

SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR CHEDDI JAGAN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY AT THE CONFERENCE OF COMMUNIST PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN HELD IN HAVANA, CUBA ON JUNE 9-13, 1975

The People's Progressive Party is most happy to be taking part for the first time in a meeting of fraternal Communist Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We express our gratitude to all those who have made this possible. And to the Communist Party of Cuba and its great leader, Comrade Fidel Castro, our special thanks for hosting this Conference and for making all the elaborate preparations in spite of the many difficulties they faced and the many arduous tasks before them.

Our meeting is taking place at a very important juncture in the history of human development. We Communists the world over can be particularly proud of the role we have played, the foundations we have laid and the sacrifices we have made.

Despite setbacks as in Chile and Uruguay, important and significant gains have been made particularly during the past five years - in Bangla Desh, Portugal, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Greece, Peru, Panama, Argentina, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, to name of them. What greater gift could the workers of the world have received than the final defeat of the US imperialists and their lackeys in Vietnam on the eve of May Day, 1975? Imperialism is in retreat and rent asunder by internal convulsions. In our own hemisphere, its aggressive policies and machinations have failed against the first free territory of the Americas. Revolutionary Cuba stands as a bastion of socialist strength - a constant reminder that there is an alternative road leading to peace, freedom and socialism.

What is more, in the face of a deepening crisis of capitalism, new developments are taking place in our continent in sectors traditionally associated with imperialism and the oligarchy. Positive trends have developed in the church and the military.

These people's victories have taken place under the influence of the growing strength of the world socialist system, at the heart of which is the mighty Soviet Union.

We agree with the line expressed in the Document; namely, that the main enemy of the peoples of the Americas is US imperialism; that it is the duty of all the Latin American Communist parties to take the lead in uniting all the possible forces against imperialism; to isolate, weaken and destroy it.

In this regard, we can draw a valuable lesson from the Vietnamese people's struggle. What were the ingredients for the victory of national liberation against the mighty colossus of the North?

Apart from heroism and sacrifice, there was the elaboration and implementation of correct tactics and strategy. Firstly, the great leader of the Vietnamese people, Ho Chi Minh, over many years patiently forged a vanguard workers (communist) party. Secondly, he united the great majority of the people in an anti-imperialist father-land front - three political parties (Communist, Socialist and Democratic), trade union and other mass, including religious and cultural, organizations. At the same time, the closest links were developed with the socialist world (it is not without significance to note that the first liberation forces that entered Saigon rode in Soviet-made tanks). And political propaganda work was done in every corner of the globe, most importantly in the USA itself.

The Document also correctly points out that while our immediate goal is anti-imperialism, we cannot lose sight of our objective of socialism, the attainment of which will not be realized without the observance of the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people.

This point cannot be over-emphasized. History is full of examples where despite certain positive anti-imperialist steps by governments, attempts were made by them at the same time to halt or even to betray the revolution.

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Haile Selassie led Ethiopia in an anti-imperialist struggle against fascist Italy, but maintained a feudal structure at home and later established links with imperialism.

Because of sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry, President Charles De Gaulle opposed US capital (and political) penetration and domination of France and the European Economic Community, removed NATO headquarters from France, recognized the People's Republic of China and advocated a neutralist Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. But at the same time, he assumed internally near-dictatorial powers and would not have hesitated to turn, as in the 1968 crisis, the army against the workers in the interest of the French bourgeoisie.

Paz Estenssoro's Nationalist Revolutionary Party nationalized the tin mines and carried out a land reform programme in the 1950's. But years after his overthrow, he collaborated with the Banzer fascist regime.

In Mexico, although with the nationalization of the oil industry anti-imperialist steps were taken in the late 1920's and early 1930's, the growth of the big local bourgeoisie which established strong links with the imperialists, and the institutionalization of military-bureaucratic bourgeois power, make difficult the attainment of a social revolution.

In this regard, it is important not just to look at the establishment of diplomatic and other relations with the socialist states and the expansion of the public sector by some nationalization. Equally important is consideration of the nature of the state.

In Guyana, for instance, nationalization is leading to state and bureaucratic capitalism coupled with corruption, extravagance, racial and political discrimination and without basic democracy at the trade union, industrial, and central and local governmental levels. A minority regime is rapidly expanding the military bureaucratic apparatus, not so much to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity as to hold down the vast majority of the people and to deny them their fundamental rights. For example, the army and police are actively involved in tampering with the electoral process and in breaking strikes.

We must not forget that the deepening crisis of capitalism, the widening gap between the developed imperialist states and the developing states in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the consequent worsening social and economic conditions of the peoples have intensified the national liberation and class struggles, and have forced and are forcing bourgeois-led Social-Democratic and Christian-Democratic regimes to make changes. All shades of the liberal bourgeoisie are calling for change. But what kind of change?

With the cold-war policy of containment of national liberation and socialism, US imperialism imposed the Puerto Rican model of economic planning for development,

based on the creation of an investment climate and incentives to foreign capital. This strategy collapsed in Latin America and the Caribbean with the Cuban Revolution.

Faced with the revolutionary Cuban alternative, President Kennedy launched the reformist Alliance for Progress. Kennedy was for change - fiscal, monetary, land reform - to prevent social explosions la Cuba, but change within the international status quo to freeze the international situation. There was to be no "second Cuba" whether in Guyana under the PPP government in the early 1960's or in Chile under Allende's Popular Unity government a decade later in the early 1970's; there was to be no shift in the world balance of forces against capitalism and in favour of socialism.

Such was the situation that imperialism devised new tactics and strategy - a strategy to incorporate the people and the state within the tentacles of imperialism and to create a social base for capitalism. After the failure of out-right pro-imperialist Puerto Rican model as evidenced by the political bankruptcy of the Alessandri regime (1958-64) in Chile, imperialism's chosen instrument was Eduardo Frei, who attacked the Cuban revolution and model as "revolution in dictatorship" and demagogically called for "revolution in liberty." This "revolution in liberty" was no more than the implementation of new US policy of "partnership," the establishment of joint ventures with government's ownership of even 51% of the shares in foreign companies, and the replacement of the Puerto Rican model by the ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America) model based on import substitution and import substituting industrialization, land reform and foreign capital.

In the Commonwealth Caribbean, where developments have always lagged behind Latin America, a similar process is developing.

The collapse of the West Indies Federation in 1962 was the political expression of the failure of the Puerto Rican strategy of economic planning for development. What has also failed in Latin America, and particularly in Chile under Frei - the Alliance for Progress and the ECLA model - is now being introduced in the English-speaking Caribbean. "Joint Vultures" is the order of the day. And for the benefit of the US transnational corporations and for the penetration of US monopoly capital in a formerly exclusive British preserve was created in 1968 the Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA), now the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), the Caribbean counterpart of the Latin American Free Trade Association and the Central American Market, which came into being in the late 1960's in keeping with President Lyndon Johnson's advocacy of the concept of "ideological frontiers" for "geographical frontiers."

In Guyana, in 1970, the PNC minority regime talked merely about "meaningful participation in bauxite" like Frei's "Chileanization of copper." But under intense political and ideological pressure, mainly from the People's Progressive Party, it moved to nationalization.

Here too it is imperative to make an objective appraisal. With the ever-widening gap in living standards between the industrialized capitalist states and the imperialist-dominated "third world" underdeveloped states, and the failure of the first UN Development Decade (1960-70), intense internal political pressure and clamant calls for national control of natural and other resources and the creation of a new World Economic Order, petty-bourgeois reformist regimes are forced to make internal changes, even to move to nationalization, and to take certain progressive steps in foreign policy.

To what extent are these steps "in accord with" or "against" imperialism?

The first post-war Labour Party (social-democratic) government carried out limited nationalization. But the enterprises served capitalism, and Britain was kept firmly in the imperialist camp. Today, the same social democrats in collaboration with the reactionary forces have yoked Britain with the European Common Market.

Imperialism's tactics are designed to adjust to different political situations. In Bolivia, it "worked with" the Estenssoro regime after the nationalization of tin, and with aid and other devices succeeded in compromising and eventually overthrowing the regime.

As the class struggle intensifies, imperialism even encourages "nationalist communism." And in the international arena, having been forced through economic difficulties in the 1970's—balance of payments and balance of trade deficits and devaluation of the dollar to accept peaceful coexistence and detente, imperialism manoeuvres to divide the socialist world, to encourage Maoist China to attack the Soviet Union.

Operation in this context, and reflecting the twists and turns of US foreign policy, and as former US Secretary of State, William Rogers put it: to move "from confrontation to engagement," the PNC regime of Guyana voted against the seating of People's China in the United Nations in 1977 and 1967, abstained in 1968, 1969 and 1970 and voted for in 1971. Since then, it has been advocating the pro-Chinese and pro-imperialist "two super-powers," "two imperialisms" line, equating socialist USSR with imperialist USA.

The recent recognition of Cuba and Guyana and other Caribbean States which previously had a hostile attitude to the Cuban Revolution must also be seen against the background of the changed position of US imperialism to the question of peaceful coexistence in general with the socialist world. As regards Cuba, political considerations weighted more heavily than purely economic considerations for the US ruling class, and thus there were contradictions and vacillations with respect to the lifting of the OAS blockade on Cuba. In the Caribbean, however, because of the small size of the CARICOM market (about 4 million) US subsidiaries, like their Argentine counterparts, and the local bourgeoisie wanted the door opened to the expanding Cuban market. In such a situation, and in the face of popular internal pressure, the recognition of Cuba became a political necessity.

Clearly, what is being witnessed in the composition of the petty-bourgeois regimes are more polarized because of the aggravated nature of the national liberation struggle.

In some cases, there is a rightist trend towards authoritarian or even fascist dictatorship. Where pro-imperialist economic planning strategies and policies, domestic and foreign, are pursued, there is a worsening of the conditions of the people due to higher tax burdens to meet the costs of increasing debt charges and a burgeoning, and most often corrupt, bureaucracy.

With the inevitable dissatisfaction and discontent, nationalism leads to suppression, denial of civil liberties and a reactionary dictatorship.

In other cases, revolutionary nationalism is taking steps against imperialism. Whatever the motivation for these steps, they must be regarded as positive; they help to weaken imperialism and must be supported.

Such support, however, must be critical support, to ensure that the Communist Party plays its vanguard role, and is able continuously to exert pressure so as to influence

the course of future development. It must be the duty of all fraternal communist parties to ensure that basic democracy is preserved and that no steps are taken, whether legal or administrative, to liquidate the Party.

Guyana presents a unique case in the continent. When the PPP was in the government for its second term (1957-64), the People's National Congress (PNC), taking a strong anti-communist and anti-Cuban position, advocated democratic socialism. It collaborated with Anglo-American imperialism and the Central Intelligence Agency. The same CIA methods and subversion that were tried and tested in Guyana in 1963 were used in Chile a decade later in 1973. It came to power on a minority vote (40%) and in coalition with the ultra-right United Force (12%) in December 1964 when the PPP polled 46%.

US-imposed pro-imperialist domestic and foreign policies led in the early 1970's to serious economic consequences and a grave crisis of confidence. The 1966-72 Development Plan, based on the Puerto Rican model, prematurely collapsed in 1970. With emphasis placed on infrastructural (roads, sea defenses, airports and airstrips, stelling and public buildings) and not industrial and agricultural development, the productive forces did not develop sufficiently to cope with the rapidly expanding population. Consequently, unemployment increased and now stands around 30% of the labour force, and is even higher among youths. Under-employment too is grave. This has led to a large-scale rural-urban migration and to a grave crime situation.

Also production did not expand sufficiently to meet charges which increased from G\$10 million in 1964 to G\$46 million in 1974 on a rapidly expanding national debt which escalated from G\$127 million to G\$813 million in the same period.

Simultaneously, the bureaucracy has rapidly expanded from 10 ministries under the PPP government in 1964 to 27 in 1975 with big salaries and allowances for the benefit of the ruling elite. Personal emoluments (salary payments) have skyrocketed from G\$27 million in 1964 to over G\$100 million in 1975.

The burden of debt payments and a top-heavy administration was placed on the backs of the workers with increased taxation and cuts in social services. Budgetary allocation from the latter declined from 45% in 1964 to 35% in 1975 with grave consequences for the health and welfare of the people.

Erosion of living standards has led generally to discontent, and particularly to disillusionment in the rank and file of the ruling party.

The regime's response to growing criticism and dissatisfaction is repression, denial of civil liberties, and extensive electoral fraud in 1968 and 1973. At the 1973 general election, the army intervened, seized ballot boxes, transported them to army head-quarters where they were tampered with. And this year, the armed soldiers and policemen were used in an attempt to break the six-weeks strike of the sugar workers.

At the same time, certain anti-imperialist steps have been taken which we have helped to bring about. We see as our duty constantly to apply mass pressure for the completion of the anti-imperialist national revolution.

Unfortunately, demagoguery in the form of "cooperative socialism," namely, the false idea that socialism will be achieved by means of cooperatives, offers the excuse for not dismantling the imperialist socio-economic structure. It also poses the danger of developing a new form of capitalism.

Guyana unlike any other country in the hemisphere presents the unique opportunity for a rapid completion of the national revolution. There is no immediate danger of a military coup as the army is not of the traditional Latin American type, but is the creation of the regime itself. And there is no strong ultra-rightist force which can act as a base for CIA subversion.

Only political opportunism prevents a determined move forward. Even the limited anti-imperialist steps are compromised as for instance by excessive compensation and the appointment of Phillip Bros., the subsidiary of the giant South African Anglo-American Corporation, as the sales agent of the nationalized Guyana Bauxite Company. And the training of technical personnel, police and military officers in countries such as Brazil, Malaysia, United States and the United Kingdom, and the building of a highway linking Guyana and fascist Brazil with technical help and aid from "the US gendarme in Latin America" poses a danger to the anti-imperialist direction.

And unless the tendency towards military-bureaucratic form of rule and the deliberate administrative strangling of the PPP is counteracted by other processes taking place in favour of the involvement of the masses and democratization, there is also the danger of the anti-imperialist process being retarded and of the inhibition movement.

Nevertheless, the balance of forces continues to change in favour of national liberation. And the perspective is opening up for the broad-based unity of action of the patriotic forces in the struggle for democracy and against imperialism.

"Leftist" elements, which attacked us before 1973 as revisionist and non-revolutionary, but against which we always took a critical but principled position are now working with us - a process which was facilitated by the attitude and behaviour of the Chinese government in Guyana. Also with two other small petty-bourgeois parties, we have a working relationship for united action. The trade unions which were compromised by ORIT and the CIA are in a state of flux. Faced with growing contradictions, their actions in certain circumstances correspond to our positions. Contradictions are also developing in the Christian Church, particularly the Catholic, which took a strong reactionary, anti-communist stand against us in the 1960-64 period.

Similar trends are developing in many areas of the Caribbean. Consequently, we of this part of the hemisphere which is somewhat isolated from the Latin American mainstream look forward to receiving firm solidarity from the other Latin American Communist parties for the struggle against imperialism and for democracy.

The Document calls for the ending of colonialism. In this respect too, firm solidarity is necessary for bringing an end to the vestiges of colonialism in the Caribbean. In this respect too, firm solidarity is necessary for bringing an end to the vestiges of colonialism in the Caribbean.

We demand the immediate release of Luis Corvalan and other political prisoners in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Haiti and elsewhere in our continent.

In conclusion, we support the call for the convening of an international meeting of the Communist and Workers' parties. This we believe will greatly facilitate the anti-imperialist struggle.

Long Live the unity of Latin American and Caribbean Communists!

Long Live the working class!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism!

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EXCERPTS FROM THE DOCUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES

US IMPERIALISM

"Since US imperialism is the main, common enemy, the strategy and the tactics of the revolution in Latin America, for those of us who conceive it as a revolution whose final aim is socialism, go through anti-imperialism."

UNITED FRONT

"The anti-imperialist struggle that will lead Latin America to final independence allows and demands the participation of the broadest social sectors, and the leading role in that struggle corresponds to the working class. The working class peasants are their natural allies. These are the social classes that aspire to the most profound transformation."

"If anti-imperialist unity is essential, the unity of the forces of the left within it is even more essential."

PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT

"Economic development cannot attain the accelerated pace necessary for our countries to bring about a solution to their serious problems of backwardness, unemployment, misery, illiteracy, without a decisive participation of the people's forces, of the workers, working peasants, and the urban and rural middle strata. And our peoples, just as Cuba's example indicates, will be mobilized to that extraordinary degree only through profound transformations which - in practice - prove to the workers of the countryside and the cities, to the intellectuals and professionals, that the revolution is theirs."

NATIONALISM

"It is true that the measures of defense of the domestic economy are not always accompanied by a genuine anti-imperialist policy. In some cases, it is strictly bourgeois nationalism which does not result in aspirations of transformation of the domestic economy, nor places the government that puts them into practice in progressive positions in view of the principal problems debated today. Nationalism can be transformed into anti-imperialist and revolutionary positions to the extent that the people's forces decisively participate in the struggle, to the extent to which the contradictions between nationalistic governments and imperialism sharpen."

DEMOCRACY

"The battle for democracy for the masses, the struggle for urgent structural changes and for the transition to socialism, are indissolubly linked to the struggle against monopolies and imperialism which, aside from maintaining control over our riches, uphold and support the oligarchies and their governments...

"The criminal blow against Chile confirms the urgency of closing ranks for the defense of democracy and against fascist threats in Latin America and its inseparable unity with anti-imperialist struggle...

"The unity of the struggle for democracy is dialectically linked to the broader framework of the anti-imperialist revolutionary unity."

MAOISM

"This Conference energetically condemns the foreign policy of the leadership of the Communist Party of China which flirts with Yankee imperialism, defends its presence in Asia and in Europe, justifies NATO, stimulates West-German imperialism and ravanchism, attacks and slanders the USSR with the same viciousness of the worst spokesmen of international reaction, fosters the aggressive militarism of the world bourgeoisie against it, promotes the insane policy of cold war in the shameless connivance with the Chilean Military Junta to which it gives political support over the blood of thousands of communists, socialists, and other patriots murdered by the brutal repression of the fascist tyranny. The Chinese leadership also fosters everywhere, groups of pseudo-revolutionaries who, from a false radicalism, divide the left, attack the Communist Parties, obstruct progressive processes and frequently act as enemy agents with the revolutionary movement.

"To confront this policy of treason against unity, solidarity and the best traditions of the world revolutionary movement is a duty for all the Communist Parties of Latin America."

REVOLUTION

"The revolutionary struggle of Latin America is characterized as a difficult and complex battle in which all forces that oppose US imperialism have their place, and in which the most varied forms and methods of struggle should be used by the Latin American revolutionary movement, adequately adopting its location and movement of use to the diversity of conditions in each country. The utilization of all legal possibilities is an indispensable obligation of the anti-imperialist forces, and the defense of the right of the peoples to decide, through democratic means, the transformation they demand, is a constant principle of our struggle.

"Revolutionaries are not the first to resort to violence. But, it is the right and duty of all people's and revolutionary forces to be ready to answer counter-revolutionary violence with revolutionary violence and open the way, through various means to the people's actions, including armed struggle, to the sovereign decision of majorities."

"The Chilean experience evidently shows that revolutionary movements cannot discard any way of democratic access to power and that it must be fully prepared and ready to defend, with the force of weapons the democratic achievements."

PATRIOTISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

"In proclaiming close unity and solidarity for the common struggle against imperialism, which has working class internationalism as its firm basis, we communists of Latin America reaffirm that each of our parties, following the principles of Marxism-Leninism and taking into consideration concrete national conditions, elaborates its own policy."

UNITY IN ACTION

"The anti-imperialist unity means above all, unity in action. Unity to mobilize the large masses and incorporate sectors and forces that still remain aloof from the struggle, although they suffer from exploitation and misery. Unity to coordinate concrete and diverse forms of struggle. Unity to act, with audacity and imagination, so that firmness in principle be joined to the necessary broadness so as not to lose a single force which could be incorporated."

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