

DRAFT FOR PRIME MINISTER - SUNDAY, 11TH MAY

BOB MARLEY MUSEUM

B/N BOB MARLEY

WHEN I WAS A BOY, I REMEMBER THAT, WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT GOING TO THE MUSEUM, YOU MEANT THE ONE AND ONLY PLACE NEAR THE BOTTOM OF EAST STREET, AT THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA.

AND THERE YOU SAW AN ASSORTMENT OF THINGS - FROM WORLD WAR I GERMAN HELMETS, THROUGH HISTORIC PRINTS, TO A METAL YARDSTICK THAT WAS SAID TO BE EXACTLY 6 FEET LONG.

AND OUT IN THE YARD THEY HAD A KIND OF ZOO, WITH IGUANA LIZARDS, ALLIGATORS, SNAKES, MONGOOSE AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

SOMEHOW WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON IT, WONDERFUL AS IT WAS TO THE EYES OF A CHILD, EVERYTHING SEEMED SMALL IN CONCEPT.

AND IT WAS NOT JUST BECAUSE THERE WERE SOMEWHAT LESS PEOPLE IN JAMAICA AT THE TIME - IT WAS BECAUSE WE HAD A DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF OURSELVES; STILL VERY MUCH CONDITIONED BY BEING BRITISH SUBJECTS; STILL NOT YET ABLE TO THINK OF UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES AS A UNIQUE PEOPLE, AND GIVING FULL CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN THE WIDEST SENSE TO OURSELVES.

OF COURSE PEOPLE WERE ALL THE TIME DANCING KUMINA AND SINGING FOLK SONGS; AND INDIVIDUALS LIKE CLAUDE MCKAY, TOM REDCAN AND CLARE MCFARLANE WERE WRITING AND BEGINNING TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT OURSELVES. AND THERE WERE CHRISTMAS MORNING CONCERTS AT THE WARD THEATRE -

BUT THINGS HAD A PAROCHIAL FEEL TO THEM, IN CONTRAST TO THE EMPIRE DAY HOLIDAYS AND THE EMPHASIS UPON WHAT THE SO-CALLED REAL WORLD OUTSIDE WAS DOING.

WE WERE LITTLE PEOPLE, CONTROLLED BY OTHERS, RESPONDING TO OUTSIDE EVENTS; WAITING FOR ORDERS, WAITING TO BE OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS, NOT DARING TO INITIATE. OUR CENTRE WAS ELSEWHERE.

B/N BOB MARLEY

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT CHANGED OUR CONCEPT OF OURSELVES WAS A GROWING REALIZATION THAT WE COULD MATCH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, AND EVEN BEAT IT.

MARCUS GARVEY HAD BEEN OUT THERE FROM EARLY IN THE CENTURY, LETTING LOOSE HIS POWERFUL IDEAS OF THE WORLD - AND WE COULD SAY - THAT MAN IS A JAMAICAN.

SPORTS ALSO PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN BRINGING HOME TO US THE FACT THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE LIVE IN A SMALL ISLAND, WE ARE NOT LITTLE PEOPLE WHOSE DOINGS HAVE NO REAL SIGNIFICANCE. NOT JUST CHILDREN PLAYING GAMES AND PRETENDING TO BE REAL GROWN-UP PEOPLE.

IT HAS BEEN SAID BY A LOT OF PEOPLE, BUT I'LL SAY IT AGAIN. THAT SUDDEN REALIZATION WE GOT, THAT UNBELIEVING THRILL, WHEN OUR RELAY TEAM WON THE 4x400 AT THE HELSINKI OLYMPICS IN 1957 WAS A STUNNING REVELATION. THE HEADLINES SAID: "JAMAICA BEAT THE WORLD", AND THAT'S WHAT IT FELT LIKE.

THE IMPOSSIBLE HAD HAPPENED.

WE HAVEN'T LOOKED BACK SINCE.

THE WORD IMPOSSIBLE, AS IT RELATES TO THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR PEOPLE MEASURING-UP AT ALL LEVELS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY, HAS PROGRESSIVELY DIMINISHED. AND WHEN BOB MARLEY HIT THE INTERNATIONAL BIG TIME, IT WAS GRATIFYING AS I, LIKE MANY OTHERS WHO KNEW HIM WAS ALWAYS CONFIDENT THAT HE COULD DO IT.

BOB MARLEY - A TALENTED JAMAICAN WITH ORIGINALITY, DYNAMISM AND FORCE, BROKE THROUGH THE BARRIERS BETWEEN NATIONS, CULTURES, PEOPLES AND MUSIC.

MORE RECENTLY WE HAD MIKE McCALLUM WHO PIONEERED JAMAICA'S ENTRY INTO THE TOP LEAGUE OF BOXING AS OUR FIRST WORLD CHAMPION, AND NOW TREVOR BERBICK HAS BEEN ADDED TO GIVE JAMAICA TWO WORLD CHAMPIONS.

B/W BOB MARLEY

AS OUR CONCEPT OF OURSELVES CHANGED, WE CAME TO REALISE THAT WE HAD TO CAPTURE AND PRESERVE THE SIGNIFICANT, THE MAGNIFICENT PRODUCTIONS THE WORKS OF QUALITY, THE BEAUTY AND THE WONDER OF OUR COUNTRY. TO RECORD, CLASSIFY, CONSERVE, PRESERVE AND DISPLAY - TO MAKE KNOWN THE SPLENDID THINGS WHICH AROSE, AND NOW ARISE FROM US, IN ORDER TO MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE, AND CAPTURE THE ALLEGIANCE OF OUR YOUNG.

AND SO FROM THAT OLD MUSEUM ON EAST STREET WITH ITS GERMAN HELMETS AND METAL YARDSTICK, WE HAVE SPREAD OUT TO CAPTURE, TO FOCUS ON, AND DISPLAY, INCREASINGLY UNFOLDING ASPECTS OF OUR CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE; OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE BECOME, AND ARE BECOMING, OUR HERITAGE.

IN ALL HUMILITY, I THINK I CAN SAY THAT NOBODY KNOWS BETTER THAN I, HOW URGENT, DEMANDING AND PERSISTENT THE DAY-TO-DAY ECONOMIC CHALLENGES TO OUR EXISTENCE AS A NATION ARE. WHEN I SPEAK ABOUT THE PRICE OF GAS OR REAL ESTATE, NOBODY HAS TO PAUSE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT SUBJECT I AM TALKING ABOUT.

BUT WHEN I TALK ABOUT CHANGING A CONCEPT OF OURSELVES IT'S A DIFFERENT MATTER.

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B/N BOB MARLEY

A MUSEUM IS A POINT OF FOCUS FOR SOMETHING THAT WE THINK IS SPECIAL AND VALUABLE ENOUGH TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC AND TO BE KEPT THERE.

THIS BOB MARLEY MUSEUM IS A STATEMENT OF PRIDE AND RECOGNITION OF SOMETHING SPECIAL THAT HAPPENED IN THE FIELD OF POPULAR MUSIC; OF SOMEONE SPECIAL WHO CAME OUT OF THE MIDST OF US, AND CLIMBED TO THE SUMMIT OF THE WORLD IN A SPECIAL FIELD. SOMEONE WHO CAME UP WITH SOMETHING UNIQUE, OUT OF THE PULSATING RHYTHMS OF OUR ROOTS AS WELL AS THE CONCERNS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT OF THIS COUNTRY, AND GAVE IT TO THE WORLD TO LISTEN TO, TO DANCE TO, AND TO SING.

I AM HAPPY TO SEE THE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY RITA MARLEY, THE MARLEY FAMILY, AND THEIR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS, IN CREATING THIS MUSEUM, WHICH TELLS SOMETHING ABOUT AN ASPECT OF JAMAICAN LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENT, THROUGH THE PERSON AND THE WORKS OF THE HON. ROBERT NESTER MARLEY, O.M. I BELIEVE THAT, LIKE DEVON HOUSE, IT WILL BECOME A PRIME ATTRACTION FOR VISITORS TO OUR COUNTRY, AND THUS ADD ANOTHER DIMENSION TO OUR CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAMME.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COMMEND NEVILLE GARRICK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND BOARD MEMBER, WHO AS AN EXCELLENT ARTIST IN HIS OWN RIGHT AND CLOSE FRIEND OF BOB, HAS CONTINUED TO SHOW DEDICATION TO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF BOB MARLEY. HE WAS A TOWER OF STRENGTH TO MASTER SCULPTOR, ALVIN MARRIOTT, WHO WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO DO THE BOB MARLEY STATUE.

THIS STATUE IS LOCATED IN CELEBRITY PARK WHICH IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING LANDSCAPED INTO A BEAUTIFUL SETTING.

B/N BOB MARLEY

LET US REBUILD THE PLACES THAT HAVE BEEN LAID WASTE, AND GIVE LASTING RECOGNITION TO THE THINGS OF VALUE THAT HAVE GROWN OUT OF OUR LIFE AND WORK.

I HOPE THAT THIS MUSEUM WILL BE AN EXAMPLE THAT WILL STIMULATE OTHERS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF OTHER MUSEUMS, THROUGHOUT THE NATION, DEDICATED TO OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR PEOPLE - WHO IN THEIR HEARTS KNOW THAT MAN CANNOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT MUST BE INSPIRED AND ARMED AND ENERGIZED BY ALL THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

FIVE YEARS AGO, BOB'S UNTIMELY PASSING SADDENED US ALL, BUT HIS MUSIC AND SPIRIT LIVE ON, REINFORCING A LEGEND THAT CONTINUES TO GROW STRONGER AND STRONGER EVERYDAY.

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