

29/1/94

ADDRESS BY  
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PRIME MINISTER

LAUNCHING OF JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1994  
JAMAICA CONFERENCE CENTRE

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THIS MORNING, I AM PRIVILEGED, WHILE DISCHARGING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE, TO PARTICIPATE IN AN OCCASION WHICH IS TRULY HISTORIC AND ALSO AFFORDS A GREAT MEASURE OF PERSONAL SATISFACTION.

AS WE ASSEMBLE TO WITNESS THE LAUNCHING OF THE JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS I AM MINDFUL THAT IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE JAMAICAN WORKING PEOPLE THEMSELVES WHO IN THREE GLORIOUS WEEKS OF MAY 1938 BROUGHT THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT TO ITS KNEES, WON RIGHTS FOR WHICH THEY HAD PETITIONED IN VAIN FOR A CENTURY, AND LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN JAMAICA.

INDIVIDUALLY THEY MAY HAVE NO MEMORIAL, BUT THEIR MONUMENT IS AROUND US FOR ALL TO SEE "AND THEIR NAME LIVETH TO ALL GENERATIONS".

THE HISTORY OF THE JAMAICAN PEOPLE IS LITTERED BY THE  
COLOSSAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF GIANTS WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE TRADE UNION  
MOVEMENT AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE.

WE REMEMBER TODAY -

ALLAN GEORGE ST. CLAVER COOMBS WHO, IN 1936 WITH THE  
ASSISTANCE OF HUGH BUCHANAN LAUNCHED THE FIRST NATIONAL LABOUR  
ORGANIZATION, "THE JAMAICA WORKERS AND TRADESMEN UNION".

WE REMEMBER THE TWO MAIN ARCHITECTS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM  
AND VITAL NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. IT WAS NORMAN MANLEY WHO  
SEIZED THE INITIATIVE ON BEHALF OF THE WORKERS IN 1938 BY  
ESTABLISHING A LABOUR COMMITTEE. HE EXPRESSED THE URGENCY  
OF THE MOMENT WITH A STIRRING APPEAL, "NOW IS THE OPPORTUNITY  
FOR LABOUR TO ORGANIZE ITSELF, AND TO SECURE FULLEST  
CONSIDERATION OF ITS PROBLEMS, AND TO STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION  
FOREVER."

IT WAS THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF INDEPENDENT JAMAICA, THAT  
GRAND OLD MAN OF LABOUR, SIR ALEXANDER BUSTAMANTE WHO,  
CONSOLIDATED THE WORKERS GAINS WITH THE FORMATION OF THE  
B.I.T.U. IT IS TRUE TO SAY HE, MORE THAN ANY OTHER  
INDIVIDUAL, SECURED FOR WORKERS A PLACE IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS  
OF THE SOCIETY FROM WHICH THEY WILL NEVER BE REMOVED.

WITH US HERE TODAY, IS A MAN WHO WAS THEN JUST OUT OF SCHOOL  
AND WHO HAD FIRST COME TO BUSTAMANTE'S ATTENTION AS A  
JOURNALIST. HE STILL SERVES LABOUR WITH THE SINCERITY AND  
COMMITMENT WITH WHICH HE BEGAN OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO. I SPEAK  
OF HUGH LAWSON SHEARER.



ANOTHER GREAT JAMAICAN IS ALSO WITH US WHO HAS SERVED IN  
THE VANGUARD OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT.

MICHAEL MANLEY BROUGHT A SOPHISTICATION OF TECHNIQUE IN THE  
MECHANICS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN.

DURING HIS FIRST TENURE AS PRIME MINISTER, WE WITNESSED THE  
MOST FAR REACHING AND COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF LEGISLATION WHICH  
COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED THE STATUS OF THE JAMAICAN WORKER.

THERE ARE OTHER HEROES AND HEROINES WHO HAVE MADE DISTINCTIVE  
CONTRIBUTIONS IN THEIR TIME.

SO IF TODAY, WE AS LEADERS SEE MORE CLEARLY THE ROAD AHEAD, IT IS  
BECAUSE OUR WORTHY PREDECESSORS HAVE LAUNCHED US FIRMLY AND SAFELY  
ON THE WAY.

IT MAY BE THAT I WAS SO DAUNTED BY THE EXPLOITS IN THE  
TRADE UNION FIELD OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS PREDECESSORS WHOM I HAVE  
MENTIONED, THAT MY ROUTE TO THE POLITICAL HELM HAS BEEN BY A  
SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT COURSE. BUT THIS HAD NOT DENIED ME THE  
POSSIBILITIES OF A CLOSE AND CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TRADE  
UNION MOVEMENT.

E.G. (A) LEGAL COUNSEL TO TRADES UNIONS AND WORKERS.

(B) VISIT TO NORWAY AS HMFA.

(C) DRAFTING OF TRUST DOCUMENTS FOR CENTRE.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ESOP LEGISLATION AND THE BIRTH OF THIS  
CONFEDERATION SIGNAL A BRIGHT START FOR 1994 AND HERALD THE  
COMPLETION OF THE MOVE FROM SLAVERY, THROUGH THE REMOVAL OF A  
MASTER-SERVANT RELATIONSHIP INTO AN ERA OF FULL AND EQUAL  
PARTNERSHIP.

THE REALITIES OF A GLOBAL MARKET, THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT OUR PRODUCTION IS COMPETITIVE, THE POLICIES OF ECONOMIC LIBERALISATION ALL OBLIGE THE ACTORS ON THE ECONOMIC STAGE TO FASHION NEW STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES.

TRADE UNIONS, AT THE LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP, MUST BE FULLY INTEGRATED IN ALL EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A MODERN ECONOMY. LABOUR IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT IN EVERY ECONOMIC MODEL KNOWN TO MAN.

NO SOCIETY TODAY IS IMMUNE FROM THE PAINS OF TRANSITION AND ADJUSTMENT.

IT IS DIFFICULT, PAINFUL AND AT TIMES EVEN TRAUMATIC, BUT CHANGE ALSO BREEDS OPPORTUNITY, HOPE AND THE PROSPECT OF SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT.

INDEED, IT HAS BEEN SAID OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO, "NOTHING ENDURES BUT CHANGE."



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CANNOT BE IMMUNE FROM THE PROCESSES OF MODERNISATION, RESTRUCTURING AND ADJUSTMENT.

WE NEED TO DEVELOP A NEW WORK CULTURE, ONE THAT IS LESS COMBATIVE OR DIVISIVE AND IS, INSTEAD, MORE CONSULTATIVE AND TANGIBLY REWARDING.

THE ACCENT MUST BE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES. WE MUST EMPHASISE TRAINING FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY AND INCREASED PRODUCTION.

WE NEED TO DISCARD OUTMODED STYLES OF MANAGEMENT, RECOGNISE THAT OTHER INCENTIVES, APART FROM THE SOLE RELIANCE ON WAGES, MUST BE PROVIDED FOR FULL WORKER MOTIVATION. OPTIMUM LEVELS OF PRODUCTIVITY WILL BE ACHIEVED NOT ONLY BY THE OUTPUT OF INDIVIDUAL WORKERS, BUT HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY A TEAM OUTPUT.

ALL THIS SERVES TO REINFORCE MY PLEA FOR ATTITUDINAL CHANGE. IN MANY WAYS PRODUCTIVITY "IS A FUNCTION OF ATTITUDE AND COST IS A FUNCTION OF PRODUCTIVITY". SO ONCE AGAIN, IT BOILS DOWN TO ATTITUDE, WHETHER AT THE WORKPLACE, IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE NATION AT LARGE.

IN THIS PERIOD OF TRANSITION TO A MARKET-DRIVEN ECONOMY, EVERY SECTOR IS OBLIGED TO RE-ASSESS ITS ROLE AND STRATEGY. THE LABOUR UNIONS ARE NO EXCEPTION.

TRADE UNIONS HAVE AN OBVIOUS DUTY TO PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF THEIR MEMBERS.

THERE IS AN EQUALLY COMPELLING INTEREST IN THE EXPANSION OF THE WORKFORCE, THE CREATION OF NEW JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.



LET US TAKE THE AREA OF WAGES WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN AN AREA OF MAJOR CONCERN. IT WAS THIS ADMINISTRATION THAT DECIDED IN 1991 TO ABOLISH AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD QUANTITATIVE PERCENTAGE WAGE GUIDELINES IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO STILL TODAY FAIL TO ACCEPT THE JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH A NECESSARY DECISION. BUT, AS I SAID THEN, THIS DOES NOT MEAN A MAD SCRAMBLE OR A FREE-FOR-ALL.

IN THE CASE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR, ABILITY TO PAY IS DETERMINED BY THE SIZE AND THE COMPETING DEMANDS OF THE BUDGET. ITS SIZE IS PUBLICLY KNOWN. THERE ARE NO HIDDEN NUMBERS OR SECRET PROVISIONS. THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT THE COUNTRY CAN AFFORD.

FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1993/94, THE PORTION OF THE RECURRENT BUDGET ALLOCATED TO PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES AND SALARIES AMOUNTED TO 63%. THE MORE THAT IS SPENT ON THE WAGE BILL, THE LESS REMAINS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE AND THE REQUISITE MATERIALS SO THAT THOSE WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE CAN FULFIL THEIR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY.

IF TOO MUCH IS SPENT FOR WAGES, THE CONSEQUENCE IS A DIMUNITION OF THE CAPACITY OF THE STATE TO EXPAND A RANGE OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND CREATE THE NECESSARY PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

WORKERS STAND TO LOSE MORE THAN THEY GAIN BY PRESSING A DEMAND FOR A WAGE INCREASE FOR WHICH NO NEW RESOURCES HAVE BEEN GENERATED TO MEET.

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN CLEAR THAT THE POLICIES TO CONTAIN INFLATION REQUIRE HARSH MEDICINE BUT ARE ESSENTIAL IN THE INTEREST OF WORKERS.

INFLATION IMPERILS THE WELFARE OF EACH EMPLOYEE AND SO THE TRADE UNIONS MUST BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE FIGHT AGAINST IT.

WHILE THE CAUSITIVE FACTORS CANNOT BE IGNORED, WE NEED TO SPEND MORE EFFORT IN FINDING EFFECTIVE AND LASTING SOLUTIONS, AND LESS ENERGY IN DISPUTING WHO IS TO BLAME IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

THE ENTIRE COUNTRY MUST JOIN THE CRUSADE FOR GROWTH FOR PRODUCTION, FOR MOBILISING DOMESTIC SAVINGS TO INCREASE LOCAL INVESTMENT. THEREBY WE WILL ENSURE THAT THIS EXTENDED FUND FACILITY IS, INDEED, OUR LAST AGREEMENT WITH THE I.M.F. AND SO ASSERT FULL CONTROL OVER OUR OWN DESTINY.



HITHERTO THE UNION MOVEMENT HAS BEEN PRE-OCCUPIED MOSTLY  
WITH MEETING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK FOR ITS MEMBERS.  
THERE ARE REMARKABLE SUCCESSES TO ITS CREDIT.

TODAY, THE CHALLENGE TO THE UNION MOVEMENT LIES IN  
SECURING A MEANINGFUL STATE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR  
COUNTRY, IN MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION AT BOTH THE INSTITUTIONAL AND  
INDIVIDUAL LEVELS IN THE CREATION AND OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS AND  
PROPERTY IN OUR LAND.

CARDINAL TO OUR PURSUIT OF PRIVATISATION IS THE SEARCH  
TO BROADEN OUR ECONOMIC BASE AND TO CREATE THE BASIS FOR ECONOMIC  
DEMOCRACY ON A LEVEL PLAYINGFIELD.

THE UNIONS AND WORKERS SHOULD BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS AND NOT MERELY PASSIVE ONLOOKERS. THE UNIONS SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE ACQUISITION OF EQUITY RESERVED FOR EMPLOYEES IN THE SEVERAL DIVESTMENTS. WORKERS MUST UNDERSTAND THE WISDOM OF PURCHASING SHARES IN THE ENTITIES BEING PRIVATISED RATHER THAN SQUANDERING REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS IN CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION. THEY MUST BE TAUGHT THE VALUE OF SAVINGS BONDS AND EVEN HOW TO BENEFIT FROM TRANSACTIONS ON THE STOCK MARKET.

THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE IT MAKES WHEN WE ARE RELYING ON OUR OWN DOMESTIC SAVINGS RATHER THAN BORROWING WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAVED.

LOOK AT HOW WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROTECT THE NHT FROM BEING FORCED TO ADOPT LENDING POLICIES DICTATED BY THE MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS.

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JOINT TRADE UNIONS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN 1980, WAS INDEED A WELCOME INITIATIVE. IT HAS LED TO A FAR MORE CONSCIOUS AND INFORMED LABOUR FORCE.

THIS INSTITUTION HAS ALSO MADE IT POSSIBLE TO BEGIN ADDRESSING THE URGENT NEED FOR WORKERS TO ACCESS THE SPIRITUAL FRUITS OF THEIR LABOUR SO THAT THEIR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COULD KEEP PACE WITH PROGRESS ON THE MATERIAL SIDE. I USE CULTURE HERE, IN THE BROADEST SENSE TO IMPLY "ALL THE MEANS BY WHICH WE EXPRESS OURSELVES".

THE JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IS NOW A REALITY. NO ONE CAN HELP BUT AGREE WITH ITS LAUDABLE OBJECTIVES.

AS WITH THE RESEARCH CENTRE, THE QUESTION IS HOW DO WE IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME PUT INTO PRACTICE WHAT WE UPHOLD IN THEORY.



FOR SOMETIME NOW WE HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE LABOUR  
MOVEMENT CANNOT FULFIL ITS FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF UNITING THE  
NATION'S LABOUR FORCE TO IMPROVE ITS OWN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
STANDING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OVERALL NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK WHICH THE NEW CONFEDERATION  
FACES. THIS CHALLENGE COMES AT A TIME WHEN THE CONTINUING  
DETERIORATION IN SOCIAL STANDARDS, WHICH IS SADLY REFLECTED IN THE  
LACK OF CIVILITY AND ESCALATION IN VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR, THREATEN THE  
VERY FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY.

I HAVE OFTEN EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IN SUCH AN  
ENVIRONMENT GROWTH WILL BE LIMITED AND SOCIAL MOBILITY STULTIFIED.

THE SOCIAL AGENDA MUST BE PLACED ON THE FRONT BURNER.  
THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF SOCIALIZATION CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH SIMPLY TO BE NOSTALGIC AND YEARN FOR A PAST WHICH NEW CULTURAL REALITIES MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO RETRIEVE. WE HAVE TO WORK WITH WHAT WE HAVE. WE HAVE TO GO FROM WHERE WE ARE.

THE PRESENCE OF THIS CONFEDERATION IS GOING TO BE VITAL. FOR IF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IS NOT IN THE VANGUARD OF THE SEARCH FOR A NEW SENSE OF VALUES AND NEW SPIRIT OF CARING AND A NEW CODE OF CIVILITY, WAGE INCREASES WILL NOT PRODUCE THE DESIRED SATISFACTION.

I WELCOME THE JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS AS AN INSTITUTION VITAL TO OUR PROGRESS. ON THE WINGS OF UNITY, I ENVISAGE YOU WILL SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL BECOME AN ASSET OF MONUMENTAL IMPORTANCE WORTHY OF OUR COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

MESSAGE FROM  
RT. HON. P. J. PATTERSON, P.C., Q.C. M.P.,  
PRIME MINISTER

THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN JAMAICA CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.

THE NATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT IS TO BE CREDITED NOT ONLY WITH THE EMANICIPATION OF LABOUR, BUT THE EMERGENCE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, AS WELL AS ITS PIONEERING ROLE IN THE CAUSE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION.

THE ADVENT OF THE JOINT TRADE UNIONS RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE BROUGHT WITH IT A UNITY OF PURPOSE. THIS HAS INCREASED ITS DYNAMIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THE LAUNCHING OF THE JAMAICA CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IS A HISTORIC LANDMARK WHICH WILL FACILITATE A NEW DIMENSION IN THE ROLE OF ORGANIZED LABOUR TO THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT. ALL JAMAICA HAILS THIS NEW MILESTONE IN THE UNIFICATION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND ANTICIPATES AN EVEN BROADER CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PEACE AND PROGRESS.

P. J. PATTERSON  
PRIME MINISTER