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ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER, DR. CHAKEDI JAGAN
DELIVERED ON HIS BEHALF BY JANET JAGAN
AT THE WINNIPEG PRESS CLUB ANNUAL
DINNER ON APRIL 26, 1963.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deeply regret that I cannot be with you tonight. A general strike has been called by the Trades Union Council. It is joined by a strike of the Civil Service.

This is the latest attempt to overthrow my Government. The U.K. commission which enquired into the disturbances in British Guiana last year said this about the T.U.C. - paragraph 63 - "There is very little doubt that despite the loud protestations of the trade union leaders to the contrary, political affinities and aspirations played a large part in shaping their policy and formulating their programme of offering resistance to the budget and making a determined effort to change the Government in office".

In 1953, after only 4½ months in office, my popular democratically elected government was forcibly removed from office. Last year another attempt was made. One of the chief instigators, the leader of the fascist-minded United Force, told the Riot Commission that he saw his function to oppose, expose and depose the Government. About this self-styled champion of democracy and freedom the Commission said:

"We are constrained to observe that his being wedded to truth did not impose so stern a cloisteral isolation upon him as not to permit an occasional illicit sortie, in order to taste the seductive and politically rewarding adventure of flirting with half-truths".

You may wish to ask why. In 1953, the British Government said that I wanted to set up a communist dictatorship. To prop up its charge of a red plot, the British Government based its case on a lot of suppositions, on a lot of 'ifs' - if the drastic action was not taken a communist Government 'might' be set up.

Last year the excuse was a necessary though radical - radical in our but not your context - budget. A Canadian visitor at the time commented that the increased tax on insurance companies was no where near as high as those in operation in this country.

Today the issue is the enactment of a law which you have been practising for years. Our controversial 'Labour Relations Bill' is patterned after the Rooseveltian 'New Deal' National Labour Relations Act. All it seeks to do is to permit the conducting of a poll to determining which union the employers should be obliged to recognise. It is being alleged that this bill gives the Minister wide powers to substitute his authority for that of the trade unions or to give him control over the rights of the trade unions. The scheme of the Bill provides for the workers themselves by secret ballot conducted by an independent Commissioner of Labour to vote for the union of their choice. This same Bill incidentally, was one of the reasons for the fall of my 1953 Government. The sugar kings would brook no interference with their unlimited domination, in particular, over their company union.

Today the world is gripped by two concepts - hunger and change. We are caught up in a vicious circle of poverty. Science has brought our world closer together. Man has within his grasp the banishment of hunger, disease and insecurity. Yet man seems to be moving further and further apart. In a physical sense we are in one world. But in the socio-economic sense we are living in two -

/ a world ...

a world of the rich and a world of the poor; a world, as the late Bernard Shaw so aptly put it, of large appetites and no dinners at one extreme and a world of large dinners and no appetites at the other. Some state it differently - a world of non-producing possessors and a world of non-possessing producers. The non-possessing producers, the working people the world over are in the grip of hunger and want. They are no longer prepared to accept the 'pie in the sky' formula. They are restive. They want change. Explosions and violent revolutions are taking place everywhere. The problem of today simply stated is the dilemma of the non-producing possessors, of the capitalist class. They do not want violent explosions and revolutions. But neither do they want change.

What is responsible for poverty in the midst of plenty? Should there be idle hands, idle lands and idle factories? Can poverty be abolished in the Cold War atmosphere?

Some of us who try to probe and find answers are attacked - and viciously at that. The late Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. Bandaranaike once said: - "I cannot help being amused at times when the Press, or certain sections of it accuse me of dictatorial action, shout out and scream out their adherence to the principles of democracy, when, as a matter of fact, their own position provides one of the most pernicious and vicious dictatorships possible in the world. That is, a dictatorship of the press".

Not too long ago, His Excellency, Dr. Azikiwe, Governor General of Nigeria attacked the foreign press for its attitude towards Africa and African development.

Right now untruths and half-truths are being peddled against my Government at home and abroad.

The fact of the matter is simply this - the root cause of poverty, disease, insecurity and a low cultural level of development is capitalism and imperialism. Technology has advanced to a point where all of man's needs could almost be fully met. But the problem is ownership and control of the means of production, which are geared not for the satisfaction of man's wants, but for profit.

Some of the medicine men of capitalism and imperialism tell us that the poor will always be with us. They tell us that the poor are getting poorer.

A decade ago we were told by the United Nations that one-fifth of the world's population living in the industrialised developed countries of the world were earning two-thirds of the world's income as compared with two thirds of the world's population living in the underdeveloped countries earning less than a sixth of the world's income. Today the gap in living standards between the wealthy and the poor; the developed and underdeveloped, countries is getting wider.

Ladies and gentlemen, let the medicine men tell us why. Let them tell us not only about effects, but causes - the roots of backwardness and hunger.

I say categorically that imperialism is the root cause, is the reason why underdeveloped countries are caught up in a vicious circle of poverty. The developed countries have fashioned and subjugated the economies of our countries for their own advantage as a raw material base, as a market for industrialized goods and as an area for the extraction of super profits.

Let us take the area of Latin America. The economy of practically every Latin American state is distorted and imbalanced, depending principally on one primary crop or mineral. The following gives some details:-

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| Tin | - | 59% | of Bolivia's exports |
| Coffee | - | 86% | of Colombia's exports |
| | | 61% | of Haiti's exports |
| | | 74% | of Brazil's exports |
| | | 51% | of Nicaragua's exports |
| | | 84% | of El Salvador's exports |
| | | 82% | of Guatemala's exports |
| Sugar | - | 85% | of Cuba's exports |
| | | 50% | of Dominican Republic's exports |
| Bananas | - | 56% | of Ecuador's exports |
| | | 66% | of Honduras' exports |
| | | 52% | of Uruguay's exports |
| | | 59% | of Costa Rica's exports |
| Copper | - | 63% | of Chile's exports |
| Oil | - | 94% | of Venezuela's exports |

In British Guiana the bulk of our export income comes from bauxite and sugar and its by-products. In the Caribbean and in Latin America, we are predominantly agricultural. Yet, even foods have to be imported. In British Guiana we import flour, butter, cheese, tinned milk, potatoes, onions, to list a few.

Latifundia, large foreign land holdings and land idleness, result in terrific land hunger and poverty on a wide scale. Unlike the developed countries of the West, where the bulk of America's private investments went into manufacturing industries for the home market, the bulk in the underdeveloped countries went into extractive industries for export. Latin America takes $\frac{1}{4}$ of United States exports and provides $\frac{1}{3}$ of the imports, without which, according to Hubert L. Matthews, the U.S.A. will be reduced to a "second rate nation". Foreign investments took out from Latin America a net drain of \$3 $\frac{1}{2}$ billion in the decade 1946-1955. Returns on investment are fantastically high. During the same period, according to U.N. Statistics every dollar invested reaped \$3.17.

Loans were forthcoming for infra structure development, for roads, railways and harbours but not to develop the commanding heights in the public sector. The result is that Latin America is today in the classic predicament of a debtor having to borrow to meet loan payments. In 1956 Latin America received \$458 million in loans. However, in that year she paid out exactly \$450 million in principal and interest on previous loans.

We in the Caribbean and Latin America are subject to the inequalities of international trade. We are forced to sell cheap and buy dear. Africans and Asians still work for two and three shillings a day. In our area, wages are higher, but by no means comparable with those in the "metropolitan" countries. By increased public expenditure, by pump priming, the U.S.A. is temporarily able to allay the deleterious effects of recession and any downturn in the economy. But what about Latin America whose economy is so closely tied. Mr. Raul Prebitch, Executive Head of E.C.L.A., in an annual report pointed out that in 1958 as compared with 1957 there was not only a decline in volume but a fall in prices as well. This was about \$700 million. A post war decade rate of net per caput annual national income of about 2.2% has dropped to about zero.

In recent years, prices for minerals, metals and agricultural products dropped by as much as 40 to 50%. At the same time the average price which Latin America paid for its imports from U.S.A. rose by about 11%. These falling prices had disastrous effects on the economies of several countries. On April 24, 1962, the New York Times carried a story on the annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank in Buenos Aires which said in part:

"Finance Minister Jorge Mejia Palacio of Colombia said his country had lost two to three times as much foreign income from falling coffee prices as it had received in Alliance for Progress credits. He said the main thing the Alliance could accomplish would be a long term world coffee pact. "Until this comes about" Senor Mejia asserted, "the help that is given us, however generous it may be, will not be blood to vitalize our economies, as was planned, but simply tranquilizers to avoid a total collapse".

Former President Kubitchek of Brazil, asked by the Organisation of American States to make a critical re-examination of the one year old Alliance for Progress programme said:

"Let's be frank. The prices for Latin America's basic food and raw material exports have depreciated so much that this area's income has declined more than \$500 million this year in terms of the price paid for the same commodities when I took office in 1956. That \$500 million is just about the amount that the Alliance for Progress has put into Latin America since the program began. Latin America is therefore in the peculiar state of a man who is receiving blood transfusion in one arm and donating blood through the other".

Seen in a wider perspective in relation to the United Kingdom, in the last seven years, the terms of trade changed by 20% to the detriment of the underdeveloped countries. The prices of goods the latter sold fell by one-fifth relatively to the prices of the goods they bought from the developed areas. In cash terms this meant a booty of about £600 million per year since 1956.

I have dealt with the areas nearest to my country. But the arguments apply equally to other undeveloped regions of the world - Africa, Asia, the Middle East. Note also that what was yesterday developed is today becoming underdeveloped. You in Canada are now becoming increasingly aware of this. Even the U.K. is becoming alarmed about outside economic penetration and control. General De Gaulle recently called for an examination of the influences of outside capital.

There is now a greater awareness that it is possible to carry on imperialist control and exploitation in an undeveloped country without retaining it as or making it into a direct and formal colony.

We want not only political independence. We want also economic independence and social justice.

Over the past 12 years, there have been stirrings of the oppressed peoples, of the underprivileged peoples, everywhere. The world wide national liberation movement have suffered setbacks here and there - in Venezuela in 1948, in Iran in 1951, in British Guiana in 1953, in Guatemala in 1954, etc.

/ Reaction ...

Reaction has put power and authority in the hands of completely acquisitive individuals who have ceased to feel a sense of public responsibility. In the metropolitan countries, reaction has maintained itself in power by witchhunts, by conformism, by bribery of sections of the working class, by creating prosperity-corrupted electors and status seekers, by developing an attitude towards the rich which combines envy with admiration. Abroad, particularly in colonial dependent territories, everything in the imperialist armoury has been done - open brutal force, constitution-mongering and gerrymandering, conferring of knighthoods and other titles and decorations, scholarships for the colonial elite, experts and advisers - to ensure firstly the delay of political independence and secondly continuity from colonial to post-colonial rule.

Where do you stand, you, ladies and gentlemen of the press? Are you for or against change? There are many who are beginning seriously to question the role of the press. How free is the free press? Can there really be freedom of the press under the present system? Is press-ownership and control leading to thought and ideological control? Is the press opposing social change so necessary in our times?

The press and other mass media of information are today a multi-million dollar monopoly business. Speaking before a Royal Commission of the press, Lord Beaverbrook once said - "I am not concerned with the consumer one way or another. My interests are two-fold. The first to make money". Propaganda against cancer is killed on behalf of the tobacco monopolists. Publications such as Consumers Union and Consumers Research which tell consumers about best quality buys are refused advertising space for fear that the big national advertisers would object. Nothing must be done which might adversely affect advertising income which is the major income spinner. Little wonder someone has said that the first freedom of the press consists in its not being a business. But profit is not the sole objective. "I ran the paper solely for the purpose of making propaganda and with no other object". So said the ambiguous Lord Beaverbrook on another occasion in his evidence before the Royal Press Commission.

Freedom of the press in such a situation therefore becomes little more than a phrase, an abstraction. Thought control is exercised by the owners in a multitude of ways, not only through the advertisers, but also through the selection of editors and journalists, among other things. That the mass media of information is not serving its function satisfactorily is being voiced by persons in high places. Supreme Court Justice William G. Douglas recently said - "Why has silence overtaken us? Why has the pattern of no discussion reached into atomic testing, disarmament, Berlin and other issues that involve the problems of survival or extinction? Is foreign policy - the key of life in this nuclear age - beyond the bounds of debate? If so, how can we, the people, ever free ourselves from military domination and assert our sovereign civilian prerogative over all affairs of state - over war as well as over peace?"

I said in November 1961 when I addressed the National Press Club in Washington that it was not our democracy which was on trial, but theirs. Increasingly more and more responsible and fearless members of your profession are beginning to voice similar sentiments. Mr. Walter Lippmann calls for an end of the cold war and the dying policy of the Dulles system of protectorates and client states. This policy based on the weapon of anti-communism killed the Romulo Gallegos Government in Venezuela in 1948, the Mosadeq Government in Iran in 1951, my Government in British Guiana in 1953 and the Arbenz Government in Guatemala in 1954. But what has this policy achieved?

The Churchill-Truman-Dulles-Eisenhower policy of cordon sanitaire, of containment of communism by a string of military bases is in shambles. The Baghdad Pact cracked up. NATO, SEATO and CENTO are creaking at the seams. Client dictators in North Vietnam, South Korea, Guatemala, Argentina and elsewhere are a great liability. How can one talk about freedom and democracy when puppet military dictators are cancelling free elections in South Korea, Argentina, Guatemala, etc.?

How safe can democracy be with the militarists in command, with the organisation men and millions of dollars behind him?

Professor Alexander Heard in his recent study on the "Costs of Democracy" published by the University of North Carolina Press tells us of the fantastic sums which are today required to finance an election campaign and the very large contributions made by big business to the major political parties. In the so called defence of freedom and democracy, the Christian anti-communist crusade journeyed to British Guiana in 1961 and helped the opposition campaign with organisation and money, equivalent to \$45,000 (according to their own admission; no doubt it was much more). Can democracy survive when it takes \$ $\frac{3}{4}$ million to elect a senator in the U.S.A.?

How safe is democracy under the spell of the 'Hidden Persuaders', the motivation analysts and the motivation researchers? Consumers, we are told, by the manufacturers and the advertising agencies, buy a promise; not lanolin, but hope; not oranges but vitality; not an auto but prestige. Mr. Vance Packard tells us that "people's sub-surface desires, needs and drives are probed to find their points of vulnerability". If consumers fall victim, what about the voters?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in times which try men's souls. The hour is late. The people the world over can not be fooled any longer. Witch hunting is not enough. Gone are the days when a king could say that the only right the people had was the right to be governed, when a Bishop could get up in the House of Lords and proclaim that all the people had to do with laws was to obey them. Today in their quest for freedom and bread, they want not abstractions, but actuality.

Anatole France once said that "the law in its majestic equality forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under arches, to beg in the streets and to steal bread". "This equality", he added "is one of the benefits of the Revolution".

Will the revolution be peaceful or non-peaceful? Will socialists like me be allowed to bring about our millenium by peaceful means? Or is Fidel Castro's way of armed struggle the only way out? Today in the name of democracy the weapon of anti-communism is used to attack us. Centuries ago, scientists like Copernicus and Galileo and philosophers like Locke, Spinoza, Kant were put to the stake, were exiled for holding and disseminating so called 'heretical' doctrines. At the time of the American Revolution, levellers and republicans were as dangerous as today's communists. At the turn of this century, socialists were deemed as crafty agitators.

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, you have a great weapon. You also have a grave responsibility. You have the power of destroying some of us who propose to reconstruct, who propose to rebuild. You also have the power and, I say, the purpose of preventing bigots and ignoramuses from blowing up the world.

Which will you choose? You Canadians have a noble tradition. In the early part of this century you led the anti-colonial struggle. The Statute of Westminster stands as an outstanding monument. In these days of jingoism you can give leadership. Let it not be said that at the critical juncture of man's history you have failed.

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Whatever you decide, remember this: The people are indestructible. You may beat them, gag them, detain them, imprison them, shoot and toll the bell for them, but they will rise again, not mysteriously, but inevitably. And we who speak for them and voice their aspirations will never be silenced.

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