in prices have also their impact on the attitudes of the people. They contribute to civic apathy and inertia of the general public. Cynicism is almost the rule.

5. The government is highly personalized. Little concern is given to administrative continuity, which is mainly an outcome of the political instability.

6. There is a general desire in the people to criticize government administration. They consider it as corrupt and look at civil servants as "parasites." In fact nepotism, favoritism, bribery, and procrastination are prevalent in the government bureaucracy. These are some of the major germs of the negative or indifferent attitudes of the people toward government. The complexity of the government is another contributing factor in this respect.

7. Public relations as a positive and planned activity in the modern sense is a new venture in Iran. It has not yet received full recognition by the government. x

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

Government administration is not generally based on sound principles of public administration. Although attempts have been made in the recent years to improve and recognize the government agencies in line with modern ideas and developments in the field of public administration, the

traditional emphasis on unnecessary administrative formalities which result in delays is still the rule.

2. Governmental formalism has led to red tape, inflexibility, and unwieldiness of the administration. On the other hand, arbitrariness and officiousness have become paramount in the government agencies.

3. The government is over-centralized, yet there are little uniform rules and sound procedures in the whole administration. There exists limited delegation of authority and responsibility to the officials in the lower echelons. All these factors contribute to delays and inefficiency in the government service. The answering of correspondence is slow, and the contents of letters to the clientele are usually unhelpful and miss the point. Most of the time they are full of jargon.

4. Clientele and other people who refer to the government agencies are shunted from department to department and from office to office. They are not provided with the necessary information or simple and clear explanations. Moreover, they are not treated cordially and properly.

5. The information or press and propaganda departments, which are in charge of public relations activities, do not have a clear idea of what public relations is, and lack high prestige in the organizational set up. These offices are mainly concerned with giving out the permitted news and information. In that sense, in the terminology of

public relations, their job is that of "omission" and not "commission." Moreover, through the house organ as well as other media, they inform the internal and external publics about the activities, programs, and progress of their respective agencies. The public relations staff who are working in these departments usually are not trained in the field of public relations. Their activities are at random and do not follow a planned and consistent program. They mix propaganda and publicity with public relations.

6. Almost no research is done concerning the attitudes and reactions of the public toward the government agencies. Public opinion polls are unknown.

7. No training courses are provided in the field of public relations in the government. The employees have little idea about what the concept or theory of public relations is. They do not have generally any appreciation of the importance of their responsibility in the matters of relationship with the public.

8. Morale in the government service is comparatively low. There is little sense of loyalty, security, or belonging in the employees. As a result strong esprit de corps is lacking. The material and non-material incentives are inadequate. Salaries are not sufficient. These factors have led many of the government officials to seek outside work.

9. Irresponsibility has become a predominant element in government administration. The employees have little sense

of cooperation. They rarely come together to organize employee societies and associations. Moreover, there is a great deal of suspicion and rivalry among the employees of every department. For these reasons, informal organization is comparatively weak in the government service.

10. The management in most of the agencies suffers from the shortage of forceful leadership and skilled administrators. Little attention has been paid to the efficient organization of administrative systems, procedures, and training schemes. On the other hand, human relations for the most part have been ignored in administration.

11. The government agencies do not have an open-door policy and function under the veil of secrecy. Consequently, the clientele is not treated on a friendly and intimate basis.

12. In the government atmosphere liberal attitudes of the management is almost a rarity.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

1. The communication and transportation system of the country is not well-developed and satisfactory. For this reason, the masses of the people all over the country can not be reached easily and successfully.

2. The illiteracy of the majority of the people makes the spoken word the most effective media of imparting

knowledge and information upon them. This fact denotes the important role of the radio, but because of technical difficulties the radio program can not be clearly heard in the remote parts. Moreover, there is the shortage of radio sets and loudspeakers in the rural areas.

3. The government publications are usually prepared for "show-off" purposes, and rarely they do reach the general public. On the other hand, they include subjects that generally can not be understood by an average person. The heart of the problem is that most of the written word is prepared for the educated city people, and little attention has been given to the uneducated rural people.

4. The press conferences are not widely employed by the government agencies. The banquets, parties, informal gatherings, and special events are also rare.

5. For the most part government has emphasized the use of propaganda techniques and institutional advertising to get public favor and to inform the people about the progress and improvement of the government.

6. Little attention has been given to the day-to-day service "over the counter" to the public with courtesy and good manners.

7. The press relations of the government agencies are not satisfactory. The news release to the press and radio does not represent the whole picture. The mistakes

are not reported. The government advertisements also are not impartially given to all newspapers.

8. The information and reception desks of various agencies are not efficient in their functioning. Some agencies even do not have any reception or information desk. The telephone communication is not usually carried on satisfactorily and with courtesy and tact.

9. The channels of communication inside the government agencies are mostly formal and little concern has been given to the human factor and informal relations.

10. There are no well-organized public relations or even publicity plans based on sound facts.

11. The reporting techniques are not well-developed. The annual reports of the government agencies which are published for public information are generally dull and complex.

12. The problems of semantics and symbols and their psychological implications are not fully recognized. The same are the human relations and group dynamics problems.

13. The use of exhibits, open-houses, demonstrations, and displays is very restricted. Such devices are only employed by few agencies.

14. There is lack of objective indices to measure the effectiveness of methods and techniques used for information or public relations purposes.

The legion of problems which were presented in the preceding pages are among the major obstacles in the way of effective public relations in government administration in Iran. Since public relations as a positive and well-organized endeavor is at present on the threshold of being recognized by the government, these problems should be carefully studied and solved. They have their impact on government administration, and its efficiency and success.

There is an attempt to establish a sound public administration in Iran. Public relations as a concept and as a body of theory and techniques is of indispensable value in this respect. It is "a key instrument of the management for establishing effective communication within government, promoting citizen-government contacts based on understanding and confidence, and creating an informed public opinion with respect to objectives of government agencies at all levels."²¹⁸

In the following chapter certain suggestions and recommendations will be presented for the improvement of public relations in government administration in Iran, and for the adoption of a positive public relations program by the government agencies.

218. Carlson, op.cit., p. 278.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

"The environment is complex and man's political capacity is simple. Can a bridge be built between them?"

"Aristotle"

A thorough study of the concept and principles of modern, positive public relations as a plan of action in the government, reveals the fact that public relations is essential for the purpose of securing strong and continuous public support; rendering an accounting; advancing the government policies and programs; and promoting the idea of community participation in the governmental affairs.

By keeping these criteria in mind, and in the light of the whole picture of public relations practice in the government of Iran along with the problems and obstacles that exist in this all important field of human relationships, certain administrative suggestions and recommendations would be made here for maintaining good and effective public relations by the government agencies. At present, public relations is badly needed by the government. It is necessary for establishing a solid foundation of public administration in the country, and can do wonders in the success of efforts

that recently have been undertaken for administrative reforms in various ministries and agencies.

This study began by a question - Why Public Relations? Certain progressive countries have answered this question by action, to remedy the problems that exist in maintaining good relations between the government and the people. The same can be done in Iran. The recommendations and suggestions presented in the following pages would be on two distinct but interrelated lines. The first would include suggestions on remedial public relations in the government for solving the existing problems. The second would consist of recommendations for preventive public relations with a long-range planned program for future. The author hopes that the government may find these suggestions and recommendations helpful and applicable for establishing better public relationships, and adopt and apply them to the government agencies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REMEDIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Although there is a redundant need for some research work and dependable data to find out the very nature of the attitudes and opinions of the masses of the people toward the government, and to clarify the reasons for different beliefs and points of view of the various publics for launching an effective public relations program, it seems non-advisable for the government to stand by and wait any longer.

It is obvious for the top executives and administrators that there exist certain problems of an emergency nature in the field of governmental public relations; it is also known that something should be done in this respect. But how? There is need for consistency, purpose, and perseverance in these activities of the government agencies in order to gain public good will and confidence; because there is a widespread indifference and neglect, in every quarter of the governmental scene, of a systematic and up-to-date public relations policy. Primarily two main goals should be accomplished by the government:²¹⁹

a. To see to it that the government does the kind of job people can think well of.

b. To call the attention of the people intelligently and deftly to the good job it does.

To reach these ends the participation of many groups and individuals is necessary. One of the most important and logical measures is holding a truth campaign about the government for the employees. They have to know everything about the government and to become conscious about their public relations role. It is mainly through them that a positive public relations program is to be executed. The remedial public relations campaign of the government agencies should provide for the following steps:

219. Ruhl, op.cit., p. 7.

1. Knowing the Publics. The employees should be interested to become familiar with the clientele and other publics they serve or they want to serve or reach. They should have some idea and impression about the tastes, feelings, reactions, prejudices, and viewpoints of these publics and act upon them.

2. Priority and Importance of Performance. The necessity of good performance of the duties and functions for the success of governmental public relations should be imparted to the employees. Because if there is no good performance, the mere publicity and propaganda for gaining popular good will and interest would not last long, and the people would detect it. This is greatly harmful and would be fatal to government administration. For this reason, supervisors, work leaders, and office chiefs should be called to meetings by the heads of departments to be acquainted about the goals and policies undertaken by the management. Then they would be equipped to give the necessary orientation to employees, to inform them about those goals and policies, and the way they should contact the clientele.

3. Telling the Mistakes. All the facts concerning the official errors and mistakes should be released, as soon as possible, through radio and press to the people, because in that case they might be sooner forgotten than if they

were found by the people themselves or by the press. Bad news should be given out as well as good news. By doing so the scandals could be prevented. The public should also be informed why mistakes have happened and what are being done to stop their recurrence.

4. **Combatting Rumors.** All harmful rumors and myths about the government agencies should be found out, explained, and removed. Honesty is the best policy. Through sincere presenting of facts harmful rumors could be successfully combatted. One of the ways to preclude misunderstanding about the government which is a good ground for accepting rumors, is to publish a booklet on facts about the government as a whole and the activities of various ministries and agencies.

5. **Informing the Public.** All the services and functions of the government agencies should be regularly reported to the people, because some of the services of the government are provided for special publics and if some of the citizens do not need them, they would not know that such services exist at all. Besides, many technical activities of the government agencies are not fully understood by the general public.

6. **Maintaining Close Relations with the Public.** All the government agencies should attempt to adopt friendly relations with the public by using all the available media of

communication. The grievances and complaints of the people should be promptly acted upon; their questions should be answered in the shortest possible time and in a simple, clear language; their favor should be sought through written and spoken media as well as courtesy, good manners; and more concern should be given by management to the informal relations with the public.

By using these remedial measures, it would be possible for all the government agencies to make successful progress in the field of public relations, to solve many of their immediate problems, to function more efficiently, and to gain public support and willingness. These measures can be taken without any drastic changes in the present organization of the government agencies and their information or press and propaganda departments. But in line with them there should be also a long-range plan for preventive public relations for the government as a whole, as well as its various agencies. There would be, however, certain overlapping between the remedial and preventive public relations, because there are no sharp demarcations between the two and they supplement each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

For the purpose of establishing an ideal public relations service in the government, the creation of a central

public relations department is essential. Such a department would replace the present General Department of Information and Broadcasting. The main emphasis in the new department would not be specifically on broadcasting as is the case at present. Other media of mass communications such as press, photography, motion pictures, and informal contacts should be also effectively used. The present organization of the Department is administratively on sound basis, but the problem is how its public relations service is carried out. The Department should not be used as a tool for the propaganda purposes of the government, but rather as an information center for the public use. It might be called the General Department of Public Relations. Although the change of title is not so important as the nature of the Department, even the title might create a better impression in the public. So far this Department has been identified by the people as a propaganda center for the governments in power. The emphasis should be put on the two-way relationships of the new Department. Its functions and responsibilities would be:

1. To serve as a central source of information about the whole government, and as an official channel of communication between the government agencies and the general public.
2. To conduct comprehensive research work to collect and analyze information and facts on the public attitudes,

public opinion, public reaction, and the general impressions of the masses of the people toward the government policies and programs.

3. To bring to the public attention the significant facts about policies, programs, viewpoints, problems, and difficulties of the government.

4. To maintain close relations with all government agencies and their public relations departments - which would be duly created - in order to coordinate the general trend of their activities and engagement in the field of public relations.

5. To plan and to administer a proper, well-organized, and positive program of public information and public relations on the basis of its duties, responsibilities, and ideals which would be public support and public good will.

This central public relations department would also give advice to the ministries and government agencies on the general policy guidelines formulated by the government, and would coordinate their public relations programs. For this purpose, it should organize regular meetings for all public relations directors of the ministries and independent government agencies, whereby they could come together and discuss their problems and programs. This public relations pool, which is based on the democratic principle of participation, would serve as a meeting ground of different ideas and opinions and would result on harmonious and coordinated

action. Therefore, the central public relations department would have a double face. It would work with, and for, the government agencies and at the same time would be concerned with the general public. In that sense, it would function both as a staff and a line agency.

Since the activities and functions of the central public relations department would cover the general set up of the government and mostly would deal with the public on the political plane to promote the general governmental policies, dealing with the detailed policies of the ministries and other agencies would be the concern of their separate public relations departments. These public relations departments would replace the present information, or press and propaganda departments. A complete reorganization should take place in these departments. All the public relations services of every ministry or agency which are, at present, carried out by different departments in each, would be combined and integrated under this new public relations department. The department would function as a staff unit directly under the minister or the head of agency and would be engaged in dealing mainly with the specific publics and clientele of the ministry or agency concerned. For the success of the work, however, there is a redundant need for selection of able and well-qualified staff in these new public relations departments. They should be well-educated and have to know something about public attitudes, opinion

formation, general background of the employees and clientele, and to be conscious about their public relations duties and responsibilities. They should be tactful, good-mannered, courteous, and well-dressed in order to create favorable impression in the people with whom they come into contact. Ultimately, they should be selected on the basis of personality, character, intelligence, education or experience, and administrative ability.

After the organization of the new public relations departments and selection of their new staff, they should begin their mission of informing the people and conducting opinion research work to find out their impressions and reactions vis-a-vis the government. This requires a sound planning.

The public relations service should examine the entire broad field of governmental public relations objectively and scientifically. It should classify issues and problems, and catalogue the pertinent case histories. Moreover, it should analyze the elements that contribute to the development of the principles that might be adopted for specific use in different types of operations. On the basis of these findings it should draft a program that covers everything from the fundamental policies down to the press conferences and contacts with the people. For this purpose, a long-term planning is essential. The recommendations for such a planning which are given here, mainly are based on the

principles that have been successfully carried out in the progressive countries, and the steps that are suggested are the steps generally followed in modern public relations practice. In the opinion of the author they are also applicable in Iran.

The program that is recommended in the following pages can be adopted by the central public relations department, as well as the public relations departments of the ministries and agencies. The focus in the former case should be on the general public. In the latter it would be on the specific publics and clientele of each government agency.

Preliminary Steps. To study and analyze the strength and weaknesses of the agency from the standpoint of its relations with its publics. This will include listing of the principal publics and a study of the history, organization, policies and practices of the agency as well as its personnel and their contacts with the public. The attention should be given to the points of interest and the points of irritation and misunderstanding of the public. On the other hand, the attitudes of the policy-making body of the agency toward the basic principles of public relations and their understanding of these principles should be studied carefully. Moreover, education of the personnel and their acquaintance with the overall program would be necessary. Therefore, unless a proper atmosphere is created, through

an internal enthusiasm for public relations, any attempt of a program of public relations or public information and education would become useless.

Fact Finding. Public attitudes, public opinion, and public likes and dislikes toward the agency should be found out through surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. After gathering the facts they should be properly analyzed and evaluated. The modern statistical methods should be used in this stage for research work.

Planning. The next stage after the thorough studying the situation and defining the problems would be making an outline of the major long-range national, local objectives the public relations program should achieve. This would be followed by examining the fundamental policies of the agency and determining how they fit the objectives. Those policies disfavored by prevailing public opinion should be modified or withdrawn. Each stated objective would need supporting themes to make its implementation easier. A well-planned program should be honest in intent and execution, related to the activities and services of the agency, continuous in application, positive in approach, comprehensive in character, sensitive to the publics concerned, and simple in meaning.

Execution of Program. The detailed outline of the media and techniques to be used in executing the program should be made, such as radio, press, films, institutional

advertising, house organ, news release, newsreel, news-photo, exhibits, demonstrations, displays, special events, and all other media of mass communications with the people. A calendar of events should be prepared for the coming year, including holidays, anniversaries, and other occasions. The programs of radio should be improved, and other media of communication used more effectively. The programs should be popularized for building a reservoir of public good will. For this purpose, they should be clearly interpreted.

Evaluation. The public relations activities and programs of the agency should be evaluated periodically. This evaluation should be objective in order to improve the services rendered. The research, study, and analysis of public attitudes and reactions as well as planning, communicating, and interpreting which are the ingredient parts of a sound public relations program should go hand in hand. They should be conducted simultaneously and on a continuous basis, because they are phases of a never-ending process.

Informal Contacts. The day-to-day "over the counter" services and face-to-face contacts that the employees of the agency have with the clientele leave their impact on the success of public relations program. They should be improved as much as possible. The employees should treat the clientele and the special publics with courtesy, good manners, and concern. The correspondence and telephone contacts and relations should be maintained politely and carefully. The

appearance and tidiness of the buildings and offices of the agency should be cared for. They should attract the public.

Internal Public Relations. A successful internal public relations has its impact on the external public relations. For this reason, the employees should be kept satisfied and be provided with material and non-material security. The management should concern itself deeply in this respect, raise the morale of the employees, and create a strong esprit de corps in the agency.

Field Relations. The attention should also be given to the field offices of the agency and their relations with the local publics and clientele. For this purpose, a public relations officer position should be created in the field offices, to be in charge of local program. This is necessary because the field offices are the point where the public largely comes into contact with government administration. Some measures of decentralization and delegation of authority should be taken in relation to field offices.

Academic Training. In-service training in the field of public relations should be conducted for the orientation and education of the employees in the agency. It is advisable that the Institute for Administrative Affairs which trains the government officials for the administrative jobs should offer some courses in administrative public relations.

* * *

These are some of the suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the relationship of the government and the people in Iran. They are necessary for the establishment of a sound public administration in the country, which has been a paramount encounter in the past few years. The interest of the people should be called upon that important endeavor.

The antagonistic opinions of the people toward government administration can be changed by letting them know and understand what the government is, what its functions are, and what have been, or are being, done in the present administration to reach the ideal public service based on merit, participation, and cooperative relations with the public.

Public relations in the government service should not only maintain a direct favorable contact with the people and report to them, but also to persuade the people within the democratic context, because "the democratic government relies increasingly on persuasion in the effort to promote cooperative action by citizens for many administrative programs."²²⁰

In Iran, government officials and public administrators need to do a great deal of effort to reach the people and to get their stories across to them in terms that they

220. Carlson, op.cit., p. 279.

may understand and respond. Here special attention should be given to the fundamental aspects of human relationships. The government should get closer to the people and encourage their sincere participation in the government affairs. It is mostly on the basis of an informed and enlightened public opinion that administrative machinery of the government can work efficiently.

The ultimate criterion of the success of any government is its acceptance by the people. Public relations in its ideal form makes the masses of the people aware of what the government does in terms that they can understand, and makes the government officials aware of what the response of the people is to the services rendered. Such a program calls for a two-way communication and relationship between the government and the people. This is the essence of modern public relations which is "a many splendored thing..."

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