



RIGHT EXCELLENT
ERROL WALTON BARROW:
Champion of the Caribbean Community

Foreword by Ambassador David Comissiong

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Caribbean Community



CONTENTS



Foreword.....1

Errol Barrow Speech:
A Giant Step For All Of Us.....9

Errol Barrow Speech:
Caribbean Integration: The Reality And The Goal.....15

FOREWORD

by Ambassador David Comissiong



In May 1986, I received a telephone call from the then newly elected Prime Minister of Barbados - Errol Walton Barrow. He proceeded to ask me a series of questions that were designed to elicit personal information about me, and then ended the conversation with the following statement: "Oh, and by the way, I am appointing you to the Senate."

I had just turned 26 years of age, and therefore at that time became the youngest Senator in the history of Barbados. Needless to say, it was a great honour for me to be asked by Errol Barrow to serve his Administration in the Upper Chamber of Parliament and I eagerly looked forward to many years of political interaction with this legendary Barbadian statesman.

Alas, it was not to be! Almost exactly one year after that unforgettable telephone conversation, this great man passed away, leaving this earthly scene. And, many years later, our nation still feels a sense of loss from his most untimely passing.

In celebration of the legacy of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow on the 100th Anniversary of his birth, I offer this slightly amended version of the tribute that I made to this great Father of the independence of our Nation in the Senate of Barbados on June 11, 1987:-

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community



Errol Barrow and the People

“There will never be another Errol Barrow! I believe that a number of very unique and special circumstances coalesced to form the character and personality of that great Barbadian.

From his very birth, his life was a special one. To begin with, he was the nephew of the Right Excellent Dr Charles Duncan O’Neal, the great socialist. And from a very young age he must therefore have imbibed the great socialist principles, and, most importantly, the principle of identity with the interest of the working people.

He was the son of Bishop Reginald Barrow, and I, as a son of a minister of religion, know the special and unique influences and pressures that are brought to bear on the child of a minister of religion; and if you are lucky, you have held up before you the great moral values; and I believe that Errol Barrow was lucky!

Furthermore, at a very early age he experienced not only the confines of Barbados, but also the variety and diversity of the

Caribbean region. For example, he lived in the United States Virgin Islands as a youngster, and his family had tangible links with St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other Caribbean islands. So at a very early age he would have become exposed to the uniqueness, vitality and the specialness of being a Caribbean person.

Also of significance is that prior to attending secondary school at **Harrison College**, he attended **Wesley Hall Boys' School** where he would have been imbued with the spirit and personality of Rawle Parkinson, and he must have imbibed there, also, the principles of self-reliance and industry that were the hallmarks of that legendary headmaster of Wesley Hall.

And in the year 1937 he was exposed to the honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey, when that great man visited Barbados and made a speech at the Steel Shed: and that, too, must have left its mark.

Needless-to-say, the young Errol Barrow experienced the phenomenal July 1937 people's uprising that played so large a role in creating the new Barbados. That, too, must have opened his eyes to the need for change in Barbados and to the possibilities of the new society that he was to play so large a part in building later on.

Not only did he participate in World War II in the capacity of a navigator in Britain's Royal Air Force, but he was also exposed to the **Nuremburg Trials** in which members of the Nazi hierarchy were tried for "crimes against humanity". He therefore saw close up the great issues of human suffering; the great problems of the 20th century - the problems of racism and extremist nationalism. And he was exposed to these things at perhaps the most profound and fundamental level in the days following the end of the second World War.

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community



Errol Barrow in the Royal Air Force

And after the war, he attended the **London School of Economics**, at a time when it was traditional for Barbadian Scholars to opt instead for Oxford and Cambridge, and exclusively for law and medicine. It means that even at that age he had his mind set on the future, because at that time Economics was a relatively new academic discipline in our Caribbean region. It means that he had his mind set in the direction of the modern world - of a modern Barbados.

Upon completing his studies in England he came back to Barbados and practised law, and became involved in politics in the era of the early 1950s - the era when the energies of the masses of people were being released following the end of World War II; the time of the great achievement of universal adult suffrage - when the ordinary Barbadian man and woman came forcefully on to the political stage in Barbados.

I think that all these powerful circumstances created a unique individual, and I will not say that we will never see a greater Barbadian, but certainly we shall never see a person who so admirably represents the best qualities of the Barbadian people.



Errol Barrow on horseback

It is a pity that Mr. Barrow - the statesman who led Barbados into Independence in 1966 - did not find the time to write his autobiography. Indeed, I think it is crucial to the development of the youth of this country that they have access to a properly documented, well written, official biography of the life, times and work of the man Errol Barrow.

But if we want to find a concise and cogent statement of where Mr. Barrow wanted this country to go - especially during the last year of his life - we need look no further than the text of the two outstanding speeches that he made during the past year: the speech he delivered to the CARICOM Heads of Government at their meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, and the speech that he delivered in Miami.

I think he was making three fundamental points in those two speeches.

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

First of all, he was telling us that our future lies in the Caribbean integration movement! He made this point very forcefully in Georgetown, Guyana. He said that we should not confine that integration process and movement to mere matters of trade and economics, but that we have to begin understanding ourselves, appreciating ourselves, appreciating the wonderful achievements, the unique institutions and the unique personality and character that we, as a Caribbean people, have developed over the centuries. We need to begin understanding that and further developing that aspect of our regional integration experience.

He also made another fundamental point: that we have, as a people, to protect the sovereignty and integrity of our nation and of our region. Mr. Barrow was very strong in his pride as a Barbadian and as a citizen of the Caribbean. Indeed, he made the point that we had to defend our Independence and stand tall as a people; that we were not here to accept largesse or freeness from anybody; and that our principles must be those of self-reliance and doing things for ourselves.

In fact, at the Miami conference, Mr. Barrow told his friends in the **United States Congress** that if they wanted to assist Barbados, the way to assist us was not to give us aid or largesse, but to free up their markets to Caribbean exports. He said that they should do that - not as any favour to the Caribbean people - but as a practical measure to redress the phenomenal imbalance in trade between our countries and the United States of America. And he was clear that that was not asking for any favour.

That is how Errol Barrow thought and spoke. In fact, the Americans themselves are now asking Japan to correct the imbalance in trade between their two countries, and this is no favour. He was not looking for favours!

The final fundamental point that he made during the past year, and the third fundamental lesson he was trying to teach us, is that we need to embark upon the urgent task of resuscitating our Barbados economy and making our economy more competitive internationally, with all classes, all people, all sectors of the economy, working towards that common goal.

Errol Barrow was trying to say to us that we exist in a very precarious environment; that we are a small island developing state; and that if we are to survive, every sector, every class, all of our people, must be involved in that process, and we must pull together.

I believe that these are the three fundamental lessons that he tried to leave with us over the past year. The third one is perhaps the most fundamental, because, in making that challenge to the Barbadian society, he was saying that our salvation lies in our own hands, in the skills, the determination and the will of the people of Barbados to succeed. ***And I believe he was throwing out a special challenge to the young people of Barbados, the ones he had done so much to educate.***

As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the birth of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow I would just like to echo that the greatest tribute we can pay to this great national hero, this “Father of Independence”, is to make sure that we continue his life’s work, and, by our so doing , bring it one step closer to fruition.

In my capacity as Barbados' Ambassador to the **Caribbean Community** (CARICOM), I have chosen to commemorate the centennial of this multi-faceted statesman by focusing on his outstanding contribution to the Caribbean integration movement, and by presenting to you the historic speech that he made in 1973 as he signed the **Treaty of Chaguaramas**

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

and launched CARICOM, as well as his wise and moving 1986 address to the **CARICOM Heads of Government Conference**. These texts are essential reading for all citizens of our Caribbean Community!

“A GIANT STEP FOR ALL OF US”



Barrow, Burnham, Williams and Manley
signing the Treaty of Chaguaramas

“A GIANT STEP FOR ALL OF US”

Address at the signing ceremony of the Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM).

Chaguaramas, Trinidad. July 4, 1973

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Comrades and friends,

To those who have not been engaged upon the slow process of Caribbean integration, it would appear that this journey commenced at Chaguaramas a few short months ago, and like a race which takes place in a stadium, the end is where the start was.

But the process, as far as three of us, I would say all of us here, certainly the four Prime Ministers, are concerned, goes a long way further back than that.

To the Chairman of this meeting, and the distinguished Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, it started with his struggles at the University of Oxford, when I can truly say, he wrestled with the beast at Ephesus. That chapter in his life has not

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

really been written, but some of us are aware that those who would distort the whole course of West Indian history set out to thwart the attempts of our distinguished Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to put the West Indian history in its proper perspective, and to give new hope to the people who had been subjected to colonial tutelage for such a long time.



Dr. the Honourable Eric Williams

I think that the writings of Dr. Williams and the economic researches of Professor Arthur Lewis were the first faint glimmerings of the indication that the Caribbean people were capable of managing their own affairs.

We have been a people who have been imbued with a sense of our own inadequacy. Half a generation later, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, who is on this platform, the Prime Minister of Guyana who is on my left, and I, under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Guyana who was the President of the first West Indian association founded in the United Kingdom - that was the **West Indian Student's Union** - we staged the first public meeting on Caribbean Integration in the United Kingdom, and we followed the biblical injunction by staging that meeting in the lion's den itself, in that bastion of imperialism which is described as Trafalgar Square.



President Forbes Burnham
of Guyana

A lot of our fellow West Indians were rather amazed at our temerity, and we solicited the assistance of our colleagues from other parts of the world in making a bold stand on the need for West Indian integration. I should like to pay tribute to the President of the **West Indian Students Union** – the first President, the former President, my colleague, Mr. Linden Forbes

Sampson Burnham, on having the courage and the foresight to lead us on these bold excursions which we followed from time to time, in protesting against conditions in the West Indies, and indeed, supporting our comrades from Africa and other parts of the colonial empires in their protests against the conditions under which our people suffered.

THE GENESIS OF CARIFTA

Occasions for making disclosures of this kind are not frequent. I can now disclose that it was on the 4th July, 1965 that the Prime Minister of Guyana met with me in Barbados, at my invitation, to discuss the possibility of establishing a free trade area between our two countries in the first instance, and the rest of the Caribbean at such time as they would be ready to follow our example.

The letter which I wrote was in my own fine Barbadian hand which is sometimes illegible. But apparently, the Prime Minister of Guyana was able to read that letter, because of his, he informs me, Barbadian ancestry. Therefore, the hieroglyphics were not entirely strange to him.

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

That letter must for some time remain in the archives of the Prime Minister of Guyana because I had a few rather caustic observations to make about the failure of our people to get together in some meaningful kind of association. I regret to say that in typical style, a style which has not been un-associated with my posture either in the courts of law or legislative councils, I had some rather personal statements to make about the failure of our leaders to get together in a meaningful association.



Right Excellent
Errol Barrow,
pictured in a shirt jac

So we have for the moment to draw a veil of secrecy and silence over the contents, or the full contents, of that letter. One day, about 25 years after we have both of us relinquished voluntarily the positions which we now hold, the archivist may be given permission, for the sake of future generations, to publish the full contents of that letter.

In that letter, I invited the Prime Minister of Guyana to come to Barbados so that we could hold these discussions and today, I am very happy to be here, some eight years later, to be a signatory to the documents for whose signing we have been summoned by the distinguished Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS A MATTER OF DUTY

To me it is the end of a long journey. Neither one of us, either the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Prime Minister of Guyana, or I, had any ambitions to be Prime Ministers. We had ambitions, at that time, to see the Caribbean integrated. Today I hear the young aspiring political contenders stating that they want to be Prime Ministers, as if being a Prime Minister is like taking an examination and once you achieve the pass mark you are automatically a Prime Minister.

I remember well, that in 1955, if I may reminisce very very shortly, that the General Secretary of the Barbados Workers’ Union and the late Norman Washington Manley, whose birthday we commemorate today- and I hope the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago will forgive me for making reference to this - spent two days trying to persuade the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago that he must take his rightful place on the Caribbean political scene.

This is another illustration of the statement which I made a few moments ago that none of the three of us set out to be Prime Ministers. I can now say that-- remembering what took place in Kingston, Jamaica-- none of the four of us set out to be Prime Ministers. The distinguished Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago did not even want to be a politician.



The Rt. Hon.
Michael Manley
of Jamaica

So that today when I hear criticism of leadership in the Caribbean, those criticisms would probably have been justified, and justifiably levelled at some of our predecessors in office; but they certainly cannot be levelled against any of the four heads of government here who have been dragged reluctantly to the high offices which we now occupy.

I hope that when the time comes that we will not be dragged reluctantly from those high offices which we now occupy.

The problem which confronts the West Indian people today is one of persuasion - to persuade people of the calibre of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and other distinguished people who have contributed towards the success of this experiment to remain with us and to make further contribution,

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

so that our countries will be able to progress - not because of any predilections on our part to preside over the destinies of our peoples. But it will be dependent upon the willingness of the people of the West Indies to recognise the quality and the nature of the leadership which some of our countries enjoy, and that does not necessarily include Barbados, but it does not necessarily exclude Barbados either.

So Mr. Chairman, it was on the 4th July, 1965 one small step for two countries. Today as a signatory to this agreement, I should like to paraphrase the words of Mr. Neil Armstrong and say it is a giant step for all of us.

CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION: THE REALITY AND THE GOAL



CARICOM Secretariat Building

CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION: THE REALITY AND THE GOAL

Address to the Caribbean Community Heads of
Government Conference, 3 July 1986,
Georgetown, Guyana

Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Fellow Prime Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

*"The Street is in darkness,
Children are sleeping,
Mankind is dreaming,
It is midnight.*

*"Who will awaken
One little flower
Sleeping and growing
Hour and hour?"*

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

*“Light will awaken
All the young flowers
Sleeping and growing
Hour and hour.*

*“Dew is awake
Morning is soon
Mankind is risen
Flowers will bloom.”*



Martin Wylde Carter,
Guyanese poet and political activist.

The celebrated national poet of Guyana, Martin Carter, in his poem **‘For my Son’** reminds us in these moving stanzas that we represent the expectations of five million human beings, and what is more, that what we achieve or betray concerns not only the living, but those who are not yet born.

There are many critical questions on our agenda. There will be many different, even conflicting views. We have a long experience in surviving such differences. And we will survive them again. But there is a fundamental theme on which I should like to think there can be no difference. And that is the absolute necessity to promote and defend the solidarity and the sovereignty of this regional Caribbean family, and also the absolute obligation to discover those strategies and mechanisms which will ultimately lead to unity of action in all major areas of our economic, social and political life.

If we have sometimes failed to comprehend the essence of the regional integration movement, the truth is that thousands of ordinary Caribbean people do, in fact, live that reality every day.

**CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION:
THE REALITY AND THE GOAL**

In Barbados, our families are no longer exclusively Barbadian by island origin. We have Barbadian children of Jamaican mothers; Barbadian children of Antigua and St. Lucian fathers. And there is no need to mention Trinidad and Tobago which has always been tied to us not only by the inestimable bonds of consanguinity, but by the burgeoning cross fertilisation of cultural art forms.

We are a family of islands nestling closely under the shelter of the great Co-operative Republic of Guyana. And this fact of regional togetherness is lived every day by ordinary West Indian men and women in their comings and goings.



Caribbean vendor

The small traders, and some not so small, who move from Jamaica to Haiti on what I believe, is their legitimate business. The same with Grenada and Trinidad, Barbados and St. Lucia and Dominica. What some people call the underground economy. It is true that the laws of each territory

may sometimes get in their way, but for the majority of these decent and industrious sons and daughters of the Caribbean, I believe their business is spontaneous though unassisted, and legitimate though unregulated.

I should like to believe that we are all committed to the principle of mobility and people interaction. To the principle, I repeat. And that we have an obligation to think and go on thinking out ways how such a principle might be applied without imposing on any territory a greater strain than its resources are able to support.

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

THE REALITY OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The point I want to emphasise is this: the regional integration movement is a fact of daily experience. It is a reality which is lived, but which we have not yet been able to institutionalise. What is the source of our failure? I should like to share some of my own misgivings.

The first has to do with communication and the ways in which we communicate. For many of our people, the regional integration movement has come to mean matters which relate exclusively to trade. Who will buy my shirts and on what conditions? Whose markets will open up for my pepper sauce, my guava jelly, who will buy my white sand, who will buy my grey sand? These are realistic questions; but we have made them the exclusive justification for our being together. And this has been a grave shortcoming.

Whether we recognise it or not, we have a cultural history, a common experience of feeling which goes deeper and is much older than CARICOM and the negotiations about trade.

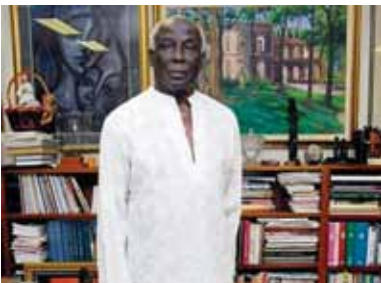
My attention was drawn recently to an essay by the Jamaican artist and scholar, Rex Nettleford, who articulates what I am trying to say about the essence of the regional movement which transcends mere discussions on trade. Jamaica is the occasion, but it is the Caribbean he is addressing. I quote:

“The public opinion polls can tell you what are the feelings of a day or moment; they cannot tell you what are the deeper social and psychological needs of our people who have had to devise strategies and stratagems of survival against the ravages of severance and suffering, and the continuing deprivation in economical, social and political terms

**CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION:
THE REALITY AND THE GOAL**

... Such strategies are the result and clear sign of a collective intellect, a collective wisdom that resides among our ordinary folk. But that collective wisdom continues to be ignored on account of the arrogance of planners trained in the North Atlantic or even at the University of the West Indies, especially when the UWI forgets that it is not an extension of Oxbridge.

The collective wisdom and intellect of our people are yet to be tapped and given central place in the development strategy of our nation. But we are so busy Westminsterising ourselves into becoming a clone of the Anglo-Saxon world and its American extension that we forget that we have a life and history of our own to be examined, dealt with and used as a source of energy for the development of this nation/region and the shaping of a civilised society.”



The Hon. Ralston Milton 'Rex' Nettleford
Caribbean Professor

In every territory of our Caribbean region – and it has been my own experience in Barbados – I believe we have been failing to find a way of using the ‘collective wisdom’ of our people. We have not been able to communicate the essence and the cultural infrastructure of the regional integration movement.

We have not been able to get people’s minds to move beyond the constraints of trade. As a result, the slightest discord between two Prime Ministers over some restrictions affecting a type or quantity of wearing apparel can plunge citizens of the two countries into verbal and electronic warfare. The promise of the regional integration movement, even in the area of trade, cannot be realised unless we find new ways of communicating

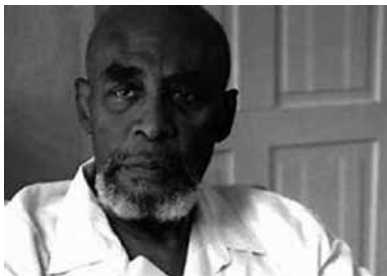
RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

to the mass of our people the meaning and purpose of all our regional institutions.

And that is one reason (if no other could be found) why the University must move from the confines of the campus more and more into the heart of the communities which constitute our region. This battle of communication in defence of the unity of the region, must be won if our efforts during this week and hitherto are to survive beyond the confines of conferences.

Every institution and organisation should feel the obligation to accept this challenge: the national and regional media; the schools at all levels of instruction; the Church; every gathering that goes by the name of Caribbean should feel this obligation to accept this challenge of communication - to propagate the message that the region is a larger concept than trade, and that the future of trade arrangements may be favourably influenced by that conviction among the mass of ordinary people whose 'collective wisdom' I believe, with Nettleford, is a fact and very much alive.



Lloyd Best: Economist and founder of the "New World" group of scholars

FALSE DIVISION BETWEEN MENTAL AND MANUAL LABOUR

The University of The West Indies has provided us - over more than one generation - with some very remarkable social scientists. I recall with a certain pride the excellent work which was done by the **New World Group** over the 1960s. Every major sector of our economic life has come under their scrutiny: Sugar, Bauxite, Oil, Tourism. Girvan and Thomas and Carrington, Brewster and Beckford, and, of course, Lloyd Best, - investigation which has always concerned the **Institute of Social and Economic**

Research, whose former Director, Allister McIntyre, is with us today.

They proved beyond any doubt that this region is not lacking in intellectual human resources. But in spite of all this excellent work, an important link was missing. All this analysis, all this valuable organisation of information, never got very far beyond the small circle of specialists for and by whom it was written. *There was no link between that great storehouse of knowledge and the toiling mass of workers who are the motor force of any society.* The analysis may be brilliant, the recommendations very ingenious; but these will serve a very limited purpose if their content does not become an essential part of the consciousness of the working population.

This has been the curse of our societies: that division between those who work exclusively with their brains and those who, we think, work only with their hands. The truth is all men and women, irrespective of occupation, have to work with their brains.

THE CARIBBEAN FOOD CRISIS

But this division of labour has made us most vulnerable where we need to be most resilient. I am speaking of food and food production. We are worse than vulnerable. It is as though we had chosen to betray the blessings which God and nature has bestowed upon us. Surrounded by the richest of seas, we condemn ourselves to importing fish. Our lands can provide almost every known food crop, yet we persist in the luxury of imported vegetables.

I should like to recall a voice and a great mentor who has never been without ideas about this danger and who tried to reverse this suicidal tendency which pervaded all our history. **Dr. Eric**

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

Williams will have to be heard again and again whenever we say agriculture. He had a conception of food production which was regional. I quote from him on the Caribbean Food Crisis:

'Food production must be approached as a basic industry to be run on commercial lines by a corporation collectively owned by the governments of the area and making approved investments in the different territories. This in practical terms, means a Caribbean Community Market ... I remind you that, last year, 1973, the Caribbean Community countries imported 24 million dollars' worth of fertiliser of which only two million (or 10 per cent) came from Trinidad and Tobago ... Production must aim to satisfy not only the food needs of the local population of the Caribbean. It must also take into account the needs of the extensive tourist trade in such countries as Barbados and Jamaica, as well as the export market beginning with the Caribbean region: Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles, Haiti, the Dominican Republic ... and the commercial co-operation I envisage for the production of food on a large scale must keep the needs of those Caribbean areas in mind...'



Dr. the Honourable Eric Williams

Dr. Eric Williams wanted to correct the preference for imported foods which has been a major cause of our psychological dependency before and after independence. And he wanted to help make agriculture a respected occupation because we needed it to make food production a respected industry, because

we cannot survive without it, and because it also required gifts of intellect and high technical competence. He wanted to help put an end to the insult he heard school children exchanging about their past. I quote:

'I myself encountered ... a group of young people to whom I was speaking and who assured me they wish to have no part of any agricultural programme related to the small farmer and local foodstuff because commodities like eddoes and dasheen were slave food.'

The Colonel from the Confederate South has won the battle for the minds of our children! I am happy to say I don't think this would happen in Dominica, where school children are making agricultural work a normal part of their curriculum. And it is here we need to begin (in the schools) if we are going to correct this hostility directed towards the production of the food which is the very fuel of our existence; **and if we are going to help another generation to understand why self-sufficiency may be one of the greatest forces of resistance to any form of external penetration.** But no amount of analysis, however brilliant, can save us from this danger without an informed and highly technical work-force in agriculture and the industries it generates.

A CARIBBEAN ZONE OF PEACE

My position also remains clear that the Caribbean must be recognised and respected as a zone of peace. In this connection, I should like to make further references to Eric Williams by saying that his speech, **From Slavery to Chaguaramas**, made in 1960 over the issue of the United States base, should be required reading in every school of the Caribbean and in every language of the Caribbean.

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community

Europe, and by extension the United States, have always thought it a perfectly natural duty to invade and occupy these territories. Columbus did not discover the new world. He invaded it. George Becks asks the question, 'How can you discover somewhere, where people are already living?'



Map of the Caribbean

We started our history as naval and military bases; that is, in our association with the modern world, each territory was there for capturing and recapturing. Eric Williams had this factor uppermost in mind in his argument over Chaguaramas;

and he always argued from history. I quote him to emphasise why this document is so important today. He said:

'And as Europe went out, the U.S.A. came in. After getting their independence, which had been based on large scale trade connections with the West Indies, most of them illegal, most of them involving smuggling, the new U.S.A. began from the very start to look upon the West Indies and the Caribbean Sea as their sphere of influence.'

They began shortly after independence by publishing the **Monroe Doctrine**, stating that they would not want to see any extension of European colonialism in the West Indies. The ambition clearly stated in those days was to dominate the entire hemisphere.

**CARIBBEAN INTEGRATION:
THE REALITY AND THE GOAL**

But if the whole West Indian movement is towards control of its own affairs, I, too, should like to know the clause in Adam's will which denies the West Indian people a share of this world, especially a share of the world that rightly belongs to them!

Puerto Rico has become a launching pad for new-colonisation of the region. We have also seen it used as a base for a number of military exercises whose purpose is clear. There have been joint manoeuvres of very great magnitude, Ocean Venture '81 and '82. A high ranking officer - in fact, the highest ranking U.S. Officer in the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico, based at Roosevelt Roads - explained their purpose when he said: 'the orchestra practised before playing in public'.

I have said, and I repeat that while I am Prime Minister of Barbados, our territory will not be used to intimidate any of our neighbours be that neighbour Cuba or the U.S.A.!

And I do not believe that size is necessarily the only criterion for determining these matters. But it is important to let people know where you stand if they will support you in what is a moral commitment to peace in our region.

So I return to Eric Williams and the great speech **From Slavery to Chaguaramas**:

'The enemy is not the submarine, or not the weapons which would be changed in 10 years and then changed in a 100 years after that ... the enemy is poverty, the enemy is the suppression of the talents of our population ...'

RIGHT EXCELLENT ERROL WALTON BARROW:

Champion of the Caribbean Community



William Gilbert Demas, of Trinidad and Tobago - Regional Public Servant par excellence

THE POWER OF IDEAS

Recently, I have been reading William Demas' very stimulating address to the **Institute of International Affairs** at the UWI, St. Augustine; and I recommend it for serious study. But my attention was particularly caught by a quotation from the British economist, **John Maynard**

Keynes, on the importance and power of ideas:

'Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist ... Soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are for good or evil.'

And that is why I believe in encouraging young people to acquaint themselves with the great variety of prevailing ideas; for it is only through knowledge and critical acquaintance that they will be able to discriminate which ideas are relevant or subversive to their interests.

And the University must never be restricted, impeded, or harassed for fulfilling its intellectual function of introducing its students, critically and honestly, to the great body of ideas which constitute the storehouse of human knowledge! The government of Barbados, of whose Cabinet I have the honour to be Chairman, will never circumscribe the University by demanding that the members of its staff should subscribe to some form of



Jose Julian Marti Perez, Cuban poet
essayist, journalist, anti-colonial
fighter and publisher

conventional wisdom
or be uncritical of the
government itself.

The Englishman, Keynes,
recalled the importance
of ideas. And in our own
sea, the great Caribbean
poet of the nineteenth
century, **Jose Marti**,
spoke of the relation of
truth to dreams.

*'A true man does not seek
the path where advantage
lies, but rather the path
where duty lies; and that
is the only practical man,
whose dream of Today will
be the Law of Tomorrow;
because he knows that without
a single exception, the Future*

lies on the side of Duty.'

CONCLUSION

I wish to add my personal welcome to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the mantle of leadership of your country, following the untimely passing of our colleague Forbes Burnham. I know that you share the vision which inspired the founding fathers of our integration movement, and which has served to sustain our Community in its moments of gravest difficulty. I wish you every success in your tenure both as Chairman of this Conference, and, as President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

I take this opportunity also to commend our out-going Secretary General for the sterling contribution he has made to CARICOM throughout his mandate. I wish him well in his future endeavours.

On behalf of the government of Barbados, I take this opportunity to acknowledge publicly all the warm messages of congratulations and good wishes I have received from my Caribbean colleagues both in Bridgetown and here in Georgetown.

Such expressions of goodwill have strengthened the commitment of my government to the principal foreign policy objective which it has set itself, namely: **to strengthen the structure of the Caribbean Community by promoting mutual understanding among its members for the benefit of all peoples.**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ministers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to conclude on a personal note by thanking you for your patience: and to borrow from John Bunyan the words spoken by Mr. Valiant for Truth in **Pilgrim's Progress**:

'Though with much difficulty I have come hither, yet I do not repent me of the trouble I have taken.'



Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow

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