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BROADCAST TO THE NATION BY THE PREMIER
DR. THE HON'BLE C.B. JAGAN, over Radio
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over Radio Demerara. B.J.B.S

Fellow Guianese,

I speak to you today with a heavy heart. This is a sad period for all of us, but for none is it sadder than for me. Everything I have striven for now hangs in the balance. First of all Independence has been withheld. For twenty long years, I have laboured to free our land of slavery and indenture and oppression from foreign yoke. But freedom is withheld and the imperial power in the country daily grows stronger and more powerful.

Secondly, all my efforts to establish a national consensus and to achieve an independence constitution acceptable to all of us have been frustrated by foreign intrigue and the naked self-interest and intransigence of the opposition leaders.

Thirdly, factional strife strides the land and our national movement lies divided and weak. For many years, while others spent their time and leisure in the pursuit of wealth or pleasure and frivolity, I trod every nook and cranny of our wide country preaching the gospel of nationalism and freedom, and seeking to infuse into our diverse groups a Guyanese consciousness which would transcend the bonds of race and creed. With the advent of the P.P.P. the old racial organisations withered away and disappeared. Today they creep stealthily into life again in the wake of Proportional Representation, nourished and sustained by American gold. And my hopes for national unity have been cast into the dust.

The story of the split in our national movement is well-known. Coming into existence in the post-war years, our national movement reached its high-water mark in a people's victory at the elections of 1953. But democracy is not sacred to those whose privileges are threatened and so we were thrown out of office and the Constitution suspended. The months that followed were a period of testing. Our people were subjected to intimidation, brainwashing and bribery. Personal ambitions together with these pressures and allurements brought about a split in our united movement in 1955. It was this - more than anything else which is responsible for the present factional strife. Needless to say, the Robertson Commission appointed in 1954 to whitewash the rape of the Constitution played a major role in the work of disruption and in sowing the seeds of suspicion and racial strife among you in the interest of the imperial power.

I saw the danger of the split, and tried in 1957 and 1961 to achieve a united front. Since the elections of 1961 I have made renewed efforts to the leaders of the P.N.C. A few months ago I requested the assistance of the Government of Ghana. But all these efforts were fruitless. I made concession after concession to no avail. The vision of the leaders of the P.N.C. was clouded by their own conceit and their personal ambitions and they were indifferent to the national interest.

In the meantime, the normal stresses and strains in the body politic have in the historical and political circumstances of our country led to an intensification of racial animosities. This strife is of course deliberately fostered by those who stand to gain by it. In the present strike in the sugar industry the Sugar Producers' Association resorted to the employment of scabs. The employment of scabs to break the strike has inevitably led to disturbances. The majority of workers in the sugar industry are Indo-Guyanese, and many, but by no means all, of the

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of all the people recruited by the S.P.A. to break the strike were Afro-Guianese. Hence an essentially trade union dispute has gathered around it racial overtones. Attacks on scabs have led to counter attacks and reprisals. Besides, the flame is fanned by sections of the press and other information media owned and controlled by minority groups who derive political advantage by the strife between the two major sections of the population.

I wish to say here that I am concerned at the way sections of the press are deliberately fermenting racial strife and inciting violence. Cartoons, banner headlines, gimmicks of every kind, distortions, fabrications and deliberate incitements are used to bring this campaign is also carried abroad. For instance, the about Mc Carthyite AIP News recently carried the vicious lie that I racial said that "The more black men you kill the better for all of hatred you". Such lies and seditious statements are the stock in trade and vio of a certain group. I warn that the State cannot permit anyone lence. to promote disaffection between the various sections of the Unfor- community and incitements to violence. tunately

As head of the Government of the country, I wish to appeal for an end to racial strife. Racial antagonism is not deeply rooted in this country. But it can easily become so if it is not promptly removed. Since its upsurge in 1955 and particularly since 1962 it has become more and more bitter each year. Let us resolve to bring it to an end today; tomorrow may be too late. We have many grave problems in this country. We cannot begin to solve them if we spend our time and energies in fratricidal strife. Our best laid plans for economic and social development will be of little consequence if we continue divided and arrayed into warring factions.

The recent upsurge of violence, hitherto confined to West Demerara, has now spread elsewhere. The Police have up to the last day or two been able to contain the situation. Two days ago, however, they reported that they might not be able to do this and requested that the military should be brought in to the aid of the Civil Power. My Colleagues and I in the Council of Ministers accepted this advice and we accordingly advised His Excellency the Governor to declare a state of emergency and call in the military to assist the Police.

I think it is appropriate to observe here that it is unfortunate that a Guyanese Defence and Internal Security Force for which the Legislature gave its approval in 1962 is not available for such emergencies. I trust that Her Majesty's Government will now see the necessity of advising that the Defence Bill, 1962, be assented to.

I realize however, that a mere call for peace and the declaration of an Emergency will not bring peace. We must get to the root causes of our troubles. The immediate cause of the present unrest is the demand by the sugar workers for the recognition of the union of their choice as their bargaining agent. That is to say, it is the basic question of trade union recognition.

This problem of recognition has a long history. In 1948 sugar workers went on a protracted four-month strike with tragic loss of life but they did not achieve their aim of recognition for the union of their choice. In 1951 and 1952 there were more strikes and in August-September 1953 there was a colony-wide one-month strike. In 1953, the United Trade Union movement backed the then Guiana Industrial Workers Union (G.I.W.U.) in a token four-hour sympathy strike on September 24. Even that failed to achieve the workers' objective. Attempts at legislation to provide for a poll both in 1953 and 1963 also failed.

/These things...

These things can hardly be conducive to peace and progress in the sugar belt. The same politicians and trade unionists who sponsored and supported the attempted enactment of the Labour Relations Bill in 1953 led the opposition to it in 1963. Last year the T.U.C. stated that it was not opposed to a poll, but rather to legislation which would permit the Government to set up such machinery as would allegedly destroy the trade union movement. One finds also that foreign trade unionists and international and regional trade union groupings who support the principle of a poll reject it in British Guiana.

The sugar workers are obviously frustrated. On three successive occasions they helped to put in office a Government with a clearly stated policy. On each occasion they have been promised that legislation will be introduced to permit a poll. If the elected Government is prevented by unconstitutional means from fulfilling its promises, and if the TUC and vested interests are not prepared to accept the recognised principles of freedom of association and the workers' right of collective bargaining by unions of their choice, then I ask you, what is the alternative left to these workers?

Let us not forget, too, that twice before in 1962 and 1963, those who pay lip service to democracy abandoned the legislature took to the streets, undermined law and authority, and for these unconstitutional activities have been recompensed by the British Government. Their illegal and unconstitutional activities yielded them rich rewards.

I say to ensure peace in the sugar industry the basic question of recognition must be solved. Let's hope that the 3-man Committee appointed by the Government will help to find a solution to this long drawn-out problem.

Secondly, the political and constitutional question must also be solved. A Constitution has been imposed on the country that is not acceptable certainly to half, and probably to the great majority, of the people. A Constitution specially designed to bring about the defeat of a particular political party and to satisfy the demand of a foreign power cannot provide a framework for peace and orderly development. If you have any doubt about the intrigue, gerrymandering and manipulation carried on to bring about the defeat of the People's Progressive Party, read Mr. R.B.O. Hart who is openly opposed to my party and my Government. If you discount American interference and pressure read Mr. Iain McLeod, former Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. John Hatch of the British Labour Party and the American journalist, Mr. Drew Pearson - none of them partisans of the P.P.P. and of my Government.

At the last Constitutional Conference, the British Government rejected all the proposals of this Government and capitulated entirely to the opposition and their friends, the Americans. British Guiana is being sacrificed to American hysteria. Writing in the New Statesman on 24th April, 1964 Mr. John Hatch stated:

"Meanwhile, frightened that Jagan was potentially another Castro, the Americans moved in to help the trade union opposition to his government through the American Institute of Free Labour Development and the political opposition through the C.I.A. Goaded by their hysterical feelings towards Cuba, the Americans decided that British Guiana could become a beach-head for Castro expansion. The success of their policy depended on British support. Burnham and his People's National Congress joined with D'Aguiar's small party in demanding a system of proportional representation. /They hoped...

They hoped the result would be to fragment the P.F.P. through the growth of Hindu, Moslem and similar communal parties. Duncan Sandys, by accepting this system last October, put the weight of the British government behind the opposition to Jagan. Tacitly he supported American policy in holding out to Burnham a hope that he could form a government refusing coalition with Jagan."

In capitulating to the opposition, Mr. Sandys even sacrificed solemn pledges and commitments made by his predecessor Mr. Iain McLeod, in 1960, when proportional representation was brought up and rejected as a rotten, abominable system. You will recall that after the 1960 Conference, which, we were told, had settled all matters of substance save that of Independence there was no quarrel by the opposition about the outcome of the Conference. Indeed, no one made proportional representation an issue at the 1961 elections. And the main opposition party clearly stated that whichever party won the elections would be leading the country to independence. It went so far as to name May 31, 1962, as Independence Day. But, having lost the elections, the opposition used the Budget in 1962 and the Labour Relations Bill in 1963, as excuses to foment disturbances aimed at overthrowing the Government and preventing independence.

The excuse ^{given} by the opposition for these disturbances was lack of consultation. If this question of consultation was the main bone of contention, then surely it was not beyond the ingenuity of the British Government to find a solution. They have shown how fertile their minds can be to devise schemes to destroy my party and me. After all, my Government had proposed the setting up of all kinds of machinery for consultations. Indeed, it went further and suggested the recomposition of the Upper House immediately on the basis of parity for Government and Opposition and later by elections under proportional representation. My Government also made several proposals which were aimed at placating imagined fears both here and abroad. These were all rejected.

I have already told you of my efforts to achieve a common front with the opposition in 1957 and 1961. I also explored every possibility of achieving an acceptable constitution for an independent Guiana. As you know, I requested the assistance of the Government of Ghana. And, as the Ghana Mission will no doubt some time disclose, I was prepared to make concessions which many representatives of African States at the United Nations frankly told me were indeed very generous. An attempt is now being made regionally, through the good offices of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago supported by other Caribbean leaders, to resolve the deadlock.

There are some who criticize me for approaching the United Nations, other Commonwealth countries and progressive Afro-Asian states. They claim that a solution must be found at home. I do not deny that a solution must be found at home. But it is naive to regard this as a mere domestic matter. For assured of the backing of powerful reactionary forces abroad, the opposition refuses to compromise. The reactionary forces must be exposed everywhere. I will go anywhere, I will see anyone to achieve unity and to get peace in Guiana. I concede that we - Government and the Opposition - must come to terms, but there must be a genuine desire on both sides to reach agreement. Unfortunately, no compromise will be reached so long as there is outside interference and it is believed that the Government and its supporters are expendable.

In the political and constitutional field therefore as

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in the industrial, we must remove the root causes if there is to be achieved real and lasting peace.

I should like to conclude^{by}/assuring you, Fellow Guyanese, that I am making every effort to help resolve the problems of our unhappy country. But I can only succeed if there is co-operation and a spirit of compromise on all sides. This is unfortunately lacking. I am willing to consider any suggestion from any group or individual which will result in a solution of our problems, particularly the important political and constitutional problem. This is a matter not only for us politicians but for all of you. We are all in the frontline. Now is the time for all men of goodwill to come forward and help solve these problems so that permanent peace and harmony can be established in our strife-torn and unhappy country.

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