

Dr. Cheddi Jagan, with other Caribbean leaders, speaks at Palisadoes Airport.



A Time To

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

A Report to the Nation:

by the Premier of British Guiana,

Dr. the Honourable Cheddi Jagan,

on the Conference of Heads of Governments of the
Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, January, 1964.

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF BRITISH
GUIANA, DR. THE HON CHEDDI JAGAN AT THE
CONFERENCE OF THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS OF
COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES HELD
IN JAMAICA, JANUARY 1964

1964 commenced with high hopes. The main themes pertained to the questions of peace and hunger. Leading statesmen the world over recognized the necessity for world peace, the ending of the Cold War and the abolition of hunger from the face of the earth.

We, too, are in agreement with these lofty aims. Our own experience has taught us, however, that some of the world's statesmen speak with their tongues in their cheeks. They say one thing and do exactly the opposite. They take decisions which run counter to their pronouncements.

Cold War considerations have prevented my country from gaining its independence. Cold War considerations have also resulted in the raping of democracy in my country. Some of the Cold Warriors consider it necessary to render unstable our institutions by forcing constitutional change in an arbitrary manner. It would seem that some countries are more concerned about their profitable investments than with an end to the Cold War which is proving so highly lucrative to them.

The developed countries see the necessity for abolishing hunger and thus removing the cause for social tensions. They proclaim that they are willing to assist the poorer countries. They speak loudly about aid. But unfortunately the aid given is tied with strings - political, military and economic. They subjugate our economies, reserving for us the role as a source of raw materials and strategic minerals, as markets for their manufactured goods and as hunting grounds for the extraction of super-profits. They sow a few millions and expect in a short while to reap several millions. It is this international division of labour that is the cause of social tensions, poverty and hunger in the underdeveloped world.

They have in their hands the "commanding heights" of our economy and the most profitable fields of production. In my country bauxite, sugar and manganese are mostly in foreign hands. The unprofitable sectors of production - rice and agriculture other than sugar and rice - are left in local hands.

By their control of the lucrative fields of banking, shipping, insurance and the import/export trade and by the imposition of high interest rates, high charges, and high profit margins they are able to impose further burdens on our impoverished people.

By manipulating the prices of our products, by buying cheap from us and selling to us dear the things which we should manufacture, by monopolistic controls and costly industry takeovers, they impose further hardships on our people.

But this is not all. When we ask for aid, we are told that we must not establish government undertakings which compete with private enterprise, that governments must concentrate on infra-structure development and must give more and more incentives to foreign investors, who seem bent on recouping their investments in the shortest possible time, in about three or four years. This means increasing government debt burdens; this means the draining abroad of our wealth.

We are all too familiar with our inherited unemployment and other problems and our growing headaches, associated with a rapidly increasing population. We cannot but be alarmed at the declining incomes earned by the countries of the underdeveloped "third world" - from a figure of about 54% in 1800 to 42% in 1900 and to only about 18% in 1962. This widening gap in living standards between the rich and poor countries is resulting in social tensions everywhere on an increasing scale.

We cannot be content with accepting aid at high rates of interest and with strings that lead to a piling up of debt burdens.

We must tell those who proclaim the necessity for reforms that change cannot come about under these imperialist and neo-colonialist conditions, that if they are genuinely interested in world peace and the abolition of hunger they must not seek by force or fraud to remove those who are genuinely working for the betterment of the masses.

At some time we must examine the root causes of our backwardness and our relations with those

who claim they want to help us. We must note their own contradictions and dilemmas. We must take note not only of what they preach but of what they actually practice.

If the freedom and democracy they extol means the subjugation of our economies, the despoilation of our wealth, the exploitation of our people's labour, the imposition of an empty, barren pleasure-seeking culture, let us tell them - out with it. If the gifts they bring us are so many Trojan horses let us tell them - we had enough of Colonialism; we do not want neo-colonialist chains.

Mr. Chairman, time is running out. This is not the time to equivocate. Now is the time to speak out, to stand up and be counted. Can we remain oblivious to the hunger pangs of the poverty-stricken masses? Can we remain silent when the sharks attempt to devour the sardines one by one?

Our own hard-won freedom, small as we are, will be insecure, and will be meaningless, if we willingly submit to the Big Stick. The Big Stick wielders have overawed some of us with their gold and battleships. But this is only a facade behind a shallow, empty morality dispensing corruption and injustice, and sacrificing principle at the altar of self-interest and expediency.

Have we not faithfully recorded that in the days of the triangular slave traffic when millions of our fore-fathers perished in the Middle Passage and on these shores, the High-and-Mighty-Lords, Admirals, Bishops and lesser Clergy, Prime Ministers and Parliamentarians -

opposed the abolition of slavery? Are we today in the Century of the Common Man going to align ourselves with the modern-day slave owners - the neo-colonialists and imperialists?

Whichever side you are on, whatever you do, remember this, the masses the world over are no longer content to be exploited and humiliated. They are on the move. They are determined to abolish imperialist wage slavery as their forefathers abolished chattel slavery. Some of them will be shot, imprisoned, detained, tortured, brainwashed and corrupted. But for every one fallen, thousands will rise up. They will neither be deflected nor defeated. And win they will. Their numbers are beyond reckoning. They have written the word independence on their breasts, and history and logic is on their side. They are armed with a superior ideology - superior to that based on greed and profit.

Mr. Chairman, we have an opportunity to make history. History will not forgive us if we remain indifferent to the woes, the sufferings, the heart-aches, the needs and aspirations of the masses. Let it not be said that we have failed.

Mr. Chairman, we have been overwhelmed by your warm welcome and your magnificent hospitality. We are happy to be with our old friends and acquaintances. We look forward to the deliberations of the Conference being fruitful.

**BROADCAST TO THE NATION BY THE PREMIER,
DR. THE HONOURABLE C.B. JAGAN ON HIS
RETURN FROM THE CONFERENCE OF COM-
MONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES HELD AT
KINGSTON, JAMAICA, IN JANUARY 1964**

As you know, I have just returned from the Second Conference of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries which was held in Kingston, Jamaica from 13th to 17th January, last. I want to take this opportunity to let you know what we discussed and what decisions we reached.

Let me say first of all that this is a Conference of the Heads of Governments of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and British Guiana. It is a spontaneous association. The decision to get together has been inspired by the feeling that we of the Caribbean have a common history and background that is in many ways unique. Another reason, of course, is the realisation that we must collaborate as closely as possible on matters of common interest if we are to survive.

The Prime Minister of Jamaica has pointed that the Conference of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries is not an attempt to revive the West Indies Federation. The Conference has no formal constitution and no standing secretariat. It has no elaborate rules of procedure, and decisions are by agreement and not by vote. It is an attempt by Caribbean leaders to work together for the common good of the people of the region and of the world.

Broadly speaking, we discussed co-operation in economic, political and educational and cultural matters. If I may take the last named category first, we discussed such matters as the problems of West Indian migrants in the United Kingdom, co-operation and inter-change of information in regard to libraries, Archives, Museums and Archaeology. There was also the question of the establishment of a Caribbean Examination Council to set, mark and standardise the G.C.E. Examination for High Schools.

In the economic sphere we found that we had a great deal in common. One paper dealt with economic trends in these territories. This paper showed that there had been in the last few years in all these countries;

- (1) a slowing down of the rates of growth - attributable in part to the decline in the rate of growth of production of the principal exports, and particularly of mineral exports;
- (2) a deterioration of the terms of trade;
- (3) a rapid increase in the public debt and the annual debt charges; and
- (4) a decline in the inflow of capital. In this connection, incidentally, it was shown that because of the need for taking positive action to attract capital, such as offering tax incentives, these countries were not reaping the full benefits of such development as was taking place.

A lengthy discussion took place on foreign policy. In my contribution to this debate, I pointed out that economics and politics were closely linked and that to have a realistic foreign policy one must take note of economic developments at home and abroad.

I said that if we examined our situation closely we would find that despite certain cultural and historical differences we in the Caribbean had certain things in common with the underdeveloped "third" world - that outside political and economic forces had moulded underdeveloped countries with similar characteristics. Our economies were imbalanced, dependent on one or two products, mostly agricultural raw materials and minerals and we were the markets for manufactured goods from outside.

Recent trends were more or less similar and indications are that such trends will continue. What was happening to us was happening to the underdeveloped world at large. For instance, the latter's share of total world trade dropped from 30% to 20% in the ten-year period 1950-1960. The developed countries were producing substitutes and synthetics, which took the place of imports from the poor countries. This meant less money for the underdeveloped countries and a general deterioration in living standards. United Nations statistics in 1949 showed that more than two-thirds of the world's population living in these countries earned less than one-sixth of the world's income. The gap between rich and poor has been widening. Around 1800 the national income per head of population in the rich countries was \$200 (U.S.) as against \$60 (U.S.) for the poor countries. By 1900, it was \$400 and \$70. By 1962, it was even wider - the figures were \$970 and \$95 respectively.

A look at Latin America, the area nearest to us, shows that its proportion of world trade dropped from 9% forty years ago to 6.5% today. It lost \$10,000 million (U.S.) from 1951-1961 because of deteriorating terms of trade - selling cheap and buying dear. In 1963 the outflow of capital was twice as much as the inflow.

The picture is the same for other underdeveloped areas of the world. The Economic Commission for Asia pointed out that South East Asian countries had a drop in export income of about (U.S.)\$400 million as a result of falling prices as compared with thirty years ago. This same picture was painted for Africa by representatives of Africa such as the Prime Minister of Nigeria during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1962.

What about our own area? As regards trade, I pointed out that a few years ago, British Guiana began producing rice surplus to the requirements of the British Caribbean. We had to find markets outside. Incidentally, I complained about the encroachment in the Jamaican market of packaged rice from outside the area particularly from the United States. Trinidad and Jamaica were experiencing similar difficulties. The West Indies was experiencing increasing competition for its citrus in the United Kingdom market from the U.S.A. It had to ask for protection. There was also complaint about tariff barriers against textile exports from Jamaica and Trinidad to the U.S.A.

Looking at the developed countries, we must note that they themselves have been experiencing difficulties - recessions, idle industrial capacity, growing unemployment, balance of pay-

ments problems. Because of these difficulties, they limit the amount of aid by establishing criteria which are difficult to meet. The West Indies is told that it has a high income per head of population, and thus is low in the priority list. On a population basis, the West Indies cannot get much aid because of its relatively small population. A U.S. aid mission told me that U.S. aid was given on the basis of about \$5.00 (U.S.) per head of population.

Incidentally, the developed countries make a big fuss about aid. But what they are doing in effect is lending the people of the underdeveloped countries part of the money which they get in profits, dividends and commissions from investments and services, and from selling dear and buying cheap. For instance in 1963, Britain made about (B.W.I.) \$3½ thousand million more from trading alone, by buying cheap and selling dear as compared with the position in 1954. This was roughly the same amount given out by Britain as loans and grants to underdeveloped Commonwealth countries since 1945. Needless to say, the loans which were made at high rates of interest had to be repaid, and this repayment is causing increasing budgetary difficulties for many of our territories.

Because of these trends internally and externally, in the developed as well as the underdeveloped countries, I see the necessity for us to take a statesman-like view of our situation, to make common cause with other underdeveloped countries for the solution of our problems. We must not break our traditional relationships. But we must recognise the severe restrictions and limitations of this relationship.

I agree, therefore, that while maintaining our traditional relationships, we must simultaneously explore all possible avenues which might lead to the expansion of world trade, which would bring about an end to the cold war divisions and alignments of the world. Only in this way could we industrialise and develop our countries in the interest of our peoples.

In the end, the Conference expressed grave concern at the widening gap between the richer and poorer countries, and between the developed and developing nations, and agreed to give support to every effort aimed at ensuring co-operation among developing nations to promote our development. We also agreed to give support to every effort aimed at persuading the developed countries to give adequate assistance to the developing nations free of strings and of restrictive conditions.

On the question of aid, the Conference agreed that the Governments of the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada and such other countries as may be agreed to, as well as representatives of international agencies, should be invited to meet with the Governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries and formulate concrete proposals for economic aid from the developed countries.

As regards trade, the Conference recognised the need for the establishment of a new pattern of world trade which would take account of the urgent needs and rights of developing countries, and expressed the view *that differences between the economic and social systems of countries should not prevent developing countries from taking advantage of expanding markets for trade.*

In the foreign policy declaration of the Conference, the four participating countries declared their desire for the closest possible collaboration among the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries; affirmed their belief in the value of Commonwealth ties and associations; and pledged their support for the United Nations and its aims and objectives.

The Conference also declared itself in favour of efforts to foster and maintain hemispheric friendship, and friendship towards all peace-loving nations. It favoured the closest possible collaboration with the Latin American and Afro-Asian Groups in their efforts to bring to an end the pernicious system of colonialism and in their struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination.

And now to the British Guiana political situation. The Heads of Governments were of the view that the problem of British Guiana was of interest and concern to all the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, and that an attempt should be made in the Caribbean by Caribbean leaders to solve it. They were of the view that the overriding principle of Caribbean survival makes it mandatory that British Guiana - among other Caribbean Territories - should attain independence as soon as the inescapable constitutional and other procedures can be settled, and these should be completed as rapidly as possible.

The Heads of Governments were opposed to Proportional Representation as a method of representation in the region. They were willing to lend their good offices to work out a generally acceptable constitutional settlement for British Guiana which would avoid the absurdity of the controversial electoral system of Propor-

tional Representation which could only lead to social deadlock.

I told the Conference that in order to allay any fears that might exist at home and abroad, my Government was willing to provide all reasonable constitutional and other safeguards and consultative machinery. I pointed out that I was not opposed to a meeting of Heads of Governments to discuss the matter in detail so that the necessary guarantees of democratic procedures and institutions in British Guiana could be assured, but however much my Government wanted independence for British Guiana, it was not prepared to agree to any limitation of British Guiana's sovereignty, or any interference in its domestic affairs.

The British Guiana question was not on the agenda of the Conference, and though discussion started at the closing stages of the Conference, it was continued after its conclusion, and on the eve and the day of the departure of the Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados delegations from Jamaica.

As a result of the discussions, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago prepared a statement to be issued by the Heads of the four Governments. I pointed out that the statement was not factually correct, and with the help of my advisers, prepared an alternative statement.

The main difference between the two drafts was that the Trinidad and Tobago draft stated that the discussions on British Guiana were the result of representations made by the Premier of British Guiana speaking on behalf of his Government. This was not correct. The position was

that when the West Indian leaders proposed that the British Guiana question should be put on the Conference Agenda, the cabinet of British Guiana requested that it be removed, and this was done. It was the Prime Minister of Jamaica, at the closing stages of the Conference, who had initiated the discussion on British Guiana, and he was followed by the Premier of Barbados and the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, all of whom expressed the view that the situation in British Guiana was a Caribbean issue and that "if it is at all possible, this issue should be settled in the Caribbean and by Caribbean representatives." I accepted the gesture and agreed to discuss the matter, provided, as I said before, there was no attempt to circumscribe British Guiana's sovereignty or interfere in its domestic affairs.

It was therefore not correct to say that I, speaking on behalf of the Government of British Guiana, had requested the Heads of Governments to help settle the British Guiana question.

The only other point of difference of any importance between the two drafts was that I felt that the statement should include the view that was previously and publicly expressed by the other Heads of Governments that the nature and circumstances of the Secretary of State's imposition were unlikely to further the interests of the people of the country as a whole. For example, Dr. Williams at a public meeting late last year is reported to have declared his utter opposition to proportional representation and is said to have so instructed his delegation at the United Nations. In this way (meaning P.R.) he once said lies madness. Similarly, Prime Minister Sir Alexander Bustamante and

Premier Errol Barrow expressed publicly strong opposition to proportional representation.

I pointed out that my draft was a more accurate statement of the position. The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago was unwilling to discuss any changes in his draft. I then suggested that the proposed Tobago Meeting should take place whether or not a statement was issued. This was also not acceptable to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

All these discussions took place on Monday 20th January. In the event, no agreement was reached, and the Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados delegations left Jamaica the same day.

I regret to say that this uncooperative attitude makes me rather pessimistic about future summit Conferences. The impression is created that it was I who was uncooperative and that the disagreement arose because of a formulation of words and because I refused to sign. But it was more deep-seated than that. It is no use talking brave words like "the pernicious system of colonialism" and yet when the vital issue of colonialism presents itself in British Guiana no firm stand is taken. No use uttering fighting words against proportional representation (P.R.), and when Sandys decides on P.R., remain silent and thus indirectly support the British Government. No use saying that "differences between the economic and social systems of countries should not prevent developing countries from taking advantage of expanding markets for trade", and yet not condemn Mr. Sandys for raping democracy in British Guiana. For everyone knows that our political difficulties have arisen because of United States antagonism par-

ticularly with respect to our trade with Cuba. This kind of attitude prevailed in 1953 when our constitution was suspended. This same kind of attitude led to the death of the West Indies Federation.

British Guiana is the acid test. It has exposed the hollowness of Western pronouncements about freedom and democracy. West Indian leadership will stand or fall on its attitude to British Guiana. It must be prepared to face facts and stand on its feet. Unless it is prepared to face the challenge of our times, nobody will take the Caribbean seriously - it will continue to have a faceless image abroad and be regarded as a backwash area of history.

I would like to end with a plea for unity and understanding. The proposals put forward by the United Kingdom Government are unacceptable. The British Government is hypocritical, It applies different yardsticks to Southern Rhodesia and British Guiana, both internally self-governing countries. Any attempt to impose a solution contrary to the wishes of the Government is bound to lead to trouble. I feel that a solution acceptable to all must be found and I am devoting all my energies to the attainment of this end. I have no doubt that with good-will on all sides, a settlement will be arrived at that is suited to the needs, circumstances and aspirations of all of us.

A decade ago we stood strong and triumphant. We were invincible because we were united. Now the great mass movement of '53 is split and we allow ourselves to be led in the paths of fratricidal strife. Violent disagreements and clashes will do our country no good. It has

only given the "agents provocateurs" a happy hunting ground to breed like flies, and the colonialists and imperialists an excuse for holding on to political power in order to continue their exploitation of our country, its resources and its people.

"Divide and rule" is the age old weapon of imperialism. We need to close our ranks once again to obtain political independence and a change in the social order. Two representative groups of our people are at the moment marching from opposite ends of our country in a pilgrimage for unity and freedom. Let their pilgrimage be at once the inspiration for and the symbol of the unity of the people of this country.

8th February, 1964.

APPENDIX V

DRAFT STATEMENT PREPARED BY PRIME MINISTER OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Prime Ministers of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Premier of Barbados met informally with the Premier of British Guiana on four occasions in the past few days, in accordance with the agreement reached by them in the recent conference of Commonwealth Caribbean Countries in Kingston, Jamaica, to consider representations from the Premier of British Guiana, speaking on behalf of the Government of British Guiana, that they should use their good offices to achieve a settlement of the British Guiana issue. The Prime Ministers of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago and the Premier of Barbados

have consistently taken and acted on the view that, if it is at all possible, this issue should be settled in the Caribbean and by Caribbean representatives.

The Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, including British Guiana are feeling today the full effects of centuries of colonial control and the difficulties and deficiencies inherited from that control. On the one hand, they face increasing pressures, both economic and political, in their efforts to improve their trading relationships and the economic and social conditions of their people. On the other hand, the outside world tends far too often to take them for granted and to regard their independence as purely nominal.

The Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, in their determination to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Caribbean peoples, are agreed that the defence of vital Caribbean interests can and must be sought only in the solidarity, in the first instance, of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries.

Whatever the particular variations of constitutional forms of economic practices which they may each adopt, consistent with the accepted conventions of national sovereignty, the fact is that what the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries have in common is more important than the incidental differences of emphasis or temperament which may occasionally divide them.

The Commonwealth Caribbean Countries therefore pledge themselves, whatever might be their individual sympathies on particular issues or general principles in a confused world, to give

priority at all times, in consultation one with another, to the defence of the interests of the Caribbean peoples against attacks or threat from any quarter whatsoever.

This overriding principle of Caribbean survival makes it mandatory that British Guiana - among other Caribbean territories - should achieve independence, just so soon as the inescapable constitutional and other precedures can be settled.

The imposition of a settlement by the United Kingdom, whatever its explanations, for however temporary a period, is inconsistent with the achievement of this fundamental objective. The conventional constitutional accords between the various parties and interests in British Guiana must be facilitated and completed as rapidly as possible, always for the benefit of the people of British Guiana.

The Heads of Governments of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and British Guiana subscribe to this general declaration of principle, and agree to meet in Tobago on February 1 and 2, with appropriate advisers to begin consideration of the details involved in its implementation.

APPENDIX VI

DRAFT STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE PREMIER OF BRITISH GUIANA

The Heads of Governments of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries, in their determination to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Carib-

bean peoples, are agreed that the promotion of vital Caribbean interests can and must be sought in the first instance in the solidarity of the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries.

The Heads of Governments have therefore agreed that it is important that a solution to the British Guiana problem should be settled, if possible, in the Caribbean and by Caribbean representatives.

Whatever the particular variations of constitutional forms of economic practices which they may adopt, consistent with the accepted conventions of national sovereignty, the fact is that what the Commonwealth Caribbean Countries have in common is more important than the incidental differences of emphasis or temperament which may occasionally divide them.

The Commonwealth Caribbean Countries therefore pledge themselves, whatever might be their individual sympathies on particular issues or general principles in a confused world, to give priority at all times, in consultation one with another, to the defence of the interests of the Caribbean peoples against attacks or threat from any quarter whatsoever.

This overriding principle of Caribbean survival makes it mandatory that British Guiana - among other Caribbean territories - should achieve independence, just so soon as the inescapable constitutional and other procedures can be settled.

The imposition of a settlement by the United Kingdom whatever its explanations, for however temporary a period, is at best of doubtful

value. In the case of British Guiana the nature and circumstances of the imposition is unlikely to further the interests of the people of the country as a whole. The conventional constitutional accords between the various parties and interests in British Guiana must be facilitated and completed as rapidly as possible, always for the benefit of the people of British Guiana.

The Heads of Governments of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and British Guiana subscribe to this general declaration of principle, and agree to meet in Tobago on February 1 and 2, with appropriate advisers to begin consideration of the details involved in its implementation.



People of Jamaica gather to hear Dr. Cheddi Jagan speak at Christian Square.

“The masses are on the move. They are determined to abolish wage slavery as their forefathers abolished chattel slavery. Some of them will be shot, imprisoned, detained, tortured, brainwashed and corrupted. But for every one fallen thousands will rise up.. They will neither be deflected nor defeated. And win they will/.....”

The Government Printery, Georgetown.

(C.G.P. & S. 924/64.)