

"TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY"



**PERSPECTIVES  
FOR THE  
WEST INDIES**

**BY**

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## **Perspectives for the West Indies**

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When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one nation to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, the perspectives for the future must be clearly and precisely stated so that the population can know where it is going and why it is going there.

We are now embarked upon the great adventure of nationhood. We are laying foundations which will affect our children and our children's children. Whatever our part has been, that at any rate is the heritage which we carry now and into the future. At this period we have constantly to examine this heritage.

We have to examine it because it affects our present and future perspectives most powerfully, particularly to the degree that we do not understand it and therefore accept as in the nature of things burdens and drawbacks, material and psychological, which in reality have been imposed upon us.

To indicate the perspectives for the future, therefore, the first essential is to appraise the perspectives of the past.

What were these perspectives of the past? When Columbus on behalf of the Spanish Monarchy discovered the West Indies, Pope Alexander VI, on May 4, 1493, assigned the entire area to Spain and debarred any other power, on pain of anathema and excommunication, from trespassing on the Spanish monopoly.

The Papal Bull ended with the following words: "For if any person does, he will incur the indignation of Almighty God, and the blessed apostles Peter and Paul."

The other powers of Europe promptly threw the Pope's perspectives for the West Indies into the wastepaper basket, and today in 1960 only the Spanish language in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic survive to recall the Spanish monopoly.

One must therefore be careful with one's perspectives.

Take another of these perspectives. King Charles II of England conceded in 1661 a monopoly of the African Slave trade to the Royal African Company for 1000 years. The independence of Ghana, to be followed shortly by the independence of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, makes a mockery of the royal perspectives, British style.

French perspectives were no more successful. In 1777 the Minister of the Navy and Colonies, in emphasising the need for perpetual apartheid, decreed that "the strict observance of this distinction . . . . is the principal bond of subordination of the slave, from the resultant opinions that his colour is wedded to slavery and that nothing can make him the equal of his master."

Today all over the West Indies universal suffrage and political equality in the eyes of the law reflect the repudiation of these perspectives which were erected on the aristocracy of the skin.

And so with the perspectives of the more modern period of colonialism.

Why should not the West Indies govern themselves like Australia and New Zealand? asked the British Professor of Colonial History at Oxford when he visited Trinidad in 1887. His answer was an emphatic NO.

His reason was that "an English Governor-General will be found presiding over a black council, delivering the speeches written for him by a black prime minister; and how long could this endure? No

English gentleman would consent to occupy so absurd a situation."

Today, a mere 75 years later, the perspectives of both the West Indies and Oxford have changed beyond recognition; and an English gentleman, Governor of Trinidad and Tobago, delivers the speeches written for him by a black premier and neither of the two, both graduates of the same Oxford university, sees anything absurd in the situation.

The United States Government in 1941 secured from the United Kingdom a lease for 99 years on vast areas in Trinidad.

The Governor, Sir Hubert Young, warned them repeatedly that their perspectives for the continuation of colonialism could not be expected to survive the inevitable progress of the West Indian movement for self government or to satisfy the Legislative Council of year 2040.

Trinidad patriot though he was, Sir Hubert Young underestimated the pace of our development. It is not the Legislative Council of 2040 but the Legislative Council of 1960 which is not merely dissatisfied with the 1941 Agreement as he foresaw in 1940, but totally rejects it.

(Strictly speaking we do not even need to reject it; it was submitted to the United States Congress and to the United Kingdom Parliament, but not to the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago.)

Nevertheless it remains true, as I have said before in my address to our Fourth Annual Convention on "The Approach of Independence", that Sir Hubert Young's Chaguaramas despatch of October 28, 1940, ranks as one of the greatest state documents of our time, and I hope shortly to be able to publish it.

I would want to do so for three reasons. The first is that it will enable people to study one of our own major documents of West Indian history. The second is that it will correct the distorted American version about which I wrote sometime ago in the Nation which has published my six articles in pamphlet form.

The third and most important is that an Englishman like Sir Hubert Young serves as a bridge with the United Kingdom as we stand on the threshold of those better relations with the metropolitan power which come with independence and the overthrow of colonialism.

These perspectives are today all outmoded, and one might be tempted to regard them as either blunders or stupidity or perverseness on the part of those who enunciated them. They are neither blunders nor stupidity nor perverseness.

The perspectives were what they were because they expressed the relationship of the West Indies to Western civilisation at the various periods. Let me analyze this relationship for you so that you can understand the perspectives. Without this exercise, we cannot really understand the perspectives for the future based on the changes in Western civilisation and the altered relationship of the West Indies to that civilisation.

Historically, the West Indian colonies were developed deliberately as satellites of the European economy. In 1492 Europe was suffering from a severe shortage of two commodities — the precious metals (gold and silver) and sugar. The voyages of Columbus were deliberately undertaken to find new supplies of both.

It has been said that the Spaniards, on arrival, first praised God and then they asked for gold. On his second voyage to the West Indies, Columbus took with him the sugar cane in order to acclimatise it to the West Indies. In return for West Indian products the Europeans were getting ready to supply the West Indian market; by Columbus' time there had begun to emerge the new capitalist system of production, on a larger scale and by more efficient methods, which would yield a surplus that could be exported.

The prevailing economic theory of Columbus' age went something like this, if I may put it in simple terms :

The wealth of a nation depends on its possession of the precious metals, gold and silver. There are two ways of ensuring such possession — either by owning the mines of gold and silver, as the Spaniards did in Mexico and Peru; or, as the British and French endeavoured to do, by a system of trade which reduced imports and so reduced the drain of precious metals, and which encouraged exports and so added to the store of precious metals.

The West Indies turned out to have relatively insignificant supplies of gold and silver. But they became ideal colonies because they supplied sugar to the metropolitan country and provided a market for foodstuffs, manufactures and machinery from metropolitan farms and factories. This trade arrangement became a veritable system — *le pacte colonial*, as the French called it, the colonial compact.

It provided opportunities for investment of metropolitan capital on a large scale in sugar plantations and factories, slaves, shipping for transporting slaves and sugar, public works in the form of docks, buildings, roads, military bases, etc.

Vast profits were made and the profits went outside of the West Indies to develop industry, commerce, and agriculture in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa — everywhere except the West Indies themselves.

This system of production rested in two pillars. The first was economic. The West Indies were required to concentrate exclusively on products which did not compete with metropolitan enterprise and to send those products exclusively to the metropolitan country.

Thus the West Indies were required to grow sugar but not to refine it; they were forbidden to develop a textile industry; as the famous saying went, they could manufacture neither a nail nor a horse-shoe. Their rum was not allowed to compete with metropolitan whisky, brandy and wine.

They were encouraged to import food rather than to grow it themselves; salted fish was given priority over fresh fish. And they were compelled to send their products only to England or to France or to Spain. Spain went so far as to prescribe only a single port, Seville, which had a monopoly of West Indian trade, and to organise fleets and convoys which sailed at specific dates.

The second pillar of this system of production was political. To carry out this economic system, the West Indies had to be governed from abroad. If, as in Barbados and Jamaica, they had some sort of elected system and parliamentary assembly, the right to vote was limited to land owners and they were subject to the veto of the Governor and the reserve powers of the United Kingdom.

They could not, for example, interfere with the laws of trade and navigation. The Governor, in his discretion, could dissolve the Assembly. Even this system was not dictatorial enough for some people. Governor Codrington in Antigua in 1690 wanted the West Indies to be governed as military bases, without parliaments.

And when in 1865 Jamaica's House of Assembly was threatened with swamping by the votes of emancipated slaves who were becoming landowners, the British Government, alleging a plot to get up a Black Republic along the lines of Haiti, suspended Jamaica's self-governing constitution and introduced the crown colony system.

It took 79 years for the Jamaica constitution to be restored. It will not take too much more than 79 months to restore the constitution of British Guiana which was taken away in 1953 under the same pretence of some plot — although, this time, a Communist one.

Where, as in Trinidad and in British Guiana, there was no elected system, the Governor, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, nominated persons to the Legislature—

planters and civil servants, for the most part expatriates. This was the crown colony system of Government.

Where, as in the Spanish tradition and the French tradition before 1789, the absolute monarch was supreme, at home and overseas, and there were no colonial assemblies, the royal official was boss. The Spanish Viceroy's reply to colonials asking for political privileges was as follows: "Learn to read, write and say your prayers, for that is as much as any colonial ought to know."

The civil service was the monopoly of expatriates; the Spaniards made an official distinction between the Spaniard born in Spain and the Spaniard born in the colonies, and only the Spaniard born in Spain could hold office under the Crown.

This was the West Indian relationship with Western civilisation for over four centuries. The West Indies hewed wood and drew water for the metropolitan country, and supplied sugar for the metropolitan teacups. They existed only to serve metropolitan interests and were regarded as useless if they did not. Their production was designed to assist the metropolitan country in its balance of trade and in its struggle for supremacy in the world market.

Thus the West Indian colonies were an integral part of the struggle for world supremacy, political and economic, and the West Indies were in a constant state of war, of island against island, each fighting with the particular metropolitan power to which at the time it might belong.

The world sugar market determined the position of every West Indian colony. Barbados was supplanted by Jamaica and Jamaica by Haiti before its independence. The 19th century saw the British West Indies struggling for survival against its powerful competitors, India, Cuba, and beet sugar in Europe; and sugar disappeared from Dominica and St. Vincent, Grenada and Tobago.

This political relationship of the West Indies with the metropolitan country inevitably determined the social relations of production in the West Indies.

The big house of the plantation was surrounded by the barrack rooms of slavery and indenture. White capital exploited black and brown labour. When the aborigines died out under the strain of the Spanish *encomienda*, they were replaced by the Negro slaves from Africa. And when it was no longer possible to enslave the African for life, the planters substituted the five year indenture of the Indian, Chinese and Javanese.

The philosophy of apartheid was invented, and justified on the ground that the aborigines were closer to the monkey than to the white man, that the African was closer to the orangoutang, and that the Indian was a savage and a heathen.

This system of exploitation necessarily carried the seeds of its own destruction. On the one hand, there were the colonial revolts. The Bush Negroes of Guiana and the Maroons of Jamaica carried on a constant guerilla warfare which resulted in the recognition by treaty of their independent states.

The slave revolt in Haiti involved the entire country and culminated in the establishment of the first independent country in Latin America. A wave of revolt of such scope and intensity threatened to engulf the British West Indies in 1832 that the British Government was faced with the alternative of emancipation from above or emancipation from below.

They were emancipated from above in 1833. One day in 1848 the slaves of Danish St. Croix presented an ultimatum to the Governor: emancipation by 4 p.m. or they would burn down the capital. They were emancipated by 4 p.m. In the same island the workers opposed the system of indenture which was substituted. The Governor, warning that one cannot grow cane with rifles, abolished indenture under pressure from the workers.

On the other hand there were the protests of the metropolitan reformers and the support of the metropolitan proletariat. Las Casas spent his life fighting for the freedom of the aborigines and Clarkson for the freedom of the Africans.

Raynal warned that some day some African would arise to lift up the sacred standard of liberty for nature's afflicted, oppressed and tormented children.

Adam Smith, the great British economist, stressed the superior magnanimity of the African slave over the sordid soul of his master.

Victor Schoelcher, the radical French democrat, insisted that no one could be excluded from the immortal slogan of the Revolution, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Charles Kingsley, the celebrated novelist, reminded his countrymen that the thousands of paupers and rogues in Britain were not a whit more civilised, intellectual, virtuous or spiritual than the emancipated West Indian Negroes.

Thus a new relationship emerged between the West Indies and Western Civilisation in the 19th century. British industrial capitalism with its philosophy of free trade had no use for the restricted markets, colonial preferences and expensive slave products of colonialism.

Expanding democracy could not limit the rights of man to the colour of the skin. European science and technology enabled beet sugar to outdistance cane sugar, and the 1897 Royal Commission stressed the bankruptcy of sugar colonialism in the British West Indies.

Apartheid was repudiated by the Cuban Independence Movement which, with the philosopher, the White Marti, and the soldier, the Negro Maceo gave the West Indies new perspectives; white political freedom could not be established on the basis of Negro economic slavery, the Revolution knew no colour, it was sufficient to say "man" to comprehend therein all rights, and Man is more than white, more than mulatto, more than Negro.

Over it all, however, hung the dark cloud of Manifest Destiny—the U.S.A. which regarded Cuba as falling naturally within its orbit, which viewed European colonialism in America as unnatural and inexpedient, and which, through the pen of Theodore Roosevelt, envisaged the substitution of American for European colonialism, which was to begin with the Spanish colonies and end with the British.

The perspectives, now, were not economic or political. They were blatantly military—the protection of the U.S.A. and the Panama Canal.

The Caribbean Sea, the cockpit of European imperialism, became the American Mediterranean, and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba as a military base, the control of Haiti and Dominican Republic by American fiscal agents supported by marines, the purchase of the Danish Virgin Islands, and the replacement of Spain's liberal constitution of 1897 to Puerto Rico by American colonialism in 1898—these were the symbols of the new American perspectives, which were nothing but old European colonialism writ large, with the spelling American style.

The Anglo-American Agreement of 1941 ceding Chaguaramas for 99 years revealed the poverty and bankruptcy of the American perspectives for the West Indies.

Thus, one century after British emancipation in 1833, the entire West Indies were again ablaze—revolt against the American—supported dictatorship in Cuba, hopeless poverty in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, an absentee plantocracy crucifying West Indian humanity upon a cross of sugar cane everywhere, Haiti under American occupation, a pervading apathy and sickness in the smaller islands broken only in periods of disorder, as the Disturbances, Commission of 1937 stated in respect of Trinidad.

What is the exact significance of all this for us today? Among other things it is this: all the difficulties from which we suffer and the

problems we have to overcome, all these are not native to our country as a Territory or to us as a people. The unbalanced state of our economy, our insularity, even the timidity with which some of us approach the privileges and responsibilities of independence, all these are due to the course of economy, politics and history which were imposed upon us for 300 years.

We are now getting out of it, and the more we understand what was done to us, the more easily we shall throw off the evil heritage that it has left behind.

Such was the West Indian society which had to feel the full force of the impact of the Second World War. The First World War had given Trinidad's politics two veterans, disillusioned, embittered by their personal experiences and political frustrations, Cipriani and Butler. The Second World War saw the emergence of organised party politics, in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Barbados; this was followed by the emergence of the post war parties in British Guiana and Trinidad and Tobago.

The democratic propaganda of the Western Countries, the Four Freedoms, the Atlantic Charter, were disseminated and struck root in the fertile West Indian soil, and the demand for political reforms could no longer be held back.

Puerto Rico took charge of its government in 1948. Universal suffrage was introduced in Jamaica in 1944 and in Trinidad and Tobago in 1946. The French Government announced that the French West Indian Colonies were no longer colonies but parts of metropolitan France. The Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles achieved internal self government and worked out a new pattern of collaboration with the former metropolitan power in external affairs.

The West Indies had joined the colonial renaissance which emancipated India and Pakistan in 1948, Ghana in 1957, and which has freed all of Asia and large parts of Africa from colonial misrule.

The West Indies in 1960 find themselves in a different relationship with Western civilisation than in 1860 or in 1760.

They no longer have a monopoly of primary production; the U.S.A. is a major competitor, whether it is sugar or citrus. In the age of the huge nation state like the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., in the age of integration of national economies whether in Europe or Latin America or Africa, in the age of political federation in Malaya and Nigeria, in the age of Pan Africanism, these small, isolated, woebegone insular economies, most of them grant aided, some tied to Britain, others to France, are an anachronism which cannot last much longer.

In the age of new sources of power — oil, electricity, nuclear energy—they are not economically at the disadvantage to which they were exposed in previous centuries when the basis of industrial development was coal, iron and steel.

A new world is opening up before us. It is ours to make what we can of it. This freedom is what divides us irrevocably from the past.

The relations with the metropolitan country are most obviously, therefore, not the same in 1960 as they were 100 years ago. They can't be.

Ten years ago few dreamed that Nkrumah would be constitutionally the equal to Macmillan, a Privy Councillor, the spearhead of the attack on apartheid, actually delimiting the Commonwealth and seeking to divide it into two parts—the self governing Commonwealth nations, and the United Kingdom with its dependent colonies.

The appointment of the first West Indian as Governor of Trinidad and Tobago is the normal thing in a Commonwealth in which the non-European Prime Ministers will soon exceed the European.

A few grants-in-aid cannot inhibit independence, as Sir Hubert Rance's Standing Closer Association Committee prognosticated 10 years ago, and the British grants announced with independence for

Somalia and Sierra Leone merely underline the distinct pledge the Secretary of State for the Colonies has given twice in the past six months to Mr. Manley on his United Kingdom Mission and to the Federal Government—that the United Kingdom will not allow budgetary difficulties to interfere with West Indian Independence.

If the relationship of the West Indies to Western Civilisation and to the metropolitan country is not what it used to be, it is unthinkable that the old social relations of production could survive unchanged. And they have not.

The trade union movement has gained steadily in strength, and its demands are geared to the workers' standards enshrined in the Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. The West Indian movement has established affiliation with the international trade union movement; and the new perspectives embrace the most despised and depressed segment of our labour forces, the plantation workers.

Our trade union movement has shown that it recognises its international responsibilities not only in formal affiliation; it has taken the lead in awakening the people of the West Indies to the necessity for action against the brutality and barbarism of the South African regime.

Education, deliberately withheld in the period of colonialism, is Priority No. 1 in the present day; and the extension and expansion of formal opportunities, together with technical training, on-the-job training and training within industry, all have become normal features of the West Indian scene.

The expansion of the domestic market and rising standards are as closely associated with the new pattern of West Indian industrial development as the low living standards of slavery and indenture, were associated with the metropolitan dominion of the West Indian market.

Above all, and especially since the advent of the PNM, the racial separation of colonialism is being steadily discarded in favour of increasing integration and assimilation of our various racial stocks, based on interracial solidarity and equal opportunity for all determined by merit.

The picture is there for all to see—an independent Trinidad and Tobago. There is no stopping the tide. Our population will not be stopped on its march. We go forward. That is not in doubt any more. The point is, what are we going forward to? What are our perspectives?

Independence means, first and foremost, external relations, foreign policy. The broad outlines are already clear. The world is divided into two camps; the hot war will follow the cold. Where do we, a new nation of three million people, stand? If the Iron Curtain is the great divide separating the two camps, then it is axiomatic that we are West of the Curtain and not part of it. There can be no argument about that. That is the anchor of our foreign policy as we emerge into independence in 1960.

But it must be just as clearly understood that within that framework we enjoy political, constitutional and moral equality. Within that framework we re-examine the colonial antecedents designed to suit the metropolitan country and establish new forms designed to suit our own needs.

I have already proposed as a solution of the Chaguaramas issue the establishment of a Joint Base. That itself, let each of you mark it well is a positive commitment to one side in the general division of the world. But if, as I have said before and I repeat it now, if that solution is not accepted because of the only possible explanation we can find, the continued domination of the habits and thinking of colonialism to us as non-whites, then independence will mean a clean

slate, the automatic rejection of all colonial commitments not freely entered into by us as equals. . . . .

The only treaties we propose to acknowledge and honour are those which we negotiate ourselves as equals. The 1941 Agreement is dead. Either a new one replaces it before independence or the necessary approaches can be made and the new decisions taken after independence.

To talk about independence and in the same breath accept obligations of a nature unknown to us by virtue of a treaty which was not only imposed upon us in the first instance but which is given apparently any interpretation and is used to justify any extension its signatories care to give—that would be to substitute military imperialism of the Americans for the economic imperialism of the British, and the new economic imperialism will probably not be long in following.

That some people should still expect this of the West Indies is merely an indication of the extent to which the West Indians are still thought of in 1960, as they were by the Professor of Colonial History at Oxford in 1887, as a servile race.

In resisting this military imperialism we are not alone. We are not the only country with an American Base. We have already been in touch with India, Ceylon and Venezuela on this matter. Our former colonial colleagues, now emerged into the full flavour of independence—will stand by us in our determination to rid ourselves of the burdens unilaterally imposed by the 1941 Agreement.

An independent foreign policy will therefore involve renegotiation of treaties between the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. with the new West Indies Dominion of equal status with its other Commonwealth partners. This is merely the norm. We have the freedom to accept here and reject there; just as Canada is not part of the sterling bloc, just as Nehru and Ceylon take no part in defence questions and maintain their neutrality.

But our position in the Commonwealth and a joint base at Chaguaramas for a few years will not inhibit us from making new attachments, based on geography, trade and culture. The area that comes immediately to mind is the Organisation of American States, which is even now thinking of closer association with Canada.

Independence in the field of foreign policy means finally independent representation at the United Nations. Whatever the deficiencies of the United Nations and its specialised agencies, this much is clear—it is the number of nations that counts and not the power of individual nations.

The West Indies will take their place in an assembly in which the Latin American bloc, the Arab bloc, the Asians and the Africans have been able to achieve an importance which cannot be ignored and which must even be respected.

This perspective of independence of the West Indies opens out broad democratic vistas.

For with independence the West Indies, with the colonial tradition of the crown colony system or democracy limited to white planters, come face to face with this crucial question—What guarantee have we, in this hemispheric climate which has so far been singularly uncongenial for the tree of democracy, that democracy will survive and endure and be maintained?

Here we face a great tragedy, the tragedy of Trinidad and Tobago—that there is no opposition, there is none in sight, no opposition that is, which, agreed on fundamentals, agreed on the national outlook, can present to the national community an alternative set of proposals, an alternative programme for the achievement of our material aims.

Opposition there is, opposition galore—but it is opposition for so. It is the opposition of old talk, the opposition of bacchanal, the

opposition of a caste of unregenerate diehards in its death throes, the opposition which seeks to perpetuate colonialism, the opposition which assiduously cultivates outside connections, the opposition which has an ark without a Noah, the opposition which looks to Mother England or Father India or Grandmother Africa, the opposition which has first thoughts that may be revised, the opposition which explains that it is conservative before it gets power in order to be socialist after, the opposition which seeks to divide our inter-racial community and to substitute a new colonialism based on the aristocracy of race for the old colonialism based on the aristocracy of the skin.

In order words it is opposition for so—opposition solely to break the PNM. Scratch its back and you will find a pathological desire for place or power, and not infrequently a disgruntled PNM member or disappointed PNM aspirant. From such an opposition no assistance can be expected in the achievement of our democratic vistas.

The whole burden of promoting democracy, which should be shared between two parties, has to be borne by ours alone. Whilst we seek to dignify, they can only denigrate. Where we seek to build up they seek to tear down even before we have built up.

These moral anarchists, these enemies of democracy, will sell their country down the Gulf of Paria in order to achieve the prominence of Quislings and the notoriety of Judas Iscariot.

So be it. We of the PNM accept the responsibility thrust upon us alone. Let us therefore emphasise, in our democratic perspectives, three main lines of approach.

(1) the development of all those political and constitutional forms associated with democratic parliaments, based always on the dignity of the legislature;

(2) the maximum tolerance in our political life and on our political platforms, based always on the conventional democratic rights;

(3) the political education of our people.

Where, 170 years ago, the traveller found in the West Indies only the most insipid conversation beginning with prices of exports and ending with the laziness of Negroes; where, 130 years ago, the Colonial Office trustee at the best could see in the West Indies only a society in which there was no counterpart in the civilised world for its entire destitution of learned leisure, of literary and scientific intercourse and even of liberal recreations; here we stand tonight in the College of Harris Promenade of the five year old University of Woodford Square, a positive manifestation of the capacity of our people to undertake all the responsibilities and enjoy all the privileges of democratic citizens.

Our democratic perspectives will necessarily influence our foreign policy. On the Latin American stage is being fought out today the battle of democracy versus dictatorship. We of the PNM cannot possibly be neutral in that struggle. We are for democracy and against dictatorship. This is not an academic question. It means, in concrete terms, principally Venezuela. It was the former Government of Trinidad and Tobago, reeking of the servile mentality nurtured by colonialism, which bowed to the wish of dictatorship and expelled the Venezuelan democratic refugees.

Venezuelan democracy, now in power, has slapped down Trinidad colonialism. We of the PNM, the voice of West Indian Independence, proclaim for all the world to hear, once more—Trinidad's soil will not be used to uphold dictatorship and sabotage democracy; more than that, we shall give no asylum to the henchmen of the dictators—let them seek asylum with their friends, if they still have any.

The democratic perspectives for the future impose yet another obligation upon us.

Racialism is an essential ingredient of colonialism. It was an economic apologist of 18th century British imperialism who saw in

the West Indies ideal colonies where the large slave population effectively controlled white aspirations for political independence.

It was the French imperialist government of the same period which justified the apartheid of slavery on the ground that, if intermarriage between white and coloured people was permitted, the result would be an understanding between both groups and the independence of the colonies.

It was the Trinidad representative of the imperialist power, Sir Ralph Woodford, (who must turn in his grave every time we speak of the University of Woodford Square), who in 1824, in opposing the application of a coloured doctor of medicine to practice his profession on the ground that his mother was a slave and he had formerly been a slave himself, openly stated that the racial discrimination which prohibited intermarriage, banned certain professions to people of colour, and limited the amount of property they could own, could not possibly be abandoned if, in Woodford's words,

"the whites are to maintain their ascendancy and Great Britain is to preserve her West India islands as colonies."

This is the heritage we have had to fight for years and we still bear some of the scars.

It is we of the PNM, who from our inception, stated emphatically that the interracial solidarity of the nationalist movement for independence must be substituted for the racial discrimination of colonialism. We called, and I call again, for the introduction into Trinidad, and particularly in our sugar plantation economy, of the spirit of Bandung, the practice of Afro-Asian solidarity.

Divided, we shall continue to be ruled, dwelling together in unity, we set an example to a world facing disaster with the pogroms of Notting Hill, the Jim Crow of the Southern States, the apartheid of South Africa.

Let us, as descendants of the people of West Africa and India, do honour to the two illustrious sons of those countries, Nehru and Nkrumah, who today illuminate the Commonwealth and symbolise the powerful democratic vista, the rights of man.

This is neither rhetoric nor political expediency, though even if it were either or both there is nothing for me or for you to be ashamed of. What is important is that our perspectives of interracial solidarity be translated into practical terms.

On the one hand there is the general philosophy — the equality, not only juridical and constitutional but also political and moral, of all, with reservations only in respect of merit and talent.

On the other hand there are the practical steps towards unity — whether it is the teaching of Hindi or the attention to Indian culture, as recommended by Mr. Capildeo on the occasion of the last Budget Debate, or the establishment of an Institute of Afro-Asian studies as proposed by Dr. Winston Mahabir in a letter he wrote me a few days ago.

I assured Mr. Capildeo that careful attention will be given to his valuable proposals. As far as Dr. Mahabir's equally valuable suggestion is concerned, I propose to take it up with Arthur Lewis in connection with the establishment of a Trinidad and Tobago Branch of the University College of the West Indies prior to raising with both the Governments of India and Ghana the question of their endowment of professional chairs in these fields.

Vast areas of new knowledge are being steadily opened up by Indian and African scholars in these days of Indian and African independence, and by British and American scholars as well. The history of these former colonies is now being rewritten by the former colonials, and the great lie of history is being exposed with all the ruthlessness that it deserves.

The great lie of West Indian history remains. I had dedicated my life to the exposure of this lie, to the repudiation of the many

calumnies and detractions with which we have been afflicted and to the filling of the gap caused by our long period of national amnesia.

Circumstances have forced me, if not to abandon, at least to defer the completion of what I had intended to be my repayment of the lasting debt I owe to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. But others will forge ahead, following the trail blazed over twenty years ago by C. L. R. James' monumental analysis of the Haitian segment of our history.

We of the PNM have always placed the deliberate cultivation of West Indian culture, with emphasis on our West Indian history, in the forefront of our national programme, and I shall continue to do what I can through the pages of *The Nation*.

I am being urged by the Editor to give the highest priority in the next few days, occupied as I am, to a study of the historical background of Jamaican nationalism, to be published in *The Nation*, and I myself am very anxious to explain to the people of Trinidad and Tobago and the West Indies the historical background to Castro and the eruptions last December of racial riots in Martinique.

A hundred and thirty years ago one of the most distinguished public servants who ever adorned the portals of the Colonial Office, an unwavering friend of the slaves, could see in the West Indies nothing but foolish governors, turbulent assemblies, missionaries and slaves, and he expressed his regret that Britain had ever assumed what he described as wretched burdens in what he called an evil hour.

The white man's burden cuts no ice today. The black or brown man's burden is the heritage we have taken over. The accusations levelled against us, of insularity, of inability to get together, these are what they made us.

When in 1793 the French Revolution abolished slavery, the French planters of Saint Domingue negotiated the transfer of the island to England. When in 1852 British emancipation was imminent, the planters of Jamaica treasonably conspired with the U.S.A. for the surrender of the island. When in 1885 the Barbadian planters faced British proposals for West Indian federation, they preferred to seek absorption into the Canadian federation.

Today the real patriots are the people of the West Indies themselves. They inherit a bad historical past. But the spirit they manifest, their confidence today, their readiness to go forward, their intolerance of continued subordination, their mental and psychological attitude today, these are a vital part of our development.

Those discussing with us economic, political or strategic problems will commit gross blunders if they do not realise that, apart from the material questions being discussed, the state of mind of our people must be taken into consideration. It is our right and our duty to ensure that, as we seek to establish the material foundations of our society, we define our spiritual attitude, we reject outworn ideas, and we substitute new ones suited to our time and place.

It is considerations of this order, and not merely the economics of nationhood, which motivate our conception of Federation.

These, Ladies and Gentlemen, are the perspectives for the West Indies which I hold forth to you. They are not mine, except in the subjective sense that the particular distillation of the objective economic movement there for all to see has been made by me. They conform with the best in the modern world. They spring from an objective analysis, contradiction of which I defy, of the bankruptcy in every sphere of West Indian colonialism—whether it be the political, the constitutional, the economic, the social, the intellectual, the cultural, the moral.

They represent the opinion, I am confident, of the majority of our people. They satisfy their long yearning and ardent aspirations for a better life, for equality, for status. We accept them and move forward with them; or we go back to slavery and colonialism, morally and possibly also materially.

These are our perspectives. This is the general outline. We have to fight for them politically, but we have to fight for them also in our day-to-day life and work. Too much of our time and energy has had to be spent throwing off the shackles of this heritage.

Every succeeding day makes me more convinced than ever that we shall have given this heritage the deathblow only when we have declared ourselves an independent nation.

But as we throw off, we have to build. Finally, therefore, I give you this to carry away.

We have to establish in ourselves, by ourselves, and for ourselves habits of disciplined labour, of personal responsibility, of the democratic process inside and outside of politics, a constant striving in every sphere to establish the foundations of a nation which we first of all shall recognise and others will have to recognise as a new nation in the Caribbean—new not only in political independence, but new also in habits and thought which these islands never knew in all the centuries of their existence, and which it shall be to our honour and credit that we have founded.



